

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Pastoral Theology

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

TITLE: A STRATEGY TO EMPOWER LAY LEADERS TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PREACHING AT AMBOHIDRATRIMO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, MADAGASCAR

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Preaching plays an important role in the lives of believers. The spiritual life of the church depends on it. Most of the members of our church are not satisfied with the sermons they hear in the church on Sabbath. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Ambohidratrimo is facing that problem. First, educated lay leaders use their skills and knowledge to preach. However, their sermons become profound and philosophical. Second, lay leaders who have not progressed much in their education convince the audience with their chosen language and voice only in preaching. Third, different opinions have been heard from members about lay leaders preaching. In particular, the sermon is too long and uninspiring. Too many references are used and the topic is not clear.

The objective of this project is to develop a strategy to empower lay leaders to promote effective preaching. The study followed Biblical teaching, the writings of Ellen Gould White, and a seminar was conducted. The seminar trained lay leaders of

Ambohidratrimo SDA Church in terms of preaching.

The study reveals that lay leaders of Ambohidratrimo SDA Church must improve their manner of preaching. Because of this research, strategies are given to empower lay leaders to develop effective preaching.

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A project

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Dedicated to my Family.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Due to the lack of pastors in Madagascar, lay leaders do most of the church's work, including preaching. The *Church Manual* of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church attests to it, saying: "Elders should be able to conduct the services of the church and minister in both word and doctrine when the assigned pastor is unavailable."¹ One pastor holds several churches in one district. The author is a recently appointed Pastor to lead the district of Ambohidratrimo which is the 50th district in the field of the Central Malagasy Conference. In this new district, there are 19 churches, 12 of which are small groups or a company; it means that the church is governed by a church director or a leader. There are no elders there. The *Church Manual* of the Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms "the leader of a company shall not be ordained to that office and does not have the authority to perform those functions that are vested in an elder of a church."² Most of these small groups are located in rural areas. The church is run by rural people, that is, they are less educated but, still, they try to give their best to lead the church. However, they have trouble explaining the Scriptures and preaching, which require more knowledge of the Bible and the principles of preaching.

In addition, church members feel dissatisfied with the sermons that they hear

¹General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Secretariat, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2015), 73.

²*Church Manual* (2015), 38.

in the church. They compare the sermons preached by the pastor and the ones preached by the lay leaders in the church. It should be noted that church members look forward to the pastor's visit to the church so that they can hear the word of God, especially the sermon. Unfortunately, the Pastor can only do that two or three times a year.

Furthermore, a sermon has an impact on the members' spirituality and daily life, and involvement in the Church. First, a church cannot develop if it does not grow spiritually. So, a church leader has a major role in increasing members' spirituality. The *Church Manual* of the SDA Church confirms "Elders must be recognized by the church as strong spiritual leaders and must have good reputations both in the church and community. In the absence of a pastor, elders are the spiritual leaders of the church and by precept and example must seek to lead the church into a deeper and fuller Christian experience."³ Second, many church members look forward to the second part of the church program, which is divine worship. Why? Because they expect to hear good and encouraging sermons. They believe that it will help them to face the difficulty and the challenge in their lives. Third, preaching produces faith, the Bible emphasized it and says: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10: 17, KJV) and faith produces works. As a result, believers become active and participate in the church.

To sum up, the issue of preaching is seen in all churches in Ambohidratrimo district. Therefore, in this project, the researcher is chosen Ambohidratrimo SDA Church to begin the study of empowering lay leaders to develop effective preaching.

³*Church Manual* (2015), 73.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major obstacles to the advancement of the Church is spirituality. Sermons play an important role in uplifting members' spirituality. However, many Church leaders struggle and have trouble sharing and giving the bread of life to members on the Sabbath. Therefore, this project is designed to bring solutions and suggestions to solve this problem.

Purpose of the Study

Preaching plays an important place in the life of the church. The purpose of the study is to develop and implement some strategies to empower the lay leaders in the church of Ambohidratrimo SDA Church of Central Malagasy Conference in Madagascar, to be able effective preachers.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for those who struggle and have problems preaching God's word. It is relevant and applicable for future leaders in the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo district and all churches of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madagascar.

Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on raising the skills of lay leaders in the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church in terms of preaching. Therefore, it will affect the spiritual lives of the members for the advancement of the Church.

Methodology and Procedure

The study of empowering lay leaders to develop effective sermons among the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo in Madagascar concerns strategic leadership.

Therefore, this research proposes strategies to develop effective sermons among lay leaders of the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church. In addition, the study will rely on secondary sources.

Furthermore, this project will divide into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the project. Chapter two focuses on the biblical-theological foundations for the study. The third chapter three provides a description of the local settings and the issue of lay preaching in the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo. Chapter four presents some strategies to empower lay leaders of the church in preaching and the last chapter concludes the study with some recommendations.

Definition of Terms

We try to define two words seen in this study: “empower” and “lay leader” “Empower” means “to give somebody the power or authority to do something.”⁴ ‘Empower’ is ‘to encourage and support the ability to do something.’⁵

In this project, we see how to empower lay leaders in the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo to develop effective sermons. In other words, empowering lay leaders mean helping them to increase their ability to preach or giving them a tool to improve their skills in preaching.

Lay Leader,

In local church is to connect the people of the church, the leadership of the church, and the local community. This connection is multi-directional. As a member of important church leadership teams, the lay leader represents the laity and provides crucial insight into the wider community’s needs. In the other direction, the lay leader helps to engage the people in the church’s

⁴*Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, s.v. “Empower,” accessed March 7, 2023, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/empower?q=empower>.

⁵*Cambridge Dictionary*, s.v. “Empower,” accessed December 15, 2022, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/empower>.

ministries. Before a church can become fruitful, however, it must first establish direction.⁶

Lay leaders hold a very important position in the church. They work together with the ordained clergy to operate and develop the work of God in their church. Lay leaders in the church can fill in for the clergy when they are not present. This project is designed to specifically assist and examine the preaching skills of these lay leaders.

⁶ Kevin Walters, "Lay Leaders Handbook," accessed February 3, 2023, https://www.ctcumc.org/files/fileshare/kevin_walters/local+church+lay+leader_handbook.pdf.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter presents the biblical and theological foundation for empowering lay leaders to develop effective preaching. First, we try to define the meaning of preaching and teaching in the Bible. Second, the need and the call of preaching are explored in the Bible. Third, this chapter analyzes the preaching of Noah and Jonah in the Old Testament and the preaching of Jesus, Peter, and Paul in the New Testament as the biblical and theological foundation of this research. Finally, the Spirit of Prophecy in preaching and the views of other Christian authors are discussed in this chapter.

Meaning of Preaching and Teaching

The words “preaching” and “teaching” have different meanings but they are related. For example, Jesus’ sermon on the mountain (Matt 5-7) contains many teachings. It is clearly stated in (Matt 9: 35) that Jesus went around teaching, preaching, and healing. Paul also distinguished the gift of teaching from the other gifts (Rom 12: 6, 7). Luke affirms in Acts 2: 42 that the new believers persevered in the teachings of the apostles. This means that the disciples did not preach only (like Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2) but took part in teaching also.

According to Freedman, in the *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, preaching is defined, as

To preach is to proclaim, to announce, to declare a word from God, to present publicly the good news, to deliver a religious discourse related directly or indirectly to a text of Scripture. Apart from a specific context, preaching is

difficult to define. Even though preaching has long been significantly linked to the life and activity of both Jewish and Christian communities, it is so varied in content, mode, audience, and purpose that it resists the constraints of a dictionary, even a Bible dictionary.¹

Albert defines preaching as “the process of God speaking forth His Word, using human instruments to proclaim His message, and then calling men and women unto Himself”² For Stott, biblical preaching means “to open up the inspired text with such faithfulness and sensitivity that God’s voice is heard and his people obey him.”³ The spoken word comes from God and He uses a person to deliver His word. Further, “although the New Testament offers no formal definition of preaching, a study of the primary terms reveals much about the nature of preaching. The most frequently used word in the New Testament for preaching, *keryssein*, is translated “to proclaim” or “to herald” and occurs more than fifty times in its various inflections.”⁴

Need and Call for Preaching in the Bible

A dictionary of Bible themes talks about the need of preaching to God’s people. As it said, “Preaching has a central place among God’s people and is vital to their life and growth. It is authorized by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and expressed supremely by Jesus Christ.”⁵

Sermons are very important in the lives of believers, and even non-believers.

¹Fred B. Craddock, “Preaching,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 5:451.

²R. Albert Mohler Jr., “A Theology of Preaching,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duduit (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 19.

³ John Stott, “A Definition of Biblical Preaching,” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators*, ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2005), 24.

⁴ H. C. Brown Jr et al., *Steps to the Sermon: An Eight-Step Plan for Preaching with Confidence*, rev. ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 5.

⁵Martin H. Manser, ‘Preaching,’ *Dictionary of Bible Themes (DBT): The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 1999), 7755.

This can be seen in the conversion of the people who heard the sermon of Peter on the day of the Pentecost. It has been stated even by the number. This is what Acts 2: 41 says, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized, and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”⁶ Preaching is a tool in the hands of the Church to save souls. Jesus commanded to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28: 19). Preaching is part of the fulfillment of this mandate. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 1: 17, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.” According to this verse, Paul was called as an apostle of Jesus Christ to preach the word and not to baptize. Paul’s apostle was called to preach. The message he brought was about the cross (1 Cor 1:18) and Christ who was crucified on the cross (1 Cor 1:23).

Preaching of Noah and Jonah in the Old Testament

There are few references to preaching in the Old Testament. Only two words in Hebrew can render the meaning of the term “preaching.” One is *basar* which includes the root of the word “joy” which is related to: “a message of joy” or “announcing good news.” We can see it in Isaiah 61: 1, which says “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” The second is *qara* which means “to proclaim or to call.” We can see it in Jeremiah 11: 6, which says, “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them.’” So, in

⁶The biblical version used in this project is New King James Version (NKJV), unless otherwise stated.

this section, the author chose Noah's preaching and Jonah's preaching as the biblical and theological foundation for this project.

Noah: The Tireless Preacher

Noah was a preacher who had an extraordinary life. For about 120 years he preached the warning from God that the flood will come. Lay leaders should imitate Noah's life so that they may be able to design effective sermons. Below we will discuss his devotional life, his message concerning his faith and obeying God, and the way he delivered the message.

His devotional life. The Bible says in Genesis 6: 9, "here is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generation. Noah walked with God." We note three things here: Noah was a righteous man, perfect, and walked with God. Noah spent many times going with God. So lay leaders should walk and spend time meditating with God each day.

His message concerning his faith and obeying God. Genesis 7: 5 tells, "And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him." Noah fulfilled all of God's commands. In other words, he obeyed God. His faith was followed by actions. As stated in Heb. 11: 7, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." The faith that he had was consistent with the message he preached. Lay leaders should always have the courage to preach the great truths in the Bible even if the people are not familiar with it.

The way he delivered the message. He preached God's warning to the people in that time almost 100 years. In Genesis 5: 32 and Genesis 7: 11, it said that Noah was 500 years old when he was commanded to build the ark, and he was 600

years old at the start of the flood. He was the preacher of righteousness without ever tired. He has the enthusiasm to preach God's word even if the people did not hear him.

Jonah: A Fleeing Preacher

In this section, we will look at Jonah, the escaped preacher. We will consider God's call to him, his refusal to go to Nineveh, and the results of his preaching at the end.

God's call to Jonah. The Bible says in Jonah 1: 1, 2 "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.'" According to this verse, God called Jonah to preach the word calling for disaster for Nineveh the Great. That is, the message is from God and He chose Jonah to preach His word. The word preached is from God.

Jonah's refusal to go to Nineveh. Jonah 1: 3 says, "But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." According to this verse, Jonah refused to preach the word and did not go to Nineveh. He was afraid that the Ninevites would repent and God would not fulfill His words again.

The result of Jonah's sermon. In the Bible, Jonah 3: 10, says: "Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it." According to this verse, Jonah's preaching had an impact on the lives of the Ninevites. It made them repent and God did not harm them. So, we can say that the role of lay leaders is to preach, but the responsibility of God is to change the hearts of the listeners.

Table 1 presents the summary of the preaching of Noah and Jonah.

Table 1. Comparisons of Noah and Jonah’s Preaching

Sermon	Noah	Jonah
Message	Warning message of God “Enter in the ark, the flood is coming”	Warning message of God ‘Go to Nineveh... ‘
Enthusiasm	Ready to preach	Still not ready to preach
Length of preaching	120 years	3 days
Listeners	Ignored God’s word	Attentive to God’s word
Result	Negative	Positive

It is clear from Table 1 that the message they brought was the same; this is God’s warning. The enthusiasm while preaching the message was different: one was ready, and the other was not. The length of preaching is also different: one hundred and twenty years for Noah and three days for Jonah. People’s reception of the message is also different: some ignored the words; others took the words to heart. The results of the sermons are different: one is negative and the other is positive.

Preaching of Jesus, Peter, and Paul in the New Testament

Jesus, Peter, and Paul are all people famous for preaching in the New Testament. God chose and called them to be His preachers. Let us examine below Jesus, Peter, and Paul’s preaching in empowering lay leaders of the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo to develop effective sermons.

Jesus: A Model Preacher

Raymond Bailey affirms that “Christ Himself should be our spiritual example, our human model, our moral model, our pastoral model, and our preaching model.”⁷

Let us analyze some qualities that made Jesus our preaching model in terms of His devotional life, His message and the way he delivered it, His appeals for people to take a decision, and His sermon on the mountain.

His devotional life. According to Mark 1: 35, it says “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place, and there He prayed.” Jesus had a special prayer life. He got up while it was still night and went to the desert to pray. White confirms this in the magazine *The Signs of the Times* in 1908, saying “Morning by morning, and evening by evening, He received grace that He might impart to others. Then, His soul replenished with grace and fervor, He would set forth to minister to the souls of men.”⁸ According to this quote, Jesus receives strength and grace every day from God before he faces the preaching of the kingdom of God. It is also said in Luke 6: 12 that “He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” It can be said that Jesus had a special relationship with his Father every day. He said “I and My Father are one” (John 10: 30). It is confirmed as stated in Luke 4: 18 that Jesus was anointed to preach the good news to the poor.

His message. Jesus’ message focuses on the “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God.” According to Paulien in the Synoptic gospels, the “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God” are the main themes of Jesus’ teachings. Although the kingdom of God is yet to come, it is already being experienced now. “The

⁷Raymond Bailey, *Jesus the Preacher* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 14.

⁸Ellen G. White, “Devotional Life,” in *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995), 282.

kingdom of God is within you,” (Luke 17: 21), Jesus said. It is stated in Luke 2: 43 that when Jesus came to earth, He said “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also because for this purpose I have been sent.” Jesus’ mission on earth is to preach the kingdom of God. Michael confirms “Jesus’ preaching acknowledged both senses of the kingdom of God. In the present, God is the sovereign Lord of the universe, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field (Matt 6:26-30). People are to “seek first his kingdom” by submitting to his sovereign authority (Matt 6:33).”⁹ So, His message focused on the “kingdom of God.” Here are a few references taken from the four gospels that tell about the kingdom of God that Jesus preached:

Matthew 19: 24 says, “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The kingdom of God is a choice.

Matthew 21: 31 tells; “‘which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.’” Those who do God’s will get his kingdom.

Mark 1: 15 speaks, “and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’” The kingdom of God is near.

Mark 4: 11 reveals, “And He said to them, ‘To you, it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.’” Jesus used a parable to describe His kingdom.

Luke 4: 43 states, “But He said to them, ‘I must preach the kingdom of God to

⁹ Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishers, 2011), 438.

the other cities also because for this purpose I have been sent.” God’s kingdom is the central theme of Jesus’ message.

Luke 8: 10 talks, “And He said, ‘to you, it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest, it is given in parables, that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’” Jesus used a parable to describe His kingdom.

John 3: 3 says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” There are conditions to enter the kingdom of God.

John 3: 5 claims, “Jesus answered, ‘most assuredly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” There are conditions to enter the kingdom of God.

His delivery. There are at least three ways that Jesus used to convey his teachings. Among them are stories, parables, and illustrations. We will discuss this below.

Jesus used stories and parables. One way that Jesus used to teach a lesson is a small story in the form of a parable. The parable defines as “The Greek term *parabolê* has a broader range of meaning than the English term parable and may refer to a variety of figures of speech, including proverbs, metaphors, analogies, and parables. For our purposes, a parable proper may be defined as “a story from daily life illustrating a moral or spiritual lesson.”¹⁰ He told simple stories to draw lessons. They are related to the kingdom of God. The stories show people how to behave, their relationships with others, and the right decisions to be taken in life. These stories are also made to show the truth in the Bible. Let us take a look below at some of Jesus’

¹⁰Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus*, 447.

parables and we will look at the people who conveyed the message, the context, the key points and verses, and the lessons that Jesus wanted to convey:

The parables of new cloth and new wineskins. (Matt 9: 16–17, Mark 2: 21–22, Luke 5: 36–38). This parable is based on the question asked by John’s disciples: “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?” (Matt 9: 14). There was a custom at that time that Jesus and the disciples did not follow. The answer given by Jesus to John’s disciples is the parable of the new cloth and the new wineskins.

The parable of the lampstand. (Matt 5: 14–16, Mark 4: 21–22, Luke 8: 16). This parable is addressed to many people including His disciples. It was incorporated into Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. At that time, most people lived in simple houses that did not have a lot of light to illuminate them. Jesus used this lamp to teach a lesson. Those who follow Him should shine as a light. (Matt 5: 16)

The parable of the wise and foolish builders. (Matt 7: 24–27, Luke 6: 47–49). This parable of the fool and the wise man who built a house was a parable made by Jesus when he preached on the mountain. This parable applies to His audience. Jesus compares those who simply listen to his words but did not obey as fools and those who obey and who build houses on the rock as wise men (Matt 7: 24).

The parable of the sower. (Matt 13: 3–23, Mark 4: 3–20, Luke 8: 5–15). The people listened to the teachings of Jesus beside the lake. Jesus sat in the boat and taught them. He compared the hearts of the listeners who received his words to the different types of land. The good land is “he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” (Matt 13: 23).

The parable of the weeds. (Matt 13: 24–30, 36–43). Here is a parable about weeds and the good seed. The sower sowed good seed, but when the rice grew, so the thorn was there too. The enemy did it, Jesus said. Jesus warned about the external judgment done to our neighbors. Only in the fall or at the end of the world, the good and the bad will be distinguished. Jesus summed it up as stated in Matthew 13: 29-30: “No, he answered, because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”

The parable of the mustard seed. (Matt 13: 31-32, Mark 4: 30-32, Luke 13: 18-19). Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. It is like a very small seed, but when it grows, it becomes a big tree. The kingdom of heaven is for all people. To conclude, in Matthew 13: 32 says “Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

The parable of the leaven. (Matt 13: 33, Luke 13: 20–21). The kingdom of heaven is likened to a leaven, put into the dough. The gospel is meant for all people: different languages, skin colors, different cultures. Salvation is for the world. This parable is summarized like this, in Matthew 13: 33 says “Another parable He spoke to them: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until it was all leavened.’”

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl. (Matt 13:44–46). We see it in Matthew 13: 44-46, which says “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking the

beautiful pearls. When he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” The lesson that Jesus wants to convey in these two parables is the same. The kingdom of heaven has a greater value than the wealth of the earth. It should be sought.

The parable of the net (Matt 13: 47–50). Jesus teaches compares the kingdom of God to a dragnet catching all kinds of fish. When the net came ashore, the people chose what they wanted. Only, Jesus gives the meaning of this parable. He said in Matthew 13: 49, 50 “So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

The parable of the homeowner. (Matt 13: 52). Jesus’ kingdom is like the scribes who were taught to the kingdom of heaven to bring out from their records something new and old. Those scribes should be able to connect the prophecies in the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus Uses illustration. Jesus was not content with using stories through parables but conveyed a message through illustrations or symbolic images also. He took it from the world around him and what he saw in his daily life. Ellen White confirms this in the book entitled *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*. She says “Jesus taught by illustrations drawn from nature and the familiar events of everyday life.”¹¹ Here are some examples of this: “the salt” (Matt 5: 13) which represents the disciples. They are His representatives in the world. “The light” (Matt 5: 14) is also used to represent the disciples who should be the light of the world in practice, language, and behavior. “Birds and lilies” (Matt 6: 26-28) is a metaphor used by Jesus

¹¹Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), 140.

to show His care for the smallest living things. He cares more for those who choose to follow Him. “The Mustard Seed” (Matt 13: 31) is very small, but when it grows, it becomes a big tree. Jesus used it to show faith. It is very important to have faith in God. If you have faith like a mustard seed, Jesus said, you can transfer mountains. The “Vine (trunk) and branches” (John 15: 1, 2) represent Jesus and those who believe in Him and follow Him. If those who believe in Jesus will be united with Him every day, they will bear much fruit, but if they are separated from Him, they will become a withered branch and may even die.

The sermon on the mountain (Matthew 5-7). “The Sermon on the Mount” arises from the description of Jesus sitting on a mountain as he teaches (5:1).¹² Mounce remarked “The latter is often called the Sermon on the Plain because it is said to have been delivered on ‘a level place’ (Luke 6:17) rather than ‘on the mountain’ (Matt 5:1). But both expressions probably denote the same place approached from two different directions.”¹³ Jesus was a model of preaching who should be imitated. His teachings focused on “the kingdom of God” or “the kingdom of heaven”. The Sermon on the Mount was not just a sermon but also a teaching. The people who are suffering, hungry, needy, sick, and poor are the majority who are ready to listen to Jesus’ preaching. There are many interesting topics found in Jesus’ sermon on the mountain. Among them are prayer, forgiveness, fasting, fornication, anxiety, love, hypocrisy, anger, etc. The message and teachings in the sermon were direct. He often repeats the words written in the old testament which are preceded by the words; “you have heard” (Matt 5: 21) or “and it was said” (Matt 5: 31). Jesus also made comparisons

¹² Allen C. Myers, ed., *Eerdmans Bible Dictionary (EBD)* (1987), s.v. “The Sermon on the Mount.”

¹³ R. H. Mounce, “Sermon on the Mount,” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary (NBD)* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1078.

through contrasts. For example, in the book of Matthew, we see “the wise and the foolish who built houses” (Matt 5: 24-27). Jesus used metaphors and visual objects to convey lessons: Salt and light (Matthew 5;14-16), nature (Matt 6: 25-34), humans (Matt 6: 1-18), animals (Matt 7: 15), and plants (Matt 7: 16-20). Jesus’ preaching style was inductive. He used allegorical images, stories, parables, and visual facts to make the listeners understand. That they can think, analyze, and make good decisions.

His appeal. As a model preacher like Jesus, His sermon also included appeals. He calls on people to accept his teaching or not, and to take a decision or not. Here are some examples of Jesus’ appeal in the book of Matthew: Jesus calls people to seek first the kingdom of God (Matt 6: 33), He calls people to repent (Matt 4:17), He calls people to follow Him (Matt 9:9), He calls people to enter to the narrow gate (Matt 7: 13), and He calls people to listen to His words and obey Him. (Matt 7: 24).

Peter: An Extraordinary Preacher

After rejecting Jesus, Peter became a passionate leader and preacher of the Gospel. This began with the sermon he delivered on the Day of Pentecost. Many people were convinced and converted after that sermon. Let us analyze this sermon model from Peter in Acts 2: 14-36. His sermon is useful for lay leaders to develop effective preaching.

The sermon’s introduction is in Acts 2: 14, and 15. Peter began his sermon by capturing the attention of the audience. He said, “Listen to my words.” He immediately dispelled the idea in the minds of the people that they were drunk. He said, “Or else these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.” (Acts 2: 15). It is too early if it is nine in the morning and the disciples are already drunk. The Holy Spirit had spoken to them.

Joel's prophecy in Acts 2: 14-21 – Peter used Joel's prophecy to explain its fulfillment at that time. Peter demonstrated that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost. This means that Christians were moving to live in a new era because the prophecies have been fulfilled.

The great truth in Acts 2: 22-36 – Here Peter revealed a great truth, namely Jesus' death, and resurrection. He showed that Jesus fulfilled God's plan and purpose by offering himself to die on the cross. God raised him from the dead according to prophecy and exalted him as Christ and Lord. He is the promised Messiah from the seed of David. And through Him, all people will be saved. It should be noted that Peter used the prophecies of the Old Testament as proof of his declaration and that Jesus was recognized by his miracles as the messiah and savior.

The Call to Repentance Acts 2: 37, 38 – When those Jews heard Peter's sermon, their hearts were pierced and they said to him, "What shall we do?" Peter answered them and said, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ that your sins may be forgiven and that you may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The word "repent" comes from the Greek word *metanoia* which means "change of mind and heart" or "change of direction." Baptism was not new to these people because it already existed at the time of John the Baptist. Peter ended his sermon with a call to repentance and baptism. Many people responded to the call at that time. The Bible says that the number of those who were baptized on that day must have been three thousand.

Peter's sermon was very special because it included all three parts of the sermon: the introduction, the explanation, and the conclusion. He knew how to attract the attention of those who listened to him. The explanation of the great truth which told that Jesus is the Messiah and the Lord was very clear. The people received the

call to repentance and baptism and they committed themselves to Jesus. Furthermore, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and his sermon was guided by the Holy Spirit.

Paul: A Fervent Preacher

Paul was called to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. He was both a writer and a scholar of theology. He wrote most of the books of the New Testament, which are called the epistles. He was passionate about preaching the Gospel. We see this in his famous words, saying, “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.” (Rom 1: 14). What is the gospel according to Paul’s statement in the book of Romans? Paul himself gives us the answer when he says that the gospel is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes in him, first among the Jews and then among the Gentiles.” (Rom 1: 16). It says in this verse that he is not ashamed to preach the gospel. The book of Acts tells the story of Paul’s missionary journeys as he preached the gospel. In this section, we will examine Jesus’ call to Paul, the content of his message, his mission to the Gentiles, and how he delivered that message.

Jesus’ call to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 3-6). At first, Paul was enthusiastic about threatening and killing Christians. His name was Saul. He received a letter from the high priest that all those who hold the teachings about Jesus would be imprisoned in Jerusalem (Acts 9: 1, 2). While on his way to Damascus to fulfill his desire, he met Jesus. As mentioned in Acts 9: 3-6, says: “As he was on his way, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. He fell to the ground, and he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ And he said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to strike against the gods.’ Then, trembling and amazed, he said, ‘Lord, what you want me to do?’ The Lord said to him, ‘Get up and go into the city, and they will tell you what you should do.’” When Saul met Jesus, his

name, his heart, and his life changed and he was ready to follow Him and preach Jesus. Many chapters and verses reveal Paul's conversion, including Gal 2: 20, which says, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Stephen concludes "Paul, former Pharisee, and persecutor of the church who later spearheaded Christianity's mission to the Gentles dominates the second half of Acts."¹⁴

His message. Paul's message was centered on Jesus being crucified and raised from the dead. He confirmed this when he wrote the epistle to the Corinthians. "But deliberately I have known nothing among you but Christ crucified," (1 Cor 2: 2). Paul took this as a true story and told and preached it in his own time. Jesus' preaching and Paul's preaching were not the same. Jesus was preaching the "kingdom of heaven" or the "kingdom of God," while Paul was confirming that and talking about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

His mission to the gentile. While Paul was on the road to Damascus, he saw a light from heaven. Jesus appeared to him and said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9: 5) After this, Paul became blind and could not see for three days. Ananias was chosen by the Lord to restore his sight and he received a special message from God saying, "Go, for he is one of my chosen vessels to bear my name before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel." (Acts 9: 15) This statement is confirmed in Ephesians 3: 8, which says, "To me, who am the least of all the saints, this grace has been given, that I may proclaim among the Gentiles the unsearchable

¹⁴ Stephen L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student's Introduction*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2006), 320.

riches of Christ.” This mission to preach to the Gentiles lit the fire of preaching the truth about Jesus in Paul.

His delivery. At the beginning of Paul’s message, there are often words of praise. He puts himself in the place of his listeners to identify them and capture their hearts. He does not minimize the religion of others but preaches the new belief that he follows. For example, when he was in Athens, he spoke to the Athenians in Acts 17: 22, 23, it is said “Then Paul stood amid the Areopagus and said, ‘Men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all things very religious; for as I passed by and considered the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the one you worship without knowing him, this is the one I announce to you.’” The word is underlined: “I perceive that in all things you are very religious” which means that Paul wants to be like his audience. He also used a passage from the Old Testament to support his opinion. As we see in the book of Timothy, he spoke to Timothy about the importance of the Scriptures. As written in 2 Timothy 3: 16, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” The word “all Scripture” refers to the Old Testament. Moreover, his knowledge of the history and customs of the pagans, their culture, and Jewish traditions facilitated the transmission of the message. He also knew many languages such as Greek, Aramaic, and Roman. It should be noted that the message he brought was persuasive, inspiring, emotional, and without a doubt. Like Jesus, Paul also used illustrations and metaphors to convey his message. He took it from everyday life. He compares the life of a Christian to an athlete (1 Cor 9: 24-27). He assimilates the battle that Christians face as a soldier carrying weapons (Eph 6: 13-17). Paul uses boxing to compare Christians running (1 Cor. 9: 26). He also uses nature and his experience during his ministry. As we see it in

2 Corinthians 11: 23-28, says:

Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness--besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

Paul also uses metaphors such as “body” when he refers to the temple of God, the Church (1 Cor 3: 16-17, 1 Cor 12: 12). There is also the word “savage wolves” which designates the false teachers who practice false teachings and show no mercy to the sheep (Acts 20: 29).

To sum up this section, we see in Table 2 a list of the major sermons of Peter and Paul in the book of Acts. Lay leaders need to know it in terms of preaching.

Table 2. Major Sermons of Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts

Sermon	Theme	Biblical reference
Peter to crowds at pentecost	Peter's explanation of pentecost	Acts 2:14-40
Peter to crowds at the temple	The Jewish people should repent for crucifying the Messiah	Acts 3:12-26
Peter to the Sanhedrin	Testimony that a helpless man was healed by the power of Jesus	Acts 4:5-12
Peter to Gentiles	Gentiles can be saved in the same manner as Jews	Acts 10:28-47
Peter to church in Jerusalem	Peter's testimony of his experiences at Joppa and defense of this ministry to the Gentiles	Acts 11:4-18
Paul to Synagogue at Antioch	Jesus was the Messiah in fulfillment of old testament prophecies	Acts 13:16-41
Paul and Barnabus at Iconium	Paul and Barnabus spoke boldly in Iconium's Jewish Synagogue, causing many to believe and disbelievers to stir up opposition	Acts 14:3-7
Peter to Jerusalem Council	Salvation by grace available to all	Acts 15:7-11
Paul and Silas in Prison	Paul and Silas preach to the prison guard after a terrible earthquake	Acts 16:31
Paul in Athens at the Areopagus	Paul preaches the gospel in the Athenian culture that has no knowledge of the God of Judaism	Acts 17:22-35
Paul to Ephesian Elders	Remain faithful in spite of false teachers and persecution	Acts 20:17-35
Paul to a crowd at Jerusalem	Paul's statement of his conversion and his mission to the Gentiles	Acts 22:1-21
Paul to Sanhedrin	Paul's defense declaring himself a Pharisee and roman citizen	Acts 23:1-6
Paul's defense before Felix in Caesarea	Paul proclaims his righteousness and judgment to come	Acts 24:10-21
Paul to King Agrippa	Paul's statement of his conversion and zeal for the Gospel	Acts 26:2-23
Paul to Jewish leaders in Rome	Paul's statement about his Jewish heritage	Acts 28:17-20

Note. From Kevin P. Halloran, "A List of Sermons in the Book of Acts," accessed November 4, 2022, <https://www.kevinhalloran.net/a-list-of-sermons-in-the-book-of-acts/>.

Preaching in the Spirit of Prophecy

We saw Jesus who provided a model for preaching, Paul the man who was passionate about the preaching of Jesus Christ, and Peter who surprised many with his sermon on the day of the Pentecost. In this section, we will examine the view about preaching in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Biography of Ellen White

Ellen White is an American Christian writer. She is known in the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a prophet because she received the gift of the spirit of prophecy. He received no less than 2000 visions from God. White wrote magazines and articles of around 5000 numbers and 40 books. She was one of the pioneers of the Adventist¹⁵ Church. She had a gift for speaking loud that needed no amplification.

Her Advice about Preaching

Ellen White wrote about preaching. She gave her opinion about it and took it seriously. Below we will look at her advice on the preacher's appearance, word and voice, and the length of the sermon.

Preacher's appearance. White declared that the preacher's appearance is a living sermon, as she states, "The appearance of the servant of God, out of the pulpit and in, should be that of a living preacher."¹⁶ According to her, the preacher does not just preach from the pulpit, but wherever he is, he preaches alive. The writer also emphasized the clothes to be worn to preach which should have a distinctive color. She says, "Some ministers wear a vest of a light color, while their pants are dark, or a

¹⁵Arthur L. White, 'Who was Ellen G. White,' accessed February 5, 2023, <https://whiteestate.org/about/egwbio/#faq797ba558-8707-4946-8906-27e67df7252a>.

¹⁶Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:446.

dark vest and light pants, with no taste or orderly arrangement of the dress upon the person when they come before the people. These things are being preached to the people.”¹⁷ Accordingly, it is not only about the person who preaches but also the clothes he wears.

The word and voice. The word and voice have special importance in preaching. The success of the sermon depends on them. White clearly said that the message that was in Jesus was to be preached for Jesus but not for the preacher.¹⁸ He does not persuade people to follow him, he persuades people to follow Jesus. He will also emphasize learning to make sounds from the abdominal muscles.¹⁹ The preacher should speak slowly, clearly, and firmly. The author stated that Jesus is exemplary in the use of words and sounds in the sermon. As she says, “Jesus is our example. His voice was musical and was never raised in high, strained notes while he was speaking to the people. He did not speak so rapidly that His words were crowded one upon another, in such a way that it made it difficult to understand Him.”²⁰ Listening to the voice of Jesus was like listening to music and all preachers should learn this.

Gesture. According to White, some gestures should not be done on the pulpit. This is how she says it, “They do not occupy the sacred desk as actors, but as teachers of solemn truths. There are also fanatical ministers, who, in attempting to preach Christ, storm, halloo, jump up and down, and pound the desk before them, as if this

¹⁷White, *Testimonies*, 2:610.

¹⁸Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980), 1:157.

¹⁹Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), 90.

²⁰Ellen G. White, “Voice and Diction,” in *Pastoral Ministry* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, 1995), 199.

bodily exercise profited anything.”²¹ The pulpit is a place to preach the truth, not a place to play stories or movies. A humble attitude is required from the preacher when he appears in front of the people.²²

Length of the sermon. The sermon should not be too long. The author confirmed it, as she said, “When a discourse is too long, the last part of the preaching detracts from the force and interest of that which has preceded it. Do not wander, but come right to the point.”²³ The length of the sermon needs to be balanced accordingly.

Views of Preaching in the Spirit of Prophecy

There were also some pieces of advice that White gave that are related to preaching, these are the Holy Spirit, the study of the Scriptures, prayer, preaching that is Christ-centered, visiting the sheep, practical religion, inappropriate illustrations, and the appeal at the end of the sermon. The Holy Spirit plays an important role in preaching. As White says, “When Christ speaks through the minister; the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of the listeners to receive the Word.”²⁴ The author insisted that before the word of God was preached, it must have been experienced. She emphasizes also that preachers should not neglect the study of the Bible. Listeners are waiting for something simple and nourishing and scriptural. The preparation of a sermon needs fervent prayer from the preacher. As she says “He is to be often on his knees in

²¹Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1952), 640.

²²Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1: 648, 649.

²³Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1962), 311.

²⁴White, “Voice and Diction,” 187.

prayer, asking for heavenly wisdom, that He may strengthen ‘the things which remain, that are ready to die.’”²⁵

Sermon preaching must be Christ-centered. The salvation of every soul is the theme of every sermon. As White confirms, “there are among their hearers many who need a plain explanation of the steps requisite in conversion.”²⁶

White stresses also the importance of visiting the sheep. She says “But if the shepherd does not visit his flock, he knows not their condition, he knows not what truths to set before them, nor what is appropriate to their case,”²⁷ White insists that “practical religion should have a place in every discourse.”²⁸

White warned the preachers about using inappropriate illustrations. The good illustrations are Christ’s figures and illustrations. The book says, “His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning,”²⁹

Preachers should call for obedience and admonish disobedience. The sermon is not only to nourish the mind but also to feed the heart. As White mentions, “the preaching of the Word should appeal to the intellect and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The minister’s utterances, to be effectual, must reach the hearts of his hearers,”³⁰ White points out the need to doing an appeal in the sermon. She says “decisions are being made, but too often the minister has not the

²⁵ White, “Voice and Diction,” 189.

²⁶Ibid., 191.

²⁷Ibid., 192.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 194.

³⁰Ibid., 196.

spirit and power of the message, and no direct appeals are made to those who are trembling in the balance.”³¹

Preaching of Other Christian Authors

Many writers have expressed their views on preaching. The three authors we mention are Jeff Magruder³² who talked about the importance of introduction and conclusion, Daniel Akin³³ who explained why illustration is needed and Haddon W. Robinson³⁴ who talked about the type of sermon called “expository preaching.” Let’s talk about it below.

Jeff Magruder

Dr. Jeff Magruder is a Bible teacher and Church leader. He studied preaching and published articles on it. He talked about the importance of an introduction and conclusion. The introduction of the sermon is very important. During the beginning of the sermon, the preacher should get the attention of all church members. In this way, using interesting sentences or important questions is the key. Then, all preachers should need good humor. They should preach with assurance and hope and in an enthusiastic manner. After that, Magruder says to go directly to the Scriptures. This is the center of the sermon. All sermons should be based on the Scripture Reading. Magruder insists on the use of an interesting story in the sermon. A successful conclusion should be a surprise, brief and straightforward. The success of a sermon

³¹White, “Voice and Diction,” 197.

³²Jeff Magruder, “*How to Win Your Audience’s Attention for Your Sermon?*” accessed October 10, 2019, <https://www.sagu.edu/thoughthub/6-attention-getting-sermon-introduction-techniques>.

³³Daniel Akin, “12 Reasons for Using Sermon Illustrations,” accessed October 15, 2019, <https://factsandtrends.net/2014/02/13/12-reasons-for-using-sermon-ilustrations/>.

³⁴Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001), 256.

depends on closing words. No matter how good the introduction and explanation are, if the conclusion is not well prepared, it has a huge impact on the audience. The author also suggests a few ways to conclude. Each sermon needs to be summarized in two or three points. It is also possible to make a call at the conclusion or end it with a story that was started in the introduction. The conclusion is very important in ending the sermon. Preparation of closing words requires careful attention. The author provides some suggestions for the conclusion.

Daniel Akin

Daniel Akin was the sixth president of the South-eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the College at South-eastern Wake Forest, North Carolina. He wrote several books and articles about preaching. He talked about why the use of illustrations is necessary. Illustrations are easy to remember. Illustrations hold interest. It brings people back to the message line. Illustrations make people want to dedicate themselves to God. When listening to stories, the mind is at ease. It helps people understand what they should do by applying what the Bible says in their lives. It can visualize the different changes to each one to other people. Illustrations convince people of the truth of the Bible. The use of experiments and living stories creates concentration for the people. Illustrations move hearts and emotions to make decisions. It is thus easier for children even for adults to memorize Bible stories.

Haddon W. Robinson

Dr. Robinson is an American writer. He wrote a book called *Biblical Preaching*. In this book, there is an explanation of a type of sermon called an “expository sermon.” It means that a sermon should have one big idea including one subject and one compliment. It is based on a passage from the Bible. As the author

defines it: “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers,”³⁵ The major work of Robinson is founded in ten stages in the development of expository messages. As he states,

1. Selecting the Passage, 2 Studying the Passage. 3 Discovering the Exegetical Idea. 4. Analyzing the Exegetical Idea. 5. Formulating the Homiletical Idea. 6. Determining the Sermon's Purpose. 7. Deciding How to Accomplish This Purpose. 8. Outlining the Sermon. 9. Filling in the Sermon Outline, and 10. Preparing the Introduction and Conclusion.³⁶

The author is convinced that expository preaching is the best and authorized by God. He confirmed it as the “type of preaching that best carries the force of divine authority.”³⁷

This section has shown that the preaching of Noah and Jonah in the Old Testament and the preaching of Jesus, Peter, and Paul in the New Testament form the biblical and theological foundation for this research. In the Old Testament, Noah, the tireless preacher, had a special relationship with God. He applied the message he preached in his life. He led a life of obedience to God. He preached the word enthusiastically, even when people laughed at him. Jonah, the fleeing preacher, received a special call from God to preach in Nineveh. Because he feared that the people of Nineveh would repent and God would reverse His decision, he fled to Tarshish. When his spirit returned, he went back to preach the word of God in Nineveh. As a result, the people repented and God did not destroy them. In the New

³⁵Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 21.

³⁶Ibid., 165.

³⁷Ibid., 20.

Testament, Jesus is the preacher par excellence. His life, message, and teachings were extraordinary. Jesus was inductive nature. He preached the kingdom of God and “preach good news (*euangelizō*) to the poor” and “proclaim (*kerussō*) liberty to the captives.”³⁸ Peter, an extraordinary preacher, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached Jesus Christ boldly. Many people repented and were baptized at that time. Paul, an ardent preacher, received a call to preach the word of God to the Gentiles. His life, message, and teachings were remarkable. He preached the gospel with enthusiasm and never grew weary. Paul was deductive by nature. According to tradition, this apostle was decapitated for preaching Jesus. In summary, this chapter shows the biblical and theological foundation of preaching. It presents Ellen White's advice about preaching and some views on the preaching of Christian authors are discussed also. In the next chapter, we will see the description of the local settings of the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church.

³⁸ David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck, “Preaching,” *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible (EDB)* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1079.

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL SETTINGS

Description of the Urban Commune of Ambohidratrimo and Its Context

The urban commune of Ambohidratrimo is located in the province of Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. The urban commune of Ambohidratrimo is delimited as follows: to the North: the rural commune of Ivato. To the South: the rural commune of Iarinarivo. To the East: the rural commune of Talatamaty. To the West: the rural commune of Anosiala.

Geographical Context

Geographically speaking, Ambohidratrimo is located between the following coordinates: latitude of 18°49'25.52" south, a longitude of 47°26'48.70" east, and an altitude of 1352 m.¹ The Urban Commune of Ambohidratrimo is part of the region of Analamanga, district of Ambohidratrimo. The Urban Commune of Ambohidratrimo is the city of the district of Ambohidratrimo. It has an area of 1238 Km² with nine Fokontany² (Ambohidratrimo, Atsimomparihy, Antohibe, Soamananety, Ampanataovana, Ambohitsiroa, Ambovo, Ambohidehilahy, Ambodisaha). Ambohidratrimo has situated 14km from the capital (Tananarive is the capital of Madagascar) and follows the national road number four.

¹From the monograph of the urban commune of Ambohidratrimo 2020.

²Fonkotany is a small area within a commune.

We see below, in Table 3, the distance and the surface between the 9 Fokontany around the commune of Ambohidratrimo.³

Table 3. The Interval between the Fokontany and the Commune of Ambohidratrimo

Fokontany	Distance (Km)	Surface (Km ²)
Ambohidratrimo	0	0,94
Atsimomparihy	1	0,65
Antohibe	3	1,57
Soamananety	2	0,71
Ampanataovana	4,5	2,04
Ambohitsiroa	3	2,56
Ambovo	3	2,69
Ambohidehilahy	3,5	0,60
Ambodisaha	2,5	0,62
Total		12,38

According to Table 3, we can say that the Fokontany of Atsimomparihy is the closest to the capital of Ambohidratrimo, at a distance of 1km and the Fokontany of Ampanataovana is the farthest from the capital (4.5km).

Demographic Context

The population of the urban commune of Ambohidratrimo is estimated at 19,308 according to the 2000 census. The total population of Ambohidratrimo district is around 495,000 which 235,127 of them are men and 259,873 are women. The active population is 198,000.⁴

³Note. From “the monograph of the urban commune of Ambohidratrimo 2020.”

⁴Ministère de l’Intérieur et de la Décentralisation, *Renseignement sur le district d’Ambohidratrimo*, PDF file, n.d., <http://www.i-tantsoroka.mg/dossier/districtmonographie/RESUMEMONOGRAPHIE.pdf>.

Economic Context

According to the information from the Ministry of Interior and Energy Distribution, the economic activity of the Ambohidratrimo district is divided into three parts: the "primary sector" represents 50%, i.e. most of the inhabitants live in agriculture. The Malagasy are rice farmers. In terms of livestock: cattle, pigs, chickens, broilers, and fish are the most common in the community. The "secondary sector" is 35%, meaning that there are people who live in the industrial sector. There is a large fabric manufacturing company in the commune of Anosiala in the district of Ambohidratrimo that employs more than 1000 people. There are also companies involved in building construction and related equipment. Some companies deal with animal feed, hotels, and those that deal with transportation. Some companies deal with technology, professional training, and many private schools and so on. The "tertiary sector" includes 15% of the people who live from trade and various services. These include wholesalers and retailers, lenders (various banks), those involved in the maintenance of historical sites such as the Royal Palace, and various entertainment and public service organization. Many members of our church live in rural areas, which means that they make their living by farming and raising livestock. Some of them are the leaders of the Church.

Historic Context

According to history, Ambohidratrimo exists since the time of royalty. It is the capital of the municipality of Ambohidratrimo. Ambohidratrimo is one of the 12 hills of Imerina (Imerina is the central part of Madagascar). King Ratrimo was in charge of Ambohidratrimo. The land was named after him at that time (Ambohidratrimo means the village of Ratrimo). Ratrimo was a wise leader because he placed the land in a high place and he dug a 4m hole around it to protect it. What makes the land of

Ambohidratrimo unique is the presence of the "Rova" which is a monument that shows its presence in history. In this "Rova", you can see the tombs of the successive kings who ruled the kingdom of Ambohidratrimo.

Socio-Cultural Context

Malagasy is famous for 'kabary' or "speech," which is delivered on special occasions such as a wedding or death or other occasions. The "kabary" is studied because it is combined with the knowledge of Malagasy eloquence. Like a "speech," the "kabary" has an introduction, an explanation, and a conclusion. The "Mpikabary" or the one who gives the "speech" has a good command of his speech.

To sum up, we have seen above the description of the local settings and their context. Knowing the contexts mentioned above can help the preacher choose the subject to preach, the words to say and the illustration to use in the preaching. Gaines confirms "It will be a great day when the preacher asks himself these questions: What are the people whom I am trying to reach? What are their religious backgrounds? What kind of music do they prefer? What is their level of education? What are their predominant cultural customs? What do they like and dislike?"⁵ Now, we will turn to the information of the SDA Ambohidratrimo church.

Information about the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Ambohidratrimo

Church Members

Within the information from the elder of the Adventist Church in Ambohidratrimo, the number of active members is 90. The inactive members are 30.

⁵Steve Gaines, "The Setting of the Evangelistic Sermon," in *Preaching Evangelistically: Proclaiming the Saving Message of Jesus*, ed. Al Fasol, Roy Fish, Steve Gaines, Ralph Douglas West (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 3-4.

The total number of members is about 120 or a little more. Women are the majority in the church (63%) and men are (37%). The number of children under 10 years old is 30. In terms of education, those with a master's degree are 10 and the rest is in the level of secondary school (70%). But most of the youth are university students (50%). The church has also 2 midwives and a nurse. The majority of members operate in the private sector (workers, service provision, sales) and have a fairly high entrepreneurial culture.

History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Ambohidratrimo

According to the historical crosscheck, the Adventist Church of Ambohidratrimo was founded in 1959 by Dr. Rambeloson Joseph and his wife. The first baptism was sister Rambolaarisoa which took place in 1963. The surrounding churches that came out from the church of Ambohidratrimo (sub-church) were the following: Andakana, Mahitsy, Ankazobe, Iarinarivo, Mandriambero, Alatsinainy, Manohiadanana, and Ambohimanarina. In 1988, the building of the old church was built which could accommodate about 100 members (50 m below the current church). The construction was financed by Dr. Rambeloson's family itself. In 1999, a series of spiritual revivals led for three Sabbaths by Dr. Rambeloson's eldest son nicknamed "Dédé"; which more or less forced the church to leave the Central Federation of Madagascar. This caused the division of the church into two parts: Many followed the movement called "Disciples of Christ" led by "Dédé" himself who teaches the establishment of the "house church". Almost the rest were faithful to the world's Adventist system. In January 2000, the current church building was built (14m x 8m). In June 2010, the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the construction of the church took place.

**Lay Leaders and Issues on Preaching
at the Seventh-day Adventist Church
of Ambohidratrimo**

Before we get into the Ambohidratrimo SDA issue, we present in Table 4 the details of the Ambohidratrimo district.

Table 4. Statistical Report for the Third Quarter of Ambohidratrimo District 2022.

Name of the Church	Status	Members 'number of the last quarter	Number of baptisms	Total of the members	Sabbath school member	Leaders 'number
1- Ambohidratrimo	O	126		126	64	5
2- Alakamisy	O	168	24	192	78	3
3- Iarinarivo	O	32		32	17	2
4- Ivoanjo	O	92		92	65	2
5- Zanakiiifananona	O	53		53	44	2
6- Ankazo	O	31		31	25	3
7- Mangasoavina	O	39	1	40	22	2
8- Manjakavarandrano	C	46		46	21	1
9- Ampahibe	C	25	2	27	15	1
10- Andranomasina	C	48		48	32	1
11- Ankodondona	C	34		34	22	1
12- Mangaikiniavo	C	39	1	40	21	1
13- Miandrizarra	C	41	1	42	23	1
14- Bemasoandro	C	23		23	15	1
15- Ambohibary	C	20		20	15	1
16- Antanantanana	C	24		24	17	1
17- Merinavaratra	SSB	12		12	12	1
18- Ambodivona	SSB	10	4	14	10	1
19- Ambanimaso	SSB	11	2	13	11	1
TOTAL		874	35	909	529	31

Note. O=Organized church; C=Company; SSB=Sabbath School Branch

From Table 4, the statistical report of the third quarter of 2022 (which was sent to the secretary of the Malagasy Central Conference on October 10, 2022)) presents the number of the church (19), the total of the members (909), the Sabbath school members (529) and the leaders of the Church (31). The Ambohidratrimo district of the SDA Church is the 50th new district of the Central Malagasy Conference. The SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo is one of the 19 churches that make up the district of the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo. Seven of these churches have the status of an organized church, while twelve are sub-churches or a company, which means that the church is not led by an elder, but by a church director. I was appointed to be the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Ambohidratrimo district in March 2022, which means that I have been in charge of this district for about 7 months. The number of all members of this district is 909, the Sabbath School members is 529 and the leaders of the church are 31, of whom 19 are elders and 12 are church directors. It should be noted that 7 of the 19 churches are organized churches and 12 of the 19 are small churches or companies. There are more companies compared to organized churches. All the members of these small churches are from rural areas. They lead the church. They teach and preach. Many of these rural leaders have not gone very far in education. The "intellectual level" is low. This has an impact on teaching and preaching. They depend on the little knowledge that they acquire about it. Most members enjoy listening to the sermons but if it is not well-explained, it would have a great impact on the spiritual side of the members.

The Ambohidratrimo SDA Church has the status of an organized church. The number of elders who lead and manage the church is five. 126 members worship there and 64 are members of the Sabbath School. As a local pastor for seven months, my personal observation of the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church is that when I observed the

preaching style of the lay leaders of this church, I realized that they had problems in this aspect of preaching. The church board has decided that the elders and the department directors are allowed to preach in the congregation. They are called the lay leaders of the church. These leaders are divided into two groups: some are educated (about 40% with a bachelor's and Master's degree), and there are those who have studied but have not gone very far (about 60%). First, educated lay leaders use their general knowledge to preach. This often turns into a deep, philosophical sermon that people do not understand. Some mix two different national languages, for example, Malagasy (mother tongue) and French (colonial language), which is used to say that they are educated. Second, lay leaders who have a lower level of knowledge try to share the word of God according to their ability and understanding. They often make people laugh to enhance the sermon. In addition, there is also informal information from members of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo. On Saturday, November 5, 2022, I had a meeting with the church members and asked them some questions about the preaching. Fifty-six members participated in the questions that were asked and their ages ranged from 15 to 65. Of the 56 members who participated, 24 were men and 32 were women.

Tables 5 to 8 present the demographic information of the participants.

Table 5. Age

Range	Number	Percentage
1. 15 to 25	19	33,92%
2. 26 to 35	11	19,64%
3. 36 to 45	7	12,5%
4. 46 to 55	6	10,71%
5. 56 to 65	8	14,28%
6. Above 65	5	8,92%

Young people aged 15-25 were the most likely to have participated.

Table 6. Level of Education

Level of education	Number	Percentage
1. Secondary school	41	73,21%
2. Undergraduate degree	12	21,42%
3. Graduate degree	3	5,35%

Most of the participants were at secondary school level (73,21%).

Table 7. Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
1. Male	24	42,85%
2. Female	32	57,14%

More women than men answered the question (57,14%).

Table 8. The Marital Status

Marital status	Number	Percentage
1. Single	18	32,14%
2. Married	31	55,35%
3. Widowed	7	12,5%

Half of the participants were married (55,35%).

Tables 9 to 15 present the responses to questions addressed to the participants.

Table 9. Interest of Church Program

List of program	Number of participant	Percentage
1. Sabbath school program	12	21,42%
2. Sermon program	44	78,57%

Members are more interested in the sermon program than the Sabbath School program. 78.57% of the 56 members are more interested in sermon services.

Table 10. Sermon Impact on Spirituality

Response	Number of participant	Percentage
1. Yes	56	100%
2. No	00	

All of them (100%) said that the sermon they listen to has an impact on their spirituality. They become strong in faith.

Table 11. Sermon Impact on Faith

Response	Number of participant	Pourcentage
1. Yes	56	100%
2. No	00	

56 of 56 (100%) says that sermon has increased their faith to be able to face everyday life challenge. They become active in God's work.

Table 12. Sermon Impact on daily life

Response	Number of participation	Pourcentage
1. Yes	56	100%
2. No	00	

56 of 56 (100%) says that sermon gives them strength to face their daily life. It encourages them to face the problems that arise in life.

Table 13. Sermon Impact on Point of Views

Response	Number of participation	Percentage
1. Yes	55	98.21%
2. No	1	1.78%

98.21% of the 56 members compared the sermons of the pastor and the lay leaders. It means that they are interested in preaching.

Table 14. Members Dissatisfaction with the Leader's Sermon

Response	Number of participant	Percentage
1. Yes	00	
2. No	56	100%

All 56 of 56 members (100%) said that they are not satisfied with the sermons that they hear at church. Maybe, there are many reasons for this.

Table 15. Reasons of Members Sermon Unsatisfaction

Members reasons	Number of participant	Percentage
1. The sermon is not interesting	1	1,78%
2. Not enough preparation	25	44,64%
3. Sleepy	5	8,92%
4. It's too long	22	39,28%
5. Other reasons (please be precise)	3	5,35%
The sermon is not encouraging.		
Preachers used too many chapters and verses.		
The topic is unclear.		

Why are the members of the Church not satisfied with the sermons heard in the church? There are several reasons for this: one of 56 members (1,78%) said that the sermon is not interesting, 25 of 56 members (44,64%) confirmed that the preachers were not prepared enough, 5 of 56 members (8,92%) said that the sermon put them to sleep, 22 of 56 members (39,28%) expressed their opinion and said that the sermon was too long, while 3 of 56 members (5,35%) expressed their opinion: one said that the sermon became a stick to beat the members with, the second person said that there were too many references used and the last one said that the topic to be discussed was not clear.

To summarize, my observation is that the leaders of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo face a real problem with preaching. On the one hand, learned and erudite leaders use their knowledge when they preach. But their sermon becomes so deep and philosophical that most church members cannot understand it. The sermon does not focus on Jesus. On the other hand, leaders with little knowledge try to explain the Scriptures in their way. Sometimes, however, their sermons do not follow the rule of preaching. They only make people laugh. Then, according to informal information from members of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo, they said that they are not interested in the sermons they hear in church because the preachers are not prepared enough. Sometimes the sermon is so long that it puts them to sleep. Some people said that there are too many chapters and verses of the Bible that have been used. The topic is not clear and the sermon is not encouraging. We will see in the next chapter the strategy for dealing with this preaching problem among church leaders.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGY TOWARD EMPOWERING LAY LEADERS IN PREACHING

We see that the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo faces a problem with preaching. Therefore, this chapter tries to give some strategies to deal with it. First, a program development will be given to empower lay leaders of the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo to develop effective preaching. Second, the program development will be implemented and evaluated.

Program Development

To empower lay leaders of the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo to develop effective preaching, I will organize the following program to realize it. The program is in the form of strategies that need to be implemented at the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo.

Seminar Conducted

To empower lay leaders of the SDA Church of Ambohidratrimo in terms of preaching, they need to be trained. The training is done in the form of a seminar. A few people meet in a place where they can talk and exchange ideas. Everyone can participate in speaking and can ask questions. The trainer does not have to sit or stand in his or her seat but can interact with the trainees. Training through seminars is an effective way to convey ideas or knowledge to people. A video projector or a table can be used. This makes it easy to take notes.

Church Board

For this lay leaders training program to be successful, it is necessary to work closely with the church committee. They will execute the program and monitor its progress. As the pastor of the church, I am both the trainer and the overall coordinator. However, it is also possible to find a professional person who has studied preaching to do the training. All decisions made in this program must be approved by the church committee. After all, raising the spirit of church members is part of their work.

Time of Preparation and Meeting

To be successful, it is necessary to plan well. For five days, during the students vacation (August), this training program will be carried out. About one year and a half of preparation is needed. The training should not be done too far or too close. It must be carefully balanced to be successful.

Place of Meeting

The church committee will look for a place to hold the meeting. As a pastor of the church and general coordinator of this program, I offer suggestions. It is best for the meeting to be held in a remote location (50 or 100 km from the main city). Places with water or sea, Wi-Fi, and greenery are preferred. This includes rooms, dining rooms, training rooms, and restrooms. The training room should be standardized so that trainees are comfortable and ready to receive the training that will be provided.

Participants

The lay leaders of the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church are: the elders, the treasurer, the church secretary, and all directors of the department. The church has eighteen departments. These leaders are especially invited to participate in this

preaching training. The church committee will be asked to prepare a special invitation card for the participants and send it on their behalf. It is earlier before the date of the training. The Church Secretary will confirm this invitation with a monthly announcement. The president of the Malagasy Central Conference and the department director of personal ministry and Sabbath School are also invited to attend this program.

Budget

The church treasurer and elders prepare the budget, but the committee decides on it. The following items should be included in the budget: the rental of the meeting place, the help provided by the church in terms of expenses and food; the preaching kit (Bible, notebook, pen, a small book summarizing the training, and a video DVD containing all that was done, a gift for the test). As a church program, this preaching training is done within the church's budget. It is also possible to appeal to church members or sponsors outside the church to support this project.

Program Conducted

This preaching training for lay leaders will take place over five days. It begins with a meditation each morning. The theme will be "the lives of famous preachers in the Bible" including Noah, Jonah, Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Their spiritual life, the message they brought and how they delivered it, their weaknesses and strengths, and the end of their lives will be examined. The length of this meditation will be at least 30 minutes. The time will be ended with a prayer. The lessons that have been learned from the lives of the preachers in the Bible are brought with the prayer for the lives of the trainees. After that, the training begins. With the main title, "Bread of Life", one topic per day will be covered, but it will be divided into two parts, morning and

evening. Here are the five topics: the first one will be about the explanation of the introduction, development, and conclusion of the sermon. The second will be about knowledge the types of sermons: The biblically thematic sermon, the narrative, the homily, and the poetic form of the sermon. The third will be especially about the gesture, Appearance, Voice, and Length of the sermon. The fourth will be the teaching on how to use illustrations in sermons. Finally, the trainer will try to examine Jesus' sermon, Peter's sermon, and Paul's sermon. At the end of each day, there is a small test where the trainees with the highest score receive a gift.

Table 16 presents the training schedule for lay leaders of Ambohidratrimo SDA Church.

Table 16. The Training Schedule for Lay Leaders of Ambohidratrimo Church

Day	Morning	Afternoon
Day 1	08:00-08:30 Meditation 1 (Noah) 08:30-08:40 Prayer session 08:40-08:50 Break 08:50-09:50 Introduction of the sermon 09:50-10:00 Break 10:00-11:00 Development	03:00-04:00 Transition 04:00-04:10 Break 04:10-05:10 Conclusion
Day 2	08:00-08:30 Meditation 2 (Jonah) 08:30-08:40 Prayer session 08:40-08:50 Break 08:50-09:50 The biblically thematic sermon 09:50-10:00 Break 10:00-11:00 The narrative	03:00-04:00 The homily 04:00-04:10 Break 04:10-05:10 The poetic sermon form
Day 3	08:00-08:30 Meditation 3 (Jesus) 08:30-08:40 Prayer session 08:40-08:50 Break 08:50-09:50 Gesture 09:50-10:00 Break 10:00-11:00 Appearance	03:00-04:00 Voice 04:00-04:10 Break 04:10-05:10 Length of the sermon
Day 4	08:00-08:30 Meditation 4 (Peter) 08:30-08:40 Prayer session 08:40-08:50 Break 08:50-09:50 Illustration and the preacher 09:50-10:00 Break 10:00-11:00 Role of illustration	03:00-04:00 Needs of illustration 04:00-04:10 Break 04:10-05:10 Example of illustration
Day 5	08:00-08:30 Meditation 5 (Paul) 08:30-08:40 Prayer session 08:40-08:50 Break 08:50-09:50 Jesus' sermon 09:50-10:00 Break 10:00-11:00 Peter's sermon	03:00-04:00 Paul's sermon 04:00-04:10 Break 04:10-05:10 Sermon example

On the first day of the training, the lay leaders receive explanations and training on how to give the introduction and conclusion of the sermon. This ensures the success of the sermon. When the introduction and conclusion are wrong, the whole sermon is wrong. There are two methods used in the sermon that the preacher

must know, namely the induction and deduction methods. The use of these two methods is related to the introduction and the concluding words. In the induction sermon method, a single point is placed in the introduction, some points are gradually introduced and explained during the presentation, and in the closing speech, all the points we want to emphasize are known. In the deductive sermon method, all the ideas we want to express and explain are placed in the introduction and they are developed in the presentation. Jesus is known for his ability to use the inductive sermon method. He goes from the particular to the general, "from the known to the unknown, from analogy to reality, from facts to faith, from life to God."¹ The method of the sermon by induction uses stories, illustrations; similes, narratives, and dialogues. Paul's apostle is known to have used the method of deduction sermon in the epistles he wrote. The preacher can also combine these two methods in his sermon. Paul used the sermon by induction when he preached to the Jews and the sermon by deduction when he preached to the Gentiles.

On the second day, we learn and train the types of sermons to be known. Among them are the biblically thematic sermon, the narrative, the homily, and the poetic sermon form. The biblically thematic sermon focuses on a text of the Bible. This text from the Bible is analyzed and explained. This type of sermon takes the form of an argument or a thematic text. In introducing the sermon, the topic to be explained is clearly stated. In explaining the sermon, begins with the central point to the general. Each point is illustrated. The concluding words should be only a few words that summarize the entire sermon. In an appeal, it is best to use the first person "you." A narrative sermon is a form of storytelling. Jesus used stories to get his

¹ Ralph L. Lewis and Gregg Lewis, *Inductive Preaching* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 196.

message across. We see this in the parables he told. Most of the books of the Bible are stories. The story contains the central theme. This is what is examined and developed in the sermon. A homily sermon is an ancient form of the sermon in which the Bible is analyzed verse by verse. This type of sermon is used in ancient synagogues. The advantage of using this type of sermon is to know the meaning of every word in the Bible. The form of the poetic sermon is found in the biblical text. Among them is the book of Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the lament of Jeremiah. The book of Psalms is filled with songs of praise and lament. To explain the book of Psalms, it is necessary to know the Hebrew way of thinking. The first point of one line is explained by the second point of the next line. Often, in the form of the poem, there is a comparison of two aspects. For example, Psalm 145:20, says, "The Lord keeps all who love him, but destroys all the wicked." The advantages of using the poetic sermon are the development of explained words and images. Preachers who are good at linguistics should find value in using this form of a sermon.

Here is an example of the exegesis of Psalm 84,

Psalm 84 may be broken down with into three major sections. Two larger units with a smaller transitional section between them. The first major section of the psalm consists of vv. 1-7 and expresses the psalmist's longing to be with God. This section begins by describing the psalmist's yearning to be with God in his temple (vv. 1-4) and concludes with a description of his journey to Zion to be with the Lord (vv. 5-7). The second main section of the psalm is found in vv. 8-9 and consists of a prayer for the king. This section may well deal with the psalmist's entrance into the temple for a festival, where prayers would have been lifted up for the king, the "anointed one" of God (Psalm 84:9). The final main section of Psalm 84 includes vv.10-12 and develops the theme that God's presence remains with those who are obedient and faithful. Throughout the psalm, there is a constant theme of the presence of God: in the psalmist's yearning for the temple, in his pilgrimage to the temple, and his awareness of God's blessing on the righteous.²

On the third day, gestures, appearance, voice, and length of the sermon will be

²Michael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basis Guide for Students and Ministers*, rev. and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.), 267,268.

studied and practiced. These elements go a long way in conveying the message of the sermon. The interest of the audience depends on the gesture, appearance, and voice used in the pulpit. If the sermon is too long, the attention is lost. The length of the sermon is discussed during training. Regarding the gesture, appearance, voice, and length of the sermon, the explanation has already been found in the previous section.

On the fourth day, we will learn and be trained on the necessity of illustration in the sermon. The use of illustrations in the sermon is very important. A sermon without an illustration is like a car without an engine. The illustration is like a little door that opens and lets air into the house. Jesus used it in his sermon. He often used things that happened in his daily life. Paul included in his sermon as an illustration of his own experience in his life. Types of illustrations that can be used in the sermon are: stories, parables, poems, proverbs, quotes, analogies, anecdotes, figures of speech, dramas, myths, object lessons, personal experiences, videos, and pictures.

On the fifth day, we will learn and train on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Peter's Sermon in Act 2, Paul's Sermon in the book of Acts, and the Epistles. Lay preachers need to know this to be imitated and modeled in the sermons that are given. The introduction, the closing words, the body of the sermon, and the appeal of each sermon will be examined.

Summary

This section explores a program development for lay leaders in Ambohidratrimo SDA Church to develop effective preaching. The program is in form of suggestions. Program training is presented to deal with the problem of lay leaders in preaching. It includes a seminar conducted, the intervention of the committee board, and other details, such as time and place of meeting, participants, and program.

The program training will be held at a special place for five days. The implementation of this program is necessary. We will see this in the next part.

Implementation of the Program

This development program mentioned above is very necessary for the success of the preaching of the lay leaders of the Ambohidratrimo church. This has been demonstrated by the seven suggestions. In this section, we will discuss the implementation of this program.

Committee Board

The church committee has decided to implement the preaching training that has been done. Only the committee organizes the program, its implementation, and follow-up. I remain a general organizer only.

Sermon Conducted

Trained church leaders are encouraged to practice by giving individual sermons. Each sermon lasts approximately 20 to 30 minutes. They can choose the topic they wish to address. They are also free to choose the type of sermon they use.

Time of Meeting

The Ambohidratrimo SDA Church lay leadership preaching program will be implemented. This will be done weekly during the worship service. The church committee will organize the distribution of the date and time for everyone to take part.

Place of Meeting

In the church, preaching is done during the time of worship. The reason is that the church is the most appropriate place to hear the word of God. After all, all

members can attend. The church does not need to look for preachers from this point on because there are already trained preachers.

Participants

Trained lay leaders participate in this preaching program. Members of the Ambohidratrimo church are invited to judge the sermon. The criteria for evaluating the sermon are listed below. Each member receives a pre-prepared sermon evaluation sheet.

Program Conducted

There are criteria for judging each sermon. These will include the introduction, presentation, and conclusion. Each one's ability to connect the previous and following ideas through the transition will also be examined. Special attention is also given to their use of illustrations. Appearance and gesture on the pulpit, voice, intonation, and length of the sermon will be specially noted. Finally, members should check the content and appeal of the sermon. A number from 1 to 10 is assigned to the sermon, and then the scores of each preacher are added together.

Table 17 shows the criteria for evaluating the sermons of lay leaders of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo.

Table 17. Evaluation Sermon Form

Criteria of Evaluation	LL1	LL2	LL3	LL4	LL5	LL6	LL7
Introduction	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Development	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Conclusion	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Transition	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illustration	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gesture	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Appearance	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Voice	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Length	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Content	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Appeal	N 1-10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	N/110	N/110	N/110	N/110	N/110	N/110	N/110

LL 1: Lay Leaders 1, N: Note, Note (1-10): Under 5 = Bad; 5 and 6 = Average; within 7 to 8 = Good; up to 8 = Very Good, 10=Excellent

Summary

This section shows the participation of lay leaders in direct preaching. It takes place in the church each week during the worship service. The length of each sermon is 20-30 minutes. Church members evaluate all the sermons they hear by filling out the sermon evaluation form. In the following section, we will examine the results of the sermons given by these lay leaders in the Ambohidratrimo SDA Church.

Evaluation of the Program

The church committee collects the sermon evaluation form that has been completed by members of the Ambohidratrimo Church. They review the scores of all lay leaders. They add up the scores of each of them. Then the church committee members evaluate the results of the sermon evaluation report. The evolution of the preaching skills of lay leaders is then known.

To sum up, this chapter treats a program development for lay leaders in Ambohidratrimo SDA Church to develop effective preaching. This program is in form of suggestions or a strategy.

The researcher suggests a program training to deal with the problem of lay leaders in preaching. It includes a seminar conducted, the intervention of the committee board, the time and place meeting, the participant, the budget, and the program conducted. The program training is held at a special place for five days. The first day of the training is focused on the introduction, development, and conclusion of the sermon. The second day is about the kinds of the sermon, including the biblically thematic sermon, the narrative, the homily, and the poetic sermon form. Douglas adds “Your congregation deserves to know whether the passage is in prose or poetry (or some of both) and whether it is in a narrative, a speech, a lament, a hymn, an oracle of woe, an apocalyptic vision, a wisdom saying, and so forth. These various types (genre) of literature have different identifying features.”³ On the third day, training is talked about how to deliver the sermon, which involves the manner of the gesture, appearance, voice, and length of the sermon. The fourth day is to study how to use an illustration adequately. And the last day is concentrated on checking the Bible about Jesus ‘sermon, Peter’s sermon, and Paul’s sermon. Finally, this program will be implemented at Ambohidratrimo SDA Church.

³ Douglas K. Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1980.), 70.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We saw in the previous chapter the strategies for dealing with the problem of preaching among lay leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Ambohidratrimo. The researcher suggested training them in preaching. This will be done in the form of a seminar. During the implementation of the program, the committee and church members will evaluate the sermon. In this last part, we will try to summarize all that has been said before, provide a conclusion and give some recommendations.

Summary

The main problem addressed in this study is the question of preaching. The preachers often go with what they know, what they understand, and what they are used to. The lay leaders of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo had this problem. Educated lay leaders use their skills and knowledge to preach. Those who have not progressed much in their education try to convince their listeners through actions and speeches. The members of the SDA Church in Ambohidratrimo said that they were not interested in and not satisfied with the sermons they heard in the church. This study showed strategies for developing the preaching skills of lay leaders. So, they will be trained in preaching. Then they will be asked to apply the training they received by giving live sermons in public. The researcher has suggested that the implementation of the program should only be done in the church. The church

members judge the sermon and the church committee evaluates the results of the sermon evaluation.

Conclusion

In terms of preaching, we say that Jesus is the model preacher. Preachers should be like Him. He had a special relationship with his Father every day. The Scriptures say that he got up as early as night and went into the desert to pray. The words he spoke were the result of his daily encounter with God. He applied the message he preached to his life. Jesus' preaching was always focused on the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. Jesus' preaching was an inductive method. Robinson relates that in the inductive method, the introduction "presents only the first point of the sermon; then, with a strong transition, each new point links to the previous one until the idea emerges in the conclusion."¹ He used examples he saw in his daily life while teaching. He is also known for his use of stories, illustrations, and personal experiences. Jesus spoke clearly, and slowly, and had a melodious voice. His teachings, and sermons, ended with a call that encouraged people to receive and enter the kingdom of heaven. To conclude, I would like to give the difference between "preaching" and "homiletics." As Hamilton says "The words preaching and homiletics are often used interchangeably, yet technically they are not identical. Preaching is the "larger" of the terms. It refers more to the total task of preparing and delivering sermons. Homiletics, on the other hand, is only one part of the total preaching task."²

¹Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 1980), 125.

² Donald L. Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 19.

Recommendations

In this last section, I will try to give ten recommendations about effective preaching to lay preachers. We see it below:

1- Effective preaching should be Christ-centered.

Every sermon must be centered on Jesus. He must be exalted in the sermon that is given. Sometimes we teach the doctrine that Jesus is hidden. So much so that people do not make decisions. Both Peter and Paul preached Jesus Christ was crucified and rose from the dead (Acts 2:36).

2- Effective preaching should be Bible-centered.

The sermon comes from the words of Christ (Rom10:17). A sermon is not a sermon if it does not come from the Bible. Lay preachers should spend a lot of time studying the Scriptures. An hour to five hours every day is necessary. Jesus used the Scriptures when he taught "you have heard", and "it is written". He understood how to memorize the words of God.

3- Effective preaching should be heart-centered.

The preacher must not only convince intellectually but also touch the heart. White points "the preaching of the Word must appeal to the intellect and impart knowledge, but it includes much more than that. The heart of the minister must reach the heart of the hearers."³ When the message is clear to the listener and his or her heart is touched, he or she is ready to decide the preacher's appeal. A lay preacher must understand how to connect the mind, heart, emotions, and desires in his sermon.

4- Effective preaching should be persuasive.

The preacher must preach persuasively. The disciples of Jesus preached the

³Ellen G. White, *The Voice in Speech and Song* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1988), 274.

word of God with courage and conviction. The preacher must not have any doubt. They must preach the word with enthusiasm and zeal. The sermon must have power. Jesus taught to the people as a man who has an authority, not as the Pharisees (Matt 7:19).

5- Effective preaching should use illustrations.

The use of an illustration promotes the success of the sermon. A sermon without an illustration is like a car without wheels. Both Jesus and Paul used illustrations in their teachings and sermons. They drew them from their daily lives and their own experiences. The preacher should try to find a good and appropriate illustration that fits the sermon he is giving. For each point that will be discussed, there should be an appropriate illustration.

6- Effective preaching should use an adequate introduction and conclusion.

It is necessary to understand how to make the introduction and closing words of the sermon. After preparing all the ideas that will be explained, the introduction and the conclusion are to be made. Two methods can be used for this, the method of a sermon by induction and the method of the sermon by deduction. If you use the method of a sermon by induction, only one point is mentioned in the introduction, while in the deduction sermon method, all points are mentioned until the main point. Jesus was an inductive nature.

7- Effective preaching should use simple language.

The preacher should try to speak in the common language of the people when preaching. It is not the mixture of several types of speech that makes the sermon better, but the use of simple and clear words that can be understood by everyone, even children. The sermon is not a praise of skill and knowledge, but a simple and clear

presentation of the truth of God's word. Jesus used language that people knew and showed the truth of God's words with simplicity.

8- Effective preaching should use fervent appeal at the end of the sermon.

When the audience understands the teachings and their hearts, emotions, and desires are touched, they move on to decision-making. Every sermon should end with a fervent call. Jesus appealed to people to receive, believe, and follow Him. Peter's sermon contained a call to repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38). Paul and Silas made also an appeal to believe in and follow Jesus (Acts 16:31).

9- Effective preaching should search the need of the audience.

On earth, Jesus went around doing good (Acts 10:38) and teaching the kingdom of God. He connected and mingled with all people, won their hearts, and understood what they needed. Lay preachers should be able to match their sermons to the needs of the audience. Paul also interacted with the people and understood what they needed.

10- Effective preaching should demonstrate God's spirit and power.

Paul appreciated the Thessalonians believers for accepting the gospel with "power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction" (1 Thess 1:5). The preacher is to preach the word of God in power and the Holy Spirit. Lay preachers must be filled with the Holy Spirit when they preach. It is necessary to ask the Holy Spirit before preaching. When Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he stood up to preach in (Acts 2). Three thousand people agreed to be baptized that day (Acts 2:41). There is more power in preaching that is led by the Spirit of God.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
CORRESPONDENCE



FIANGONANA
ADVANTISTA
MITANDRINA NY
ANDRO FAHAFITO
AMBOHIDRATRIMO

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To : Pastor JIMISON Josoa Jacquot

Date : 27th March 2022.

On behalf of SDA church Ambohidratrimo, I write to notify you that the church board voted that you can proceed with your research project entitled :

**A STRATEGY TO EMPOWER LAY LEADERS TO DEVELOP
EFFECTIVE PREACHING among SDA church of Ambohidratrimo in
Madagascar.**

The church has given you permission of using our local church and its membership for the purpose of your research.

We wish you God's blessings as you work on your research project.

CHURCH ELDER

RAKOTOMAMONJY Grégoire



APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the questionnaire addressed to the participants in Tables 9 to 15:

1. What interests you most about the following church program?
2. Does the sermon you hear in the church affect your spirituality?
3. Does the sermon increase your faith?
4. Does the sermon give you the strength to face your daily life?
5. Do you compare the sermons of your Church leaders with those of your pastor?
6. Are you satisfied with the sermons of the leaders of your Church?
7. If not, why do you say that?

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2005-2007 District Pastor- Ankavandra, Zone Menabe
Central Malagasy Conference of SDA Church

2007 District Pastor- Bejofo, Zone Ambatondrazaka
Central Malagasy Conference of SDA Church

2007-2010 District Pastor- Amparafaravola, Zone Ambatondrazaka
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2010-2013 District Pastor- Mananara, Zone Analajorofo
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