

Empirical research on the experience of the New Homiletic in South Korea



Authors:

Hyun W. Park¹
Cas Wepener¹

Affiliations:

¹Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Hyun Woong Park,
73hwpark@gmail.com

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The purpose of this article is to present empirical research to reveal the reality of the New Homiletic in South Korea. This research was conducted by means of semistructured interviews with seven pastors and eight laypeople of the evangelical faith, residing in Seoul and its metropolitan areas, within the age limits of 20–59 years. The aim was to uncover the experience of the sermons by both the preachers and the hearers of the sermons. The researcher chose Pieterse's methodology of analysing the data, which is an inductive analysis called open coding. Six main categories from the pastor's group and five categories from the laypeople emerged from the data. The categories were rearranged into four themes, which is a valuable finding for current-day Korean preaching in order to enhance the homiletical praxis.

Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications: This article presents empirical research on the reality of the New Homiletic in South Korea. The results indicate similarity between South Korea and the USA. The conclusion is that traditional discourse should give way to the New Homiletic. This research can become the basis for finding new strategies for evangelical preaching.

Introduction

In this article, the researcher would like to report on the first task of the research with the theme 'A homiletical strategy for evangelical preaching in South Korea: Beyond the New Homiletic'. The researcher adopted Osmer's (2008) methodology for practical theology and described the South Korean church's situation after the 1997 economic crisis mentioned in the previous chapter (Park 2015:13-41).¹

However, the researcher could only find the opinions of some theological scholars that are not based on actual empirical data gleaned from empirical research. This would be like a doctor making a diagnosis and decision without having examined the patient. For this reason, empirical research is called for in the Korean church, and homiletical research needs to be conducted in South Korea. Immink and Pleizier (2005:284) said, 'We can ... also consider practical theology as empirical theology, that is, as a theological theory that describes and analyses empirical phenomenon with theological concepts'.

Until now, scholars had focused on the preacher's exegesis, interpretation and application by referring to and analysing the manuscripts of sermons in South Korea. In the literature investigation that forms part of a much larger research project, of which this article is one section, the researcher found some quantitative research done by means of questionnaires on the importance of preaching.² The only study that could be found with results pertaining to qualitative research in South Korea was the one conducted by Jang³ in 2013. There is thus a clear hiatus in terms of empirical research with regard to preaching in the Korean context.

Another problem found in the preliminary research was that there seems to be no study on laypeople's listening to sermons in South Korea.⁴ It is conceived by the South Korean church that a sermon belongs in the preacher's sphere, not the laypeople's. Laypeople think that commenting on the sermon displays an irreverent attitude. When the researcher met laypersons for interviews, they agreed with this statement. All participating laypeople said, 'We have never heard about this

1.The researcher examined the reality of the South Korean church and the influence of the social contexts of South Korea on the changes in homiletics through literature as the descriptive task.

2.For more information, see MHS (2011) and KACP (2013:278:301).

3.The title of his dissertation is 'Phenomenal research on healing experience through preaching: Counselling preaching with qualitative research'.

4.Pleizier (2010:9) said that the turn of empirical research in homiletics towards the listeners and reception to the preaching is in accord with the New Homiletic's appearance.

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kind of research that asks for comments about the sermon'. But it is important to know their opinions and ask for their thoughts because laypeople's feedback on the preaching becomes the clue to understanding more objectively the direction of the mainstream Korean preaching. At the same time, this effort of gaining empirical data helps to overcome the one-way effect of the sermon, so that preaching becomes a partnership between the preacher and the listeners.

The purpose of this empirical research was to make pastors and laypeople aware of what the New Homiletic entails and measure their reaction to these new ideas. The researcher adopted a phenomenological approach in this part of the study to uncover meaning and researched seven pastors' and eight laypeople's experience of the sermons.⁵ This research stands on the social constructivist world view that '[t]hey [meanings] are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives' (Creswell 2009:8). The researcher selected the semistructured interview method to listen to preachers as well as listeners on the Korean situation first-hand and to investigate two matters: (1) the opinions of pastors and laypeople on the New Homiletic and (2) the public and social perceptions surrounding the characteristics of Christian preaching. This research was done with the intent to reveal to what extent the New Homiletic is already possibly influencing the homiletic praxis in South Korea.

The main aim of this article is thus to present the results of the empirical research that was conducted, seeing that this kind of research fills a current hiatus with regard to homiletical research in the Korean context. After a brief introduction on the New Homiletic the data obtained will be presented. Conclusions based on the data will be discussed at the end of the article.

Conceptualisation of the New Homiletic and research questions

Eslinger (1987:14) used the term 'the New Homiletic' because he wanted to expose the form and the theory of the new sermons compared with the old orthodox, topical preaching. Eslinger (1987:11–15) presented five types of New Homiletic sermons: (1) preaching as story, (2) narrative in the black tradition, (3) narrative and the sermonic plot, (4) the inductive method in preaching and a (5) phenomenological method of preaching. Although the New Homiletic takes a variety of forms and features, at its centre its single emphasis is on the human experience (Campbell 1997:120; Gibson 2005:478).

In traditional homiletics, the preacher does not consider the listeners; however, in the New Homiletic, the listeners work

5.Regarding data saturation, the researcher had two reasons for selecting only seven pastors and eight laypeople. First, the purpose of this empirical research was to listen to the experience of the Korean church's pastors and laypeople directly as a starting point for the research. Second, the researcher wanted to learn if the responses from the participants would differ because of age, gender or size of the church the pastor leads or the laypeople attend. However, the researcher discovered that the responses did not differ due to age, gender or the size of the church.

together with the preacher to experience the meaning of the text. The emphasis in sermons moves from sending out the information of the text to evoking an experience in the hearers that is relevant to them (Gibson 2005:478).

The New Hermeneutic pays attention to the character of language. The New Homiletic has three central issues regarding the New Hermeneutic.

First is the sermon as a collaboration between the preacher and the listeners. In traditional homiletics, the interest of the listeners is marginalised, but with the emergence of the New Homiletic, the interest of the listeners has been greatly increased (Allen 2003:1; Long 1993:167–188).

Second is the recognition of the importance of language. In the New Homiletic, preaching is not conveying the meaning of the Bible but evoking and creating experience for today. The New Homiletic in its relationship with language is qualified in different ways: poetic, narrative, imaginative, creative, and transformational (Immink 2004:100). The New Homileticians pursue the integral relationship between form and content in the sermon and highlight a creative style.

Third is recognising the importance of the movement of the sermon. Traditional sermons inevitably lose a sense of flow when structured in the three-point format. The listeners increasingly lose interest and become passive. The sermon becomes boring, and the listeners close their minds. The New Homiletic has used three strategies to overcome the weakness of the traditional sermon: (1) emphasising a natural movement, (2) intentionally delaying exposing the resolution and (3) shifting the importance from space to time (Lowry 1985:12).

With the features of the New Homiletic in mind, the researcher formulated a half-structured interview schedule. He started with a broad orienting question to build rapport. He asked follow-up questions to uncover the experience of those interviewed and to be sure that he understood them clearly (Thumma 1998:206). The researcher consciously involved himself with the participants by means of sympathetic and priestly listening (Osmer 2008:31–78).

The following questions were put to the pastors:⁶

- When did you begin preaching? What difference is there between your past and present preaching?
- There are probably many church members who say that they were blessed by the pastor's sermons. By which aspect of the sermons did they say they were blessed?
- Have you ever talked or chatted about preaching with laypeople or other pastors? What did they say?
- What do you think of the New Homiletic:⁷ preaching by communicating with the listener (rather than one-way preaching with three points); narrative preaching;

6.The researcher completed the transcription himself. It took one and a half months and ran to over 200 pages. For a more detailed discussion, see Park (2015:55–90).

7.In general, the pastors interviewed did not know the term but after explanation, almost without exception, replied that it is in fact their current praxis.

preaching that includes many experiences of the preacher; preaching that provides answers to the listener's individual problems; and open-ended application preaching?

- How do you rate the balance of your sermons between individual faith and the problems of the listeners versus the social and public aspects, such as the church community, the local community and the state of the community?
- The Korean church's growth has entered a decline. The younger generation, between the ages of 20 and 40 especially, is reluctant to join the church. At a time like this, what kind of preaching do you think will appeal to them?
- Recently, a survey⁸ revealed that the problem with the Korean church is the pastor. The respondents pointed to a gap between the words and actions of pastors. In this situation, what would you change in your preaching and in your lifestyle?
- What message do you think your church members want to hear?

The following questions were put to the lay members:

- Since when have you attended this church? What difference is there in your pastor's past preaching compared with the present?
- If you were blessed by the pastor's sermon what aspects of the sermon blessed you?
- Have you ever talked or chatted about preaching with laypeople or other pastors? What did they say?
- What do you think of the trend of changing the preaching from one-way preaching with three points to preaching that communicates with the listeners, namely narrative preaching, preaching that includes many experiences of the preacher, and preaching that provides answers to the listener's individual problems? What do you think of open-ended application preaching?
- How would you rate the balance of your pastor's sermons between individual faith and the problems of the listeners, on the one hand, and social and public aspects, such as the church community, the local community and the state of the community, on the other?
- The growth of the Korean church has entered a decline. The younger generation, aged between 20 and 40, is reluctant to join the church. At a time like this, what kind of preaching do you expect from your pastor?
- Recently, a survey revealed that the problem with the Korean church is the pastor. The respondents pointed to a gap between the words and actions of pastors. What do you think of these results?
- What kind of message do you want to hear from your pastor?

Process of the research

The researcher contacted three pastors, who promised to take part in the research when the researcher made the proposal, and asked to have an interview with members of their

8. The results of the survey of the social trust of the Korean church released by the Christian Ethics Movement on 05 February 2014. See the source at <http://cemk.org>. Viewed March 2014.

congregations. However, the researcher could not interview the participants because of unforeseen circumstances.⁹ For this reason, the researcher set the standard of selection of participants and recruited the participants.¹⁰

Selection of participants

Firstly, the researcher limited the age of the pastors of evangelical churches who would participate in the research to between 40 and 59 years.¹¹

Secondly, the researcher restricted the participants to the senior pastor of a church. In South Korea, most of the pastors who preach the Sunday morning sermon are senior pastors. The researcher worked on the assumption that the senior pastors put more thought, time, effort and energy into their sermons than the assistant pastors because they are responsible for preaching more sermons and they carry more responsibility for the spiritual health of their church members.

Thirdly, the researcher limited the number of interviews to one per church. In other words, only the senior pastor or a layperson at each church was interviewed. Although the aim of the research was to examine the perception of the pastor and the layperson of the sermon, interviewing a pastor and a layperson at the same church about the sermon could be seen as an assessment of the sermon in the atmosphere of the Korean church.

Fourthly, the researcher limited the research area to the capital city, Seoul, and its metropolitan area. According to the South Korean statistical information service, the population of South Korea was 47 990 761 and the population of Seoul and its metropolitan area was 23 459 570 in 2010.¹² The 20–59 age group makes up 63% (14 843 582) of the residents in this area. Half of South Korea resides in this area. The population is concentrated in and around the capital. The aim of the limitation of the area was to gain a more complete understanding of the present-day and future situation of the Korean church.

Fifthly, the researcher tried to select laypeople who also met the above criteria: their preachers had to be evangelical senior pastors in the age group between 40 and 59 residing in Seoul and its metropolitan area. Where a pastor was interviewed, a layperson was not selected. The age of the lay participants was limited to between 20 and 59.

The researcher worked with an informant¹³ who is close to the researcher and is well known to the preachers and the

9. Regarding the unforeseen circumstances, see Park (2015:46).

10. All procedures as required by UP for ethical clearance, such as explaining the rights of the participants, anonymity and the expected benefits, have been followed. For more information on the research ethics, see Babbie (2013).

11. During the research, the researcher faced difficulty in choosing the participants for the pastors' group. Pastors who were over 60 years old as well as pastors of mega-churches who were initially approached proved to be reluctant to get involved in this research.

12. See more information at http://kosis.kr/statisticsList/statisticsList_01List.jsp?vwcd=MT_ZTITLE&parmTabId=M_01_01#SubCont. Viewed January 2014.

13. For more information about the informant, see Babbie and Mouton (2001:298).

TABLE 1: The group of pastors.

Pastors	Region	Denomination ^a	Period as senior pastor (years)	Sex ^b	Age (years)
P1	Paju City	Presbyterian	1	Male	41
P2	Seoul City	Presbyterian	6	Male	47
P3	Seoul City	Presbyterian	6	Male	48
P4	Ansan City	Presbyterian	20	Male	52
P5	Hwasung City	Presbyterian	9	Male	50
P6	Suwon City	Presbyterian	11	Male	51
P7	Seoul City	Presbyterian	21	Male	58

^a, The Presbyterian Church is the largest denomination in South Korea. Although there are other denominations in South Korea, the researcher had chosen to listen to the opinions of pastors who take a similar theological stand to the researcher. Another reason is that it is not easy to get the participation of pastors because Korean pastors are not accustomed to talking about the views of others regarding their sermons.

^b, The researcher targeted senior pastors between the ages of 40 and 60. There are very few female senior pastors in South Korea. The one female senior pastor the researcher did know was over 60 years of age.

TABLE 2: The group of laypeople.

Laypeople	Region	Denomination	Occupation	Sex	Age (years)
L1	Sungnam City	Independent church member	Undergraduate student	Male	22
L2	Sungnam City	Presbyterian	Office worker	Female	27
L3	Goyang City	Presbyterian	Bank official	Male	36
L4	Kwangmyung City	Holiness Church member	After-school instructor	Female	34
L5	Seoul City	Presbyterian	Car dealer	Male	46
L7	Sungnam City	Baptist	Government worker	Male	54
L8	Sungnam City	Presbyterian	Housewife	Female	50

laypeople who are interested in preaching. He greatly assisted the researcher in recruiting the participants who had 'the more pertinent data, keeping in mind the possible diversity of opinions' (Thumma 1998:205).¹⁴ The researcher contacted the participants for the research through email or phone. More information regarding all the participants in the research is presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Research period

The period of conducting interviews was set for the 3 weeks from 24 March to 01 April 2014. The researcher phoned the participants to make an appointment and visited them at a time and place convenient for them. The interviews took approximately 1 hour: the maximum was 1.5 hours, the minimum was 45 minutes.

After completing the interviews, the researcher sent the transcript of the interview to each participant to confirm the content of the interview. In this process, Layperson 6 (L6) expressed her desire to withdraw from the research and asked the researcher to delete her transcription. She did not state the reason precisely but wrote, 'I did not feel that I had criticised the pastors and their preaching that much, but when I read the transcript I felt uncomfortable at what I had said' (L6, female, 48). She was concerned about the content of the interview. L6 took an active part in the interview and revealed her thoughts. She expressed strong criticism of the preachers' preaching and their ministries. In Korean culture, it is regarded as a virtue not to comment on ministers and their preaching: a written transcription, given this culture, would have been a big burden to her.¹⁵ The researcher explained that in the final report the participant and the

14. In order to recruit participants who have pertinent data, the researcher did not select the participants randomly.

15. This attribute of Korean culture does not affect the credibility of the research. The participants spoke honestly during the one-to-one interview.

congregation would remain anonymous. Nevertheless, L6 reiterated her wish to withdraw from the research. The researcher accepted the request and deleted the codings from L6 from the final report.

Data analysis

The researcher, in looking for the essence of the experience of the New Homiletic of pastors and lay members of the Korean church, chose the South African homiletician Pieterse's methodology for analysing the data. Although this research is not a grounded theory study, Pieterse's methodology, which is often used as a grounded theory approach, is appropriate and effective to identify the central themes for this research. The researcher borrowed the first cycle of Pieterse's methodology,¹⁶ which is an inductive analysis called open coding (Pieterse 2011:96). Open coding was used to reflect what pastors and laypeople at present experience and think about the preaching in the Korean church.

The researcher focused on describing the common points that the participants of the research had experienced. Summarising the experience of individuals regarding the universal phenomenon is the basic purpose of phenomenology. In the light of the research questions, the researcher manually coded all the data with colour pens and highlighters and rearranged the coded data by dividing them into meaningful segments and naming the segments (Nieuwenhuis 2007:100; Pieterse 2011:99). Thereafter, the data were combined into broader categories (Creswell 2007:148).¹⁷

16. There are three cycles: open coding, selective coding and theoretical coding. Pieterse (2010:121, 2011:96) said that open coding is an analytical model of 'initial identifying of categories' as well as the inductive analysis of what the interviewee thought, spoke and so on. Open coding begins with collecting the data and then dividing it into segments and labelling the content of the segments.

17. The transcripts of the interviews will be kept by the University of Pretoria for 10 years.

Analysis of the pastors' interview data

The researcher analysed the raw data of each pastor's and layperson's interview by utilising Pieterse's methodology (2010:113–129, 2011:95–112). In the analysis of the pastors' interviews, open coding produced 105 codes, and 27 subcategories and six main categories emerged from the data.

The main categories with their subcategories and the data are displayed below with the core contents of each interview.

Category 1: New Homiletical methods used by preachers

When the researcher mentioned the term 'the New Homiletic' to the pastors, none of them had heard of it, but some knew the term 'narrative preaching'. After the term was explained to them, all the preachers replied that they already knew it and that it was their current practice. Their experience of the New Homiletic is as follows (P = Pastor; L = Layperson).

A. Being very interested in their listeners (five codes):

'Because I speak of their concerns, the listeners pay careful attention to the preaching'. (P3, male, 48)

B. Pastors' efforts to understand their listeners (six codes):

'I often cite from a bestseller that speaks to the mind of ordinary people ... I begin a sermon with things that are not directly connected to the Bible ... For the conceptual shift, I like to watch comedy programmes such as "Gag Concert"'. (P1, male, 41)

C. The great importance of sympathy in preaching (three codes):

'I think it is not the content of the text but sympathy with the actors that touches the hearts of church members. They are not impressed with a well-known story, but when the Word sympathises with them, they weep and return with much feedback'. (P5, male, 50)

D. Asking the listeners to apply the sermon (five codes):

'I do not order particular things to be done in particular ways. However, as a matter of fact, there are cases where I seldom mention during my sermons. Yet I prefer to first illustrate my own ways of doing things before asking for theirs'. (P4, male, 52)

E. Consideration of the sermon that is heard (one code):

'Preaching must be clearly heard'. (P3, male, 48)

F. High regard for the emotional touch (two codes):

'Many people weep when they sing praises to God. As a result, people return with feedback like "I was sincerely touched by the songs, which corresponded with the content of the sermon." It is not possible to sing the same songs every Sunday or sing a song that is even slightly off the point of the sermon. I try to find songs with lyrics precisely matching the sermon, and if there is none, I modify the existing lyrics'. (P1, male, 41)

G. Using the preacher's story to make the listeners understand (six codes):

'My sermon became longer for a reason ... I bring in my story, a good testimony, to connect the listeners to the text'. (P6, male, 51)

H. Using a word to awaken the imagination (two codes):

'I extended the story of Zacchaeus to the church members via imagination. I try to imagine the parts that are not mentioned between the lines of the Bible. It encourages empathy and understanding among the listeners'. (P3, male, 48)

I. Making the text ambiguous (three codes):

'This is the reason why the listeners have expectations. The content of the sermon is obvious. However, the context becomes less obvious as more of the context is heard. The conclusion, nevertheless, is the same. Although the conclusion is the same, the listeners find it fresh. I consider it a failure if the sermon is familiar'. (P1, male, 41)

J. Rev Chansoo Lee is mentioned as an example of a preacher using the New Homiletical methods (two codes):

'Pastor Chansoo Lee preaches with it (the New Homiletical preaching methods). I have not learned this method, but I found myself unintentionally preaching with this method ... Pastor Lee deliberately makes the listeners weep with his preaching'. (P1, male, 41)

K. Variety of ways to get feedback from listeners (six codes):

'I have received passive messages through KaKaoTalk (kind of SMS like WhatsApp) such as "Pastor, I was touched today." Sometimes they upload a post on KaKaoStory (kind of SMS) about the blessings they have received from the sermon'. (P4, male, 52)

Category 2: Feedback on their sermons as received from listeners

The researcher tried to hear the pastors' focus in their preaching with the question 'What aspect of the sermons did they say they were blessed by?' They responded as follows.

A. When their concern and their life were touched by the Word (five codes):

'People who are suffering experience God's touch when they hear the sermon. People who visit the church for the first time also shed tears a lot because they were touched'. (P6, male, 51)

B. When they were given concrete guidelines for life by the Word (one code):

'I receive positive feedback after my sermon when I share detailed practical guidelines for the congregation to live as a Christian and a member of society'. (P2, male, 47)

C. When they understood the Word of God (two codes):

'Generally, they like my sermons because I preach only from the Bible, not other matters. I often received this comment: "I like your sermon because you disclose the real meaning of the Word"'. (P7, male, 58)

Category 3: The preaching of messages that pastors think church members want to hear

Many pastors think the congregation wants to hear the message of consolation because the economic situation in South Korea is worsening. On the other hand, P6 said something very significant: pastors have a problem because they cannot give a message of consolation all the time.

A. The message of consolation and being moved (five codes):

'I think they expect a sermon that will considerably console their lives with God's love'. (P2, male, 47)

B. The thoughtful want the Word of God (two codes):

'I thought the congregation wanted to hear the message that is consoling and pleases them. Perhaps many pastors think the same. Of course, there are some who like to hear it. But during the 11 years of my life with the congregation, I realised that I have underestimated them and did not trust them. I now trust them. They truly do want me to preach according to the Word of God'. (P6, male, 51)

C. The preacher's inner conflicts about the expectations of the listeners (four codes):

'I cannot say that. Instead I tell them that I know you want to hear the message of consolation from the Word but you cannot hear only that message. We must hear what God tells us and understand as well as experience the power of the gospel'. (P4, male, 52)

Category 4: The evaluation of the New Homiletical methods of pastors

Five of the seven pastors who participated in this research responded positively to the New Homiletical methods, but P6, although he has used the methods to a certain degree, expressed a negative attitude towards it. P7, who uses the typical herald image (Long 1989:24–30), rejected the methods. The five pastors who used these methods disclosed their worries and concerns about the methods. They still want only to deliver the Word of God to the listeners; however, they do not spend much time preparing their sermon or doing Bible study. This is because they pay more attention to the ministry and the growth of the church than to preaching.

A. Positive evaluations of the New Homiletical methods (five codes):

'Nowadays, the majority of the pastors use these methods for preaching: I am one of them'. (P4, male, 52)

B. The opponents' thoughts about the methods (five codes):

'I stand on the opposite side (of the New Homiletic). I cannot agree with it. Where should our starting point for the preaching be? Is it the need of the listeners or the need of God? When seeing a broad outline of the whole Bible, ultimately, it is not the need felt by the people but the real need of God. God gave his message to the prophets and priests to instruct, teach and proclaim it to the people. This is the general pattern revealed throughout the Bible'. (P7, male, 58)

C. The worry and concern of pastors who use the New Homiletic methods (two codes):

'The New Homiletical methods you mentioned are big with the listeners. The sermon that is made by this method is highly in favour with the congregation. The temptation to use this method is really, really difficult to resist'. (P1, male, 41)

D. The trend of the pastors regarding the sermon (four codes):

'In the cell meeting of the pastors, they don't talk about the trend of the sermon but more about the mission field. We stopped studying the Bible together a few years ago. We just discuss the concerns of the pastors that take place in the church'. (P5, male, 50)

Category 5: The directing point of pastors' preaching

Although the Korean church pastors are excited by the New Homiletical methods, they still set their sights on preaching the gospel of Jesus. They unanimously agree that it is the only way to break through the difficult situations in the Korean church, such as the decline in the growth of the Korean church, especially among the younger generation, aged between 20 and 40, who are reluctant to join the church. The pastors' conscience states that only the gospel of Jesus and the Word of God should be preached, as it has been since the early days of the pastors' preaching career to this day.

A. In the early days of the pastors' preaching career, they wanted to expose the meaning of the text (four codes):

'At that time, the explanation of the Bible was regarded as the most important factor for a sermon. I expected a better explanation and application of the Bible'. (P2, male, 47)

B. They think only the gospel can fascinate the younger generation (seven codes):

'When you listen to the younger generation, you know what they want. They are not fascinated with the culture in the church but with the gospel. They want to hear about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the truth about him, according to the Bible. They come to the church for the gospel. When the gospel is proclaimed, they are fascinated'. (P7, male, 58)

Category 6: Increasing the interest in the communal and public aspects of the sermon

Campbell (1997:142–144) points out that one of the weaknesses of the New Homiletic is the loss of the social and public character of Christianity in the sermon because it pays too much attention to the individual. The researcher examined the social and public aspects of the sermons of the Korean evangelical pastors who follow the methods.

A. Increasing the interest in the social and public aspects of the sermon (8 codes):

'The number of subjects in which an evangelical church was interested was too narrow – for example, the subject of protecting the environment. It was dealt with at the University of Hansin, but we are now preaching on it'. (P5, male, 50)

B. The emphasis on the communal aspects in the church (five codes):

'After watching a good video on the impropriety of the social structure, we had a discussion. I focused on the matter of living as a Christian among the members of society'. (P2, male, 47)

C. Avoiding political issues (three codes):

'I am apt to exclude political issues from my sermon and do not preach about social responsibility, because many parts of it are related to political issues'. (P4, male, 52)

D. Concerns of the pastor pursuing communal aspects (two codes):

'I believe that the health of our church thoroughly depends on a person's faith. Gathering up every individual forms a big cogwheel. When the history is seen as a big cogwheel, the church turns the wheel and the church engages with each individual, leads the enormous cogwheel of God. Since it is so, the problem of ethics, education, politics, and justice can naturally not be neglected'. (P6, male, 51)

What the researcher found first was that the Korean church's preachers have started to use the methodology of the New Homiletic. Not all the pastors who participated in the interview knew the term 'New Homiletic', but when they heard the researcher's explanation, they replied that they already knew it and that it was their current praxis. Secondly, because of the effect of the New Homiletic, the sermons of the Korean church were focusing on the individual. Thirdly, the ministers thought that laypeople would want to listen to a sermon that would touch their life and concerns. Fourthly, although there was a diversity of opinion among the ministers about using the methods of the New Homiletic, all the ministers agreed that the mission of the preacher was to preach the gospel and speak the Word of God as written in the Bible. Fifthly, the pastors still want to preach the gospel and the Word of God. Sixthly, the pastors are increasing the focus on communal and public aspects in their sermons.

Analysis of the laypeople's interviews

In analysing the laypeople's interviews, the open coding produced 69 codes, 23 subcategories and the following five main categories.

Category 1: On the preachers' methods used for preaching

Preachers often bear the listeners in mind and use their own stories, testimonies and experiences as illustrations to help the listeners understand the sermon. They put special stress on the emotional touch and on preaching that evokes sympathy. With regard to the application of the preaching, preachers leave the right to choose the application of the sermon to the listeners. Laypeople listen to the sermons of famous preachers mainly through the Internet and apps on smartphones. They listen enthusiastically to the sermons, especially to those of Rev. Chansoo Lee, which were mentioned by all the participants over 40 years of age.

A. Respecting the listeners (three codes):

'As you know, the old pastors preached from the position of a herald for God rather than the position of a sinner. Nowadays, the pastor preaches from the same position as the listeners: as sinners. The pastor links our life and the Word in order to guide our life in righteousness'. (L5, male, 46)

B. Using the preacher's own story and testimony as illustration (seven codes):

'The pastor often shares his testimony and experiences during his sermon. He repeatedly talks about his children and also shares a story of his first acquaintance with his wife. Now it is a well-known story among the congregation'. (L2, female, 27)

C. The emotional touch (two codes):

'He touches the hearts of the thirties and the forties through preaching. He also shares their concerns'. (L5, male, 46)

D. Preaching with sympathy (three codes):

'In olden days the younger generation could not find parts in a sermon that evoked their sympathy. Then came the pastor who is of the same age as us. His sermon is very simple and has a message directed toward us. In the beginning of the sermon, he includes illustrations'. (L5, male, 46)

E. Giving the listeners the right to decide their application of the sermon (two codes):

'Yes, he did it no matter what ... The application is always related to a sermon so it can be shared by individuals in the cell meeting. We share the applications of the sermon of the earlier week in the cell meeting'. (L7, male, 54)

F. Listening to other sermons (three codes):

'There are many good sermons on Christian radio and in the media these days ... I, my wife and my sister-in-law listen to the sermons of famous preachers, including my senior pastor, on the website of the church or through apps on smartphones'. (L5, male, 46)

G. Rev Chansoo Lee was mentioned as a representative preacher these days (three codes):

'I often listen to the sermons of Pastor Lee, who is very emotional. He praises God during the sermon by singing songs. His sermon mainly consists of testimonies, and in a way it touches and influences the congregation'. (L7, male, 54)

Category 2: Feedback on sermons by listening to the laypeople

Five of the eight participants who answered the question 'If you were blessed by your pastor's sermon, what aspects of the sermon were you blessed by?' said that they were touched by the clear preaching of the Word. Other responses (in order of importance) were the preacher's sincerity in preaching, a message that is applicable to life and a consolation message.

A. Understanding the Word (four codes):

'I was glad. I knew the story from long ago, but he brought up new aspects of it that I was not aware of'. (L1, male, 22)

B. Feeling the preacher's sincerity in his preaching (two codes):

'When the pastor preaches in a simplified form, it usually impresses me because it looks as if it is part of his daily life. He is not an eloquent speaker nor does he use eloquent words. He just shares a few words'. (L3, male, 36)

C. Messages applicable to life (one code):

'I can see an insight in his preaching that can be applicable to life'. (L3, male, 36)

D. Listening to consolation messages (one code):

'After preaching, the church members said with one voice: "How does the pastor know my situation? It seems like he is looking into my concerns"'. (L8, female, 50)

Category 3: Expecting to hear from the preaching

Five of eight laypeople who responded to the question 'What message do you want to hear from your pastor's preaching?' said, in order of preference, preaching that explains the message of the text in depth, preaching that coincides with the message and the life of the pastor, preaching that touches the heart, and preaching that preaches only the gospel of Jesus.

A. Preaching that explains the meaning of the text in depth (seven codes):

'I personally long for a sermon that is preached only on the context of the Bible. The sermon that is focused only on the meaning of the Bible, the historical and cultural background rather than adding superfluous illustrations. I would like to hear more about the things that cannot be learned by self-study. I hope to be filled with it'. (L8, female, 50)

B. Preaching that corresponds with the message and the life of the pastor (two codes):

'The key words of these days are sincerity and trustworthiness. Many people mention these words. I think it is the reason why pastors who take centre stage these days receive credit. They do not preach brilliantly, but they look as if they live according to what they preach'. (L3, male, 36)

C. Preaching that touches the heart (one code):

'The message of the pastor is very good, but I wish the pastor would become more emotional. For example, when he shares his life, I expect a more sincere testimony that touches the heart'. (L5, male, 46)

Category 4: Dissatisfaction with the preaching

When the researcher asked questions about the laypeople's opinions of their pastor's sermons and whether they hear opinions from others on sermons in general, the laypeople began to share their complaints about their own church and of the church in general. The majority are disappointed with the famous preachers. The laypeople who often listened to their sermons expressed deep disappointment at the bad behaviour of these famous preachers. They said the behaviour became known through the media. It blocked the spreading of the gospel and has facilitated the movement of anti-Christianity. The laypeople criticised the use of the preacher's story and testimony as illustration, saying it is boring and it just leaves them without the main message in their memory. Some criticised the poor sermon content and the preaching that consoled without reproach, and expressed dissatisfaction with the intent to touch the feelings.

A. Disappointment with preachers (four codes):

'I do not expect much of the preaching. It is true that preaching is important in the Protestant faith, but it is not all of it. Recently, there are many things that make you feel disappointed about the excellent preachers'. (L3, male, 36)

B. The preacher's own story as an illustration (four codes):

'I like the fact that the pastor exposes his story about his family life, but he repeatedly speaks about it. I sometimes think that the story should no longer be told in the sermon. The visitor at the church who visits for the first time might feel intimacy, but to the church members it is a pain in the neck when they hear the story repeatedly'. (L2, female, 27)

C. Antipathy to the touching of feelings (one code):

'I believed in Jesus for 20 years. I wept many times, but it did not change my life. There were some sermons that did not give me a restlessness of emotion, but I still remember the message. It influenced my life'. (L3, male, 36)

D. Poor sermon content (two codes):

'As we, human beings, are spiritual beings, we are concerned about the problems and the meaning of our lives. However, the sermon is not about these concerns we have. The church seems to think that members will not come to church if the pastor preaches on issues that are serious and intense. The office workers come to church to listen to intense messages, but the pastor preaches about things we can hear outside the church'. (L3, male, 36)

E. Consolation preaching without reproach (two codes):

'According to what others have said, there are many sermons that are pleasant to listen to, sermons that comfort and console without any reproof or blame'. (L4, female, 34)

Category 5: Public aspects revealed in the sermon

Six out of eight laypeople who participated in this research responded that the sermons are concentrated on individual faith rather than on communal and public aspects. But the pastors emphasise social aspects in announcements or at prayer meetings, not in the preaching. The domains in which the church practises social and public activities are usually aid, sharing with the poor and the disabled, North Korean defectors and the local community.

A. The sermon's high regard for individual faith (seven codes):

'Individual faith occupies about 70% or 80% of the sermon, and the public aspects occupy about 20% or 30%. The pastor preaches more on individual faith rather than on public aspects'. (L5, male, 46)

B. Emphasising the public aspects at prayer meetings or in announcements rather than in the sermon (three codes):

'It is interesting. Although the church plays a huge role in society, the pastor does not emphasise social responsibility in the sermon. He does not mention communal and public aspects. He rather focuses on individual faith ... However, the pastor emphasises it when he makes announcements or at some other times. So I do not think the emphasis on public aspects is insufficient'. (L3, male, 36)

C. The sermon avoids having a political colour (one code):

'The pastor does not reveal sensitive political issues or colours of it'. (L3, male, 36)

D. Communal activities performed in the church (five codes):

'Our church serves disabled people, multicultural families and neglected classes of people. Recently, we started to focus on children, foreigners and seniors'. (L2, female, 27)

The researcher quoted a lot of data to show the reality in detail. The reason for the elaboration of the data was to meet the current need for information.

The researcher found in the laypeople's interviews, firstly, that their pastors used the methods of the New Homiletic. Secondly, although one interviewee would like to listen to a consolation message, almost all of the laypeople want to listen to preaching with in-depth explanations of the meaning of the text and based on the preacher's practice. Thirdly, the laypeople are disappointed with preachers' bad behaviour, including too much of the preacher's own story and intentional playing on the emotions of the congregation. Fourthly, the lay people do not think that the communal and public aspects are addressed in the preaching.

Interpretation of the analysed data

The data were analysed according to the methodology of Pieterse. Six categories of answers of pastors and five categories of the laypeople's answers emerged from the collected data. The categories were rearranged into four themes that will be developed here in more detail.

The first theme is the New Homiletical methods used by preachers. The researcher could determine the extent of the New Homiletic in the Korean church through the interviews with the pastors and the laypeople. The Korean preachers have already turned from the traditional 'herald image' of the preacher to the 'pastor image' (cf. Long 2005:19–36). They take great interest in their listeners and use the methods of the New Homiletic, such as evoking sympathy and using the sermon to touch the listeners' emotions, using stories from their own lives, using the language of the imagination, and making the text ambiguous. Many participants mentioned Rev. Chansoo Lee spontaneously as a representative preacher who uses the New Homiletic methods.

The two groups agree on many points in the first category, but there are differences. For example, the laypeople like to listen to the sermons of famous preachers on the Internet or on an application on their smartphones, but the pastors do not listen to others' sermons and are only interested in their own ministry and in the growth of their church.

The second theme is feedback on sermons. The researcher asked the pastors, 'Which aspects of the sermons made the listeners say they were blessed?' The laypeople were

asked, 'By which aspects of the sermon were you blessed?' There was a difference between the answers of the two groups. The majority of the pastors said that it was the listeners' concerns and lives that were touched by the Word. The majority of the laypeople said that they were blessed when they understood the Word. The researcher asked the pastors another question: 'What message do you think your church members want to hear?' Many pastors answered that the church members wanted to hear a message of consolation. The majority of the laypeople answered the question 'What kind of message do you want to hear from your pastor?' with 'preaching that explains the meaning of the text in depth'.¹⁸

There is a second perception gap about the sermon between the two groups. Firstly, there is a difference in the perceptions of the Sunday sermon. Pastors focus on middle-level listeners to get their attention during the sermon, because there are a variety of levels amongst the people. But many of the laypeople who participated in this research wanted to listen to sermons that explain the meaning of the text in depth, at least in the Sunday service because they have no time to attend other services. Secondly, laypeople's expectations from the sermon differ depending on the level of their belief and the age of their faith. As L8 disclosed, in the beginning of her belief she expected a consolation message, but after experiencing healing by the Word, she is not satisfied with a consolation message; she wants to listen to a message that is rich in the Word. Therefore, the expectation from the sermon is proportional to the maturity of the Christian faith of the listener.

The third theme is cognition of the sermon by the pastors and the laypeople. Although there was a diversity of opinion about using the methods of the New Homiletic, both groups agree that the mission of the preacher is to preach the gospel and speak the Word of God as written in the Bible.

The fourth theme is expressing the social and public responsibility of Christians in the sermon. What Campbell (1997:142–143) pointed out as the weakness of the New Homiletic in the American church is also evident in the Korean church, which too focuses on the individual rather than on public aspects in the sermon. Although the group of pastors insisted that they preached about the social and public responsibility of Christians, the laypeople who listened to the sermons said that the proper place for communal and public aspects was the announcements or prayer meetings rather than the preaching.

Conclusion

The research reported on in this article attends to both Osmer's (2008) empirical–descriptive task as well as his interpretative task by both describing the current situation regarding the New Homiletic in the evangelical church in

18. It is an interesting finding that laypeople want to listen to the gospel and the Bible. The results are similar to those of the American survey that researched with questions and interviewed 128 churchgoers in 2001. The listeners in America also wanted to listen to sermons that respected the authority of Scripture and were based on Scripture (for more information, see Mulligan et al. 2005:1–5).

South Korea and providing some insight into why this is the situation. Within an over-arching practical-theological methodology, the findings reported in this article can be augmented with the normative as well as pragmatic tasks in order to develop a New Homiletical theory for praxis in the Korean evangelical church. However, the explicit aim of this article was an attempt at a contribution from an empirical perspective to the vacuum with regard to qualitative data regarding preaching in this specific context.

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Authors' contributions

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