

Paedagogia Homiletica Viatorum. **A pedagogy of the road for African Christian preaching**

Cas Wepener
Stellenbosch University, South Africa
cwepener@sun.ac.za

Abstract

The four movements of the “Lukan liturgy” on the road to Emmaus, specifically the gathering, word, table and sending, are used to develop route markers for a homiletical pedagogy of the road for Africa. An argument is advanced for a special kind of contact between lecturer and students that takes seriously a variety of epistemologies and ontologies; for prioritising listening to speaking; for a pedagogy that serves a postcolonial imagination; and lastly, for a teleological orientation that works with an anthropology of desire and preaching as a Christopraxis event.

Key words

Homiletics; preaching; pedagogy; teaching; Africa; South Africa

1. On the road¹

It happens every day across Africa. Two people walking along the road talking about recent events. Events that upset them. A stranger joins them. They do not recognise this stranger. He asks them what they are discussing. Rather upset, they tell this Stranger about a prophet of God, mighty in word and deed, who was executed. They had hoped that this prophet who was executed was the one to free them of all the shackles they must bear on the continent, but it is already the third day since the death of the prophet. To top everything, women came and told them that this prophet’s grave is

1 This article is based on a “Commissioned paper” delivered at the inaugural conference of the African Homiletics Society in May 2023, Ogbomosho, Nigeria. An earlier version of this article was published in the non-accredited *Journal of the African Homiletics Society*.

empty and that angels told them that the prophet is alive. The Stranger then responds, asking them if they do not believe, believe that the anointed One had to suffer to reach His glory? As they continue walking, the Stranger interprets Scripture for them. When they arrived at their destination, in the spirit of ubuntu, they insist that He stay with them saying: “Stay with us, as it is almost evening and they day is over.” The Stranger accepts their hospitality, enters the house and at the table this guest becomes the host when He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks, and shares it. As He does this, their eyes open and they recognise Him. Immediately He disappears. They look at each other, saying that their hearts warmed when this Man spoke to them and interpreted Scripture. Then they immediately get up to tell other people that the Lord is risen, what happened on the road, and how their eyes were opened as He broke the bread.

The Road to Emmaus is a well-known Lukan narrative. The account beautifully encapsulates a classical liturgy or worship service with its clearly distinguishable movements and elements. It starts with the first movement, the Call to Worship or Gathering, as at first it is two and then three who are gathered. And, importantly, they are specifically Christologically gathered in the presence of the risen Christ amid their troubles. Then we have the second movement, what I will call the liturgy of the Word, namely Jesus working with Scripture, here specially the prophets and engaging in proclamation – proclamation that the hearers later report had warmed their hearts. There is also the liturgical element of prayer when they request the Lord at the centre of this story to stay with them as it is almost night. The third movement is the movement to the table, where Jesus engages in the eucharistic fraction of taking, blessing, breaking, and sharing. It is during these actions that the eyes of those present are opened. This is also the moment that led to the fourth movement of this Lukan liturgy, namely the Sending. This is a sending that spills over to the liturgy after the liturgy, or the liturgy of life.²

This Lukan account is a four-fold liturgy that happened en route as a *leitourgia viatorum*, a liturgy of the road, a liturgy that is steeped in wisdom

2 Niek Schuman, “Vertrekpunten,” in *De weg van de liturgie* edited by Paul Oskamp & Niek Schuman, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 23; Cas Wepener, *Aan tafel met Jesus* (Wellington: Bybelkor 2010), 21–29.

for pedagogy. I want to use each on the four movements of the Liturgy of the Road to Emmaus, namely Gathering, Word, Table and Sending, to develop route markers for a pedagogy for homiletics in Africa. I start with the gathering.

2. Gathering

When a Homiletics lecturer enters the lecture room, she gathers with students. The mode in which this is done is fundamental for any homiletical pedagogy. The first concept I want to use to explain how I view the pedagogical position of homiletics lecturers in Africa, I borrow from the Brazilian postcolonial liturgist Claudio Carvalhaes. Carvalhaes³ uses the term “with-ness” to describe how prayer and liturgy should be conducted as postcolonial practices. I want to add that, like prayer, a pedagogy for Homiletics in our various African contexts should also be implemented in a state of “with-ness”. According to Carvalhaes, people praying in liturgy are constantly reorientated in the world. Prayer as participation in liturgy strongly impacts on people’s outlook towards the world. Thus, according to him, it is important to explicitly worship in solidarity with those in pain in the world. The liturgical adage *lex orandi lex credendi lex vivendi* should, according to Carvalhaes, not be approached in a linear fashion, always starting with the law of prayer (*lex orandi*). Liturgists will do well to start with *lex vivendi*, the lived experience within the quotidian lives of worshippers and only then move to *lex orandi*.

In postcolonial liturgy that is performed in with-ness with those in pain in the world there is a simultaneity of *lex-orandi-credendi-vivendi*. Carvalhaes writes: “that is why praying is such a troubling act: because we act and are acted upon, word and performance giving shape to my soul, marking my body, disturbing my mind, moving my emotions, challenging my allegiances, changing my faith, reinventing my life.”⁴

3 Claudio Carvalhaes, *Praying with every heart. Orienting our lives to the wholeness of the world* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2021), 5; Claudio Carvalhaes, *Liturgies from below* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2020); Claudio Carvalhaes, *What’s worship got to do with it?* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018).

4 Carvalhaes, *Praying with every heart*, 21.

I want to argue that a homiletical pedagogy should start with the homiletics lecturer who is explicitly teaching in with-ness with the lived realities of his or her students – thus a pedagogy from below. This is not a new insight and classical texts on pedagogy such as “Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education” start with the very basic principle of contact between faculty and students.⁵

In postcolonial African contexts I believe this should go much deeper than mere contact between the lecturer and the students, and that there is no longer a place for an aloof homiletical sage on the stage in the teaching platforms of our faculties and seminaries. Whilst teaching, the homiletics lecturer should embody a “spirituality of liminality” and be open to receive a so-called “second naïveté” when engaging with students. This is my first route marker towards a pedagogy for homiletics in Africa, and it has to do with the person or identity of the lecturer himself. I will be wasting our time today if I do not start with the identity of the lecturer, as this is the foundation stone on which the rest of the homiletical pedagogy is built. How we gather for worship on a Sunday, the quality of the *koinonia* or the absence thereof in that very first moment of encounter, represents the foundation for everything that is to follow in the liturgy.

We preach who we are. The same holds true for teaching in the lecture hall and that we teach who we are. There is the well-known joke in the Reformed tradition, namely that the way in which a preacher enters the pulpit tells you a lot about her faith and theology and what could be expected in the sermon. The same holds true for teaching, as the mere way in which I enter a lecture hall, the tone in which I speak and how I interact with the students or don’t interact at all, is an embodiment of my personality, my character and my spirituality, my own theology in general and my theology of preaching in particular, also my operative teaching anthropology, which influences my pedagogy.⁶

5 Arthur W. Chikering & Zelda F. Gamson, “Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education.” *AAHE Bulletin* no. 3 (1987), 2.

6 Stephen Farris, “Exegesis of the self” in *The new interpreter’s handbook of preaching*, edited by Paul S. Wilson et al (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008), 267–269; André Resner, “Character.” in *The new interpreter’s handbook of preaching* edited by Paul S. Wilson (Nashville: Abingdon 2008), 225–227.

We are all familiar with the core metaphors for preachers, namely a herald, storyteller and pastor, and how our association with one of these metaphors influences our practices as preachers.⁷ One would be able to formulate similar metaphors for the Homiletics lecturer. Who I am is part and parcel of my Homiletics pedagogy and when teaching Homiletics in a postcolonial and academic ecumenical (South) African setting such as Stellenbosch, the lecturer must embody very specific qualities. In this specific regard, I believe a lecturer should embody a “spirituality of liminality.”⁸

The concept of liminality derives from the Latin word *limen*, which means a threshold and was used within the context of rites of passage.⁹ It refers to a border-crossing situation, the liminal space in which a child, for example, finds himself during an initiation ritual in which he is no longer a boy and not yet a man. I argue that we need Homiletics lecturers who are on the threshold, and who can remain present in that difficult liminal space, and not all too quickly arrive at conclusions and answers, but at first just remain in the in-between space with the students. For this she will need what Rick Osmer¹⁰ calls “a spirituality of presence”, which entails priestly listening, specifically listening to the students. This is a form of *spiritualitas viatorum* or a spirituality of the road. It is a spirituality that attempts to embody a pedagogy that seeks to go beyond either a teacher-centred approach or a learner-centred approach to teaching preaching but is more attuned with what Long and Tisdale¹¹ call a learning-centred methodology. This methodology is akin to Troeger and Tisdale’s¹² “exercised-centred” pedagogy and their emphasis on the integration of theory and practice in

7 Thomas G. Long, *The witness of preaching* (Louisville, KY: WJK 2004), 18–45.

8 Cas Wepener, “Burning incense for a focus group discussion. A spirituality of liminality for doing liturgical research in an African context from an emic perspective.” *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 19 no. 2 (2015): 271–291.

9 Arnold Van Gennep, *The rites of passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Victor W. Turner, “Liminality and communitas,” in *Readings in ritual studies*, edited by Ronald L. Grimes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall 1998), 511–519.

10 Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology. An introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

11 Thomas G. Long, & Leonora T. Tisdale, *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice. A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2008), vii.

12 Thomas H. Troeger & Leonora T. Tisdale, *A sermon workbook. Exercises in the art and craft of preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014), 2.

teaching preaching. However, for our African context I think it should be a learning-centeredness of a particular kind.

I can illustrate what I mean by a “spirituality of liminality” for homiletical pedagogy in an African context with reference to the relationship between pedagogy and ontology and epistemology. Cephas Omenyo, with reference to the Akan in Ghana, writes that the empirical and meta-empirical are inseparable. This observation also holds true for many other peoples from Sub-Saharan Africa. Omenyo¹³ quotes John Pobee, who posits that “the sphere of the supernatural is much broader in the African culture than in any European context”. In my Homiletics lecture hall in South Africa, however, with reference to the relevant worldview, I have both Africa and Europe in one space. And within which worldview, a more dualistic European or a wholistic spiritual African worldview, should the students of preaching embody and practice the event of preaching? Of course, I as lecturer have my own convictions and preferences in this regard, whatever they may be. So where should I position myself? In Amsterdam or in Accra, in London or Lilongwe, in Oslo or Ogbomoso? Thus, as Homiletics lecturer I enter in my classes a space that should embrace at least two continents, if not more. And I definitely also engage with the complexity associated with the worldviews inherent in the global flows associated with worship and preaching in the wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and a network culture, which is itself a liminal space for which one needs a particular pedagogical spirituality, specifically a pedagogical spirituality of liminality, of being en route with the students as a fellow traveller.¹⁴

In most cultures liminality is seen to be a sacred space or time. I believe there is also something sacred about our Homiletics classes, as what everyone brings into that space should be respected as gifts, even as potential burning bushes. I respect and appreciate the worldviews and wisdom that

13 Cephas N. Omenyo, “New Wine in an Old Wine Bottle? Charismatic Healing in the Mainline Churches in Ghana,” in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* edited by Candy G. Brown (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 234.

14 Nicolaas Matthee & Cas Wepener, “The impact of emerging technologies on liturgical practices: A than a technological exploration,” in *Engaging the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Perspectives from theology, philosophy, and education*, edited by Jan-Albert van den Berg (Bloemfontein: SUN Press, 2020), 209–229; Barnard; Cilliers & Wepener, *Worship in network culture* 28.

my students bring into my classes.¹⁵ This does not mean I uncritically accept everything they bring to the engagement; however, I do suggest that I hesitate for a moment and question myself as the final source of authority when it comes to Homiletics. The need for a critical-appreciative position brings me to the second concept related to the identity of the lecturer, namely a “second naïveté”.

When I studied in Stellenbosch some 25 years ago my lecturers often told us that they are using French philosopher Paul Ricoeur’s notion of a second naïveté to move us from our first naivety, our pre-critical “Sunday School theology”, through the crucible of historical-critical engagements with the Bible and theology, to a second naïveté. I think there was a lot of wisdom in this approach, as I cannot engage with Scripture and with people reading and interpreting Scripture, not even to mention the preaching and the hearers of sermons, if I have not myself been through this crucible by means of critically engaging with the hardest questions of theology and hermeneutics. With regards to a homiletical pedagogy, it is important to realise that our professors were convinced that they possessed something, a grammar and proficiency which we did not yet possess – this was the second naïveté, which entailed fluency in the grammar of Western theological discourse acquired whilst doing postgraduate studies in Europe.¹⁶ They saw it as their duty to guide us to let go of what we already possessed, theologically speaking, in order to acquire the wisdom and skills which comprised an academic mindset and faith that have been shaped in the crucibles of historical-critical and other academic and theological discourses.

What was taken for granted by my lecturers was that their critical-scientific worldview and exclusively Western theological and philosophical sources of knowledge were authoritative, and that they would assist us in getting to where they were. What they had was set as the standard and ideal. What we

15 Stephen Ellis & Gerrie ter Haar, “Religion and politics: taking African epistemologies seriously,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 45, no. 3 (2007): 385–401.

16 What I describe here resonates with how Jennings speaks about whiteness in his reflections on theological teaching and pedagogy. See Willie James Jennings *After whiteness. An education in belonging* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans).

had to offer to the conversation in lecture rooms was not normally tapped into.¹⁷

In Stellenbosch I still underwrite the necessity for students to acquire a second naïveté; however, I suggest that this also holds true for the lecturers who should also and continuously strive to acquire a second naïveté with which the students, on their part, can assist the lecturers. On both ontological and epistemological levels, the students bring so many rich insights and sources with them into the lecture hall, sources concerning a spiritual worldview, orality, storytelling and more, which can greatly enhance the practice of preaching in African contexts, as is also highlighted by African homileticsians such as Zimbabweans Eben Nhiwatiwa¹⁸ and the Ghanaian scholars John Quashie and Mark Aidoo.¹⁹

These notions of a “spirituality of liminality” and a “second naïveté” are my point of departure for a *Paedagogia Homiletica Viatorum* or homiletical pedagogy of the road. It was in with-ness with Cleophas and his fellow traveller that the risen Christ joined them, and I believe that Homiletics lecturers should in a similar frame of mind enter their lecture halls in Africa.

3. Word

After the Gathering moment on the road to Emmaus, there was what I call the liturgy of the Word. Jesus spoke to them; however, Jesus first carefully listened to His hearers before He engaged Scripture and responded. Jesus’s preaching here is situated on the road between listening and speaking. For a homiletical pedagogy I began by advocating for a listening lecturer with a specific spirituality. However, I also advocate for listening students. Preaching is about speaking, or that is how it is usually viewed. However,

17 Cf. Cas Wepener & Ian Nell, “White males teaching Theology at (South) African universities? Reflections on epistemological and ontological hospitality.” *Academia Letters* (August 2021): 1–5.

18 Eben K. Nhiwatiwa, *Preaching in the African Context. How we preach* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources International, 2012a); Eben K. Nhiwatiwa, *Preaching in the African Context. Why we preach* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources International, 2012).

19 John A. Quashie & Mark S. Aidoo, *Biblical Preaching in a Contemporary African Setting: An Introduction* (Tema: Kabkork Publications, 2018).

I believe that we should cultivate a pedagogy for preaching that prioritises listening to speaking whilst teaching.

The Princeton homiletician Sally Brown, in commenting on the missional church and the role of preaching, writes in her latest book *Sunday's sermon for Monday's world*: "As Christianity all over the globe becomes less white and less mainline, the missional initiative will need to broaden its scope. The future is likely to be less preaching and more listening."²⁰ The Reformed philosopher Nicolas Wolterstorff²¹ writes in his liturgical theology entitled *The God we Worship*: "Just as it often happens that one person is not on speaking terms with another, so too it sometimes happens that one person is not on listening terms with another" and later also "the understanding of God that is most passive and fundamental in the traditional liturgies is that of God who as one who can and does listen to us and is capable of responding favourably to what we say."²²

Wolterstorff builds his argument about listening on a God who listens, and I want to join him by emphasising a preaching Jesus in the Lukan liturgy of the road who listened before speaking. Preachers are sometimes not on listening terms with their contexts or their biblical texts. What is needed is a pedagogy that emphasises deep listening to both preaching texts and the contexts. In this regard the book *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice* is helpful. In the first chapter Thomas Long provides a summary of homiletical pedagogy in the West from the late 19th century until today. According to Long, pedagogy for preaching shifted from a focus on the personality of the preacher in the late 19th century, which shifted under the influence of the theology of Karl Barth and others in the mid-20th century to preaching as the peak function of biblical hermeneutics, to a focus on

20 Sally A. Brown, *Sunday's sermon for Monday's world. Preaching to shape daring witness* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans: 2020), 31.

21 Nicolas Wolterstorff, *The God We Worship. An Exploration of Liturgical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 75.

22 Wolterstorff, *The God we worship* 62–63. Cf. also the emphasis on listening with reference to anger in Cas Wepener & Suzanne van der Merwe, "Angry listening and a listening God. Liturgical-theological reflections," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* vol. 7 no. 1 (2021) 1–19; Cas Wepener, "Angry worship and preaching. Embodying context and text in liturgy. Part 1," *Studia Liturgica* 53, no. 2 (2023), 172–186; Cas Wepener, "Angry worship and preaching. Embodying context and text in liturgy. Part 2," *Studia Liturgica* 53, no. 2 (2023), 187–201.

the inductive movement in the late 20th century and the focus on sermon form, which led to the popularity of narrative preaching and as such a full circle back to the personality of the preacher as storyteller. “So, in the last 125 years all the bases have been occupied... the personality of the preacher, the encounter with the Bible, the form of the sermon, the inner capacities of the preaching student, and the inner life of the listener – have been put forward as the organizing centre of preaching and, consequently, of homiletical pedagogy.”²³

In the light of these developments Thomas Long and his co-authors ask where homiletical pedagogy should go next, and their answer is to focus on preaching as a Christian practice. By defining preaching as a practice, various constituent parts of this practice should all come into focus when pedagogy can be identified and receive individual attention in teaching preaching. I believe their suggestion will serve a pedagogy that prioritises listening over speaking and, as such, listening that serves speaking. In my home country different faculties and seminaries emphasise certain aspects of a Homiletics in the curricula, for example, an emphasis on biblical exegesis, but then sometimes to the neglect of exegesis of the context.

When preaching is approached as a practice which entails a constellation of actions, along with biblical exegesis as one of the actions, then exegesis of the social, economic, political, cultural, and pastoral context will also be emphasised as yet another action, and consequently the creation of form, the performance of the sermon and other actions will all receive attention in a more balanced way.

Jesus listened to Cleophas and his fellow traveller before He spoke. A listening Homiletics lecturer will do well to work with a learning-centred pedagogy that encourages “reciprocity and cooperation among students” as well as “active learning techniques”²⁴ in which a lecturer listens to the students, the students to the lecturer, the students to one another, and the students also listen to themselves, specifically with regard to all the various constituent parts that make up the practice of preaching. Giroux, in line

23 Thomas G. Long, “A new focus for teaching preaching,” in *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice. A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*, edited Thomas G. Long & Leonora T. Tisdale (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2008), 3–17 (7–11).

24 Chickering & Gamson, “Seven principles for good practice,” 2.

with the thinking of Adorno and Freire, states: “Critical pedagogy is thus invested in both the practice of self-criticism about the values that inform teaching and a critical self-consciousness regarding what it means to equip students with analytical skills to be self-reflective about the knowledge and values they confront in classrooms.”²⁵

Here, for example, one can think of group work when it comes to exegesis and hearing how others hear and understand a biblical text; also active listening techniques to exegete a congregation and come to the insight that all people who listen to your sermon are like all other people, like no other people and like some other people.²⁶ Preaching opportunities during which both lecturer and students provide feedback to a student and video recordings of sermons in which a student is forced to listen to himself preaching and critically reflect on it, can also add value. We move to the table in Emmaus.

4. Table

When Jesus broke the bread, the eyes of those who were there opened and they recognised Jesus. John Calvin liked to end a worship service with the *Nunc Dimittis*, the Song of Simeon, as those who attended worship should, at the end of the service, be able to declare, like old Simeon in Luke’s Gospel, that they can now go in peace as their eyes have seen salvation.²⁷ According to Gerard Lukken, ritual has an ethical dimension, namely that it ontologically engages those who participate in another worldview or reality and as such renders an opportunity for reorientation.²⁸ Preaching is a liturgical ritual in which both preacher and hearers engage with the potential to reorientate and reimagine. Differently formulated, preaching should reframe hearers to be able to look in a new direction and the

25 Henry A. Giroux, “Rethinking education as the practice of freedom: Paulo Freire and the promise of critical pedagogy.” *Policy Futures in Education* 8 no. 6, (2010): 715–721

26 Leonora T. Tisdale, “Exegeting the congregation,” in *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice. A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*, edited by Thomas G. Long, & Leonora T. Tisdale (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2008) 61–74.

27 Cas Wepener, *Soos 'n blom na die son draai. Liturgiese voorstelle* (Wellington: Bybelmedia, 2011), 10.

28 Gerard Lukken, *Rituelen in overvloed. Een kritische bezinning op de plaats en de gestalte van het christelijke ritueel in onze cultuur* (Baarn: Gooi & Sticht, 1999), 58–70.

consequent reframing or imagination will be closely related to the act of attentive listening, as discussed in the previous section.

Part of a pedagogy for Homiletics should thus entail a sensitivity and openness towards an aesthetic approach to preaching. An aesthetic approach to proclaiming God's Word is as old as the Bible itself and its prophetic witness in which the present realities were continuously reimagined in the light of God's past so that in and through prophetic proclamation a new future could be imagined and made real. Preaching as a liturgical practice is thus, just like a sacrament such as the Eucharist, fundamentally an anamnetic act in which past, present and future merge within the event of preaching and as such create visions of God's preferred future, which becomes accessible for the hearers in the preaching event.²⁹

In a discussion of "Preaching as Reimagination", Walter Brueggemann³⁰ describes preaching as "an act of imagination, that is, an offer of an image through which perception, experience, and finally faith can be reorganized in alternative ways." My predecessor in Stellenbosch, Johan Cilliers,³¹ argues that preachers can say something only after they have themselves seen something. Cilliers's insight is akin to Thomas Long's image of a preacher as witness who can bear witness only on the grounds of being a witness herself.³² Preachers who thus have seen or who have themselves witnessed, in Scripture, in the context, in other relevant sources, can assist the hearers to also see or witness. Preaching is then much more than a cognitive exercise focused primarily on explanation, but an aesthetic act orientated towards cultivating the imagination. For Cilliers this reimagining or reframing can happen through preaching in three ways, namely reframing as re-naming of reality through the spectacles of Scripture; as a re-configuration in which reality is, when necessary, disrupted so that it can be re-configured; as re-imagination, especially as re-imagination of Christ proclaimed over and

29 Cf. Cas Wepener, "Liturgy and the Proclamation of the Word," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Worship* edited by Joris Geldhof (Cambridge: University Press, forthcoming).

30 Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home. Preaching among Exiles* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 1997), 32.

31 Johan Cilliers, "Die optiek van homiletiek. Prediking as om-raming van perspektief" *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 53 no. 3&4, 52–69 (September 2012): 57.

32 Long *The witness of preaching* 45–51.

against accepted Christ images.³³ Cilliers writes: “Preaching as reframing observes and re-names; it disrupts and upsets. However, it also points towards new realities and possibilities.”³⁴

In the (South) African context I believe this entails a homiletical pedagogy which is sensitive to a postcolonial imagination and thus a postcolonial mode of reframing and reimagining. It will entail a preaching pedagogy that enables students to see and become witnesses of oppressive structures and legacies, reframe reality in the light of God’s Word and imagine new possibilities. Myths of binarity and heteronormativity should as dominant discourses be interrupted through postcolonial³⁵ modes of proclamation and make new acts of imagination possible, and this aim should be embedded in a preaching pedagogy in Africa.

In many African contexts preachers are part of dominant groups and not always sensitive to the fact that the way in which they look at the world sometimes perpetuates oppressive structures as their imaginations still bear the shackles of coloniality. This also holds true for rather powerful Homiletics lecturers on the continent. It is therefore imperative that pedagogy adopts an aesthetic approach that opens up the possibility for reimagining, a reimagining which includes a postcolonial imagination. In this regard Emmanuel Katongole’s³⁶ work such as *Born from lament* is helpful as he emphasises the importance of religious practices and engaging in practices in our continent, in which I include the ritual liturgical acts of preaching as acts of hope that can assist the continent to be “born from lament.” For a pedagogy that emphasises imagination, preaching itself should also be reframed as a practice involving more than just the auditory sense, and in the event of preaching the worshippers should also be given the opportunity to see, smell, taste and feel the good news, to experience

33 Cilliers “Die optiek,” 60–68.

34 Cilliers “Die optiek,” 69.

35 Kwok Pui-lan, “Postcolonial Preaching in Intercultural Contexts.” *Homiletic* no. 40 (June 2015): 8–21; Sarah Travis, *Decolonizing Preaching. The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014); Wessel Wessels, *Postcolonial homiletics? A practical theological engagement with post-colonialism* (Unpublished PhD: University of Pretoria, 2021).

36 Emmanuel Katongole, *Born from lament. The theology and politics of hope in Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017).

the Gospel through all their senses.³⁷ What exactly this good news of preaching entails bring me to the fourth and final movement in the liturgy of the road in Emmaus, namely the sending.

5. Sending

After the *koinonia*, the preaching on the road, the hospitality and sharing at the table, Cleophas and company got up and shared the good news. The encounter they had with the risen Christ thus had an impact on them that I will call formation. As hearers and participants, they were formed in a particular way. In this section I want to argue that our homiletical pedagogies should actively seek to serve a kind of preaching that impacts positively on the hearers of sermons, or in the words of Sally Brown,³⁸ that Sunday's sermon impacts on Monday's world through the lives of the hearers.

It is imperative in my view that a homiletical pedagogy should reflect not only on the anthropology with which it works, in other words how human being are being viewed in order to make an impact on how humans are formed by means of practices such as preaching. But it should also reflect on the operative theology of preaching present in a module. Both anthropology and theology have teleological implications in this regard.

Any pedagogy works overtly or covertly with a certain anthropology, and I believe for teaching preaching the operative anthropology should be brought to the surface and critically scrutinised in order to turn it into an effective pedagogy. When it comes to a practice such as preaching that rests so strongly on the auditory sense and the ability of people to hear and listen to sermons, the almost default anthropology is to view people mainly or even exclusively as thinking beings. However, adhering to only the cognitive dimension as constitutive of what makes a human is a reductionist anthropology leading to a view of education as only an

37 Cas Wepener, "The object and aim of multi-disciplinary liturgical research." *Scriptura* 93 (2006): 384–400 (387). "The Reformatory saying *Praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* is still mainly and exclusively interpreted as the preaching being an auditory medium, and something like See/ Smell/ Feel/ Taste *verbi Dei est* (also) *verbum Dei*, is largely downplayed."

38 Brown, *Sunday's sermon*.

intellectual exercise interested in the transmission of ideas and knowledge. The hearers of sermons are, as human being, more than their brains, and so are students of Homiletics. A homiletics pedagogy should critically reflect on what constitutes a person and on that basis approach students when teaching preaching. In what follows I use the insights of the philosopher Jamie Smith³⁹ and his views on a pedagogy of desire.

Smith argues that in the wake of the European Enlightenment we were bequeathed “a dominant and powerful picture of the human person as fundamentally a thinking thing – a cognitive machine defined, above all, by thought and rational operations.”⁴⁰ He also shows how this picture was especially absorbed by Protestant Christianity and that it had a huge influence of the practice of preaching. Smith writes: “This adoption of a cognitive, rationalist anthropology that accounts for the shape of so much Protestant worship as a heady affair fixated on ‘messages’ that disseminate Christian ideas and abstract values (easily summarised in PowerPoint slides).”⁴¹ This cognitivist anthropology, according to Smith, resulted in the adoption of a “stunted pedagogy that is fixated on the mind.”⁴² Like all people, students are of course thinkers, but they are also believers, and importantly for Smith, desirers.

Smith⁴³ argues that the African theologian, Augustine of Hippo, understood that the most fundamental way in which human beings intend the world is love; that it is human to love and that what we love defines who we are. The love or loves he is referring to is not the love, for example, for a sibling or a parent, but ultimate loves – “that to which we are fundamentally orientated, what ultimately governs our vision of the good life, what shapes and moulds our being-in-the-world, the ultimate desire that shapes and positions and makes sense of our penultimate desires and actions.”⁴⁴ What we ultimately love is also what we worship and “It is not what I think that shapes my life

39 James K.A. Smith, *You are what you love. The spiritual power of habit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016); James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom. Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008).

40 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 42.

41 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 42.

42 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 43.

43 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 50–51.

44 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 51.

from the bottom up: it's what I desire, what I love, that animates passion."⁴⁵ Humans are loving beings and the question is not whether we love, the question is rather what we love, what we thus worship, and as such directs and shapes our lives. Smith thus works with an anthropology of desire and teleologically with a desire that should be directed at desiring the kingdom of God. This calls for a pedagogy that not only has the minds of students in its view, but also and especially their hearts. With this anthropology of humans as beings who desire, preaching pedagogy should work with the aim of capturing the head and heart of the student. This means that it is important to inspire students and to embody, in my own person, a teaching practice that reflects this passion for my subject.

Concomitantly it is imperative for a preaching pedagogy to bring to the surface the undergirding view of the preaching that is being taught. John McClure⁴⁶ distinguished between "theology and preaching" and "theology of preaching." The latter refers basically to how preachers understand preaching as the W/word of God. The former, "theology and preaching", is a reference to the fact that every preacher "has an operative or functional theology" and that it "represents the preacher's individual take on the Christian tradition as it shows up in preaching."⁴⁷ Apart from every preacher, every Homiletics lecturer and student of preaching also works with such an operative or functional theology of preaching. In discussing the teaching of preaching, David Lose emphasises that preaching cannot be merely talk "about" God, but needs to "re-present the resurrected and living Christ as God's ongoing presence and work in the world, thereby inviting the hearer to participate in the new reality God has created and continues to sustain through our life in Christ."⁴⁸ It is what can be called Christopraxis preaching, preaching that joins in the on-going ministry of the triune God on earth.⁴⁹

45 Smith *Desiring the kingdom*, 42.

46 John S. McClure, *Preaching words* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2007), 136–137.

47 McClure, *Preaching words*, 136.

48 David Lose, "Teaching preaching as a Christian practice." in *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice. A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*. Edited by Thomas G. Long & Leonora T. Tisdale (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2008), 54.

49 Andrew Root, *Christopraxis: A practical theology of the cross* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014); H. Russel Botman, "Discipleship and Practical Theology: The

Both the undergirding anthropology and the operative theology regarding preaching that a preaching pedagogy works with have teleological implications for a teaching methodology. A pedagogy that works with the vision that humans long for the Word of God that will open their eyes to the fact that they are already in the presence of the living Christ, a fact that will warm their hearts as they desire the kingdom of God; along with a view of preaching as a Christ-event in which those who hear the Word can join in the on-going story of redemption of God, is a preaching pedagogy in which the aim of preaching is a particular kind of formation, a formation that impacts the liturgy of life.

6. Conclusion

On the road to Emmaus and in Emmaus, Jesus revealed His identity, and it is time for me to reveal mine. To quote a South African author, I am a “pale native”. Pale, but born and bred on the African continent where my ancestors have been living for almost 400 years. I am an ordained minister in the Reformed tradition with a predominantly Western theological education, which I received in South Africa and in the Netherlands; however, I teach at an ecumenical faculty which is part of a university, thus not at a seminary. The university where I teach is in South Africa, a democratic republic in Africa with an infamous history of apartheid and colonialism in which the church and theology played no minor role. What I have thus just now shared, I said as a South African, as an ordained Reformed preacher teaching Homiletics in combination with Liturgy in a Department of Practical Theology and within a very particular ecumenical and postcolonial African context. My proposed route markers for a preaching pedagogy in Africa should thus be critically scrutinised before translating and inculturating them in homiletics curricula in other parts of the African continent. I am well aware of my own situatedness, the complexity of our African continent and the diverse realities and

Case of South Africa,” *International Journal of Practical Theology*, 4 no. 1 (2000): 231–242; Cas Wepener & Marcel Barnard, “Researching rituals and liturgy in Africa. Conducting research as liminal trinipraxis,” in *Moving methodologies. Doing Practical and Missional Theology in an African Context*, edited by Johan Cilliers (Wellington: BibleMedia/Biblecor 2022), 209–226.

challenges we all face, and I thus emphasise the “viatorum” in the title of my presentation. I wish to present nothing more than a *Paedagogia Homiletica Viatorum*: A Pedagogy of the Road for African Christian Preaching. It is also a road on which students should remain after they have graduated, also after they have received their master’s and doctoral degrees. This pedagogy of the road should make it clear from the very first Homiletics module that preaching entails life-long learning and un-learning. And as I travel this road, I thank the Lord that He has directed me to the African Homiletics Society and as such to dozens of fellow travellers from whom I can learn.

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