

Semeiotic Preaching – An ancient-future homiletical model for preaching in a postmodern digitised culture

WJ LOTTER

 orcid.org/0000-0002-4353-1624(insert own ORCID)

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Promoter: Prof dr FP Kruger

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PREFACE

Among the many excellent gifts which God has adorned the human race, it is a singular privilege that he deigns to consecrate to himself the mouths and tongues of men in order that his voice may resound in them.”— *John Calvin*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the analysis of Semeiotic Preaching – An ancient-future homiletical model for preaching in a postmodern digitised culture is my own work. This information is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Philosophiae Doctor in Practical Theology: Homiletics at the North-West University (NWU Potchefstroom Campus).

WJ Lötter

ABSTRACT

The central theological argument in this thesis is to prove that semeiotic preaching is an effective ancient homiletical model for preaching (i.e. communicating) more effectively to the audiences of the digitised culture. This is attained by applying the prevailing rhetoric, founded on a combination of left-brain facts and right-brain creativity. This research has therefore focussed on four major questions based on the research model of Osmer: How can a descriptive-quantitative empirical research on semeiotic preaching, from ancient Biblical times until now, contribute to better communication to a postmodern digitised cultural context? How can an interpretative investigation into insights from the fields of Liturgics, Linguistics and Social Psychology contribute to analyse the need for semeiotic preaching in the problematic praxis of a digitised culture? How can a normative evaluation of semeiotic preaching help improve the praxis of effective communication in Biblical preaching to a digitised culture? How can an ancient-future homiletical model contribute to a new praxis for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context that will be in harmony with the language of the digital culture? Semeiotic preaching is not a new right-brain, post-rational and intellectual homiletical model, but a whole-brain form of rhetoric that is proven Biblically. The results of the quantitative empirical survey conducted for this thesis have indicated that church audiences are in favour of whole-brain memorable preaching. Human experience based on non-verbal language such as metaphors and imagination has become an important asset to knowledge but can also involve many risks. Utilising the whole brain enhances an eco-hermeneutical approach, inviting intra- and interdisciplinary subjects aimed at equipping the preacher with relevant techniques in order to address the problematic praxis, with subjects such as creativity, the art of persuasion, metaphors, narratives as well as ecclesiology, sacramental liturgy and missiology. A semeiotic sermon is an abductive incarnational act whereby one can hear, see and feel the message. A model such as visual-creative preaching can easily over-emphasise the focus on the preacher, the rhetoric or the entertainment of the audience. Therefore, semeiotic preaching is a balanced model. The new EPICx2 practical theory designed in this thesis endeavours to ensure that important balances between the right and the left brain are maintained, e.g. the balance, between passive listening, experiencing and participation. The triadic relationship between God's will, human creativity (the art of persuasion, imagination, wordplay *et cetera* (etc.)) and the work of the Holy Spirit is also an important principle to create a responsible ethics for semeiotic preaching. Some of the new techniques discovered include the following: the importance of whole-brain exegesis, the exegesis of metaphors and narratives, the praxis of the metaphorical image, the exegeting of the complete Biblical narratives. It also includes

the inseparable relation between narrative and metaphor as well as the preaching and the liturgy, the use of imagination, creativity and the art of persuasion as rhetorical skills and the participation and experience of the audience. Semeiotic preaching does not aspire to increase either verbal or non-verbal information, but rather the experiencing of creatively processed information with utilising more than one of the human senses. Much more could be done in this regard in future research and the term semeiotic preaching could possibly be changed to whole-brain expository preaching or homiletics.

KEY WORDS:

Semeiotic Preaching, Digimodernism, Ancient-future preaching, Whole-brain homiletical model, Narraphor

OPSOMMING

Die sentrale teologiese argument in hierdie navorsing is om te bewys dat semeiotiese prediking reeds deur Hebreeuse bybelskrywers in antieke tye as 'n effektiewe vorm van geheelbrein retoriek beoefen is. Geheelbrein retoriek impliseer die volgende: die linkerbrein redenasies en strategieë is net so belangrik soos die regterbrein kreatiwiteit en retoriek. Hierdie vorm van retoriek staan bekend as 'n antieke-toekomsgerigte kommunikasiemetode wat beter met die digitale post-millennium gehore en konteks resoneer as monologiese linkerbrein feite en punte. Vir hierdie doel word die navorsing op vier belangrike vrae gebaseer volgens die navorsingsmodel van Osmer: Hoe kan 'n beskrywende kwantitatiewe empiriese studie aangaande semeiotiese prediking (van antieke tye tot nou) bydra tot die formulering van 'n nuwe homiletiese teorie en model t.o.v. effektiewe preekkommunikasie? Hoe kan 'n interpretatiewe ondersoek in die veld van o.a. meta-teoretiese vakgebiede soos bv. die liturgie, taalkunde en sosiale sielkunde bydra tot die behoefte van semeiotiese prediking en die identifisering van moontlike probleemareas? Hoe kan 'n normatiewe evaluasie van semeiotiese prediking 'n bydra lewer om die praxis van effektiewe bybelse prediking aan die gehoor van die digitale kultuur op verantwoordbare wyse te verbeter? Hoe kan hierdie antieke model 'n bydrae lewer tot die praxis van 'n nuwe taal vir die gehore van die digitale era? Semeiotiese prediking is dus nie 'n nuwe regterbrein, post-rationele, post-intellektuele homiletiese model nie, maar 'n vorm van geheelbrein retoriek wat Bybels gefundeer kan word. Die kwantitatiewe empiriese navorsing het ook bevind dat post-millennium gehore ongeag hulle denominasie of demografie ten gunste is van semeiotiese prediking. Die menslike hermeneutiek wat die nie-verbale kommunikasie soos byvoorbeeld die subjektiewe ervarings, metaforiese taal en beelde, sowel as die verbeelding insluit speel net so groot rol in die oordrag van kennis as feite, maar ontluik terselfdertyd baie gevare wat deur die nuwe teorie ondervang sal moet word. Die geheelbrein konsep vereis dus gevolglik 'n eko-hermeneutiese benadering wat intra- sowel as interdisiplinêre vakgebiede insluit om die predikers met relevante kennis en vaardighede toe te rus soos bv. die kuns van oorreding, metafore en verhale, kreatiwiteit, missiologie, sakramentele liturgie en ekklesiologie. 'n Semeiotiese preek is 'n abduktiewe inkarnasionele gebeure wat die boodskap nie net laat hoor nie, maar ook kan laat voel en sien. Die nuwe EPICx2 praktykteorie wat deur hierdie studie geformuleer is, wil poog om die balanse tussen die linkerbrein en die regterbrein te probeer handhaaf, tussen luister en beleef, tussen passiewe gehoor en deelname, tussen God se Woord en mens se skeppende handeling, sodat aspekte soos vermaak van die gehoor, die prediker en sy retoriek nie die verhouding met God, Sy Woord of die werk van die Heilige Gees oorskadu nie. Van die nuutste tegnieke wat

deur hierdie tesis ontdek is sluit bv. die volgende in: geheelbrein eksegeese, die eksegeese van beelde en stories, die gebruik van een metaforiese beeld, die geheel-Bybelse narratief, en die onlosmaaklike eenheid tussen metafoor en narratief sowel as die prediking en die liturgie, die rol van verbeelding, kreatiwiteit en die kuns van oorreding sowel as die belangrikheid van die deelname en ervaring van die gehoor. Semeiotiese prediking wil nie verbale of nie-verbale informasie vermeerder nie, maar informasie kreatief prosessee tot minder woorde en minder beelde en meer interaktiewe belewenisse en deelname tussen die spreker en die gehoor. Toekomstige navorsing word verwelkom en sluit die moontlikheid in om die onderwerp semeiotiese prediking dalk te verander na geheelbrein prediking/homelietiek.

SLEUTELWOORDE:

Semeiotiese Prediking, digimodernisme, Antieke-toekomsgerigte kommunikasie, Geheel-brein homiletiese model, *Narrafoor*

ABBREVIATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT (OT):

Gen	Genesis
Ex	Exodus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
II Sam	II Samuel
I Kgs	I Kings
Is	Isaiah
Jon	Jonah
Zech	Zechariah
Ps	Psalms
Prov	Proverbs

NEW TESTAMENT (NT):

Mt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Acts	Acts
Rom	Romans
I Cor	I Corinthians

II Cor	II Corinthians
Gal	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phil	Philippians
Col	Colossians
II Thes	II Thessalonians
II Pet	II Peter
I Jn	I John
Rev	Revelations

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

A.D.	Anno Domino
CARE	CREDIBILITY, ACTION, REASON, EMPATHY
DH	Deuteronomistic History
E.C.M.	Emerging Church Movement
EPIC	Experienced, Participating, Image rich, Connecting
EPICx2	Exegetical and Experience-Partnerships and Participation, Image-rich and image quality, Christological and Connecting
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (for example)
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> (and so forth)
In press	In process of publishing
id est	that is
KJV	King James Version

KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure
MSE	Mean Squared Error
NIV	New International Version
NT	New Testament
NWU	North-West University
OAD	Oxford Advanced Dictionary
par.	Paragraph
p.	pagina
RERC	Research Ethics Regulatory Committee
s.a.	sine anno
U.S.A.	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Homileticians increasingly over the last twenty-two years are voicing the need for an audience-orientated preaching style. Concepts like *inter alia* experience and receptivity are prevalent in Practical Theological research. Preaching is after all an integral part of liturgy and requires the participation of believers. The central role of preaching herein is supported by the conviction that God not only spoke in Jesus Christ and in Scriptures, but that He also speaks here and now through the preaching of His Word (Immink, 2014:111). Preaching is not a formal duty administration from the side of the minister but rather the proclamation of the Word of the present God. The following footsteps concerning an increasingly interest in what listeners should experience within the communicative act of preaching, are evident:

- McClure (1995:7) proposes a concept he described as collaborative preaching as possible method that involves members of a local congregation in sermon brainstorming. Within this approach, preaching becomes a rhetoric of listening through which the theological insights of the congregation find a voice on the pulpit. McClure (1995:9) is interested in the Church's role regarding public theology and therefore preaching has, according to him, the important role of empowering congregations. He regarded the roundtable-approach as suitable for preaching in order for a dialogue, in which the community might discern the message of the Word of God, to manifest;
- Cilliers (2004:1-18) in turn is greatly concerned about the complexity and difficulty of relevant preaching. He refers to the problematic praxis with regard to preaching – a failure to communicate the Gospel with faith and integrity and the declining interest in religion via cultural shifts;
- Long (2005:198) is concerned about the fact that many preachers do not progress from the abstract to real life situations. Long therefore highlighted the idea that a sermon is an action or event of speaking and hearing. Long (2005:37) proceeds to indicate that the understanding of the essence of preaching went through phases over the years. In the 1960's the concept of kerygmatic preaching was evident. In the 1970's the importance of inductive preaching received attention within research. In the 1980's an emphasis was placed on the narrative and on imagination. In the 1990's people referred to preaching as an art. After the year 2000 people became increasingly aware of the hermeneutics of the listener;
- Tubbs-Tisdale (2008:3) even urged for a new focus on teaching preaching. The author refers to the fact that preaching is one of the most vulnerable occupations in which a person can

engage. A preacher's gifts and talents are on public exhibition. Preaching can either be denotative (provide clarity) or connotative (metaphors and images) (Tubbs-Tisdale, 2008:106);

- Meyers in Hogan *et al.* (2012:147) advises that preachers and their audiences should be explorers of the text in order to become more open to the message of the text. It seems as if scholars are increasingly interested in the sacramentality of life where every moment of life is regarded as sacred. The movement towards a bigger interest in meaningful sermons that has vision regarding present realities, is becoming increasingly important;
- Cilliers (2014:4) elaborated on the direction of development in homiletical research by indicating that preaching also has to do with the actions of seeing and feeling. Cilliers highlighted the importance of perceiving, namely that something is only said after it has been seen. He referred to the research of Rudolf Bohren and then indicated that those who sign up for preaching become sign-seekers. Preaching also has the function of reframing and even renaming life's realities. Cilliers accentuated the need for preaching that will provoke hope within a South-African context;
- Immink (2014:88) pointed out that when believers assemble in a worship service, they are touched by the sacred. In and through the communicative actions of liturgy faith is activated. This sacred ensues in a concrete interaction between the human self and the Spirit of Christ in order for the communion with Christ to become a living reality (Immink, 2014:88). Therefore, Immink (2014:89) also mentioned the idea of performance which entails the world of faith and touches on everyday life;
- Van der Rijst (2016:11) applied the sacramental embodiment to homiletics and mentioned the importance of preaching that makes God present or also referred to as the sacramental character of preaching.

This investigation intends on engaging with the voice that echoed since the year 2000. Numerous authors contributed in this regard and this study likewise engages with the connotative aspect of a sermon. In the past hermeneutics was often applied to the interpretation and understanding of the Biblical text from the side of the preacher. The hermeneutical process between the message and the listener/s is often neglected (cf. Pieterse, 1985:97). One of the major shortcomings in homiletics regarding the role listeners' play within the communicative act of preaching is to adjust to a kind of narrative preaching style, which includes the visual metaphorical support or whole-brain rhetoric. In this particular study, the possible value of semeiotics is investigated. Semeiotics not only links to the language style of digitised communication, but also to a Biblical rhetorical style. Semeiotic preaching thus manages to capture the whole brain of a listener.

Semeiotic preaching, against the background of semeiotics as a linguistic and academic subject, might be confusing since semeiotic preaching does not rely on non-verbal communication only, but also on multi-sensory communication which includes the following; seeing, hearing and (feeling) kinaesthetic communication (Van Tonder, 2010:5-7). Semeiotic preaching does not intend to replace verbal communication as such but is a creative communicational support method for verbal communication of preachers. The issue at stake is that preaching should enable listeners to understand the sermon. Two wholesome ones, namely the message and the reality of hearer's lives, are functioning comparable to an ellipse with two focal points (Pieterse, 1985:97). The semeiotic approach towards preaching wants to contribute to the Practical Theological investigation regarding this interaction between two wholesome ones. The misconception that this type of communication (semeiotics) is more related to the right brain is one of the predominant reasons why modernistic hermeneutics have been sceptic about this type of preaching (Van Tonder, 2010:8).

The word semeiotic is derived from the Greek word *semeion* which means any created or existing sign, metaphor, non-verbal gesture, event or story that has another meaning (Louw & Nida, 1989:443-445). According to the (OAD) Oxford Advanced Dictionary (1991:1150), semeiotics is defined as the study of signs and symbols in order to understand their meaning. Sweet (2014b:22) describes semiotics as the ability to read and convey "signs", where a "sign" (be it an image, gesture, sound, object or word) is something that stands for something else. Semiotics is about pointers, not points. Yet, in spite of all these, the concepts multisensory preaching and knowing have been raised within the homiletics. Tubbs Tisdale in Long *et al.* (2008:75) propagates the need for multisensory knowing in order to connect to peoples' lives in multisensory ways as part of the hermeneutical process.

Following the elucidation of the concept of semeiotics, it is inevitable that the expression of semeiotic preaching should be further clarified in section 1.2. Currently, exponents like *inter alia* Sanders (2013:1) and Hohstadt (2010:1) postulate that semeiotic preaching might be a possible new way of communicating/preaching in the digitised era, since it resonates better with the communication style of this culture than the rational, structural, verbal communication practised by most preachers. The authors mentioned above emphasised the important fact that people are listening to sermons within the unique context of a worship service. Effective communication is a prominent feature within liturgy. They also highlighted the fact that preachers should become increasingly aware of the obstacles listeners are facing in listening to sermons and therefore relevant and intelligible preaching is pivotal.

In the semeiotic approach towards preaching, digital communication is based on a language where words are supported by visual metaphors, signs, sounds and narratives (Van Tonder,

2010:7; Kysar & Webb, 2006:13-14; Sweet *et al.*, 2003b:92,126-130,152-155). The emergence of this new culture of communication may be one of many reasons why people seemingly lose interest in the preaching, especially in listening to rational, linear monologues and predominant cognitive structured verbal communication (Joubert, 2012a:17). Visualisation of the image or images portrayed in the sermon enables listeners to later-on recall the essence of the message in their memory. Pieterse (1985:121), for example, utilised the concept of “ver-beeld¹-ing”. From a homiletical viewpoint it could also be described as the importance and need for active listening.

It is imperative to investigate the subject of semeiotic preaching from a homiletical point of view. This research will endeavour to explain why semeiotic preaching fits the digital culture better by enhancing on meta-theoretical research (listening to other disciplines with the same interest *exempli gratia* (e.g.) the educational, communicational, psychological and the sociology.

Semeiotics historically stood between controversial Church practices by the early Roman Catholic Church and the Reformers predominant left-brain theology on the other side. The Reformers endeavoured to rectify the praxis of symbolism favoured by the Roman Catholic Church that placed the Word secondary to the symbols. In returning to *Sola Scriptura*, the Reformers could possibly have let the pendulum swung too far to the other side. This research proposes a preaching theory that integrates with the liturgy where more weight can be placed on the praxis of metaphors and symbols, thus balancing the accents between left-brain reasoning and right-brain experiencing. Philosophers also do not agree on whether symbols are complete carriers of the truth. Linguists believe that the metaphor belongs to the realm of the cosmos and the imaginative (Vos, 1995:123). The question at hand is how can semeiotics be brought back into homiletical theory for communicating the Word of God to a world now more used to semeiotic communication than ever before due to the influences of digital communication?

This study will endeavour to investigate the tension-field of preaching to listeners where the message, aimed at active listening, is delivered in a creative manner so that listeners become engaged within the communicative triangle that Brueggemann (2010:33) once visualised. Brueggemann (2010:35-45) emphasised three areas, of equally importance, that should relate to each other when approaching a sermon, i.e. the Word of God, the interpretation of the preacher and the acceptance of the receiver in a specific context in order to motivate change (Pieterse, 1993:26-27).

1 Image (imagination)

Brueggemann (2010:33) visualised the organic interaction in the following manner:

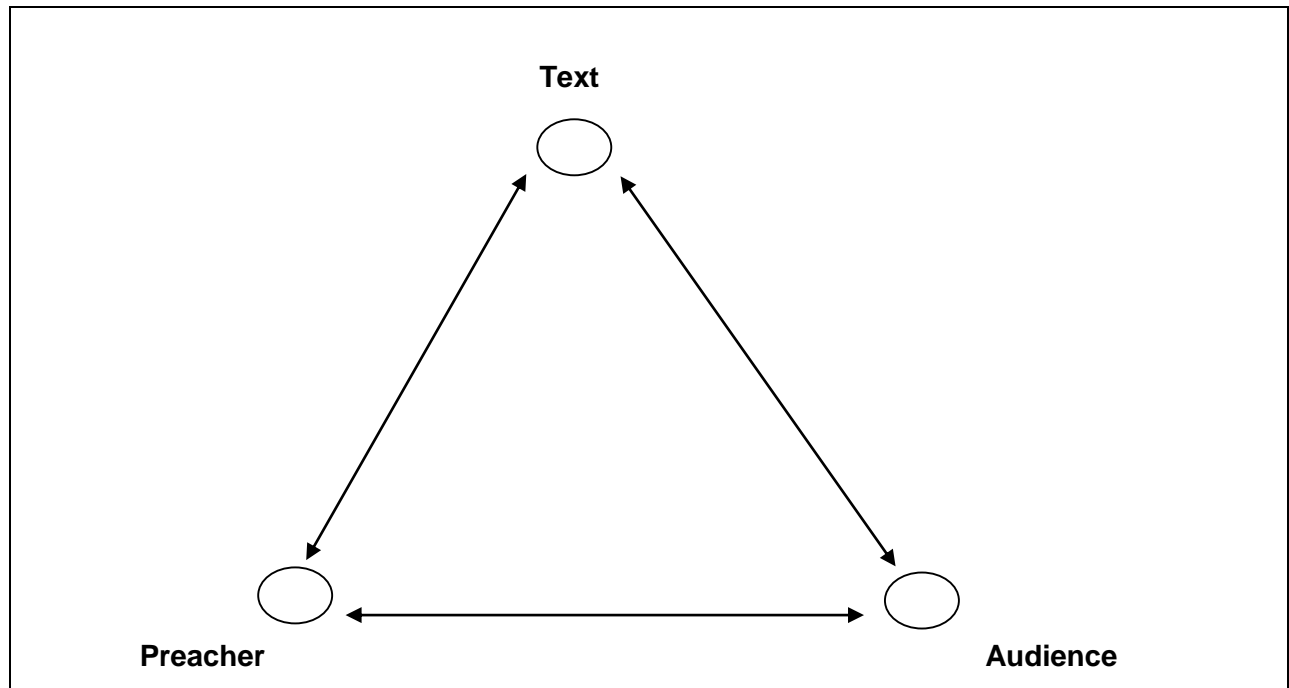


Figure 1: *Brueggemann: organic interaction*

Homiletics is especially interested in the dynamic reciprocity between the above three opposites in a communicative triangular in order to collaborate without tension. All three of the connecting points have a legitimate and complete place within the homiletic space that God has given it in His wisdom and goodness. The relationship between the preacher and the Word of God and his/her knowledge and theology often neglects the connecting relationship with the audience. This particular study wants to focus on the communicational dynamics between the preacher and the audience in order to create a living relationship with the Word of God.

Firet (1987:260) agrees that the communicational praxis is an important part of the Practical Theology in service of a relevant Church. According to Cartledge (2003:15) and Pieterse (2001:13) the voices, not only from the homiletics, but also from intra- and interdisciplinary sciences, for a new homiletical model, which might rescue the Church from the degeneration of preaching, is a welcome asset in the Practical Theological sciences.

Many theologians, pedagogues and linguists have already recognised the importance of an effective communication model for preaching, regardless of the impact of the new digital communication on preaching. These scholars include the following: Joubert (2012a:17, 29-38) and Joubert (2013:116), Crocket *et al.* (2011:92), De Wet (2011:58), Cleary *et al.* (2010:76-77), Ott and Strauss (2010:266), Timmer (2010:10-23), Brueggemann (2010:35-45), Niemandt (2007:40), Kysar and Webb (2006:13-14), Carter (2006:18-27), Flemming (2005:19), Jensen

(2005:19), Lynch (2005:54), Vos (2005:297), Cilliers (2004:199-217), Miller (2004:76-93), Wiersbe (1994:60-100) and Pieterse (1993:1-19,26-27).

1.2 SEMEIOTIC PREACHING AS A PROPOSED NEW METHOD TO ADDRESS THE DIGITAL CULTURE

1.2.1 What is semeiotic preaching?

Contextual preaching also means to adopt the style and the meaningfulness of language within the existing culture. When a culture becomes more familiar with semeiotic communication, there should be a need for a hermeneutics for semeiotic communication in the field of the homiletics. According to Webber (2008:20, 23; Gibson *et al.*, 2004:13) semeiotic preaching can be described as a rhetorical art that makes use of signs and metaphors to communicate religious truths. This was common practice in times when most people could not read or write but were familiar with the contextual metaphors and stories (Naudé, 2002:16; Jensen, 1980:120-122).

One of the reasons why modern homiletics moved away from the ancient methods of metaphors and stories is the impact that objective textual exegesis and rational reasoning had after the invention of the printed media and the rise of theological studies in a Western European context (Niemandt, 2007:16-25; McNair, 1988:352-355). Unfortunately, the world has changed and the new medium of communication is now predominantly related to semeiotic communication accompanied by sound, pictures and metaphors.

In the words of Sweet (2014b:23) a semeiotic approach towards preaching differs from other approaches in the following manner:

Semiotic preaching differs from traditional sermon building in its insistence on seeing the sermon itself as an incarnational medium. Traditional textual exegesis is based on mining the ore of words to excavate the gems of "Biblical principles," a Biblical panning for nuggets of wisdom in one massive stream of words...Are words the best conveyers of the divine? Alternatively, are experiences, intuitions, emotions, images, and stories more reliable and memorable?

The main purpose of semeiotic preaching is not to entertain the audience but to touch the hearts of a new generation through a method that draws the receiver into a communicational experience with God's Word through multi-sensory methods (Cleary *et al.*, 2010:76-77; Ott & Strauss, 2010:266; Timmer, 2010:10-23; Kysar and Webb, 2006:13-14; Carter, 2006:18-27; Jensen, 2005:19; Vos, 2005:297; Wiersbe, 1994:60-100). The question arises: does this new theory now exclude the left-brain rational thinking completely?

1.2.2 Exploring the disadvantages of certain aspects of semeiotic preaching

This study will examine existing theological theories supporting the importance of effective communication in preaching (Brueggemann, 2010:35-45; Ott & Strauss, 2010:266; De Wet, 2011:58; Flemming, 2005:19) in order to compile objective perspectives regarding the advantages and disadvantages.

A critical examination of semeiotic preaching will be based on the following important questions:

- Can the semeiotic preaching theory receive Biblical normative support and how does it change or enhance the left-brain, exegetical and interpretational work of the homiletician;
- Can semeiotic preaching be taught to less creative preachers and what dangers are there in the use of metaphors and stories in a sermon, especially regarding its open-endedness and multi-layer interpretations;
- How acceptable will this new style be to the Reformed hermeneutics of rational expository preaching?
- How acceptable will this style of rhetoric be to the Reformed audience (Brueggemann, 2010:35-45; Pieterse, 1993:1-19, 26-27)?

De Klerk and De Wet (2013:1-22) also warn to not fall trap to presumptions regarding the motivation of new theories. It is important to keep in mind that verbal, cognitive communication is only one aspect of effective preaching. Other aspects that contribute towards the communication of the message are also evident, namely: attitudes (preachers and listeners), love, touch, fellowship and care (Young, *sine anno* (s.a.):1). Young (s.a.:1) reminds us that communication and therefore communication in preaching is also about relations, feelings and expressions that no human can live without.

Christians in context of the digitised culture should not sacrifice tangible human behaviour for the sake of fitting into a culture of selfishness, electronic addiction and isolation. Preachers cannot just be expected to change to inculturate into this culture (Van Tonder, 2010:3-4). Preaching should not only just amend to a culture that closes their ears to words and their hands to serving (Gibson *et al.*, 2004:11-14). To inculturate, is when the Church influences another culture for example learning how to speak their language without adopting their bad behaviours and habits. It should also be mentioned that although the cognitive aspects of communication are one side of the coin the other side of the coin, namely semeiotics and inculturation should not be regarded as the only answer to a constructive listening experience. It is rather about an organic interrelationship that should manifest.

Other practical problems to investigate, could relate to a subject such as creativity with an important question: can creativity be learned or is it a gift? According to Cilliers (2004:206-217) creative expressions enhance the memory and therefore preaching and the whole sermon is an art of creativity. Barnard (2016:184) elaborates on the idea that people in their need for creativity do not stick to one social form of worshipping. He also indicates that people are involved in what he coined as a network culture that needs creativity from preachers and liturgists. Not all preachers possess such artistic skills. The research should give attention to this problem. From a theoretical perspective Reid (1995:1) pleads for a normative theory for the hermeneutics of metaphors in order not to fall trap to either wrong interpretation of metaphors neither to allegorical preaching. Bresee (1991:1) also warns not to over-accentuate the homiletical technique, but rather focus on the intention, even PowerPoint can become an obstacle in good communication if not used carefully.

Another problem with following the trends of the digital culture is that it changes quickly and generates a need for immediacy. Everything with regard to technology peaks and breaks new economical records whilst everything that is divine and ecclesial tumbles to hit the bottom (Joubert, 2012a:29-38). The electronic culture also creates an addictive intimacy that no other form of communication can create and impedes maturity and effective collaboration with the real world (Romanovski, 1991:65-72). Therefore, Ott and Strauss (2010:266) reminded how rapidly contexts are evolving and that all new models should remain open-ended (Vos, 2005:297).

Masango and Steyn (2011:1) remind that the human reflection to the λόγος is a communicational task by real humans that could never be perfect and therefore should always rely on the creativity and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Van Tonder, 2010:14) and not only on techniques that may turn Christians into spectators. The relation between the anthropological, the pneumatological as well as the Christological dimension to preaching should also be an important subject in this research.

1.3 META-THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Pieterse (1993:1-48), in conjunction with Osmer, emphasise the importance that Practical Theology should also be based on meta-theories - borrowed from other disciplines such as human sciences, sociology and communicational science in such a matter that it enhances the beauty of preaching and the image of God (De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:1-22). This thesis recognises the interdisciplinary approach of the social sciences as well as an intra-disciplinary approach (Cartledge, 2003:15; Pieterse, 2001:13). According to Cilliers (1996:12), a study in homiletics cannot be practised in isolation and should include meta-theories (Erasmus, 2007:181-183; Cilliers, 1996:12).

Other disciplines that might be investigated in order to describe what is going on could include the following: communicational sciences (rhetoric and the art science of persuasion), psychology (neurology, creativity and imagination), education, theology (ecclesiology, church-history, missiology and Biblical hermeneutics), the linguistics (semeiotics), philosophy (the difference between objective and subjective truth) and sociology (what shapes cultures and to describe digimodernism).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Main question:

Can semeiotic preaching, and all its different aspects, be theoretically and practically proved in order to be accepted by Reformed homiletics as another form of expository preaching?

1.4.2 Sub-questions:

Questions arising from the central research question can be formulated as follows:

- How can a descriptive-quantitative empirical research on semeiotic preaching, from ancient Biblical times until now, contribute to better communication to a postmodern digitised cultural context?
- How can an interpretative investigation into insights from the fields of Liturgics and Social Psychology contribute to analyse the need for semeiotic preaching in a problematic praxis of a digitised culture?
- How can a normative evaluation of semeiotic preaching help improve the praxis of effective communication in Biblical preaching to a digitised culture?
- How can an ancient-future homiletical model contribute to a new model for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context that will fit into the language of the digital culture?

1.5 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Normative theoretical support for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context does not currently exist. Semeiotic preaching is postulated as an important asset to resolve the degeneration of Reformed preaching in a postmillennium digitised age. Although described by some of the scholars mentioned in this chapter thus far, no one has engaged in a research of a normative theoretical and practical model for semeiotic preaching that includes a hermeneutics for semeiotic exegesis as well as a praxis for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context.

1.5.1 Aim

To prove that semeiotic preaching can become a new normative homiletical model for Reformed preaching based on Biblical theological principles.

1.5.2 Objectives

The objectives for this study could be formulated as follow:

- How can descriptive-quantitative empirical research on semeiotic preaching, from ancient Biblical times until now, contribute to better communication to a postmodern digitised cultural context?
- How can an interpretative investigation into insights from the fields of Liturgics and Social Psychology contribute to analyse the need for semeiotic preaching in a problematic praxis of a digitised culture?
- How can a normative evaluation of semeiotic preaching help improve the praxis of effective communication in Biblical preaching to a digitised culture?
- How can an ancient-future homiletical model contribute to a new model for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context that will fit into the language of the digital culture?

1.6 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

Semeiotic preaching is an effective ancient homiletical model for future communication that can be normatively proved. It is proposed as a new homiletical model that can amend preaching in order to address a digitised culture more effectively. Semeiotic preaching is effective because it utilises the whole-brain and all human senses. This form of rhetoric is practiced with great success in commercial marketing and taught under the subject; art of persuasion. It could be practised just effectively in the homiletics because it is the human nature to communicate with both hemispheres. Right-brain rhetoric is not less a carrier of truth nor a thread to the divinity of God's Word, but in relation to objective truth just as effective than left-brain reasoning and an asset to faith.

- Semeiotic preaching is a form of ancient biblical times that can contribute to better communication to a postmodern digitised cultural context;
- The insights from meta-theoretical disciplines e.g. communicational sciences, the fields of linguistics and semeiotics and social psychology can contribute to analyse the need for semeiotic preaching in a problematic praxis of a digitised culture;

- A normative evaluation of semeiotic preaching can help improve the praxis of effective communication in biblical preaching to a digitised culture;
- Semeiotic preaching can contribute to a new model for preaching in a reformed context that will fit into the language of the digital culture.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

In choosing a methodology suitable for this research, the researcher maintained the freedom of objectivity to follow other authors' methods in specific research areas to fit the objectives of this research the best. Heitink (1999:165) uses three keywords in his approach to practical theological research methodology, namely *understanding*, *explanation*, and *change*. Three circles are set into motion during research: the hermeneutical circle (with *understanding* as its keyword), the empirical circle (with *explanation* as its keyword), and the regulative circle (with *change* as its keyword). Browning (1995:13) describes research activity ranging from *description*, to *systemizing* (exploring practical wisdom and understanding), to *strategizing* (practising strategic Practical Theology). Dingemans (1996:62) similarly observes that most practical theologians distinguish between the following dimensions in Practical Theological research:

- Analytical description of the Practical Theological situation;
- Research into normative viewpoints;
- Development of a strategy for change flowing from normative viewpoints.

This research will utilise the research method proposed by Osmer (2008:6-29) since this method is suitable to the research questions and aim of the study. This research will therefore mainly follow the four phases proposed by Osmer². The reason why Osmer's four phases are more applicable as foundation for this research is that he commences his method by keeping an ear close to the contextual issues, and then turns to relative theories and normative theological interpretations and ends with a practical outcome.

Practical Theology, to be practical, must attempt to describe and interpret both contemporary situations and classic Christian resources (Browning, 1985:16). The intention is to describe, by means of a qualitative literary research, the history as well as different aspects of semeiotics and reasons why it is interpreted positively in the manner it was practised, but also treated with

2. According to Smith (2010?) in a Review of Richard Osmer, Practical Theology, the model of Osmer was predominantly designed to help ministers in the ministry but is now widely recognised as an academic model. This thesis will also collaborate with other models.

scepticism for many years, especially in Reformed preaching. This will be accompanied by a quantitative empirical survey determining the attitudes towards either left-brain rhetoric of right-brain rhetoric as well as examining the impact of digital communication on a predominant left-brain preaching style. The objective is furthermore to interpret these findings in relation to meta-theoretical perspectives from various other disciplines in order to create a normative discourse in relation to Reformed theological and Biblical input with the purpose of designing a new model for expository preaching in a Reformed context.

1.7.1 Explaining the four phases of Osmer

The four phases of Osmer (2008:4) are important phases for conducting this study but are not the only scholar's methods that will be followed. The reason why Osmer's methodology is so important is that the problem regarding the degeneration of preaching is not because of poor theory, but of a serious contextual matter. Osmer does not begin with theory but with the context.

Osmer (2008:4) describes the four phases as follows:

- Describes the theme and purpose for the research;
- Uses relevant literary material including other scientific fields of study to broaden the understanding of the current situation;
- Utilises insights, concepts, and principles based on the Word of God and theological perspectives to add normative value to the new theories;
- Endeavours to implement the new strategy as a proposed solution for the problem empirically described.

1.7.1.1 What is going on? The descriptive empirical task

Osmer proposes a method that he refers to as priestly listening or a process of deconstructing the story, discovering the cultural context and investigating the problem via a diversity of theories (Osmer, 2008:6-9). The latter will be attained by means of conducting a literary and quantitative empirical research, which will test the attitude of both listeners and preacher according to the Likert-scale. Pieterse (1993:1-48) supports Osmer and emphasises the importance that Practical Theology should be based on empirical results derived from research of contextual issues.

A 1-7 Likert scale will be used to measure people's attitude towards different styles of preaching in the questionnaires. Therefore, it is important to design a scale with balanced keying i.e. an equal number of positive and negative statements (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:211). The research will be conducted by employing questionnaires with questions scaling the respondents' answers

between negative and positive reactions towards different preaching styles on a scale between 1 and 7 (see the example below). The questionnaires will be conducted to members of a variety of denominations over a large geographical area of South Africa to test their attitude towards different styles of preaching and liturgy.

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:142-289) a quantitative empirical survey should comply with international protocol and standards. Therefore, the researcher should adhere to the academic guidelines in order to meet the standards and format of the project. The following procedures have been followed until finally approved by the Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC) under ethics number NWU-00121-15-A6.

The following topics were selected: Testing the attitudes towards different preaching and sermon styles:

- **Preaching styles**- to determine whether there is a correlation between a specific style and how it will still be supported in the digimodernistic context;
- **Preachers experienced-positively and negatively** to determine if there is a difference between the preacher as a messenger from God and the message (how it is delivered and accepted);
- **Liturgy: procedure or experience** - to determine if there exist different perceptions regarding liturgy and/or whether liturgy is only about teaching the theology of sin and forgiveness;
- **Declining church attendances**- to see what members would indicate as reasons why people, including the youth are abandoning the Church.

Six different denominational groups have been selected in order to establish an objective perspective on the attitude towards different preaching styles and reasons for the decline of church members or decline in church attendance. These groups were further subdivided between different demographical units of South Africa e.g. large congregations in cities opposed to small congregation in rural areas (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:215,250-251).

1.7.1.2 Why is it going on? The interpretive task

Osmer's second phase of research now turns to the question; Why is it going on and refers to this question as the researcher's interpretative task- theological reflection, discovering principals to guide new strategies and explore past and present practices (Osmer,2008:6-8). This phase will include the research of inter and intra meta-theoretical disciplines such as the communicational sciences, the sociology, educational, linguistics, church-history and liturgy as well as psychological sciences.

1.7.1.3 What ought to be going on? The normative task

According to Osmer (2008:10) the third phase begins with the question; What ought to be going on and now turns to the results of what the researcher has finally learned from the good practises of others who have indicated that they were addressing the same problem – this is called the normative task (Osmer, 2008:10). The normative task involves a theological interpretation, ethical reflection, and empirical results (a need for a Biblical normative proof for semeiotic preaching) deriving from the findings of the research in order to place a normative value to the new theory (Osmer, 2008:6-10).

A Biblical examination will be conducted by means of a grammatical exegetical deconstruction of a selection of texts as well as showing the results of historical research regarding the use of semeiotic teachings in ancient-Biblical times. The guidelines provided by De Klerk and Van Rensburg (2005:3-102) will also be followed:

- Biblical proof of semeiotic rhetoric and the art of persuasion in the Old Testament;
- Whole-brain reasoning and rhetoric;
- Audience-orientated rhetoric;
- Theonome-reciprocity;
- Ethical principles for the praxis of imagination, creativity and the use of semeiotic language;
- Ethical principles for the praxis of experience and participation;
- According the NT the purpose of the *semeia* in relation to a Christological approach;
- The Pauline theology for contextual preaching;
- The place of preaching in relation to the preacher, the audience and the presence of Christ.

1.7.1.4 The pragmatic task

The practical task of Osmer (2008:12-29) is actually what a research in Practical Theology is all about. “A study in Practical Theology should always focus on an outcome that can motivate a change which will focus on the ‘here and the now” (Van Tonder, 2010:24, 27). Therefore, the final phase of this thesis will be to design (although experiential and open-ended for further studies in the future); a new form of expository preaching (with its advantages and disadvantages) called semeiotic preaching.

Osmer (2008:4-11) summarises the four tasks of Practical Theological research as follows:

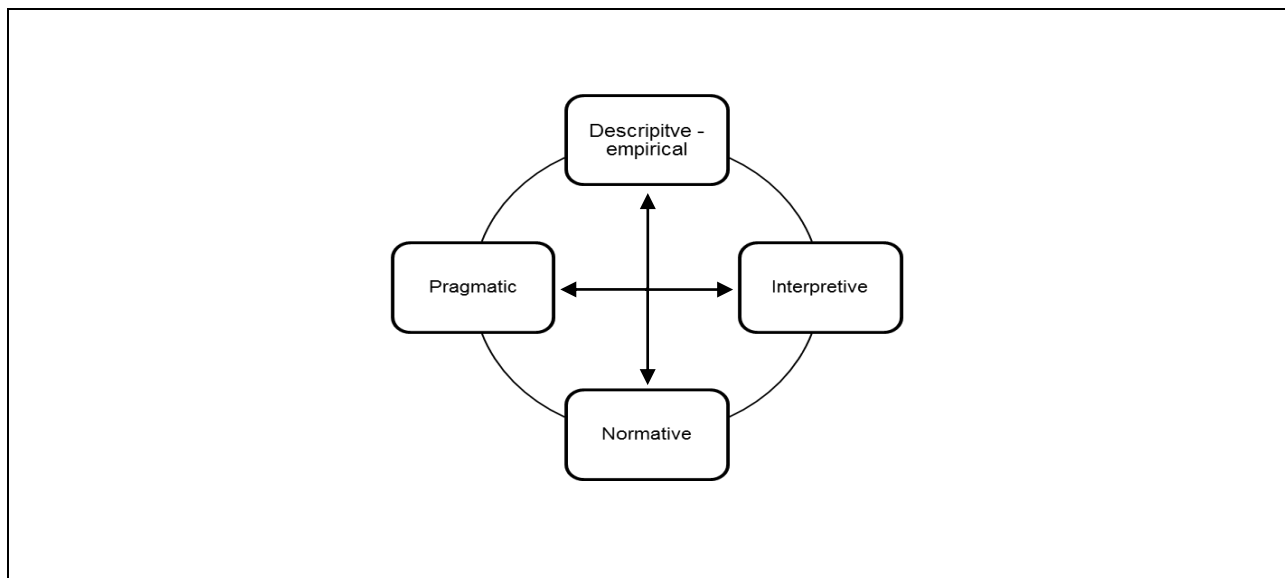


Figure 2: Four tasks of Practical Theological research

- *The descriptive empirical task* describes the theme and purpose for the research;
- *The interpretive task* uses relevant literary material including other scientific fields of study to broaden the understanding of the current situation;
- *The normative task* utilises insights, concepts, and principles based on the Word of God and theological perspectives to add normative value to the new theories;
- *The pragmatic task* endeavours to implement the new strategy as a proposed solution for the problem empirically described.

1.8 DEDUCTIONS

The problematic praxis for this research has been identified as a communicational praxis that belongs to the field of communicational hermeneutics. The research methods of Osmer has been identified and will be followed with supporting views of other researchers where necessary. There does not exist a practical homiletical theory for semeiotic preaching in a Reformed context. This thesis will aim to describe a normative theory first and then endeavour to design a new practical model for semeiotic preaching.

CHAPTER TWO: DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PREACHING IN A DIGITISED CULTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL PHASE

During the first phase of the research, the proposed methods will be followed to describe what is going on and will include a qualitative literary research of the impact of communication on culture and on preaching and a quantitative empirical survey regarding the attitude of different church audiences towards different preaching styles, their preparedness to accept semeiotic preaching. Reasons for poor church attendance and the rapid decline of membership especially after the turn of the millennium (digimodernism) will also be explored. This will include other quantitative empirical surveys with statistical evidence regarding the degeneration of the Reformed sermon and the correlation between poor preaching and poor church attendance. The research will also investigate what is going on in other Christian churches globally.

The next part of the study will describe how the homiletics has already taken notice of these dramatic changes of the digitised culture and their communication. One such reaction is semeiotic preaching. It will be described within a specific subdivision of the homiletics. This part will be followed by reporting on the 2015 quantitative empirical research, conducted in a South African context amongst different denominations, accompanied with statistical data.

Osmer (2008:6-9) explains that this phase includes people's personal experiences, contexts and attitudes (refer Masango & Steyn, 2011:1; Van Tonder, 2010:14). Niemandt (2007:103-123) and Gibbs (2005:1) advocate the need for human experience as an important asset to knowledge. It is in this critical area of tension between objective truth in preaching and subjective experience that the limitations and new possibilities will be researched. It is significant because digital communication has dramatically transformed communication and culture, creating a dramatic contextual shift the Church should take notice of in order to remain relevant.

According to Dingemans (1996:87), the empirical research is just as important as any other form of science because the Church is part of the society and vice versa (Heitink, 2007:28-30). Heitink (1999:223) refers to empirical research as the only method to measure the praxis of faith. Hereby, Practical Theology is not only practised in a vacuum of rational theories alone, but also in combination of true human reflection in a specific time and context, adding humanity to science (Heitink, 1999:218). Practical Theology thus relies on human and social reflection in order to help the Church to understand the world better (that is continuously changing) in order to proclaim Christ better (Masango & Steyn, 2011:1).

In terms of the qualitative literary research, the most recent literature and statistics regarding this topic will be used. The literary study will be dealt with in an eclectic manner in order to describe if digital communication has dramatically transformed all previous communicational strategies and if it has transformed society, the human brain and the way people communicates with empirical proof how has the homiletics/theology reacted towards the described problematic praxis.

2.2 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITISED CULTURE ON VERBAL COMMUNICATION AND SOCIETY

It is important to take recognition of how homiletics interpret and noticed the impact of the pressure of an anthropological communicational style on preaching and the liturgy. Clements (1998:1) reminds that expository preaching was never supposed to stop at text interpretation. The postmodern world requires more than just an intellectual exercise. Cilliers (2009:8) refers to contextual preaching as a bipolar tension that should never be avoided. Johnston (2001:61) identifies five principles for effective preaching in the context of a postmodern paradigm:

- The audience should never become more important than the Biblical message of God;
- The preacher should not lose confidence in Biblical truths;
- The preacher should not let the pendulum swing too far to the direction of pragmatism;
- Fusion of the world of the audience (whom we need to trust more for becoming obedient) with the content and experience of the sermon.

According to Hofstadter (2001:1) digital communication brought a new way of communication whereby every user become a producer or editor. This is not new to those who create stories via writing, drama or motion pictures, but what is new is that every user of a digital device can now produce a creative story enhanced by symbols, sound and pictures - called shared experienced communication (Kumcu, 2011:8-9).

Digital communication has enhanced the human ability to tell a story in multisensory fashion changing the printing and reading method of storytelling almost completely and may be one of the major reasons why the printed and reading medium of communication are degenerating so quickly in the digitised world.

According to Vosloo (2010:1) the impact of digital communication on the printed media, showed that only one out of ten South Africans will still read a book, this means only 14% of South Africans. According to Weissmann (2014:1), nearly a quarter of American adults had not read a single book in the past year. The number of non-book-readers in the United States of America (U.S.A.) has nearly tripled since 1978. Hohstadt (2010:1) also postulates that digital

communication is a hundred and eighty degree turn from the printed, reading and audio media and certainly brings a huge challenge to structured communication. Ricoeur (1974:13) reminds that this type of communication (visual, symbolic, using fewer words) is not new to the world (Ricoeur, 1981:165-181).

Digital communication on the other hand is about images, participation and connection, the printed and verbal text is about letters and words and less exiting (Sweet, 2013:1). Ricoeur (1974:13) reminds that this type of communication is not new to the world (also see Ricoeur in Thompson, 1981:165-181).

The role of words is now merely to complement the messages, the pictures and the symbols (Crockett *et al.*, 2011:57). Digital communication is also based on a strategy that touches more than one human sense at a time and is aimed at stimulating imagination (Van Tonder, 2010:7; Kysar & Webb, 2006:13-14).

The emergence of this new communication may be one of many reasons why people lost their interest in a preaching style that is predominantly based on verbal monological rhetoric, conducted strictly rationally, structural, reductional or called predominant left-brain communication (Joubert, 2012a:17). Piper *et al.* (2012:127) and Gordon (2009:29) make no secret that a preaching style that is not conducted in a fashion that captures the listener's attention and imagination in the culture of digital communication will bore their audiences more than ever before. When Christians stay away from sermons, the Church not only loses members, but they also fail at their real purpose and mission according to the calling of Christ.

Another characteristic of digital technology is the speed by which it develops and transforms cultures. The effect of the digitised culture on the Church and on preaching has been described as to being hit by a Super Storm (Joubert, 2012a:17; Sweet, 2008b:1-7; Niemandt, 2007:9-11) mainly because of the speed at which it transformed cultures globally and left the Church behind.

These authors, amongst many others, criticise the Church for adapting too slowly to these contextual changes and not being concerned enough about the consequences of staying behind. The Church also protects the written and spoken Word of God and its basic universal truth, whilst postmillennium communication thrives on images, symbols and metaphors (Harris, 2008:91). According to Joubert (2013:116), it seems as if there is an inadequacy in theological training, lacking the practice of creativity and imagination in order to keep up with these changes. When traditional churches hold on for too long onto one specific tradition they lose their grip on the new culture and before they can even get a grip on the new culture, another new cultural shift has already occurred (Joubert, 2013:110-116; Hohstadt, 2010:1).

2.2.1 Descriptive perspectives on the Church's reaction to the digitised culture

Hughes (2003:120) asks a very important question: how does language and thought hook into the world? Even though religious language is supported by faith, the world and its communication have changed rapidly since the arrival of digital communication. Digital communication began to influence the modern world about twenty years ago and reshaped the communicational methods and style of the previous era completely (Crosbie, 2009:1). This new communication manner, enhanced by cell phones and the internet, has been described as a *chaotic communication*, utilising the whole brain especially complementing the creative neurological functions of the right brain to process information extremely fast, by using less words and more visual-rich and interactive communicational methods. The traditional modernistic communicational model, applied in preaching since the Reformation, comprises the opposite; it is predominantly a left-brain argumentative, communication method conducted by one man and his interpretation of the Word of God and his understanding of the world in a well-structured presentation with the purpose to persuade the audience (Brennen & Kreiss, 2014:1-14; Van Tonder, 2010:7; Kysar & Webb, 2006:13-14).

According to Hohstadt (2010:1) the era of the so-called one-man authority is under more pressure than ever in the postmillennium culture. The glory of eloquence has faded rapidly. The great rationalist project of the Enlightenment has come adrift. Literal logic no longer converts anyone.

Crosbie (2009:1) also believes that digital communication has excessively captured the functions of the right-hemisphere of the brain. It therefore challenges the traditional left-brain preaching strategies and reasoning that dominated in the Reformed homiletics for the last 500 years to adjust to the new contextual methods of communication (Sweet *et al.*, 2003b:126-130).

Van Staden (2013:1) believes that theology is a creative endeavour relying not only on knowledge, but also on experiences (the results of connecting to the right brain). Vos (1995:112-122) recognises that symbolical communication is an important asset for religious communication, especially in the digital context. The symbol does not only carry meaning without words, it is also something one can identify with without too long explanations. The most significant challenge for the Church in this upcoming and fast growing digitised context will not only be to inform the audience with stories and pictures, but to let the audience experience the message. The core issue of preaching is not "getting something said"; it is not even "getting something heard"; it is getting something experienced that can transform a person's life for God and the gospel (Sweet, 2014b:46).

Sweet *et al.* (2003b:126-130) also agrees that the concern lies with the previous left-brain preaching styles and holding unto modernistic rationalism without being complemented by

creativity and imagination. The digital culture shows almost no more interest in a communication that is formal, structured and conducted in the form of long verbal explanations.

The problem with the above literary findings is that there does not exist enough empirical proof of the impact of digital-communication on the degeneration of traditional preaching neither if this is the sole reason why church members are staying away? Regardless of the absence of such empirical proof, much has been written about the impact of the digitised culture on structured communication and society since the turn of the millennium. Not all the literature collected for understanding where the theology finds itself in this situation come from homiletics, but also from other disciplines e.g. the missiology and ecclesiology; all concerned about the future of preaching with a sound theological reflection on this specific problem (Kruger, 2016:3).

2.2.2 Descriptive empirical perspectives on the impact of digital communication on linear communication

The success of digital communication is overwhelming as indicated by the following statistics:

- More than 1.8 billion people worldwide have gained access to more than 206 million active web sites and more than 100 million blogs. Broadband now gives access 'instant', 'always-on' access to 3,700 TV stations, plus tens of thousands of downloadable movies, and hundreds of millions of professional and amateur video clips. Approximately 4.1 billion people or 60 percent of the world's population use mobile phones (Crosbie, 2009:1);
- A new web page is developed every two seconds, a new product every thirty seconds; world knowledge doubles every eighteen months (Sweet, 2008a:20);
- Facebook receives 809 million visits per month and Twitter 416 million per month (Bullas, 2013:1);
- Google averages 12.447 billion visits per month, generating revenue of US\$ billion on advertising alone (Smith, 2015:1);
- 968 million people use Facebook every day and the average friends that will be added by a single female will top above 240 friends (Smith, 2015:1).

According to Joubert (2012a:29-38) the digital culture has enslaved people to a need for the 'new' and the immediate. Everything with regard to digital technology peaks and breaks new records whilst everything that is divine and ecclesial tumbles to hit the bottom. If the Church is caught in the middle of a contextual storm, the following statistics must raise an urgent need to adapt in order to stay alive:

Statistics by Lane (2014:1) indicate that 50% of ministers in the U.S.A. will not last in the ministry for longer than five years. One out of every ten ministers will actually retire as a minister leading to the closing down of 7,000 churches per year in the U.S.A. Another 50% of ministers feel unable to meet the demands of the ministry. Ninety percent feel they are inadequately trained to cope with the demands of the ministry and 90% of pastors said the ministry was completely different from what they thought it would be like. According to Schoeman (2014:1-2) vast numbers of pastors are leaving the ministry (85% of seminary graduates entering the ministry leave within five years and 90% of all pastors will not stay to retirement in the USA).

Regarding the Southern African context, Dreyer (2009:1-14) indicated that the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa by 2009 had only 200 ministers to take care of all the remaining congregations in the whole of South Africa. Inadequate theological education is one of the main reasons for leaving ministry (Schoeman, 2014:1-2). The research has indicated that inadequate training is not the only reason to use for blaming why the Church is declining.

2.2.3 Deductions:

It seems as if a new culture has emerged with the arrival of digital communication. The culture not only is more self-sufficient than ever before, but also prefers a more right-brain form of communication based on the principles of semeiotic rhetoric. It also seems as if the new culture is drifting further away from Christianity relying on the self-sufficiency and security the technological age has to offer.

Various voices from within the theology as well as from other disciplines are concerned about the negative effect of digital communication on culture, the Church, preaching and other important social responsibilities.

It seems as if digital communication has isolated people further from tangible humanity to an addictiveness to subjective experiences and knowledge. No matter how creative and visually rich a sermon is, people has become more isolated in the new digital era than ever before and will stay away from Sunday sermons to avoid the crowds and boring monologues (Barna cited by McKnight, 2011:1; Lynch, 2005:54). According to Barna (2011:1) families feel different. Forty seven percent of families welcome technology and media with open arms, rather than with suspicion. One of the reasons for this may be that many families use technology, including television, movies and video games, as a shared experience. Twenty one percent of the youth tested in the Barna survey say their parents have a double standard when it comes to technology.

Another research question to be taken into consideration is which of the above affects traditional preaching the most? Is it digital communication, is it the new digitised culture, is it the previous

modernistic or postmodernistic and secularised cultures, is it poor preaching or is it diverse reasons of which one of the reasons is poor preaching?

2.3 DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE DEGENERATION OF REFORMED MEMBERSHIP AND PREACHING

The research will go back in history as far as 1988. The reason for doing this is that any researcher can over-simplify especially when the Church is criticised for being too slow to adapt to cultural changes. According to Dreyer (2009:1-14) the Super Storm has been with us longer than we might have thought. Returning to the 1980's in order to find out if the analogue of the Super Storm is really new and related to postmillennium digitised influences only. The results of empirical studies from 1988 to 2008 reveal the following decline in numbers:

Table 1 Empirical studies from 1988 to 2008

	DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH		DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH OF AFRICA		REFORMED CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA	
	Baptised members	Confessed members	Baptised members	Confessed members	Baptised members	Confessed members
Decline % 1988-1998	24%	5,5%	25%	6%	23%	3%
Decline % 1999-2008	20%	4,5%	20%	12%	23%	9%
Decline in numbers	199,083	98,943	27,610	23,446	16,953	9,128

Dreyer (2009:1-14) interprets these statistics as follows:

- There is linearity between all three denominations regarding the loss of membership and church attendance, which is approximately **30%**;
- By 2008 all three Reformed denominations have lost 375 163 members but the greatest loss was amongst the children and youth which has declined by **65%**;
- Oliver (2006:126) also indicates that the Dutch Reformed Church has lost 270 000 members by 2006;
- The Reformed youth is by far leading when it comes to abandoning the Church.

Dreyer (2009:1-14) and Hendriks (2003:8-15) identify the following factors that might have contributed to the degeneration of the traditional Reformed churches before the era of digital communication:

- The effect of emigration on white population in South Africa led to a decline from 21.4% in 1911 to 9.6% by the end of 2001 (Hendriks, 2003:9). According to Schoeman (2006:487) 160 162 Dutch Reformed members have lived outside the borders of South Africa by 2006;
- Low birth rate amongst White South Africans (Hendriks, 2003:6-7);
- Worship services that are not always appealing especially to the youth. The traditional Afrikaans speaking churches of South Africa have lost almost a half million members by 2003 to other denominations especially Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (Hendriks, 2003:10);
- Younger members prefer churches where there are greater freedom, variation and participation (Roth, 2015:1);
- According to Hendriks (2003:9-10) the Reformed church group is mainly unaware of the gravity of their situation. The core of their problems might also be due to world-wide cultural shifts, the aftermath of the era of apartheid, the internal struggle for unity, and the inability of older members to adapt to a new situation;
- The Church model for preaching during the modernistic period has lost its power and market shares (Hendriks, 2003:9).

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- The above statistics only include the first 8 years after the turn of the millennium and the introduction of digital technology leaving the average age of children born in this era at between 8-9 years and probably too young to make decisions such as abandoning the Church;
- Statistics show that there is not much difference between the declines of membership in the Reformed churches before the era of digital technology than after it;
- This indicates that Hendriks and Dreyer's assumptions that there is more than one reason why church membership is declining are reliable.

2.3.1 Most recent South African Reformed Church statistics regarding membership.

According to the most recent statistics published by the almanacs or yearbooks (2010 to 2014) of the three traditional Reformed churches in South Africa there is a steady to rapid decline in membership, but with no evidence that it can be related to the impact of digital communication.

The following literature were used to compile most recent evidence of the status of membership in the three major Reformed churches of South Africa; Jaarboek van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (2011:214-417; 2015:442-446), Almanak van die Hervormende Kerk van Afrika (2012:211-214; 2015:211-212) and the Almanak van die Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika (2011:51-52; 2015:46-48).

2.3.1.1 Summary of membership status of the three traditional Reformed churches:

Table 2 Membership status of the three traditional Reformed churches

Denomination:	Date	Total membership	Decline % 2010-2014
Dutch Reformed Church of Africa			
	2010	99 072	7,63%
	2014	91 516	
Reformed Church of South Africa			
	2010	10 1798	7,55%
	2014	94 109	
Dutch Reformed Church			
Children	2010	23 1351	10.58%
	2014	20 6878	
Adults	2010	94 3414	18.40%
	2014	76 5637	

Please note, although a jaarboek (yearbook) is published in 2015, the statistical data belongs to the previous year as indicated in the above columns.

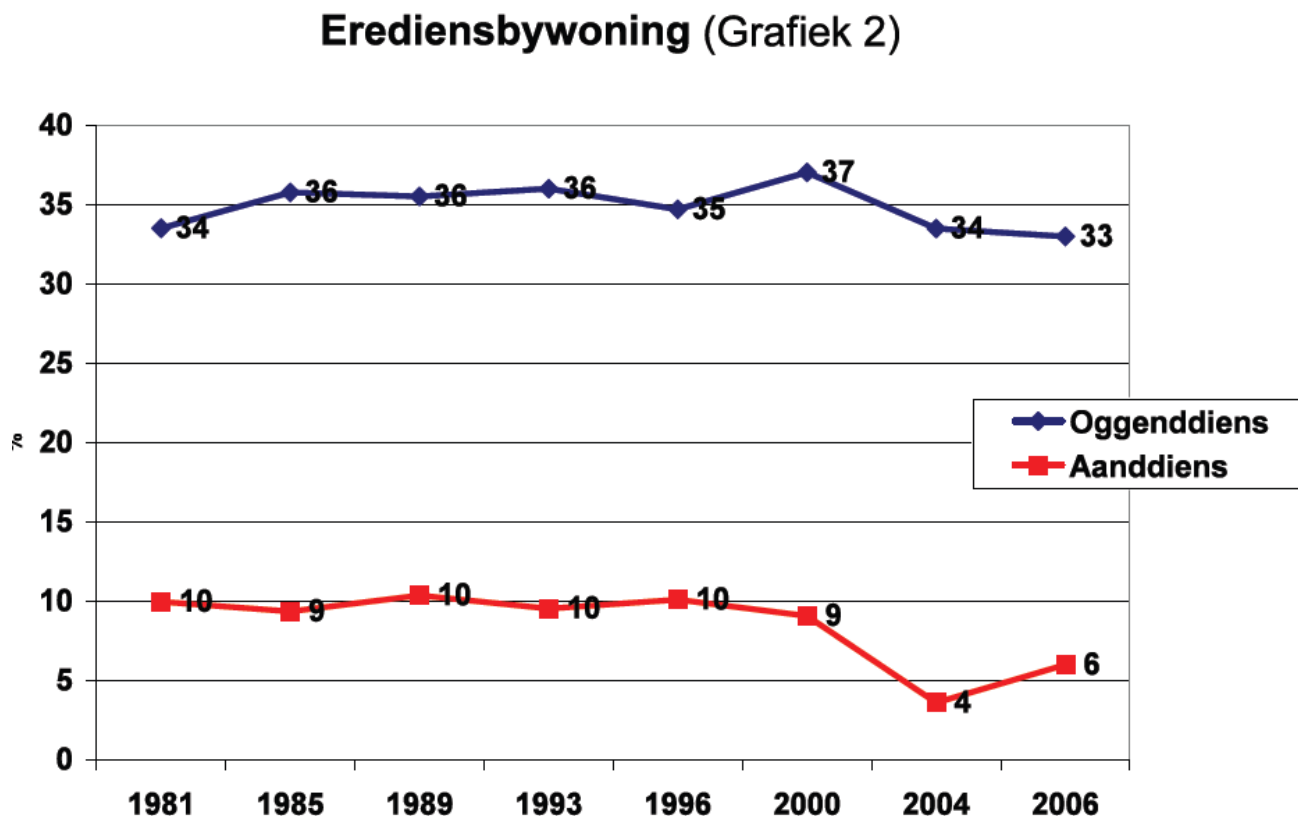
The information above has led to the following deductions:

- These latest statistics over the last four years certainly reveal an increase in the decline of membership since 2010, with the Dutch Reformed Church taking the lead with a total loss of almost **202 250** members. When reverting this to a period of ten years the percentage could rise as high as **30%** for the Dutch Reformed Church and just under 20% for the Reformed Church of South Africa and the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa;
- Although these statistics reveal a steep increase in the decline of membership of the Reformed churches in South Africa, it does not indicate one specific reason for it. According to Joubert (2012b:20) the Pew Forum on Religion however, has indicated the influence of secularism;

- The only measurable link between churches of late 1980 and now is sermons. It is therefore important to conduct a research that will test the attitudes of church members towards traditional Reformed preaching and contemporary preaching styles.

2.3.2 Church attendance³ in the Dutch Reformed Church from 1981-2013

According to Schoeman (2011:480) there is not much difference between church attendances between 1981 and 2006⁴:



Graph 1 Church attendance

According to statistics supplied by the Synod of the Eastern Transvaal (notule van die negende Buitengewone vergadering in 2007⁵), church attendance of only 30% was reported in the previous year (Anon., 2007:3).

³ Attendance also refers to participation in the sermon

⁴ Copyright table: Schoeman, 2011:481

⁵ Translated: minutes of the 9th meeting of the synod in 2007

Snyman (2009:1) confirms in her article that church attendance in the Reformed churches has dropped to 33% since 1991. According to Dreyer (2013:1) the average Reformed Church attendance could be as low as 30%. (Church attendance should not be perceived as the sole purpose of preaching but in the frame of a bigger picture where people are called to practise the Christian faith in all spheres of life).

The above information has led to the following deductions:

- The traditional churches began to decline in terms of membership long before digital communication first made its appearance in South Africa. The reasons prior to this e.g. secularism might have already created a challenging storm for the Church;
- In general there is no dramatic difference between church attendance before the digital revolution and after the digital revolution;
- The fact that church attendance has stayed the same for almost 30 years raises alarming questions regarding an effort to resolve it. Conner (2013:6), Clayton (2010:11) and Geysers (2003:4) all believe that theological training is not in touch with what is happening in the world, especially with regard to the rapid cultural changes.

2.3.3 What is going on in other Christian churches globally?

Describing what is going on in the macro context reveals that the South African situation in terms of declining membership is not unique. According to Barna cited by McKnight (2011:1) church attendance in the U.S.A has declined to 52% and Sunday school to 25%; and 40% people became unchurched.

According to Anon. in Dutch Daily News, (2013: 1) church attendance in the Netherlands has dropped to 16 %. Church attendance in the Netherlands of the age group between 18 to 34 years has dropped to 12 % (Bendavid, 2015:1).

The same is happening in England. The Church of England closes about 20 churches per annum. Roughly, 200 Danish churches have been deemed non-viable or under-used (anon. in Dutch Daily News, 2013: 1). The Roman Catholic Church in Germany has shut about 515 Churches in the past decade (Anon. in Dutch Daily News, 2013:1). The Netherlands appears to be the most advanced country in Europe where churches are closing their doors. The country's Roman Catholic leaders estimated that two-thirds of their 1,600 churches will be out of commission in a decade, and 700 of the Netherlands' Protestant churches are expected to close within the next four years (Bendavid, 2015:1).

On the other hand, Pentecostal churches have indicated the opposite. They show remarkable growth in spite of these cultural transformations that are leading to the decline of the traditional churches. According to a report by Cortez (2014:1), there were 631 million Pentecostals in 2014 comprising nearly 1/4 of all Christians. There were only 63 million Pentecostals in 1970, and the number is expected to reach 800 million by 2025. This statement receives support by Palm (2015:1). Pentecostalism is reshaping the social, political and economic landscape of many countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The interpretation regarding why Pentecostal churches gain such tremendous momentum will receive further attention in the next chapter and might have to do with the focus on experience, participation and informal rhetoric.

In a recent survey conducted by Barna (2016b:1) post-Christianity has increased to 48% among Christian American adults. According to Barna, Post-Christianity is when Christian belief and practice drops below 60%.

2.3.4 Preliminary conclusion:

The analogue; the Super Storm used to describe the impact of the new culture on the Church, certainly draws concerning attention especially when described by supporting quantitative empirical results. Heitink (2007:21) is outspoken that the Church of the 21st century is in bad shape and in need to undergo radical transformations. Hauerwas (2013:9-11) also believes that the Church as an institution is in trouble. This may be the reason why the postmillennium condition of religion is described as being hit by a Super Storm.

Unfortunately, these results can simultaneously be shocking and deceiving when interpreted with subjective assumptions. It therefore needs careful interpretation against a wider picture before conclusions can be drawn.

The literary study indicated thus far that the Church has certainly reached a challenging stage for verbal rational preaching to survive in a culture that has become addicted to a complete different way of communication and socialisation (Peterson, 2013:1).

With the exception of the Renewal and Pentecostal Churches on three continents (that are predominantly not dominated by the Western culture), statistics globally revealed the degeneration of Traditional or Institutional Churches which originated in Europe. It is also clear that this phenomenon relates to a long history of different cultural influences such as secularisation and not only because of the effect of the digitised culture.

Though the digital age is still in its early days, and difficult to measure its real impact on preaching scientifically it has created a new interest in effective communication and new exciting methods to preach the Word of God e.g. utilising the whole brain.

It is evident that this study is in need of a contextual quantitative empirical research regarding the attitude of the different denominations towards different styles of preaching and if there is a correlation between ineffective preaching and why people stay away. It will also investigate if there is a correlation between digital communication and the degeneration of traditional preaching.

The problematic praxis so far has indicated via the literary research that there are shortcomings in theological training regarding contextual transformation and introducing new communicational strategies in order to stay in touch with the latest changes. The language of the new culture has shifted from predominantly the ears to the eyes and from structured linear communication to chaotic communication.

Where do these findings fit into the field of homiletics? How did homileticians react to these contextual changes? What are the shortcomings in the field of homiletics? Have new homiletical models been recognised and explored?

According Cilliers (2004:14) preaching is losing its public appeal, becoming boring, individualistic, the property of the preacher, faith is replaced by professional presentations.

2.4 DESCRIPTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THEOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO THE PROBLEMATIC PRAXIS

The study has discovered a significant growth in theological reactions globally and from various disciplines, not only the homiletics (Kruger, 2016:4). The research wants to focus on homiletical reactions and shortcomings, but also has to listen to other interdisciplinary voices, because Practical Theology wants to be interrelated with other supporting disciplines with an interest in either the communications or the human sciences (Cartledge, 2003:15).

There is an urgent need amongst many theologians from different Christian denominations to proclaim the Word of God, creative, interesting, but also effective enough to create trust and faith in the Christian Church and its mission.

Conner (2013:1) concedes that the Church needs to seek new ways to contextualise the proclamation of the gospel to a digital culture that speaks in one hundred and forty characters or less. MacDonald cited by Larson (2012:33) acknowledges that the new culture no longer trusts the traditions and teaching of theological models built on modernism. Masango and Steyn,

(2011:1) believes that preaching as a communicational task is conducted by real humans and therefore does not exclude personal experience, creativity and the Work of the Holy Spirit. The predominant reflection in postmillennium Practical Theology is a movement from modernistic rational intellectualism (Kysar & Webb, 2006:174) towards realness and humanity that includes the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the preacher (Thompson in Long *et al.*, 2008:71).

Brueggemann (2010:35-45; 50-167) emphasises a balance between the actual Word of God and our ever evolving contextual reactions. He uses the word re-imagination when it comes to contextual preaching and not just only imagination as a new creation in preaching. Timmer (2010:10-23) also advances the need for something human and genuine in preaching. Many other homileticians believe that the new culture has a need for real people and real stories.

Van Tonder (2010:14) also postulates in his thesis that homileticians should no longer be concerned about objective scientifically correct exegesis alone, but also about learning to speak the language of the people living in this new context. Graves in Graves and Schlaffer (2008:11-13) illuminates the humanity of God's incarnated Word. It was never meant for the ears alone, but also for the human heart from where it manifests in real human lives and activities. Tubbs Tisdale in Long *et al.* (2008:75) propagates the need for multisensory expression in order to connect to people's lives in multisensory ways as part of the hermeneutical process. Woodbridge (2007:1) also talks about a new hermeneutics, where the exegesis should begin with the context and not the text.

The human reflection to the Word of God is more than only exegesis and explaining texts (Vos 2007:19). Niemandt (2007:103-123) accentuates the need for experience and creativity as an important asset to knowledge. It is no longer only knowledge and text that receives priority in the search for the truth; the human story and the real life experiences is part of the truth (Thompson in Long *et al.*, 2008:64). According to Sweet (2014a:47) the human spirit is created to gain knowledge through experience and does not make us irrational, but it allows for truth that goes beyond knowledge. Van Tonder (2010:20-21) refers to it as the super-natural sense of observation (human reflection) and fits into a postmillennium paradigm of theorising; called critical realism which is also scientifically acceptable. Muller (2008:7) and Osmer (2008:170) all agree that human reflection is a new form of rationality that should involve crossing one owns contextual and cultural borders.

Graves also believes that storytelling is an indispensable part of being human (Graves & Schlaffer, *eds.*, 2008:8-10). A recent study, testing brain activity, discovered that the brain is most active when the subject is telling a story (Sweet, 2014b:36). Humanity lives by narrative and the

ancient people lived by story (Gibson *et al.*, 2004:13; Webber, 2008:20, 23). Biblical stories are rich with metaphors, symbolism and images to enhance the narrative.

Kysar and Webb (2006:20-21) believe that there is also humanity in the Word of God, written by real people with real issues no other than what we experience today. Preaching should therefore bring the real human story and the story of God together (Graves in Graves & Schlaffer, *eds.*, 2008:14). Postmillennium homileticians believe that the ancient methods of communicating the divine story of God can help us to take the Church through the digitised age to the future (Sweet *et al.*, 2003a:23). Naudé (2002:16) explains that stories have the ability to dwell in peoples' lives and renew old stories, something lectures cannot do. Sweet (2014b:65) argues that preaching should be more authentically Biblical and Christological. That means more artistic and less dogmatic.

Semeiotic preaching is proposed as an ancient-future rhetoric that may help to contextualise the traditional sermon into the digitised exposed audiences more effectively.

2.4.1 Semeiotic preaching and the language of the digitised culture

The word **semeiotic** comes from the Greek word *semeion* that means any created or existing sign, metaphor, non-verbal gesture, event or story that has another meaning (Louw & Nida, 1989:443-445). According to the OAD (1991:1150) semeiotics means the study of signs and symbols in order to understand their meaning. Sweet (2014b:22) describes semiotics as the ability to read and convey "signs," where a "sign" (be it an image, gesture, sound, object, or word) is something that stands for something else. Semiotics is about pointers, not points.

Semeion means any created or existing sign, metaphor, non-verbal gesture, event or story that has another meaning (Louw & Nida, 1989:443-445). According to the OAD (1991:1150) semeiotics means the study of signs and symbols in order to understand their meaning. The Biblical survey has indeed proved how *semeia* enhance the experience of the narrative in order to improve understanding. According to Hohstadt (2010:1) *semeia* is an ancient (natural) communicational strategy.

The rediscovery of the value of the metaphor is about 50 years old and became recognised by philosophers and linguists as another cognitive method of producing meaning, also known as critical realism (Stallman, 1999:48).

Downing in Raschke (2013:1) recognises that semiotics is a valuable instrument to communicate to a complex culture, but should never be used as a blunt instrument. Culture and communication can never contradict revelation, which of course renders the well-established modernist historical-critical method of re-signing the deeper meaning of Biblical texts.

There is a difference between semeiotic preaching and semeiotics as a linguistic and academic subject. Semeiotics as a linguistic academic theory predominantly focusses on non-verbal signs. Semeiotic preaching does not rely on non-verbal communication only, but also on multi-sensory communicational methods (Van Tonder, 2010:5-7). Semeiotic preaching thus does not want to replace verbal communication, but supports verbal communication with right-brain semeiotic media such as metaphors, symbols and imagination. The fact that this type of communication is more related to the right brain is one of the predominant reasons why modernistic hermeneutics have been sceptic about this type of preaching (Van Tonder, 2010:8).

Sweet (2014b:38) bases semeiotic preaching on ancient Biblical communicational techniques that include the use of semeiotics such as images, metaphors and experienced narratives. According to Miller cited by Lowry (2001:105) narrative means a description of events, real or imaginative (refer Hohstadt, 2010:1; Sanders, 2013:1; Webber, 2008:20,23). One of the shifts homileticsians need to make in order to speak the language of the digitised culture (which no longer communicates with rational thoughts and points), is to realise that the power of communication does not lie in words alone (explaining texts), but also in images and stories of the text (Kysar & Webb, 2006:147-174). In traditional pulpit-centric preaching, homileticsians were taught how to exegete words. Semeiotic preaching wants to exegete the meaning of images, complete narratives (not only verses), symbols and metaphors (Sweet, 2014b:23, 53) which are more memorable than abstract explanations. Long (2009:1-18) voices detailed critique against narrative preaching and illuminates to strive for a responsible Biblical approach to this very human-like form of transferring information.

Semeiotic preaching as a new homiletical model is also caught in the middle of a storm based on complex and conflicting philosophic and linguistic ideas that peaked in the 1970's in Europe and gradually faded in the academic world, probably because of the lack of unity amongst semioticians (Kull & Velmezova, 2014:530-548; Van Wyk, 2014:57-63). It is therefore important to add Biblical normativity to this theory as well as a practical explanation to propose it to the Reformed homiletics (Diaz, 2015:2-11). Downing in Raschke (2013:1) and Diaz (2015:2-11) also support this idea and encourage the need for a Christian semeiotics that is interrelated with expository preaching and the work of the Holy Spirit and not only with the purpose of addressing a new culture in a new language and style.

Robinson (2001:21) states that expository preaching is the communicating of a Biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context, whereby the preacher applies it to the context of the listeners. This method could have developed over the years to one of two extreme opposites; either too intellectual, or too much towards the pragmatic contextual side. Robinson proposes a more balanced approach,

believing that expository preaching is still the best method to avoid fundamentalism or allegorical text interpretations. According to Stitzinger (1992:5-32) expository preaching derived from other less satisfying methods such as fundamentalism and allegoric preaching.

Semeiotic preaching might at first glance raise a few controversial topics when brought to the Reformed homiletical table. Heitink (2007:108) reminds that the Reformed tradition is a cognitive learning tradition or in other words predominant a left-brain written and oral tradition that exposes God's written Word. Niemandt (2007:16-25) believes that Reformed theology is imbedded in the culture of rational left-brain⁶ modernism.

Where does this topic fit into the field of Reformed hermeneutics?

2.4.2 The problematic praxis fits into the field of a hermeneutical-communicational discipline

The word homiletics is derived from the Greek word *homilētikos/homilein* meaning to converse, or to associate with someone (Louw & Nida, 1989:406,446). The word *hermeneutics* on the other hand is derived from the Greek word *ἑρμηνεύω* that can be translated with the words *interpretation* or *translating* (Louw & Nida, 1989:405). In order to translate a text one must have knowledge of both the understanding of the text as well as the language and culture of the new audience (Vos, 2005:298). Homiletics strives to keep a well-balanced relation in mind (also called relational hermeneutics), comprising the relation between the science of homiletics on the one hand, and the science of hermeneutics on the other (Pieterse, 2001:8). On the one hand; focussing on the '**what**' to preach and on the other hand on the '**how**' to translate the text into the language of the context.

Preaching, if it is to meet its objective of changing people's lives, must have some relation to effective communication in a specific context. To be effective, the topic must be well understood and presented (Immink, 2014:176). The final process, i.e. presenting the sermon, includes an understanding of the context/culture (De Wet, 2011:58; Osmer, 2008:6-9; Pieterse, 2007:120; Flemming, 2005:19; Vos, 2005:297).

Ott and Strauss (2010:266) agree that a study in the field of a relevant communicational model for preaching within this new culture is of utmost importance. Contexts are continuously changing and so does the need to stay wired or to listen to the evolving context (Vos, 2005:297). Hohstadt (2010:1) also indicates that churches become completely irrelevant when holding on unto

6 Cilliers, J. 2004. In the living voice of the gospel, prefers to refer to the word hemisphere and not left or right-brain

methods that have become outdated for too long. Flemming (2005:19) furthermore indicates that preaching is not about explaining texts (Bible study) but also about an incarnational process into a specific context or contexts.

Long, cited by Clark (2008:1) postulates that in order to practise contextual theology it is essential to understand how to communicate it the best. Knowledge/understanding of a context then relates to an understanding of the communicational genre of the people in a specific context, which is more than words, but also includes a specific style, a way of processing information and connotations to metaphors and symbols (Vos, 2008:41; Denison, 2006:9).

Likewise, Practical Theology, according to Heitink (1993:231), has to do with the relation between religion (theology) and social contexts. Harris (2008:91) opines that the Church was never called to function in isolation (also refer Tubbs Tisdale in Long *et al.*, 2008:75). Kruger (2016:8-10) also advances the importance of the communicational discourse or cognition between the Church and society. It is a hermeneutical discourse in order to stay relevant and is part of the calling of the Church to serve the world (Johnston, 2001:10).

The concern in Practical Theology regarding this topic is what carries the most weight in Reformed theology; the text as objective truth or the audience as subject? In other words, the problematic praxis is also about the tension between objective truth and subjective creative expression especially by means of semeiotics.

According to Hugo (2012:39-43) the positive influence of the postmodern frame of mind is to visualise and understand that the Christian belief is not only about abstract beliefs, but also about experiencing God in one's own context. The Word of God is not only written by dictating God's words, but also came into existence via real human reflection, experiences and discourses. Hugo (2012:39-43) agrees that there are dangers in the postmodern theological reflection. The challenge for postmodern theories is not to stay relevant, but to maintain its normative theological status. According to Hugo (2012:39-43) there is a shift in Practical Theology from radical rational hermeneutics to eco-hermeneutics, which leaves room for the human reflection on God's revelations (also see Muller, 2008:7).

This resonates with the idea that the λόγος wants to bring opposites together. In this thesis, the problem derives mainly from the third area, namely the diverse, dynamic and fast evolving context (Pieterse, 2007:120). What will happen if we cannot connect to this context effectively? Herrington *et al.* (2003:30) refers to the importance of the context as "*our wired togetherness*", bringing different worlds together. For Practical Theology to be truly practical and relevant, it must have some description of the present situation, some critical theory about the ideal situation, and

some understanding of the processes, spiritual forces and technologies required to progress from where we are to the future (Browning, 1985:20).

The new topic on the homiletic table is about communicating the Word of God to a context influenced by image-rich, predominant right-brain digital communication. It is thus about the need to capitalise on the functions of the right brain which includes metaphors, sounds, feeling, visual experience and interactive stories. Janse van Rensburg (2003:17) refers to it as **whole-brain exegesis** and preaching. This research will endeavour to find a normativity between the divine Word of God and the anthropological reflection. The problematic praxis of this thesis thus fits well into the field of hermeneutical communications (Thompson in Long *et al.*, 2008:66; Pieterse, 2001:8-17) whereby the analytical hermeneutics suits left-brain reasoning, whilst how to communicate the message suits the more intuitive right-brain hermeneutics (Pieterse in Immink & Vos, *eds.*, 2009:250; Clark, 2008:1; Immink, 2003:156).

The new subject for homiletics in the field of hermeneutical-communications is to understand that comprehensive communication (preaching) is not only about theology and words (Denison, 2006:9), neither is it simply about creative communication using metaphors and narratives, but it also encompasses a hermeneutical understanding of both text and context (Barnard, 2009:295; Heitink, 2007:240; Pieterse, 2006:3; Jensen, 2005:5).

2.4.3 Descriptive perspectives on the literary study

- Digital communication has transformed communication to a new exciting form of communication that stimulates both hemispheres of the brain, challenging any other form of communication that does not incorporate the whole brain;
- Digital communication is based on shared experiences involving the users such as an editor or producer equipped with creative possibilities (using symbols and images that replace most of the words);
- There seems to be a limitation in Reformed homiletical studies regarding the design of a new homiletical model for preaching that may practically equip preachers to address the new culture with a new style;
- There is empirical proof that preaching began to degenerate since television gained momentum about 30 years ago. The only difference between the impact of television and that of digital communication is that the latter birthed a new culture. The Church is not only challenged to speak the language of the new culture, but also to understand it;

- Traditional churches cannot hold on for too long unto one specific tradition because they will lose their grip on the new culture that is already a fast transforming culture, based on the speed at which technology progresses;
- The predominant new trend in Practical Theology today is a movement from modernistic rational intellectualism towards realness and human experience (critical realism);
- Semeiotic preaching is a new proposed model for expository preaching to a digitised culture. Semeiotic preaching wants to bring the old (rational left-hemisphere exegesis and preaching) and the new (humanity and activating the right-hemisphere) together in what is called whole-brain exegesis;
- Semeiotic preaching is more than just a form of rhetoric, it is a hermeneutical science that integrates intellectual left-brain reasoning with right-brain constructs;
- Semeiotic preaching is based on a Hebrew art of storytelling that wants to draw the exegete to the back-stories and images as well as real human experiences of the people of the text;
- The core issue of preaching in a postmillennium digitised context is not getting something said; it is getting something experienced.

2.5 EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM A QUANTITATIVE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The aim of the quantitative empirical research conducted in this study, is to compare the literary findings with what is going on in the practical contexts of churches. Within this research, the researcher will take the attitudes of church members from various denominations towards different preaching styles (traditional and contemporary) as well as the attitudes regarding the influence of the digital media on preaching and the reasons why people are abandoning the Church, into consideration.

2.5.1 Pre-arrangements regarding quantitative empirical research

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:142-289) a quantitative empirical survey should comply with international protocol and standards. Therefore, the researcher should keep to the academic guidelines in order to meet the standards and format of the project. The following procedures were followed until finally approved by the Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC) under ethics number NWU-00121-15-A6:

2.5.1.1 Selecting a topic:

The following topics were selected for testing the attitudes towards different preaching and sermon styles:

Table 3: Topics and predicted outcomes

SELECTED TOPICS	PREDICTED OUTCOMES
Preaching Styles	To determine whether there is a correlation between a specific style and how it will still be supported in the digimodernistic context
Preachers Experienced Positively or Negatively	To determine if there is a difference between the preacher as a messenger from God and the message (how it is delivered and accepted)
Liturgy: Procedure or Experience	To determine if there are different perceptions regarding liturgy or if it is only about teaching the theology of sin and forgiveness
Declining Church Attendances	To determine what church members would indicate as reasons why people, including the youth, are abandoning the Church.

2.5.1.2 Formulating a hypothesis:

Reformed or traditional preaching is predominant developed by left-brain rational exegetical methods since the birth of Reformed theology. Predominant left-brain theology might have lost its effectiveness especially regarding the way it is communicated because of major cultural changes such as electronic and digital communication since first introduced in South Africa during the 1970's and again during the 1990's. The new generation prefers a more fluent communication (less teaching and more storytelling) that stimulates both hemispheres of the brain, which include the use of metaphors, images, narrative and preferable with the use of fewer words and less structure.

2.5.1.3 Denomination and geographical borders:

Six different denominational groups were selected in order to establish an objective perspective on the attitudes towards different preaching styles and reasons for the decline in the number of church members or decline in church attendance. These groups were further subdivided amongst the different demographical units of South Africa e.g. large congregations in cities opposed to small congregations in rural areas (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:215,250-251).

- The Reformed Church of South Africa - North-West province, Free State and Gauteng;
- The Dutch Reformed Church - North-West province, Free State, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng;
- The Dutch Reformed Church of Africa - North-West province, Free State and Gauteng;
- The fourth group included non-traditional churches who do not practise any Reformed preaching styles and liturgical orders - North-West province, Free State, Gauteng;
- Renewal churches: A.G.S. Potchefstroom, Gauteng and independent churches including the interdenominational Afrikaans Combined Church (ACC- New Zealand);
- **33** different denominations participated in this survey. **291 (48.2%)** were from typical traditional Reformed background and **313 (51.8%)** from a non-typical Reformed and/or other denominational background in order to create two groups: traditional and non-traditional churches;
- **297 (49.2%)** volunteers came from rural South Africa and;
- **305 (50.5%)** from larger congregations, mainly located in the large cities (e.g. Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg).

2.5.1.4 Respondents; gender and age:

A total number of **604** volunteers had participated in the survey. Both genders between the ages 9-84 were invited to randomly participate in this survey. The average age was **40.9** with a standard deviation of just above **18**. A total of **288 (48.0%)** volunteers were **female** and **312 (52.0%)** were **male**.

2.5.1.5 Position of respondents in congregations

Overall, the respondents were divided between Regular Members, Ministers/Pastors and Non-regular Members. **537 (88.9%)** regular members, **38 (6.3%)** ministers/pastors and **3 (3.3%)** Non-regular members participated in the survey.

2.5.2 Experimental design to test attitudes according to a 1-7 Likert scale:

Measuring people's attitudes towards different styles of preaching a 1-7 Likert scale was used. It is imperative to design a scale with balanced keying (an equal number of positive and negative statements (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:211). The survey was conducted by employing questionnaires that include questions that will scale the respondents' answers between negative and positive reactions towards different preaching styles on a scale of 1-7 (see example below):

	Disagree			Neutral		Agree	
Please answer all 20 statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The questions/items will be designed to allow the respondents to select one of the following answer choices on a symmetric agree-disagree scale with nominal values. Numerical values were assigned according the guidelines of De Vos *et al.* (2011:178) as well as Sullivan and Artino (2013:1). Strongly disagree (Nominal value: 1-3), Neutral (Nominal value: 4-5), Agree (Nominal value: 6-7).

By means of the above, the different levels of agreement and disagreement can be measured. When this data, either categorical or numerical, is transformed into statistics, assumptions, interpretations and trends can be drawn (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:249).

A prototype questionnaire (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:145) was designed and tested on 20 randomly selected respondents at a Council meeting of nine different congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church held at Bothaville on May 2015.

2.5.3 Strategic planning in order to optimise the validity and reliability of the survey

The researcher selected the participating congregations with care and endeavoured to cover a large geographical area that stretches from the Western Cape to Mpumalanga, South Africa and New Zealand, consisting of different congregations and denominations.

Most of the questionnaires were handed out per hand (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:188) in the absence of the researcher. Only ministers and pastors were selected and trained to manage the survey in their congregations in order to generate unbiased results according to the prescribed protocol and regulations (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:201).

Less than 10% of the questionnaires were returned by email.

The study's reliability was further enhanced by the researcher being unfamiliar to 95% of these respondents and the administrators. They were randomly selected in order to prevent any preconceptions by the researcher. None of the respondents was selected prior to the date of completing the questionnaire.

The survey was completed within a month and a half by mostly randomly selected volunteers.

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:181-186) reliability improves when information and statistics are processed and standardised by a professional body. The experimental as well as final design was approved by the Department of Statistics at the North-West University under the supervision

of Dr Suria Ellis (Pr Sci Nat.- Head: Statistical Consultation Services, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University on the 27th of July 2015).

The researcher had agreed upon changes and strategies and had committed to abide by the format and protocol.

2.5.3.1 Threats to the test:

De Vos *et al.* (2011:155) refer to one such general threat as the Hawthorne effect. Hereby respondents may react differently when answering a questionnaire than how they feel and think in real life situations.

It is important to keep in mind that Likert scales may be subject to distortion because respondents may avoid portraying themselves or their organisations in a less favourable light.

2.5.4 The questionnaires:

2.5.4.1 Sample of the English Questionnaire (refer Appendix A)

Survey for the purpose of a PhD degree in Theology at the North-West University.

**Please read the following ethical guidelines and instructions before proceeding to
the questionnaire.**

The purpose of this survey is to test people's attitude towards different preaching and sermon styles. The data gathered from this research study will be published in a PhD thesis under the research regulations of the NWU. Participation is voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality of participatory congregations will be maintained. Please complete the following biographic information before proceeding:

A1. Denomination: _____ (e.g. Pentecostal)

A2. Gender:

Male		Female	
------	--	--------	--

A3. Age:

A4. What is your position in the congregation?

A.4.1 Regular member:

A.4.2 Pastor/Minister:

A.4.3 Not regular member:

A5.

City		Rural	
------	--	-------	--

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all 20 statements. Mark only one value per statement. Regarding *disagree* (1 is the strongest opinion, *neutral* (5 is the strongest) and *agree* (7 is the strongest).

		Disagree			Neutral		Agree	
Please answer all 20 statements:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PREACHING STYLES								
1	Formal preaching – (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most.							
2	Shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences.							
3	The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically.							
4	Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only.							
5	Illustrating stories make preaching more effective.							
Please turn the page to complete statements 6-20.								

		Disagree			Neutral		Agree	
	Please answer all 20 statements:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	PREACHER'S POS. AND NEG. EXPERIENCED							
6	There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance.							
7	People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is.							
8	Preachers successfully deliver the biblical messages to fit our context.							
9	Preachers deliver the Word of God usually creatively.							
10	Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons.							
11	A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching.							
	LITURGY: PROCEDURE OR EXPERIENCE							
12	Traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is effective.							
13	Renewal churches e.g. (Charismatic Churches) are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings.							
14	The purpose of liturgy is to mainly teach the theology of sin and forgiveness.							
15	The purpose of liturgy is to enhance the experience of meeting with God.							
	DECLINING CHURCH ATTENDANCES							
16	Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore.							
17	When sermons are not conducted with visual aids people will rather go to other Churches who offer such creativity.							
18	The youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs.							
19	People are more fascinated by social media (such as Internet and mobile phones) than attending Church services.							
20	People do not attend church services that are too time-consuming.							
End: Thank you very much!								

2.5.4.2 Sample of the Afrikaans Questionnaire (refer Appendix B)

In accordance with the ethical guidelines, the questionnaire was also translated into Afrikaans in order to be administered to Afrikaans congregations.

Gesindheidstoets aangaande die ervaring van verskillende preekstyle in die erediens vir die doel van 'n doktorsale studie in Praktiese Teologie aan die Noord-Wes Universiteit

Lees asseblief die etiese klaring en instruksies deur voordat u die vrae begin antwoord en raadpleeg gerus die eksaminator indien enige onduidelik bestaan.

Die data wat met hierdie vraelys ingesamel word sal verwerk word en uitsluitlik vir akademiese doeleindes gebruik word. Geen name van individue of spesifieke gemeentes sal genoem word nie. Die doel van die ondersoek is om kerkgangers se gesindhede te toets oor verskillende erediens- en preekstyle. Daar is nie 'n regte of verkeerde antwoord nie, maar indien u nie seker is nie, antwoord eerder neutraal as om die vraag nie te beantwoord nie. Voltooi asb. eers onderstaande biografiese inligting voordat u met die vrae begin:

A1. **Denominasie** : _____ (Bv. NG, Hervormd)

A2. **Geslag**:

Manlik	
---------------	--

Vroulik	
----------------	--

A3. **Ouderdom**:

--

A4. **Wat is u posisie in die gemeente? (merk een)**

A.4.1 Gereelde lidmaat:

--

A.4.2 Leraar:

--

A.4.3 Nie 'n gereelde lidmaat nie:

--

5.

Stad	
-------------	--

Platteland	
-------------------	--

INSTRUKSIES: Dui aan hoe u oor die volgende stellings voel. U mag verskil. Merk slegs een blokkie vir elke vraag. Alle vrae moet beantwoord word. Indien u met 'n stelling *verskil*, merk asb. 'n nommer tussen 1 en 3 (met 1 die sterkste mening), of *neutraal* (4 of 5) of *stem volkome saam* (met 7 die sterkste mening). Moet nie een vraag onbeantwoord laat nie, merk eerder *neutraal* (4 of 5).

		Verskil sterk			Neutraal		Stem volkome	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Beantwoord al 20 vrae asb:							
	PREEK STYLE							
1	Formele prediking – bv. (verduidelik net die teks met punte en feite) boei die meeste mense.							
2	Korter preke (minder struktuur, punte en feite) is baie meer effektief.							
3	Die alledaagse gebruik van selfone en internet het 'n negatiewe invloed op hoe mense na preke luister.							
4	Visuele preke (met stories en/of video-insetsels) word beter beleef as preke daarsonder.							
5	Ondersteunende stories maak dat preke makliker onthou word.							
Blaai asseblief om! Vrae vervolg op die agterkant								

		Verskil sterk			Neutraal		Stem volkome	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Beantwoord al 20 vrae asb:							
	PREDIKER POS en NEG INVLOED							
6	Hoe 'n predikant/pastoor preek, speel 'n groot rol in erediensbywoning.							
7	Mense sal steeds eredienste bywoon ongeag hoe die predikant/pastoor preek.							
8	Ons predikant(e)/pastoor(e) slaag daarin om die boodskap en die praktyk by mekaar uit te bring.							
9	Ons predikant(e)/pastoor(e) doen moeite om die boodskappe kreatief oor te dra.							
10	Radio en TV predikers se boodskappe is beter as meeste kansel predikante/pastore se preke elke Sondag.							
11	Die predikante/pastore se kennis is belangriker as hoe hulle preek.							
	LITURGIE: PROSEDURE OF ERVARING							
12	Die tradisionele gereformeerde liturgiese orde (wet, skuld en geloofsbelydenis) wat elke Sondag voorgelees word, is effektief.							
13	Die kerke wat meer klem lê op geestelike belewenis as op ordes se erediensbywoning is beter.							
14	Liturgie is ontwikkel om mense meer van God te leer.							
15	Liturgie is ontwikkel om mense meer van die Heilige Gees te laat beleef.							
	AFNAME IN BELANGSTELLING IN DIE KERK							
16	Swak prediking is een van die redes waarom mense nie meer wil kerk toe gaan nie.							
17	As eredienste nie visueel aantreklik is nie, sal mense na ander kerke toe gaan wat dit wel doen.							
18	Jong mense verlaat die kerk omdat eredienste hulle nie aanspreek nie.							
19	Mense word meer deur sosiale media (soos internet en selfone) geboei om hulle geloof uit te beeld as eredienste.							
20	Mense gaan nie meer kerk toe nie want eredienste is te lank.							
Einde. Baie dankie!								

2.5.5 Methods of analysis

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:248-251) data analysis consists of the following:

- Descriptive phase: reporting the distributions, focusing on one variable and find out what is the mutual tendency?
- The second phase is called factorising, whereby variables are combined with each other;
- The third phase is causation and consists of the relationship between the different variables;
- Lastly, there is the inference, whereby one estimates the population characteristics.

2.6 SURVEY REPORT: DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL STATISTICS SUMMARY

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:277-289) writing a research report involves pinpointing the essence of the project-goals and objectives, revealing the findings and then to discuss and summaries the complete findings.

2.6.1 Frequencies summary of individual items

The summary includes all the denominations and volunteers together without any comparisons or correlations. The frequency summary helps to view the total percentage scores each item received by adding the subsequent mean percentages on a scale of 1-7 together. The **disagree** percentages of the first part of the scale (1-3) were added together, the **neutral** percentages of (4-5) were added together and the **agree** scales (6-7) were also added together.

Table 4: Survey Analysis: Frequencies summary of individual items

FREQUENCIES SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS						
		% Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree		
	Preaching Styles				Mean	Standard Deviation
N1	Formal preaching – (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most.	24.7	33.3	41.12	4.74	1.701
N2	Shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences.	25.5	33.4	39.7	4.67	1.642
N3	The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically.	32.8	33.4	32.8	4.39	1.770
N4	Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only.	18.7	23.0	57.9	5.16	1.743
N5	Illustrating stories make preaching more effective.	12.6	14.9	72.4	5.62	1.596
	Preacher Positive. and Negative Experienced				Mean	Standard Deviation
N6	There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance.	4.3	13.4	80.8	6.01	1.125
N7	People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is.	50.7	34.3	14.2	3.63	1.584
THE ITEMS MOST VOLUNTEERS DISAGREED WITH:						
N8	Preachers successfully deliver the Biblical messages to fit our context.	3.0	14.6	81.0	6.07	1.033
N9	Preachers deliver the Word of God usually creatively.	3.0	17.2	78.5	6.06	1.062
N10	Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons.	46.0	42.5	10.1	3.64	1.512
N11	A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching.	33.9	42.1	22.2	4.21	1.604

		% Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree		
	Liturgy: Procedure or Experience				Mean	Standard Deviation
N12	Traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is effective.	26.2	27.2	45.4	4.73	1.892
N13	Renewal churches e.g. Charismatic churches are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings.	19.5	39.1	40.2	4.77	1.684
N14	The purpose of liturgy is to mainly teach the theology of sin and forgiveness.	15.1	34.6	49.5	5.11	1.535
N15	The purpose of liturgy is to enhance the experience of meeting with God.	20.0	37.9	41.2	4.83	1.617
	Declining Church Attendances				Mean	Standard Deviation
N16	Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore.	25.5	32.5	41.4	4.67	1.714
N17	When sermons are not conducted with visual aids people will rather go to other Churches who offer such creativity.	34.9	36.6	27.6	4.21	1.699
N18	The youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs.	25.8	31.6	41.6	4.67	1.751
N19	People are more fascinated by social media (such as Internet and mobile phones) than attending Church services.	33.8	45.7	19.5	4.14	1.532
N20	People do not attend church services that are too time-consuming.	54.3	30.8	13.7	3.46	1.700

2.6.1.1 Report 1: Individual percentages:

Table 5: Statements and percentages

The items most volunteers disagreed with:	
Statement	Percentage
People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is (N7)	50.7% disagreed
Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than their own preachers (N10)	46.0% disagreed
People do not attend church services that are too time-consuming (N20)	54.3% disagreed
The items most volunteers felt neutral about:	
Statement	Percentage
Cell phones and the internet can have a negative influence on listening to preaching (N3)	33.4% selected neutral
The preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching (N11)	42.1% selected neutral
People will revert to other churches if their own sermons are not conducted with visual aids (N17)	36.6% selected neutral
People are more fascinated by social media (such as the internet and mobile phones) than attending church services (N19)	45.7% selected neutral
The items most volunteers agreed upon	
Statement	Percentage
Formal preaching (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most (N1)	41.12% agreed
Shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences (N2)	39.7% agreed
Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only (N4)	57.9% agreed
Illustrating stories will make preaching more effective (N5)	72.4% agreed
There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance (N6)	80% agreed
Preachers successfully deliver the Biblical messages to fit our context (N8)	81% agreed
Preachers deliver the Word of God almost always creatively (N9)	78% agreed
Traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is still effective (N12)	45.5% agreed
Renewal churches, for instance, Charismatic churches are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings (N13)	40.2% agreed

Statement	Percentage
The purpose of liturgy is mainly to teach the theology of sin and forgiveness. In other words, all volunteers believe there is more to liturgy than just a teaching of sin and forgiveness (N14)	49.5% agreed
The youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs (N18)	41.6% agreed

2.6.1.2 Report 2: The items that received a mean of above 5:

- Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only;
- Illustrating stories make preaching more effective;
- The purpose of liturgy is to mainly teach the theology of sin and forgiveness;
- There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance;
- Preachers successfully deliver the Biblical messages to fit our context;
- Preachers deliver the Word of God nearly always creatively.

2.6.1.3 Report 3: The items that received a mean of less than 4:

- People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is;
- Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons.

2.6.2 Summary:

This summary will only deal with the scales under **not agree (1-3)** and **agree (6-7)** and only with the four items that have received the highest percentages under **neutral (4-5)**.

2.6.2.1 Preaching versus church attendance (N6-7; N16).

This survey had indicated that there is a clear relation between good and poor preaching and good and poor church attendance.

2.6.2.2 Preference for formal or illustrating preaching (N1 and N4-5)

The difference between formal preaching (N1) and narrative preaching (N4-N5, stories and illustrations) measured 41% to 72.4%. This is a strong indicator that there is a preference for narrative and illustrating (right-brain exegesis) in sermons.

2.6.2.3 Traditional sermons vs. contemporary sermons (N12-N15)

(N12) Traditional liturgy is still well supported by 45%, but the majority agreed that renewal churches are successful because they do not have strict liturgical orders (N13). Almost 50% had indicated that liturgy is a method to teach the congregation about sin and forgiveness (N14) but (N15) indicated that liturgy should enhance a positive experience with God. There is almost a 50/50% indication that liturgy can be experienced as teaching as well as something that can be experienced as more than just words/lectures (i.e. less left-brain teaching), but also a way of leading the congregation to experience the presence of God without continually focusing on sin, guilt, etc.

2.6.2.4 What factors may lead to the degeneration of preaching? (N16-N20)

The survey volunteers do not believe that digital communication is the main culprit causing a Super Storm in the Church; with only 19% agreeing that digital communication might have a negative influence on the way we listen to a monologue sermon, but 45.7% were uncertain. The lack to address the youth in their language and needs was selected as one of the reasons why the youth abandons the Church. The absence of visual aids was not seen as a major reason why people abandon the Church.

2.6.2.5 Preachers in the spotlight (N8-N11)

This survey endeavoured to analyse the communicational competency of pastors/ministers (N8-N11) but it seems as if the loyalty factor of participants prevailed. According to the survey results, all preachers deliver creative, contextual sermons and not even radio or television preachers could perform better. It however seems as if the members that have participated in this survey (N11) no longer feel that knowledge is more important than the preaching style. Could this be another indication of a preference for more right-brain experiences?

2.7 FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analysis is a useful tool that allows researchers to investigate concepts easier by collapsing a large number of variables into a few interpretable underlying factors. Factor analysis is a statistical procedure used to identify a small number of factors that can be used to represent relationships between sets of interrelated variables (Singh, 2017:1).

2.7.1 Pattern Matrix- grouping relating items together

Table 6: Relating items

Factor one: Contemporary preaching	
N4	Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only (.816)
N13	Renewal churches e.g. Charismatic churches are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings (.693)
N2	Shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences (.427)
Factor two: Traditional liturgy	
N15	The purpose of liturgy is to enhance the experience of meeting with God (.915)
N14	The purpose of liturgy is to mainly teach the theology of sin and forgiveness (.912)
N12	Traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is effective (.679)
N1	Formal preaching – (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most (.419)
Factor three: Digital technology	
N10	Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons (.620)
N11	A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching (.600)
N3	The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically (.596)
Factor four: Experiencing the preacher negatively	
N7	People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is (.770)
N16	Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore (-.580)
N6	There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance - 524
Factor Five: Experiencing the preacher positively	
N8	Preachers successfully deliver the Biblical messages to fit our context (.867)
N9	Preachers deliver the Word of God nearly always creatively (.810)
Factor Six: Reasons for a declining Church:	
N19	People are more fascinated by social media (such as the internet and mobile phones) than attending church services (-.727)
N20	People do not attend church services that are too time-consuming (-.707)
N18	The youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs (-.696)
N17	When sermons are not conducted with visual aids people will rather go to other churches who offer such creativity (-.545)

The next step is the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO). It is an important test for factor analysing because it measures whether there is sufficient data left after compacting it.

2.7.1.1 Report 1: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO)

According to Field (2005:3), the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is used to compare the magnitudes of the observed correlation coefficients in relation to the magnitudes of the partial correlation coefficients. Large KMO values are good because correlations between pairs of variables (i.e., potential factors) can be explained by the other variables. If the KMO is below .5, the factor analysis is not recommended. If the sum of the partial correlation coefficients between all pairs of variables is small when compared to the observed correlation coefficients, the KMO measure will be close to ONE. The correlation among variables should be small. 0.5 to 0.7 indicates a mediocre correlation, 0.7 and 0.8 a good correlation, and 0.8 to 0.9 a great correlation and any figure above 0.9 a superb correlation (Hatcheson & Sofroniou, 1999:n.p.).

The KMO after compacting is **0.785**, which indicates a good correlation.

2.7.1.2 Report 2: Variation explained:

Six factors were extracted which accounted for **59.9%** of the total variances which is suitable for generating general to good results.

2.7.1.3 Report 3: New topics after factorising:

The pattern matrix shows how the data was compacted in order to formulate the 6 factors with the following topics: Each topic is supplied with a few characteristic words to describe why they were grouped in to one factor.

Factor 1: Contemporary preaching and its four items
N5 Illustrating stories
N4 Visual support (PowerPoint, video clips)
N13 Experience v/s rational knowledge
N2 Shorter sermons

Factor 2: Traditional liturgy and its four items

N15 Experiencing God in liturgy

N14 The theology of sin and forgiveness in liturgy

N12 Ten commandments, confessions of guilt and faith in liturgy

N1 Formal preaching (left-brain method)

Factor 3: Digital technology and its three items

N10 Radio and television v/s pulpit sermons

N11 Importance of the knowledge of the preacher

N3 The influence of digital media

Factor 4: Experiencing the preacher negatively and its three items

N7 The preacher v/s poor church attendance

N16 Poor preaching v/s/ poor church attendance

N6 Good preaching v/s good church attendance

Factor 5: Experiencing the preacher positively and its two items:

N8 Contextual preaching

N9 Creative preaching

Factor 6: Reasons for a declining Church and its four items:
N19 Social media
N20 Time-consuming sermons
N18 The reasons why the youth abandons the traditional Church
N17 Too little visual expressions

In order to use these factors, it first have to pass the Cronbach's Alpha test (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011:53-54).

2.7.1.4 Report 4. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test and report:

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test:

Table 7: Survey Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability test

Factors	Chronbach's Alpha	Mean	Standard deviation
Contemporary preaching	0.719	5.04	1.23
Traditional liturgy	0.779	4.87	1.31
Digital technology	0.317		
Experiencing the preacher negatively	0.384		
Experiencing the preacher positively	0.69	6.04	0.93
Reasons for a declining Church	0.703	4.12	1.22

The Cronbach's α (alpha) has tested four factors to be healthy enough to be used as factors. The other two factors (digital technology and experiencing the preacher negatively) will be treated separately with their individual items).

The above information has led to the following deductions:

- The two highest means in the table above (a mean indicates the numerical value on the scale 1-7 that has been selected by the majority of respondents) indicate a positive attitude

towards contemporary preaching (that includes visual aid, less formal liturgy and illustrations such as stories (5.04) and the preacher experienced positively in terms of preaching contextually, relevant and creative (6.04);

- Although it could be that members did not want to devalue their ministers/pastors, these two items simultaneously have indicated the positive attitude towards contextual relevant and creative preaching;
- The two lowest means were allocated to (Factor 3) reasons why the Church is declining;
- It seems as if South African church audiences seek other reasons for why the Church is declining (external more than internal reasons). This could be another case where the loyalty factor prevailed. The second lowest mean was allocated to (Factor 4) traditional liturgy, but contemporary preaching and traditional liturgy only differed by 2 points;
- Considering that 291 (48.2%) respondents came from typical traditional Reformed backgrounds and 313 (51.8%) respondents from non-typical Reformed and other denominations, the mean for contemporary preaching (5.04) and for traditional liturgy (4.87) make sense. Members of renewal churches supported contemporary sermons and members of more traditional churches supported traditional liturgy/sermons.

2.8 FACTOR CORRELATIONS

2.8.1 Correlations between the four reliable factors

The detailed interpretation of these figures will be discussed in paragraph (par.) 2.8.2 and further.

Table 8: Survey Analysis: Correlations between the four reliable factors

Four reliable Factors	Contemporary preaching	Traditional liturgy	Experiencing the preacher positively	Reasons for a declining Church
Contemporary preaching	1.000	-.268**	.083*	.403**
Traditional liturgy	-.268**	1.000	.255**	-.351**
Experiencing the preacher positively	.083*	.255**	1.000	-.113**
Reasons for a declining Church	.403**	-.351**	-.113**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- **Report 1: Contemporary preaching:**

There is a negative correlation between contemporary preaching (meaning in favour of illustrating stories, visual support, creating right brain experiences and shorter sermons) and traditional sermons (meaning in favour of participating every Sunday in the same liturgy and teachings regarding sin and forgiveness and formal preaching) which means that contemporary preaching methods are moving away from traditional sermon styles.

The correlation between contemporary preaching and the reasons provided in this survey for why the church is declining (meaning in favour of the negative influences of digital communication, the fact that church services have become too long and do not address the needs of the youth and are not visually expressed enough) is high (**403**). This correlation might indicate that contemporary churches had adapted to new styles for the purpose of more visual supported sermons and communication.

- **Report 2: Traditional liturgy:**

The correlation between traditional Reformed preaching styles differs completely from the above factor. There is a negative correlation with contemporary preaching. There is a positive correlation with the preacher regarding contextual and creative preaching. This might indicate that traditional churches, though still more focused on the content and the authority of the preacher as a man of God than on how he/she delivers the sermon, do not resist creativity and contextually in this context. This is important for this study because it indicates that semeiotic preaching can benefit both traditional and contemporary denominations.

A negative correlation is reported between traditional liturgy and the reasons why the Church is declining. The negative correlation might relate to traditional churches' trust and faith in the Church and other reasons will be sought to describe reasons why the Church is declining.

- **Report 3: Experiencing the preacher positively**

The positive correlation between the input of a preacher and traditional liturgy/sermons received a score of **.255** indicating that the more positive people are about traditional liturgy, the more positive they are about their preacher.

There is a negative correlation with the reasons given in this survey why churches are declining. Thus, the more positive people feel about their ministers/pastors, the less they agree with the reasons named in this survey for why the Church is declining.

The reason for this assumption could relate to the loyalty of traditional church members to their ministers and church traditions.

- **Report 4: Reasons for a declining Church:**

There is a strong correlation between the reasons for a declining Church and contemporary preaching. This also indicates that these churches have made an effort to understand why people desire to leave the Church and responded by adjusting in order to address their needs.

The correlation with traditional liturgy/sermons is very weak. Those in favour of the reasons why the Church is declining are not in favour of traditional liturgy and preaching styles.

The correlation with the preacher's effectiveness correlates negatively. It is evident that a good number of church members might blame their ministers/pastors for disappointing their members with not delivering good contextual and creative sermons.

2.8.2 Correlations between the individual items of the two weak factors

Table 9 Survey Analysis: Correlations between the individual items of the two weak factors

	Contemporary preaching	Traditional liturgy	E th
Media and technology N3 The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically.	-.042	.102*	.01
Experiencing the preacher negatively N6 There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance.	.136**	.136**	.28
Experiencing the preacher negatively N7 People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is	-.034	.178**	.05
Media and technology N10 Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons.	.144**	-.117**	-.12
Media and technology N11 A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching.	-.100*	.265**	.12
Experiencing the preacher negatively N16 Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore.	.068	-.043	-.06

2.8.2.1 Report 1: Media and digital technology:

This factor includes the following items:	
N3	The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching;
N10	Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons;
N11	A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching.

- **N3 The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching**

The only strong correlation was between the influence of media and technology and traditional liturgy/sermons. This may indicate that conservative cultures may be more concerned about the negative influences of digital technology than those originating from cities where people are more accustomed to it.

- **N10 Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons**

There is a positive correlation between television and radio preaching and contemporary preaching and the reasons why the Church is declining. This indicates that the participants perceive a preaching style that is in touch with the culture (mostly what television and radio preachers need to do when they are outside the boundaries of their congregations) as popular and that traditional preaching styles relate to the declining interest in a Church that treasures old traditions.

There are two negative correlations, one with traditional liturgy that supports the assumption above and the second one to experiencing the preacher positively. This indicates that those who are in favour of the styles of television and radio preachers might want to point out a need for such styles within.

- **N11 A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching**

Lastly, the importance of a preacher's knowledge correlated positive with traditional liturgy/sermons and the positive experiences created by the preacher such as creativity and contextually. It correlated negative with contemporary preaching. Once correlations such as these are observed, it indicates that traditional churches still respect their ministers' authority but contemporary preaching and Charismatic churches relate more to experience than knowledge. Simultaneously they are not against creative preaching within the parameters of their church traditions.

2.8.2.2 Report 2: Experiencing the preacher negatively:

This factor included the following items:	
N6	There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance;

N7	People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is;
N16	Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore.

- **N6 There is a significant correlation between good preaching and good church attendance**

There were equal positive correlations between good preaching and good church attendance regardless if it is a contemporary, charismatic or traditional church. The strongest correlation was with the positive contributions preachers are making regarding creativity and contextuality, indicating the importance of the preacher-audience relationship. The correlation score was .285 (the highest of all correlation scores). The more good sermons are experienced, the more negative the correlation with the reasons **supplied in this survey for why the church is declining, becomes.**

- **N7 People will still attend church services regardless of poor preaching**

Only traditional church members had indicated that they still agree with this statement. (.178 correlation score).

- **N16 Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore**

There was a strong correlation between those who supported the reasons for the decline in church members and the influence of poor preaching (.230 correlation score).

2.9 ASSOCIATION TABLES

An association table is another method to arrange the data in order to get a more in-depth perspective. With association tables, the researcher can now correlate the biographical and geographical data collected with the factors in order to see e.g., what the difference is between gender or age and certain attitudes towards preaching.

2.9.1 Effect sizes

Effect sizes play an important role when compiling association tables in indicating the strength of the difference between two variables, for example, the strength of the difference between how

women and men perceive sermons. An effect size of 0.2 is too small to make any significant assumptions, 0.5 is medium and 0.8 is a strong difference.

2.9.2 P-value

The P-value indicates the statistical association between two variables. A good P-value lies between 0.0 and 0.05.

2.9.3 Denominational/factor association table

This was done in order to determine the association between traditional and renewal churches and the factors. There were only three significant associations as indicated below in bold:

Table 10 Survey Analysis: Denominational/factor association table

Factor vs. different denominational cultures (non-traditional and traditional)	Mean Renewal	Mean Traditional	MSE (Mean Squared Error)	Variation	P-Value	Effect Size(d)
Contemporary preaching	5.44	4.792	0.855	0.468	0.014	0.56
Traditional liturgy	4.316	5.354	1.105	0.370	<0.00	0.85
Reasons for a declining church	4.377	3.921	1.188	0.215	0.020	0.39

2.9.3.1 Report 1:

It is clear that this survey was conducted between traditional Reformed churches and Renewed Reformed churches (inclusive of other Charismatic churches). According to this table, the Renewal churches are more positive about contemporary preaching than those belonging to traditional Reformed churches and renewal churches are less positive about traditional liturgy. The table has also indicated that Renewal churches have agreed more to the reasons in this survey supplied why the Church is declining than those from traditional church backgrounds.

- **Gender/factor association:**

There were no significant associations or differences indicated between gender and any of these factors.

- **Age/factor association:**

There were also no significant associations indicated between age and any of these factors.

2.9.4 Membership positions/factor association:

Table 11 Survey Analysis: Membership positions/factor association

Factor (A4-membership position in congregation)	Mean Regular member	Mean Pastor/ Minister	Mean Not regular member	MSE	Variation Congregations	P-Value	Effect Size(d) 1 with 1,2	2 with 3
Experiencing the Preacher positive	6.09	5.601	5.546	0.74 1	0.741	0.00	0.54 0.60	0.06
Reasons for a declining Church	4.16	4.060	4.312	1.20 2	0.253	0.724	0.08 0.13	0.21
N3. The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically.	4.29	5.049	4.147	2.85 5	0.236	0.032	0.43 0.09	0.51

2.9.4.1 Report 1

Regular members feel more positive about the values their ministers/pastors are adding to the sermons than what ministers/pastors had indicated for themselves. Ministers/pastors are also more concerned about the influence of digital technology on preaching than being indicated by their regular members.

The effect sizes in this table indicated that there is no difference between the attitudes regarding preaching preferences of congregations of either different or the same denomination no matter where they are located (urban or rural). This may indicate that the world of the digital age has become smaller and even more similar than ever before.

2.10 CONCLUSION: DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

2.10.1 Descriptive perspectives on communicational changes in the digitised culture:

- The audience of the digitised culture is no longer spectators of communication, they are used to be participants in diverse communication media, based on visual shared experiences;
- Digitised communication involves more than one human sense;
- The printed and predominant left-brain oral monologue is under pressure;
- A preaching style that is not conducted in a fashion that captures the listener's attention and imagination in the culture of digital communication bores the audiences more than ever before;
- The brain activity is most active when the subject is telling a story;
- When Christians stay away from sermons the Church not only loses members, but also fails its real purpose and mission according to the calling of Christ;
- There might be a shortcoming in theological training, regarding the practice of creativity and imagination in order to keep up with these changes;
- Digital communication utilises the whole brain, complementing the creative neurological functions of the right brain to process information very fast, by using less words, and more visual-rich and interactive communicational methods;
- The new digitised culture no longer communicates with long reading and long written and oral conversation alone, and is becoming especially weak on listening to long structured conversations conducted with facts and points;
- The most significant challenge for the Church in the fast growing digitised context, will be to get the message experienced;
- There is a correlation between technology and the transformation of communication;
- The era after the turn of the millennium can be described as meta-modernism or digimodernism;
- Some of the characteristics of the digitised culture are diverse, fast moving, experience, participation and connecting;
- Semeiotic preaching should not be seen as a new kind of language and a stage performance that will rescue the Church overnight.

2.10.2 Descriptive perspectives regarding theological reactions

- The study has discovered a significant growth in theological reactions globally and from various disciplines, not only the homiletics;
- There is an urgent need amongst many theologians from different Christian denominations and disciplinary fields to proclaim the Word of God, creative, interesting, more memorable, but most of all in such a way that it will regain the lost trust and faith in the Christian Church and its mission;
- There is a new interest in humanity in the homiletics opening the door to communicational task is conducted by real humans and therefore does not exclude personal experience, creativity and the Work of the Holy Spirit;
- Re-imagination, realness and contextual preaching are on the homiletical table
- There is a need for a new language and style;
- There is a shift from the ears to the heart;
- There are voices for multisensory preaching and rhetorical techniques to connect to people's lives;
- The predominant reflection in postmillennium Practical Theology is a movement that includes the work of the Holy Spirit;
- The human reflection to the Word of God is more than only exegesis and explaining texts;
- Experience and creativity is an important asset to knowledge, called critical realism ;
- The human reflection is a new form of rationality that should involve crossing one owns contextual and cultural borders;
- There is also humanity in the Word of God, written by real people with real issues no other than what we experience today;
- Preaching should bring the real human story and the story of God together;
- Postmillennium homileticians believe that the ancient methods of communicating the divine story of God can help us to take the Church through the digitised age to the future;
- There is a difference between semeiotic preaching and semeiotics as a linguistic and academic subject;
- Semeiotic preaching is a multi-sensory communicational method;

- Semeiotic preaching thus does not want to replace verbal communication, but supports verbal communication with right-brain semeiotic media such as metaphors, symbols and imagination;
- Semeiotic preaching is based on ancient Biblical communicational techniques that included the use of semeiotics such as images, metaphors and experienced narratives;
- The persuasive power of communication does not lie in words alone (explaining texts), but also in images and stories of the text;
- Preaching, if it is to meet its objective of changing people's lives, must then have some relation to effective communication that is related to the praxis of understanding the context (incarnational process);
- Churches become completely irrelevant when holding on too long unto methods that have become outdated;
- Three areas have been discovered that are of equally importance that should relate to each other when studying Practical Theology. They are, the Word of God, the interpretation of the preacher and the acceptance of the receiver in a specific context in order to motivate normative change;
- A new way of looking at the λόγος is that it wants to bring opposites together; the *wired togetherness* between the text and a new context;
- The problematic praxis of this thesis thus fits well into the field of hermeneutical communications;
- Whole-brain exegesis might be one of the major short-comings in a predominant cognitive educational and within the context of Reformed theology and homiletics;
- Therefore any new homiletical model for effective preaching should be complemented by both hemispheres of the brain in order to create a preaching experience that touches all the human senses;
- Reformed theology might still be a long way from teaching students how to practise semeiotic preaching but there are other sciences that could be invited to the homiletic sciences in order to teach students some of the important skills;
- One of the disadvantages of using semeiotics is that it can communicate multiple and contradictory realities to the perceiver;
- Another danger is that effective communication strategies could transcend the Word of God;

- Semeiotic preaching is more than just preaching, it is a hermeneutical science and form of art adding a new science of exegeting images, narrative, symbols, and metaphors already existing within in the text;
- Semeiotic preaching is based on a Hebrew art of storytelling that wants to draw the exegete to the back-stories and images, experiences of the people of the text and not only literature itself.

2.10.3 Empirical results and conclusions:

- The homiletical crisis accompanies the traditional churches in South Africa since statistically proved, dating back to the 1980's. There were more church members in the 1980's, but the percentage attending Sunday morning services was not different than in the digimodernistic era;
- The Church's greatest lost is amongst the youth - 65% decline by 2008 - they are the digimodernists;
- Other qualitative surveys have indicated that amongst all complex reasons for the decline in attending traditional sermons, poor preaching (meaning not addressing the audience in their context) is one reason for abandoning the traditional churches. The church model of the modernistic period has lost its power;
- It is evident that the Church, as a higher authority, is no longer the dominant entity in the Western Culture since the 17th century. Therefore in the macro context, the South African situation is not unique;
- Pentecostal churches have indicated remarkable growth in spite of these cultural transformations that are leading to the decline of the traditional churches;
- The Church has certainly reached a challenging stage for verbal rational preaching to survive in a culture that has become addicted to a 360-degree different way of communication and socialisation.

Summary of the items most volunteers agreed upon; **291 (48.2%)** respondents came from typical traditional Reformed backgrounds, and they have revealed the following:

- **72.4%** agreed that illustrating stories will make preaching more effective;
- **80%** agreed that there is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance;
- **81%** agreed that preachers successfully deliver the Biblical messages to fit our context (N8);

- **78%** agreed that preachers deliver the Word of God almost always creatively;
- **45.5%** agreed that traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is still effective ;
- **40.2%** agreed that renewal churches e.g. Charismatic churches are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings;
- **49.5%** agreed that the purpose of liturgy is mainly to teach the theology of sin and forgiveness. In other words all volunteers believe there is more to liturgy than just a teaching of sin and forgiveness;
- **41.6%** agreed that the youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs;
- According to the quantitative imperial analysis the survey was valid and reliable;
- There is a clear and positive indication in favour of good sermons; meaning illustrative, interesting, memorable and relevant. Even traditional churches are in favour of such sermons as long as it does not violate the most treasured traditions of their Church;
- The empirically results had proved the need for a theory such as semeiotic preaching; in other words for right-brain communicational strategies, and that it could be introduced to traditional Reformed preaching. Reformed Church audiences are in need of a sermon that captures all human senses and can create a capturing experience and is not conducted like a lecture;
- The survey, however, could not manage to indicate a negative correlation between the use of digital technology and the degeneration of an interest in preaching. However, pastors and ministers had indicated that they are more concerned about the influence of digital technology than their members are. Regardless, if digital technology is a real threat to preaching or even if the American scholars are over-exaggerating the situation, their views had made it possible to rediscover the effective ancient homiletic strategies that have captured the whole human brain when communicating the Word of God;
- The survey also could not indicate the correlation between poor preaching and why the Church is losing so many members especially the youth; however, it indicated a correlation between poor preaching and poor church attendance. One should therefore keep in mind that poor church attendance already existed in the 1980's long before digital communication arrived. Other factors such as secularisation should be included in the list of reasons why the Church is degenerating. It has also become clear that the era of attending Church as a religious custom regardless of how bad the preacher preaches has succumbed in the postmodern, digimodernistic culture;

- It is evident that good preaching relates to good church attendance, however preaching should always be more than just luring the crowds back to the Church, it should also lure them out into the world with an appetite to make a difference;
- Lastly, the survey had indicated that the support for formal preaching is not very high any more but there is still room for good liturgy. Though the survey did not test other forms of liturgy, it is evident that there is a positive indication for a liturgy that relates more to experiencing God through all our senses than another theological lecture regarding sin and forgiveness;
- There is a place for semeiotic preaching in the field of communicational hermeneutics, open for future research and more practical models to enhance preaching, allowing imagination and experience to touch peoples' hearts and lives with the Word of God that is also real and alive.

Unfortunately, the above results can simultaneously be shocking and deceiving when interpreted with subjective assumptions. It therefore needs careful interpretation against a wider picture before conclusions can be made. Although the digital age is still in its early days, and it is difficult to measure the real impact on preaching scientifically, it does not mean that the positive impact on better communication should be ignored, but rather be utilised to rediscover new exciting ways to preach the Word of God. It is evident that this study is also in need of a deeper level of research, called according to Osmer; the interpretative phase, to open these results to a broader hermeneutical conversation with intra - and interdisciplinary fields.

A critical research, especially with new theological insights, is needed to convince that semeiotic preaching is Biblical with practical advantages such as that it can be taught to even the less creative preacher. The research will endeavour, according to the next phases of Osmer to achieve this goal.

2.10.4 Interaction between descriptive and empirical perspectives

- The audience of the digitised culture is used to a diverse communication media, based on visual shared experiences and more than one human sense - **72.4% respondents agreed that illustrating stories will make preaching more effective;**
- The printed and predominant left-brain oral monologue is under pressure - **only 41% agreed that formal preaching (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most;**
- A preaching style that is not conducted in a fashion that captures the listener's attention and imagination in the culture of digital communication bores the audiences more than ever before

- **80%** agreed that there is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance;

- The brain activity is most active when the subject is telling a story - **72.4%** agreed that illustrating stories will make preaching more effective and **57.9%** agreed that sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only;
- The new digitised culture no longer communicates with long reading and long written and oral conversation alone, and is becoming especially weak on listening to long structured conversations conducted with facts and points - **39.7%** agreed that shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences;
- There is a correlation between technology and the transformation of communication – the survey had indicated a positive attitude towards contemporary preaching (that includes visual aid, less formal liturgy and illustrations such as stories);
- There is an urgent need amongst many theologians from different Christian denominations and disciplinary fields to proclaim the Word of God, creative, interesting, more memorable, but most of all in such a way that it will regain the lost trust and faith in the Christian Church and its mission - the survey had indicated a positive attitude towards preachers who preach contextual, relevant and creative;
- There is a new interest in humanity in the homiletics opening the door to communicational task is conducted by real humans and therefore does not exclude personal experience, creativity and the Work of the Holy Spirit. Re-imagination, realness and contextual preaching are on the homiletical table. There is a need for a new language and style - there were equal positive correlations between good preaching and good church attendance regardless if it is a contemporary, charismatic or traditional church. The strongest correlation was with the positive contributions preachers are making regarding creativity and contextuality, indicating the importance of the preacher-audience relationship. The correlation score was **.285** (the highest of all correlation scores);
- Postmillennium homileticians believe that the ancient methods of communicating the divine story of God can help us to take the Church through the digitised age to the future - There is a positive correlation between television and radio preaching and contemporary preaching and the reasons why the Church is declining. This indicates that the participants perceive a preaching style that is in touch with the culture (mostly what television and radio preachers need to do when they are outside the boundaries of their congregations) as popular and that traditional preaching styles relate to the declining interest in a Church that treasures old traditions;

- The persuasive power of communication does not lie in words alone (explaining texts), but also in images and stories of the text. Therefore any new homiletical model for effective preaching should be complemented by both hemispheres of the brain in order to create a preaching experience that touches all the human senses - *The survey had indicated that church audience no longer feel that knowledge is more important than the preaching style. This could be another indication of a preference for more right-brain experiences;*
- Preaching, if it is to meet its objective of changing people's lives, must have some relation to effective communication that is related to the praxis of understanding the context (incarnational process) - *The correlation between contemporary preaching and the reasons provided in this survey for why the church is declining (meaning in favour of the negative influences of digital communication, the fact that church services have become too long and do not address the needs of the youth and are not visually expressed enough) is high (403). This correlation might indicate that contemporary churches had adapted to new styles for the purpose of more visual supported sermons and communication;*
- Churches become completely irrelevant when holding on too long unto methods that have become outdated. Other qualitative surveys have indicated that amongst all complex reasons for the decline in attending traditional sermons, poor preaching (meaning not addressing the audience in their context) is one reason for abandoning the traditional churches. The church model of the modernistic period has lost its power - *the average Reformed Church attendance could be as low as 30%.*

CHAPTER THREE: INTERPRETATIVE STUDY OF SEMEIOTIC PREACHING

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERPRETATIVE PHASE

The study will be conducted by means of a qualitative literary research with the aim to listen to a selection of meta-theoretical subjects related to the problematic praxis (Osmer, 2008:6-8). According to Cilliers (1996:12) and Erasmus (2007:181-183) a study in homiletics cannot be conducted in isolation and should include meta-theoretical subjects. Meta-theoretical perspectives are important to help understand the complex context of preaching in a broader perspective in order to formulate a relevant homiletical model (Cilliers, 2004:6; Immink & Stark, 2002a:14). This chapter recognises the importance of an interdisciplinary approach (refer De Klerk & De Wet, 2013:1-22) as well as intra-disciplinary approach.

The interpretative task seeks reasons for the phenomena that were observed in the descriptive task. The key-question according to Osmer now is; *why is it going on?* The interpretative phase wants to identify the issues embedded within other fields of study relating to the communicational homiletical field such as hermeneutics, sociology, from within the theology subjects such as church history, grammatical exegesis and new homiletical theories in order to help understand the problems and their relations better.

Relevant literary material will be selected for a qualitative literary research (Osmer 2008:4). Precaution is necessary not to over-simplify the problematic praxis, therefore it is important to listen to many intra and interdisciplinary fields (also see Cartledge, 2003:15; Pieterse, 2001:13). This means to observe the problem within different theological fields as well as from other fields of study.

The first part of the study will involve a theological survey from a historical point of view. This is important as to learn from previous experiences (Dingemans, 1996:72-74). In accordance with the methodological guidelines of Osmer (2008:6-8) the research will focus on theological reflection, discovering principals to guide new strategies and explore past and present practices. Osmer refers to this process as applying 'sagely wisdom'. Sagely wisdom requires the interplay of three key characteristics: thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation and wise judgement.

The second part will be conducted from the perspectives of the hermeneutical sciences, searching for reliable guidelines for interpretation and knowledge (Dingemans, 1996:82-85). It is also important to listen to the historical development of rational reasoning and its influence on

Reformed theological hermeneutics of Biblical truth as well as its influence on both right-brain and left-brain preaching, with reference to the influences made by Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur.

The third part, will consult the sociology. Cilliers (2004:6-18) has indicated the importance of sociology in the Practical Theology especially regarding contextual preaching (also see Cartledge, 2003:15; Pieterse, 2001:13) and in this case especially regarding the impact of digital communication on society and how it effects the behaviour of people.

The fourth part will observe the problematic praxis from a linguistic point of view as well as how semeiotics effects rhetoric, listening, memory and persuasion. Semeiotics also had different controversial meanings in the linguistics that should be recognised (Van Wyk, 2014:57-63; Wilson, 1977:169-189).

The fifth part will investigate the problematic praxis from the perspectives of the communicational sciences, e.g. how different communicational strategies effect the human brain (psychology) and how people communicate effectively with each other in mediums other than words and writing. Practical Theology is interested in both contextual shifts and effective communication.

Cilliers (2004:6-18) recommends categorising the meta-theoretical subjects for this type of research as follows:

- Interpretative perspectives from a theological intra-disciplinary (intra ad) point of view, including the following subjects: Church history, grammatical exegetical sciences and homiletics;
- Interpretative perspectives from the sociological sciences;
- Interpretative perspectives from the communicational-psychological sciences;
- For the purpose of a critical understanding of semeiotics it is also important to listen to the linguistic-hermeneutical sciences;
- Interpretative perspectives from pews and preachers.

Finally, this chapter endeavours to interpret these findings critically by comparing the quantitative results with the qualitative interdisciplinary research results in order to lay a responsible foundation for the next phase (the normative theoretical task). This will be done by a qualitative eclectic literary study in the field of sociology according to the recommendations and purposes prescribed by Cartledge (2003:15) and Pieterse (2001:13).

3.2 INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE HOMILETICS FROM A CHURCH HISTORICAL SURVEY

3.2.1 Introduction to the historical survey

According to Osmer (2008:6-8) a historical survey is important in order to discover past principles to help design new homiletical strategies and practices with the important lessons learned from them. This will be done by conducting a qualitative literary study, covering a period of almost 2000 years, comprising certain dominant eras and how it influenced the homiletical communication strategies at that specific time in history. Part of surveying past practices is also to identify the reasons why these strategies had to evolve and made room for new strategies when a new culture arrived.

According to McGrath, (2001:33) defining eras in history is difficult due to reasons such as the absence of universal agreement on defining the mutual characteristics of such eras. This approach will therefore mainly focus on general cultural eras from the early Church to the end of the 19th century (the 20th century will feature under the subdivision: sociological sciences) and how their ideas became visible in different homiletical communicational strategies. These interpretations will play an important role in designing a new theory for a homiletical model that may fit the digitised culture more effectively.

3.2.2 Before Gutenberg: Right-brain hermeneutics for illiterate audiences

The first era that will be investigated, is known as the Patristic period (McGrath, 2001:5). The characteristics of the early Christian Church was interrelated with Roman-Greek philosophical influences such as Plato's understanding of the λόγος, illiteracy and poverty (Edwards, 1997:19-21). Plato in short postulated that the λόγος was only a shadow of the reality (Gallatin in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:247). This idea made it logic and easy for right-brain imagination and homiletical communicational strategies to dominate. Such strategies were, for instance, the practice of Biblical narratives accompanied with the use images (Jensen, 2005:10-13). The visual narrative became common practice prior to the printed text (Gutenberg) when most people were illiterate. Another reason for applying visual hermeneutics during the Greco-Roman time is because new gained converts had been brought up on visual learning and there was a need to continue with these practices in their Christian experience (Wilson:2017:1). Christians borrowed many symbols and ideas from the pagans, adding Christian meaning to it (Wilson, 2017:1). The pagan influences eventually may have led to the negative attitude towards the use of images and symbols in non-Roman Catholic traditions.

According to Jensen (2005:19) the first use of images was to instruct the Word of God. The images were complementary to the spoken word. The God who became flesh can indeed communicate through all human senses, not only the ear, but also the eye.

According to Walton in Jensen (2005:20) art supported early Christianity as follows:

- It stimulated memory
- It depicted the commands of the gospel
- It complemented oral instruction
- It stimulated a variety of senses

The practice of a visual-rich hermeneutics for preaching in the Church since then became a continuing issue in the history of Christian preaching. The homiletical hermeneutics in the first era after Christ can also be described as a spiritual hermeneutics based on the scholarship of Clement and Origen (Edwards, 1997:64-69). According to Schian and Dargan (2004:159-161) Origen was the father of the sermon as a fixed ecclesiastical custom. Both the theological-practical exposition of a definite text as well as the homily can be traced to him (McGrath, 2001:11). The sermon was allegorical, missionary, apologetic, and suited to address spiritual needs. A spiritual hermeneutics based on the spirituality and authority of Church leaders was an ideal method to instruct illiterate people. Allegory controlled the homiletical use of Scripture until the Reformation (Schian & Dargan, 2004:159-161). Origen's utilisation of an allegorical method of interpretation stimulated an increased interest in the exposition of the text (Stitzinger, 1992:14), in spite of all the issues and conflicts related to allegorical preaching (also see Fisher, 2013:1). According to Payne (1996:1) allegorical interpretation contributed to exegeting the hidden or symbolic parallel meanings within certain texts, provided that it was the intention of the author. Unfortunately, some schools during this time undervalued the importance of historical background in exegesis that already brought a division between the Alexandrian Church Fathers and the Antiochenes (such as Diodore, Theodore Mopsuestia and Chrysostom) who rejected allegory and favoured literal and historical interpretation (Fisher, 2013:1). This has led to an Eastern homiletical style that was more imaginative, poetic and wordy and a Western homiletical developed that was more sober, practical, simple and clear, wrapped in dogmatic-didactic style (Schian & Dargan, 2004:159-161).

Since the time of Constantine (beginning of the 4th century *Anno Domini* (A.D.)), the early Church struggled to remain Biblical sound due to a period of inculturation with Constantine's policy of tolerating heathen beliefs and practices. Some of the practices involved the worship of martyrs (Labuschagne, 2008:1; Todd in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:130-135). By the end of Constantine, people

knew very little about the life of Jesus even after believing that they were guided by His Spirit (Edwards, 1997:76).

It is interesting to notice that Augustine has also made use of the historical narratives of the Old Testament (OT) (Schian & Dargan, 2004:161). He introduced the doctrine of grace, sacraments, the Trinity and became the father of pluralism (McGrath, 2001:13,556).

After the liberation of Christianity by Constantine, the arts began to flourish in the new emerging Church (Jensen, 2005:22-23). The purpose of constructing visual fascinating churches was to open people's eyes to God's glory. John of Damascus (676-749), according to Jensen (2005:32), can be called the doctor of Christian art. John of Damascus brought a new Christological interpretation to the dualistic theological debate at that time regarding the true nature of Christ. John of Damascus believed that the incarnation into the flesh sanctified the matter when the matter became salvation for our salvation (Jensen, 2005:38). Matter can then also be perceived in a religious context as divine. John's point of view reflected in the arts as a divine presence whereby the arts could be appreciated without worshipping them.

3.2.3 Preaching in the Middle-Ages and the Renaissance

This era was influenced by romanticism, early scholasticism and the monasteries with exponents such as Bernard of Clairvaux (Maccione, 2012:1; Ritchie, 1999:1). According to McGrath (2001:30-41) scholasticism was more or less what modernism did to Western culture. It influenced the reasoning and intellectual mind effectively to construct abstract doctrines and lasted for very long. Maccione (2012:1) reports that symbolism began to emerge and unfortunately later developed into superstitious rituals including the worship of holy symbols and rituals. Even church buildings and holy people were worshipped (Todd in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:131-134).

MacCulloch (2009:440) explains that the λόγος, under the influence of Maximus, included anything from the Word of God to all of creation. Maximus believed it was possible to see beyond the text into the deeper spiritual truths. Mysticism and symbolism became a new way to obtain the hidden knowledge of God and the purpose was to journey from a lower level to a higher spiritual glory (Wijnberg, 2014a:6-7; MacCulloch, 2009:440; Edwards, 1997:94). The theological understanding of the word λόγος has again been reconsidered and the new idea was that the Word has become flesh; giving further approval of the worship of icons (Gallatin in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:247). The sermon focussed on personal experiences that appeal to the inner perception and emotions (Schian & Dargan, 2004:161-165).

The extreme use of visual hermeneutics led to mysticism; a theology and practice whereby the Word of God became secondary to the metaphorical, the spiritual and the symbolical reflection of the worshipper (Smith in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:205-216). The visual interpretation became suspicious due to the pagan influences (*papist*), and the OT prohibitions against graven images (Wilson, 2017:1). This eventually led to bitter conflict and even persecutions under Leo III who attempted to bring an end to these heresies (MacCulloch, 2009:440; Gallatin in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:247) yet, the assault of Leo III could not illuminate the practice of visual hermeneutics completely (Schian & Dargan, 2004:161-165). This reaction opened the door for something new in the homiletical development; the left-brain era, the era of intellect and reasoning slowly began to infiltrate theological training (Edwards, 1997:234-256).

By the end of the Middle Ages, the Church became characterised by decay and corruption because of the lack of qualified preachers and theology (Schian & Dargan, 2004:164-165; Green, 1996:99). In the Greek Church during the 5th century, liturgy, and not the sermon, became the focus of the church service. According to Schian and Dargan (2004:165) the whole period can be described as a period of homiletical degeneration.

It is already becoming evident by deconstructing the historiography of the relation between different cultures (eras) and preaching how important it is to keep a balance between the rational and the imaginative.

3.2.4 The era of Reformations and Post-Reformations

According to Waugh (2013:1) and McNair in Dowley *et al.* (1988:352) the era of the Reformation started around 1450 in the context of the invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz, Germany, 1450. Some scholars also refer to this era as the pre-reformation. The Reformations expanded all over the Western world and continued until 1750 (McGrath, 2001:48-83). This was the beginning of a new dramatic cultural shift described by some scholars as the pre-modernism (Carson, 2016:1; Jue, 2012:1). It brought a new era (left-brain focus) of science based on rationalism and intellectualism (Niemandt, 2007:16-25; McGrath, 2001:48). This gradually developed into a culture that moved away from the previous authority of the Caesar and the Pope to all who could afford to study and simultaneously the printed book made universal knowledge possible. The new culture fitted the Reformers well because there was a need for a new Christian education based on scientific rational theology and sound doctrines.

This era is complex, and includes a long and even bloody history with many philosophical and political (church-political resistance) conflicts. The insights of Niemandt (2007:24) that a new culture never completely overwrites the other or former culture, can clearly be seen in this era.

Even after the Reformation and the turn to scientific systematic exegesis, deductive scholasticism and allegory still prevailed in many homilies (Jensen, 1980:11).

The Reformers were highly educated (Atkinson in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:373) and they developed a preaching style with the aim to bring theological truths to people who had never read or understood the Bible before, in order to educate them, sermons began to take the form of lectures, catechisms and essays. The overall emphasis was to prove Biblical truth (Ritchie, 1999:1).

Schian and Dargan (2004:165-170) describe the homiletical accents during this era as follows:

- During the first phase of rational hermeneutics for homiletics many sermons were dogmatic-polemic, allegorical, dialectic and demonstrative;
- Thomas Aquinas e.g. demonstrated a dry formalism in dialectic argumentation;
- Sermons began to address repentance;
- Expository preaching was born but allegory still prevailed;
- Sermons were logical, detailed, rhetorical, rational and instructive;
- During the later phases, Protestant-orthodoxy emerged and the preachers finally broke through the old school scholastic methods and began to return to Biblical homily.

The degeneration of the Reformed sermon is not new. When a new scholasticism revived a few decades after the first Reformations, preaching took the way of formal rhetoric and pure doctrine (Joubert, 2012a:17). Scholasticism was a pedagogical method for teaching Protestant theology at the first Protestant universities (Clouse in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:278-279). Scholasticism was deductive in its approach and knew which direction each question was heading (Jue, 2012:4; Ritchie, 1999:1). By the end of the 17th century, Reformed preachers lost their freedom of diversity and imagination.

There is no doubt that the era of rational preaching had to come to rescue the Word of God from being misused by extreme right-brain hermeneutics. It also fitted the new culture of rational reasoning and brought a new scientific approach to the exegetical understanding of the Word of God, but from a homiletical point of view the predominant left-brain homiletical methods did not appeal to the whole human brain. According to Troeger in Vos *et al.* (2007:59-71) the literal meaning of imagination is image-creation. The Bible does not originally give doctrinal facts, but stories and images. The early Protestants treated imagination under the same perception as idolatry. According to Jensen (2005:50-55) Luther and Calvin were not against images, but against the misuse of images in relation with poor theology. During 1872-1874, imagination

returned to the homiletics again as an important asset to preaching, but the ambiguity laid by the Post-Reformation would remain until today. Troeger in Vos *et al.* (2007:66) cleverly asks the question; why would the Reformers be afraid of misusing only one of God's gifts because of the sinful nature of man, should the sinful nature not affect all of our being, also our rational thinking and our verbal communication?

Two hundred years after the Reformation, the Church was again in a desperate need of a revival.

3.2.5 Interpretive perspectives from Lutheranism and Roman Catholic theology

According to Frassetto (2016:1), Schian and Dargan (2004:180-181) preaching never stood centrally in Roman Catholicism during the time of the Reformation nor the sole authority of the Word of God, but the sacraments, liturgy, rituals and the authority of the Pope. Text interpretation was not to be separated from church traditions such as the papal infallibility or sole authority of the Pope and was reconfirmed at the Council of Trent (1545 -1563). In spite of condemning the new Protestant movement, there is significant evidence of a Roman Catholic Reformation during this Council such as the importance of proper preaching, proper liturgical orders and theological training. However, four hundred years after the Council of Trent the equality between the authority of church traditions and the Word of God still prevailed. By 1648, Modern Roman Catholicism was born and the Church had to recognise the emergence of individualism. Finally, under the leadership of Leo XIII (1878-1903) modernism was fully recognised in Roman Catholic theology, including freedom of thought and the use of Biblical and historical criticism.

Lutherism, on the other hand, according to Ngien (2003:28-48), placed theology and preaching in an indissolubly relation with each other. It is supremely through the words of the preacher that the Word of God in the Scriptures is made alive in the present. Luther believed that the preached word of the preacher is the Word of God. This led to the following Lutheran characteristics:

- Preaching the Word of God is simultaneously a divine and a human activity;
- The Gospel is essentially proclamation, Christ coming to us through the sermons;
- The preached Word of God is inseparable from practising the Word of God;
- The Word of God, in the spoken form is the only way to see God;
- Preaching became almost a sacrament;
- The *what* that is preached is more important than *how* it is preached;
- God speaks to us in human language;

- Christ is the content of preaching, Saviour and example;
- The activity of the Holy Spirit is intrinsically bound to the Word that is spoken.

Postmodern communicational shifts demand that preaching should also be conducted in such a way that it will capture the whole brain with the presence of the logic and the visual, the need for participating experiences such in Roman Catholic and Lutheran liturgy (not theology). The *how* we preach has become the centre of criticism in the digitised culture as indicated by the empirical study (also by church members from different denominational backgrounds). On the other hand, one cannot just entertain for the sake of addressing the needs of the new culture. Luther certainly offers a solution to this challenge in his approach that preaching the Word of God is simultaneously a divine and a human activity.

There is also pressure on the so-called one man's monologue and authority. According to Anon. in The BBC news (2013:1), there are still 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world today in a theological tradition where the Pope's authority is still equal to that of the Word of God and where their traditions did not change much over the last 500 years. According to Wiegel (2002:1) there were about 350 million Protestants in the world (2002) of which 75 million are reformed (Anon. in Wikipedia, 2016:1). According to Cortez (2014:1) there were 361 million Pentecostals, almost a quarter of the Christian population in 2014. Pentecostals, after a period of a hundred years, are way behind in numbers in relation to the predominant rational believers and the Roman Catholic's more spiritual and liturgical traditions. This may surely indicate that predominant rational communication is still appealing to the majority of Christian audiences, but the question is; does rational communication exclude creativity and experiencing of rational truths? This can be compared to a Second World War movie, based on facts, but illustrated with emotional images and moving soundtracks capturing the experience of war in such a manner that the viewer can almost physically experience it.

The problematic praxis of this study is interested in the demands of the whole-brain communicational culture and the design of a whole-brain homiletical model. The historical survey thus far indicated an ebb and flow between right- and left-brain homiletical strategies and the consequences when only one of these hemispheres gets over-emphasised. The degeneration of Reformed preaching may be caused by a culture who has been transformed by predominant right-brain communication and is busy losing their interest in linear verbal communication.

In trying to understand ancient-future homiletical strategies in the design of a new homiletical model, one should keep another aspect of ancient human nature in mind; it seems as if the human

nature still shows an affinity for divine and holy experiences and even a holy authority touching all the God-given human senses.

3.2.6 The period (1700-1810): Pietism and a reaction to orthodoxy

According to Schian and Dargan (2004:170-181) the period 1700-1810 can be summarised as follows:

- Sermons now began to focus on practical Christianity and a consecrated (renewed) life;
- The form of the sermon became simpler, the structure more distinct and the expression plainer;
- This era became influenced by the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement pursuing universal truth;
- The most significant influence after the Reformation and the Great Revivals on theology and preaching, came with the liberal philosophers and theologians e.g. Descartes and his "*cogito ergo sum*" (Niemandt, 2007:16; Brown in Dowley *et al.*,1988:479) and others like Kant and his scepticism against the metaphysical (Brown in Dowley *et al.*,1988:538-41-541);
- By 1810, there was a clear break from orthodoxy and Pietism.

3.2.7 The era after Gutenberg: modernism and postmodernism

The reason why the two cultural periods, modernism and postmodernism, are treated together is because of their similarities in spite of different accents and even uncertainty by some scholars if postmodernism completely pushed modernism aside (Vanhooser, 2003:7-9).

3.2.7.1 The Nineteenth century:

Schian and Dargan (2004:186-188) summarise the homiletical developments during the 19th century as follows:

- Dominated by a Christological approach;
- The general truths of reason were no longer in control, the Gospel ruled;
- The Evangelical era arrived;
- The influence of Schleiermacher led to a return to Christ and the Bible;
- The evangelistic approach was characterised by variety and freedom and became popular in America.

3.2.7.2 The Emerging Church movement- adapting to fit the postmodern changes

By the late 20th century, a church movement began to emerge in reaction against modernism called the Emerging Church. It is not a new denomination, but rather another form of Reformation or a movement still in an experimenting phase that is prevalent in many different denominations (Tickle, 2012:181-209; Niemandt, 2007:49-59). This movement wants to shed extreme modernistic concepts that have become outdated since the emergence of a new culture dated back to 1900 and practised predominantly by the Pentecostals and Charismatics (Tickle, 2012:39,69-70) but only getting its birth certificate in 2005 (Tickle, 2012:108).

According to Slick (2007b:1) emerging churches will emphasise relationships, community, visual methods, storytelling, and more expressive worship instead of absolute truth constructions derived from Scripture and delivered during preaching and teaching.

Niemandt (2007:62) summarises the Emerging Church's sermon and characteristics as follows:

- A return to Christology and focusing on the Kingdom of God (identifying with the life of Christ and obedient discipleship (Niemandt, 2007:61-66). According to Tickle (2012:171-172) this may under-emphasise the dogma of the Trinity;
- A closer move to engage in culture. Tickle also challenges the success of being popular and of growing for the sake of numbers (Tickle, 2012:119);
- Emphasising a greater commitment to *koinonia*;
- Breaking the laws of exclusiveness and becoming more open to inclusiveness;
- Participation in the sermon;
- Creativity is present in both preaching and sermon;
- Networking instead of controlling;
- Returning to ancient homiletical and ecclesiastical practices with more emphasis on relationships than on education.

Jue (2012:1) also agrees that the Emergent Church, like all postmodern movements, is attempting to move beyond the past and trying to discard the shackles of modernity (Jue, 2012:1; Slick, 2007a:1). He summarises the Emerging Church Movement (E.C.M.) as follows:

- A return to ancient faith and practices that pre-dated modernity;
- Does not introduce a new Christianity completely detached from any historical roots;

- A desire to present an authentic Christianity that moves beyond formal religious faith. Emphasises relationships, community, visual methods, storytelling and more expressive worship;
- Emergent thinkers reject absolute truth, arguing that such a method is no longer tenable in a postmodern context;
- Emergent Churches alike have turned preaching into more than listening by reintroducing the practise of multi-media presentations, dramas and video clips.

According to Tickle (2012:184,207-209), emergence Christianity is a human discourse based on a cultural interpretation. Nothing is really new or unique about it and the word emergence Christianity is unnecessary; an adaptation like this may just as well be called progressive Protestantism. Emergence theology has made all the mistakes over the last hundred years committed by Mother Church, but Tickle concluded that in spite of the mistakes, they present a close relationship to the Judean-Christian narrative. The E.C.M. is another postmodern commentary that might contribute to the Church's understanding of humanity in preaching. In this context semeiotic preaching as an ancient-future model does not belong to the emerging movement but to a progressive protestant Church, always committed to responsible reformations in order to stay theological responsible and relevant.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- It is evident that the Church as a higher authority is no longer the dominant entity in the Western Culture since the 17th century;
- The Western Church homiletics was influenced by modernism;
- Modernism was favoured because it enhanced objective truth which was well accepted in the Western culture and for the purpose of academic training;
- Postmodernism arrived in the middle of the 20th century as a commentary to modernism;
- Postmodernism still indicates a significant relation to modernism with different philosophical theories regarding truth;
- Postmodernism brought an openness to meta-narratives such as the use of diversity, images and stories (parables) and reconnecting to true human experiences;
- Postmodernism has assisted homiletics to move away from unnecessary dogmatism, control and legalism to realness and relations;

- The Word of God can become secondary to the demands of real human experiences and relations;
- One of the fundamental mistakes committed by the modern rational thinkers is that they have excluded human experience and the creative mind from learning;
- It is questionable if the Reformed traditions, especially in South Africa, have listened to the postmodern critique;
- Postmodernism did not declare war against left-brain reasoning but rather questioned if this should be implemented as the only intellectual method;
- The E.C.M. is not a new denomination, but rather another form of Reformation that wants to disperse of extreme modernistic concepts;
- In spite of the mistakes the Emerging Church made with regard to emphasising relationships, community, visual methods, storytelling and more expressive worship constructions, they re-introduced the importance of humanity and the Judean-Christian narrative.

3.2.8 Interpretative perspectives from the historical survey

The findings from deconstructing the history of the Church over such a large period in history and time can hardly be complete, but the following assumptions regarding the design of an ancient-future homiletical model are clear:

- The mistakes made in the past are important lessons for designing a new homiletical model;
- Churches should not wait too long to make valuable changes for the purpose of contextual preaching, change should always be executed in dialogue with both theological wisdom and contextual needs;
- Changes and new ideas always find itself in possible minefields of conflict. Any new theory should therefore not only address a problem, but also be normatively approved in order to be introduced first on experimenting level and then as a new homiletical model;
- A solution for the rival between left-brain and right-brain preaching is to keep the whole brain content with Biblical normative proof.

Reformed Theology had to find a sound Biblical way between many extreme philosophies, spiritualities and theological ideas. Modernism endeavoured to establish a profound foundation for such a midway. The Western Church adopted a modernistic ecclesiological model closely related to that of the previous Roman Catholic culture called; State Church (based on the principles of colonialism). This model was successful as long as it was supported by the people

of a homogeneous culture even without true conviction. This unfortunately opened the door for ideology, nominal Christianity, political enmeshment, fragmentation, control, exclusiveness and a strong resistance to adaptation.

A new homiletical model focusing on communication hermeneutics for a specific context is not new according to the historical survey. The first four hundred years can be compared to the eras of postmodernism and postmillennium cultures of the 20th and 21th century. The only difference between then and now is that people are now mostly literate. During this time in history, the homiletical approach also focused more on the right brain with communicational strategies such as metaphors, images and narratives. Intellectualism and modernism on the other hand contributed to formulate valuable theological concepts (such as the Trinity) and creating scientific exegetical principles.

A new homiletical model should listen and learn from previous experiences, of which one such important lesson is that neither right-brain nor left-brain homiletical models when practised in isolation of each other, survived the natural human intellect. It is evident that the left brain is better designed for reasoning than for creating metaphors, stories and images and the right hemisphere (although better designed for creative communicational methods) can also lose its effectiveness when practised without the logical and the rational.

It is clear that the Reformed Church has been dominated over the last 500 years by predominant left-brain homiletics in spite of Luther's vision (still visible in the Lutheran Church today) to practise a whole-brain homiletics.

We might be challenged once again by the digitised communication to make a reverse migration (back to the first four hundred years of the early Church or even further back to ancient Biblical times) in order to convey the Word of God in a predominant whole-brain style. It is clear from a historical perspective that the human mind is a whole-brain mind especially stimulated by the digital media. The challenge will not be to sacrifice any of these two God-given hemispheres, but to develop a homiletical model that will satisfy the whole human brain in a complete intellect.

It could be wise to let go of a search for universal truth for it is not the main calling of the Church, but rather follow the guidelines of great thinkers such as Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur that make room for diverse meanings for the sake of a contextual Christianity and experience. Whilst the Reformers of the modernistic era resisted a whole-brain sermon, the longing for experience could not be oppressed; this led to the birth of Pentecostalism at the beginning of the 20th century allowing human experiences such as emotions as inspired by the Holy Spirit. Participation and interaction began to manifest in the sermon. By 2014, the number of Pentecostals was estimated

to be 279 million. This should point to, within this specific theological paradigm, the popularity of participation and the human desire to experience God through more than one of the human sense.

3.3 INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE HISTORY OF HERMENEUTICS AND THE THEORY OF SEMEIOTIC COMMUNICATION

This section of the research will mainly focus on the influences of the 20th century on hermeneutics and semeiotics and how it influenced the methodology of rational preaching. In this section the following meta-theoretical subjects will feature based on the philosophies, hermeneutics, semeiotics, theology and the linguistic sciences:

- The history of hermeneutics in the 20th century: Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur;
- The history of semeiotics: Charles Saunders Peirce and De Saussure;
- The history of Sola Scriptura;
- The history of the concept λόγος.

The reason for this section and interest in this topic emanates from an observation by Cilliers (2004:15) that there exists different opinions from within the theology regarding rational theology and how to pursue objective truth for Biblical preaching, obtained by grammatical exegesis (also see Ricoeur, 1988:101-106). The debate regarding universal truth and the Church's protectiveness of the truth are controversial, especially in South African context (Cilliers, 2004:15). In order to understand the 20th century philosophers' reactions better, is important to understand what happened in the 19th century and before.

The historical survey has thus far described why the Reformers favoured rational left-brain reasoning. The Roman Catholic Church of that time over-accentuated the metaphor and elevated it to a mysterious subjective theological praxis. The Reformers followed the latest trends of a more scientific and logic development in line with the advance of the sciences that developed with the printed media (Van Roo, 1982:290-297).

According to Stallman (1999:46) the metaphor was for a very long period in time overruled by the literal-truth paradigm, believing that literal assertions were more effective bearers of truth than metaphors. Stallman (1999:21-24) believes that the tension between metaphor and truth dates back to the Enlightenment when literal language became the predominant way to describe truth and for obtaining knowledge. The consequences of the literal-truth paradigm doctrine led to the perception that metaphor belonged purely to rhetorical form/style and not to the rational sciences. A new scientific interest in hermeneutics began to develop in the late 1950's and shed new light

on the complexity of the understanding and interpretation of metaphors on even a deeper level of thought. These new insights regarding metaphors, not only returned cognitive status to metaphors, but also regained the status of a communication that involves a normative hermeneutics that can carry the truth just as effectively as logic reasoning.

Semeiotics as an academic term stood in the middle of a difficult, complex and theological debate since the Reformation, combined with extreme philosophic and linguistic concepts regarding text interpretation, all contributing to its sceptical approach especially in theology (Van Wyk, 2014:57-63; Wilson, 1977:169-189).

The following exploration will endeavour to find positive interpretative perspectives for the purpose of this study.

3.3.1 Interpretative perspectives of the history of hermeneutics and semeiotics in the twentieth century: Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur

According to Malpas (2016:par.2.2) hermeneutics traditionally, in the 20th century, had its origins in problems of Biblical exegesis and in the development of a theoretical framework to govern and direct such exegetical practice.

Post-structuralism rejected the idea of a literary text having only one single meaning. Instead, it postulated that every individual reader creates a new possibility for interpretation and meaning. This gets very close to the Roman Catholic interpretation of Scripture as well the misinterpreted the *so/a* doctrine (Mathison, 2007:1-3). The danger is that the recipient can replace the author as the primary subject. Post-structuralism examines other sources for meaning (e.g. cultural norms and other literature, etc.). These alternative sources are also in danger of losing authenticity and consistency (Wikipedia, 2015:1).

This approach was further developed by the controversial and many times misunderstood philosopher Derrida, who came under attack of being anti-analytical and dishonouring the values of reason and truth (Reynolds, s.a.:1), asserting that texts outlive their authors, and become part of a set of cultural habits equal to, if not surpassing, the importance of authorial intent (Reynolds, s.a.:1).

Although Bultmann did not mention semiotics per se, he developed a new form of hermeneutics called the *demythologising* of the Biblical text, where the “*whatness*” of the text is less important than the “*that-ness*”. This new idea did not pass without controversy and even total rejection by grammatical historical exegesis (Bultmann *et al.*, 1953:1-44; Van Wyk, 2014:57-63; Wilson, 1977:169-189). Together with this new hermeneutics, a fresh danger arrived with a possibility

that the historical meaning of the text could become defused. The words imagination and subjective interpretation also became part of Bultmann's hermeneutics, which did not fit the doctrine of the Word of God and Reformed exegesis (Bultmann *et al.*, 1953:1-44; Thiselton, 2009:167; Wilson, 1977:169-189).

According to Kull and Velmezova (2014:530-548), Bultmann questioned if the Bible was originally intended to impose upon all believers of all times in all contexts, only one universal objective rational truth. Bultmann believed that the imaginative and the symbolic meanings of the Biblical texts are equally essential in the God-man's ongoing discourse in order to address all people of all cultures and all times (see Bultmann *et al.*, 1953:1-44).

Dutton (1992:432-437) observes that the interest in subjective text interpretation gained momentum during the postmodern era especially with the work of Umberto Eco. Eco believed that the purpose of text interpretation is open interpretation and a hermeneutics, which limits one's potential understanding to a single line (or as he refers to it as the *closed* text), remains the least rewarding. Eco claimed that texts are alive and active between mind and society. Eco also emphasised the fact that words do not have meanings that are simply lexical, but rather operate in the context of utterance. This idea is now accepted by many philosophers and critics and was popularised by reader-response theories as well as by hermeneutically informed theories.

Mantzavinos (2016:par.3-4) believes that Schleiermacher has developed a more encompassing theory of textual interpretation according to a set of rules that provided the basis for good interpretive practice. This was the genesis of human or historical sciences (the *Geisteswissenschaften*). The basic problem of hermeneutics was methodological: how to ensure that it is proper scientific. Schleiermacher argued against a distinction between "general" and "special" hermeneutics, a general theory of hermeneutics applicable to all texts, including the Bible. Immink confirms that Schleiermacher introduced the hermeneutical value of the inner experience (Immink & Stark, 2002a:15). The Biblical text was always seen in a different way; sacred and above all other texts and should not be treated like other literary works not really making room to reflect the inner experience. Downing in Raschke (2013:1), also questions the belief that the literary language and meanings of religion as documented in the Bible are set in stone and asked whether they are also open-ended to say much more than just conveying historical and theological facts?

Postmodernism is characterised by a reaction to absolutism, linear thinking, rationalism, inflexibility and control from above (Carson, 2016:1). Postmodernism introduced humanity and experience as another form of intellectual intelligence.

The thesis will not follow the above exponent's theories, but recognise the new development and the pitfalls of a reaction towards a hermeneutics that may lead to relativism. The following philosophers became major exponents towards a new hermeneutics and making room for responsible use of the arts and the semeiotics that has become more acceptable in the homiletical field.

3.3.1.1 Hans-Georg Gadamer

According to Malpas (2016:par. 2.1-3) Gadamer's thinking is in line with Greek thought, especially that of Plato and Aristotle. Elaborating on Heidegger, he developed the concept *phronesis* (self-knowledge) or our practical 'being-in-the world' over and against theoretical apprehension. *Phronesis* and dialogue provide the essential starting point for the development of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Gadamer did not reject the importance of method in interpretation and knowledge, he pointed to the limited role of method and the priority of understanding as a dialogic, practical, situated activity.

Gadamer's (1975:172-468) influences can be summarised under the heading of romantic hermeneutics and his concepts of the fusion of horizons whereby the scholar finds ways in which the text's history articulates with their own background and became one of the major reasons why he could not believe in the complete objectivity of the rationalist tradition. Gadamer suggested that meaning is created by intersubjective communication. Gadamer was also against the approach of aligning human sciences with natural sciences. He was also perceived as the father of the *cirkelstructuur* of knowledge, recognising the fact that humans are part of the world that surrounds them.

Gadamer (1975:172-468) also began to understand that humanity cannot contain universal truth. According to Popova in Tholl (2014:1), knowledge involves subjective humanity, the art of interpreting lies in the integration of new information with the human understanding of the different worlds we are living in. That is why the human element is so vital in the age of digital communication. The next important contribution by Gadamer is the linking of art with truth; with truth itself being subjected to prior and partial disclosure that can never make it completely transparent. Both of these elements are connected with Gadamer's response to the subjectivist and idealist elements that were present in the neo-Kantian tradition. In keeping with this point of view, truth can also be experienced (*Spiel* or play). The symbolic character of the artwork is always perceived as showing something more than is literally present.

The basic model of conversation according to Gadamer involves an exchange between conversational partners that seek an agreement. Conversation always takes place in language

and understanding is thus linguistically mediated. Language is that within which anything intelligible can be comprehended. In this respect, language always involves others and the world. Gadamer claims that language is the universal horizon of hermeneutic experience. Hermeneutics concerns our fundamental mode of being in the world and understanding and is thus the basic phenomenon in our existence.

Gadamer's main influence can be summarised as follows:

- The subject of knowledge matters as much as the object;
- There is no complete objectivity with regard to rationalism;
- Humanity cannot contain universal truth;
- Meaning is created by intersubjective communication;
- Truth can also be experienced (*Spiel* or play);
- Not all truths are obtained cognitively.

3.3.1.2 Habermas

Habermas (1987:17-137) took the ideas of Gadamer further with a more pragmatic and natural humanistic approach of truth (not rejecting universal truth *per se*). He embedded truth in a social and communicational context, allowing meaning to be discovered and experienced by means of social consent as a natural form of normative understanding and meaning. Communication as transferring knowledge is achieved by practising it on equal important levels. He reacted thus against Gadamer's liberal point of view for allowing the subject to carry too much authority for knowledge and truth. Social consent is therefore needed to trust truth. Habermas has made room for truth to develop on three equal important levels; objective, social, and the subjective level and claims validity for those speech acts under three corresponding aspects; propositional truth, normative rightness and subjective truthfulness (Kim, 2011:81).

Habermas (1987:17-137) never followed postmodernism blindly, but also criticised both modernism and postmodernism, e.g. for being either ideological, idealistic or even unrealistic or excessive pessimistic, radical and over-exaggerating. His major contribution was not to demolish modernism but rather to redirect it from previous errors. Habermas opened the door for a more pragmatic and natural humanistic approach of truth embedded in social and communicational experiences that include the subjective nature of both these entities in understanding.

According to Kim (2011:82-85) Habermas formulated three sources of influence on the speech act: the cognitive function of representing a state of affairs; the expressive function of disclosing

the experiences of the speaker and the appellative function of directing requests to addressees. From this perspective, the linguistic sign functions simultaneously as symbol, symptom and signal.

Habermas (1987:17-137) considers that the meaning of an utterance is fundamentally a shared understanding between a speaker and a listener; based on a presupposition of equality between speaker and listener. Without this recognition of equality, a theory of meaning could be reduced to a conflict between participants.

Habermas's main influence can be summarised as follows:

- Habermas made the hermeneutics of the human sciences more credible for scientific purposes;
- Communication and reasoning include symbolic language;
- Reasoning includes right brain creativity.

3.3.1.3 Ricoeur

Ricoeur (1974:256) conceded that man is a linguistic being and that it is in and through language that man expresses himself and manifests his being; and it is by means of language that man relates with other beings and with the world. Man is language (Itao, 2010:2; Viljoen & Van der Merwe, 2007:1). Ricoeur (1970:26-27) also believed that there is no general hermeneutics and no universal canon for exegesis.

Ricoeur, more directly influencing the field of theology, contributed further to how the text relates to the world outside of the text with the emphasis not on objective knowledge, but rather on new personal insights (Ricoeur,1988:101-106). Ricoeur (1974:13) also contributed to the interpretation of language. One of the disadvantage of using language is e.g. that it can communicate multiple and contradictory realities to the perceiver (Ricoeur, 1974:13). Language is always polysemic; it can have more than one meaning, more than one translation, so all uses of language necessarily call for interpretation. The latter includes signs, such as semeiotic communication. All communication should be subjected to interpretation because of the nature of open-endedness, even in the case of rational communication. Rational exegesis should not overrule the open-ended creative possibilities of a metaphor. Ricoeur (1974:110) refers to this as creating new worlds that shape our self-understanding or personal experience of the metaphor (heuristic value of a metaphor). Language is more than an act of a speaker, it is more than an expression of a subject, it is a whole-brain hermeneutics that includes both subject and object and regarding language, both semeiotics and structure (referred to as a complete language

offering multiple sense). One of Ricoeur's major contributions regarding the hermeneutical task was to open the hermeneutics to a dialogue between two entities of which self-understanding (meaning) should be the outcome of the hermeneutics. The outcome is not emphasising the knowledge regarding objective truth, but to gain new insights for a new person in a new context by means of encountering the external text (Ricoeur in Ihde, 2004:9-13).

Ricoeur in Ihde (2004:9-13) reminds that preaching, as an act of communication, is part of a complete hermeneutics and not only about speaking or reflecting on a subject. Language is both objective and subjective, the recipient is just as important as the sender, the structure is just as important as the metaphor and the context is just as important as the subject is. This indicates the possibilities still waiting to be explored in order to improve the preacher's knowledge and skills regarding this wide and open multidisciplinary topic.

Regarding the semeiotics Ricoeur defined the symbol as any structure of signification because every symbol is a sign or a particular linguistic expression that expresses, conveys or communicates a meaning. Every symbol can function as a sign, but not every sign is a symbol. Whereas mere signs hold only manifest meanings, symbols on the contrary carry much deeper meanings. The meaning of symbols is not immediately discernible, challenging the intelligence of its users to make sense of it. Symbols are signs possessing double or even multiple meanings, but whose latent meanings are accessible only by means of the patent ones (Itao, 2010:3).

According to Itao (2010:5) Ricoeur coined a term: the hermeneutics of conflict: suspicion and faith allowing the possibility to interpret symbols with suspicion on one hand, and to interpret it with faith on the other hand.

Ricoeur's main influence can be summarised as follows:

- Language has more than one meaning, all uses of language necessarily call for interpretation (signs, such as semeiotic communication as well as rational communication);
- Language is more than an act of a speaker, it involves a whole-brain hermeneutics;
- Preaching as an act of communication is part of a complete hermeneutics and thus not only about speaking nor reflecting on a subject;
- The recipient is just as important as the sender;
- The structure is just as important as the metaphor;
- The context is just as important as the subject;
- Where symbols are involved, interpretation becomes necessary.

3.3.1.4 Interpretative perspectives on the contributions of Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur for a hermeneutics for semeiotic preaching

The important beacons laid by these exponents in the field of language, interpretation and truth and its influence on semeiotic hermeneutics are as follows:

- Truth lies not only with the source and the sender, but also with the recipient;
- Meaning can also be discovered and experienced as a natural form of understanding;
- The importance of humanity and the context in relation to an abiding authority to the Word of God, provided that the Word of God is not treated fundamentalistically;
- Personal experience of the metaphor (heuristic value of a metaphor) should hold no threat to the truth when practised with a responsible hermeneutics of interpretation;
- Language is a whole-brain hermeneutics that includes both subject and object;
- Preaching as an act of communication is part of a complete hermeneutics;
- The recipient is just as important as the sender;
- The structure is just as important as the metaphor;
- The context is just as important as the subject;
- A new understanding of the self is just as important as the knowledge;
- All language call for interpretation.

This thesis has found the contributions of Ricoeur the most valuable of all for a hermeneutics for semeiotic preaching.

3.3.1.5 Interpretative perspectives on the history of semeiotics: Charles Saunders Peirce

Semeiotics, as an interdisciplinary theory, came into existence after the Reformation but was rejected by fundamentalists and the 18th century structuralism (Atkin, s.a.:1). Semeiotics, as a discipline, originated in ancient Greece (Kubicki, 2006:61), but only became a recognised linguistic theory during the post-structural era by exponents such as de Saussure and Peirce, which contributed to a total new hermeneutical approach and text interpretation whereby the subjective influence of the individual and his/her social context or culture became just as important as the written text itself (also see Phillips, s.a.:1). According to Sweet (2014:75) Peirce positively contributed to aligning knowledge with contextualisation and experience especially religious experience-the work of the Holy Spirit.

According to Nöth (1995:39) Peirce is recognised as the father of modern theory of signs. Sweet (2014b:73-75) is of the opinion that Peirce's first important contribution lies with the field of contextualised and experienced knowledge. This imposes a differentiation between information and communication (Hughes, 2003:119-127). In modernism deductive information dominated, in postmodernism the weight began to lean more to the side of communication and experience or abductive logic (also see Burch, 2014:par. 3). Peirce insisted that the experiencing faith in God came first, not from propositions, beliefs or ethics, but from the sheer beauty of faith itself (Everaert-Desmedt, 2006:par. 2.1.2.2-par. 2.3).

Peirce argued that true pragmatism was a continuation of Jesus's teaching in Mt 7:16 regarding the fruits of faith (Ochs, 1988:41). According to Sweet (2014b:74-75) Peirce believed that logic is a process of argumentation and communication that develops from inference to inquiry (refer Bellucci & Pietarinen, s.a.:par. 2). The first mental processes are called deduction, which is only the beginning of communication and logic understanding - it is the logic mathematical facts proven by formula. If someone preaches deductively, the preacher will only restate the facts, followed by induction, which is an advanced synthetic form of cognition that issues in a creative insight of generalisation and classification (principles based on empirically gathered evidence). The highest level of thought, according to Peirce, is the abductive process (refer Downing, 2012:228-34). Abduction is a creative inquiry, proven through experience and action (*posteriori*). Abduction seeks answers and strives to prove results (concretised truth-experience). For Peirce faith resides within the abductive imagination (Sweet, 2014b:74-75).

According to Pierce, imagination in faith is allowable, as long as it ultimately alights on possible, practical effect. This may or may not be fully conscious (Peirce, 1998:235). For Sweet (2014b:78-79) all three of the above categories (deductive, induction and abduction) need to work together in an eco-hermeneutical communication and can be summarised as mind, body and spirit.

According to Hughes (2003:119-127) a new interest in the academics regarding semeiotics was also initiated by Pierce (an interest in non-verbal linguistics in a modernistic intellectual paradigm). This theory explains that verbal language is not the primary form of signifying meaning and was practised long before humans began to theorise about it. The interest in non-verbal communication led to the discovery that the human brain is capable of an intelligence to understand both verbal and non-verbal communication.

According to Guinard (2002:par. 2) a sign was for Peirce everything: a sound, a stamp, an idea, an odour, a feeling, a sonnet or the rule of a game. Nöth (1995:43) mentions that Peirce believed that a sign could only be understood by collateral experience. Therefore, it can only express what it was meant to indicate in according to the motive of the author. A sign has also infinite meaning;

every interpretant creates a similar sign in his/her mind (unlimited semiosis). These meanings can either be logical, energetic or emotional (triadic classification of signs). According to Guinand (2002:par. 2) a sign according to Peirce is actually hosts triadic meaning:

The **immediate object** is "the object as the sign itself represents it." It attaches to the foundation of the sign since it is this idea that relates to the object in the sign. The **dynamic object** is "the reality which, by one means or another, comes to determine the sign's representation." It is the "effective cause" (Aristotle) of the sign, the "real" object, the *opportunity* for the sign to be a sign, its *raison d'être*, the reality the user can experience at second hand. If the immediate object is "within the sign," the dynamic object is "outside the sign."

According to Guinand (2002:par. 2) the correct interpretation of the sign results from a cultural convention, a norm that is a strict application of the linguistic code. The intended interpretant requires a stability that allows linguistic communication and exchange. The dynamic interpretant is the real effect that occurs when the sign, in its function as a sign, determines in actuality. A sign is therefore always three signs at once.

Charles Saunders Peirce's main influence can be summarised as follows:

- He managed to integrate logic philosophy with faith in a hermeneutics for semeiotics that could be considered the first theory for whole-brain hermeneutics;
- Intellectuality is needed to exegete signs;
- He managed to bring the triadic steps of logic together in equally importance; from deductive reasoning to inductive and abductive reasoning. This has opened the door whereby the facts (the deductive logic) can be turned into body and soul (the experienced/abductive logic), utilising both hemispheres of the brain in order to communicate the information.

This thesis will endeavour to strike a balance between abstract information and creative communication and to prove that the creative *semeia* as well as the non-verbal *semeia* (the image and what it points to) have been gifted to man to communicate especially regarding religious communication. According to Hughes (2003:219) semeiotics can avoid arbitrariness via a theological and cultural normativity (just as education intends to instruct cognitive information so can education create a unanimous understanding of signs and symbols).

According to De Wet (2011:5-7) the three major shifts in the homiletics, influenced by the new hermeneutics are as follows:

- A priority shift from the text to listener (from a vertical homiletics to an horizontal homiletics);

- From exegesis to hermeneutics (from a theocentric understanding to an anthropocentric understanding);
- From Christology to pneumatology (a shift from the glory of Christ to the need to connect to people's hearts and for effective preaching-inductive preaching).

3.3.1.6 Interpretative perspectives on the history of *Sola Scriptura*

Labuschagne (2008:1190) remarks that misconceptions regarding the Reformed hermeneutics dated back to the *Sola Scriptura* doctrine and the faith in the truth and authority of the Word of God.

The phrase *Sola Scriptura* comes from the Latin word: *sola*, meaning: alone, ground or base, and the word *scriptura* meaning: writings (referring to the Scriptures). *Sola Scriptura* means that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of Christianity. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for preaching (Geisler & MacKenzie, 2009:1).

Labuschagne (2008:1188-1190) postulates that the doctrine *Sola Scriptura* is about the message that directs us towards God (the authority of God) and not to the users. *Sola Scriptura* is not about the written text as a closed objective fundamental word-by-word truth. The practice of preaching and exegesis according to Reformed hermeneutics never intended to exclude history and other traditions in order to understand and to preach from Scripture (Geisler & MacKenzie, 1994:1-2).

According to Labuschagne (2008:1188-1195) Reformed hermeneutics was never meant to be seen as a final process, but as *ecclesia reformata, ecclesia semper reformanda* (a Reformed Church that should always keep reforming). Labuschagne (2008:1188-1195) remarks as follows regarding Reformed hermeneutics:

- The intention of the Reformation was never to make a final comment regarding the understanding of Scripture and Church (that privilege previously belonged to the Pope-something the Reformers have turned away from);
- The text critical approach of the Reformers opened the door for more possibilities such as contextual hermeneutics;
- Both Calvin and Luther agreed upon the humanity of textual exegesis (God works through humans) that will always keep the exegete humble in a spiritual relation between God and man.

According to McGrath (1993:19) the Reformers described in their doctrine of accommodation, that God communicates with finite mortals in their languages without changing the context. The content may still be objectively true, but in a culture-laden form (Carson, 1998:130).

Mathison (2007:1-3) explains that misconceptions can lead to major misleading; the Reformed doctrine *Sola Scriptura* according to him was misunderstood. It was meant to be "**solo**" *scriptura* instead of **Sola Scriptura**. The intention was to propose a doctrine whereby no one should rely on his own (solo-like the Pope) wisdom in the interpretation of the Scripture.

Solo Scriptura was later revised to **Sola Scriptura** by the liberals Simeon Howard (1733-1804) and Charles Beecher (1815-1900) who advised pastors to set aside all human attachments to preaching and churches and honestly dictate themselves to Scripture alone (Mathison, 2007:1-3).

Mathison (2007:1-3) remarks that the doctrine of both *Scripturas* lost tract with contextuality and reality. The Bible would not be understood if it was not laboured by many others including archaeologists, linguists, scribes, textual critics, historians, translators and more.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Sola Scriptura is about the message that directs us towards God (the authority of God) and not to the users;
- Sola Scriptura is not about the written text as a closed objective fundamental word-by-word truth;
- Sola Scriptura was meant to be "solo" Scriptura instead of Sola Scriptura. The intention was to propose a doctrine whereby no one should rely on his own (solo-like the Pope) wisdom in the interpretation of the Scripture;
- The correct interpretation of Sola Scriptura implicates that the Bible can be proclaimed with the responsible liberty of creativity.

3.3.1.7 Interpretative perspectives on the history of the λόγος

Peters (1967:4-69) describes that the word λόγος stands prominent in the Reformed hermeneutics and originates from the Greek word: λόγος, originally from the word λέγω lego.

"I say", originally meant an opinion, an expectation, word, speech, and account or to reason, but later became a technical term in philosophy to explain logic. The Sophists used the term to implicate *discourse*. Plato preferred to translate it with the word reason or giving an account,

meaning to speak and to put together. Thus, Plato's emphasis is on the living dialogue as the only context for the unveiling of λόγος. The Latin translation is *ratio* and this had led to a more strict use of reason within the confines of mathematics, science and logic (Peters, 1967:4-69).

Despite the conventional translation of λόγος as *word*, it was not always used for *Wort* from the time when Luther translated it. In the grammatical sense, the term *lexis* (λέξις) was more often used to explain a word as λόγος. Early translators from Greek in the 4th century were frustrated by the inadequacy of any single Latin word to convey the λόγος in the Gospel of Jn. Later commentators turned to a more dynamic use of λόγος, involving *the living word* as proposed by Jerome and Augustine (Jeffrey, 1992:459-460).

Sweet (2015)⁷ also agrees that philosophers such as Heraclitus who first used the word λόγος (also see Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015:1) have narrowed the meaning of λόγος to rational knowledge that eventually failed to contain humans under such one divine universal truth.

In more recent attempts to understand the meaning of λόγος, Sweet (2015)⁷ maintains that λόγος in the context of Plato's understanding can also mean to bring two opposite worlds together. He concedes that λόγος can also mean the narrative of God in relation to man's narrative as reaction to the narrative of God. Sweet (2012:85) explains furthermore that faith does not come from teaching objective truth alone but by participating in the divine narrative of God, that includes human creativity. With this interpretation, semeiotic preaching as a hermeneutical discourse steps into the postmodern paradigms of Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur.

Peppler (2013:1) agrees with Sweet that truth is an intertwined relationship with God's story and with each other's stories. Karl Barth believed the λόγος is truly God as well as truly man (Yoon, 2008:95). Truth has only one reference and that is not if we know it, or even proclaim it, it is if we can live it. This also relates to Ricoeur's concept of self-understanding (meaning) and defines truth as a shared experience, not a proposition. The ancient Hebrew word *shubh* means not viewing God from a distance, but entering into a relationship where God is central in the human experience (Peppler, 2013:1).

According to Van der Merwe and Viljoen (1998:8-9) truth is not only what we know, but also how we react to its content. The story does not end in the λόγος it begins with the λόγος. Is this not what Hermes did when he translated the messages from the gods (where the science of hermeneutics derived from)? Hermes had to stand between two worlds in order to translate the

⁷ Seminar conducted by e-Church, Mosaic Church, Johannesburg

message of the gods to ordinary people (Hoeller, 1996:1). Louw and Nida (1989:400) also concede that in spite of all the different meanings of the word λόγος in different contexts, the theological meaning of it is deeply interrelated with a relationship between God and flesh according to John 1:14. The gospel of John identifies the λόγος, through which all things are created as divine *Theos* and further identifies Jesus as the incarnated λόγος.

Labuschagne (2008:1205) concedes in the light of Barth and Brunner that truth is also incarnational and relational (not possible without a relationship with God through Jesus Christ). This implicates that God has the final say which man can only endeavour to understand throughout all his life. Jesus taught people to experience truth within their own lives, to rise to the occasion of God's glory and grace (Sweet, 2014b:50).

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- λόγος, can also mean the living word;
- λόγος can also mean the narrative of God in relation to man's narrative as reaction to the narrative of God;
- Truth is an intertwined relationship with God's story and with each other's stories;
- λόγος is truly God as well as truly man;
- The gospel of John identifies the λόγος, through which all things are made, as divine theos and further identifies Jesus as the incarnated λόγος;
- The λόγος has a human side involving real human experiences and senses.

3.3.1.8 Conclusion: Interpretative perspectives on the history of hermeneutics and the theory of semeiotic communication

It has become evident that hermeneutics stands between two responsibilities regarding objective truth; to address the presence in such a manner that the historical meaning does not become irrelevant, and secondly, to avoid that the subjective interpretation does not create no universal truth at all:

- This research recognises the complex history and lack of knowledge (sporadic) regarding the history behind rational theology and how to pursue objective truth for Biblical preaching;
- The debate regarding universal truth and the Church's protectiveness of the truth is indeed controversial;
- The metaphor was for a very long period overruled by the literal-truth paradigm;

- New scientific interest in hermeneutics began to change this perception and added normative proof of logic and intelligence to semeiotic language;
- The complex science of hermeneutics in the 20th century evolved to an understanding that the subject of knowledge matters as much as the object;
- The fusion of horizons proposes that the text's history should articulate with the reader's own background and become one of the major reasons for rejecting the complete objectivity of the rationalist project;
- Truth can also be experienced (*Spiel* or play);
- The basic model of conversation involves an exchange between conversational partners that seeks an agreement;
- Habermas made the hermeneutics of the human sciences more credible for scientific purposes;
- Reason cannot happen without communication and communication cannot be meaningful without reason. This includes symbolic language;
- Habermas also contributed to the important equality between subject and object in communication (contextuality);
- Regarding the speech act called the *perlocutionary act*, it can be achieved in many different ways;
- Language is always polysemic; it can have more than one meaning, more than one translation; so all uses of language call for interpretation (including signs, such as semeiotic communication as well as rational communication);
- Language is a whole-brain hermeneutics that includes both subject and object, both semeiotics and structure (referred to as a complete language offering multiple sense);
- Self-understanding (meaning) should be the final outcome of the hermeneutics;
- Preaching as an act of communication is part of a complete hermeneutics not only about speaking nor reflecting on a subject;
- Language is both objective and subjective, the recipient is just as important as the sender, the structure is just as important as the metaphor, and the context is just as important as the subject is. This indicates the possibilities still waiting to be explored in order to improve the preacher's knowledge and skills regarding this wide and open multidisciplinary topic;

- The whole-brain concept dates further back than we might have thought and the rest of the research will search for its Biblical normativity;
- The goal of a hermeneutics of conflict for interpreting signs is therefore to have the hidden meaning of symbols brought to light and understood. It is a form of iconoclasm that rescues the symbol from falsification to its real meaning;
- Suspicion and faith are needed to reveal the hidden messages behind words and symbols;
- Semeiotic preaching is not new, but existed in ancient Biblical times;
- Hebrew meditation was multi-dimensional with touching sensory images. The power in their meditation came from a dialogue of multi-layered metaphors;
- Metaphor is also widely recognised as a matter of thought and not only a matter of expression;
- Pierce managed to integrate logic philosophy with faith in a hermeneutic for semeiotics that could be considered as the first whole-brain hermeneutics;
- Semeiotics are needed to turn facts into body and soul, into experience, utilising the right-hemisphere of the brain and other senses such as emotion and imagination;
- New hermeneutics is a priority shift from the text to listener (from a vertical homiletics to an horizontal homiletics), from exegesis to hermeneutics (from a theocentric understanding to an anthropocentric understanding) and from Christology to pneumatology (a shift from the glory of Christ to the need to connect to people's hearts and for effective preaching-inductive preaching);
- The doctrine of both *Scripturas* lost tract with contextuality and reality. The Bible would not be understood if it were not laboured by many others including archaeologists, linguists, scribes, textual critics, historians, translators and more;
- Λόγος is both incarnational and relational (not possible without a relationship with God through Jesus Christ). This implicates that God has the final say which man can only endeavour to understand throughout all his life;
- Jesus taught people to experience truth;
- The *solo monologue* and *solo method* certainly has become further defused in the digital age, but there are exciting new possibilities to be experimented with in designing of a new communicational hermeneutics for a semeiotic rich generation;
- The possibilities of a whole-brain homiletics seem to hold prosperous results for the future of preaching when treated holistically responsible, meaning according to Biblical theology, the correct principles and for the right reasons;

- There is a need for a Christian semeiotics that is interrelated with expository preaching and the work of the Holy Spirit.

3.4 INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

In this section, the research will endeavour to indicate the importance of listening to the sociological sciences especially regarding modernism, post- and digimodernism. This will be done by a qualitative eclectic literary study in the field of sociological sciences according to the recommendations of Cartledge (2003:15) and Pieterse (2001:13). The interest in the perspectives of the sociological sciences will specifically endeavour to discover more empirical proof of the impact of cultural shifts on society and trust in the Church. Cilliers (2004:6) asks the following questions:

- Has Reformed theology taken these shifts really into account? (33% church attendance already apparent in the 1980's as indicated Chapter 2)
- Has the Church explored new possibilities in order to stay relevant?
- Does the homiletics endeavour to understand audiences better?

Rab (2007:4) mentions that culture is a highly complex concept; therefore, care should be taken when making assumptions. According to Rab (2007:4), the word culture originated from the Latin verb *colere*, which means, "to cultivate". It was first used to refer to the cultivation of land (vineyards, gardens, etc.). Thus, *cultura agri* means to look after, nurture, change and improve the "raw" nature that surrounded man, e.g. instruments, tools, clothing, ornaments, customs, institutions, beliefs, rites, games, works of art, omit, and even language – all that enable man to become a social being.

This thesis will briefly interpret the shifts from modernism to postmodernism and then of the impact of the newly described digimodernism.

3.4.1 The transformation from modernism to postmodernism and the effect on cultural changes on the Church

According to Wijnberg (2014b:6-7) the Church, no matter what they do to keep their audiences satisfied, is not in a time of religious upheave anymore. Wijnberg identifies four major (dominating) cultural changes over a period of 3 centuries, AD, until now as follows:

Table 12: Four major (dominating) cultural changes

Culture:	Period:	Style:
Religion:	300 bc.-16 th century	From above: Preaching
Knowledge:	16 th century - 20 th century	Rational, objective teaching
Construction:	20 th century	Self, subjective, Individualism
Production:	1960- until now	Consumerism, Shared information

It is evident that the Church as a higher authority is no longer the dominant entity in the Western Culture since the 17th century. The realistic conclusion is that membership numbers are not more important than having committed members and having devoted preachers with nothing to lose whilst endeavouring to present the Word of God with the best of the left-brain discoveries in combination with the best of the right-brain possibilities. In that way, those committed to the Christian faith will remain committed to make this faith visible in a world where the tide might again turn towards a need for the Word and a life of and for God.

The beginning of the 20th century (late modernism) was characterised by the influences of science, reason, apologetics and ideology (exclusiveness). Theological diversity made its way in the Western Church and, which reached its peak in the mid-20th century (Thiselton in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:604).

The homiletics was characterised by a varied spirituality as well as modernistic influences in establishing universities, teaching universal methods and truth (Conner, 2013:1). Protestant homiletics began to develop an openness towards modernism (Niemandt, 2007:20-23; Middleton & Walsh, 1995:75-83; Atkinson in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:362-366).

Postmodernism arose in the middle of the 20th century as a commentary to modernism (Cilliers, 2004:7-9). According to Vanhoozer (2003:7-9) the term postmodernism is difficult to define and should rather be seen as another modernistic development or condition created by new perspectives or reactions. Postmodernism still indicates a significant relation to modernism still sharing some similarities, but with different approaches and accents. Vanhoozer (2003:7-9) believes that the predominant transformation from modernism to postmodernism was the rival between the modernistic philosophy of universal truth (objectivism) and the postmodern philosophy of truth (subjective to the self or to different cultural/social contexts).

McClure (2007:112-114) believes that postmodernism brought an openness to meta-narratives and to collaborate more with other theories (such as sociology, the linguistics, psychology) than ever before, thus opening the theology to explore diversity. According to Webb (2014:1) postmodern people are more open to trust realness than absolutes. To compliment absolute truth, the focus is also on truth in a smaller normative space that includes relationships, social contexts and experiences. Carson (1998:91) believes postmodernism has assisted homiletics to move away from unnecessary dogmatism, control and legalism to realness and relations. Stott and Scharf (2013:2-5) warn not to let the pendulum of humanity swing so far that the authority of the Word becomes secondary to the demands of real human experiences and relations.

One of the fundamental mistakes committed by the modern rational thinkers was that they have excluded human experience and the creative mind from learning (Atkinson in Dowley *et al.*, 1988:486) by imposing the natural scientific methods on the human and linguistic sciences. Gadamer (1975:174-224) first rejected this practice. Ritzer (2008:567-568) follows Habermas, in believing that postmodernism also committed mistakes, for instance, in over-reacting to modernism and in failing to relate the postmodern phenomenon to real practices.

When postmodernism entered the modernistic culture as a commentary and began to question absolute truth and control, preaching once again came in the spotlight of scepticism and distrust (Cilliers, 2004:7-9). The Church, well established in their modern ways, began to resist postmodern thinking. It is questionable if the Reformed traditions, especially in South Africa, have listened to the postmodern critique and shed some outdated radical modernistic practices (Niemandt, 2007:42-44; Cilliers, 2004:9).

There are numerous reasons why the Western Protestant churches are struggling to adapt to new cultures after the modernistic era (and they are not the only churches), but only three important reasons will be highlighted:

- The first reason is the Church's long history of holding onto pre-modernistic and modernistic influences (Niemandt, 2007:42). Modernism was the culture of all sciences and fitted the Reformed churches well because the emphasis on authority resonated with the belief in the authority of God above. Modernism also enhanced objective truth, which was well accepted in the Western culture and for academic training.
- The second reason has to do with the protecting character of the Church's own cultures and traditions and the accompanying fear to violate the authenticity of the Word of God with any other previous methods that had no relation to scientific rational reasoning (Sweet *et al.*, 2003b:13-38).

- The third reason is called religious exclusivity, especially amongst the mainline churches (Gibson *et al.*, 2004:63). This characteristic is built on modernistic colonialism that gave birth to the Christendom with political and economic powers and a strong belief that it has become the superior culture (Niemandt, 2007:13,25).

Postmodernism did not declare war against left-brain reasoning but rather questioning if this should be implemented as the only intellectual method. Postmodernism also did not come to draw an absolute boundary between modernism and postmodernism (Niemandt, 2007:24) but should have challenged Reformed homiletics to listen to the invitations of meta-narratives, such as the use of diversity, images and stories (parables) and reconnecting to true human experiences in order to reconstruct the same content in just a different package and context (Niemandt, 2007:21-23).

3.4.2 Interpretive perspectives on the emergence of a new culture: digimodernism

According to Cole (2016:1) sociologists (digital sociology) are specifically interested in the following areas:

- The impact of digital technology on tangible interpersonal communication and influence;
- The role and impact of digital communication on building and informing communities and shaping important values;
- Since the early days of the emergence of digital communication, the so-called digital divide has been an area of concern to sociologists, for example, the divide between different cultures such as the Church and the common (secular) culture. What was supposed to bring people from all cultures together, is in digital communication simultaneously alienating cultures, especially those still interested in gathering large groups in order to share collective information and experiences (such as the Church);
- Sociologists are also interested in technology and visual media (digital sociology) and how it shapes cultures, persuasion and moral responsibility;
- The impact of digital communication on making realistic decisions;
- Sociologists do not unanimously agree on the negative impact of digital communication on society and humanity.

McGrath (2012:3-47) on the other hand advocates the negative impact of digital technology on especially family relationships from a human-moral point of view. The second reason, according to Greeley (2012:31-33) is that there does not exist enough empirical evidence of the impact of

digital technology on society such as the degeneration of humanity and decision-making. The empirical results conducted in this study regarding the impact of digital communication on the Church and on preaching could also not provide enough evidence regarding its negative influences.

3.4.2.1 Defining digimodernism

Many exponents believe that there exists a correlation between technology and the transformation of culture, especially the technology regarding communication. Habermas (1987:140-267) believed, for example, that communication is the source through which people gain knowledge and information whereby they develop mutual identities which in turn create and transform cultures. Habermas was concerned about the individualistic movement introduced by new media that may damage collective society and identity. Kirby (2006:1) and Kumcu (2011:8-9) also believe that technology such as digital technology can transform a culture. This argument receives support from (Joubert, 2012a:17). The hermeneutical observations regarding communication and culture offers more reasons for the degeneration of preaching than just to point a finger at theological training.

McCarthy (1981:272-273) believes Habermas was correct that communication and communicational technologies and strategies shape and transform society faster and more radical than any other human activity ever before.

Kirby (2006:1), a British cultural critic, believes that postmodernism has become defused and marginalised after the turn of the millennium and the arrival of digital technology and now refers to it as post-postmodernism or pseudo-modernism. Hirsch (2006:16) refers to the new culture as liquid-modernity. According to Vermeulen and Van den Akker (2010:4-12) the new culture (after the millennium) can be described as meta-modernism or digimodernism.

Where modernism endeavoured to totalise everything and postmodernism liberated against totalisation and became self-centred and shaped by culture (Middleton & Walsh, 1995:75-83). Digimodernism (referring to a new culture) consists of a diversity of cultures made possible by globalisation based on the influence of advanced technology that connects people with different ideas from all over the world (Wijnberg, 2014b:1-4). This argument receives support from Kirby (2006:1). Digital communication thus has not only created a total new exciting way of communication (Kumcu, 2011:8-9), but also another new culture called digimodernism (Kirby, 2006:1).

According to Hohstadt (2010:1) one of the concerning characteristics of the digitised culture is that it is diverse, fast moving and transforms quickly, what was yesterday out-dated could become tomorrow's latest fashion, leaving unstable worlds behind that refuses static realities.

According to Joubert (2012a:28) postmillennium (digimodernistic) people are pilgrims not settlers creating a dislike in tangible *koinonia* (Barna cited by McKnight, 2011:1). This might describe why the Church (settlers) finds it difficult to arrange group orientated programs based on old ecclesiological principles such as Sunday sermons.

Another concern is the impact of digimodernism on tangible humanity by isolating people more than ever before, making people more self-sufficient than ever before. According to Carter (2006:18-27) the postmillennium culture can be defined as a post-Christendom, de-churched or declining Christendom culture or also referred to as the end of Civil Religion (Beyers, 2014:1-12; Joubert, 2012b:20; Eswine, 2008:10-19). According to Joubert (2013:114) post-Christendom is not only a result of liberalism and secularism, but also a direct result of the digitised culture and non-linear individualism. According to Beyers (2014:12) the concept Super Storm might be an overreaction, Christianity is not dying it is in need of a transformation whereby the old must make room for the new.

To be caught between two extreme different worlds is never easy. Some churches and theologians resist the new cultures and others surrender everything without giving careful attention to consequences and the new dangers of following the newest trends (Van Tonder, 2010:4). The degeneration of preaching is a complicated matter, but receives more momentum where churches still prefer to hold onto the old ways as the only way (*sola method*) (Joubert, 2013:116).

The most significant challenge for the Church is to find wise and theological responsible ways to fit into the new culture, without giving up the divine message of the Word of God or the purpose of the Church (Kysar & Webb, 2006:13-14).

Barna cited by McKnight (2011:1) believe that the above problems may only be experienced in the near future, because not all people are excessive users of digital technology yet, but for many it may have already affected their relationships to local communities (also see Lynch, 2005:54). According to Barna (2016a:1) the trend of digital communication is still going positive opposed to the Church's negative growth. Eighty one percent of women feel positive connected to friends, and **58 %** feel encouraged. The downside is that it appears that people will lose wisdom.

Digimodernism is part of a storm the Church has to face, challenging the Church to make effective, creative, responsible, theological and practical adaptations (Beck, 2012:1; Barna in McKnight, 2011:1).

According to Wijnberg (2014b:1-4) digimodernism is more diverse than any other culture before, enhanced by globalisation (global communication and socialisation). It also shows characteristics of oscillating between old and new cultures (Vermeulen & Van den Akker, 2010:4-12) that makes it even more complex than any culture before to study. This theory is based on an assumption that cultures never completely disintegrate when a new culture arrives, even if the former culture is dismantled and pushed to the periphery there will always be an oscillation between old and new cultures (Vermeulen & Van den Akker, 2010:4-12).

Consensus on what defines a culture can hardly be achieved when a culture is still in its early stages. The problem with describing digimodernism is that sociologists and philosophers do not have a long history to base authentic assumptions on. The major impact of this culture is still to be experienced.

In order to interpret digimodernism and its influences on the Church, it is important to obtain a general view of its characteristics.

3.4.2.2 Interpretive perspectives from the characteristics of digimodernism

The digitised culture is incorporating, flexible, highly informed by the global community and capable to form new ideas and beliefs as quickly as the global community accepts it. This is called digital romanticism (Vermeulen & Van den Akker, 2010:4-12).

Rab (2007:14-16) and Kirby (2006:1) summarise the digimodernistic culture as follows:

- Interconnectivity - Permanent availability changes traditional cultural patterns ranging from how we use our personal space to how we do our work and perceive society;
- Isolation - digital communication unfortunately also opens the door to isolate individuals even further in an unrealistic network to an unreal social community with immense consequences that. It is one thing to offer support with a text message, it is another thing to get involved in real eye to eye support of people in need of food, clothes, touch, etc.(refer Tubbs & Moss, 2012:322-323; Barna, 2011:1; Lynch, 2005:54);
- Complex - the devices used in digital communication enable users to engage in complex processes made simple by the touch of a button;

- Speed - Digital communication has also made communication simple and quick and therefore decreases the need for long explanations. One symbol, image or metaphor replaces long sentences;
- Intangibility - in a digital environment we are distant from the actual source of information and objects. Therefore trust and reliability has increased;
- Post-Historical - Kirby (2006:1) contributes to these perspectives by adding another characteristic that can be referred to as a post-history culture. The negative side of this type of communication is that it wipes out history and future and enhances the need for the now and the self by means of individual engagement, controlling (power), managing, creating fast food that will not satisfy the stomach for very long;
- The fact that digital communication already supplies the users with creative functions may also create a shallowness in the human spirit and society, with almost no creativity (Kirby, 2006:1);
- The pseudo-modernist may become technological wise, but socially helpless and immature in a realistic world been wiped out by an unrealistic world (Kirby, 2006:1).

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- There does not exist enough empirical evidence of the real impact of digital technology on society;
- The concept Super Storm might be an overreaction, Christianity is not dying it is in need of a relevant contextual adaptation;
- The new culture (after the millennium) can be described as meta-modernism or digimodernism which created a new way of communication and culture;
- The degeneration of preaching is a complicated matter, and does not relate to one reason only. It seems from a sociological perspective that more in depth research is needed to address this complex phenomenon;
- The challenge for preaching in this context is to make more room for creativity, experience and tangible participation than ever before. Christ should also become part of the immediate need.

3.5 INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES FROM THE COMMUNICATIONAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Just as the printed media and rational philosophy changed the predominant preaching method from right-brain experiences to left-brain reasoning, so has digital communication transformed the predominant left-brain communication to a more advanced communication that includes the right brain (especially the visual and the sensory communication. According to Kirby (2006:1) the entire world is caught in a communicational challenge in an attempt to get the attention of this new culture.

Much has been written regarding this topic from both inter and intra-disciplinary perspectives including the theology, educations, the communications and psychology. This indicates the importance of effective communication in the field of the homiletics and not only effective interpretation. The purpose of this study is to search for new communicational strategies that can support preaching as a predominant monological form of public communication in a more diverse, visual orientated and interactive communicational era. This will include listening to the following strategies that could be applied to the problematic praxis of the thesis:

- Interpretative perspectives regarding new communicational strategies that makes digital communication the most advanced form of mass communication;
- Interpretative perspectives on creativity and imagination in effective communication;
- Interpretative perspectives on the effectiveness of narratives and metaphors;
- Interpretative perspectives on different forms of communication and its effects on different brain functions;
- Interpretative perspectives on public communication and the art of persuasion.

3.5.1 Interpretative perspectives on the strategies of digital communication and its effect on monological communication

Kirby (2006:1) and Cilliers (2004:10-11) interpret the communicational strategies of the digital culture as follows:

- Digital users are no longer spectators they have become inventors whereby the user is no longer a passive listener, but an active participator of the script who can predict the outcome e.g. in reality television. This certainly has a negative effect on authority, reliability and trust;

- Another negative aspect is called: digital illusions, e.g., you do not know if the source of your information is really coming from another person, the same gender or race. Cilliers (2004:10-12) also believes the image can replace reality and desensitised people from real experiences;
- Digital technologies re-structured the nature and relationship between author and receiver. All receivers have become authors (producers) themselves. In a sense, all participants become part of the text. Rab (2007:14-16) also believes that digital communication has combined oral, written and visual communication;
- Digital communication evaporates fast and has ephemeral nature. Messages can be deleted, archived, and then forgotten. It is not like books where one can return too. Users of digital communication hereby gets addicted to the new and the next message or image;
- The image is replacing the culture of books (Cilliers, 2004:12);
- Heartfelt communication and rhetoric are replaced by visual shows making the monologue one of the worst forms of communication (Cilliers, 2004:14).

According to Kirby (2006:1) postmodern people still have read, watched, and listened, stimulating their intelligence, creativity and authenticity. In pseudo-modernism one clicks, presses, surfs, chooses, moves, and downloads, stimulating meaningless activities, enhancing ignorance, arrogance and less creative brain activities. It is clear that the dominant intellectual framework has change or will change soon. The question is, why is this form of almost lazy communication so highly effective and so highly anti-monological communication?

The digital communication's success with utilising a communication that stimulates the imagination and creativity has brought a new interest in it amongst various sciences interested in effective communication. Cilliers (2004:9-14) agrees about the massive cultural shift in communication that shifted communication from predominantly the ears to the eyes (image rich communication) making the monologue probably one of the worst forms of communication. Kumcu (2011:8-9) also believes that digital communication, with all its interactive and creative possibilities such as sound, symbols and images, has made the verbal left-brain monologue the worst form of communication.

Digital technology thrives on interactive whole-brain communicational strategies (Rab, 2007:14-16) that are busy creating a declining interest in former communicational strategies, especially if they are not interactive as reading or monological speeches such as lecturing or preaching (Barna in McKnight, 2011:1; Hohstadt, 2010:1; Rab, 2007:14-16).

Pfeiffer and Jones (1998:15) postulate that the communication mode that we still rely on most is the verbal communication, yet it creates the most problems especially in the digital context (Joubert, 2012a:17; Sweet *et al.*, 2003a:23). Another problem with verbal communication, according to Pfeiffer and Jones (1998:15), is that words are not always associated with similar experiences or similar feelings on the part of the listener and that has a huge effect on the understanding and the memory of the listener (Gadamer, 1975:172-468).

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Digital communication is highly diverse, immediate, interactive and interesting (offering many functions) and utilising the whole brain without too much concentration;
- Digital communication uses less words and more pictures;
- It is becoming a real challenge not to bore the users of digital communication with too long intellectual and theological arguments;
- Digital technologies has combined oral, written and visual communication;
- Digital communication stimulates the whole brain.

3.5.2 Interpretative perspectives on creativity and imagination on effective rhetoric

Grözinger in Immink and Stark (2002b:175-176) believes that humans are created to complete even what is written in the Word of God because we are alive and so is the Word of God. According to her, we create with this incompleteness, in order to create a new language, a reception aesthetics whereby something like answering happens in order to complete the calling. To complete what is written means we have to use human skills in order to accomplish it. Cilliers (2004:199) believes that all human creativity builds on the familiar and something that already exists, but rearranges it so that it can be observed from a different perspective.

According to De Bono (1979:162) it is difficult to come up with a creative idea without knowledge, thus encouraging the role of the whole brain in order to be successful in the constructing and shaping of a new idea. De Bono (1979:162-165) also believes that the more we throw out old ideas instead of changing them, the less creative we become. This emphasises the importance that not only semeiotic preaching, but also all homiletical models, should base new theories on the principles of an ancient-future homiletical concept.

According to Engemann cited by Immink (Immink *et al.*, 2002a:38-49) and others, creativity has the following dynamics:

- It is a process that connects to reality, creating new stories and new pragmatic possibilities. De Bono (1979:160-161) believes that creativity is not always about creating something new, but to change, renew or to refresh the old ideas because of dissatisfaction. The research results of this thesis confirm that there are numerous voices expressing their dissatisfaction with the preaching as a communicational act. In this sense creativity is needed to adjust and renew previous ideas (Kruger, 2014:4-5);
- A successful creative sermon creates cohesion between the preacher's theological motives and the cooperation of the audience, when the listeners; who are mostly pre-occupied during the week by various activities, can later on still recall what has been preached in order to become doers of the Word;
- A creative sermon thus creates open spaces for people to live and act their faith in;
- A creative sermon addresses the past, the present and anticipates the future;
- Creativity is not only doing something creative, but also becoming something - a real person dealing with real life issues.

The insights of Cilliers (2004:214-215) regarding the effective use of images can be summarised as follows:

- The image serves the words we speak in order to enrich them (refer Crockett *et al.*, 2011:57);
- Images make reality possible;
- Images reduce too many words and enable us to preach shorter resulting in the messages being more memorable;
- Images enable the building of relations - as will be elaborated on in the next section.

Wiersbe (1994:64) influenced by Brueggemann explains that humans have places of resistance and embracing that can only be reach by means of metaphors, stories and images. Wiersbe (1994:61) gives an example of the power of imagination according to the insights of Siegelman (a psychologist) who believes that healing is not possible without bringing a person's inner life (affect) and understanding together (cognition) through imagination and metaphorical images. This brings the research to an important question; can the creativity required for semeiotic preaching be learned to the non-so-creative preachers and should all metaphors really contain a visual picture or is it also something that can be created with words?

Cilliers (2004:14) who believes that creativity can be learned, also believes that the human mind is already a gallery of pictures, not a library of written facts and points. According to Wiersbe

(1994:61,67-68) the whole social life is based on imagination, yet it is not only the Church that suffers a lack of imagination, but also everywhere where people abandon imagination for the pragmatics, the science and the reason. According to Wiersbe (1994:71) the psychologist Siegelman discovered through research that children after entering school soon become less imaginative and more literal. Wiersbe (1994:290) further explains that by the age of 40 most people are about 2% as creative as when they were young, just because they have not practised imagination, but it does not mean that it has disappeared; it just needs to be exercised again.

Artists like Betty Edwards also believe that it is possible to teach every human being creative and artistic skills because it is according to whole-brain studies possible and relates to a form of observation. Once you have trained the right brain to observe with imagination, it gives birth to creativity (Edwards, 2001:1-5). It is a process that connects to reality, creating new stories and new pragmatic possibilities.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Creativity is a gift from the living God;
- All human creativity builds on something that already exists, but rearranges it so that it can be observed from a different perspective;
- Creative ideas require knowledge;
- Creativity is needed to connect to reality;
- A creative sermon thus creates open spaces for people to live and act their faith in;
- A creative sermon addresses the past, the present and anticipates the future;
- Creativity is not only doing something creative, but becoming someone real;
- The image serves the words;
- Images make reality possible;
- Images make messages more memorable;
- Images create a door to connecting and building relationships;
- Images can create a divine presence that words cannot always accomplish;
- Images touch more than one human sense at a time;
- Creativity and imagination can be taught.

3.5.3 Interpretative perspectives on the effect of different communicational styles in correlation with different brain functions

The study of the effect of different communication styles on the brain is still in the early days, but what has been discovered so far should illuminate the homiletical field with new insights to explore both exciting new and old ways to capture the mind and imagination of listeners via verbal and non-verbal communication.

Research in understanding the relation between different forms of transforming information, e.g. the difference between storytelling and lecturing and how it activates different brain activities, is also in its childhood days. According to Widrich (2012:1), Spanish psychologists have discovered via experiments whereby they have conducted brain scans on volunteers who have listened to different styles of communication, that the richer the story is in describing events and experiences, the more it activates the sensory cortex. The human brain has the ability to recall and share the experiences that have been shared in the story. For example, when someone tells about how delicious certain foods are, the sensory cortex becomes active and creates a shared experience in taste.

In a research conducted by Crockett *et al.* (2011:92) they indicate how reading and hearing have become less effective ways of carrying information across. Reading and hearing generate less than 20% memory after two weeks. In another research by Tubbs and Moss (2008:37-38) results indicated that the average effectiveness of receiving information via listening alone is 25%. This implicates that people do not hear 75% of all spoken messages.

According to Crockett *et al.* (2011:9-11) it is not only preachers who struggle to address the postmillennium audiences, but also educators, especially those teaching teenagers because of their excessive use of electronic media and digital communication. According to Crockett *et al.* (2011:9-11) electronic media has changed the neurological functions of the brain and human observation and concentration. Communication in the digitised context has shifted from predominant verbal to predominant visual communication (Van Tonder, 2010:7).

O'Donoghue (s.a.:1-13) and Hofstadter (2001:1) indicate that there is scientific proof that digital communication is busy changing the neurologic functions that activate communication, especially when over-stimulated (Crockett *et al.*, 2011:57).

According to Stephens *et al.* (2010:1) narrative communication is successful because it does not only activate the whole brain, but also synchronises the brain of the speaker with the brain of the listener in what is called neural coupling that improves understanding and persuasion (a method

that has already been implemented effectively in commercial marketing). It is proved that as long as the speaker involves the listeners, the neural coupling remains stable, but when the communicator fails to involve the listener the neural coupling switches off after a while and the speaker loses the interest of the listener. The more the communication activates the neuro-cortexes the easier new information become accessible to the brain and for persuasion and memory.

Van Praet (2015:1) concedes in his research that people speak, because they want their message to resonate with their recipient/s. The importance of shared experiences in communication is best explained in quoting Van Praet (2015:1):

There is neurological evidence that effective communication actually physically resounds in the brain of the receiver, echoing the thoughts of the communicator. By using brain scans, Princeton University has led a remarkable study that determined that in both the listener and the communicator, similar regions of the brain fired when participants were engaged in unrehearsed, real-life story telling. The research team concluded that our brain cells synchronize during successful communication. Sometimes the listeners' brain patterns would even anticipate where the story was going.

As people make more use of digital communication and get familiar with processing information with the whole brain when communicating, they begin to process information four times faster than a speaker can speak. This causes listeners of the monological speeches to get easier side-tracked than ever before, placing their thought on other things and losing track of what the speaker wants to convey (Cleary *et al.*, 2010:76-77; Rosenthal, 2013:1; Hofstadter, 2001:1).

Although Wiersbe differentiates very strongly between the left- and the right-brain thinking and never mentions the word whole-brain rhetoric, he does mention that images feed concepts and concepts discipline images, images without concepts are blind and concepts without images are sterile (Wiersbe, 1994:52).

Cilliers (2004:208-209) indicates that the differentiation between right- and left-brain functions can be over-simplified. Cilliers believes that the whole brain complements the cognitive processes of processing information and creating new ideas. Using creative communicational tools such as images and metaphors is not the result of functions of the right-hemisphere only, but also involves knowledge of the subject, passion and commitment (Swartz *et al.*, 2004:171).

The success of digital communication has revived a new interest in the functions of whole-brain communication and different methods that might rescue oral communication such as preaching from further degeneration. These findings have directed the survey to focus on the importance of understanding creativity and imagination in order to address whole-brain rhetoric.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Illustrations activate the sensory cortex of the brain;
- The human brain has the ability to recall and share experiences that are even verbally described;
- The human brain links naturally with metaphors;
- Whole-brain communicating processes information four times faster than a speaker can speak and monological speeches can get their listeners easier side-tracked than ever before;
- The success of digital communication has revived a new interest in the functions of whole-brain communication.

3.5.4 Interpretative perspectives on the use of narratives and metaphors in effective rhetoric

Widrich (2012:1) believes that the success of storytelling lies in the fact that this is what humans have been doing since our creation. According to Viljoen and Van der Merwe (2007:1) life is an incipient story.

Widrich (2012:1) and Zakk (2013:1) summarise the effect of storytelling as follows:

- A story is the best way to activate parts in the brain so that a listener turns the story into their own idea and experience;
- The simpler a story, using simple language as well as a low complexity, the more it activates the regions in the brain that relate to the situation and happenings in the story;
- It captures the whole brain (Zakk, 2013:1);
- It transports the listener into the character's world (Zakk, 2013:1);
- Good image-rich stories capture attention quicker and may hold onto it for much longer;
- Stories enhance learning, understanding and persuasion (Zakk, 2013:2).

Widrich (2012:1) concedes that we do not only tell stories, we also think and dream in narratives and images. The key to capture an occupied and tired mind is with a picture; a metaphor and a story. Metaphors activate a part in the brain called the *insula*, which helps humans to relate to emotional experiences such as pain, joy, taste *et cetera*. By looking or describing an image e.g. such as a spider, the *insula* may bring up an emotion of either fear or a pet or even an experience of being bitten by a spider. It is evident that the human brain links with metaphors and literal happenings automatically. Everything in our brain is looking for the cause and effect of something we have previously experienced.

When a narrator cannot show his/her audience a picture and needs to rely on describing it in words, the image now becomes imaginative. According to Wiersbe (1994:61) imagination is a combination of emotion and intellect, which makes it possible for listeners to see and feel, igniting the whole brain.

According to Stallman (1999:1-34) metaphors were also perceived as a creative cognitive hermeneutics of similarities since Aristotle. The essence of this understanding as a cognitive hermeneutics is that a metaphor is a form of condensed meaning or ideas compacted in one image. A metaphor is a deviant of words (not replacing words - rather reducing long explanations) representing the same meaning or truth in other words, another style of conveying rational information. A metaphor is also widely recognised as a matter of thought and not only a matter of expression (Stallman, 1999:1-34).

The digitised culture no longer communicates with long reading, long written and oral conversation alone, especially weak on listening to long structured conversations conducted with facts and points. The digitised communication utilises the whole brain to participate in communication (Burke in Russinger & Beyers, 2005:75). It is evident that digitised communication thrives on the use of images, symbols and metaphors to convey the human narrative (Harris 2008:91). One of the disadvantage of using images – verbal or visual – is that they can communicate multiple and contradictory realities to the perceiver (Jensen, 2005:136; Ricoeur, 1974:13).

According to Reinstorf (2002:1287) a metaphor, even if it hosts a familiar picture or analogue, can have more than one meaning. Exegetical information is needed to understand the author's original meaning correctly before there can be proceeded with a hermeneutical process.

Jensen (2005:136) states that one cannot use images without words and words should not be used without images. If there is a concern about openness towards meaning in the image and metaphor, one should consider that the written word also opens the door for subjective meaning.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- A story is the best way to activate the whole brain;
- Stories transport the listener into the character's world;
- Stories capture attention quicker;
- Metaphors activate a part in the brain called the insula, which helps humans to relate to emotional experiences such as pain, joy, taste, etc.;
- The human brain links with metaphors and literal happenings automatically;
- Imagination is a combination of emotion and intellect which makes it possible for listeners to see and feel, igniting the whole brain;
- A metaphor is a form of condensed meaning or ideas compacted in one image;
- Metaphor is a deviant of words (not replacing words but rather reducing long explanations) representing the same meaning or truth in other words another style of conveying rational information;
- Metaphor is recognised as a matter of thought;
- Images cannot be used without words and words should not be used without images.

3.5.5 Public communication and the art of persuasion

The art of persuasion confers with cybernetics (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001:1-4). Second order cybernetics is the science of governing or directing an audience or individual towards a goal or change, or the art of persuasion or how to convince someone without force, guilt or fear.

Rhoads (1997:1) believes that we receive around 500 persuasive messages per day, of which the highest percentage of messages rely on the visual media. It is another example of how the commercial market utilises the whole brain (the complete human senses) in order to persuade the masses.

The question to be answered is: how can new and old communicational techniques help verbal communicators to change attitudes towards verbal communication, e.g. preaching?

According to Gass and Seiter (2011:159) non-verbal communication stimulates the learning processes and persuasion because the receivers have to interact with imagination. Non-verbal communication even enhances intimacy in relations. Gass and Seiter (2011:159-177) mention seven types of non-verbal communication strategies that are important to the art of persuasion:

- Kinesics: eye contact gains trust;
- Haptics: physical touch;
- Proxemics: space and distance;
- Chronemics: promptness and time;
- Artefacts: dress and environment;
- Physical appearance: looking neat;
- Paralinguistics: Not what you say, but how you say.

The art of persuasion has much more to it than just content. According to Gass and Seiter (2011:292) images (non-verbal communication) are in accordance with research more memorable and recognisable than words and therefore an important asset to the art of persuasion. Gass and Seiter (2011:293-296) state that images persuade via the following strategies; iconicity, indexicality and syntactic indeterminacy:

- Iconicity: the one image that says it all;
- Indexicality: seeing is believing;
- Syntactic indeterminacy: Images are in need of left-brain logic.

Tubbs and Moss (2012:302-323) focus more on the negative aspects of mass media and communication, it e.g. limits the sensory and personal experience, almost no feedback and no real interpersonal conversations, even talking to computers and computers talking to humans.

According to Kvernbekk (2009:5-7) it is neither monologue nor dialogue that guarantees successful connective communication. Two more essential ingredients are needed; content that is tailored (connect) to the receiver, accompanied by an understanding of the culture of the recipient. Effective communication, no matter if it is monologue or dialogical, can only be successful when the message and the medium resonate with the soul of the receiver (connect); called reciprocal coupling.

Waknell (2012:1) also created an acronym for public speaking that may assist with the task of connecting, called CARE. He specifically designed these ingredients for effective persuasion of the audience. CARE stands for CREDIBILITY, ACTION, REASON, and EMPATHY. All four strategies work together in order to persuade the audience.

This study does not want to focus on all the complex communicational principles in detail; however, Waknell's principle of empathy has the strongest possibility to connect to an audience. According to Waknell (2012:1) empathy happens when the communicator endeavours to understand the needs of the audience and then, by means of empathy, connects to them. Second order cybernetics and the principle of empathy have something in common - it means stepping into someone else's shoes, understanding their needs and showing respect for them and then metaphorically putting arms around their shoulders and guiding them gently towards the desired action.

To practise the principle of empathy, the communicator needs to relate and engage with his audience and if the audience has become familiar in a digital context to whole-brain communication, then homiletics need to adjust to whole-brain homiletical communicational strategies.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- The art of persuasion is the science of governing or directing an audience or individual towards a goal or change;
- Research suggested that the whole brain is indeed the best way to persuade audiences;
- Non-verbal communication stimulates the learning processes and persuasion, because the receivers have to interact with imagination;
- The art of persuasion has much more to it than just content;
- The art of persuasion lies with how well the communicator can connect with his/her audience with the right content accompanied by an understanding of the culture of the recipient;
- Effective communication can only be successful when the message and the medium resonate with the soul of the receiver (connect); called reciprocal coupling;
- The art of persuasion lies also with credibility, action, reason, and empathy.

3.5.6 Conclusion: Interpretative perspectives from the communicational sciences

The communicational sciences' most valuable contribution is the effect of different communicational styles on different neurologic brain functions. Regardless of the impact of digital communication, one could consider the question of what is the impact of monological argumentative left-brain preaching consisting of facts and points on the human brain and on good whole-brain communication.

The communicational sciences also engaged the topic of the art of persuasion and the role of stories and metaphors in optimising persuasion.

The question is: can these important discoveries be normatively proved for the purpose of a new homiletical model?

3.6 INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES FROM PEWS AND PREACHERS

According to Stott and Scharf (2013:9-11) postmodern people have lost their confidence in the truth and the Church. The empirical study (Chapter 2) already indicated to the voices of the pews and their ministers from various denominational and demographical backgrounds. According to a survey conducted by Du Preez (2006:76-77), it is evident that the audience's attitudes (either positive or negative) are changed not by content, but by presentation. Cilliers (2004:16-18) elaborates on these findings as follows:

- People are tired of listening to long explanations in a quick-fix culture;
- It is an illusion that people come to church on a Sunday to listen to cognitive monologue reasoning (Sweet, 2014b:49);
- The new culture questions the motives of the Church, such as the claim to be the only owners of the truth;
- A lack of relevancy to their daily lives;
- Underestimating their intellectual competency.

According to a survey by Du Preez (2006:76-77) it is evident that the audience's attitudes (either positive or negative) are changed not by content, but by presentation.

Regarding pastoral factors, Cilliers (2004:16-18) underlines the following:

- Preachers feel that they have too many other expected responsibilities which make it difficult to spend enough time preparing a sermon;
- Not all preachers has either the talent or personality to qualify for excellent orators;
- Disappointments may lead to lose confidence in the success of preaching;
- Preachers do not always have the skills to compete against other better communicational methods and styles;
- Preachers are not always creative enough and might suffer from homiletical burnout that causes a lot of stress (see Niemandt, 2007:47).

The task of creating a sermon is never easy. Cilliers (2004:220) mentions an aspect that should become of great concern when he refers to preaching as an unbearable responsibility - the unpleasant burden of always being well-prepared and ready with something new or an answer to something new - this may lead to homiletical fatigue or burnout. If whole-brain preaching becomes a new homiletical praxis, the homiletical task will even become harder and it will take more skills and time to prepare for a sermon. If congregations are not going to allow their ministers to spend more time on preparing their sermons, the whole-brain model might not prevail.

Lane (2014:1) mentions, as already indicated in the thesis, that 50% of ministers in the U.S.A. will not last five years. One out of every ten ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form. Four thousand new churches open each year while 7,000 churches close. Another 50% of ministers feel unable to meet the demands of the job. Ninety percent feel that they are inadequately trained to cope with the ministry demands and 90% of pastors indicated that the ministry was completely different from what they thought it would be like.

With regard to Theological Training, Niemandt (2007:40) propagates openly that Reformed theological training has lost its grip on producing spiritual leaders that can influence the new culture without sacrificing the divinity of the Church. Niemandt (2007:40) quotes a report by Hartford Institute of Religious Research indicating that there is a significant correlation between the qualifications of the preacher and the lack of growth and moral standards in many churches.

3.7 CONCLUSION: INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF THE META-THEORETICAL RESULTS

Right at the beginning of the chapter it was visualized that this chapter should offer perspectives on why the problematic praxis occur. Therefore, the following perspectives could be offered in providing a framework of what is the deeper lying issues evident in this research.

It is questionable whether the Reformed tradition, as a whole, has adopted the wisdom of a whole-brain homiletical model yet. As indicated in the previous chapter, the Church is described as being caught in a Super Storm, especially due to huge cultural transformations, a rapid exodus out of the Reformed churches and a resistance (holding on to Reformed modernism) to adapt fast enough to cultural changes such as the communicational style of the digimodernism. Any church that holds onto outdated homiletical methods is not true to the calling of the Church and of its history. History revealed that the Church has always adapted to new communicational and liturgical styles and the diversity of communication is part of the creativity of humans. The Church has always incorporated external influences to inculturate the Word of God such as philosophy, scholasticism, modernism and postmodernism.

The solution proposed by this thesis lies within the field of the communicational hermeneutics and not a new theology. Although theology and philosophy played major roles in the design of homiletical models such as the dogma *Sola Scriptura*, the λόγος and the hermeneutical meaning of semeiotics, the findings have indicated that all these concepts were negatively shaped by perceptions and misconceptions. There is always a danger and a risk in any human reaction and interpretation especially when a new culture arrives, therefore wise interpretation is needed.

The scholars of a new homiletical model should wisely interpret the underlining theological concepts that shaped Reformed preaching over the centuries.

For the purpose of this study only *Sola Scriptura*, the λόγος and semeiotics were selected because of the important role they play or have played in preaching over the last 2000 years. *Sola Scriptura* could also mean that the Bible points to God and not as God speaks alone; exclusive of our own time, context or own narrative and experiences. If so, God will lose track of reality and humanity. The λόγος could also implicate more than absolute truth, but also be interpreted as bringing two opposites together; the Word becoming flesh; bringing the metaphysical to incarnate in the physical (*living dialogue*), God becoming human so that humans can think, feel, imagine, create, speak and experience as the other opposite. Preaching is therefore simultaneously Godly as well as a human skill that includes our interpretations, creativity, our successes and our failures. Both Calvin and Luther agreed that the humanity of textual exegesis (God works through humans) would always keep the exegete humble in a spiritual relation between God and man. Faith eventually does not come from teaching objective truth alone, but by participating in the divine narrative of God, that includes human creativity. Regarding *semeiotics*, one cannot separate it from major philosophical influences that have opened the interpretation of signs and symbols to subjective interpretation and meaning causing the authors to lose their original meanings. Wise interpretation should not allow the philosophers to discourage the use of semeiotic strategies in preaching, since it was practised in Scripture and used by many great Christian preachers including Jesus Christ. Although the open-ended text approach (subjective expression) has positives, faith and objectivity are non-negotiable assets in Biblical exegesis and in creating the core message of the sermon. This means: listening to other exegetical interpretations of the Biblical text, listening to the contextual understanding of the audience and their faith, listening to the Holy Spirit and returning to the text.

All research regarding this topic should mention the risks of over-emphasising using right-brain metaphors and symbols without understanding Scripture and the historical context first. Another misinterpretation regarding digital communication that may lead to wrong practices is that digital

communication is not primarily a right-brain communication medium, but a whole-brain communication strategy.

It is clear, with regard to communicational sciences, that the human brain is designed to utilise both hemispheres in communication, but has the ability to be designated to either the right-hemisphere or the left-hemisphere, according to the genre. For example, in an academic context, the left-hemisphere plays the dominant role, but when a person listens to music, the brain will switch over to the right-hemisphere. The question is not where do we place preaching (right- or left-hemisphere), but rather where does the culture wants to place preaching as a communicational task? According to the empirical results of the previous chapter, all listeners of many different denominations over a large demographical area of South Africa indicated the preference for a good sermon (contextual, relevant and preferably visually supported). According to these findings, the most responsible way in meeting this demand is with a whole-brain homiletical approach.

Digimodernism did not arrive to create a Super Storm, but rather a Super Challenge due to the communicational strategy that utilises the whole brain effectively. This new strategy of communication helped to rediscover the effectiveness of already practised homiletical methods in history. It also re-emphasises the importance of connecting to the audience, participation, community and the need for Christians to engage in the culture. The analogue Super Storm rings true where the Church holds on for too long to predominant left-brain preaching techniques (*so la method*). This era, however, offers much more than just creating a Super Storm for the Church, it also offers new possibilities to proclaim God's Word to a new culture by applying methods that can ignite the neuro-cortex of the brain more effectively thus making information more accessible to the memory of the brain.

The digimodernistic culture is not only about a specific communicational genre, but also about creating an unrealistic social self-centred culture. The Church should utilise these weaknesses in a new homiletical model.

If we can derive something positive from modernism and postmodernism, such as the importance of humanity and the context, then we can learn something valuable from digimodernism. These include e.g. the rediscovery of the advantages of whole-brain rhetoric and how metaphors and symbols can support preaching with using fewer words to explain the same concept.

One of the most significant discoveries made by digital communication is that knowledge can also be obtained via experience. According to the insights, thus far, these practices and ideas are not

completely new and the study has indicated that the Church and Biblical preachers could have practised semeiotic or whole-brain preaching long before the arrival of digital communication.

Preachers should be authors of experience, which can be created by making use of multisensory communication. In order to create such a sermon, homileticians need to investigate abductive and transductive communicational methods. Hereby, reasoning lies with the assistance of the experience of the audience and not with facts and knowledge of the preacher alone. The conclusion of the sermon is literally handed over to the audience so that the Word can become part of an incarnational experience in their lives. This happens when the preacher leaves something for the audience to ponder on and to discover the meaning of the message themselves. It is nothing but an open-ended technique to open the door for the Holy Spirit to have God experienced. Abduction offers practices such as creativity, inspiration, imagination, feeling and intuition but does not exclude either the scientific or the logical interpretations of the information compiled by means of induction or deduction.

Regardless whether right-brain homiletical methods were practised in the past, the challenge to equip preachers with these skills until they can master it well will still be a huge task. The research suggests the need of an interdisciplinary approach whereby students can be trained by communicational and creativity experts to master these skills.

According to these findings there is also light in the tunnel, everything needed to adjust to an image-rich communicational world lies in the history of homiletics, therefore a total homiletical *metanoia* is not needed in Reformed homiletics, but rather a responsible balanced *metanoia* and interpretation of Biblical texts because they already have the images and symbols hidden in them. The *semeia* is nothing but a natural communicational strategy to capture the whole-hemisphere of the brain within a communicational hermeneutics that includes the complete human experience such as imagination, participation and creativity. Therefore, semeiotic preaching can be defined as another form of expository preaching.

Semeiotic preaching wants to assist left-brain exegesis with image-rich right-brain exegesis whereby the text can also be exegeted for the images, the symbols, the back-stories and metaphors and their meaning. The art of semeiotic preaching is to utilise the old *semeia* and to create the new (giving real meaning to the word creativity). The art of interactive communication could also become a new interdisciplinary subject in the homiletics in order to help create an authentic homiletics of interactivity (a method that captures the whole brain). Digital users are no longer spectators, they have become inventors - they create the script and predict the outcome.

The most significant challenge for the Church is to transform its language and style in order to fit the new culture without giving up the divine message of the Word of God or the purpose of the Church. Regarding the style of the preacher, there is a significant return to a Christ-like style with the question; if a preacher conducts formal rituals in the sermon is he/she really modelling the core-narrative of Christ or the core-narrative of another lesson in dogmatic theology? The biggest challenge for Reformed preaching is to take the old and to create something new out of it; or in other words, how to make the experience of God and Christ more real than the theological content (*Posteriori*).

Therefore, it could be concluded that if a preacher can manage to enhance preaching to a divine experience, he/she as well as the audience will become visually part of the incarnated experience that is much more than observing PowerPoint slides and video clips, (these can however still be used).

The study has also discovered that it is not the monologue *per se* that is degenerating, but only the word-driven monologue (the left-brain monologue) conducted with facts and points. The narrative is inseparable from the metaphor. Sweet created the word *narraphor* to indicate the inseparateness of the metaphor and the narrative. Care should be taken not to focus on images, metaphors and symbols alone. The visual narrative activates the whole brain, eight neuro-cognitive systems in all, and all must be ignited to make the whole brain active. The two hemispheres of the brain function the best when they collaborate instead of operating separately.

Metaphors activate the *insula* in the brain, which helps humans to relate to certain experiences, in other words, the image makes reality possible. The art of finding images lies in a combination of good exegesis and imagination. Imagination is a combination of emotion and intellect, which makes it possible for listeners to see and feel, igniting the whole brain.

One of the required shifts from traditional preaching to semiotic preaching is to realise that the power of the Word is not in the words, it is in animating the words with stories and images. Creativity and imagination are risky crafts that need to be handled with care; the caretaker always remains the Word of God.

It is believed that modernistic preaching methods lack the skill of connecting to the audience. In the digital culture where people communicate to a cyber-community, it has become one of the most important skills in preaching. A multidisciplinary approach, especially in the liturgy of semeiotic preaching, can help to better connect to the audience.

It is neither monologue nor dialogue that guarantees successful communication, but content that connects to the receiver, accompanied by an understanding of the culture of the recipient (reciprocal coupling).

Sermons should shift from programs to processes and transform from formal structures to informal happenings. The preacher should shift from a position of authority to that of a host. The text should shift from predominantly spoken words to visual experiences supported by relating life stories.

Because the new culture develops and transforms so fast, studies in this field should remain open-ended and receptive to new theories. In this perspective, the interpretative interests of hermeneutics are not ends in themselves, but processes of understanding and interpretation towards the goal of a new practical homiletical orientation in a digitised world.

The Reformed tradition is degenerating. Church attendance hovers at the brink of 30% of members. It is a delusion that people come to church on a Sunday to listen to cognitive word-driven monologue reasoning.

According to the research, there is indeed a practical problem to be addressed between semeiotic preachers and expectations of their congregations. Semeiotic preaching is not an art but a natural form of communicating that can be learned. Personality and story-telling talent also play a role in narrative preaching, especially to tell a story well and not just to relate a good story but the basic elements is possible to be taught to any passionate preacher.

The task of creating a good sermon is never easy. The topic and praxis of semeiotic preaching are diverse matters and so rich in that even possessing a few of these skills should enable a preacher to make the word-driven monologue more interesting and memorable.

Theology, and especially Practical Theology, has God and humans in mind. The preacher stands between God and the human mind. If the preacher does not understand, the culture of the humans he/she are called to, God will become a stranger in their world. They are the people who are partly involved in a church, but they are fulltime living and working in a place and space that is no different to that of any other human being on this planet. They are the *meta-theories* alongside theology that we need to listen to because they are the Church and the culture, they have the communicational gifts, they are the informed, and they are the networked and the connected people. They are complete human beings with beautiful minds that can see, feel, touch, relate and join in or resist. Homiletics should capitalise on all of these in order to reach into their hearts.

The Church has a responsibility, on an academic level within the field of the homiletical sciences, to continuously adjust its communicational methods in a dynamic hermeneutical spiral of changes. This is for contextual preaching, but also for the credibility of the theological sciences amongst other sciences (e.g. the humanities) as well as for the professionalism of the preachers and for the integrity of our calling and mission in the world we are living in. The hermeneutical spiral of communicating the Word of God is never irresponsible nor irrational but open-ended discourses inviting the complete human intellect, the whole brain and its creativity.

CHAPTER FOUR: NORMATIVE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SEMEIOTIC PREACHING

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

This thesis began with a problem statement regarding a new homiletical theory; semeiotic preaching, that may resonate better with the communicational style (language) of the digitised culture. The problematic praxis is thus about communicational inculturation in order to prevent preaching from further degeneration. It has been observed by the researcher that this new theory has not been empirically researched in order to be approved as an additional normative homiletical model for Reformed preaching.

Osmer refers to the normative phase as wise discernment or a careful prophetic interpretation of the research results. This can now be done by listening to as many objective voices as possible in order to gain maximum objectivity of one's own suppositions in order to discern which research information has normative value and which should be declined.

According to the research phases of Osmer, the first chapter (priestly listening) endeavoured to deconstruct what is going on within the homiletical field regarding the cultural-communicational transformations of the digitised culture and its effect on preaching as a communicational hermeneutics. In order to listen to the audience's attitude towards different preaching styles a quantitative empirical research in accordance with the Likert-scale was conducted (Sullivan & Artino, Jr. 2013:1).

The aim of Osmer's second phase was to interpret and explore past and present practices from within the theology and other disciplinary field such as human sciences, sociological sciences and communicational sciences in order to discover the best practices for preaching in the digitised age.

In this chapter, the research proceeds to Osmer's third phase (2008:6-10), an objective dialogue between the empirical results and theological interpretation in order to discover new ethical perspectives for semeiotic rhetoric guiding the new hypothesis towards a new normative theory for semeiotic preaching. This will be based on one of the most important research questions; can semeiotic preaching be normatively approved and can semeiotic preaching be practised as an effective Biblical method as well as an effective and relevant contextual method that will be accepted by the postmillennium audiences?

This phase will involve a qualitative literary research within the latest theoretical guidelines regarding normativity, Biblical grammatical exegesis and a theological reflection in order to evaluate all results. These results are the most important elements in terms of what Osmer (2008:139) refers to as what should be happening in the normative phase; prophetic discernment.

The information concerning the normativity of semeiotic preaching will be collected by means of a qualitative literary research and grammatical Biblical exegesis. The qualitative literary survey will be conducted in such a way to generate maximum distance from the researcher's own interpretations by comparing the research results to sound theological perspectives from other theologians and the exegetical results.

The Biblical normative reasoning in this thesis will be based on a grammatical exegetical paradigm for obtaining objective theological perspectives regarding the researched topic. The focus area will investigate Biblical texts from the OT and the NT where semeiotic communication was practised as a literary and oral genre.

4.1.1 Methodological vantage-point

4.1.1.1 Closer understanding of the concept normativity

According to Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:3-33, 289-291) and Janse van Rensburg (2004:50-54), there is much more to normative theory than just approving the empirical results with Biblical interpretations only. It is already clear that a critical hermeneutical framework is needed to apply the new proposed theory for semeiotic preaching to a broader theological and meta-theoretical discourse, meaning listening to other disciplinary fields within the field of theology as well other disciplines such as social psychology, communicational and grammatical exegetical sciences with an interest in the hermeneutics of effective communication.

According to the above scholars, the following perspectives were discovered as valuable assets to the methodology proposed by Osmer:

- Ziebertz in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:291) motivates a normativity for both practical outcome as well as the theoretical part of the research;
- According to Ziebertz in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:291-292) there should be a balanced or even integrated relation between theory and praxis;
- Ziebertz in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:292-293) postulates that a study in Practical Theology should aim to improve religious practices, but also to serve knowledge (describing the object of research and making rational decisions);

- Janse van Rensburg (2004:50-54) agrees with Osmer that the field of normative reference in this phase should be Biblically based, but warns that the researcher should not reduce normativity to quoting Biblical verses only, but rather allow the Biblical interpretations to participate in a hermeneutical discourse with the empirical results;
- According to Dreyer in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:4-17) the danger of normativity lies between two extremes; ideology and utopia (two common errors made in the normative phase of research). Utopia may lead the researcher away from reality and ideology could become a *status quo* regardless of reality (Van der Ven *et al.* 2005:7).. Dreyer suggests an integration between these two opposites in order to create a realistic and balanced normativity (Dreyer, 2008:7);
- Gaanzevoort in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:18-20) reminds that normativity in Practical Theology is involved in more than one discourse because it is a conversational discipline in a responsible and constructive dialogue between context and source (between human social practices and God). Gaanzevoort thus widens the referential field of normativity in Practical Theology to an interdependent relation between God and context (meta-narratives or relational hermeneutics);
- Dreyer in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:11-14) brings this praxis in relation to the debate regarding objective truth as observed in the previous chapter. According to Dreyer (2005:13) absolute knowledge is not the main objective of normativity (not even according to Scripture), but a relative autonomy of objectifying truth. Gaanzevoort in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:23-25) agrees with Dreyer and warns not to fall trap to positivistic interpretations of empirical data but rather keep to a critical hermeneutical approach. According to Dreyer in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:13) true knowledge is not to create absolute truth, but to allow new facts and insights to participate in a constructive dialogue between reality, interpretation and Biblical texts. The insights should not only be Biblical but also theological, exegetical (historical and contextual which include the meta-narratives). It is also recommended that the critical hermeneutical framework should reach further than a theological/Biblical discourse and also include the meta-theoretical perspectives obtained from this research;
- According to Janse van Rensburg (2004:53-54) a balanced normative approach is to partner with both the deductive and inductive approaches of interpretation, whereby the Word of God is allowed to communicate to humans in a specific context and reality in such a way to rectify issues directly or indirectly via the wisdom gained by contextual insights;

- According to Dreyer in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:24) a new homiletical model should stay true to the creative power of God's Word in order to bring God into reality (good practice) according to Gaanzevoort in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:27-29);
- Dreyer in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:14-15) postulates a balanced hermeneutics between distance and belonging, and between Christian beliefs and modern and postmodern presuppositions. Ziebertz in Van der Ven *et al.* (2005:298-293) recommends a discursive, logic rhetoric that corresponds with Osmer's (2008:139) prophetic discernment by converging the empirical results with the normative research in a broad hermeneutical frame approved by the religious community engage with this study;
- Woodbridge (2013:106-110) concludes that normative research attempts to make prescriptions for how things should be done according to norms (rules) or values (standards) in accordance with the Bible and Christian convictions in order to make applicable and tangible recommendations. The ethics deriving from this perspectives are concerned about how we should preach according to Biblical standards in a culture that is less interested in the printed and oral text;
- Practical Theology according to Woodbridge (2013:108) is hermeneutical, in not only understanding the new transformed world, but also our traditions based on the interpretations of Scripture and history. The new theory needs an application and with the application comes a normative theory that indicates the search for God's will for present realities. According to Osmer, theological interpretation focuses on the interpretation of present episodes, situations, and contexts with theological concepts (Osmer 2008:139). Ethical reflection refers to using ethical principles, rules, or guidelines to guide action towards moral ends (Osmer 2008:161). This is required because present practices are filled with values and norms (Osmer, 2008:149). According to Smith (2010?:100) reformation can only be built on models of good practice, whether past or present in order to reform a congregation's present actions. Semeiotic preaching is challenging the current communicational and hermeneutical practices of the Church with evidence of the rapid declining interest in Reformed preaching. Critical reflection is thus needed in the light of Scripture and tradition in order to motivate a new normative strategy;
- Critical reflection includes interplay with Biblical studies, historical theology, systematic theology, church history and other resources in order to describe and teach the Church how homiletics should be practised in the new culture, according to ethical guidelines (Woodbridge, 2013:109-110). Lastly, Woodbridge (2013:110) expects to find a description of Biblical principles and commands in the normative phase.

The insights from these practical theologians will only be used to illuminate the theory of normative research and will not displace the methodology of Osmer that was selected for this research.

4.1.2 Outline of the chapter

- Grammatical exegetical interpretation of different Biblical texts in the Old and NT where semeiotics were used to convey the Word of God;
- For this purpose, a qualitative literary research will be accompanied by Biblical grammatical exegesis on a selection of texts from the OT where semeiotic rhetoric was used in the genre of a narrative. This thesis acknowledges other uses for semeiotics in other genres, e.g. prophecies, revelations, wisdom and worship. The examples selected in this chapter relate to the narrative, the practice of whole-brain rhetoric and to the art of persuasion, which fits the topic of this research theme the best.
- Semeiotic perspectives discovered in the OT in II Sam 12:1-7, 17:1-13 and Jonah);
- Exegetical discoveries on the use of semeiotics in II Sam 17:1-13;
- Normative perspectives on the art of persuasion;
- The parables of Nathan (II Sam 12:1-7) and Jonah illustrating semeiotic rhetoric as whole-brain rhetoric;
- Exegetical perspectives on the purpose of semeiotic storytelling according to a structural analysis of the story of Jonah;
- To discover why ancient messengers and authors practised semeiotic communication;
- To discover different semeiotic techniques and its purposes in different contexts and genres;
- To discover the relation between semeiotics and effective rhetoric;
- To discover the theological perspectives of the relation between semeiotic preaching and the sermon;
- To prove that semeiotic rhetoric is a whole-brain rhetoric;
- To formulate ethical perspectives for the art of persuasion and semeiotic rhetoric in both the Old and the NT;
- To formulate ethical perspectives for an audience orientated communicational strategy. The Reformers believed that the focus should be on the text and not on the audience, can a new Biblical perspective assist in creating a new, more balanced theological perspective on this matter;

- To Biblically prove the need to adjust to different social changes such as new communicative strategies for the sake of preaching the Christian belief to all;
- Normative perspectives on whole-brain rhetoric and creativity;
- Ethical perspectives on semeiotic rhetoric based on the OT;
- Biblical perspectives on the purpose of semeiotics in the NT;
- The purpose of *semeia* according to Jn 2:1-12;
- Grammatical exegetical background;
- Semeiotic perspectives from the parables of Jesus;
- Normative assumptions regarding the relation between semeiotic rhetoric and Christ;
- Ethical perspectives on semeiotic rhetoric based on the examples selected from the NT;
- Perspectives from the relation Christ and communicating and Christ and culture according to the missional strategies of Paul ;
- Ethical perspectives on the relation anthropology, culture and Christ.

4.2 BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SEMEIOTIC RHETORIC

4.2.1 Introduction to the Biblical perspectives

The Biblical normative study will endeavour to focus on the following: Semeiotic rhetoric as mentioned in the first chapter went through different phases in history. It became a less logical and suspected method for Reformed preaching especially after the Reformation and after post-structural philosophical influences. The language of the new culture is less literate, more semeiotic, but it is also designed to be used by intellectual people and can therefore be defined as a whole-brain intelligent form of communication. The Biblical normative study will endeavour to prove that whole-brain rhetoric as anthropological reflection to God's Word was practised effectively and in balance with the pneumatology since ancient biblical times.

4.2.2 Semeiotic perspectives discovered in the Old Testament (II Sam 17:1-13, II Sam 12:1-7 and the book of Jonah)

The reason for selecting these passages from Scripture is because Wiersbe (1994:15-55) originally selected these two texts from Samuel to indicate the effectiveness of right-brain rhetoric. The reason for selecting Jonah is based on Berger's (2016:1-3) belief that whoever wrote Jonah was more than an artist but also knew the OT by that time very well. The author delivered a

masterpiece of rhetoric to an audience intelligent enough not only to grasp the structure of Jonah, but also relating to the metaphors (the theological themes relating to other Biblical texts (another example of whole-brain rhetoric).

4.2.2.1 II Samuel 17:1-13

II Sam 17:1-12, tells about the counsel of two advisors (Ahithophel and Hushai) during the time of rebellion by Absalom against his own father (David): **Ahithophel's** counsel (II Sam 17:1-3):

I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed⁸.

Hushai's counsel according to II Sam 17:8-12 reads as follows:

You know your father יבֹא and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear בַּד robbed of her cubs. Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion אֶרֶץ will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave. "So I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba as numerous as the sand חֵלֶם on the seashore be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground⁹.

4.2.2.2 Exegetical discoveries on the use of semeiotics in II Sam 17:1-13

Wiersbe (1994:15-55) selected two passages from the Samuel narrative; II Sam 17:1-13 and II Sam 12:1-7 to illustrate the differences between left- and right-brain rhetoric.

According to Arnold (2003:585-587) this part of the Samuel narrative reaches a climax regarding the tension of the situation between David and his enemies; will David fall or recover, whose

8 All Bible quotations from New International Version (NIV) Bible, 1995

9 All Hebrew quotations from Hebrew OT Transliteration (Holy Name King James Version (KJV) s.a.:1):

advice will Absalom use, Ahithophel or Hushai, but the answer should be searched for against the macro theme of the Samuel narrative or prophetic narrative (Rumney, 2007:1).

Bosman maintains that II Sam 12 to 17 is imbedded in the historical narrative referred to as the Deuteronomist History (DH) including Deut to the second book of Kings (Bosman & Louder, 1987:44). According to Rumney (2007:1) it can also be called the narratives of the early prophets. Rumney (2007:4-5) compares the DH narrative regarding the kings of Israel and their successes and failures to Shakespeare's Hamlet and is inclusive of imaginative narrative (refer Arnold, 2003:21; Bosman & Loader, eds., 1988:43-96).

According to Arnold (2003:586) the narrative is detected by specific themes and words such as the way in which Hushai addresses Absalom in II Sam 16:16 God save ה'ה the king ה'לך The Hebrew word used in the next verse (II Sam 16:17) כֶּה־סֵד- *kheh-sed* (goodness, kindness, faithfulness) also relates to one of the major narrative themes, namely the goodness and the loyalty of God (the covenant King of Israel) opposed to the disloyalty of the earthly kings.

It is therefore important to read the whole narrative and to identify important themes such as the repeating of the transgressions of the leaders, the watchful eye of the prophets and their prophecies, the punishments and outcomes in relation to the fulfilment of God's promises. According to Arnold (2003:587) there is an intertextuality and unity especially between chapters 13-20.

Campbell (1986:64-110) also indicates the importance of reading the narrative as a whole, in order to identify with the main prophetic story, the themes, repeating vocabulary, plot and rhetorical styles; e.g. promises broken; promise kept (Fernhout, 1986:1-4).

According to the macro-context there is much more to the rhetoric of Hushai and Absalom's decision to choose his advice and not that of Ahithophel. It has much more behind it in die back-story than just rhetorical persuasion. The counsel of Ahithophel and Hushai in II Sam 16:15-17:29 should be seen as the central unit of chapters 5-20 (Constable, 2016:76). According to Tanner (2000:24.5) the central theme of the DH is related to the blessings and curses of the covenant in relation to the promises of God. In spite of the failures of kings (promises broken), God restores (promises kept) by punishment, repentance and forgiveness in order to achieve His covenant promises (Constable, 2016:102-103).

According to II Sam 11, there is a clear relation between the transgressions of King David in the macro-narrative and the outcome of rejecting Ahithophel's counsel and accepting Hushai's counsel.

Nathan prophesies in II Sam 12:12-13 that although David's transgressions are forgiven punishment will still follow in the form of calamity from within his own household (NIV Bible,1995). This prophecy of Nathan should also be taken in consideration when interpreting the outcome of the two counsellor's speeches.

Secondly, according to II Sam 15:31 David prayed to God to turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness. This interpretation receives support by Arnold (2003:588). Wiersbe (1994:16) also acknowledges the fact that one should not exclude the information discovered from the macro-context whereby it becomes clear that God is in control of His covenant plan, in spite of the fallacies committed by man (also see Constable, 2016:76).

4.2.2.3 Normative perspectives on the art of persuasion

Kruger (2016:2-3) underlines the importance and purposes of the art of persuasion in the homiletics. According to Jang (2007:34-36) persuasion is more than communicational rhetoric, but an integrative communicational act between the text, the communicator and the audience. It is thus not only about the how, but also about the *what* and the *whom*.

A comparison between Ahithophel's (left-brain rhetoric) and Hushai's (image-rich, right-brain rhetoric) according to Wiersbe (1994:15-55) reveals the following regarding the art of persuasion:

Table 13: Ahithophel (left-brain rhetoric) versus Hushai (right-brain rhetoric)

Ahithophel (left-brain rhetoric)	Hushai (right-brain rhetoric)
Listen to my reasons (verse 1-3).	See and feel the future outcome (Verses 7, 10, 11-12)
Focus of attention is on the speaker (refers four times to himself; verses 1,2). Let me choose הרחבך , I will rise הַמִּוִּקֵּץ, I will come אֹבֵדִי and I will strike, יַתִּיכֵהוּ	Focus is on participation by addressing the listener as you (Hushai uses the words you and we six times)
Gives a logical plan verses 2-3	Envisage the plan (verses 7, 10, 11-12)
Advice supported by facts verse 1- I would choose twelve thousand men	Facts supported by metaphors and pictures and imagination: a wild bear בַּד robbed of her cubs, the heart of a lion אֶרֶב as numerous as the sand לִזְחָל
Focussing on the ears	Focussing on all the senses (relating to the experience of fear when encountering a deprived female bear face to face)
Deliver the information	Experience the information (verses 11, 12) e.g. everyone knows how a female bear reacts when been robbed of her cubs
Giving information out	Getting information through by touching the emotions e.g. referring to David as Absalom's farther אָבִי and not the king, touching the emotional relation between father and son (Auld, 2011:521)
Concepts without images	Combines concepts with images (e.g. strong as a bear and heart of a lion)
Telling	Showing and experiencing

It is evident that semeiotics¹⁰ play an important role in persuasion, but not the only role in effective rhetoric. Other factors include choice of vocabulary, style and the role of the Work of the Holy Spirit as will be explained later. This part of the thesis wants to focus on the Biblical art of rhetoric.

10 Semeiotic preaching, according to exponents such as Sweet (2014b:38), Sanders (2013:1) and Hohstadt (2010:1) is an ancient homiletical method utilising not only words but also visual or descriptive signs, such as metaphor, non-verbal gesture, event or story in order to carry meaning.

According to Vos (1996:139-142) rhetoric is the art of eloquence. Rhetoric according to Wendland (2016:3-4) may be defined as the art and technique of persuasion originally described by Aristotle, or somewhat more broadly, as the ability to communicate effectively in order to accomplish one's purpose when speaking. Classical Greco-Roman rhetorical theory posited five canons, or aspects, of textual composition and presentation: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronunciatio*. Because we are dealing with a written text, *pronunciatio* cannot be placed next to Hushai's rhetoric, but in terms of the rest, the text gives proof of practising a skill that involves more than just words and metaphors. The text gives proof of how Hushai practised *inventio* and *dispositio* (Vos,1996:139-142). This can be applied to the II Sam 17 rhetoric:

- According to II Sam 17:7 Hushai knew David's experience in strategic planning of combat and warfare very well (*inventio*);
- He knew where David was hiding (II Sam 17:9);
- He had inside information regarding the moral of David's soldiers by referring to them as brave soldiers (II Sam 17:10);
- He carefully chose his vocabulary (*dispositio*), to fit his plot perfectly, e.g. referring to David as Absalom's father אבִי and not the king in order to touch the emotion between father and son (Auld, 2011:521). Auld (2011:517) also refers to the previous chapter (II Sam 16:16-19) where Hushai greets Absalom with the words: "God save הַיְיָ the **king** מֶלֶךְ as another example of wise choice of vocabulary in order to win the favour of the person he needs to betray without getting caught;
- Lastly, one cannot play the role of a double agent without careful strategic left-brain planning and well-planned vocabulary.

The next section will indicate the use of *elocutio* and *memoria* in optimising *persuasion*:

- Hushai addressed his audience personally, e.g. you know, יָדָעְתָּ. The word you repeats itself six times in Hushai's counsel - in other words *elocutio* in order to create participation;
- His rhetoric ignited the imagination that activated necessary senses (such as visualising, emotion, fear, proud, etc.). For example, to imagine a female bear's rage when she is being deprived of her cubs activates the experience of fear, to envisage an army as many as the sand of the sea activates a vision of pride and to see yourself on the throne when you plan your strategy for battle activates a vision of victory - *elocutio* and *memoria*;
- Creating experience and communicational participation according to Wiersbe is not to ignore facts, but to have them accompanied by images - *elocutio* and *memoria*;

- Experience and communicational participation are enhanced by emotions and senses e.g. Hushai cleverly reminding Absalom that the king he wants to defeat is actually his father and not just a king of one of Israel's enemies - *elocutio* and *memoria*.

According to the exegetical findings it appears as if the semeiotic-rich counsel of Hushai in II Sam 17 was also conducted with careful planning, gathering of information, choice of vocabulary supported by a selection of familiar images touching emotion and imagination in a complete hermeneutical strategy prior to the counsel.

Biblical exegesis reveals evidence of similar rhetoric by other prophets and authors in the OT. Job e.g. and the role of the metaphors from nature e.g. the ostrich and the crocodile. There is also Ezekiel and the metaphor of the temple and the water, Joel and the metaphor of the grasshoppers. This gives convincing evidence that this type of narrative communication was a whole-brain skill, (maybe learned) and practised by early Jewish prophets and authors. According to Vos (1996:139) there is archaeological evidence proving that the Greeks and Romans trained their students in the art of rhetoric during NT times with exacting logic and strategic methods. This proves that whole-brain rhetoric was a practice that existed since ancient biblical times.

It is important to realise that this thesis already indicated that poor preaching is not the only reason why preaching is degenerating therefore is it impossible to propose the art of persuasion as the only solution. Other studies indicated that effective preaching relies on more than just mastering the art of rhetoric. Although effective preaching does not rely on the method, alone it does not exclude to endeavour to master excellent rhetoric, especially in the digimodernistic context. A normativity for responsible rhetoric should be found in collaboration with a broad theological and hermeneutical frame.

4.2.2.4 Hushai and an audience orientated rhetoric

The last topic resulting from Hushai's rhetoric is the importance of a rhetoric that resonates with the mind and the world of the listener. The question is how the relation regarding the importance between the text and the audience should be managed in order not to over-emphasise either of the two that might result in a loss of interest in preaching.

According to Vos (1996:143) audience-orientated rhetoric came under negative critique by Barth and Thurneysen with their *allein ihr Inhalt*. Effective rhetoric in the homiletics should not over-emphasise either esthetical eloquence or the predominant importance of the audience. Preaching as a communicational act has two responsibilities to take care of; the first is the integrity of content and the second the eloquence of rhetoric as a relational communicational art, meaning

to stand between two worlds and communicate effectively, this includes the semeiotics (Vos, 1996:143).

A normativity for an audience-orientated rhetoric is valuable in order to avoid that excellent preaching becomes entertainment or to turn entertainment into economy. According to the NT, semeiotic preaching should point to Christ and not to the popularity of a preacher, neither to the entertainment of audiences.

The art of persuasion can be a risky praxis especially when you speak on behalf of God. There can be an over-emphasis either on the rhetorical skills of the preacher, or on the entertainment of the audience. According to Vos (1996:139-142) the critique against the art of eloquence is that it can even turn untruths into belief via the esthetical nature of it. What is the relation between the art of persuasion as a communicational skill and the authority of God through His Word?

4.2.2.5 Biblical perspectives on theonome reciprocity

According to Cartledge (2001:585-586) Hushai's careful choice of the right words is another indication of the collaboration of wisdom gained from a broader hermeneutical process inclusive of consulting the covenant God through prayer and adopting to the needs of his context and audience in order to deliver a persuasive counsel. According to the macro context of the Samuel narrative preaching is also about listening to God, about praying and aligning yourself to His will, about a broader knowledge of God's covenant plan and the audience's needs based on what God has to offer. If a prophet listens well, the prophet can now turn to the audience, a new hermeneutical field to discover and prepare a communicational strategy that serves both God and the recipients.

Regarding the convincing side of Hushai's counsel, Kruger (2014:7) reminds that the success of his counsel was not the result of his masterly rhetoric alone, but in a co-depending relationship with the Holy Spirit. According to verse II Sam 17:14 it was the Lord who had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel (Yahweh had appointed הוֹצֵא to break רָרָךְ in order to bring disaster) on Absalom (Manser, 2010:401). This is an important remark and proves the importance of any rhetoric (not only semeiotic rhetoric) to be practised in dependence of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Van Ruler (1969:181) created the word *theonome reciprocity*, allowing humans a respectful moral autonomy to utilise everything God has given to serve His purpose under His authority in order to proclaim the Word of God. *Theonome reciprocity* thus wants to bring the anthropology, the pneumatology and the Christology together in a normative homiletics for semeiotic preaching.

According to Van Tonder (2010:40-43) the pneumatological relation with preaching in the homiletics is based on an interpretation of II Pet 1:20-21:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy (προφητεία) of Scripture came about by the prophet's own (ἰδίας) interpretation (ἐπιλύσεως) of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human (ἀνθρώπου) will (θελήματι), but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried by the Holy (Αγίου) Spirit (Πνεύματος)¹¹.

According to Louw and Nida (1989:405) ἐπίλυσις is something no one can explain without by human effort alone. Constable (2012:1) believes that προφητεία can also refer to the Word of God. He then elaborates the interpretation of this text in the context of the false interpretations of the Word of God and not the Roman Catholic conclusion that does not recognise the personal interpretations of Scripture. Constable concludes from the macro context that προφητεία does not exclude the ἀνθρώπου, but in relation to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and verified by the fulfilment of the prophecy according to the witness of Scripture.

According to Joubert and Mare (2015:1038-1049) the context of the second letter of Peter was indeed the influences of false interpretations of Biblical prophecies by false prophets.

Van Tonder (2010:40-43) concedes that preaching without the Holy Spirit will lose its effectiveness and *vice versa*. The relation between the preacher and his/her interpretation and presentation of the Word is a praxis that collaborates between the freedom of the Holy Spirit and the freedom and the unique craftsmanship of the preacher as well as the integration of the listener.

According to Van Tonder (2010:40-43) the Holy Spirit works supernaturally, but not in absence of human endeavour. The Holy Spirit is the co-worker of the written Word of God, as well as of the proclaimed Word of God inclusive of the obeyed Word of God that includes rational interpretations, narrative and symbolic explanations as well as well as the praxis of faith in the lives of every believer.

According to De Wet (2011:28-30) the pneumatology is not *per se* an one dimension relation to justify human endeavour, but guides us first to a relation with God's Word and faith in Jesus Christ. The pneumatology in this regard is related to the Christology. Once anchored in a Christological-pneumatological relation, the preacher is free to deliver the Word of God in a

11 NIV Bible (1995) and all Greek quotations from Interlinear Bible (2011-2013:1) and NT Greek Lexicon: King James Version (2017).

diverse of methods and styles as revealed in Scripture. This includes whole-brain rhetoric, rational reasoning, imagination and creativity.

Wiersbe (1994:16) also acknowledges the pneumatological relation to preaching, but reacts immediately by stating that in spite of the fact that God has ordained the outcome of Hushai's counsel, there is a collaboration between God and man, whereby God also ordained the use of creative gifts such as right-brain rhetoric. Creativity such as semeiotic language, in order to accomplish His goals (this does not exclude the fact that God can use the left-brain to achieve His goals).

According to Eclov (2016:1-3) prayer synchronises our preaching, regardless of the style and rhetoric, with the Holy Spirit. When that happens, the sermon is persuasive. The persuasive power in our sermons also comes from the Word of God, not from our personalities, stories, humour and wordsmithing alone. Eclov lastly points to *pathos*, to the emotional persuasion of a sermon. This happens when hearts are moulded by the text and the rhetoric.

An ethical perspective for semeiotic preaching is thus not to entertain the audience with artistic rhetoric, but to bring the audience into a God-man experience, by endeavouring to touch all their senses and not only their ears. Long (2009:18) believes that the power of God's Word does not only come from narration, but also from declaration, explanation, invitation, confession and most of all obedience.

4.2.2.6 Deductions

According to the macro-context there are much more to the rhetoric of Hushai and Absalom's decision to choose his advice and not that of Ahithophel. The macro context revealed the important relation between the pneumatological work of God in humans and through humans to deliver the result with as much rhetorical skill as possible.

If rhetoric consists of the elements *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronunciatio* the Biblical text proves that Hushai utilised at least four of them. This could not be executed without careful hermeneutical preparation, thus resulting in a whole-brain rhetoric. This discovery will receive further attention in exegeting specific texts to prove whole-brain rhetoric.

The above texts selected from the Samuel narrative also prove that semeiotics is an ancient homiletical praxis. Likewise Christy in Cram *et al.* (1999:299-3-6) motivates that De Saussure is not the father of semeiotics. Some linguists have pointed out that De Saussure built his semeiotics upon Aristotelian and Neoplatonist knowledge from the Middle Ages, particularly about the writings of Augustine of Hippo. De Saussure only reformed an ancient theory. According to

Gasparov (2012:59-60) much of De Saussure's ideas have been absorbed in recent linguistic theories to an extent that not much of his ideas are still believed. The notion today is linked with the exegetical guidelines for expository preaching such as that meaning should be searched for via a diverse hermeneutic approach.

Two important questions may help to formulate and biblical ethics for art of persuasion: First, what is the relation between the art of persuasion as a communicational skill and the authority of God through His Word? The second concerning question is, what is the relation between the text and the audience.

The above exegesis revealed the importance of *theonome reciprocity*. The pneumatological assumption receives support by II Pet 1:20-21: For prophecy never had its origin in the human (ἀνθρώπου) will (θελήματι). The prophecy comes from the Holy Spirit, but does not exclude human endeavour. Communication between God and human is a dialogue allowing the freedom to respond with all our gifts inclusive of the use of the whole brain.

Postmodernism and digimodernistic influences on preaching can over-emphasise the anthropology (the humanity, the audience and the context), but the results gained from this study indicated that communicating about God is just as important as listening to God. If listening requires theological studies, so does communication. Entertainment is not the main purpose of preaching, but guiding those who believe in preaching to a relationship with God, to obey His guidelines and principles, and to surrender to salvation. If the theological-anthropological relation is in the sequence of firstly the Word of God, followed by humanity, then humanity unfolds in a complete subjective hermeneutical response that includes the whole brain and all human senses and experiences.

According to Brueggemann (2011:5-6) to preach is thus to engage in counter-imagination. Given the important role narratives play in the human construction of reality, as well as in leadership, the communication of a counter-narrative in which God is active in the world may very well be described as an act of prophetic-imagination.

According to Guite (2012:16), poetic or imaginative language holds the potential of not only mirroring human realities so that people see themselves more clearly, but also of opening a window into the mysteries beyond nature so that they are transformed by a more-than-earthly light. Avis believes in accordance with Augustine that God is a poet that communicates with us in the imaginative mode; our most appropriate response is also in that mode.

This thesis will shift the focus now to the normativity of whole-brain rhetoric.

4.2.3 The parable of Nathan (II SAM 12:1-7) and Jonah illustrating semeiotic rhetoric as whole-brain rhetoric

4.2.3.1 The parable of Nathan (II SAM 12:1-7)

In the NIV Bible (1995), an extraction of the Nathan's parable II Sam 12:1-4 reads as follows:

There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.

The exegetical findings confirm that, this parable is another prolific example of whole-brain rhetoric. According to Berman (2015:1-4) the Nathan-parable is excessively clever to be classified as right-brain rhetoric only. Berman discovered how this parable was rationally designed with a specific motif to reveal a triple-layered meaning. Although this rhetoric leans more to the pastoral side of preaching, the pastoral empathy is just as an important asset to preaching than exegetical and theological knowledge (Masango & Steyn, 2011:1).

According to Berman (2015:1-16) the triple-layered meaning refers to the following scenarios:

- David as adulterer;
- David as murderer and;
- David as a punished King.

The ambivalent information given by Nathan in this parable is intentional and cleverly crafted in such a way to trick David no matter which interpretation he follows. The first interpretation proposes the following comparisons in the parable¹²:

12 Hebrew quotations from Hebrew English Bible, s.a.:1

- David is the rich man רישע
- Uriah is the poor man שור
- Bathsheba is the ewe השבֵּבֶה
- The wayfarer רֶלֶה is interpreted as temptation; it comes as a traveller and stays as a thief.

The intention of the above interpretation is to expose David as an adulterer.

From a macro context, one can also construct a second interpretation after reflecting on several problems discovered with the first interpretation. First, David did not steal Bathsheba (the ewe) and murdered her, he committed a sexual crime followed by the subtle murder of her husband Uriah (in the parable David steals his ewe and in reality he murdered Uriah).

According to Berman (2015:8-10) when the surrounding narratives are taken into account the parable can host a second interpretation possibility. According to the second interpretation, the one that was stolen the most from, is Bathsheba: She lost her husband, according to law, she also lost her freedom, and as a pregnant widow, she could have lost her life according to Jewish tradition. These potential losses made her to come to David for refuge and protection. In the light of these findings, the parable looks as follows and Bathsheba is appointed a double role:

- David is the rich man;
- Bathsheba is the poor man;
- The ewe is Uriah;
- The wayfarer is also Bathsheba coming to search for shelter under David's roof.

In the third possibility, the parable can reflect on David's punishment:

- David is the rich man;
- Bathsheba is the poor man;
- The ewe is Uriah;
- The wayfarer is David and Bathsheba's unborn child.

It is impossible to assume that such a clever example of rhetoric is the result of right-brain creativity alone. It must have taken many hours of thinking and preparation to create such a clever triple-layered parable.

Nathan according to Berman (2015:15) illustrates the collaboration between cognitive rationale planning and a creative parable. The parable is so cleverly designed that the author is not only interested in the conversation between Nathan and David, but also with a conversation with the reader/listener. Between the understanding of David and the understanding of the reader, the effects of David's deeds receive maxim exposure. The purpose has more in mind than just to expose David, but for all to see the total consequences of what began only as one sin.

Berman (2015:16) concedes with explaining the logical plan behind the Nathan parable:

- First, there are the logical intentions of the author;
- Second, there is the power of metaphor that holds more than one interpretation. All interpretational possibilities derived from the surrounding narratives in die macro-context;
- The triple-layered meaning trapped David and surprises the reader;
- Although metaphorical, such a rhetoric cannot be accomplished without careful rational planning and design.

4.2.3.2 Conclusion

Wiersbe selected two passages from the Samuel narrative; II Sam 17:1-13 and II Sam 12:1-7 to illustrate the effectiveness of right-brain rhetoric. Unfortunately, this interpretation by Wiersbe over simplifies creative right-brain rhetoric. The II Sam 17 text also gives prove of how Hushai used his left-brain in planning his counsel. According to II Sam 17:7 Hushai knew David's experience in strategic planning of combat and warfare very well. He knew where David was hiding (II Sam 17:9). He had inside information regarding the moral standard of David's soldiers by referring to them as brave soldiers (II Sam 17:10). He carefully chose his vocabulary to fit his plot and plan perfectly e.g. referring to David as Absalom's father אבִי and not the king, in order to touch the emotional relation between father and son. Lastly, one cannot play the role of a double agent without careful strategic left-brain planning and well-planned vocabulary.

Nathan on the other hand illustrated the importance of rationale planning in order to create an excellent parable with three meanings in the same story just by changing the relation of the characters to different metaphors. The assumption is that such clever rhetoric is not possible without left-brain strategic planning accompanied by rational thinking and constructing a story with right-brain narrative, imagination and metaphor.

4.2.3.3 Exegetical perspectives on the purpose of semeiotics and whole-brain rhetoric according to a Jonah narrative

Loader believes that Jonah displays a high standard of narrative art and will be dealt with as narrative literature and not as prophetic literature (Bosman & Loader, 1988:122-127). According to Woodard (1991:3-4) there is unanimity on the interpretation of the book among OT scholars that the story is metaphorical/a parable with references to similar historical events and theological themes (Allen, 1976:179). According to Allen (1976:177) the author is not interested in historical facts, but rather in Jewish theology and ideology. Jonah is a work of art and a masterpiece of the narrator's literary sophistication and rhetorical skills as will be illustrated with structural analytical evidence regarding the different narrative elements of the narrative. The narrative carries wisdom and lessons in such an authoritative way that it is quoted by Jesus in Mt 12:39-41 as a *semeia*, a sign of what the Son of God has come to do, better than what Jonah could accomplish (Allen, 1976:194-196).

According to Wendland (1996:193) evidence of a Hebrew narrative text is characterised by a central storyline featuring the *waw* consecutive with the “imperfect” verb (*wayyiqtol*) to convey a particular action orientation in past time e.g. the narrative begins with the Hebrew word *now*; *now* the word of Yahweh came to Jonah. This proves the genre: It is indeed been told as a story.

The names and metaphors mentioned in Jonah also need attention:

Nineveh: The Babylonian name relates to the word *nina* meaning a place where **fish** were abundant. Ishtar or Nina was the goddess of the city, and was associated with *Nin-mah*, Merodach's spouse, as goddess of reproduction. The Babylonians built a great temple for Ishtar or Nina. (International Standard Bible encyclopaedia in Bible study tools, 2017:1).

Jonah means **dove** and is associated with being faithful (Allen, 1967:180).

The great fish אֲדָמָה לִדְגָּן in Jon 1:17 relates according to macro textual interpretations to the **sheol**-the metaphor of death, the **see monster** or the **fleeing serpent** according to Is 27:1 לְיִתְיֹלֵךְ **leviathan** אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁׁרֵץ **serpent** (Noegel, 2015:247-249).

The plant; is a metaphor of **mercy** (Allen, 1967:180).

According to these metaphors, the irony of the Jonah narrative unfolds as follows: Jonah, the dove is called to save Nineveh from being swallowed by their own fish, instead a fish swallows Jonah, but God transforms the death-fish to a metaphor of rescue. God is the dove. Nineveh repents from their deadly fish, Jonah receives a plant to rescue him from the deadly sun, but he

ends unhappy because he wants God's mercy and grace only for himself - he is indeed not a dove.

The structure of Jonah is what fascinates Biblical scholars interested in linguistics the most and the exegetical work will now turn to this ancient form of literary rhetoric. The purpose of the structural analysis is to illustrate the cleverness and art of Hebrew storytelling. The main structure is symmetrical and arranged in clear chiasmic patterns (Wendland, 1996:203).

Wendland (1996:203) illustrates the chiasmic patterns by beginning with a less complicated example from Jon 1:1-3 before proceeding to the macro text as well as thematical micro chiasmic patterns (refer Ramney, 1997:1-8):

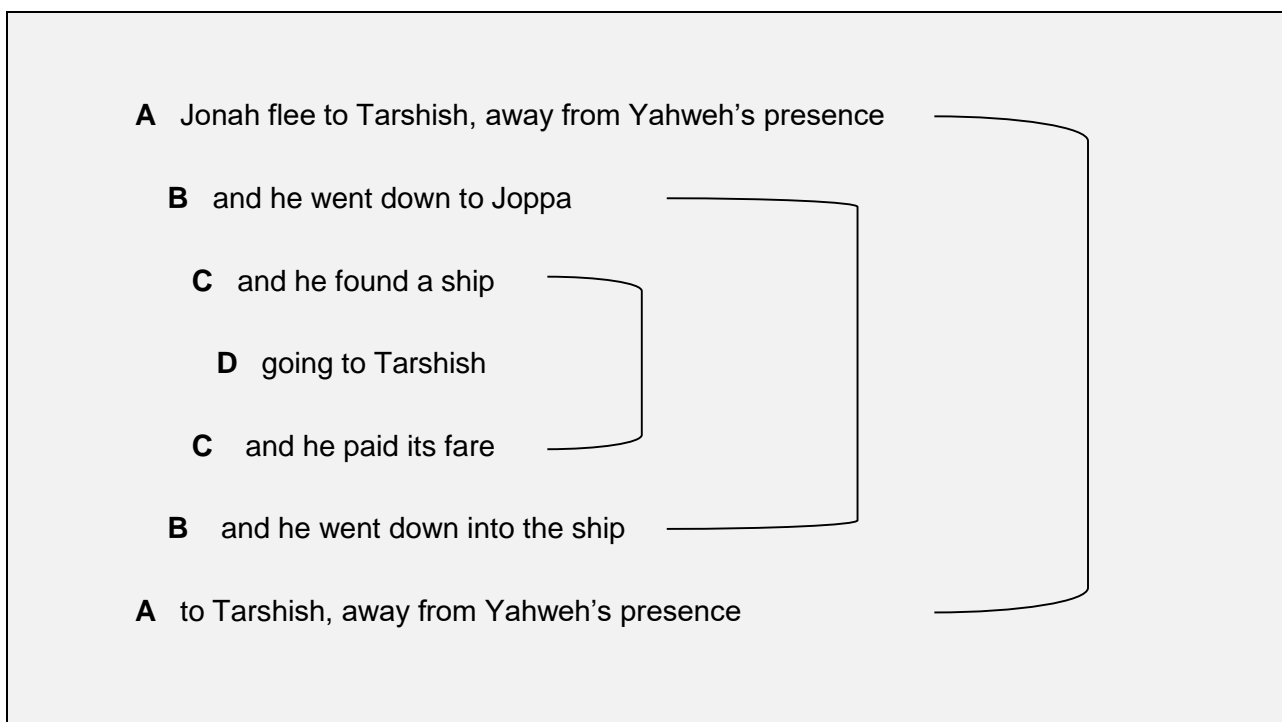


Figure 3: Ring composition: Jon 1:1-3

According to Loader in Bosman and Loader (1988:122) chiasmic patterns and ring composition as illustrated below were deliberately designed to complement themes and meanings in Hebrew poetry and narrative literature:

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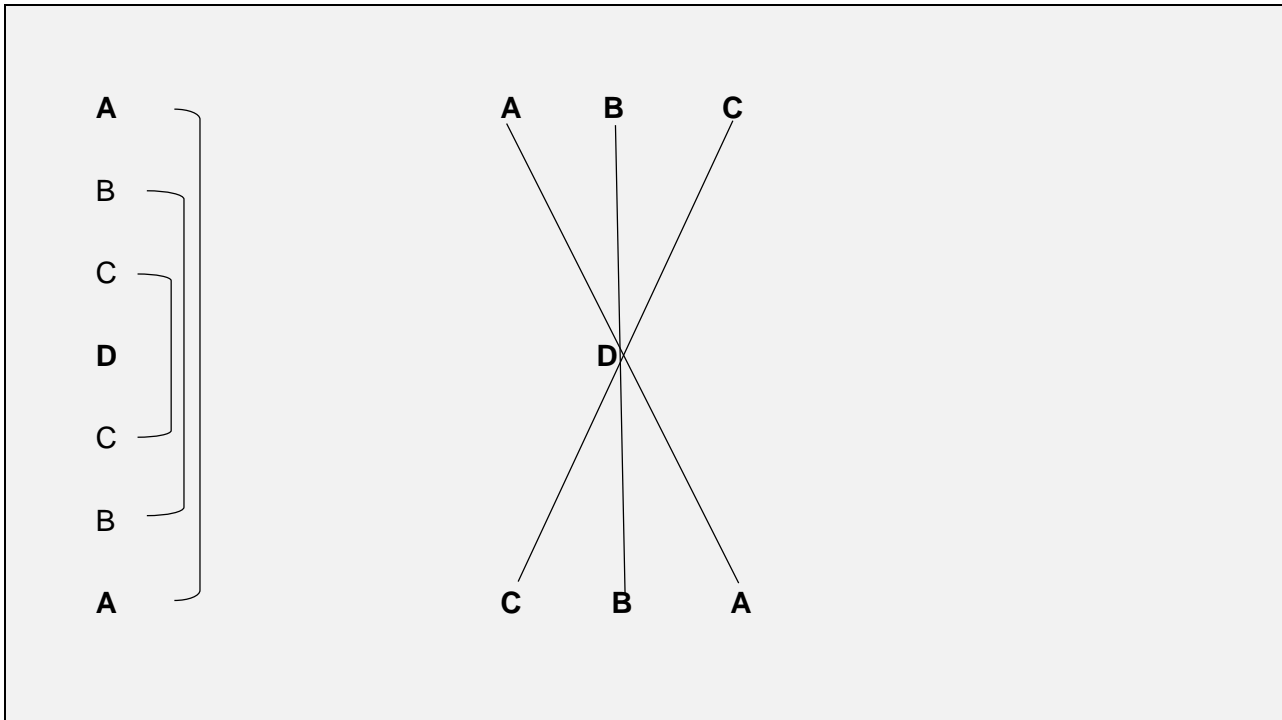


Figure 4: Chiasmatic patterns: Jon 1:1-3

Wendland (1996:373-374) now turns to the macro narrative where the chiasmatic pattern continues to dominate the narrative. The overall plot structure looks like the following (task/problem – complication - crisis/climax - resolution/denouncement). It consists of seven scenes that are marked by patterns of recursion: (Jon 1:1-3, 1:4-16, 1:17-2:10, 3:1-3, 3:4-10, 4:1-4, 4:5-11).

This linear sequence in turn manifests in two parallel panels of plot-related topical arrangement with a climactic structural addition at the end: Yahweh has the final as well as the first word. These two divisions, or narrative cycles, may be diagrammed as follows (Wendland, 1996:373-374):

The first division:

- A. (1:1–3) **Yahweh calls Jonah the first time** and he flees from Nineveh
- B. (1:4–16) A **life/death crisis**; exhortation by the captain; Jonah's unwilling message to the pagan sailors of the ship;
result: they all repent and pray
- C. (1:17) Surprising transition: Yahweh saves Jonah
by means of a great fish
- D. (2:1–9) Jonah's response, a **pious prayer**: thank you for
letting me live
- E. (2:10) **Instruction**: Yahweh's miraculous object lesson
is complete and Jonah is safely delivered

The second division:

- A. (3:1–3) Yahweh calls Jonah **the second time** and he
travels to Nineveh
- B. (3:4–9) A **life/death crisis**; Jonah's unwilling message
to the pagan people of the city; exhortation by the king; result:
they all repent and pray (an even greater number)
- C. (3:10) Surprising transition: **Yahweh saves Nineveh** by "repenting" himself
- D. (4:1–4) Jonah's response, a **peeved prayer**:
please just let me die
- E. (4:5–9) **Instruction**: Yahweh's miraculous object lesson in the plant, worm and wind-Jonah is sorely
afflicted
- F. (4:10–11) **Conclusion** (thematic peak): Yahweh's last word to Jonah and to every current listener: Salvation
belongs to Yahweh.

Figure 5: Narrative cycles: Jonah

Loader in Bosman & Loader (1988:122) summarises the **macro chiasm** or **cross composition** in the recurring theme regarding the story of Jonah (bad person versus good person) as follows:

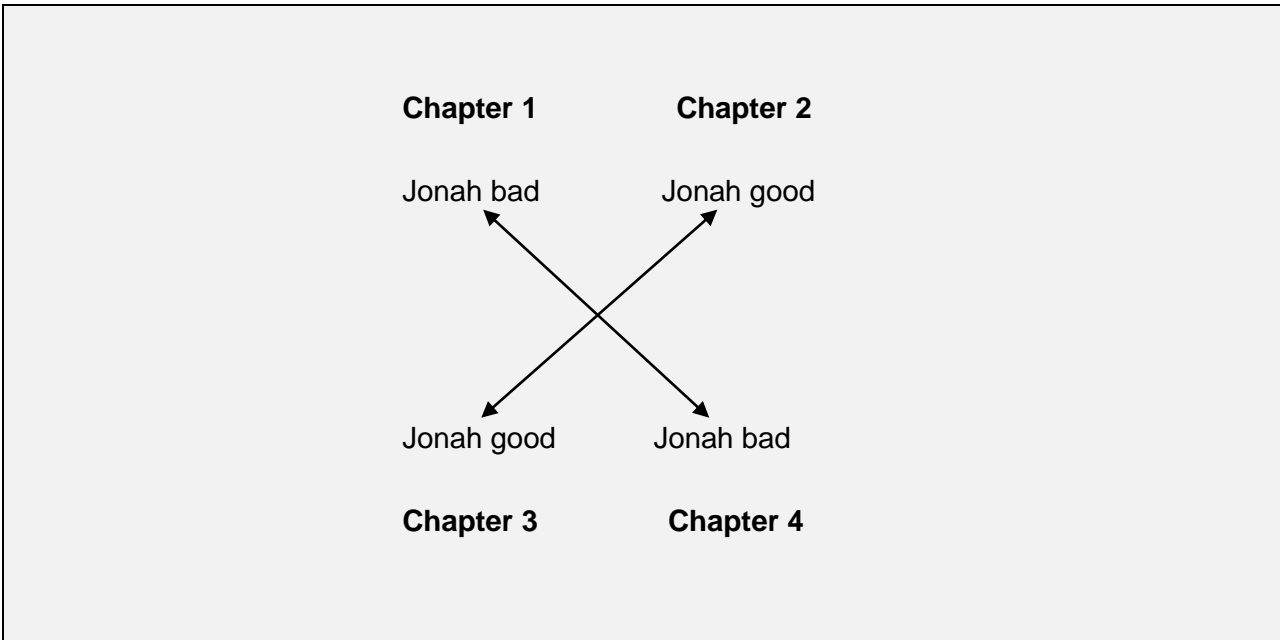


Figure 6: Macro chiasm: Jonah

The structural analysis is a clever support to the plot of the narrative and binds the narrative together in recurring themes or ambivalent events and outcomes. It becomes even more impressive when discovering second and third order chiasms e.g. the arise/descent מוֹקֵד/יָרַד theme (Halpern & Friedman, 1980:80). The major role of these two ambivalent themes is to create a multitude of story through irony, humour, etc. This plays an important role in defining the genre and theme of Jonah; the more he descends the more God arises.

The chiasmic structure of the arise/ descent theme in original Hebrew sequence from right to left:

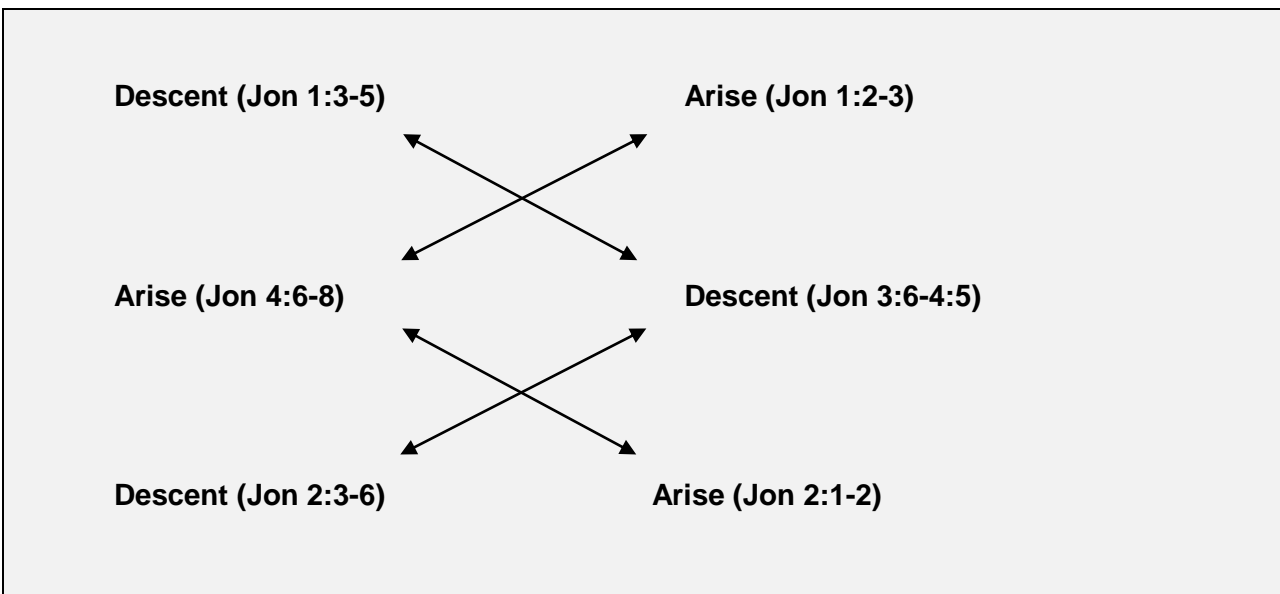


Figure 7: Chiastic structure: arise/decent theme: Jonah

According to Halpern and Friedman (1980:80) the arise/descent theme can be constructed as follows:

Jon 1:2	arise to Ninive	Arise	
	their wickedness is come up	Arise	A
Jon 1:3	Jonah rose up	Arise	
	And went down to Yafo	Descent	
	And went down into a ship	Descent	D
Jon 1:5	And Jonah went down into the belly of the ship	Descent	
Jon 1:6	The Shipmaster asked Jonah to arise	Arise	
	Elohiem may think upon us	Arise	
Jon 1:7	The lot fell upon Jonah	Arise	A
Jon 1:12	Cast me in the see	Descent	
Jon 1:15	So they cast Jonah into the see	Descent	D
Jon 1:17	Jonah went into the belly of the fish	Descent	
Jon 2:1	Jonah prayed unto the Lord	Arise	
	Out of the fish's belly	Arise	A
Jon 2:2	And he heard me out of the belly	Arise	
Jon 2:3	Cast me into the deep of the see	Decent	
	In the midst of the see	Decent	D
Jon 2:6	Down to the bottoms of the mountains	Decent	
Jon 2:7	My prayers came in unto thee	Arise	
	Elohiem may think upon us	Arise	A
Jon 2:10	The fish vomited Jonah out	Arise	
Jon 3:1	The Lord came up to Jonah a second time	Arise	A
Jon 3:2	Arise to Nineveh	Arise	
Jon 3:6	The king arose from his throne	Arise	
	And sat in ashes	Decent	
Jon 4:5	Jonah went out	Decent	D
	And he sat down	Decent	
Jon 4:6	And a plant came up	Arise	
Jon 4:7	When the sun came up a worm came	Arise	A
Jon 4:8	When the sun arose a wind came	Arise	

Figure 8: **Arise-decent theme: Jonah**

The Jonah narrative can be best summarised by quoting the following:

By exploiting the chiaroscuro of semantic ambiguity, the author delights his reader, and, at the same time, plumbs the character of prophecy. Jonah stands on its skilful interweaving of rhetoric with action (Halpern and Friedman, 1980:91).

Berger (2016:1-3) believes that whoever wrote Jonah knew the OT by that time very well, because of the metaphorical and thematic relations to other Biblical texts e.g. the similarities to Noah and the flood narrative and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

According to Loader the literary brilliance of Jonah further unfolds when understanding that Jonah for example is a very short book in order to accomplish such a literary art and almost beyond human capabilities (Bosman & Loader, 1988:123). It consists not only of semeiotic creativity such as chiasms and concentric structures, paradoxes, irony (e.g. where the fish; symbol of death and punishment becomes a symbol of deliverance (Allen, 1976:184) and poetry with a touch of wisdom (only little traces of similarities to wisdom) and prophecy. The narrative also displays knowledge of Biblical expressions, themes and motives. This include e.g. Nineveh's demise can be compared to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, the storm and the fish to the flood and Noah's ark (Allen, 1976:176-177), similarities to Ps 74:13-16 and Ex 14:21-22 (Noegel, 2015:254) and of rhetorical skills in order to maintain a plot and tension right to the very end of the novel (Burden & Prinsloo, 1987:254). It is indisputably a combination of left-brain (almost mathematical reasoning and planning) and right-brain creativity accompanied with metaphor e.g. Jonah's name (dove-faithful), the fish (the death), the plant (mercy) and Nineveh, also referring to the fish god they worshipped which ironically was about to swallow them, but miraculously escaped from (Allen, 1967:180).

Besides the composition of Jonah, the author(s) manages to create irony and humour, wordplay and satire in the Jonah narrative (Haughwout, 2010:1): Jonah is attempting to run away from God, when he himself knows that God is omnipresent. Even the cattle of the Ninevites should fast and be dressed in sackcloth, opposed to Israel who repeatedly ignored there prophets' messages and here the Ninevites (heathens) and their animals repent at just five words from the mouth of Jonah! Jonah the believer is fast asleep in the storm and a heathen awakens him to arise to pray the same words God used to call Jonah to Nineveh. The pagan sailors are willing to risk their lives to save Jonah, yet Jonah the believer being unwilling to do the least thing to save the pagans of Nineveh. Jonah represents Israel and his name means dove or faithful, yet he is not.

Halpern and Friedman (1980:86) give a few clever examples of wordplay in Jonah, e.g., when Jonah sat in the heat outside Nineveh. Before and after the experience, Yahweh asks Jonah: is it right that you should be angry? (Jon 4:4, 9). The root for anger and heat is the same word: *hrh*. The statement at the start of the chapter, Jonah was greatly displeased, and he was angry (or

hot) like the heat in the sun. According to Haughwout (2010:1) wordplay is a rhetorical skill. The parody of Jonah reaches its climax in the NT Mk 4:36 and Mt 8:24) where Jesus was fast asleep in the stern of fishing boat, this time the unfaithful disciples awoke Him just as the unfaithful captain awoke Jonah because there was a storm on the sea. Jonah was thrown overboard to save the lives of the sailors, this time Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea just by throwing His words overboard. The last relation to the NT (Mt 12:39, 41) also turns Jonah into a *semeia* when Jesus compared Himself to Jonah. He will also descend into the belly of death and arise after three days not for the sake of Nineveh, but for the whole world (Bosman & Loader, 1988:126).

4.2.3.4 Conclusion

The structures of the Jonah narrative help to carry the story of Jonah's disobedience by demonstrating his downward movement from a position of honour and respect to one of rebuke and death. The narrator, in fact, makes this movement clear through repetition. The above pattern, in relation to the ascent/ decent theme, is not accidental, but illustrates Jonah's recurring failures opposed to God's recurring successes. The contrast between Jonah and God evokes almost in humoristic and playful manner how God humiliates the disobedient person by paradoxically comparing Jonah to the heathens. They pray, they have mercy, they repent, even their animals repent, they got it, but Jonah, the one who was supposed to see God's salvation, did not see it.

Other recurring words and themes are the word call and the confrontation between life and death. Jonah faced death **three times** and God saved lives **three times** - first the sailors, then Jonah's and then Nineveh. To call unto the Lord was all that was needed by Jonah, the fugitive prophet, in order to be successful to his calling. God in return was always on time and came to the rescue, but not only to Jonah's personal needs, but also to the needs of others. The more Jonah (dove of faithfulness) descended away from life to death (the deadly fish monster), the more God turned death into life. The message and the structure are deliberately planned (whole-brain narrative) in order to carry meaning and the message. The author intentionally left the Jonah narrative open-ended; Nineveh escaped the belly of the fish and repented, Jonah escaped the belly of the Sheol $\psi\chi\iota\lambda$ (Jon 2:2) but did he repent or not?

The story of Jonah was crafted with meticulous care to an audience intelligent enough to not only grasp the structure, but also relating to the names, the metaphors (e.g. the fish as the metaphor of death) and the theological themes relating to other Biblical texts.

4.2.4 Normative perspectives on whole-brain rhetoric and creativity

The three examples from the OT illustrated different genres of semeiotic and whole-brain communication in relation to the enigmatic pneumatological work of God and the Holy Spirit. Once the anthropological and pneumatological relation is in a balanced reciprocity, the human gifts and creativity can be laboured freely. Hushai used metaphors and mastered the art of persuasion, Nathan created a parable with a logic plan and the author of Jonah mastered the art of poetic structure (chiasms) with elements of irony, satire, parody, hyperbole, etc. in order to capture the attentions of their audiences in order to convey the message of God. The exegetical work revealed that all three authors created their messages with more than just right-brain creativity.

Nathan's parable had more than one interpretation possibility that no matter which one of the three David would chose he would be caught guilty. The triple meaning of the interpretation is so clever; it represents the sequence of events according to the macro-narrative of Samuel I and II (Berman,2015:12). First, David committed adultery, followed by the event of a murder and then exposed by Nathan and punished by God. According to Buford (2008:105) a parable, however, can get past the defences of our own behaviour and reach the inner court where there is agreement about what is right and what is wrong.

The parable of Nathan and the counsel of Hushai were not selected to prove the power of semeiotic rhetoric *per se*, but to illustrate the intelligent logical reasoning that accompanied their semeiotic, whole-brain rhetoric.

Jonah's author/s on the other hand was a master of creating recurring paradoxes supported by symmetrical structures called chiasms. It is impossible to witness such a literary and rhetorical masterpiece as the product of right-brain creativity alone. Without doubt one also witness left-brain thinking and literary communicational skills. These texts are so rich in meaning that the more one endeavour in exegetical labour the more there is to discover. This indicates that creative Biblical messages using semeiotics in different genres are not inferior to the left-brain nor to their purpose namely; to carry a divine message.

The results from these OT texts normatively prove that rational left-brain reasoning and planning play a vital role in semeiotic rhetoric and in the art of persuasion. It has been indicated by research with Biblical prove that communication becomes more effective when the right-brain receives impulses that activates the neurological functions of the right-brain such as imagination in order to see and feel the message which enable the listener to be drawn into the message with less concentration.

The Bible does not give a normativity for the dominant use of either the left-brain or the right brain in rhetoric, but rather reveals the use of both (especially seen in the parables of Nathan and Jonah). The undebatable principle for the use of right-brain rhetoric is that it cannot be practised effectively without the left-brain thought, which includes a proper understanding of the text via proper exegesis (Barnard, 2009:294). According to the clever rhetoric of Hushai, the parables of Nathan and Jonah, semeiotic rhetoric can be recognised as whole-brain rhetoric, which holds many possibilities for its praxis in the Reformed context. It can now be proved that semeiotic preaching is not about collecting images for use in PowerPoints, but it is about crafting a narrative and mastering a rhetoric that involves knowledge collected from exegetical labour, the same preparation required for expository preaching and gaining wisdom and creativity from a relationship with God through prayer. The art of mastering semeiotics is attained by utilising the left brain as well as the right brain. The one hemisphere thinks and plans the facts; the other one delivers them creatively. Semeiotic preaching is another form of expository preaching.

Louw and Edwards (1993:346-347) also believe that there are enough scientific evidence to prove that creativity is another form of intelligence. The above examples of Hushai, Nathan and Jonah's creative rhetoric certainly adds Biblical normativity to this meta-theoretical observation.

Brueggemann (2011:5-6) believes in order to preach creatively is to engage in counter-imagination. Given the important role narratives play in the human construction of reality, the communication of a counter-narrative in which God is active in the world may very well be described as an act of prophetic-imagination. According to Guite (2012:16), poetic and imaginative language holds the potential of not only mirroring human realities so that people see themselves more clearly, but also of opening a window into the mysteries beyond nature so that they are transformed by a more-than-earthly light. Avis (1999:5) suggests that human imagination is one of the closest analogies to the being of God because God delights in revealing Himself through the forms of imagination, that is, in the poetic and the symbolic. Avis believes according to Augustine that God is a poet that communicates with us in the imaginative mode; our most appropriate response is also in that mode.

Semeiotics as a hermeneutical key for preaching should be treated as a whole-brain communicational strategy whereby the left-brain supports the right brain's creativity and the right brain's images are aligned with the left brain's purpose of discovering objective facts and truths. Cilliers (2004:209) also believes that the two hemispheres of the brain function the best when they collaborate instead of operating separately. All three authors Biblically examined showed similarities regarding a clever strategic and logic plan and intention called whole-brain reasoning, whole-brain hermeneutics and whole-brain rhetoric.

According to Edwards (2001:23, 4) excessive research amongst Neurologists by the time she published her book has indicated a new interest in the cognition and functions of the whole brain. Neurologist began to criticise the rigid distinguishing between the left and right-mode of the brain. According to Edwards (2001:23, 4) the brain is too much of a mystery to differentiate so rigidly between the two hemispheres. The human brain has more than a 100 trillion calculating connections. Edwards (2001:4) concedes; it is all about a position of observing or visualising. The Biblical exegesis has proved that the left-brain visualises the abstract, the right brain brings the abstract to life.

4.2.5 Ethical perspectives on semeiotic rhetoric based on the Old Testament

- The Biblical examples provided are too clever to define semiotic rhetoric as a creation of the right brain only nor does it reveal that preaching effectively is the result of human reasoning and creativity alone, but relies on a co-dependency on God and the Holy Spirit. It is an intelligent skill in need of even more skills than just theoretical theological knowledge. The Biblical examples have shown that the creators of semeiotic literature had theological knowledge e.g. Biblical background e.g. the theology of the covenant plan of God. They were ordained to serve either as advisors or as prophets and therefore received Biblical credibility and authority;
- The Biblical examples have shown that the creators of semeiotic literature had theological knowledge e.g. Biblical background e.g. the theology of the covenant plan of God and were directly involved in gaining results from prayer. They were ordained to serve either as advisors or as prophets and therefore received God-inspired credibility and authority;
- The Biblical examples show signs of their knowledge in the art of storytelling, the intelligent use of metaphors, imagination, poetic structures that play a vital role in meaning and the art of persuasion. The art of storytelling which is part of the Jewish tradition and identity (Sweet, 2014a:1-30);
- According to Avis (1999:5) Christian imagination should thus not be confused with fixation;
- We often miss these authors' excellent narrative abilities by not reading the narratives, but exegeting a few texts and words. Semeiotic preaching unfolds more when we start exegeting to complete narratives and the back stories;
- It is clear that there should not be tension between the creative mind, the rhetorical skills and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The examples used in this chapter exegetical proved that no matter how intelligent or how creative these authors were, they were in line with the bigger narrative (the covenant plan of God);

- Communication is the most important gift to the God-man and man-God relation and should be treated as one of the most important aspects in homiletical training;
- The examples taken from Scripture ask questions, e.g. do we train preachers to create participation, to express the texts visually, to tell a story effectively, to exegete and use metaphors, to activate more than one human sense, to combine the left and the right-brain as well as what elements should be part of the art of persuasion;
- If these skills were part of Aristotle's and Greco-Roman teachings (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio*) and training and part of ancient Hebrew traditions then we need to revive it or digital communication will left the rational left-brain preaching communication in the shadows of a slow death (the Ahithophel's way);
- Besides the need for rhetoric, training these examples has indicated the importance of capturing the imaginations, attentions and memories (*elocutio and memoria*) of their audiences. This study has indicated that postmillennium culture is a highly visually informed culture. The world delivers according to their preferences and improves communicational techniques by the day. The Bible has proved that God owns all different communicational methods e.g. there are metaphor, there are poetry, stories, humour, visions, imagination, signs and wonders, physical experiences, parables, songs just to name a few. The Bible is a masterplan for digital communication, we need to revive it responsibly;
- The study has also indicated that it could be wise to invite other disciplines to assist in homiletical training regarding understanding communication and subject such as the art of persuasion, the role of the audience, social and culture shifts, the linguistics and subjects such as story writing, metaphors and training in creativity;
- Although effective preaching does not rely on the method, alone it does not exclude to endeavour to master excellent rhetoric, especially in the digimodernistic context. A broad theological and contextual hermeneutical frame is compulsory in order to prevent the pitfalls of over-emphasising technique and under-estimate the persuasive power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit;
- The last topic resulting from a study of the selected texts of OT is the importance of the audience. Much more could be done in future to train and equip the audience especially regarding developing a spirituality and the role of praying or religious communication. The audience can also fall in the trap of becoming spectators or believing that God can only speak to them via the preacher, but much can be done to exercise communication between God and the believer in their personal lives. If not, we are back at the era where the Pope had all the authority. The audience is the voice of Christ to the world, this should raise an important

interest in equipping them to complete the dialogue and the participation in the proclaimed Word of God;

- Semeiotic preaching not only requires theological and exegetical training, but also meta-disciplinary training to enhance the excellence of a divine eloquence;
- Semeiotic preaching as a whole-brain homiletics can only be practised in alliance with the theory and practice of expository preaching and other important and related human sciences (a diverse hermeneutic approach in relation to the concept of *theonome reciprocity*);
- This assumption allows, according to Scripture, for cognitive, rational as well as creative intelligence as gifts from God. No matter how creative, the God-man discourse is both intelligent and emotional, capturing not only the mind, but also addressing the heart;
- The narrative is inseparable from the metaphor (*narraphor*);
- Sweet believes the use of the narrative in combination with the metaphor wants to break down the resistance to the word-driven monologue in order to create relational reality and enters the unconscious mind quicker and causes the participant to fall into the lap of truth (Sweet, 2014b:40-41);
- Any new homiletical model for effective preaching should be complemented by both hemispheres of the brain in order to create a preaching experience that touches all the human senses;
- Whole-brain exegesis might be one of the major shortcomings in a predominant cognitive educational and within the context of Reformed theology and homiletics;
- Semeiotic preaching should be complemented by both hemispheres of the brain in order to create a preaching experience that touches all the human senses;
- A danger in attempting to communicate the Word of God effectively is that it could transcend the Word of God (Van Tonder, 2010:45);
- Webber (2008:20,23) also warns that this transformation is not only about a new kind of magical language and a stage performance that will change the badly ruined condition of the Church overnight, nor should repentance be seen as a new syncretism within the new culture but it is a repentance back to the Church's ancient roots - returning to the story of God.

4.2.6 Conclusion

There is clear evidence of semeiotic rhetoric in OT literature. It is also clear that semeiotics were practised in ancient Biblical story telling, especially since people could not read and write (Vos,

1996:139) and the art of story-telling and semeiotic rhetoric was most probably taught. It could just as well been a human endeavour, but these creative stories, evidently in the macro context, resonated with God's will discovered by Biblical knowledge and the role of prayer.

Semeiotics is a collective word for different creative ways to convey a message from God to man. One of the most important ways was to create the message in alliance with the bigger narrative (the covenant and promises of God).

Neither De Saussure nor the E.C.M. can be considered as the father of semeiotics, since the Jews of the OT are. The Biblical grammatical exegesis has proved this notion. This research has also proved that digital communication is based on the same principles as ancient semeiotic rhetoric in its use of the narrative accompanied by visual images and shared experiences.

No matter if we are in the company of ancient Hebrew prophets or in front of digital addicted teenagers, the human brain responds the best to a communication that narrates either with the assistance of a story or of a metaphor.

The authors of the OT did not have access to technology such as PowerPoint, but they had the power of imagination in order to describe the unseen, they knew how to describe the metaphors in such a way that it resonated with the imagination of their audiences (called reciprocal coupling). The exegesis also proved according to the examples selected from OT texts that these stories needed intellectual knowledge in order to be understood. Though the audiences were predominantly illiterate, they have been educated in the Torah as well as in creative storytelling.

The Biblical exegesis has also proved that semeiotic preaching is not a reaction to rational thinking, but it wants to complement rational thinking in what has been discovered and could be described as whole-brain semeiotic rhetoric.

These findings were also tested by means of meta-theoretical research indicating the effectiveness of right-brain communication e.g. how the use of images can activate different sensory neuro-cortexes better than left-brain argumentation, thus making new information more accessible to the brain, for memory for persuasion purposes.

Semeiotic preaching is not a reaction to the digitised culture *per se*; it is rather a reaction to over-emphasising difficult left-brain rhetoric, as has been proved by the quantitative empirical survey of the second chapter where the results indicated a 72.4 % vote in favour of creative and image-rich preaching.

The normative research has proved that the left-brain supports the thoughts and the designs of the narratives, but that the right brain creates the images and the style in order to deliver the message in such a way that the recipient can participate and experience the message with the whole brain.

Finally, semeiotic preaching cannot be practised without theoretical as well as practical training in relation to a broad hermeneutical field of understanding theology, culture and communication.

4.3 BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PURPOSE OF SEMEIOTICS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (NT)

The OT reflects a high emphasis on literary and oral art on the surface and a pneumatological intervention under the surface of the text. The question is, if semeiotics serves the same purpose in the NT? For the purpose of this discussion, the research will turn to the gospel of John and the parables of Jesus.

4.3.1 The purpose of *semeia* according to John 2:1-12

4.3.1.1 Grammatical Exegetical background

According to Coclici (2011:186-187) exegeting semeiotics is not possible without considering the historicity of the text and intention of the authors regarding the original audience. Without a historical approach, the semeiotic text becomes fable and myth. The historical critical approach is not to prove literal events, but to understand the first audience's traditions and their interpretations of the *semeia*. Behind the Biblical text, a lesson is encrypted through metaphor, metonymy, allegories and rhetorical devices used in writing the Bible that requires in depth exegetical labour.

The parables of Jesus according to Vos (1996:75) were sometimes based on Greek rhetoric whereby one character in the parable always is of human nature. In the Greek version of parables there was an introduction that guided the receiver to understand exactly what the purpose of the parable was (e.g. Mk 4:13 and Lk 15). This is another indication of the importance of a whole-brain hermeneutics in order to practise semeiotic preaching effectively.

Jn 2:1 according to the NIV Bible (1995):

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs σημείων through which he revealed his glory δόξαν; and his disciples believed ἐπίστευσαν in Him.

According to Vos (1996:73), the Gospel of John is a literature mixture between narrative and reasoning. According to Salier (2004:8-17) the fourth gospel is cleverly crafted for a diverse first audience with a strong relation to Judaism which might have been the reason for this type of sign or *semeia* narrative.

The audience lived in a political violent context of the Graeco-Roman Empire, with many heathen cults and gods. The *semeia* narrative is used against these diverting signs for first generation believers to read the correct signs and to follow it until you reach a point of complete maturity in Christ the Life-Giver.

Salier (2004:18-33) traces the purpose of *semeia* back to the OT times. In conclusion, he discovers that the main purpose was to see and to believe in Yahweh. This assumption is made on the Egypt narratives where *semeia* was not only used to indicate the presence and revelations of God, but also to create trust in Him. In the prophetic literature the *semeia* are symbolic signs of the truth. In the Graeco-Roman culture visual *semeion* (observed by the eye) functions as a way to obtain knowledge and proof. In Ancient warfare, signs were used to communicate different strategies, signifying that knowledge and interpretation were needed in order to understand their meaning. The hermeneutical understanding of the *semeia* in John ranges between a text-to-reader and reader-to-text (cultural context) narrative.

According to Salier (2004:66-69) the sign of turning water into wine (Jn 2:1-12) in a Judean context (based on the OT) has many meanings:

- A symbol of God's blessings according to (Deut 32:14);
- The richness of land (Num 13:23,26);
- Symbolising the goodness of God (Num 15:5,7);
- To gladden the heart (Ps 104:15);
- Prosperity and peace (II Kgs 18:31, Prov 3:10);
- The Judgement of God especially of the rival gods (Deut 28:39, Is 16:10);
- Restoration of all things (Gen 49:11, Zech 9:15-17).

If the first audience consisted of a mixture of Jews and Hellenistic Greeks, they could have been familiar with the water turned into wine by the god Dionysus. If Dionysus is the early Christian's rival god, the gospel of John uses Jesus cleverly as *semeia* to rival the Roman god and to prove that He is the real Son of God and Saviour all men has to have faith in (Salier, 2004:66-69).

From the macro context all *semeia* point to Christ as the only supreme God and Saviour (Jn 1:18, 3:13, 3:16-21). In order to draw the attention to Christ, all *semeia* in relation to context and macro context, OT exegesis and multi-cultural interpretations interplay in the John narrative in order to achieve this. The purpose of the *semeia* is not *per se* to construct artistic rhetoric as in the OT, but to prove Jesus Christ's existence and purpose (Salier, 2004:66-69).

To explain the relationship between sign and faith, another sign narrative will be explained according to Jn 4:53-54; i.e. the healing of the Official's son:

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed ἐπίστευσεν. 54 This was the second sign δεύτερον σημεῖον Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Salier (2004:71) discovers another function of the *semeia* in John. It resonates with real events and resonates with everyday life situations whereby it touched the senses of joy and empathy, either at a wedding, or the victory over other gods (Jesus can heal without touching or being present at the bed of the sick), but most of all the joy of victory over disease (fever) and the death of a child. The Christological relation thus not only illuminates the importance of focusing on the Giver of life, but in return, the Giver of life focusses on the needs of the audience. This is an important normative assumption regarding the problematic praxis of an audience-orientated sermon. Christ is the normative balance between text and context. This will now receive further attention in the next section on the subject of the parables of Jesus.

4.3.1.2 Semeiotic perspectives from the parables of Jesus

According to Coclici (2011:178) the parable *parabola* is a narrative with lessons from daily life.

Bailey (1998:30) states that it was first believed that the parable had only one meaning and that was to point to the Kingdom of God. Studies that are more recent have tended to view the parables as literary art. Parables are distinguished from other literary figures in that they are narrative in form, but figurative in meaning. Parables use both similes and metaphors to make their analogies, and the rhetorical purposes of parables are to inform, convince or persuade their audiences.

According to Reinstorf (2002:1283) the new hermeneutics began to understand parables as metaphors, having a multitude of interpretational possibilities especially by the listener from his/her context and understanding. A metaphor is a bearer of the reality. A revelatory image

creates new meaning. The main purpose of a metaphor is not simply to instruct, but rather to challenge.

Reinstorf (2002:1287) illustrates with an example of the parable of the Good Samaritan how allegorical interpretations were preached. These allegorical interpretations are based on a lack of searching for clues within the narrative as well as proper exegesis regarding the cultural and social background of the original parable. Bailey (1998:32) also agrees there is a misconception that the analogues used in parables are clear and easy to bridge to any new context. The first step towards the correct application of a parable is to be aligned with the author's original motive *Sitz im Leben*.

Reinstorf (2002:1287) gives examples of how the parable was seen as a picture of salvation, illustrating the futility of any attempts of self-justification, also as a metaphor for Jesus the Good Shepherd, tending to the wounds of God's flock and as an illustration of Jesus's compassion for the shunned.

What was previously missed in this parable is the clue given in the prologue (Lk 10:25):

On one occasion, an expert in the law νομικός stood up to test Jesus.

According to Bailey (1998:32) the settings of the parables in the Gospels are sometimes supplied by clues left by the narrator, e.g. the parable of the wedding banquet in Mt 22:14: *For many are invited, but few are chosen*. Other examples of the use of parables indicate how their authors made editorial comments in order to guide the meaning of the parable. Bailey further explains how authors would sometimes use the prologue to explain the parable, e.g. the parable of the persistent widow in Lk 18:1:

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable παραβολήν to show them that they should always pray and not give up...

In other instances, the epilogue gives a clue to the proper interpretation e.g. in Lk 16:9 where Jesus explains the parable by telling the audience exactly what He wants them to understand from it: I tell you ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω. In other parables, the prologue and epilogue form an interpretive parenthesis around the story e.g. Mt 18:23-24 (Bailey, 1998:32).

For Reinstorf (2002:1287) the meaning of the parable should be searched for around the challenge set up by the expert in the law νομικός. Both Priest and the Levite on the one hand knew the law but the Samaritan on the other hand did not. Ironically, the Samaritan, whom the

Priest and the Levite regarded as unfaithful to the Torah, is shown to be the one who shows obedience to the Torah.

The νομικός also challenged Jesus with the question who is my neighbour? A neighbour according to Reinstorf (2002:1287) is not someone to be defined, but someone one *becomes*.

Bailey (1998:35) concedes that Jesus often told parables (image-rich) to answer a question (interaction), meet a challenge (participation), or invite the listeners (connecting) to change their thinking. It is evident that Jesus illustrates through this example His connectedness to His audience, to their social culture and to their needs. By addressing and understanding their needs and the wrongs e.g. the ambivalent practicing of the law, the parable was clearly understood and revealed the New Law, the love of Christ.

Sweet (2014b:23-24,45-46) believes that the EPIC-model (par. 5.2.4.4) he developed for semeiotic preaching/sermons is linear to the mission of Christ and the gospels, because Jesus's audiences participated in events e.g. celebrating at a wedding, eating at a table, fishing, arguing with the Pharisees by asking questions and then answering them. Most of the time Jesus did something to create a shared experience, e.g. the miracles. He brought images to His rhetoric e.g. the lost coin, sheep and the prodigal son. Jesus's teaching always required action; something to do, somewhere to go, somehow to connect and to tell others.

The Christological relation to preaching invites the listener to participate by what Sweet (2014b:51-52) calls transductive or transincarnational methods. The preacher hereby focusses less on *taking apart* passages and more on finding ways for the congregation to take part or being dynamically constitutive to the message. It is about being appointed to act according to the message. Participating in an audience is thus related to convincing. In order to get what Jesus meant with his parables, the listener had to be an active and willing participant in the story and in relationship with Jesus, to enter into the story and apply it personally (Sweet, 2014b:40).

4.3.1.3 Normative assumptions regarding the relation between semeiotic rhetoric and Christ

According to Salier (2004:172-175) the *semeion* in the Gospel of John, has a deeper theological (Christological) function than just linguistic rhetoric- creating e.g. interaction and participation. According to John the *semeion* also direct the audience to Christ (the most important purpose; the invitation), as a witness of His passion for saving lives and to open people's eyes in order to receive faith in Him. Like a trial, the reader is put before a testimony in order to make a cognitive verdict. The *semeion* are actions of Christ to asset His identity. The *semeion* does not stand

separated from the audience's context and resonates with real human experiences such as death, joy, social injustice, oppression, sickness etc. in which He acts as a giver of life. *Semeion* in the Gospel of John thus function not only as a symbol of life, but brings life. It combines the visual proclamation with a cognitive decision.

Semeiotics does not only want to serve the homiletics with creativity and whole-brain rhetoric, but also with a language of love, hope and faith in Christ. According to Vos *et al.* (2007:24) it is the language of love that concurs the heart. Jensen (2005:81-85) adds a final word- this all is made possible because the Word has become flesh Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο (Jn 1:14), therefore we can touch, feel, see and hear and think God. We need the image and the word together.

Jesus used the *parabola* to connect to people in their contexts with lessons from daily life.

Parables were told by Christ to inform, convince and persuade. Jesus often told parables to answer a question (interaction), meet a challenge (participation), or invite the listeners (connecting) to change their thinking. It is evident that Jesus illustrates in this example His connectedness to His audience, to their social culture and to their needs.

According to Sweet (2014b:40) the NT word for parable means *alongside*. Jesus builds His stories alongside of the native images and experiences so that people could not only hear, but also see and remember. The power of remembering and understanding stories for so long in Biblical times should already indicate something about its remarkable effectiveness; e.g. how is it possible that these stories could have survived over such a long period even under the pressure during difficult political situations?

According to Mt 13:16 and 17 Jesus emphasises the importance of both hearing and seeing:

But blessed are your eyes because they see βλέπουσιν, and your ears because they hear ἀκούουσιν. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

According to Van Tonder (2010:109-112) Jewish-Christian religion is a religion of both hearing and seeing. According to Van Tonder (2010:110-111) the Bible is an example of God that reveals Himself to humans by becoming human, on the terms of humanity in order to be experienced by all senses. Van Tonder believes this is possible because of the two natures of Christ. Christianity is because of the incarnation of Christ the only religion that is based on visual experience whereby Jesus gave us an image of God. Van Tonder (2010:114-123) concedes that Christ freed the visual image from creating idols when people cannot see, but through Christ we can experience with more than just the eyes and react to it without creating idols, but responding with all our

human senses, this is a contextual theology of a hermeneutics that will always stay relevant. Christ is not against humanity, nor the world (with all its different cultures-John 3:16), but without surrendering His true nature and purpose also true to a calling of transforming cultures. Communication is an exciting creative God-given human phenomenon with no creative limits to incarnate the Word of God in every world.

Sweet (2014b:23, 28, 38, 40, 41, 50) summarises the advantages of the use of parables as follows:

- The parables of Jesus were purveyors of truth in order to see and to remember;
- It brought new insights via realistic stories and events ordinary people could relate to;
- The parable enters the unconscious mind quicker, and causes the participant to see the truth;
- They create relational reality;
- Jesus's goal in preaching was not that everyone understood Him, but that everyone experienced Him and interacted with His message.

Vergeer (1997:1-34) also reiterates the important role of **memory *upomnesei*** in the ancient Biblical times where most people could not read or write. The oral traditions specialised in rhetorical strategies that enhanced the role of memory in order to advance to the important Christian calling of witnessing. Vergeer (1997:25-34) gives examples of such rhetorical strategies e.g. repeating, songs and associations. Vergeer (1997:157-158) concedes that memory is not only a human endeavour, but is also another pneumatological gift (Jn 14:25-26):

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind ὑπομνήσει you of everything I have said to you.

According to Hermelink in Vos *et al.* (2007:42-43) three levels of speaking should resonate with each other in preaching: narrative, confession and theological reasoning. This is what the NT parables accomplished successfully.

According to Jensen (2005:37) the theological purpose of the NT semeiotics as a narrative is for all the humans to see salvation with all human senses (I Jn 1:1):

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard ἀκηκόαμεν, which we have seen ἑώρακαμεν with our eyes ὀφθαλμοῖς, which we have looked at and our hands χεῖρες have touched ἐψηλάφησαν - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

Jensen (2005:37-39) postulates that the purpose of the incarnation is a *semeion* in order to see the *imago Dei*. It is becoming clear that the main purpose of the Biblical *semeia* is directing human sinners towards not only understanding salvation cognitively, but to experience salvation with all their senses.

According to Sweet (2014b:47) Jesus's parables were not given to be understood, but to reveal. For people to remember sermons, they must join in a shared experience, not just intellectually, but with all the senses.

According to another insight by Sweet (2014b:49) the Bible originated from real experiences such as walking with Christ whilst being visually instructed by Him. Kysar and Webb (2006:147-174) also believe that the parables of Jesus were not sermons, but real happenings with real experiences.

According to Walton in Jensen (2005:20) semeiotics and art supported early Christian teachings in achieving the following:

- It stimulated memory;
- It depicted the commands of the gospel;
- It complemented oral instruction;
- It stimulated a variety of senses.

The Christological relation is bipolar: it points to Christs and it includes with empathy the world and the needs of the audience.

4.3.1.4 Ethical perspectives on semeiotic rhetoric based on the examples selected from the New Testament

The research of this chapter has, by means of sage wisdom and discernment, led to the following ethical perspectives:

- Jesus communicated to predominant uneducated people, but most of the parables were told in argumentation and confrontation with the Pharisees and the Rabbis of the temple who were well educated. Therefore the assumption should be made that the NT rhetoric is a mixture between narrative and reasoning;
- The *semeia* plays a visual supportive role in the narrative/reasoning agreed by scholars that it invites the important role of the Christology in the narrative of the NT;

- The Christology is again a wise and balanced gift to preaching. It displaces neither the role of the preacher nor the importance of the audience. It does not overshadow everything with the simplicity of Christ alone. The Christology allows for humanity, even for failure, the gifts of rhetorical techniques and the humanity to explain the stories and their meanings again when people did not understand it;
- There is grace and love in the Christology meaning that whatever we do to communicate the story of salvation it should result in a story of turning water into wine, to find faith and salvation;
- The Christology of preaching resonates with realness and the importance to relate to real stories based on realistic events all people can relate to. This realness plays an important role to ignite all other human senses;
- The parables of Jesus indicated the importance of the memory of the audience. The digitised era is world of too much of everything especially information;
- The Christology of preaching reminds us to keep it simple, one story, one motive, one theme, one metaphor at a time;
- Less complicated preaching, more story and more metaphor requires more training and more time to create them. The homiletical education should address a theological ethos for the one who has to craft a semeiotic sermon and congregations should abide by a normative ethos that the preacher's main focus should not be to shepherd the congregation in such a way that it put his/her preparing time under pressure;
- The Christology for preaching also opens other important topics for successful rhetoric such as the role of dialog (interaction), participation and connecting to the audience;
- Semeiotic preaching in relation to a Christological perspective not only wants to direct all rhetoric to Christ, but wants to enhance to visual communications; the more the audience see, the more they will feel and the more they will remember;
- The role of the preacher is to reveal Christ through not hiding the experience of love and mercy in the sermon;
- According to the communicational techniques of Christ, parables are a relational communication (Christianity is a relational religion), something the homiletics should consider to teach;
- Digital communication is all about networking and relations and an important asset to effective preaching;

- According to the NT, the *semeia* is also a command; it commands to become a disciple of Christ and not only a spectator.

4.3.1.5 Conclusion

The normative survey on the purpose of semeiotic rhetoric in the NT has added more normative value to the praxis of semeiotic preaching:

- Semeiotics as a homiletical model has a deeper theological (Christological) function than only creative communication;
- The *semeia* of the NT directs the listeners and participators to Christ;
- The *semeion* does not stand separated from the audience's contexts and resonates with real human experiences;
- It combines the visual proclamation with cognitive argumentation and decision;
- Semeiotics does not stand separated from the verbal word and from explanations;
- Jesus used the *parabola* to connect to people in their contexts with lessons from daily life;
- Parables were told by Christ to inform, convince and persuade;
- Jesus illustrates in His rhetoric His interest to connect to His audience and to their social culture and needs;
- Semeiotics serves a purpose of not only listening, but also adding another sense; seeing in order to remember *upomnesei*;
- The parables of Jesus were purveyors of truth;
- It brought new insights via realistic stories and events ordinary people could relate to;
- The parable enters the unconscious mind quicker;
- Jesus's goal in preaching was not that everyone should understand Him, but that everyone should experience Him and interact with his message;
- NT parables successfully accomplished a homiletical model that combines narrative, confession and theological reasoning;
- The purpose of the *semeion* in the Gospels is to see the *imago Dei*;
- Jesus's parables were not given to be understood, but to reveal;
- The parables of Jesus were not sermons, but real happenings with real experiences;

- It stimulated memory;
- It depicted the commands of the gospel;
- It complemented oral instruction;
- It stimulated a variety of senses.

4.4 PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATION CHRIST AND COMMUNICATING AND CHRIST AND CULTURE ACCORDING TO THE MISSIONAL STRATEGIES OF PAUL

According to the findings in this thesis, the focus of hermeneutics since the arrival of postmodernism began to lean more to the side of humanity (such as the importance of our own context and subjective creative interpretations and experiences). Besides the purpose of the positive relation between Christ and the context of His audience, this thesis is focussed on proving the normativity of inculturation.

Regarding a normativity of contextual reflection on the Word of God, it is useful to investigate the epistles of Paul where he described his own personal contextualising for the sake of the gospel according to I Cor 9:19-23:

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I **became** ἐγενόμην like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as **to win** κερδήσω those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win κερδήσω those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people.

The letters of Paul are a new genre in the Bible, but are recognised as a form of preaching and rhetoric (Neyrey, 1990:11-25). What is interesting is that Paul preached to different cultures and used different languages and traditions called an approach of discursive hegemony or a postcolonial hermeneutics (Punt, 2007:1-2). According to Punt (2007:3-5) Paul was caught between different powerful traditions, first that of his own, then there was the Greco-Roman Empire and then there was the new upcoming Christian world. The important emphasis Paul is making here regarding an inculturated gospel lies with the words **I became** ἐγενόμην, in order **to win** κερδήσω. According to Neyrey (1990:11-25) I Cor. 9:10-23 is against Paul's anthropological cosmos because of his strict Jewish, pharisaic education and upbringing. This statement is supported by Paul's own writing in Phil 3:5-6:

*I was **circumcised** περιτομή on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a **Hebrew** Ἑβραῖος of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a **Pharisee** Φαρισαῖος.*

The question is how did Paul manage to break past the barriers of his anthropological cosmos? Wendland (2008:4) has made a remarkable observation when he argues that **in Christ, culture does not** matter according to Gal 3:26-28:

So in Christ Jesus you are all **children/sons** υἱοὶ of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Neyrey (1990:12-15) further explains that in order to move from such a strict Jewish culture into a diverse Mediterranean culture like Paul did for the sake of the gospel can only be accomplished when one advances from an anthropological culture to a symbolic religious cosmos. To understand Paul's symbolic cosmos one has to study Paul's letters in the macro context. In this context Wendland (2008:3) discovered that Paul was not a strict Jew, but of the 1st century Mediterranean non-elite. Paul was a Diaspora Jew that grew up in one of the Hellenistic πολεῖς of the Roman Empire where he most likely grew up speaking both Greek and Hebrew (Acts 21:37-40).

"Do you speak Greek Ἑλληνιστὶ ?" he replied. "Aren't you the Egyptian Αἰγύπτιος who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the wilderness some time ago?" Paul answered, "I am a Jew Ἰουδαῖος, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people. "After receiving the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic :

According to Wendland (2008:4-9) Paul was therefore able to integrate his Greek, Jewish and Christian experiences to help contextualised the gospel. When speaking to Jews he used Jewish idioms. When in Athens his preaching ignored the OT and instead he used Greek imagery. Consequently, Paul provides a flexible model of contextualisation. The question is how do you integrate into different cultures without losing trust and authority? According to Punt (2007:5-7) there is only one way. Paul claims his apostleship and authority from his knowledge and trust in the complete Bible- this is called the discourse of Biblical power. It is with this authority and power we need to integrate the gospel into the language of the digitised culture. Christianity is a diverse cultural discourse. The assumption is words and rhetoric are powerful, but holy words are more powerful. According to Punt (2007:7-8) to be listened to one still needs authority, knowledge and

intellect. Paul utilised all of these in his preaching. The assumption is again clear; no matter if the digital context is used to a more right-brain rhetoric we certainly need to adjust to it. We do not lose Biblical authority in order to become right-brain communicators, Paul managed to win the different cultures because of his Biblical or divine authority, we rather have to lose old outdated traditions and communicational methods.

According to Wendland (2008:4-9) when **communicating Christ**, culture matters a great deal (1 Cor 9:20):

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. (also see Acts 13). To those under the law I became like one under the law.

According to Whiteman (1997:1) contextualisation captures in method and perspective the challenge of communicating the Gospel in such a way that it relates to more than one culture.

According to the NT and the writings of Paul, contextualisation goes back to the early Church as it struggled to break loose from its Jewish cultural trappings and enter the Greco-Roman world of the Gentiles. Contextualising according to Whiteman (1997:1) remains a huge challenge today and is not something that comes naturally, but is part of the Church's calling.

Paul adapted the content and the style of his speaking to suit his audience. Culture is hugely important when it comes to **communicating Christ** in a way that our listeners can understand. According to Van Tonder (2010:19-88) the mission of man (anthropological mission) communicating God's Word is a missional calling to reach out into the world, utilising new languages and ways to communicate effectively. The Word as text and the recipient as context become an equally important dialogue in the missional purpose of preaching (Mt 25:14-30). The Church therefore stands in a mutual communicational relation between God, the Church and the World. The purpose of preaching is to inspire the Church in order to respond to the calling- to connect to the world.

Where the Word of God in relation to the Church is placed first, the communication between Church and its context should be placed in a relationship of equal importance. It is therefore important that the Church should stay in touch with the best and the latest communicational methods in order to accomplish its mission. Like Paul, the digitised communication has created a symbolic anthropological cosmos, a world united by the language of pictures and symbols that can cross the barriers of any other language. This new world resonates with opportunities the Church can explore and should utilise.

Besides the responsible shift according to Paul's mission to adapt to different cultures the anthropological debate, further searches for a balance between human skills and preaching the Word of God.

According to Van Tonder (2010:18-88) the theological debate regarding this movement endeavours to find a responsible theology that balances the Word of God in the hand and lives of humans (allowing us to be nothing else but humble humans that may use our God-given human skills to preach His Word). The theological discourse acknowledges the fact that humans were created to the image of God have become sinners but also being restored by Jesus Christ.

According to Larkin (2003:238), the anthropological debate is based on the Gal 1:11-12:

*I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of **human** ἄνθρωπον origin. I did not receive it from any **man** ἄνθρωπον, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*

Objectively, the Word of God is not of man, but God gifted man to think, reason and to proclaim His Word. How can this happen through the human nature?

Larkin (2003:301) gives a Biblical solution for this based on I Cor 2:12:

What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

In this relationship, the humanity is gifted to be adequate to receive and to labour with God's words.

According to van Tonder (2010:19-88) the theological debate regarding the true restoration of the human nature needs to be done within an eschatological understanding of restoration and not a Christological understanding of salvation, meaning that the complete restoration will only be reached in the eschatology. This interpretation allows for a renewed life in Christ, but also for the restrictions of a still incomplete human nature. Therefore, the Word of God should remain the supreme authority in the God-man communicational relation, and then followed by the man-God reflection. Dingemans (1991:58-60) also believes humans are not only sinners, but redeemed by the grace of salvation. The anthropology in theology cannot be separated from Christology whereby sinners receive redemption. From this perspective, Dingemans refers to the preacher as a redeemed gifted person to a redeemed gifted audience.

The theological-anthropological relation in homiletics is important, but simultaneously dangerous. On a positive side, it is important to keep the Biblical discourse contemporary and relevant, but on a negative side, the divinity of the Biblical discourse can succumb to the human discourse as has been described by the historiographical survey of the previous chapter. The theological/ethical guideline for the anthropological relation with preaching, is to keep the Biblical discourse supreme and above human techniques, but not without the rational and artistic competencies of the complete human mind. If the theological-anthropological relation is in the sequence of the Word of God first, followed by humanity, then humanity unfolds in a complete subjective hermeneutical response that includes the whole brain and all human senses and experiences.

The above assumption by Van Tonder in his debate (2010:18-88) also recognises the bipolar relationship between humanity in divinity whereby the one respects and the other allows to enhance on the given Word with a responsible freedom. Loader explains that the responsible collaboration between God's mysterious works and human reflection in spite of their transgressions is widely recognised in the Biblical narrative especially in the books of Esther and Ruth (Bosman & Loader, 1987:112).

Wiersbe (1994:15-48) also recognises the divine work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) in collaboration with all human competencies (anthropology) sometimes in rational structural teachings based on classical philosophical rhetoric, especially seen in the NT in the letters of Paul (Huntsman, 2006:190-207) other times in storytelling and the use of metaphors as seen in many parts of the OT (also in the Samuel narrative) and the parables of Jesus.

4.4.1 Concluding perspectives on the relation: anthropology, culture and Christ

The emphasis on the anthropology, the influences of postmodernism and the humanities can receive too much emphasis in postmillennium homiletics. The strategy followed by Paul can be called; the I became ἐγενόμην to win κερδήσω strategy. The letters of Paul is another genre of Biblical rhetoric. The I, became ἐγενόμην to win κερδήσω strategy is against Paul's anthropological cosmos but not against his symbolic or Christological cosmos. This indicates that in Christ, culture does not matter and when communicating Christ, culture matters therefor Pauls could speak more than one Mediterranean language.

The study has proved that contextualisation goes back to the early Church and something we cannot neglect no matter how difficult. In order to inculturate into the language of the digital culture we do not need to learn a new language we need to return to our ancient roots and adjust

to a more visual and experienced rich rhetoric conducted in the form of the narrative and not a lecture.

Paul adapted the content and the style of his speaking to suit his audience. Culture is hugely important when it comes to communicating Christ in a way that our listeners can associate with.

The Word as text and the recipient as context become an equally important dialogue in the missional purpose of preaching. The Church therefore stands in a mutual communicational relation between God, the Church and the World. The purpose of preaching is to inspire the Church in order to respond to the calling- to connect to the world.

Where the Word of God is placed first in relation to the Church, the communication between Church and its context should be placed in a relationship of equally importance. It is therefore important that the Church should stay in touch with the best and the latest communicational methods in order to accomplish its mission. Like Paul, the digitised communication has created a symbolic anthropological cosmos, a world united by the language of pictures and symbols that can cross the barriers of any other language. This new world resonates with opportunities the Church can explore and should utilise.

Objectively, the Word of God is not of man, but God gifted man to think, reason and to proclaim His Word. How can this happen through the human nature?

This study has discovered that the humanity is gifted to be adequate to receive and to labour with God's words in different contexts and to different cultures. The Word of God should remain the supreme authority in the God-man communicational relation, and then followed by the man-God reflection. If the theological-anthropological relation is in the sequence of the Word of God first, followed by humanity, then humanity unfolds in a complete subjective hermeneutical response that includes the whole brain and all human senses and experiences.

Where, the OT relied much on technique the NT (though not excluding technique) relies more on a Christological calling; to become in order to win.

4.4.2 Ethical perspectives on the relation: anthropology, culture and Christ

- When the humanity and pressure to adjust to new cultures are not treated according to a Biblical normativity the Church (as proved by a historiographical research) can evolve in a complete humanistic direction;
- The postmillennium cultures have revived whole-brain communicational methods, but at the cost of a further decline in religion and especially Christianity;

- The principle is to address the demand of the new culture lies in the method of Paul; the I became ἐγενόμην to win κερδήσω method. The win refers to Christ. If the method is I became to gain, the Church becomes popular and economical;
- We all have an anthropological cosmos that can become enmeshed with the ecclesiastical cosmos. According to Gal.3:26-28 in relation to a Christological ecclesiology, culture should not matter; Christians should in spite of their own culture also learn to adopt a symbolic religious cosmos;
- Digital technology has globalised the world meaning we are more diverse than ever before challenging the Church to be more inclusive than exclusive. This study wants to encourage the inclusiveness ἐγενόμην of the digitised communication which is an ancient-future way of communication on order **to win** κερδήσω;
- In communicating Christ, culture matters, then the Word as text and the recipient as context become an equally important dialogue in the missional purpose of preaching;
- The purpose of preaching is to inspire the Church in order to respond to the calling- to connect to the world. Where the Word of God in relation to the Church is placed first, the communication between church and its context should be placed in a relationship of equally importance;
- It is therefore important that the Church should stay in touch with the best and the latest communicational methods in order to accomplish its mission;
- The ἐγενόμην /κερδήσω concept is a Christological concept that when practised it should balance the relation between God's word as the supreme authority and the anthropological challenge of inculturation;
- The preacher as a redeemed gifted person to a redeemed gifted audience;
- The ethical principle of inculturation is thus a bipolar relationship between humanity and divinity, whereby the one respects and the other allows enhancing on Word with a responsible contextual freedom.

4.5 NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE RELATION BETWEEN SEMEIOTIC PREACHING AND THE SERMON (THE SACRAMENTAL EVENT)

4.5.1 Introduction: Unity between preaching and liturgy

One of the important questions raised in the introduction of this chapter is what should the relation between preaching in the context of a new language and the sermon (liturgy and worship) be?

This implies the relation between a man/woman and God? It can easily happen that although man is busy with theology, his/her endeavours can get side tracked to either that of the person who can preach well or a worship team that entertains well. Another modern danger is that the sermon can become completely intellectual (also see Torevell in his preface, 2000:11).

A study in the field of the communicational hermeneutics can easily lean too much to the side of preaching as a communicational skill and misses the purpose of the rest of the sermon (the liturgical moment of a happening when God meets His congregation).

Reed (1971:1-9) also recognises the importance of a broader impact of preaching than just the Sunday morning audience, therefore should preaching be placed as a co-worker amongst other disciplines as Forester *et al.* (1988:44) concedes, God encounters us through a system of visible, physical and material means (this includes both the left and the right brain and both cognitive and semeiotic expressions).

There are dangers regarding any preaching and not only semeiotic preaching that need to be addressed in this chapter. Jacobsen (2011:14) warns that new homiletical models for preaching can in the postmodern context fall trap to methodological pluralism. Homiletic theory has often succumbed to a temptation common to sub-disciplines of Practical Theology. As a result, homiletics became communication and rhetoric. Therefore, systematic theology should frame homiletical reflection.

According to Geldhof (2015:1) liturgical theology is a study of Christian worship that is solidly anchored in the Christian traditions that includes rituals, prayer and worship practices. Therefore, liturgical theology is also intrinsically part of the entire scope and content of the Theology. Geldhof (2010:155-176) believes that liturgy is also an *intra add* theological subject that includes other fields of study such as ecclesiology, anthropology, church history, pastoral care, the pneumatology and systematic theology. The practical purpose of liturgy is to bring God, humanity and the life of the Church together; therefore, liturgy is an interplay between the communication of God (*opus Dei*) and the work of people or a dialogue between humanity and divinity.

According to Geldhof, (2015:1) liturgy also allows extra interdisciplinary approaches to enrich and enhance the liturgy, e.g. the role semiotics, cultural studies, ritual studies, theatre and performance as well as music and arts. These subjects could all become part of the new homiletical model (par. 5.2.4.4) and in a liturgy where people can experience, participate, see, feel and connect.

According to Kruger (2017?:6-7) a quantitative empirical survey has indicated that people lose interest and concentration during traditional Reformed liturgy. The survey even reveals what people are thinking about when they lose interest in the liturgy. It is a challenge to be just as creative and abductive in the liturgy as in preparing the message. The more the message and the liturgy collaborate the more meaningful this important part of the church service will become.

4.5.2 Whole-brain sermon and liturgy: unity between preaching and worship

Four elements of liturgy were selected in the research that relate to the findings of this chapter and they are the following:

- **Christocentric:** just as the *semeia* point to Christ, the complete sermon and liturgy should do the same;
- **Mystery:** symbolic language has the ability to unfold mysterious religious beliefs more effectively than words can accomplish;
- **Memory and persuasion and art of creativity:** The liturgy should enhance memory and persuasion non-cognitively to generate transformation;
- **Ritual and worship is a whole-brain activity:** Where the truth and the spirit meet, it ignites worship - worship is the result of left- and right-brain activities.

4.5.2.1 The Christocentric purpose of preaching

Cilliers (2004:35-179) takes cognisance of the fact that the sermon does not belong to the preacher alone, it also belongs to Christ and to the congregation (refer Pecklers 2005:14). Cilliers (2004:222) furthermore believes that the whole sermon is an act of broken authority. In I Cor 2:2 Paul refers to his authority in one single word: *the cross*.

Froese (2009:5) suggests that we should not ask what the sermons is about, but what is happening in the sermon:

In the end, what the sermon is about and what it is doing, needs to be joined. A sermon that is clear only on content, but pays no attention to what it is doing, will probably sound like an essay or a report. On the other hand, a sermon that pays attention to what it is doing but with little regard to content will lack Biblical and theological depth and may produce some warm fuzzy feelings that lack staying power.

This strange authority makes Christ present in the liturgy in both experiencing Him and in celebrating Him. The Christology combines the complete brain and offers the congregation the opportunity to experience and participate Christ in the sermon.

To conclude, Long (2005:13-24) addresses the problem that can over-shadow the authority of Christ by referring to the herald image model for preaching. The herald image model reinforces the Biblical and theological purpose of preaching and the sermon and transcends the power of human skills and technique. Forester *et al.* (1988:30-31) contribute by using two words when augmenting a theology for worship and that is to participate in a ritual of *truth* and *spirit*.

Froese (2009:7-9) believes that the gospel is not just content; it is also a power, a mysterious event, a dynamic happening (also see Forester *et al.*, 1988:57). Therefore, the sermon is also a happening of the gospel (Christ-centric) Froese (2009:8) explains it as follows:

*The gospel also does something to people and communities; it performs something **in us and for us.***

Froese (2009:8) summarises the relation between gospel and sermon as follows:

- The sermon is *kerygma* not only information;
- It is transformative;
- The gospel not simply content but also as power.

Pecklers (2005:213) concedes that the Christocentric character of the sermon will align the Church with its mission and calling, thus liturgy constitutes more than what happens in the church but also outside the church.

It has been proved that Christ is the Word that became flesh and the door to the Holy Spirit. Christ is the anchor of theonome reciprocity.

Forester *et al.* (1988:57) concedes the dialogue between the mysteries of God working **in us** and **for us** as follows:

- This mysterious happening should reveal God's secret purpose for the salvation for all (Rom 2:25, 8:19-21);
- The mysterious works of God are an earthly reality expressing in a hidden way the meaning related to God's secret plan (Eph 5:32, Rev 1:20 & 19-21);

- It is an historical happening with a special significance relating to God's plan (I Cor 15:51 & II Thes 2:7).

Forester *et al.* (1988:58) explain why the term mystery was replaced with the word sacrament in the early Church, i.e. to distinguish the Christian understanding from the pagan understanding and practices of the mystical rituals. The mystery of the Gospel relates to the presence of Christ, e.g. best witnessed in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Thus, the best praxis to express the sacramental presence of Christ is with semeiotic language. According to Kubicki (2006:62-66) semiotics will assist the unity between preaching (the truth) and the liturgy (the spiritual reflection or happening) to the generation of theological meaning in the gathering rite and refers to the whole service as a sacramental event.

Forester *et al.* (1988:58) draw the following lines between semeiotics and the mysterious revelation of Christ's salvation and presence:

- *Signum*: the visible for of an invisible grace;
- *Virtus sacramenti*: the inward experience of the invisible grace;
- *Verbum*: the spoken word-the link between the *signum* and the *virtus*.

Pecklers (2005:214) reiterates that Christian worship is also about awe and wonder.

4.5.2.2 Memory and transformation an art of creativity

Atkins (2004:140-148) adds the advance of memory in the sermon (I Cor 11:24-25 - *do this in remembrance of me*) created by semeiotic language, involving the whole body and all its senses and invites the listener to participate in order to experience transformation (Torevell, 2000:23-37).

Torevell (2000:180-183) believes that the symbolic language is an arena of meaning and collective participation. It is also the best language to reveal the sacred and the divine in a shared creativity. This is the arena for semeiotics, a whole-brain experience that was practised since early Biblical religion.

According to Cilliers (2004:206-217) creative expressions enhances the memory, therefore preaching and the whole sermon is an art of creativity.

4.5.2.3 Ritual and worship- a whole brain activity of sacred meaning

The word liturgy is derived from the Greek word *leitourgia* that means belonging to the people (*litos*) and work (*ergon*). This can mean an act of service or a civic function (Pecklers, 2005:12). We should hear verbs (acts of participation, experience and transformation) in this definition.

If the whole-brain concept for semeiotic rhetoric is Biblical then it should also be Biblical for allowing the complete sermon to be based on the whole-brain principles. Hughes (2003:19-55) reminds of the era when liturgy was overshadowed by subjective right-brain expressions.

Forester *et al.* (1988:1-5) state that worship is a sign of faith and not another intellectual lecture on faith (also see Hughes, 2003:19-31) and therefore preaching cannot be separated from the context of worship and *vice versa* (Forester *et al.*, 1988:48). Hughes (2003:19-31) comments that that late-modernism helps us to understand symbolic liturgical expressions better. We need whole-brain experiences in the liturgy, not only the left-brain nor predominant right-brain experiences.

Forester *et al.* (1988:46-61) integrate the word and the worship (the left and the right brain) by means of a Biblical/theological discussion. Forester *et al.* refer to the Psalms (poetry) as both worship and Word. Ps 116 recognises the relation between forgiveness and gratefulness, expressed in the liturgy. One needs to understand forgiveness and then reacts with a joyful heart (worship). With regard to the NT, Forester *et al.* (1988:46-61) refers to Col 3:16 and Eph 5:19. The conclusion he then makes is that the Word results in worship and worship signifies the Word.

According to Webber (2008:23-111) worship does the following:

- It connects to God's story;
- It remembers the past;
- It imagines the future.

Forrester *et al.* (1988:54-61) postulates the following regarding the relation between preaching and worship:

- Scripture permeates worship;
- Scripture is a major element of worship;
- Scripture warrants worship e.g. baptism and the Lord's supper (I Cor 11:23);

- No signs, no worship can be conducted without the Word, and the Word should accommodate worship, symbolism and ritual which existed from Israel in the OT until today (not every act in the church is cognitive there is also the element of mystery (I Cor 2:1).

The semeiotic sermon is not only a whole-brain sermon, but also the result of a complete hermeneutics allowing for other theological values to be voiced in the present time e.g. salvation, the Church's mission, confessions and gratitude, but also to open a vision unto the future (eschatology).

According to Forester *et al.* (1988:9) the whole brain invites the whole body to participate in the liturgy:

Worship is, then, the activity of the people of God. It is not something they watch, a kind of stage show...not is it something they listens to, like a lecture. Rather, it is something they do, and do together...creating friendship with God and our fellows.

Long (2005:13-24) also believes that the sermon is not passive, but a happening or an event.

McGraw (2017:1) summarises the theology of preaching as follows:

- Preaching is part of a calling of evangelism and discipleship (Mt 28:19-20). According to Acts 8:4-5 believers in general evangelised (*euangelidzomai*) as a result of preaching (*keruso*);
- Preaching is a public, authoritative proclamation of the gospel;
- Preaching is the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor 5:9-18);
- According to Eph 4:11 Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as gifts to his Church. All of them instruct the Church;
- Christ preached the kingdom of God (Mk 1:39);
- Preaching must impart the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) in a way that it demonstrates the promises of God in Christ (II Cor 1:20).

The above results have led to following deductions:

- Liturgy can best be expressed as a whole-brain language, because it has to awaken the presence of Christ in the sermon, a sacramental moment that transcends the cognitive and the intellectual, but does not excludes the important support of Biblical theology and exegesis;
- The creative and the imaginative cannot be practised without the support of left-brain reasoning and planning. Once this is accomplished the sermon will enhances memory that is much needed in order to obey and to transform;

- Liturgy is thus a service of the complete Christian life. Preaching is part of the liturgy and the preacher should therefore labour just as hard to conduct the whole sermon encapsulating all different elements in a creative unity.

4.6 NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SEMEIOTIC RHETORIC FROM BIBLICAL TIMES TO DIGIMODERNISM

This chapter confirms that, regardless of the methods of the digital communication, humans have been communicating with their whole brain, rationally and creatively since the beginning of language. We have been created to communicate even Biblical truths with all the human gifts our Creator afforded us.

4.6.1 Perspectives from the Old Testament

- Digital communication utilising the whole brain is just as effective as the rhetoric of the OT - semeiotic rhetoric is an ancient homiletical practice;
- This study has managed to enhance on Wiersbe's emphasis on right-brain rhetoric in proving that semeiotic preaching is Biblical, a form of whole-brain rhetoric;
- This chapter also discovered with exegetical proof that the concept *theonome reciprocity* relates to the relationship between man and his God-given gifts and knowledge, the word of God, the Holy Spirit and the person of Jesus Christ. None of these four relations can act separately in effective, persuasive rhetoric that keeps the preacher humble and God in the centre of honour;
- The importance of an audience-orientated rhetoric has also been discovered and Biblically proved;
- The importance of participation and experience in effective persuasion no matter if it is physical or intellectual has been confirmed;
- It has been proved that semiotics enhances persuasive power of the sender;
- Effective rhetoric should include the following aspects to qualify as a form of whole-brain communication: *Inventio*- background, knowledge and exegetical information, *Dispositio* – the carefully choice of vocabulary, *Elocutio* (creating participation) and *memoria* (optimising imagination that activated necessary senses, *Pronunciatio*- how the sender delivers his message in terms of style and language;

- A normativity for responsible rhetoric should also be found in collaboration with a broad theological and contextual hermeneutical frame that includes the work of the Holy Spirit and prayer;
- Effective rhetoric in the homiletics should not over-emphasise either esthetical eloquence or the predominant importance of the audience;
- According to the NT semeiotics should point to Christ;
- The Holy Spirit is the co-worker of the written Word of God, as well as of the proclaimed Word of God, inclusive of the obeyed Word of God that incorporates rational interpretations, narrative and symbolic explanations as well as the praxis of faith in the lives of every believer;
- The pneumatology is not a one dimension relation to justify human endeavour, but guides us first to a relation with God's Word and faith in Jesus Christ;
- To preach is to engage in counter-imagination or prophetic-imagination;
- Imagination is one of the closest analogies to the Being of God because God delights in revealing Himself through the forms of imagination;
- The Biblical examples from the OT do not exclude rational thinking, exegetical background, theological interpretations or different rhetorical styles to carry meaning;
- The use of semeiotics in different genres were proved not to be inferior to the left brain nor to their purpose namely to carry the divine message of God
- It has been indicated by research with Biblical proof that communication becomes more effective when the right brain receives impulses, such as imagination, that activates the neurological functions of the right brain;
- Images feed concepts and concepts discipline images;
- The Bible does not give a normativity for the dominant use of either the left brain or the right brain in rhetoric, but rather reveals the use of both;
- The undebatable principle for the use of right-brain rhetoric is that it cannot be practised effectively without proper exegesis;
- Semeiotic preaching is another form of expository preaching;
- Creativity is another form of intelligence;
- Semeiotics as a hermeneutical key for preaching should be treated as a whole-brain communicational strategy;

- According to Avis (1999:5) Christian imagination should thus not be confused with fixation;
- Semeiotic preaching unfolds more when we start exegeting to complete narratives and the back stories;
- The Bible has proved that God owns all different communicational methods e.g. metaphor, poetry, stories, humour, visions, imagination, signs and wonders, physical experiences, parables and songs, just to name a few;
- The study has also indicated that it could be wise to invite other disciplines to assist in homiletical training regarding understanding communication and subjects such as the art of persuasion, the role of the audience, social and culture shifts, the linguistics and subjects such as story-writing, metaphors and training in creativity.

4.6.2 Perspectives from the New Testament

- The purpose of the *semeia* in the NT is not *per se* to craft artistic rhetoric as in the OT, but to prove Jesus Christ's existence and purpose through faith;
- The parables of Jesus have a multitude of interpretations;
- A metaphor is a revelatory image that creates new meaning;
- The main purpose of the use of Jesus's metaphors was not to instruct, but to challenge;
- The danger of a metaphor even if it hosts a familiar picture or analogue is that the exegete can omit important exegetical information needed to understand its original meaning;
- Jesus's audiences participated in events e.g. celebrating at a wedding, eating at a table, fishing, arguing with the Pharisees by asking questions and then answering them;
- Jesus created shared experiences e.g. the miracles;
- With all Jesus's teaching came something to do, somewhere to go and somehow to connect;
- Participating in an audience is related to convincing;
- The *semeia* in the Gospel of John, has a deeper theological (Christological) function- i.e. actions of Christ to assert His identity;
- The *semeia* does not stand separated from the audience's context and resonates with real human experiences such as death, joy, social injustice, oppression, sickness, etc. in which God acts as a giver of life;
- *Semeia* in the Gospel of John thus functions not only as a symbol of life, but brings life. It combines the visual proclamation with a cognitive decision;

- Semeiotics does not only want to serve the homiletics with creativity and whole-brain rhetoric, but also with a language of love, hope and faith in Christ;
- The Bible is an example of God that reveals Himself to humans by becoming human on the terms of humanity in order to be experienced by all senses;
- The parables of Jesus are purveyors of truth in order to see and to remember;
- The parable enters the unconscious mind quicker and causes the participant to see the truth;
- Jesus's goal in preaching was not that everyone understood Him, but that everyone experienced Him;
- Three levels of speaking should resonate with each other in preaching: narrative, confession and theological reasoning;
- The Christology is a wise and balanced gift to preaching. It displaces neither the role of the preacher nor the importance of the audience. It does not overshadow everything with the simplicity of Christ alone. The Christology allows for humanity, even for failure, the gifts of rhetorical techniques and the humanity to explain the stories and their meanings again when people did not understand it;
- There is grace and love in the Christology entailing that whatever we do to communicate the story of salvation, it should result in a story of turning water into wine, to find faith and salvation;
- The Christology of preaching resonates with realness and the importance to relate to real stories based on realistic events. This realness plays an important role to ignite all other human senses;
- The parables of Jesus confirmed the importance of the memory of the audience;
- The Christology of preaching reminds us to keep it simple, one story, one motive, one theme or one metaphor at a time;
- According to the NT the *semeía* is also a command; it commands to become a disciple of Christ and not only a spectator;
- Paul highlighted that the importance regarding an inculturated gospel lies with the words I became ἐγενόμην, in order to win κερδήσω. This can only be accomplished when one advances from an anthropological culture to a symbolic religious cosmos;
- When communicating Christ, culture matters a great deal, but in Christ, culture does not matter;
- The study has proved that contextualisation goes back to the early Church;

- In order to inculturate into the language of the digital culture we do not need to learn to adjust to a more visual and experienced rich rhetoric conducted in the form of the narrative;
- Paul adapted the content and the style of his speaking to suit his audience;
- The Word as text and the recipient as context become an equally important dialogue in the missional purpose of preaching;
- The Church therefore stands in a mutual communicational relation between God, the Church and the World. The purpose of preaching is to inspire the Church in order to respond to the calling to connect to the world;
- Where the Word of God, in relation to the Church, is placed first, the communication between Church and its context should be placed in a relationship of equally importance;
- It is therefore important that the Church should stay in touch with the best and the latest communicational methods in order to accomplish its mission. Like Paul, the digitised communication has created a symbolic anthropological cosmos, a world united by the language of pictures and symbols that can cross the barriers of any other language. This new world resonates with opportunities the Church can explore and should utilise;
- The Word of God should remain the supreme authority in the God-man communicational relation, then followed by the man-God reflection;
- If the theological-anthropological relation is in the sequence of first the Word of God, followed by humanity, then humanity unfolds in a complete subjective hermeneutical response that includes the whole brain and all human senses and experiences.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRAGMATIC TASK OF SEMEIOTIC PREACHING

5.1 INTRODUCTION: METHOD AND AIM OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter, according to the method of Osmer (2008:4), now turns to the pragmatic task:

Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the 'talk-back' emerging when they re-enacted.

The practical task of Osmer (2008:12-29) is actually what research in Practical Theology is all about. "A study in Practical Theology should always focus on an outcome that can motivate a change which will focus on the 'here and the now'" (Van Tonder, 2010:24,27). Therefore, the final phase of this thesis will be to design (although experiential and open-ended for further studies in the future), a new form of expository preaching (with its advantages and disadvantages), called semeiotic preaching.

The pragmatic task endeavours to implement the new strategy as a proposed solution for the problem empirically described. Brueggemann (2010:35-45) emphasises three areas, of equally importance, that should relate to each other when studying Practical Theology. They are, the Word of God, the interpretation of the preacher and the acceptance of the receiver in a specific context in order to motivate normative change (Pieterse, 1993:26-27).

In order to formulate new pragmatic perspectives regarding this specific subject of study, it is necessary to integrate the perspectives of all three previous chapters (descriptive results, interpretative quantitative empirical results and the normative results) in a hermeneutical interpretative relation with each other in order to bring theory and empirical results together in what I will propose as subjects for a curriculum in homiletics, called semeiotic preaching.

The following main themes/perspectives and strategies were gathered from the research conducted in the second to the fourth chapters. The aim is to propose these new strategies in the form of practical theories for a proposed new model for semeiotic preaching:

- A new communication style is needed to address an audience used to digital technology (compare par. 2.2-2.2.3);

- Semeiotic preaching requires an eco-hermeneutical approach (par. 2.4-2.4.2, 3.3 & Chapter 4, par. 4.4);
- Semeiotic preaching should balance equally with Scripture, Christology and pneumatology (par. 2.4, 3.3.1.5, 4.2-4.6);
- Semeiotic preaching is an inter- and intra-disciplinary communicational science and not only a linguistic or theological science (par. 1.3, 2.3.4, 2.4, Chapter 3, 4.1, 4.2);
- Semeiotic preaching is integrated with a semeiotic sermon (par. 1.2.2, 2.3.10, 2.4, 3.5.2, 4.5);
- Semeiotic preaching engages with abductive communication-meaning experience, participation and visual connection in an audience orientated rhetoric (par. 1.1, 2.2-2.4.3, 2.9-2.10, 3.2-3.5, 4.2-4.5);
- Semeiotic rhetoric requires a whole-brain exegetical approach in order to make it a reliable carrier of Biblical truth (par. 2.4-2.4.2, 2.5, 3.2-3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.2-4.2.6);
- Semeiotic rhetoric is rich in images and narratives (wordplay) and engages with creativity and imagination (par. 2.4-2.4.1, 2.4.2-2.4.3, 3.5.4, 3.7, 4.2-4.3).

5.2 PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES ON A PROPOSED NEW HOMILETICAL MODEL FOR SEMEIOTIC PREACHING

The following subjects are recommended in light of the above results in order to propose the new model:

- Understanding the complexity of effective preaching;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on a normative foundation for a semeiotic sermon;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on contextual preaching: communicating the language and style of the digimodernistic culture;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the praxis of eco- hermeneutics;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the concept theonome reciprocity;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on semeiotic preaching;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the praxis of imagination and creativity;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on whole-brain exegesis for metaphors and symbols;
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on whole-brain semeiotic rhetoric;

- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on crafting a semeiotic sermon: (the new advanced *kinaesthetic* EPICx2 model (E-exegesis, Experience, P-partnering, Participation, I-image rich, image simple, C-Christocentric preaching, Connecting);
- Crafting a semeiotic (EPICx2) sermon (transductive preaching);
- Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the praxis of audience-orientated preaching.

5.2.1 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on understanding the complexity of effective preaching (par. 2.2-2.6, 2.8-2.10.2 & Chapter 3)

According to the empirical survey, there is a clear and positive attitude in favour of illustrative, interesting, memorable and relevant sermons regardless of the impact of visual digitised culture. It has been proved that the human brain is more acceptable to integrated forms of communication utilising the whole brain. Even traditional churches are in favour of such sermons as long as it does not violate the most treasured traditions of their church. The question however, is; what is effective preaching? Can semeiotic preaching guarantee better church attendance and should church attendance be the only criteria measuring effective preaching?

The subject effective preaching has many facets and cannot be described from only one point of view e.g. image-rich rhetoric and semeiotic preaching. This thesis thus recognises the complexity regarding effective preaching e.g. the role of a diverse interpretations audience regardless of how well the preacher has delivered the message (cf. the work of Ricoeur, Habermas, and Gadamer in 3.3). An effective model in this sense thus wants to recognise the communicational needs of the context (becoming a digitised culture) as well as what is needed to adjust accordingly. Effective preaching in this context identifies new communicational strategies e.g. the importance of creating images and experience.

Vos (1996:121-210) explains the complexity of a statement such as effective speech e.g. what do you use to measure effective preaching? Is it the relation between the *locution*, *illocution* and *perlocution*, is it because it was memorable or is it because it changed a person's life? Although this thesis does not want to go in to too much detail regarding Vos's perspectives, it recognises the complexity of effective preaching in such a way that semeiotic preaching cannot be elevated as the only normative model for effective preaching to a digitised culture. Semeiotic rhetoric should be placed along many other essential communicational and theological perspectives, methods and skills to qualify as effective, but this thesis focusses on communication and would thus describe what could be implemented in a new homiletical model to enhance better communication and better listening.

In context of the above results, Firet (1987:119) sheds light on the concept and indicates that the most dangerous measurement of effective preaching is attendance and applause. Effective preaching can be created by excellent human creativity and rhetoric. According to the pneumatological relation, effective preaching is measured differently. What counts the most is obedience and a changed life (even if it counts for one person only).

According to Vos (1995:102) the purpose of preaching is not only evangelical, it is also for the church member (especially people confronted by hopelessness), to remember *memoria Christi*-memory bridges the past and the presence (ancient-future) and creates a presence of hope in Christ (this happens in relation with the Word and the Holy Spirit).

Reed (1971:1-9) also recognises the importance of a broader purpose of preaching than just the Sunday morning audience, therefore should preaching be placed as a co-worker amongst other theological disciplines and not only the communicational hermeneutics within the field of the homiletics.

It is also evident from the results thus far that there are more factors to be taken into account for a sermon to be effective just than excellent exegesis, communicational skills and reasoning. Vos (2005:318) adds to the complexity of effective preaching by giving examples of other essential skills such as the use of vocabulary, the relevancy of the topic, the persuading skills of the orator and the ability to create a convincing logical plot.

Du Preez (2006:79-91) did a research on the so-called noise between preacher and audience, that can handicap effective preaching further and includes the following:

- Too long sermons;
- Struggling to bring the message to a clear practical application; *the application* problem;
- The irrelevancy of wrong supporting images and stories;
- Poor quality of the sound and images display in the Church;
- The different socio-economic situations of the listeners;
- Psychological disturbances such as guilt.

Effective preaching is thus based on a complex interaction between the text and the semantic code, the preacher (ethos) and the hermeneutical communicational code as well as the rhetorical abilities of both the preacher and the audience (pathos) and their diverse cultural code (Steyn, 2008:116-124,144; Vos, 1996:164). It is impossible for one homiletical model to meet all these

complexities, therefore semeiotic preaching should not be labelled as the saviour of preaching in the digital culture, but rather as a welcoming assistant amongst many other models and ideas.

Preaching, if it is to meet its objective of changing people's lives, must then have some relation to effective communication (in a specific context). To be effective the topic must be well understood and presented (Immink, 2014:176). According to Pepler (2013:1) effective preaching is an intertwined relationship with God's story and with each other's stories. The previous chapter, par. 4.5 indicated the importance of preaching in relation to the complete sermon in order to collaborate with the story of God and not only the preacher's story. This collaboration between sermon and preaching is important to ensure that a sermon is successful. The sermon (liturgy) not only invites Christ, but also allows the audience to experience and to participate in prayers, answers, confessions and commitments with faith and worship.

Truth has only one reference and that is not if we know it, but can we proclaim it?

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Preaching is not to deliver theological lectures, nor Bible reading or sharing exegetical information. Preaching is also a communicational science with many facets the homiletical field could address to equip the preachers of the postmillennium era better;
- Preaching is imbedded in a broad eco-hermeneutical field that involves the whole brain in order to practise this science;
- The homiletical field could do much more regarding the field of studies of preaching as a communicational skill in a broad hermeneutical field, not only to optimise the rhetorical skills of preachers, but also the listening skills of the audience;
- The digitised culture is already equipped with a whole-brain hermeneutical potential just by using digital communication daily;
- Semeiotic preaching wants to offer more than just effective and memorable sermons, but also effective sermons in line with theological fields such as the missiology, liturgy and the ecclesiology.

5.2.2 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on a normative foundation for a semeiotic sermon

5.2.2.1 Contextualisation: communicating the language and style of the digitised culture (compare par. 2.2, 2.2.3-2.2.4, 3.4, 3.4, 4.4)

Contextualising is one of the most important pragmatic theories for practising semeiotic preaching.

The world the Church needs to understand is called digimodernism. Digimodernism is not representing nor effecting everyone in the current society and the Church yet, but it has been emerging into the postmodern society since the turn of the millennium. The study has discovered that Western society can no longer be viewed as a religious culture. These perspectives should prevent over-reactions regarding the threats arising with digimodernism e.g. the emergence of a Super Storm. Empirical results have indicated almost no difference between church attendance in the 1980's and after the turn of the millennium. This signifies a theological and homiletical problem in that the praxis of contextual preaching and ministries is not being addressed.

Digimodernism is a communicational renaissance. It has revived the Biblical rhetoric, the whole-brain communicational practices of the past, the effectiveness of persuasion in using the story and the image; it has advanced the human intellect from the left brain alone to the complete brain. Utilising all of this should make religious communication more exciting, more experienced, more in touch with all of our human senses, more memorable and more creative than ever before. Digital communication is indeed an ancient-future revival and Biblical rhetoric has been copied and transformed into digital communication.

Just as the printed media brought about a renaissance 500 years ago, and the Church benefitted from the printed media, we should benefit from utilising whole-brain rhetoric. If we can learn something positive from modernism (rational objective truth) then we can learn something positive from digimodernism such as whole-brain communication, participation and experience of the audience. These include e.g. the rediscovery of the power of responsible metaphorical and symbolical communication. Vos (1995:112-122) recognises the poverty of creating experience in the Reformed sermon. The inside of the Church should be a place of discovery, especially with the eyes. Symbolical communication is an important asset for religious communication, especially in the digital context. The symbol does not only carry meaning without words, it is also something one can identify with without too long explanations.

One of the most significant discoveries made by digital communication is that knowledge can also be obtained through experience. According to the insights achieved, these practices and ideas are not completely new, as the study has indicated that the Church and Biblical preachers have practised semeiotic preaching long before the arrival of digital communication.

It had been proved that rational reasoning is the most trust-worthy method for studying Biblical literature and theology, whilst rational communication is not the best way for transferring religious and Biblical information to a diverse audience especially when exposed to a visual-rich digitised communication. This research, with Biblical proof, already indicated that communication becomes more effective when the right brain receives impulses, such as imagination, which enables the listener to be drawn into the message with less concentration.

Van Tonder (par. 2.4) has indicated the importance of a contextualised communication and language. (cf. the work of Ricoeur, Habermas, and Gadamer in par. 3.3). Kysar & Webb (par. 2.4.1) conceded that the power of communication does not lie in words alone, but also in images and stories.

Webber (par.4.2.5) warned that this new language should not be seen as an overnight solution for the Church, nor should the transformation be seen as a new syncretism with the new culture but it is a repentance back to the Church's ancient communicational roots.

The fourth chapter (par. 4.4) had normatively proved the need for contextual preaching. Whiteman (par. 4.4) agreed that contextualisation is indeed a hermeneutics of communication.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Chapter 2 has indicated the massive record-breaking results of digital communication (par. 2.2-2.2.2). This chapter also indicated the degeneration of preaching as monological based on one-man's authority since the 1980's (par. 2.3-2.3.4). The theological and homiletical reactions, such as to move from predominant left-brain preaching to semeiotic rhetoric, utilising real human experiences both Biblical and in real life, were described in par. 2.4-2.4.3. The audience-orientated rhetoric has also become an important topic as can be deduced from the attitude of the audiences towards the positive need for more visual, narrative and memorable sermons;
- The fourth chapter, par. 4.4 normatively proved the need and success of contextual preaching according to the missiological method of Paul. According to the Biblical findings of Chapter 4 (par. 4.2-4.3) contextual rhetoric was, and still is, highly effective in mastering the art of

persuasion. Contextuality is embedded with a broader hermeneutics that includes the work of the Holy Spirit and prayer. God always speaks in line with the context;

- Contextualisation is indeed a Biblical hermeneutics of effective communication.

5.2.2.2 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the praxis of eco-hermeneutics (par. 2.4-2.4.2, 3.3, 4.4)

Digital communication is about images, participation and connection, as opposed to the printed and verbal text that is about letters and words and has become less appealing to the digitised culture - as empirically proved. Digital communication is also based on a strategy that touches more than one human sense at a time and is aimed at stimulating imagination with diverse methods and strategies with millions of different resources and styles. Digital communication is an eco-hermeneutical whole-brain communicational experience.

According to par. 2.4.2 the positive influence of the postmodern frame of mind is to visualise and understand that the Christian belief is not only about abstract beliefs, but also about experiencing God in one's own context. The Word of God is not only written by dictating God's words, but also came into existence through real human reflection, experiences and discourses (cf. the work of Ricoeur, Habermas, and Gadamer in par. 3.3).

Reformed Church audiences are in need of sermons that captures all human senses that can create a capturing experience and not presented as another lecture. The empirical results have also proved the need for semeiotic preaching. It also proved that the literary study describing the concerns and ideas by postmillennium theological thinkers are relevant.

Par. 2.4. and 4.3.2.1 characterised the digitised culture as diverse and fast-moving therefore any form of public communication should adopt an eco-hermeneutical, multisensory praxis of knowing in order to connect to people's lives (cf. Peirce's influences to recognise the movement from left-brain reasoning to right-brain conceptualisation in par. 3.3.1.5). This contextual challenge requires a new hermeneutics (par. 3.3). Preaching, if it is to meet its objective of changing people's lives, must then have some relation to effective communication in a specific context and to the calling and purpose of Jesus.

This thesis also recognises the dangers of a total humanised postmodern hermeneutics and postulates a responsible hermeneutics therefore par. 3.3.1.7 indicates the importance of a balanced hermeneutics; to bring two opposite worlds together; the narrative of God and the human narrative.

According to Jensen (2005:5,77) there should not be any tension between text and whatever medium we use to reflect on Word of God. Jensen (2005:39) further refers to Jesus Christ as an example of a new medium of communication (concrete and visual) expressed in real human contexts and fashion in order to understand God's will better. The hermeneutical process is thus not about what comes first; text or context but about mutual important resources for excellent rhetoric and the ability to persuade with faith.

According to par. 3.3.1.7 truth is also incarnational and relational (not possible without a relationship with God through Jesus Christ). This implicates that God has the final say which man can only endeavour to understand throughout all his life. Jesus taught people to experience truth in real life situations and not only by means of reasoning.

The deductions based on the results of this thesis do not want to guarantee effective preaching by relating it to effective communication based on an eco-hermeneutical approach, but rather want to propose a new homiletical model in a specific communicational context in order to optimise the hermeneutical and communicational possibilities of preaching.

The proposed model is called; semeiotic preaching, and the model is originally designed for communicating to the emerging digital culture; which is in process of changing our communication from the printed text to the visual text. These important results want to propose a design of an eco-hermeneutical multi-sensory model, capturing the whole brain in order to expose God's Word not only interesting and relevant but also with faith and a purpose to motivate change.

Regarding the praxis and training of semeiotic preaching as an eco-hermeneutical science a new homiletical model, such as semeiotic preaching, should embrace exciting new subjects e.g. eco-hermeneutical exegesis, creativity and imagination (par. 2.2, 2.4.1, 3.3-3.5,3.8-4.2.2.2-4.2.2.3), communicational and sociological sciences, interactive communication that involves the audience, the art of persuasion, semeiotic exegesis and right-brain rhetoric (compare par. 2.2, 2.2.2, 2.3.4-2.4, 3.4-3.6 4.2.5).

Semeiotic preaching therefore fits into the field of communicational hermeneutics, and within the semeiotic model, there is room for a whole-brain, multi-disciplinary reciprocity between theology and other human sciences related to the subjects of teaching and communicating.

According to Cilliers (2004:15) the main critique coming from theology itself is the over-emphasising of objective truth in modernistic homiletics that has led to the under-emphasising of humanity and realness that has led to critique such as irrelevant and boring preaching (Cilliers, 2004:15). According to Carson (1998:152) the major critique against objective truth, is to preach

the Bible as dictations. This study has empirically indicated that such a style is no longer appealing to people of the digital culture. This chapter includes the most applicable topics that could become new subjects for the praxis of semeiotic preaching.

The research has discovered relevant perspectives from intra- and interdisciplinary fields to support the problematic praxis with responsible new possibilities to equip the postmillennium homilist. Theology should therefore bring theology into dialogue with other theological disciplines and the arts and science-that are all carriers of the Biblical truth. The challenge of postmodern theories is not to stay relevant, but to maintain its normative theological status (par. 2.3.4, 2.4, 3.3-3.5, 4.2.5).

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- In order to practise semeiotic preaching more than just exegesis and writing a sermon should happen. The preachers should participate in an eco-hermeneutical discourse of bringing life, body and soul to the exegetical findings (the creative abductive discourse);
- This will not fall into the lap of the preacher, but will be discovered in relation to the Holy Spirit by searching for relating narratives and images in the current context;
- Once the image/metaphor and narrative have been discovered, the preacher can proceed to the next phase and that is how to integrate the preaching part of the sermon with the participation and experience of the audience (sacramental liturgy that makes God and Christ present). This discourse can be described as a whole-brain homiletical discourse that begins with the interpretation of the printed text (deductive discourse), then progresses to the visual text (creativity and imagination) and ends in a participating, experienced and connection (incarnational) sermon (abductive discourse in reliance with intra-theological subjects such as liturgy, missiology and ecclesiology). Preaching the Word of God is thus not about proclaiming abstract beliefs, but also about experiencing God in one's own context.

5.2.2.3 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on theonome reciprocity (par. 2.4, 3.2-3.3.1.6, 4.2-4.6)

Communication is an anthropological phenomenon whilst religious communication is a relational phenomenon. Masango and Steyn (2011:1) remind that the human reflection to the Word of God is a communicational reflection by real humans that should always rely on the creativity and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (also see Van Tonder, 2010:14) and not only on techniques that may turn Christians into spectators. The relation between the anthropological, the pneumatological as

well as the Christological dimension to preaching should also be an important subject in this research.

The purpose of semeiotics in the NT indicated a rhetoric that wants to direct all stories, parables or *semeia* towards Christ. The concept *theonome reciprocity* should include a relation between all human thought and creativity and a Christology. Christology according to the findings in this research is related to communicational acts and not to dogmatical disputes regarding the nature of Christ. Cilliers (1998, 3-20) also believes in preaching as a contextual relation between Christ and the world. The preacher has to look through many windows in order to be relevant, but Christ should be the existential reverence of all relevance.

According to Vos (2005:300) Christ should always be part of the preaching context, no matter if the sermon is based on the OT. Every sermon should point to Christ, not by manipulation of Biblical texts, but by theological relation between redeemed sinners and obeying the Word of God. We do not preach the Scriptures; we let the Scriptures preach through us as they point to Christ (Sweet, 2014b:68). In a certain sense Christ should always be a contextual figure *praesentia Christi* (Vos, 1997:91) in the audience and on the pulpit. Semeiotic preaching should thus be more than a rhetorical form of art, but also a communicational act that resonates with Christ (the ultimate *semeia*) and His mission of salvation and the mission of the Church.

According to Vos (2005:306) when preaching is based on the foundation of a theonome reciprocity, the next step in the new homiletics, is to craft a sermon and to make it a work of art (the aesthetics of reception). This enables maximum effort to get to the heart of the listener and to turn knowledge into experience and experience into memory and memory into a relationship with Christ. In the days of the iconoclasts, a balanced Christology was needed to rescue the use and misuse of images in the Church and in preaching. A balanced Christology e.g. postulated by Luther argued that Jesus had two pure natures (*communicatio idiomatum*), and not only one (Jensen, 2005:60). Jensen (2005:44-47) concedes that through a pneumatological perspective there is a difference between the Christ that **is for us** and the Christ that is **within us**. We are His human agents to the fullness of His nature and therefore we respond creatively to the same fullness. If we divide the humanity from the divinity, we are imprisoned by a dualism that is not true to the nature, either of Christ or to our own human nature. Strange that we do not see our reading and speaking also limited by a corrupt human nature as the Church in reaction has limited the use of imagination.

Vos (1995:112-122) recognises the poverty of experience in the Reformed churches. Symbolical communication is an important asset for religious communication, especially in the digital context. The symbol does not only carry meaning without words, it is also something one can identify with

without too long explanations. Vos (1995:93-101) reminds according to qualitative studies in Netherland and South Africa that there is a diverse interpretation of Christ amongst the listeners. The creative role of Christ-orientated preaching would be to accompany such preaching with symbols. Symbols are simple metaphors and easy to integrate in the lives of listeners with diverse subjective opinions of Christ.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Religious communication is a relational phenomenon between the logical and the ontological. This cannot be taught, but only motivated and inspired. The advantage of this relation is that it enhances the trust of the religious community in order to allow for both the anthropological freedom as well as the pneumatological and Christological aspects of a religious sermon to be practised, trusted and accepted;
- The best praxis to demonstrate theonome reciprocity is with semeiotics in both the preaching part and the liturgical part of the sermon;
- Christ should always be part of the preaching context (*praesentia Christi*) by theological relation dialogue between redeemed sinners and obeying the Word of God;
- We do not preach the Scriptures but reveal it through more than just words and structure, so through the symbolic work of the Holy Spirit and sacramental presence of Christ. This includes our human creativity and imagination as part of the revealing character of religious truths.

5.2.3 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on semeiotic preaching

5.2.3.1 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the praxis of imagination and creativity (par. 2.2, 2.3.4, 2.4-2.5, 3.3, 3.5, 3.7, 4.2.2.2-4.2.2.3, 4.3-4.4).

Can creativity and imagination be learned? Long (2005:13-14) also asks if good preaching can be learned and came to the conclusion that at least we can teach what is required for preaching to be good. Wiersbe (1994:189-304,309) amongst many other scholars believes that the lack of creativity is a huge problem in communicating religious truths after the Reformation. He believes creativity can be learned and practised by every human when put into a lifestyle of creativity. Cilliers (2004:192-199) also believes that the Spirit makes the preacher creative. Therefore, creativity can be learned because the learning process is also a gift from God (Cilliers, 2004:200).

According to Cilliers (2004:204-206) creativity is not only what the preacher creates in the study, but also what happens on the pulpit. The crafting and the delivery is all part of the creative

relationship between Spirit and preacher. Niemandt (2007:123) believes that the Church is in a time and space where it is necessary to let all creativity flow as God-given gifts in relation to wisdom (prophetic discernment). This includes risk-taking, curiosity, openness to explore the new and the old and revitalising the Church with energy and love.

Sweet (2014b:24) is also concerned that creative sermons can enhance passive entertainment. Creativity and imagination are two risky mediums and need to be handled with care. Wiersbe (1994:62) pleads for the design of a moral theology for creativity whereby one may not exceed the imagination above the Word, but rather utilises it to enrich the Word of God.

According to Cilliers (2004:211-212) the solution lies in perceiving God (the first imaginative hermeneutics) as a creative God from Whom we can create a creative sermon. The selected texts of Chapter four give proof that such astounding creativity as human skill is simultaneously a gift that brings different worlds together and opens new worlds to see. Engemann cited by Immink (Immink *et al.*, 2002a:30,34) explains that God is a creative God who gifted the human brain to see more than printed texts. Cilliers (1998:3-20) calls this divine creativity; a Biblical search for the footprints of God, His wisdom, His will, His love and grace that resonate in the lives of every believer. Cilliers (1998:18) reflects on John 1:29a: Look Ἰῶε, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. We have to ἴδωε just like John, no matter if he has seen Jesus; many others did as well and yet could not find faith in Him. Imagination without faith will not be able to point to the Lamb as Christ, the Saviour.

All creation came into existence through His creativity and created humans as responsive beings are invited to participate in this creative act in order to make God visible in the present time, not only quoting God's historical presence. The golden rule for applying subjective imagination or second-order creativity is to keep it for the final phase of exegesis and not the first phase. According to Wiersbe (1994:61) imagination is a combination of emotion and intellect, which makes it possible for listeners to see and feel, igniting the whole brain.

Wiersbe (1994:64) influenced by Brueggemann explains that humans have places of resistance and embracing that can only be reached by metaphors, stories and images. Wiersbe (1994:61) tells about psychological healing whereby the psychologist, Siegelman explained that healing is not possible without bringing a person's inner life (affect) and understanding together (cognition) through imagination and metaphorical images.

It is debatable if every sermon should consist of all these elements, and De Bono (1979:164-165) warns that the lack of time is an obstacle for attaining creativity. It has already been put to question; are preachers not too busy to craft such sermons? Creative sermons require more

effort and may come in conflict with the traditional expectations of the minister especially where he/she is the only minister in the congregation. Once semeiotic preaching proves its success, congregations should be trained to support the preacher in order to focus on crafting such sermons.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- Creativity is a practical life-style that can be learned, whereby preachers search for connections between the past, the present and the future by means of listening, reading and discussion. This could be done by incorporating more people in his/her sermon preparation known as the round table concept;
- Listening and experiencing (visualising and feeling) past present and future realities creates naturally new stories and new pragmatic abductive possibilities;
- Creativity should not frighten the less creative preacher because creativity is not about creating something new, but to putting what is already existing together (renew or refreshing ideas, images, stories and concepts);
- Creativity is also something that happens between the preacher's motives and the cooperation of the audience and the work of the Holy Spirit;
- Creativity is not only doing something creative, but becoming something - a real person in dealing with real life issues is more creative than just a mouth proclaiming Biblical facts;
- Creativity is mastered by utilising the whole brain in observing the world behind, around and in front of us.

5.2.3.2 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on whole-brain exegesis for metaphors and symbols (par. 1.2.1, 2.2, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 3.2, 3.3-3.5, 3.7, 4.2.2.2-4.2.2.3, 4.2.5, 4.2.6, 4.3)

History has indicated that predominant right-brain rhetoric has gone wrong many times in history of the Church before. By the end of the Middle Ages, the Church became characterised by decay and corruption because of the lack of left-brain reasoning (Schian, 2004:164-165, Green, 1996:99). On the other hand, postmodern philosophy also indicated the failure of the idealistic Enlightenment vision to make universal objective truth possible.

Stallman (1999:1-63) contributed to this problematic praxis by giving normative linguistic proof that metaphorical rhetoric is also another form of cognitive thought. He elaborated on this theory by explaining the need of a whole-brain exegesis and specific strategies to interpret metaphors in order to prevent polysemic interpretations especially Biblical metaphors.

Wiersbe (1994:68) pleads for an ethical/moral model for the use of right-brain imagination. Creativity and imagination are a risky craft that needs to be handled with care after it became defiled by sin whereby creativity can begin to focus more on the gift than the Giver. The *theome reciprocity* concept created by van Ruler, is a wise prophetic method to resolve the problematic praxis committed by the sinful human nature. According to Stallman (1999:1-28) care should be taken of the multi-layer meaning and open-endedness of the metaphor. Without proper exegesis, the original meaning or motive of the metaphor can go astray. The exegete has a responsible task to excavate the texts in order to recover the most correct meaning (according to the original Biblical motive and meaning) of the metaphor.

Stallman (1999:18, 35-36) mentions that the problem with transferring information via the use of metaphors lies with the possibility of improper interpretation (either fundamental or by subjective interpretation without proper exegesis). Reid (1995:1) therefore pleads for a normative theory for the hermeneutics of metaphors in order not to fall trap to either wrong interpretation of metaphors neither to allegorical preaching. Stallman (1999:39-40) acknowledges that the interpretation of metaphors remains difficult because it hosts multiple levels of relations, analogies and contexts (e.g. level 1: figure of speech, level 2: sense and level 3: reference). The interpretation of metaphors should follow a progressive path through these three levels: from words to sentences and from sentences to discourse. In order to understand and interpret metaphors it is important to gain the insights from the canonical discourse.

Van Heck (2005:1-9) also believes metaphors have an open-ended purpose whereby one metaphor can point to two different meanings. Van Heck (2005:9) gives Biblical proof of such ambivalent interpretations for the same metaphors in Jeremiah 2,13,15,17 and 18. Metaphors are thus a challenge for the debate regarding universal truth because the meaning of a metaphor can change according to different situations, different audiences and purposes. Therefore, a whole-brain exegesis is of utmost importance to interpret each metaphor according to its unique cultural and social contexts as well as the intentions of the original author/s (Van Heck, 7-8).

Metaphors signify words and concepts, they do not replace words and concepts (cf. the contributions of Ricoeur in par. 3.3). Exegetical explanation based on left-brain reasoning will always play an integrated role in metaphorical rhetoric. Even Jesus's stories and metaphors were at times misunderstood and Jesus had to explain the meaning of it repeatedly (Wiersbe, 1994:306) e.g. John 10:6 (NIV Bible, 1995):

Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

According to Stallman (1999:1063) the double relation to different subjects (analogies between two realities) should be kept in mind when exegeting the meaning of metaphors. In order to navigate to the specific characteristics of the analogies, the exegete should become familiar with the canonical narrative that includes the traditional interpretation of Biblical metaphors. Comparing God to a Judge (Is 66:16) might be experienced both negatively and positively. God as Judge according to Is 66:16 incurs a negative connotation, but by applying the canonical method of investigating all references to God as a Judge, one will discover also the positive sides of perceiving God as a Judge (according to Is 33:22 also a Saviour).

Wiersbe sheds important light on exegeting metaphors via a method of following the metaphors throughout the complete Biblical discourse that should also help with the interpretation of its meaning within a complete narrative. This excessive labour of Wiersbe (1994:89-198) illustrates how canonical narrative deriving from a compilation of thematic Biblical metaphors over a long period by different narrators in different situations can open new discourses and meaning. Only a few examples were selected:

- **The garden metaphors:**

The story of man begins in a garden (Gen 2:8-9) where the first Adam betrayed God in a Garden, Jesus was betrayed in a garden (Jn 18:3), man gets restored by Jesus according to I Cor 15:45 (Eph 4:20-24) in a garden (Jn 19:41) and finally in a new Garden (Rev 21:1-5).

- **Dark and light metaphors:**

Creation begins with the contrast between darkness and light. God brought the light with Him. The light renews creations. John pictures Jesus as the light of the world (Jn 8:12) in contrast to the darkness. When Jesus came it was like the 8th day of creation (Lk 1:78 & Mt 4:15-16). Paul describes the light as something that renews (II Cor 5:17). John literarily plays with the light and day metaphor e.g. Nicodemus came to Jesus in the night (Jn 3:2) and leaves in the light (Jn 3:21). Judas who walked with the light (Jn 12:35-36) went out in the night (Jn 13:30). The light metaphor ends in Rev 21:22-23 and Rev 22:5.

- **Other examples of metaphors that elaborate on a specific thematic discourse include the following:**

Bread: (first used in Ex 12:8, Mt 26:26 & reinterpreted in Jn 5:35) Jesus was born in Bethlehem, meaning house of bread;

Water: First used in Gen 1:2, and reinterpreted in Jn 4:14, Rev 22:17;

Fruit: First used in Gen 1:11 and Gen 3:3 and reinterpreted in Gal 5:22-23 and Rev 22:2;

Food: First used in Gen 1:29-30 - with the command; eat freely (Gen 2:16) Jacob betrayed his brother with food (Gen 27:31) Jesus was born in a manger - a place where animals feed and later refers to Himself as the bread of life (Jn 6:35). The story of food ends in Rev 22:14; drink freely (Sweet, 2014a:18).

Another method to interpret the meaning of a metaphor is by means of a literal paraphrase of the metaphor (Stallman, 1999:1-63). This should capture both the similarities and differences between the two subjects and should reveal most of its meaning e.g. God is a Judge according to Is 33:22 and Is 66:16 could mean. Either God's verdict as a Judge will sentence us to punishment, or it will righteously punish Israel's enemies or God as Judge will save and rescue Israel from punishment. Themes (repeated analogues) do not merely incur the same meaning, but changes occur according to contextual conditions and situations. The same metaphor can mean something completely different in a total different situation.

Regarding ancient Biblical metaphors, the exegesis must include the social and traditional background of the first audience (historical cultural contexts) in order to determine the correct meaning of the metaphor. This is called the interactive level of interpreting the meaning of metaphors.

The difference between metaphor and symbol according to Kubicki (2006:64) is that signs and metaphors function on the level of *cognition*, providing us with information whilst symbols function on the level of *recognition*, providing with integration. According to Kubicki (2006:61-67) this is an important asset to the sermon and to the liturgy where deep theological teaching can be experienced without words, she calls it the theology of sacrament, the path between body and soul, the bringing of all human senses into action. Symbols can enhance participation, experience, presence and spirituality. This subject could receive more attention in future research.

According to Vos (1995:125-126) symbols are an emotional form of communication that should never replace the rational communication therefore:

- Symbols should always honour God;
- Symbols should direct to the salvation of Christ;
- Symbols should relate to the traditions and culture of the congregation;
- Symbols should rely on sound theology;

- Symbols should be social acceptable;
- Symbols as art should be aesthetical profound in order to touch the emotional experience of Biblical theological truths;
- Once the meaning or meanings are reconstructed, the metaphors allows by means of progressive imagination to create new metaphors and words to express the same meaning or thought in a new context;
- Regarding the creation of new metaphors in preaching Kruger (2014:7-8) indicated how Jesus's masterly practised the metaphor in creating something new based on something old, something familiar. This implies an objective understanding of the original meaning as well as an understanding of the preacher's and his/her audience's world in order to introduce the meaning of the original metaphor to a new context; complete hermeneutics thus includes a hermeneutics of the audience;
- Regarding the creative cognition that accompanies semeiotic rhetoric (Wiersbe, 1994:189-304,309) a complete hermeneutics is needed that includes both objective studies, as well as subjective creative understanding and creativity, the freedom of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the preachers as well as that of their listeners.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- To understand and practise Biblical metaphor the best, the preacher should become familiar with the whole Biblical story and not only with exegeting verses and translating Greek and Hebrew words for deeper meanings;
- Metaphor cannot be separated from contextual thought;
- Semeiotics are not logical in itself they are logical within the narrative, accompanied by a logical argument, even explanations. The preacher should learn to practise metaphors in relation to the narrative;
- Proper exegesis should endeavour to unlock the motive and purpose of the use of a metaphor by means of consensus;
- The best way to find a new metaphor that may fit the experience of the new audience the best is to find an image that correlates the best with the main theme and motive of the message and summarises the message;
- The metaphor is more than just a summary and more than just an overflow of visual information. The best practice of a metaphor is thus to reduce words or even too many images. The preacher should labour to make remembering easier and to find that one quality

image that will stay and will stay due to its multisensory nature, connecting to the heart of the listener. Finding such a metaphor may take the same amount of time as preparing exegetical material.

5.2.3.3 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on *narraphoric* rhetoric (par. 2.2, 2.4.2-2.4.3, 3.3, 3.5, 4.2-4.5)

According to the quantitative findings in Chapter 2 the difference between formal preaching and narrative preaching is 41% to 72.4 %.

The narrative *haggadah* is not that simple, there are also different forms of the narrative e.g. informative, illustrative and commemorative narratives (Vos, 1996:188) and requires its own theory and praxis in order to utilise it for no other reason than to unfold the story of the Gospel (Vos, 1996:182,187-204). Narrative preaching is therefore not only about telling illustrative stories to capture the attention of the audience, either at the beginning of the sermon as an introduction or at the end as a conclusion. This is accomplished by practising specific methods to tell the Biblical story in such a way that it captures all senses, imagination, participation and persuasion throughout the sermon.

Not every passage in Scripture is a narrative, but a sermon is a narrative (Miller cited by Lowry, 2001:2-132). In this context the sermon is not about telling stories, it is about telling the Biblical message in such a way that the listener can engage with attention, in experiencing the message with different human senses and imagination. Narrative rhetoric is a skill that requires a connecting introduction, a logic and capturing plot and a participating slot. This skill requires theoretical as well as practical training (Vos, 1996:169-210).

The more we preach from OT texts, the more we will develop an eye for story and an image. The Gospels will further help to develop the technique because it is exactly what Jesus did. Stories do not have to be fiction because Jesus crafted them from real everyday life-stories. The stories come from the congregation first, then books, newspapers, films. A storyteller, once the Biblical text has produced a message, just needs to keep his/her eyes open, for the story (if the Biblical text has not provided a good story already) as well as for the image.

Sweet (2014b:148-157) believes that *narraphoric* preaching resonates with the dynamic methods used to capture the attention and the minds of the digital users. According to him, Biblical *narraphors* remind us that there is a touch of humanity and real story in preaching. Preaching should therefore shift from explaining texts and theological concepts to creating “body and soul” (to incarnate) into real people’s lives and events. Real life issues are not about exegesis,

explaining words or about dogmatic concepts. Their purpose is to enrich the story not to replace the story. People do not struggle with Greek and Hebrew and *Sola Scriptura* in their daily lives.

The *narraphor* is a perfect bridge to contextual, relevant preaching, as an incarnational process, in a communicational medium that fits the digitised culture the best.

The *narraphor* has the ability to dwell into people's lives, not only enhancing memory, but also becoming practical in faith and behaviour (Sweet, 2014b:148-157). Masango and Steyn (2011:1) believe that preaching, as a communicational task, is conducted by real humans and therefore does not exclude personal experience, creativity and the Work of the Holy Spirit. Timmer (2010:10-23) also emphasises the need for something human and genuine in preaching.

This thesis has also discovered the disadvantages of stories and metaphors and therefore places a huge theological responsibility on the shoulders of the preacher. Preaching is, for example, not only about capturing the attention of the audience, it is a hermeneutical calling to bring two worlds together like Hermes did. To stand between the world of the text and the world of real people with different contextual issues and needs. This thesis has discovered that creativity, stories, and other possibilities come into existence when caught between two worlds. We need to learn to utilise it with all God has gifted us with, His incarnated Word, the Holy Spirit, the narrative, the metaphor, the art of rhetoric and creativity and so much more.

Another disadvantage discovered is that metaphors and stories can have multiple meanings. The digitised culture is not the end of the era of words; it is rather the end of over-emphasising abstract argumentation and using too many words without having them coupled with the listener's contextual experiences and knowledge. Semeiotic preaching needs explanations, but the better the story and the better the metaphor the shorter the explanations will be. The story and the metaphor should resonate with the motive and the message of the Biblical text.

Jensen (2005:136) points out that one cannot use images without words and words should not be used without images. If there is a concern about the openness towards meaning in the image and the metaphor, one should not forget that the written word also opens the door for subjective meaning as clearly witnessed in the different interpretations of the Word of God (Vos, 2008:41).

Important concerns that became apparent as a result of this study, are the disappointment and discouragement amongst preachers due to too many expectations from the congregation, too many activities and roles to be played and according to research, most pastors blame inadequate theological training as well. It takes time to engage with a text, to listen to a text and to understand a text, it takes more time to contextualise the text, and it takes more skill to present a semeiotic

sermon effectively. Future research and education will be needed to address the problematic praxis, not only on the side of the one who has to prepare such a sermon, but also on the side of the congregation and their traditional expectations of the preacher. According to Ephesians 4:11-13 one person cannot attend to all the needs of the congregation: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” There are numerous other Biblical metaphors that describe the congregation as functioning as a body and not as a single person e.g. (I Cor. 12:14). Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many.

This thesis has also discovered that a preacher can select a group of people (the so-called roundtable or collaborative preaching concept) who can assist him/her and play an important part in preparing the sermon and gathering relevant contextual information from selecting a text, to finding a story and applicable metaphor. Around the table, real issues, stories, and images can be birthed from within the context of real people’s lives.

Meta-theoretical research has also indicated how the brain’s sensory cortex is activated during the use of stories and metaphors. There is scientific proof of neurological and chemical differences in the brain functioning when the communication is based on different rhetorical techniques. In order to visualise and to experience the Word of God, the information needs the assistance of the right brain.

The degeneration of the interest in preaching according to a historiographical survey has happened before because of the lack of either whole-brain rhetoric, imagination, too little rational reasoning, a lack of faith and other cultural influences. The predominant passion of preaching should not be to outsmart the digital culture, but to please God the creator who bestowed a diverse means upon all humans of communication.

A complete study of the Biblical narrative is required to understand the meaning of the narrative and the metaphors used in the narrative. Exegesis of genres containing semeiotic rhetoric requires more than the exegesis of words in a small periscope alone. Semeiotic preaching wants to develop an exegetical eye for the complete Biblical narrative and the *semeia* in the macro context in order to capture the best interpretation of the *semeia*.

The same exegetical labour prescribed for expository preaching by Reformed homiletics is thus required to understand Biblical narratives and to apply them correctly in the sermon.

To accomplish the *narraphoric* rhetoric, homiletics should learn to master the use of the whole brain. The digitised communication utilises the whole brain to participate in communication (Burke cited Russinger & Beyers, 2005:75). Whole-brain communication might be one of the major shortcomings in a predominant cognitive educational and within the context of Reformed theology and homiletics. Therefore, both hemispheres of the brain should complement any new homiletical model for effective preaching in order to create a preaching experience that touches all the human senses. Neither left-brain nor right-brain communicational strategies, when practiced in isolation, have succeeded in the past to satisfy the evolving human intellect and creativity (see Chapter 3).

The problematic praxis of this thesis thus fits well into the field of hermeneutical communications whereby the hermeneutical side fits the left-brain facts and information whilst the right brain concentrates on new creative processes to conduct the message with illustrations, stories and experience (cf. the work of Ricoeur, Habermas, and Gadamer in 3.3).

The possibilities of a whole-brain homiletics seems to hold prosperous possibilities for the future of preaching when treated holistically responsible, meaning according to Biblical theology, the correct principles and for the right reasons.

It is proposed that semeiotic rhetoric is the best style for persuasion. As mentioned in Chapter 4, persuasion is more than communicational rhetoric, but an integrative communicational act between the text, the communicator and the audience. It is thus not only about the **how**, but also about the **what** and the **whom** (Jang, 2007:34-36).

According to Eclöv (2016:1-3) *pathos* is the emotional persuasion of a sermon. This happens when hearts are moulded by the text and the rhetoric. Regarding the convincing side of Hushai's counsel, Kruger (2014:7) discovered that the success of his counsel was not the result of his masterly rhetoric alone, but due to a co-depending relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Semeiotic hermeneutics is thus a whole-brain hermeneutics whereby the text is still honoured for meaning (Kysar & Webb, 2006:174), but the text is seen as more than just printed words, but also as pictures and metaphors in specific genres only (Hohstadt, 2010:1; Webber, 2008:20,23).

According to Sweet (2014b:28,42-49) to preach with narratives and metaphors is to practise responsible hermeneutical discernment because semeiotic meanings can outfit the original meaning of the metaphor in the text. Exegetically, semeiotic preaching wants to elaborate on both left- and right-brain methods to exegete Biblical texts, but right-brain exegesis is not interested in chapters and verses anymore, nor in theology and dogma, but in the complete

narrative (Sweet, 2014b:15-18) with the support of visual/oral metaphors and capturing parables (refer Kysar & Webb, 2006:147-174).

Semiotics utilises the left-brain exegesis as a map with its coordinates, numbered roads, names etc., but simultaneously connects to the right brain to see, feel and experience the places on the map (looking at images and scenes behind the names and places). The one cannot arrive without the other. Cilliers (2004:199) defines creativity as the ability to work innovatively with existing associations creating new practical associations (*bisocialtions*) and the more practical they are, the more creative they become. Semeiotic exegesis assists left-brain exegesis with right-brain images in order to see and not only to understand the text (Kysar & Webb, 2006:174). This perspective perceives the text as more than just printed words, but also as pictures of real people and real events.

Whole-brain exegesis involves exploring left-brain facts and theology also with a pneumatological responsibility of keeping God above all human endeavour in mind (cf the work of Peirce in 3.3.1.5 & Perry, 2012:1-75; Webber, 2008:20,23; Kysar & Webb, 2006:174).

Sweet concludes with Jewish whole-brain rhetoric on describing four hermeneutical levels (Sweet, 2014b:27-28):

- The first was the peshat, the literal and simple understanding of Scripture as found in the Mishnah;
- The second was the remez, the more complex typological meaning, represented by the studies of well-known rabbis in the Talmud;
- The third was the derash, the metaphoric or parabolic meaning and in-depth exegesis associated with the studies of the Midrash;
- The fourth was the *sod*. This was the most spiritual of all, it contained the very secrets of truth itself, requiring intuitive and creative interpretation; the meanings of metaphors, parables and mysteries. It was as much transformational as informational.

Exegesis should rather be incorporated with a complete hermeneutics and within this relation; contextual images will reach the eye of the preacher and the hearts of the congregation. The search for images lies within a hermeneutics and not within the exegesis. The hermeneutics needed for whole-brain preaching is the praxis whereby the preacher also visualises images, not only in the text, but also through the text and in the reality of the audience. Exegesis and hermeneutics are inseparable partners in preaching. Exegesis is not preaching, it is the foundation of preaching, so is hermeneutics without Biblical exegesis not preaching, it will be

nothing but a human science. To conclude, exegesis is still needed to make logical assumptions even from the images in the text. An eco-hermeneutical approach is needed to discover images, especially familiar images. Cilliers (1998:3-18) refers to the exegetical process also as more than exegeting text, but to develop an eye for footprints to experiences and expressions of God's grace; *vestigia Dei*. In this regard, it is perceived that Sweet does not differentiate between exegesis and hermeneutics enough.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- The whole-brain hermeneutical and communicational concept is a real human phenomenon that can be traced back in the history of human communication and understanding;
- The narrative *haggadah* of the OT is not that simple and was accomplished by practising specific methods, style and structure in order to capture all senses, imagination, participation and to enhance memory;
- Narrative rhetoric is a skill that requires a connecting introduction, a logic and capturing plot and a participating slot. This skill requires theoretical as well as practical training thus making narrative rhetoric a whole-brain rhetoric;
- The best way to practise whole-brain rhetoric is to start practising whole-brain exegesis in developing an eye to visualise and imagine or to experience the Biblical story and God (*vestigia Dei*) instead of only exegeting words and meaning. This will naturally activate and stimulate the right hemisphere of the brain;
- Preaching should therefore shift from explaining texts and theological concepts to create body and soul (to incarnate) into real people's lives and events;
- Another method to practise whole-brain rhetoric is to believe that the audience do not only have a brain connected to their ears, but also ears connected to their hearts;
- If the preacher is very creative and more inclined to start with right-brain creativity, the whole-brain concept wants to remind that metaphors and parables also need good left brain and logic explanations;
- Creative sermons does not mean no structure. Structure helps to carry the message and to guide the preacher as was illustrated with the poetic structures in the book of Jon 4.2.2;
- The better the preacher prepares the sermon in a whole-brain fashion, meaning planning the purpose and outcome as well as the structure the shorter the sermon will be and become more memorable;

- Stories and illustrations do not persuade people, it is still the complete package including the logical. Even stories and metaphors should be logical and relational as been illustrated in Chapter 4, par. 4.2;
- The story and the metaphor should resonate with the motive and the message of the Biblical text;
- Prayer synchronises our preaching regardless of the style and rhetoric with the Holy Spirit. When that happens, the sermon is persuasive;
- The persuasive power in our sermons also comes from the Word of God, not from our personalities, stories, humour and wordsmithing alone;
- Hermeneutics is when the text enables the preacher to see images, not only in the text, but also through the text and in the reality of the audience;
- Exegesis and hermeneutics are inseparable partners in preaching;
- Exegesis is not preaching, it is the foundation of preaching, so is hermeneutics without Biblical exegesis not preaching, it will be nothing but a human science.

5.2.3.4 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives for audience-orientated preaching (par. 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.6.1, 2.8.7, 3.2, 3.4, 4.2.2.2, 4.2.5, 4.3-4.5)

The quantitative survey in Chapter 2 has indicated a negative attitude for formal preaching, but a positive attitude for liturgy. Though the survey did not test other forms of liturgy, it is evident that there is a positive indication for a liturgy that relates more to experiencing God through all our senses than another theological lecture regarding sin and forgiveness.

There is empirical proof that preaching began to degenerate since television gained momentum about 30 years ago. The only difference between the impact of television and that of digital communication is that digital communication brought about a new culture. The Church is not only challenged to speak the language of the new culture but also to understand it. We need to keep in mind that the average church's audience is a multi-generational audience and not all a digital-exposed audience - making it difficult to apply only one specific new model and this contextual area of the problematic praxis should receive further attention in future research.

The empirical survey indicated that we owe effective preaching to our audiences. It is evident that good preaching relates to good church attendance, however, preaching should always be more than just luring the crowds back to the Church, and it should also lure them out into the world with an appetite to make a difference. In order to craft such a sermon homileticians need

to investigate abductive and transductive communicational methods. Hereby, reasoning lies with the assistance of the experience of the audience and not with the facts and knowledge of the preacher alone. According to Stewart (2003:1) people reason in one of three general ways: deductively, inductively or abductively (cf the work of Peirce in 3.3.1.5). The conclusions of **deduction** are logically certain. **Induction** is based upon observation of repeated experience and thus leads one to a probable conclusion and not a certain conclusion. **Abductive reasoning** offers the listener neither a certain nor a probable conclusion. It does, however, attempt to explain the facts. Abduction thus seeks to determine the most plausible meaning or interpretation. In short; it indicates reasoning with the assistance of experience. According to Stewart (2003:1) the truth in such reasoning lies with the recipient and not the author. Transductive preaching according to Niemandt (2014:9-12) is where a sermon is not an act of communication and trusting the preacher's knowledge alone, but where room is made for becoming the sermon, where trust is literally handed over to the audiences (an incarnational experience).

The counsel of Hushai also illustrated the importance of an audience-orientated rhetoric, something Hushai knew very well and Ahithophel not. Hushai knew how to infiltrate Absalom's mind and where to connect to him the best, touching his emotions and imagination and making his needs visual. According to Van Tonder (2010:15-88) the listeners are just as important in the hermeneutical discourse of effective rhetoric. The audience have their own subjective hermeneutics of understanding, interpreting and experiencing the rhetoric of the preacher.

Webb (2014:1) summarises the problems created by modernistic preaching styles that do not aim to connect with the audience, but rather with the content as follows:

- Connection to the audience gets lost when the purpose of the sermon is to inform the mind rather than to melt the heart;
- Content has become more important than how it is presented;
- When the what becomes more important than the how, then it does not matter how bad a preacher communicates as long as he/she delivers the content.

The empirical survey conducted in the second chapter has revealed the need for a preaching style where presentation is just as important as content.

Semeiotics is about pointers that capture more than the ears, but opens the files of emotion and experience (Sweet, 2014b:22-23). This means that the semeiotic preacher becomes an animator who sees and feels the story and not just dictate a written text (like an exegete). Preachers should not sell knowledge and words alone; they should, as digital technology does so successfully,

create experienced communication, but in relation to the whole human brain and all the senses. The Bible gives proof that right-brain rhetoric resonates with logic and cognitive thinking.

The normativity of shared experiences and participation with the purpose of persuasion is Biblically not a one man's business, but is embedded in and subjected to the authority of God in the first instance. It is also clear that the best rhetoric is part of a comprehensive intellectual hermeneutical strategy. The image that will resonate with the audience is the result of a comprehensive hermetical process that requires good prepared before one speaks. Participation according to OT narratives is based on authority and intellectuality. The understanding of experience that this thesis wants to describe is not from the body, but from the soul, in the psyche and heart of each listener. This experience (reciprocal coupling) wants to enhance the imagination of the listener and wants to invest new theological concepts in the mind and the memory of each listener without long explanations. One has to ask critically; what good experiences are there in lecturing if you are not a student? The preacher's audiences are not students, they are the Church and the missionaries who are needed to enter their worlds equipped and prepared to witness.

According to Chapter 3, par. 3.5.5-3.5.6 the art of persuasion is the science of governing or directing an audience or individual towards a goal or change. Research suggested that whole-brain communication is indeed the best way to persuade audiences. Non-verbal communication stimulates persuasion, because the receivers have to interact with imagination. The art of persuasion is much more than just good content. The art of persuasion lies with how well the communicator can connect with his/her audience with the right **content** accompanied by an **understanding of the culture** of the recipient. Effective communication can only be successful when the message and the medium resonate with the soul of the receiver (connect); called reciprocal coupling. The art of persuasion lies also with credibility, action, reason and empathy.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- The empirical survey indicated that we owe effective, purpose-driven preaching to our audiences;
- In order to craft an audience-orientated sermon homileticians need to investigate abductive and transductive communicational methods;
- Reasoning lies with the assistance of the experience of the audience and not with facts and knowledge of the preacher alone;
- The art and techniques of persuasion can help to capture the trust and belief of the audience;

- The whole brain is the best way to persuade audiences;
- Non-verbal communication stimulates persuasion, because the receivers have to interact with imagination;
- Connecting to the audience can be accomplished by handing the end of the sermon over to the audience (the open-ended technique);
- Preachers can connect to audiences the best with semeiotics that engage them visually with participation and experience;
- Participation according to OT narratives are based on authority, creativity, faith and intellectuality;
- The preacher's audience is not a classroom, they are the Church and the missionaries needed to return to their worlds equipped and prepared to witness.

5.2.3.5 Strategic/pragmatic perspectives on the relation semeiotic preaching and semeiotic liturgy according to the EPICx2 (E.E.P.P.I.I.CC.) model: (par. 2.2, 3.7, 4.2-4.5, 5.1-5.2.3.4)

In Chapter 4, par. 4.5 this thesis discovered the importance of integrating the sermon with preaching by balancing the preaching and the liturgy of the religious sermon in equal importance to each other (par. 2.8.2.1, 2.10, 4.5). Preaching is thus imbedded in a sermon; the sermon (liturgy) is embedded in the preaching. They are both communicational and both equally important to make the ceremony of gathering and meeting with God and fellow believers meaningful and effective. Liturgy since ancient times supported semeiotic communication in the form of rituals and symbolic acts. This thesis has indicated that in preaching four authorities of Christian faith are linked together; *Scripture, tradition, experience* and *human reasoning* that interrelate to different genres of preaching (par. 4.5).

Semeiotic preaching does not only rely on a one man's performance or the support of semeiotic communication only, but is also a multi-sensory communicational model that can effectively be applied to the liturgy that belongs to the whole congregation (par. 4.5).

According to Reed (1971:1-9) the *Loci communes theologici*, designed by Lutheran theologian Philip Melancthon in 1521 was designed to direct preaching towards a broader theological relation (eco-hermeneutical relation). Melancthon created seven intra- and interdisciplinary questions in order to craft a relevant sermon. These disciplines were proposed to create a dialogue with sound theology, anthropology, soteriology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and eschatology. The *Loci communes theologici* was designed to commit preaching to a diverse

field of intra- and interdisciplinary fields in order to face the challenges of practising and preaching theology in the digitised culture (refer Joubert, 2013:177,130; Cilliers, 2004:84-87).

Regarding Melanchthon's *Loci communes* sense for anthropology in preaching (Reed, 1971:1-9; Niemandt, 2007:103-123; Gibbs, 2005:1) both advocate the need for real human experience as an important asset to knowledge. Kysar and Webb (2006:20-21) and Cilliers (2004:93-94) also agree that there is humanity in the Word of God, not only Godliness. Preaching should therefore bring together the real human story in the indicative mode of God's story (Graves & Schlaffer, 2008:14). Context and humanity thus stand in a relation to one another in semeiotic preaching.

Regarding Melanchthon's *Loci communes* sense for ecclesiology (Reed,1971:1-9), the new approach for effective preaching in the new culture should support an ecclesiological model that embraces *koinonia*, especially in a culture where *koinonia* is oppressed by selfish digital communication (Clayton, 2010:15). Sweet (2014b:3-4) believes that the Church as a community of *koinonia* was formed and shaped around tables, not tablets and pulpits.

Regarding Melanchthon's *Loci communes* sense for theology (Reed, 1971:1-9), Clayton (2010:14) warns that no institutions, and very few persons, function as **sole authorities** in theology after Google anymore.

The newly constituted acronym is called **EPICx2** (E.E.P.I.I.CC.) and it leads to the following questions:

- Was the double (**E's**) practised during the preaching preparation? First, was the **Exegetical** labour (par. 2.10.2, 3.2, 3.3, 5.2.3.2, 5.2.3.3) well executed during the preparation of the sermon before one started to create an **Experienced**-filled sermon? If the exegesis was not well laboured, the creativity needed for the text to be experienced will not follow. The exegetical results are needed for crafting a whole-brain semeiotic sermon, maximising imagination and stimulating the right-brain creativity in order to have the message experienced;
- The double (**P's**) want guide the following: Were the following **Partnering** relationships (bipolar relations) brought together during the preparation phase, in order to create better **Participation**?
 - The collaboration between the pneumatological responsibility to listen to the text and the anthropological responsibility (par. 4.2.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.5.2.1) to listen to the context and to respond with a freedom to create. Was the sermon crafted like a narrative with an accompanied image, symbol or metaphor?

- Were both left and right hemispheres of the brain (par. 4.5.2.3) involved in the sermon, is there a strategy to collaborate between authority from above and participation from within the audience;
 - The next partnership is between the liturgy and the message (par. 4.5.2.3). These two events should be treated like a unit. The liturgy should also have semeiotics, the same metaphor and a story as that was used in the message in order to create a simple logic flow of the narrative and participating experience;
 - The next partnership is between exegesis and hermeneutical observations (par. 3.3) and observing different worlds even the world yet to come. Eco-hermeneutical observations (par. 5.2.3.2) are important to stimulate imagination and reality. If not participation of the audience via the text into their own contextual realities will not be possible;
 - Finally, is there a partnership between the preacher and the audience? Is the preacher inclined to hand the sermon over to the life of the audience (par. 5.2.3.4)?
- The next important questions relates to two **(I's)**. **The first I**, stands for **Image-rich communication**. Image-rich communication is not about the **quantity** of images used to convey the message, but could alternatively be created with words that recall images and experiences. **The second I**, stands for the image/metaphor. This can be accomplished by finding only one image that summarises the central truth/theme of the message and could have more value than a thousand words or long slide show (par. 1.2.1, 3.4.2.2, 4.2.4).
 - The final question is regarding the double **(C's)** which stands for **Christological and Connectiveness** of the sermon (par. 1.2.2, 3.2, 3.3.1.8, 4.2, 4.3-4.6). This thesis wants to indicate the importance of a sermon that connects first to the life and theology of Christ. Christ is the only transformative connection from which all other theological requirements and goals for preaching will materialise. Was Christ's presence identifiable from the beginning to end of the sermon? Was it real and tangible? The *semeia* should point to Christ (par. 4.3) first and also be experienced in the rhetoric, the metaphor, the narrative plot, the symbolism, the liturgy and the person of the preacher and the worship of the audience. If so, the sermon will have all the essential elements not only of persuasion, but also of becoming. If the audience connects with Christ, they will also connect to His mission and become a transductive audience and carrier of the divine truth. They will become the *semeia* of the sermon.

5.2.3.5.1 *Creating Experience and exegetical strategies (par. 2.2, 2.3.3, 2.4-2.6.4, 2.10.1, 3.2-3.5, 4.2-4.5, 5.2.3.2):*

5.2.3.5.1.1 *Experience:*

Experienced learning is not new, it was an ancient rhetorical method also found in the teachings of Aristotle touching more than one of our human senses in order to create experience e.g. the use of drama, the arts and poetry. Preachers of the digital age should be authors of experience (Sweet, 2014b:46). Although Sweet refers to semeiotic preaching as another form of expository preaching and the role of semantics and exegesis, the importance of whole-brain exegesis does not feature in his acronym EPIC.

The Biblical examples selected in Chapter 4 indicated the authors' broad hermeneutical labour prior to their presentation and writings (refer par. 4.2.3.2-4.2.3.3). The concept whole-brain exegesis (par. 5.2.4.2) should search for Biblical experiences, images, back-stories and metaphors, e.g. the suffering of Jews during the exile, the joy of a father when the prodigal son returned. This chapter, par. 5.2.4.2, also indicated the dangers of metaphors and the exegetical requirements to concur these dangers.

According to Dudit (2014:1) people remember sermons better when they can experience the message, not only intellectually, but also with all their senses (par. 3.5.3.). It invites the whole human brain and body to participate, (enhancing the message to be experienced), especially when told like a story and not lectured and allow for an experienced liturgy and not another theological lecture (refer par. 5.2.4.6).

Preachers should use experience in teaching the Word of God, based on whole-brain exegesis and can be created by making use of multisensory communication. In order to craft such a sermon homileticians need to investigate abductive and transductive communicational methods (Sweet, 2014b:69-95). If a preacher has laboured well on his/her exegesis then he/she will manage to enhance preaching to a divine and real human experience. The preacher as well as the audience will then become visually part(abductive and transductive) of the incarnated experience that is much more than observing power point slide shows and video clips (these can still be used, but with the lack of exegesis it will not relate to the purpose of Biblical expository preaching).

According to Sweet (2014b:47) experiencing the Word of God should not mean to turn irrational, but to allow truth to go beyond the left brain. Jesus's parables were not given to be understood, but to reveal. For people to remember sermons, they must join in a shared experience, not just intellectually, but with all the senses (reason and emotion). According to McClure (2007:79)

communicational studies have indicated that rational clarity (not style) is still higher valued in public speaking than anything else, something semeiotic preaching should keep in mind e.g. not to present the *semeia* in such a way that people lose track of the logical plot of the sermon. McClure (2007:84) suggests the importance of *metonymy* whereby all communicational methods such as metaphors, stories, symbols, etc. juxtapositions with one sequential internal logic.

No matter how cleverly digital communication is designed e.g. to capture the whole brain or to link people globally in seconds, there are no replacements for real human experiences such as tangible human care and compassion, something that should never be neglected to be experienced in the Christian sermon and community. Therefore, care should be taken not to replace real experience and participation with neither objective nor subjective interpretations and experiences only (especially in the digitised era where people can become more isolated than even before from real human experiences as illustrated in the Word of God).

Preaching is not only about explaining texts with exegetical findings. According to Jensen (2005:45) when a preacher does not use imagination nor images, he/she falls into explanations. According to another insight by Sweet (2014b:49), the solution does not lie in the words we preach, neither in the creativity of preachers alone, but also in the images and the stories of the text itself. The Bible was not lectured, but originated from real experiences. Kysar and Webb (2006:147-174) also believe that the parables of Jesus were not sermons, but real happenings with real *experiences*.

Digital communication allows people to participate in shared experiences, ideas and information by communicating with images that tell of their experiences. Sweet (2014b:76) differentiates between *priori* knowledge *posteriori* knowledge. *Priori* knowledge is conceptual and independent of experience, based on reason alone. *Posteriori* knowledge or assertion is based on experience. Digimodernism can over-emphasise the need for experience opposed to the need for knowledge. *Posteriori* preaching should embrace both.

Vos and Pieterse (1997:22) also welcome the importance of the right brain for crafting effective and memorable sermons. Human skills include all of our gifts and all of the human brain, including the rational, the imagination and other creative possibilities that can enhance experiencing the message not only listening to the message.

It can be concluded that experience is more than emotions or a sermon prepared for entertainment, it is to experience the text in order to relate to the message that touches the heart and mind in order to enhance faith, change behaviour and activate a service for Christ.

Lindbeck (1984:16) warns that the focus in preaching should not be overshadowed by what should happen in the sermon other than informational content. A balance between exegesis and experience i.e. the left brain and the right brain is once again important. The risks regarding semeiotic preaching and the dangers of using metaphors to enhance experience has been considered (par. 5.2.4.2). The findings in par. 5.2.4.2 have indicated that semeiotic language is more than experience, it is also about meaning. Meaning of the correct use of it can only be discovered in exegetical work that includes the understanding of the complete narrative and not only preaching from one verse, one word or one metaphor.

5.2.3.5.1.2 *Exegesis:*

The findings of this thesis have unfolded a new concept called whole-brain preaching. In EPICx2, the second E stand for Exegesis (whole-brain exegesis consisting of both: grammatical exegesis as well as semeiotic exegesis). A whole-brain exegetical approach should delight in excavating the grammatical facts as well as the semeiotic rhetoric, the experiences of Biblical narratives and real life stories and encounters with God. The research already stipulated the importance of developing an eye for complete narratives (not only a verse or periscope), the metaphors (par. 5.2.3.2), the back stories and other illustrations and not only the meaning of words and discoveries based on theological interpretations. Whole-brain exegesis includes the abstract facts, but does not exclude the imagination of seeing and feeling the story as it happened during the time of the Biblical context. This form of exegesis already supplies the exegete with right-brain material based on left-brain facts to create a whole-brain sermon.

It is from the exegesis that wisdom, images and experiences will be gained to proclaim the Word of God more effectively, touching all human senses (par. 4.5). In the liturgy it is e.g. not about technique *per se*, but about the mysterious presence created by symbols, music, rituals, prayers and confessions. The sermon does not only belong to the preacher, nor to the audience alone, but also to Christ to create an unexplained encounter just by opening the Church's door to His presence.

The study has also discovered that memory; knowledge, trust and change are all enhanced by experience and participation. The more people support a new idea in the digital community the more will people trust the idea. Truth is according to the findings of this study embedded in experience and participation and does not only belongs to objective truth trusted in the position and authority of the preacher. Subjective experience does not ignore universal truth, and in accordance with Gadamer, Habermas and Ricoeur, it is acknowledged that there should be room for diverse meanings for the sake of a contextual Christianity.

5.2.3.5.2 *Participating and partnering strategies: (par. 2.2, 3.3-3.5, 4.3.1.2)*

5.2.3.5.2.1 *Participating:*

What does participation in a sermon mean? Does it imply that the audience has to get an opportunity to join in the sermon, e.g. following the customs of the Afro American churches where everyone is allowed to speak up loudly, by confirming something the preacher has said? In light of the fear for public speaking, this does not seem to be the right way to go (Jackson *et al.*, 2017:par.1-5).

Does participation mean that the preacher has to make use of a collective method when preparing the sermon, allocating people to share their ideas and thoughts? Two forms of connectivity and participation were recognised in the research. The one is based on communication whilst the other one is based on tangible participation.

McClure (1995:17,50) refers to participation as something that can be practised during the week during sermon preparation. It is called the round-table preaching or collaborative preaching method (also see Cilliers, 2004:136-43). Like a Bible study group people meet every week to interact collectively in ideas, needs and stories for the next sermon. McClure believes that without this type of listening to the audiences ideas, needs, etc. persuasion walks a tightrope between coercion and manipulation. Persuasion is according to McClure (1995:25) not an action on someone, but an action with someone. McClure (1995:47) agrees that collaborative homiletics is a problematic praxis. Interactivity could become a new subject in the homiletics in order to help create an authentic homiletics of interactivity.

Although Vos (2005:297) agree with the importance of listening to others before you speak, this might also not be what is really meant by participation. In order to understand what is really meant, one needs to study other meta-theories regarding this topic. This relates to Sweet's (2014b:51-52) transductive or transincarnational method, focusing less on taking apart passages and more on finding ways for the congregation to take part or being constitutive to the message dynamically. It is about being appointed to act according to the message. Participating with an audience is thus related to convincing. In order to comprehend what Jesus meant with his parables, the listener had to be an active and willing participant in the story and in relationship with Jesus, to enter into the story and apply it personally (Sweet, 2014b:40).

The digitised culture has become a culture of participation and Reformed homiletics should search for non-threatening ways to allow people in the Church to become more than just passive spectators (Sweet, 2014b:24). Sweet (2014b:93-94) suggests that it is time that preachers should leave something for the audience to ponder on and for their imagination and faith to take home.

Niemandt (2007:109-11) feels that participation is more tangible than rhetorical skills and shares a few examples of how participation could be practised in the sermon; e.g. members read the Scripture from Bible together, questions and answers, invite more members to participate in different types of prayers and testimonies, just to name a few. Interactivity could become a new subject in the homiletics in order to help create an authentic homiletics of interactivity.

Cilliers (2004:131-141) concedes, no matter how Reformed churches will apply participation in the sermons, the sermon belongs to the pews; the bearers and the defenders of truth. Engemann cited by Immink (Immink *et al.*, 2002a:28) concedes that God invites us to participate and Niemandt (2007:104) believes that the core characteristics of Christian religion is participation. The question is: does it belong in a sermon or as a supporting activity alongside the sermon e.g. care groups and other forms of *koinonia* during the week, where members can participate the praxis of their faith? Breed (2012:1-4) believes that participation is best achieved outside the Sunday sermon whereby the gifts of the congregation can be practised according to Biblical guidelines. This indicates that there should be more to a Biblical *ecclesia* than just the Sunday sermon.

The digitised culture has become a culture of non-threatening participation and Reformed homiletics should search for non-threatening ways in the future to motivate the audiences to overcome the habit of becoming passive spectators (Sweet, 2014b:24). It is questionable if tangible participation e.g. to turn to others, to pray with others, to give feedback etc. will work with the introverted digital culture. Semeiotic preaching is rich in communicational ideas, but lacks a praxis for how to turn cyber introverted people into valuing real people in real situations in so much, that people will forget about their cell phones and tablets when engaging in tangible *koinonia*. This may still be a challenge for future studies.

According to Cilliers (2004:212-213) the Hebrew word “*dabar*” has more than one meaning. The one is bringing us closer to meaning and the other one is *deed*. The Word is therefore also physical and visual in order to become human among us. Cilliers (2004:214) believes that preaching can make those connections by becoming more visually illustrative of abstract theological concepts.

The important assumption made in this thesis is that experience and participation is not only tangible, but also a rhetorical skill that can be created via creative communicational techniques such as real stories, emotions and images. The experience and participation this study has discovered does not apply to the body only, but also to the mind, the soul and the emotion. This can be created by rhetoric such as semeiotic preaching. According to Van Tonder (2010:15-88), participatory communication is the predominant praxis between God and man. The opposite, is

passive communication or listening without reacting. Participation with digital communication could also be accomplished with sharing ideas, meanings, petitions, fundraisings etc. via cell phone groups, Facebook. Care should be taken not to confuse the participation that accompanies Christian fellowship or hospitality with the participation that accompanies rhetorical techniques. Burden and Prinsloo (1987:n.p) write in their introduction that the electronic culture has lost the effect of the spoken word. In Biblical times a word had power; an impact *efficax*. According to Burden and Prinsloo, our religion and faith are based on communication where we sometimes have to listen and sometimes have to respond. The Bible gives proof of both, but all occur within the context of communication. When one speaks the other listens. There is nothing wrong with the monologue and this thesis has proved that the monologue can be just as creative and imaginative as any other form of communication when semeiotics accompanies the monological rhetoric. Burden and Prinsloo (1987:n.p) also assert that God allows for the dialogue and this could enhance the participating role of the audience.

5.2.3.5.2.2 *Partnerships in an eco-hermeneutical approach:*

The whole-brain model is also interested in a whole-brain and whole-disciplinary hermeneutical approach. In this context, the **P** of EPICx2 now also refers to important partnerships.

In order to motivate an audience to participate in a sermon, trust and the art of persuasion may become one of the most important assets. To gain trust and persuasion the following partnerships have been identified by the research and should collaborate with each other in order to remain normative and authentic:

- The pneumatological dependence is important for both listening to the text and the anthropological reaction to adjust creatively to the context and to respond with a responsible freedom of creativity and imagination and the power of persuasion;
- Semeiotics cannot work without the company of the Word of God;
- Were both left- and right-hemispheres of the brain involved in the sermon (par. 5.2.3.3)? The left brain is responsible for the strategic reasoning and interpretation of facts and concepts, planning and argumentation. The right brain creates the *narraphors* that enhance participation. Every narrative should be accompanied by a relative image, symbol or metaphor;
- The next partnership is between the liturgy and the sermon (par. 4.5). These two events should be treated in a unity. The liturgy should also have semeiotics, a metaphor and a story in order to create a real experience with God and Christ. The liturgy is the arena of participation;

- The final partnership is between exegesis and hermeneutical observations and observing different worlds; even the world yet to come. Hermeneutical observations are important to create participation.

Semeiotic preaching will not be possible and effective without these important partnerships and participation will have no Biblical direction and purpose.

5.2.3.5.3 *I-mage-rich and the use of one I-mage as a metaphor in effective rhetoric: (par. 2.2-2.4.2, 2.10.2, 3.4-3.5, 4.2.2.2, 5.2.3.2)*

This thesis has established the creative power of the image (not images) based on the use of semeiotic rhetoric based on examples from the Old and NT. Kruger (2014:7) postulates that a rhetoric expressed in metaphors such as practised by authors of the OT is an example of how it turns ears into eyes and optimises the attention and participation of the listener by capturing the imagination which is important not only for interpretation and memory, but especially for persuasion.

The first **I** of **Image-rich**, relates to **image-rich rhetoric** and the second **I** to the use of **visual images**. According to Vos in Vos *et al.* (2007:21-22), the homiletician is also a **wordsmith** that can use many creative methods to turn words into something more than ordinary words, but also igniting pictures, emotions, memory, etc. According to Vos *et al.* (2007:21-22) one such method is the use of the metaphor. Metaphors surprise the ordinary word by opening new worlds, experiences and perspectives when one object is compared to another.

Troeger in Vos *et al.* (2007:59-71) explained, as referred to in the previous chapter, why the Protestants treated imagination with ambiguity. To overcome the ambiguity of imagination, Troeger in Vos *et al.* (2007:63-69) proposes a theological integrity of imagination. This can be based on the following:

- The Bible offers imaginary creativity and expression amongst rational thought, but the main purpose was to see and to remember;
- We are called to engage in the creative work *bara* of God; *homo nominans* - created to create names, created to honour the image of the Creator;
- Imagination is much needed in order to reach a world different to the views of that of the Church. Troeger refers to this kind of imagination as a pastoral step-over into another world - we dwell in a world according to how we imagine it. Troeger explains how Jesus connected to the everyday lives of people caught between poverty and wealth, freedom and slavery and then creates out of these close observations His parables in order to open our eyes to a

theology of hope we forgot to create because of ignorance. To reinvent hope in a hopeless world could be called sacramental imagination.

Wiersbe (1994:60-100) believes that people suffer from starved imagination. According to Joubert (2007:116) churches that preserve non-imaginational, rational concepts, familiar patterns and traditions, decompose now faster than it took to develop them.

According to Cilliers (2004:208-214) and the insights from this part of the research, the OT offers examples of image-rich communication either from God's side, or the side of its message bearers (Niemandt, 2007:107; Cilliers, 2004:210-211).

The first **I** thus stands for wordsmithing, crafting words that ignites the imagination of the listener.

The second **I** stands for the visual or metaphorical image and not for images (a long PowerPoint slide show).

According to Jensen (2005:19) the purpose of the Biblical use of images was to instruct the Word of God. The images were complementary to the written text. The God who became flesh can indeed communicate through all human senses, not only the ear, but also the eye. Bosman and Lauder (1988:43-45) reminds that the Deuteronomistic History (DH) is also an example of interpretation when the same narratives of the Hexateuch were retold in a new context. The knowledge of the Biblical narrative does not come from images and experiences alone, but also from retelling and reinterpreting the original stories.

Cilliers (2004:211) furthermore concedes that Biblical images have progressive power and demand creative contemporary imagination. The art of finding images lies in imagination, something you must learn and something you should be looking for in the text (Cilliers, 2004:199-217).

An image invites the audience to participate with the eyes and with imagination in order to experience the characters and the events. Listeners can easily get lost in long explanations and slide shows, but one image/metaphor can draw the listener into the story. Luther contributed to the correct use of a picture in teaching his followers that every picture can tell a story, but only one particular kind of story can make a sermon (Jensen, 2005:58). According to Jensen (2005:76) there was an era where words excluded alternative mediums to inform religion. Images without explanations succumb to the temptation of being too inclusive. The solution is to bring the oral explanation and the image in an equal important complimentary relationship to each other.

The insights of Cilliers (2004:214-215) regarding the effective use of images can be summarised as follows:

- The image compliments the words we speak;
- Images create realities;
- Images enhance memory;
- Images connect to the audience.

Sweet (2014:28) postulates that in order to craft a semeiotic sermon the exegete needs to develop an exegetical eye for the images in the text:

Therefore, to understand Jesus and the Scriptures, we need to train others and ourselves not to exegete more words, but to exegete images...

A disagreement with Sweet emanates from the results of this thesis, not regarding the use of images, but regarding a new exegetical model that develops an eye for the images in the text. This can easily over emphasises the role of the image opposed to the role of words. Not every word in the Word of God is written with the purpose to expose visual images, but also ideas, concepts, relations, statements, etc. The image cannot be separated from the word, nor the Sitz im Leben (the original social cultural context). Semeiotic exegesis cannot be separated from proper left-brain exegesis.

Lastly, this thesis wants to elaborate on Cilliers's statement of the advantage semeiotics offers to use fewer words. The image-rich statement of Sweet should not lead to an over-bombardment of images in the sermon.

Images do not create a semeiotic sermon. It is only a supporting communicational part of what semeiotic preaching is all about. It is the hermeneutical and relational purpose of the image that counts the most. Therefore, the image should relate to the narrative of the text and to the memory of the audience, not the entertainment of the audience, nor the artistic and technological skills of the preacher. Images can also be crafted by means of words and imagination. It is recommended by this thesis that one such metaphorical image can have a better impact than a slide show. According to these results, the following question can be asked: Is the image a product of careful thought, in such a way that one picture can summarise, encapsulates the message (the central truth), and simultaneously resonates with the audience's experiences, touching senses and emotions?

This one image; (either orally illustrated or visually expressed) happens at the end of the preparation, not at the beginning and helps the preacher to stay with the central truth of the Biblical text and to avoid touching too many themes in one sermon. Finding such an image takes time, but it replaces many words and too many unnecessary images or stories and resonates better with the simplicity of digitised-communication. Too many images can also disrupt the logic flow of the sermon. This one comprehensive image becomes the symbol and the metaphor of the message.

In the new acronym EPICx2 image-rich communication refers to quality of words and the visual image and not to the quantity of either words or images.

5.2.3.5.4 **Christocentric versus connective strategies:** (par. 2.2.3.1, 2.4, 3.2.7.2, 3.2.7.2, 4.2-4.5)

The English word "sermon" originated from a Latin word, *sermonis*, which meant a *connected discourse*, that is, to join or weave together thoughts about a single topic. The English word "series" originated from the same Latin root word, *sero*, as that for sermon (Blank, 2011;1). In preaching four aspects come together namely, Scripture, tradition, experience and human reasoning that interrelates to different genres of preaching (McClure, 2007:125). Expository preaching on the other hand also means to expose Jesus and facilitate people to experience Him through Scripture (Sweet, 2014b:68).

According to the findings of this thesis (par. 5.2.3.3) a Christocentric sermon will connect the audience not only to Christ Himself, but also to the mission of the Church namely to reach out to the world, utilising new languages and ways to communicate effectively. Christ transformed Paul's personal sacrifices to endeavour contextual transformations (par. 4.4). The Word that has become flesh, the text and the recipient and their contexts become equal important partners in the dialogue of the missional purpose of preaching (Mt 25:14-30). The Church therefore stands in a mutual communicational relation between Christ, the Church and the World. The purpose of preaching is to inspire the Church in order to respond to the calling-to connect to the world (par. 5.2.3.4).

Humans are relational species, and we live in a relational world. The digitised world is less informational and much more relational, networked and connected no matter if it is not tangible or sometimes not even realistic, people are used to being connected in their minds and emotions (Sweet, 2014b:54-55). Sweet (2007:55) believes that the key to connect to an audience and to each other and the world lies in making the life of Jesus (Christology) more visible in the sermon.

Jesus connected to all people even the strangers and the outcasts effectively (Niemandt, 2007:95). Niemandt (2007:91-97) gives a few practical guidelines to enhance connectedness:

- The character of the sermon should be open and inviting. Even strangers should feel welcome;
- Recognising the value of the audience and appreciation for their commitment to come to church and to serve the Church;
- To change the perception that the pews are not students, but rather like a family;
- Hospitality should be one of the main characteristics of a church that functions like a family of Christ.

Miller (2004:107) agrees with Cilliers and Niemandt that connecting to each other and the world is real and not something for the mind or the rhetoric only (in other words it has to become more than reciprocal coupling, but visible in words and in deeds).

The relation between Christ and connecting to His audience was predominantly the result of an audience-orientated attitude that presented the love of God for those in need (Sweet, 2014b:45-46). His teachings and preaching were accompanied by deeds with specific reasons (faith in Christ). The Church is also more than a gathering place to listen to sermons, but a living community where one can participate with deeds according to gifts. According to the findings of this study, either participation can be constructed by one of two means, on intellectual communicational level or on a practical Christological level based on what McClure (1995:29) calls Christian hospitality, following early Christian ethos and traditions such as what happened when Christians gathered in houses. The service belonged to the fellowship of the community.

5.3 CONCLUSION: STRATEGIC/PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRAXIS FOR SEMEIOTIC PREACHING: (par. 2.2, 3.7, 4.2-4.5, 5.1-5.2.3.4)

- The new praxis remains open-ended for further studies in the future;
- The empirical results were integrated in the pragmatic task;
- The perspectives of all three previous chapters (descriptive results, interpretative quantitative empirical results and the normative results) were integrated in this chapter;
- Semeiotic preaching is a new form of expository preaching with adding the right-brain function in order to craft a sermon that captures the whole human brain;

- The pragmatic task regarding the new model has managed to balance the relationship between the Word of God, the interpretation of the preacher and the acceptance of the receiver in a specific context in order to motivate normative change;
- Semeiotic preaching is an integrated model, balancing exegesis and hermeneutics, the divine and the humanities, the left brain and the right brain;
- This chapter has managed to gather new possible subjects for the semeiotic preaching model in a new curriculum after concluding that skills, including creativity, can be learned;
- The most important pragmatic strategy is to apply certain ethical perspectives to the praxis of semeiotic preaching because of its integrating characteristics with the anthropological aspects of communication, audience orientation, the subjective interpretations of metaphors and the creative rhetoric and persuasive power;
- The theory of theonome reciprocity, eco-hermeneutics and whole-brain exegesis stand bold on the side of the preacher;
- It has also become clear that the aspect of connecting to the audience (listening) is just as important as to mobilise the audience in becoming part of the sermon;
- Semeiotic preaching is a skill that wants to aim for more than just the ears, but to involve the human senses and aims to touch the hearts of the listeners;
- It is evident that digital communication is challenging all communicators the utilise the whole brain in transferring information, but also to utilise techniques to create better experiences and participation than ever before;
- The EPICx2 model lays a foundation for semeiotic preaching according to Reformed expository standards and embraces the whole-brain/eco-hermeneutical approach
- A new concept that has been discovered, is the power of only one image; the metaphor. The narrative should always accompany the image/the metaphor. The *semeia* points to Christ. Lecturing is not preaching and points and facts can turn important sensory cortexes of the brain off instead of turning them on. Semeiotic exegesis is enhanced by searching for the images in the text, reading and exegeting the complete Biblical story and not only a verse or a word and also gathering interesting story material from the historical background (the back stories);
- Some of the disadvantages discovered relate to the time required for crafting a semeiotic sermon versus the other expectations of the preacher (not being only a preacher, but also a leader and a pastor);

- One of the dangerous traps to fall into is to tie the audiences further to the seats of spectators with semeiotic preaching;
- Semeiotic preaching moves from important deductive facts to abductive (incarnational preaching - meaning giving the facts a body and a soul). Every sermon is a creation of an identifiable reality with a body and a soul;
- Semeiotic preaching thus uses the exegetical abstract left-brain facts to create a real right-brain experience and reality;
- Semeiotic preaching is not only another form of expository preaching, it is also liturgical where the audience can experience that they are just as an important part of the sermon as the preacher;
- In order to create experience in the sermon, the preacher has to hand the sermon over to the audience and to Christ;
- A Christocentric liturgy creates what preaching words cannot always accomplish and it is Biblical proven that semeiotics is the best method to make Christ present in the sermon. The Christological focus is a relational act that will lead the audience into participation and connecting to the missiological calling and purpose of the Church;
- The preachers should understand how the lecturing style of most Reformed liturgy on dogmatic concepts regarding sin and forgiveness can actually turn the neuro cortexes of the brain off instead of turning it on;
- This study has indicated the unity between the preaching content and theme and the liturgy. Preachers could experiment to let the liturgy flow as a unit from the preaching, because the preacher can hand the message over to the audience to reflect on what they hears, to pray about what they heard, to confess about what they did not accomplished yet in either their faith or commitment to the calling of the Church, and the receive time to re-commit and to worship God for what the rest of the day and the week may offer for the humble servants.

Table 14: Eco-hermeneutical strategies for whole-brain preaching

In order to craft an semeiotic sermon the following partnerships should always stay in a dialogue of equal importance with each other	
The left brain	and the right brain
The text	and the audience
The exegesis of words and historical background	as well as the exegesis of metaphors, symbols and experiences
Exegesis	as well as eco-hermeneutics
Deductive reasoning	As well as abductive logical episodes of deconstruction and reconstruction
The narrative	and the metaphorical image
The text verse	and the complete narrative
The preaching(listening)	and the liturgy(participating and experiencing)
The anthropological labour and creativity	and prayer and the pneumatology
The anthropology	and the Christology
The Sunday sermon	and the missiology and calling

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY

Many of the postmillennium voices in favour of a homiletical adaptation that will fit the digitised culture better are not recognised homileticians and therefore set the objectives for a study in the field of the communicational hermeneutics in order to compile new normative strategies for a homiletical model called: semeiotic preaching.

The main theoretical question is: can semeiotic preaching and all its different aspects be theological normatively proved (theoretical and practical) in order to be accepted by Reformed homiletics as another form of expository preaching? Another question is can such a creative and artistic skill be taught to all preachers?

Therefore, this research has focussed on four major areas according to the research model of Osmer (par. 1.9.1):

- The theme and purpose for the research;
- Relevant qualitative literary and empirical quantitative material were researched including meta-theoretical fields to broaden the understanding of the problematic praxis;
- Insights, concepts, and principles based on grammatical Biblical exegesis and theological perspectives were conducted to add normative value to the new theories;
- New strategies were discovered to enhance on previous theories as a proposed solution for the problem empirically described.

6.1 CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND (par. 1.3-1.8)

The world, since the turn of the millennium and the arrival of digital communication has not changed much on the surface, but has changed dramatically regarding communication and trust in the Church. Communication and postmillennium culture is in a process of influencing our world at such a rate that is has been described as hitting the Church like a Super Storm. The importance of new contextual homiletical models are receiving more and more attention in theology and especially amongst homileticians.

Digital communication is a form of semeiotic rhetoric that not displaces words, but rather want to compliment words. The digital communication uses less words, therefore preaching should adjust to a communicational and rhetorical style that make more use of metaphors in combination with narratives.

This model is not proposed as a new invention, but as a rediscovery of an ancient Hebrew form of rhetoric. The problem is that Sweet is not a recognised Homiletician and that the word semeiotics is a problematic and controversial subject in the social sciences. The new world is not only a **Super Storm**, but ringing with **Super Opportunities** of which one such opportunity is the change that research can offer when committing such an subject to scientific acceptable methods such as adding Biblical/theological normativity to the new homiletical model: semeiotic preaching. There is indeed a difference between a rhetorical model and a homiletical model.

6.2 CHAPTER TWO: THE DESCRIPTIVE EMPIRICAL RESULTS REGARDING THE PROBLEMATIC PRAXIS (par. 2.2-2.3.3, 2.4-2.10.3)

This chapter discovered that the problematic praxis regarding relevant contextual preaching can be traced back with quantitative empirical prove to the 1980's and is not a new postmillennium phenomenon in the traditional churches. The study has also indicated that the Church adapts too slowly to address the new contextual changes.

The quantitative empirical survey for this thesis has indicated no matter if a congregation is geographical placed in an urban or rural area, neither belonging to a traditional or contemporary, Reformed or Pentecostal tradition, church audiences are in favour of whole-brain memorable preaching. Human experience based on non-verbal language such as metaphors and imagination has become an important asset to knowledge (2.1). **72.4%** agreed that illustrating stories would make preaching more effective. **80%** agreed that there is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance (par. 2.10.3).

The chapter has gathered important empirical evidence regarding the need and attitude of all religious audience towards effective preaching especially regarding a style away from lecturing to visual expressions and positive experiences that creates trust, memory and obedience. **40.2%** has indicated that this is the reason why charismatic and renewal churches boast a better church attendance.

6.3 CHAPTER THREE: THE INTERPRETATIVE META-THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR SEMEIOTIC PREACHING (par. 2-3.6)

This chapter discovered the good practices of the past in church history as well as the mistakes committed by the Church in an era before the Reformation. Poor theological reasoning was one of the reasons for the demise of semeiotics in the Church. The research has discovered that semeiotic preaching was practised in the Church especially in an era when people could not read or write. The chapter also discovered the good practices and mistakes committed by modernism

followed by postmodernism e.g. and over reactions to the cognitive rational left-brain communication.

This chapter further managed to define and describe the new context as digimodernism, which is important for a new contextual homiletical model and its pragmatic adjustments. It is a whole-brain consuming communicational culture.

The communicational psychological sciences contributed to the discoveries of different reactions and brain functions towards different types of communication e.g. stories activate the most sensory neuro cortexes and lectures activates the less. The human brain consist of two complementary hemispheres that collaborates in what is called a whole-brain communicational reciprocity. Utilising the whole brain enhances experience, participation, creativity, memory, persuasion, attention, trust, and belief. Monological speech with abstract facts and points literally shuts the brain functions down whilst digital communication ignites all these brain functions.

Peirce, the father of theoretical semeiotics has contributed to a theoretical foundation for a whole-brain communicational discourse described as a movement from deductive to abductive reasoning in order to communicate to a complete human being (λόγος is truly God as well as truly man). A technique still taught today in commercial marketing and the art of persuasion. The whole brain is a carrier of the truth.

6.4 CHAPTER FOUR: THE NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON SEMEIOTIC PREACHING (par. 4.2-4.6)

This chapter has discovered the rich semeiotic rhetoric of the Old and the NT embedded with logic reasoning, structure, composure and the will of God. The triadic character of God's will, human skills and the work of the Holy Spirit was revealed and proved. This is called **theonome reciprocity** and helps with important ethical principles for semeiotic preaching. The message and creativity begins with the text and God, the *semeia* are second order creativity. The art of persuasion and humans skills are not excluded in the God-man discourse, but should be placed last and not first.

In the NT, the *semeia* is a pointer to the presence and purpose of Christ (*elocutio and memoria*). It is an abductive sacramental moment whereby one can hear, see and feel Christ as the Life-Giver. The Christological focus is important to connect to audience in realness. If not the audience will not be able to connect to their missional calling. The NT helped to understand that semeiotic preaching is as much liturgical and sacramental as it is communicational. The inculturating methods of Paul (**I became** ἐγενόμην, in order **to win** κερδήσω) on the other hand

proved that preaching is as much missional, audience orientated, as it is God-inspired and focussed.

From a theological/ethical perspective, the research has discovered valuable ethical guidelines for semeiotic preaching such as this very important principle:

- A creative homiletical model such as semeiotic preaching can easily over-emphasise the focus on the preaching part of the religious sermon, therefore it is important that preaching should be understood as only one aspect of the sermon and should be treated as part of a bigger unit.

6.5 CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRAGMATIC THEORIES FOR SEMEIOTIC PREACHING

Semeiotic preaching differs from traditional preaching in seeing the sermon as an incarnational medium that includes experiences, intuitions, emotions, images, and stories that are just as reliable facts and points and even more memorable.

This chapter is proving that semeiotic preaching can be learned. Chapter five has resulted in a new model for semeiotic preaching called EPICx2 (EEPPIICC). (par. 2.4, 3.3.1-3.2.4, 3.5.3, 4.2.2.2, 4.2.3-4.2.6, 4.5, 5.1-5.3).

EPICx2 preaching thus begins with whole-brain **Exegesis** searching for both abstract left-brain facts as well as the Biblical stories and images in the text to create a whole-brain **Experience** of the Biblical reality. In order to manage the audience's **Participation** via aspects such as contextuality and relevancy, their attention and participating imagination, important partnerships are required in juxtaposing relationships (in both during preparation of the sermon and presentation). These partnerships include the following: semeiotic preaching is just as important as semeiotic liturgy, the preacher is just as important as the audience, skills such as the art of persuasion just as important as the work of the Holy Spirit. The left brain and the right brain, the text and the context and exegesis as well as hermeneutics, the narrative and the metaphor, the verse, the metaphor and the complete narrative, the anthropology and the Christology, the mind and the soul and lastly the facts and the imagination. An EPICx2 sermon never relies on a complete slide show to create a visual sermon, but rather on image-rich communication with only one metaphor (image), that summarises the central theme of the sermon.

Semeiotic preaching is a Biblical communicational homiletical model (the Bible already supplies the semeiotics, the guidelines, the motives, the structure, the logic and the Christological fulfilment) that can be practically taught. As a practical theological science, it fits into an eco-hermeneutical field adopting valuable theoretical as well as pragmatic concepts from intra and

inter disciplines. The eco-hermeneutical approach opens the door to a multidisciplinary homiletical model that could also include even more subjects such as creativity and imagination (par. 2.2, 2.4.1, 3.2, 3.5.3, 3.6.2, 3.8, 4.2.2. 2- 4.2.2.3).

Creativity is a welcome asset to practise semeiotic preaching. According to the research, creativity happens when applying the above principles and can therefore be taught to all preachers.

The above statements led to the following deductions:

- The research began with the importance of communication and the use of the narrative and the image, but discovered the importance of Christ and the Holy Spirit in creativity and persuasion. The study was as much a spiritual and Biblical journey rediscovering the richness of the Word of God, providing almost everything required to preach contextually to the new digital culture.
- Other pre-assumptions were that there was a Super Storm due to the influence of digimodernism, that modernism was completely outdated and that right-brain preaching was the only solution to rescue preaching from further degeneration. I discovered that the Super Storm is actually a Super Opportunity, modernism is still an important asset to preaching and rational objective truth and whole-brain hermeneutics is much more effective and Biblical correct than right-brain or left-brain hermeneutics.
- My assumption regarding better training of the preacher was rectified by discovering the role of the audience and that not only the preacher, but also the audience could benefit from understanding the purpose of the sermon. I was also negatively influenced by traditional liturgy, but this research made me exited again by the importance of the liturgy, but then not as a lecture, but as an creative experience that hands the sermon over to the presence of Christ and the participation of the audience.
- Semeiotic preaching is Biblical normative, it is an inclusive intra and inter disciplinary eco-hermeneutical science that can be learned by any public speaker including the preacher.

6.6 FUTURE RESEARCH

I began the research with a problematic praxis regarding a communicational transformation created by the digital communication. I was hoping to find strong evidence of its negative influence on predominant left-brain preaching, but I discovered more than just a negative influence but also the opportunities of a whole-brain communicational strategy for preaching. Secondly, I began this research overwhelmed by the concept of right-brain rhetoric and

discovered the term whole-brain rhetoric and exegesis and that a predominant right-brain homiletical strategy can create enormous problems such as the entertainment of the audience.

I was further inspired by postmillennium thinkers such as Sweet and have great respect for their pioneering contributions to adapt to the digitised culture, but I have discovered in spite of my own pioneering limitations the lack of other important homiletical support in their work such as the whole-brain eco-hermeneutical approach. Because of these pioneering discoveries and limited practical experience the following subjects holds exiting future research possibilities.

6.6.1 Semeiotic preaching

Much more can be done in future research and the name semeiotic preaching could be changed to whole-brain expository preaching or homiletics.

6.6.2 The role of the audience

Semeiotic preaching's main purposes is not to entertain the audience and could be conducted even without any PowerPoint, but the aim is to touch the hearts of a new degeneration through a method that draws the receiver into an communicational experience with God's Word through multi-sensory methods. Can audiences be trained to become better listeners and practitioners of the sermon?

6.6.3 EPIC liturgy

Much still needs to be done in the field of non-verbal communication in the Church in order to enhance experience, symbolism, participation, images and the use of metaphors in order to create a sacramental presence in the sermon.

6.6.4 The time and effort to create a semeiotic sermon

A minister has many roles to play in a congregation limiting his/her time during the week for crafting a whole-brain sermon accompanied with relevant images and supporting stories Semeiotic preaching acquires creativity and artistic skills in order to be successful, but it is more time consuming. Future research should give attention to the issue challenging traditional churches to transform to a New-Testamentical model where the Church as a body can release the minister from to many roles in order to help him/her to focus or specialise on more preaching and educating the audience.

6.6.5 Elaborating on the concept speaking the language of the culture

Future research may further investigate the language of traditional churches from the pulpit. Many words in confessions, catechisms and songs could be revised/translated because they no longer resonate with the new world, and their contexts, experiences and the lives of the audience. One such word e.g. is catechisms or even liturgy. How many young audiences will immediately recall what the true meanings of these words are?

HOOFSTUK 6: OPSOMMING

Een van die probleme wat deur die studie aangevoer word as motivering tot verdere navorsing, is dat heelwat postmillennium denkers wat oor taal, kommunikasie en gepaardgaande homiletiese aanpassings nadink, nie erkende homilete binne Gereformeerde teologie is nie. Hierdie waarneming het juis die rasionaal geword vir 'n studie in die veld van die kommunikasie-hermeneutiek met die doel om semeiotiese prediking as nuwe normatiewe model voor te stel.

Een van die belangrikste vrae wat in die tesis gevra word, is: kan semeiotiese prediking eerstens normatief gefundeer word as 'n alternatiewe vorm van verklarende prediking binne die Gereformeerde teologie en tweedens, kan alle predikers (ook die nie-so-kreatiewes ingesluit) so 'n diep-kunstige vorm van kreatiewe retoriek aanleer en bemeester?

Die metodiek vir die navorsing is volgens die riglyne van Osmer toegepas (par. 1.9.1):

- Formulering van die tema en doel van die onderwerp wat nagevors gaan word;
- Relevante kwalitatiewe literêre en empiriese kwantitatiewe navorsing binne die teologie sowel as buite die teologie (meta-teorieë) is versamel en geïnterpreteer met die doel om binne die bestek van die praktiese teologie die hermeneutiese veld van die navorsing optimaal te verbreed;
- Normatiewe navorsing is gedoen op grond van Bybelse grammatikale eksegeese om die nuwe bevindinge te bewys en etiese riglyne te formuleer;
- Laastens is nuwe praktiese strategieë ontdek wat by die bestaande strategieë gevoeg is om die basisteorie te verbreed en te verbeter.

6.7 HOOFSTUK EEN: NAVORSINGSVOORSTEL EN AGTERGROND (par. 1.3-1.8)

Op die oppervlak beskou, het die wêreld na die millennium nie aansienlik verander nie, maar op die keper beskou het die koms van digitale kommunikasie die wêreld van die modernistiese kommunikasie sodanig verander dat meer en meer mense nie meer aanklank vind by die kommunikasiestyl van die prediking veral binne die tradisionele preektradisie nie. Die spoed waarteen die transformasie plaasvind word meermale beskryf asof deur 'n *Super Storm* getref te word, met die vraag: gaan ons aanpas of uitsterf? Navorsing het getoon dat meer en meer teoloë wêreldwyd hulle kommer en voorstelle aangaande 'n nuwe kontekstuele homiletiek vir die digitale era ter tafel lê.

Semeiotiese prediking is een van die nuwe modelle wat reeds aan die Suid-Afrikaanse predikers deur die Amerikaanse teoloog, Len Sweet (wat reeds talle relevante boeke geskryf het en belangrike praktiese perspektiewe uitlig), bekendgestel is, maar nog nie as 'n normatiewe teorie beskou kan word nie.

Hierdie navorsing het vanuit 'n meta-teoretiese invalshoek bevind dat digitale kommunikasie gebaseer is op semeiotiese retoriek, m.a.w. beeldende narratiewe wat die geheelbrein betrek. Die Kerk se preekstyle word dus uitgedaag om by die nuwe taal en styl aan te pas om sodoende relevant en geloofwaardig te bly.

Semeiotiese prediking word nie as 'n totaal nuwe homiletiese model wat woorde vervang voorgestel nie, maar berus op die beginsels van 'n homiletiese praktyk wat so vêr as die Ou-Testamentiese skrywers terugstrek, wat woorde visueel en verbeeldingryk komplementeer. Die probleem wat deur die tesis aangespreek word berus op die erkenning dat Sweet nie 'n erkende homileet is nie en andersyds dat die woord semeioties met skeptisisme bejeën word vanuit die filosofiese en linguistiese hantering daarvan in die verlede.

Hierdie navorsing het voorts bevind dat die nuwe digitale kultuur wat die kerk se prediking verder verswak het, nie net 'n *Super Storm* is nie, maar ook 'n *Super Geleentheid* is. Een van die opwindende geleenthede is juis dit wat navorsing op hierdie terrein kan bied om verdere positiewe bydraes tot kontekstuele homiletiek te maak.

Daar is inderdaad 'n gewigtige verskil tussen semeiotiese retoriek en 'n semeiotiese homiletiese model. Retoriek is maar een komponent van so 'n komplekse model.

6.8 HOOFSTUK TWEE: DIE DESKRIPTIEWE EMPIRIESE BEVINDINGE RAKENDE SEMEIOTIESE PREDIKING (par. 2.2-2.3.3, 2.4-2.10.3)

Die degenerasie van die tradisionele prediking en dalende lidmaatgetalle, volgens kwantitatiewe navorsing, strek so vêr terug as die tagtigerjare. Die verskynsel is dus nie nuut nie en kan nie net aan die invloed van digitale kommunikasie toegeskryf word nie. Wat wel 'n kommerwekkende ontdekking is, is dat die kerk so traag aangepas het by die veranderde konteks, met die gevolg dat die swak erediensbywoning nie verander het sedert die tagtigerjare nie, maar dat daar wel skerp dalings op die gebied van lidmaatgetalle sedert die millennium plaasgevind het.

Die kwantitatiewe navorsing het vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie bevind dat ongeag of 'n gemeente in die stad of die platteland is, en of dit 'n tradisionele gemeente of kontemporêre gemeente is, of Gereformeerd of vernuwend/Pinkstergemeente is, die postmillennium gehore is ten gunste van relevante, kreatiewe prediking wat verhale en visuele beelde insluit. Dit blyk dat

nie-verbale kommunikasie wat ervaring en verbeelding verhoog net so belangrik is in die oordrag van Bybelse teologie (par. 2.1). **72.4%** respondente het saamgestem dat illustrasies en stories die prediking meer effektief maak. **80%** respondente het saamgestem dat daar 'n ooreenkoms tussen goeie prediking en goeie erediensbywoning is (par. 2.10.3).

Die navorsingsresultate van hierdie studie het ook getoon dat postmillennium gehore gereed is vir 'n nuwe liturgie en 'n erediens wat nie net beter onthou kan word nie, maar ook beter beleef kan word. **40.2%** respondente het aangetoon dat ervaring een van die redes is waarom charismatiese en vernuwingskerke meer aantreklik as tradisionele kerke gevind word.

6.9 HOOFSTUK DRIE: DIE INTERPRETATIEWE META-THEORETIESE RESULTATE VIR SEMELOTIESE PREDIKING (par. 2-3.6)

Hierdie hoofstuk het die goeie en slegte praktyke van die verlede betreffende die homiletiek en gepaardgaande vakgebiede ondersoek. Vanuit 'n kerk- en kultuurhistoriese ondersoek oor 'n periode van om en by twee duisend jaar is bevind dat semeiotiese prediking nie 'n vreemde praktyk voor die Reformasie was nie en deur bekende kerkfigure beoefen is. Die navorsing het ook die goeie en slegte praktyke van die modernisme beskryf. Samevattend het kerklike regterbrein gebruike ongelukkig later omtrent geen goeie teologiese gronde oorgehou nie, wat gevolglik die gesag van die Skrif ondermyn het. Die modernisme het weer so swaar op die linkerbrein staatgemaak dat weinig regterbrein kommunikasietegnieke behoue gebly het.

Die hoofstuk het ook vanuit die sosiologie die nuwe kultuur as digitale-modernisme met omvattende karaktereenskappe van veral sy kommunikasie-voorkeure beskryf. Dit kan saamgevat word as 'n geheelbrein-kommunikasiestyl. Die kommunikasiestyl van die digitale era staan lynreg teenoor die monologiese styl van prediking. Hierdie kontekstuele interpretasies is belangrik vir die formulering van 'n nuwe homiletiese model vir hierdie spesifieke konteks.

Vanuit die psigologiese-kommunikasie wetenskappe is interessante ontdekkings rakende die reaksies van verskillende kommunikasiestyle op verskillende dele van die brein (veral die neuro-kortekse) gemaak. Daar is byvoorbeeld aangetoon hoe verbeeldingryke stories die sensoriese kortekse aktiveer, terwyl feitlike lesings die sensoriese neuro-kortekse die minste aktiveer. Die brein bestaan uit twee komplimentêre hemisfere met verskillende funksies wat die oordrag van informasie mees effektief oordra wanneer beide hemisfere gebruik word in kommunikatiewe wisselwerking of geheelbrein-kommunikasie. Geheelbrein-kommunikasie bemagtig die brein om informasie ook deur ander media as net woorde en feite te prosesseer. Daar is voorts ontdek dat die mens ook kan leer deur ervaring en dat geheue, konsentrasie, geloofwaardigheid en geloof wedersydsk tussen sender en ontvanger verhoog waar die geheelbrein ingespan word.

Peirce het vanuit die semeiotiek belangrike redenasieprosesse geformuleer om uiteindelik by geheelbrein-kommunikasie uit te kom. Dit kan beskryf word as 'n redenasiediskoers wat by basiese formulerings begin en wat as deduktiewe diskoers bekendstaan (kognitiewe denke). Indien iemand so preek word slegs feite oorgedra. Die tweede fase staan bekend as die induktiewe fase (morele byvoegings) en die derde fase staan bekend as abduktiewe diskoers wat die denke, liggaam en siel insluit, m.a.w. die geheelbrein). Hierdie vorm van kommunikasie wat nie-verbale kommunikasie insluit het die vermoë om die geheelmens aan te spreek en nie net sy linkere brein nie. (λόγος is terselfdertyd waarlik God en waarlik mens). Abduktiewe uitdrukking word vandag nog in kommersiële bemarking gebruik om o.a. oorreding te verhoog. Die geheelbrein is dus 'n voertuig van die waarheid.

6.10 HOOFSTUK VIER: NORMATIEWE AFLEIDINGS RAKENDE SEMEIOTIESE RETORIEK EN PREDIKING (par. 4.2-4.6)

Hierdie hoofstuk het die ryk semeiotiese retoriek van beide die Ou en Nuwe Testament ontdek. Die verrassende was dat hierdie retoriek nie suiwer 'n regterbrein-kommunikasie behels het nie, maar geheelbrein abduktiewe kommunikasie, met duidelike tekens van logika, struktuur, komposisie sowel as die pneumatologie wat via hierdie menslike retoriek en oorreding God se wil bekend gemaak het. Die triadiese wisselwerking tussen God se wil, die mens se skeppingswil en die werk van die Heilige Gees is normatiewe Bybelse beginsels soos deur van Ruler beskryf as die Teonome wisselwerking. Die etiese beginsel is dat die prediking altyd weer na God en die teks moet terugkeer (eerste-orde kreatiwiteit), dat verbeeldingryke retoriek laaste in die God-mens dialoog plaasvind (tweede-orde kreatiwiteit) en dat oortuiging uiteindelik die Heilige Gees se werk is en nie die mens en sy gawes se werk alleen nie, maar nie die mens en sy gawes uitsluit nie.

In die Nuwe Testament kom ook die *semeia* tot vervulling as 'n teken wat op Christus se sakramentele teenwoordigheid dui (*elocutio en memoria*). Alle *semeia* is abduktiewe oorredings om verstandelik en sintuiglik, ook geestelik by Christus die Gewer van die lewe uit te kom. Die Nuwe Testament verhelder die abduktiewe oorreding in so mate dat ontdek word dat semeiotiese prediking nie net kommunikatief is nie, maar ook liturgies.

Betreffende die belangrike saak van kontekstuele prediking is die missiologiese strategie van Paulus ondersoek om hierdie gehoor-georiënteerde benadering normatief te belig. Die Paulus beginsel is 'n offer wat bekendstaan as (Ek het geword ἐγενόμην, om ander te wen κερδήσω)-prediking is inderdaad Len Sweet se *Giving blood*, en so kommunikatief ryk en geheelbrein as wat die prediking moet wees, so is dit ook missionaal Christologies. Sonder die Christologie sal

die prediking die gehoor nie bereik nie, en die gehoor dan ook nie die omgewing waar hulle moet getuig nie.

Gevolgtik het hierdie hoofstuk waardevolle etiese beginsels vir semeiotiese prediking opgelewer soos byvoorbeeld:

- Die eenheid tussen die prediking en die erediens as geheel (die liturgie) voorkom dat die fokus net op die prediker, die belewenis van die kunstigheid of die vermaak van die gehoor verplaas word;
- In die liturgie kry ook die gehoor en Christus deurlopend aandag.

6.11 HOOFSTUK VYF: DIE PRAGMATIES/TEORETIESE BEVINDINGE BETREFFENDE SEMEIOTIESE PREDIKING

Semeiotiese prediking verskil van tradisionele prediking in die opsig dat die teks ook as 'n vleesgeworde teks beskou word, 'n inkarnasie, nie net op Christus se menswording twee duisend jaar gelede nie, maar sakramenteel via die Woordverkondiging. Dit is dus 'n geheelbrein-ervaring aan die geheelmens, nie net gerig op die mens se ore en kognitiewe brein nie, maar God se Woord wat ook in liggaam en siel beleef word. Dit sluit die ander waardevolle sintuie in waarmee God ons toegerus het, soos die emosie, die visuele en intuïsie. Dit is juis hierdie vorm van kennisoordrag wat die preek meer onthoubaar, vervuld en deurleefd maak sodat mense makliker met Christus se roeping daarop kan reageer.

Hierdie hoofstuk poog om met die akroniem EPICx2 (EPPPIICC) (par. 2.4, 3.3.1-3.2.4, 3.5.3 4.2.2.2, 4.2.3-4.2.6, 4.5, 5.1-5.3) te bewys dat semeiotiese prediking ook pragmaties is en nie net teoreties nie, en daarom ook prakties aangeleer kan word. Dit staan vir die toepassing van **Exegesis** (Eksegese) as brug na die **Experience** (Ervaring), **Partnerships** (vennootskappe wat die verskillende eko-hermeuntiese onderwerpe met mekaar laat koördineer en saamwerk) terwille van **Participation**, Deelname van die gehoor), die dubbel II staan vir **Image-rich** (Beeldryke kommunikasie) sowel as om daardie **een treffende, kwaliteit visuele-metaforiese beeld** in plaas van te veel beelde aan te wend. Die tweede I staan dus vir kwaliteit beeld en is daardie een metaforiese beeld per preek wat die boodskap saamvat en beskryf en 'n duisend woorde vervang. Die dubbel C staan vir die **Christology** (Christologie) wat belangrik is om die teks met die gehoor, en die gehoor met die teks en dan as geheel met die konteks te verbind **Connecting** (Resoneer) waarin hulle lewe missiologies saamwerk met die Christelike taak en roeping.

Die nuwe EPICx2 prediking begin met geheelbrein eksegese as 'n soektog na beide abstrakte feite sowel as stories en beelde om hiermee skeppend toepaslik na die hermeneutiek van die

regterbrein te beweeg. Sonder die eksegeese sal die prediker nie weet watter ervaring om na die gehoor te bring nie. Om werklike deelname in die erediens te bewerkstellig (deelname in terme van kognitiewe en gevoelsmeelewing) is dit nodig om die volgende beginsels deurgaans in die voorbereiding en aanbieding te jukstapponeer: prediking en liturgie, die predikant en die gehoor, sy/haar vaardighede soos kreatiwiteit en die kuns van oorreding, die linkerbrein en die regterbrein, die teks en die konteks, die eksegeese en die hermeunetiek, die narratief en die metafoor, die teks sowel as die geheel narratief, die antropologie en die Christologie, die verstand maar ook die liggaam en die siel, en laastens die feite en die verbeelding. Die funksies van dubbel I en dubbel C is reeds in vorige paragraaf opgesom.

Semeiotiese prediking is 'n geheelbrein kommunikatiewe Bybelse normatiewe teorie wat prakties onderrig en leerbaar is en vakke soos kreatiwiteit, simboliek, die kuns van oorreding, kommunikasie en digitale kultuur kan insluit. As praktiese teologiese wetenskap, en binne die bestek van 'n eko-hermeneutiese benadering, neem dit hande met relevante intra- and interwetenskaplike dissiplines binne die Geesteswetenskappe. (par. 2.2, 2.4.1, 3.2, 3.5.3, 3.6.2, 3.8, 4.2.2.2-4.2.2.3).

Afleidings:

Die navorsing het in vele opsigte 'n hele aantal vooropstellings oortref. Aanvanklik het dit na 'n studie gelyk wat oor simboliese kommunikasie handel, maar dit het ook 'n studie van die mens-God-dialoog ingesluit. Wat aanvanklik gelyk het na 'n humanistiese vakwetenskap, het die onmiskenbare teenwoordigheid van die Heilige Gees, die Christologie en rykheid van God se Woord ingesluit. Sonder God se Woord sou die rykheid van semeiotiese retoriek in die slag gebly het.

Die voorveronderstelling van die *Super Storm* is ook versag na die van 'n *Super Geleentheid*. Die aanslag op beide modernisme en die humanistiese benadering van die regterbrein is geïntegreer in 'n inklusiewe geheelbrein teorie.

Die voorveronderstelling dat nuwe teorieë die prediker bemagtig is verbreed met die ontdekking dat dit ook die gehoor betrek. Die praktyk oor hoe om die gehoor beter toe te rus vir die erediens binne en buite die ruimte van die erediens, is 'n veld wat nog baie nagevors en verken kan word.

Laastens, was ek ook skepties oor die voortbestaan van die Gereformeerde liturgie, maar die studie het ook die belangrike wisselwerking en eenheid tussen die prediking en die liturgie belig. Sodoende kry meer as een entiteit 'n beurt om aan die erediens deel te neem.

Semeiotiese prediking is Bybels normatief bewys. Dit is 'n eko-hermeneutiese vakgebied wat intra- en inter-dissiplinêr met onderafdelings soos die kuns van oorreding, geheelbrein retoriek en kreatiwiteit aangebied kan word en dus aan enige openbare spreker/prediker geleer kan word.

6.12 TOEKOMSTIGE NAVORSINGSMOONTLIKHEDE

Ek het aanvanklik met die studie binne die kommunikasie hermeneutiek begin wat die probleem vanuit die invalshoek van die impak van die digitale kommunikasie op die monoloog ondersoek het. Die oorspronklike oplossing vanuit die literatuurstudie het aanvanklik eenvoudig gelyk naamlik 'n aanpassing na regter-brein retoriek en ek het gepoog om veral sterk negatiewe invloede van die digitale era in so mate aan te bied dat dit homiliete sou motiveer om indringende aanpassings te maak soos byvoorbeeld tegnieke aan te leer soos verhalenede en beeldryke kommunikasie om sodoende by die leefwêreld van die gehoor aan te pas. My voorveronderstelling dat digitale kommunikasie net negatief is, kon egter nie empiries bewys word nie en ek het ook die positiewe kant van die digitale kommunikasie ontdek wat uiteindelik aan die geheel-brein hermeneutiek en homiletiese model geboorte gegee het.

Ek was aanvanklik positief oor die moontlikhede van regter-brein retoriek, maar my voorveronderstellings hieroor is beïnvloed deur die gevare van 'n dominante regter-brein erediens wat o.a. die visuele vermaak van die gehoor kan oorbeklemtoon.

Ek het met groot waardering en bewondering die kommentare van postmillennium denkers en hulle voorstelle nagevolg, maar ook tot die besef gekom dat hulle werk net soos myne nog pionierswerk is en vol oorreaksies en ander voorveronderstellings is. Sweet, byvoorbeeld is beroemd vir sy reaksie teenoor modernistiese linker-brein prediking, maar hierdie studie het ten spyte van sy eie tekortkominge alreeds verder aanbeweeg, deur nie die linker brein of die gebruik van monologiese retoriek te devalueer nie, maar juis in kohesie met die regter brein so te benut dat kreatiewe retoriek juis beter gepraktiseer kan word. Omdat die studie pionierswerk is binne 'n komplekse terrein van ander aanvullende intra en inter wetenskaplike dissiplines wat die homiliek waardevol kan ondersteun, beveel ek die volgende toekomstige studies aan wat binne nog nagevors moet word.

6.12.1 Semeiotiese prediking

Die navorsing het getoon dat hierdie teorie oor baie meer gaan as net die prediking, daarom kan die naam in die toekoms aangepas word van semeiotiese prediking na byvoorbeeld geheelbrein prediking/homiletiek.

6.12.2 Die rol van die gehoor

Die deelnemende rol van die gehoor word meermale onderbeklemtoon in verhouding tot die rol van die prediker en die teks. Daar sal nog baie moeite met hierdie teorie gedoen moet word, veral ten opsigte van die teologiese geldigheid daarvan om dit in die praktyk van die Gereformeerde erediens te laat materialiseer. Beide die gehoor sowel as die prediker kan in die erediens oorbeklemtoon word en toekomstige navorsing kan veral empiries vastel wat gehore se behoeftes is en hoe dit aangespreek kan word.

6.12.3 EPIC liturgie

Baie moet nog gedoen word op die terrein nie-verbale kommunikasie, ervaring en simboliek binne die erediens sowel as om die sakramentele funksie en waarde van Christus se teenwoordigheid in die erediens te laat beleef sonder abstrakte teoretiese verduidelikings.

6.12.4 Voorbereiding en tydsbesteding aan 'n semeiotiese erediens

Die predikant moet verskillende rolle in die gemeente vul, en kan meermale by te veel ander gemeente verpligtinge betrokke wees sodat tyd aan die prediking onder groot druk geplaas word. Semeiotiese prediking maak die taak nie juis makliker nie, want enige vorm van kreatiewe prediking neem meer tyd in beslag. Wat die toekomstige navorsing aanbetref kan gekyk word na die praktyk van die liggaamsmodel waar meer take volgens gawes vanuit die gemeente bedryf kan word om sodoende die leraar meer tyd te gee vir voorbereiding aan die Woordverkondiging en die erediens.

6.12.5 Taalgebruik binne die kerk en op kansels

Daar word steeds talle woorde van die kansels af gebruik wat nie meer tot die leefwêreld van die digitale mens deurdring nie. Hoeveel jongmense sal byvoorbeeld weet wat beteken kategismes of selfs liturgie? Toekomstige navorsing kan empiries hierdie woorde se relevansie ondersoek en op kreatiewe wyse plaasvervangende woorde skep om die ou woorde te vertaal tot meer relevante woordeskat vir 'n relevante kerk.

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APPENDIX A

Sample of the English Questionnaire

**Survey for the purpose of a PhD degree in Theology at the
North-West University.**

**Please read the following ethical guidelines and instructions before proceeding to
the questionnaire.**

The purpose of this survey is to test people's attitude towards different preaching and sermon styles. The data gathered from this research study will be published in a PhD thesis under the research regulations of the NWU. Participation is voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality of participatory congregations will be maintained. Please complete the following biographic information before proceeding:

A1. **Denomination:** _____ (e.g. Pentecostal)

A2. **Gender:**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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A3. **Age:**

A4. **What is your position in the congregation?**

A.4.1 Regular member:

A.4.2 Pastor/Minister:

A.4.3 Not regular member:

A5.

City	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rural	<input type="checkbox"/>
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INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all 20 statements. Mark only one value per statement. Regarding *disagree* (1 is the strongest opinion, *neutral* (5 is the strongest) and *agree* (7 is the strongest).

		Disagree			Neutral		Agree	
Please answer all 20 statements:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PREACHING STYLES								
1	Formal preaching – (e.g. explaining texts with points and facts) captures audiences the most.							
2	Shorter sermons (less structured, no points and less facts) are more acceptable to audiences.							
3	The use of cell phones and the internet have a negative influence on listening to preaching specifically.							
4	Sermons with visual support (PowerPoint, video clips) are more effective than words only.							
5	Illustrating stories make preaching more effective.							
Please turn the page to complete statements 6-20.								

		Disagree			Neutral		Agree	
	Please answer all 20 statements:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	PREACHER'S POS. AND NEG. EXPERIENCED							
6	There is a significant relation between good preaching and good church attendance.							
7	People will still attend church services regardless of how poor the preaching is.							
8	Preachers successfully deliver the biblical messages to fit our context.							
9	Preachers deliver the Word of God usually creatively.							
10	Messages by preachers on radio and television are in general better than most pulpit sermons.							
11	A preacher's knowledge is more important than his preaching.							
	LITURGY: PROCEDURE OR EXPERIENCE							
12	Traditional liturgy (commandments, confessions of guilt and faith) every Sunday is effective.							
13	Renewal churches e.g. (Charismatic Churches) are better attended because they rely more on creating experience than on delivering liturgical teachings.							
14	The purpose of liturgy is to mainly teach the theology of sin and forgiveness.							
15	The purpose of liturgy is to enhance the experience of meeting with God.							
	DECLINING CHURCH ATTENDANCES							
16	Poor preaching is one of the major reasons why people do not attend church services anymore.							
17	When sermons are not conducted with visual aids people will rather go to other Churches who offer such creativity.							
18	The youth abandons the Church because sermons do not address their needs.							
19	People are more fascinated by social media (such as Internet and mobile phones) than attending Church services.							
20	People do not attend church services that are too time-consuming.							
End: Thank you very much!								

In accordance with the ethical guidelines, the questionnaire was also translated into Afrikaans in order to be administered to Afrikaans congregations.

APPENDIX B

In accordance with the ethical guidelines, the questionnaire was also translated into Afrikaans in order to be administered to Afrikaans congregations.

Sample of the Afrikaans Questionnaire (refer Appendix B)

Gesindheidstoets aangaande die ervaring van verskillende preekstyle in die erediens vir die doel van 'n doktorsale studie in Praktiese Teologie aan die Noord-Wes Universiteit

Lees asseblief die etiese klaring en instruksies deur voordat u die vrae begin antwoord en raadpleeg gerus die eksaminator indien enige onduidelik bestaan.

Die data wat met hierdie vraelys ingesamel word sal verwerk word en uitsluitlik vir akademiese doeleindes gebruik word. Geen name van individue of spesifieke gemeentes sal genoem word nie. Die doel van die ondersoek is om kerkgangers se gesindhede te toets oor verskillende erediens- en preekstyle. Daar is nie 'n regte of verkeerde antwoord nie, maar indien u nie seker is nie, antwoord eerder neutraal as om die vraag nie te beantwoord nie. Voltooi asb. eers onderstaande biografiese inligting voordat u met die vrae begin:

A1. **Denominasie** : _____ (Bv. NG, Hervormd)

A2. **Geslag**:

Manlik	
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Vroulik	
---------	--

A3. **Ouderdom**:

--

A4. **Wat is u posisie in die gemeente? (merk een)**

A.4.1 Gereelde lidmaat:

--

A.4.2 Leraar:

--

A.4.3 Nie 'n gereelde lidmaat nie:

--

5.

Stad	
------	--

Platteland	
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INSTRUKSIES: Dui aan hoe u oor die volgende stellings voel. U mag verskil. Merk slegs een blokkie vir elke vraag. Alle vrae moet beantwoord word. Indien u met 'n stelling *verskil*, merk asb. 'n nommer tussen 1 en 3 (met 1 die sterkste mening), of *neutraal* (4 of 5) of *stem volkome saam* (met 7 die sterkste mening). Moet nie een vraag onbeantwoord laat nie, merk eerder *neutraal* (4 of 5).

		Verskil sterk			Neutraal		Stem volkome	
Beantwoord al 20 vrae asb:		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PREEK STYLE								
1	Formele prediking – bv. (verduidelik net die teks met punte en feite) boei die meeste mense.							
2	Korter preke (minder struktuur, punte en feite) is baie meer effektief.							
3	Die alledaagse gebruik van selfone en internet het 'n negatiewe invloed op hoe mense na preke luister.							
4	Visuele preke (met stories en/of video-insetsels) word beter beleef as preke daarsonder.							
5	Ondersteunende stories maak dat preke makliker onthou word.							
Blaai asseblief om! Vrae vervolg op die agterkant.								

		Verskil sterk			Neutraal		Stem volkome	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Beantwoord al 20 vrae asb:							
	PREDIKER POS en NEG INVLOED							
6	Hoe 'n predikant/pastoor preek, speel 'n groot rol in erediensbywoning.							
7	Mense sal steeds eredienste bywoon ongeag hoe die predikant/pastoor preek.							
8	Ons predikant(e)/pastoor(e) slaag daarin om die boodskap en die praktyk by mekaar uit te bring.							
9	Ons predikant(e)/pastoor(e) doen moeite om die boodskappe kreatief oor te dra.							
10	Radio en TV predikers se boodskappe is beter as meeste kansel predikante/pastore se preke elke Sondag.							
11	Die predikante/pastore se kennis is belangriker as hoe hulle preek.							
	LITURGIE: PROSEDURE OF ERVARING							
12	Die tradisionele gereformeerde liturgiese orde (wet, skuld en geloofsbelydenis) wat elke Sondag voorgelees word, is effektief.							
13	Die kerke wat meer klem lê op geestelike belewenis as op ordes se erediensbywoning is beter.							
14	Liturgie is ontwikkel om mense meer van God te leer.							
15	Liturgie is ontwikkel om mense meer van die Heilige Gees te laat beleef.							
	AFNAME IN BELANGSTELLING IN DIE KERK							
16	Swak prediking is een van die redes waarom mense nie meer wil kerk toe gaan nie.							
17	As eredienste nie visueel aantreklik is nie, sal mense na ander kerke toe gaan wat dit wel doen.							
18	Jong mense verlaat die kerk omdat eredienste hulle nie aanspreek nie.							
19	Mense word meer deur sosiale media (soos internet en selfone) geboei om hulle geloof uit te beeld as eredienste.							
20	Mense gaan nie meer kerk toe nie want eredienste is te lank.							
Einde. Baie dankie!								