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Training, Equipping, and Deploying Teenagers for Preaching with a Prophetic Emphasis at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING, EQUIPPING, AND DEPLOYING
TEENAGERS FOR PREACHING WITH
A PROPHETIC EMPHASIS AT THE
PLANTATION SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

by

Iosif Salajan

Adviser: Hyveth Williams

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Professional Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TRAINING, EQUIPPING, AND DEPLOYING TEENAGERS FOR PREACHING
WITH A PROPHETIC EMPHASIS AT THE PLANTATION SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTIST CHURCH

Name of researcher: Iosif Salajan

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Date completed: May 2020

Problem

Teenagers were not integrated in the preaching ministry of the Plantation
Seventh-day Adventist Church. Their involvement in the worship service revealed
challenges in publicly expressing their faith and spiritual experience. The absence of
training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for preaching ministry contributed to their
low retention and their lack of representation in the leadership of the church.

Method

Between August 2018 and May 2019, under the coordination of the researcher,
preaching mentors offered teenage mentees from the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist
Church a complete learning cycle called sermonic process. It started with producing the

sermon, continued with practicing the sermon and culminated with preaching the sermon. For evaluation, qualitative data was collected through evaluation forms, focus groups, reflective journals, sermon scripts, and video recordings.

Results

Five teenagers of the church were mentored for prophetic preaching ministry. Through mentorship and hands-on learning they experienced significant growth in their preaching skill-level and spiritual journey. Additionally, change-inspiring awareness was raised in the congregation regarding youth retention and integration in leadership. Moreover, the project reinforced the crucial nature of trust-based relationship between mentors and mentees in the mentorship process.

Conclusions

First, this ministry project was successful because it was built on the solid biblical foundations of God calling teenagers to prophetic ministry. Second, hands-on training in a supportive mentorship context is the most effective teaching method for teenage preaching. Third, the key for a successful implementation of a ministry project that involves a large number of participants is accountability on all levels. To improve future teenage preaching projects, I recommend (a) shorter classroom training sessions, (b) more time between practice sessions, and (c) a longer period of time between the actual moments of teenagers preaching in front of the congregation.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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A Professional Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

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I acknowledge the tremendous contribution of all those that were with me on this thrilling journey. Soli Deo Gloria!

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preaching is foundational to the mission of the church. It has always been a

challenging endeavor and it is all the more so today. The avalanche of technology and

information, combined with the difficulty to find relevance in the realm of traditional

faith, has marred the general view about preachers and preaching, especially in the

younger generation. With this prophetic preaching project I hope to contribute to a

positive change of perception that will inspire young people to not only appreciate the art

of preaching but also become effective preachers.

Description of the Ministry Context

In recent years, my ministry and leadership have gone through significant

changes. In 2013, I emigrated from Romania to the USA. In January 2014 I was

employed by the Florida Conference as a pastor for the Romanian Adventist Temple and,

starting April 2015, also for the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church. The

next significant ministry milestone came in March 2017 when the Florida Conference

called me to serve as the Senior Pastor of Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church,

where I am currently providing pastoral leadership through preaching, leadership

development, strategic planning, equipping, counseling, visitation, and administration.

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Initially, this Doctor of Ministry Project was conceived for the North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist Church, a congregation with an average Sabbath attendance of 100 people. My new assignment to the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church is different in many ways. Nevertheless, there are many common elements that have allowed me to adapt my project to the new context. This is a large multiethnic congregation, with people originating from more than 60 different countries and an average attendance of 800. Most of the attendees are commuters; only few live in the neighboring communities. The immediate proximity of the church is an upper-middle class Caucasian community, hard to be approached with the Gospel by a Caribbean-majority church. A large number of children and youth, a variety of ministry programs and a dynamic, upbeat worship style testify to an enthusiastic congregation centered on strong biblical and family values. Nevertheless, this church is not untouched by the alarming reality of America, where 40 to 50% of the youth drift from the faith community after they graduate from high school (Powel, Mulder, & Griffin, 2016, p. 17).

Statement of the Problem

Teenagers of the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church displayed difficulty in publicly expressing their faith and spiritual experience. Their little involvement in church worship revealed reading challenges, poor vocabulary and grammar, inadequate rhetoric, and awkward mannerism. In spite of the constant need for lay-preachers, the younger generation was not integrated in the preaching ministry of the church. This, among other things, had a bearing on the church's low retention of youth and their lack of representation in the leadership of the church. The absence of vision for training, equipping, and deploying young lay-preachers heavily contributed to this situation.

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Statement of the Task

The task of this ministry project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for preaching with a prophetic emphasis at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. This program aimed to identify those teenagers of the church that were willing to be mentored in preaching. Additionally, it endeavored to reveal and employ the mentorship potential of the church's experienced preachers for the benefit of the younger generation.

Delimitation of the Project

This ministry project was limited to five teenagers (3 males and 2 females) of the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church that expressed their desire to be trained, equipped, and deployed to preach prophetically. The intervention of this project was completed within one year in the church's fellowship hall and sanctuary.

Description of the Project Process

This ministry project process included (a) developing the theological foundations, (b) reviewing recent relevant literature, (c) developing an intervention methodology, (d) implementing the intervention, and (e) evaluating the results of the intervention.

Theological Reflection

In order to develop the theological bases for teenage prophetic preaching, in the Theological Reflection (Chapter 2) I examined Bible passages and Ellen G. White writings relevant to the topic of training, equipping and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching ministry.

The main premise of my theological reflection was that the Bible endorses prophetic preaching as a proclamation of God's message of grace and justice. In it, I focused on three main aspects: the legitimacy of teenage prophetic preaching, the spiritual profile of the prophetic preacher, and the preparation of the prophetic preacher for the act of preaching. In my discussion about the legitimacy of teenage prophetic ministry, I examined (a) the legacy of the schools of the prophets, (b) teenage prophetic figures, and (c) Joel's prophecy about the eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit. I also contoured a profile of the prophetic preacher that includes (a) the courage to criticize injustice, (b) the ability to tell the truth in love, and (c) the power to energize people to do justice. Additionally, I discussed persuasively and biblically that excellence in preaching asks for both spiritual preparation and practical training.

Literature Review

Relevant literature was reviewed in the following areas: (a) learning theory for teenagers, (b) critique of prophetic preaching, (c) prophetic sermon preparation, and (d) evaluation of preaching. In my Literature Review (Chapter 3), based on current learning theories, I argued that for an effortless learning experience prophetic preaching should be taught as a holistic practice. Moreover, the surveyed sources convinced me of the duty of prophetic preaching to confront both individual and corporate injustice, always in love and under divine directive. Furthermore, findings acquired through the examination of the particularities of prophetic sermon preparation and evaluation helped me develop an effective intervention methodology.

Methodology of the Intervention

The intervention methodology (Chapter 4) of this ministry project was derived from the Theological Reflection and Literature Review provided in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, and was designed to provide solutions to the demanding situation described in the Statement of the Problem. It outlined the step-by-step process envisioned for an effective implementation of this ministry project from the recruitment of participants, throughout the sermonic process, to the technicalities of its evaluation. It also described the protocols adopted for the effective management of the participants throughout the intervention process.

Structure of Intervention

Teenage preachers were offered a complete learning cycle (Chapter 4) through a *sermonic process* which unfolded over a period of approximately one year in three phases: producing the sermon, practicing the sermon, and preaching the sermon. This learning cycle moved mentees step by step from having virtually no preaching experience to his or her first real preaching experience.

Implementation of Intervention

The implementation of intervention (Chapter 5) took place between August 2018 and May 2019. It started with the recruitment of the three categories of participants: preaching mentors, preaching mentees, and evaluators. Subsequently, participants signed written consent forms, prior to the commencement of the training process. During the sermonic process accountability was vital; however, all subjects were free to leave the project at their discretion at any moment of its implementation.

The sermon production phase consisted of three 90-minute training sessions, one session per month, followed by assignments completed by each mentee under the guidance of his or her personal mentor. In the practice phase, each mentee practiced his or her sermon three times. In the preaching phase, mentees preached in both worship services of the church, one preacher per month, over a period of five months.

Evaluation of Intervention

The evaluation of the intervention (Chapter 6) was an ongoing process throughout the entire implementation. Qualitative data was collected through evaluation forms, focus groups, reflective journals, sermon scripts, and video recordings. After each preaching event, evaluators answered focus group questions and shared insights about the delivered sermon. At the end of the implementation, a final focus group evaluation of the entire ministry project took place. Sermon grades and scripts showed that mentees experienced significant growth in their skill level during the hands-on learning process, whereas focus groups revealed the change-inspiring impact of the project on the church's commitment for youth retention and leadership participation. Additionally, personal reflective journals reinforced the crucial nature of a trust-based relationship in mentorship.

Definition of Terms

Although the specialized terms used in this project document are defined as they appear in its text, some definitions may be useful to the reader from the beginning.

Focus group represents a group of evaluators whose response to some specific questions regarding this preaching ministry project was studied to determine the expected response of the congregation.

Holistic learning is an experience-based, hands-on, participative, transformative learning approach. According to this, preaching can be learned as a holistic practice that applies and embodies theory (Gane, 1997, p. 25; Borich, 2007, p. 226; Lose, 2008, p. 42; Nieman, 2008; pp. 36-37; MacKeracher, 2012, p. 353).

Participant is used as a collective term that refers to the three categories of individuals involved in this ministry project: *mentees*, *mentors* and *evaluators*. *Mentees* are teenagers that expressed willingness to be mentored for prophetic preaching ministry. *Mentors* are leaders of the church who are experienced in preaching and able to train others in the art of preaching. *Evaluators* are ordained church elders that assisted the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of this ministry project.

Project coordinator is another expression for the *researcher* used in the implementation phase of this project.

Prophetic preaching is a method and style of proclamation rooted in the biblical concept of "prophet" in which the prophetic preacher, under divine directive (Williams, 2018, pp. 86-87), radically criticizes the abusive power that disregards God's instructions and energizes those who have gone astray to turn back to God and live according to His will (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 13; Wogaman, 1998, p. 3; McMickle, 2006, pp. 2-5; Morris, 2011, pp. 6-9; Tisdale, 2010, pp. 3-10). Consequently, a *prophetic sermon* is a presentation grounded in the Bible that conveys God's word in a specific context (Carter, Duvall, and Hayes, 2005, pp. 22-23; McKim, 2014, p. 289) combining the three main elements of prophetic preaching: criticizing, energizing, and divine directive.

Schools of the prophets designate educational settlements of the prophets in the Old Testament called *naioth* (1 Sam 19:18)*,* which means "habitations." These were

training centers where *the sons of the prophets* (see 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; Amos 7:17) were trained, equipped and deployed by the prophets for prophetic ministry. The *sons of the prophets* were young people, some of them teenagers, desirous to be mentored by the prophets; they were not necessarily biological sons or family members of the prophets (White, n.d.a, p. 593). *Teenage prophetic figures* are young people in the Bible, called by God to prophetic ministry at an early age.

Sermonic process stands for the complete learning cycle offered to teenage preaching mentees, which includes: producing the sermon, practicing the sermon, and preaching the sermon. This learning cycle allowed mentees to learn the art of preaching holistically, moving step by step from no preaching experience to a real preaching experience in front of the congregation.

A *sermon script* is the written form of a sermon that can present itself as an elaborate verbatim discourse or an outline that allows for sections of improvisation.

Reflective journals are the personal records of mentors, mentees and project coordinator's learning experiences.

Summary

This introduction offered a concise synopsis of completing the task stated in the title of this Doctor of Ministry Project: training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for preaching with a prophetic emphasis at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Intervention Methodology, derived from my Theological Reflection and Literature Review, aimed to address the two stringent realities of the youth of our church: low retention and poor representation in the leadership of the church. The evaluation of this project revealed that it had a change-inspiring impact on the congregation's commitment

regarding these two aspects. I hope that this ministry project will raise awareness with regard to the potential of this long-neglected age group of our churches and will stimulate other pastors and church leaders to take similar actions within their ministry context.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Introduction

Preaching is theology in practice. Sound theological reasoning lies at the foundation of effective theological practice. The core premise of my theological reflection is that the Bible endorses prophetic preaching as powerful and effective proclamation of God's message of salvation and justice. Therefore, the theological framework of God's Word determines the legitimacy and effectiveness of this preaching project.

This theological reflection will examine Bible passages relevant on the topic of training, equipping and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching ministry as modeled by the Old Testament prophets that spoke truth to power, challenged the status quo and called to repentance. In some cases, for a deeper understanding I will also explore the writings of Ellen G. White. This chapter will focus on three main aspects: the legitimacy of teenage prophetic preaching, the spiritual profile of the prophetic preacher, and the preparation of the prophetic preacher for the act of preaching.

Legitimacy of Teenage Prophetic Preaching

A sense of prophetic call has always been intrinsic to Seventh-day Adventism. From the beginning, "Seventh-day Adventism has viewed itself as a called-out people with a prophetic mission" (Knight, 2008, p. 28). At the level of preaching this prophetic mission did not manifest itself merely as a focus on apocalyptic prophecy. There were

also attempts of speaking out against the systemic and systematic abuse of power outside and even inside the church, especially the use of "kingly power" in the leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Plantak, 2017, pp. 93-170). Nevertheless, prophetic preaching in the sense of addressing issues of social justice inside or outside the church has always been on the fringes of Adventism.

An increasing number of projects aim to train laypeople within the Seventh-day Adventist Church for preaching (Modad, 1989, Gibbons, 1992; Arnold, 2008, Belcher, 2010; Wibberding, 2010; Green, 2013; Counsel, 2014; Bates, 2019), but all these studies are geared mainly toward adult subjects. Little attention has been given to prospective teenage preachers and even less to teenage prophetic preachers.

It was not the purpose of this reflection to discuss the legitimacy of prophetic preaching in general; I was rather interested to know whether the Bible sanctioned the participation of young people in prophetic preaching ministry. More precisely, I asked the following question: In biblical times, did God call and empower teenagers for prophetic ministry?

To this end, I looked at the following prophetic manifestations described in the Bible: the schools of the prophets, teenage prophetic figures, and the prophecy of Joel 2:28 regarding the eschatological outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

<center>The Schools of the Prophets</center>

Bible commentators use the concept of "schools of the prophets" to designate the educational settlements of the prophets in the Old Testament. The Bible does not label them with this name. In 1 Samuel 19:18 they are called *naioth,* which simply means

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"habitations." In order to understand the role of these "habitations," it is informative to know the identity of the "sons of the prophets" that attended them.

The historical and the literary context reveal that these young people were not necessarily biological sons or family members of the prophets. For instance, when Elijah was taken to heaven, Elisha, one of the sons of the prophets, cried out, "My father, my father" (2 Kgs 2:12). However, that did not mean Elijah was his biological father. Elisha was Elijah's disciple, not his biological son. Consequently, in the Bible the designation "sons of the prophets" (see 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; Amos 7:17) is used with the sense of "disciples of the prophets." White (n.d.a) explains the role of the schools of the prophets:

> If a *youth* desired to search deeper into the truths of the word of God and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, these schools were open to him. The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel to serve as a barrier against the widespread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the *youth*, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object Samuel gathered companies of *young men* who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. (p. 593)

By all appearances, these "habitations" of the prophets were educational institutions. They were training centers where "the sons of the prophets" were trained, equipped and deployed by God's prophets for prophetic ministry. White (n.d.c) suggests that every church should be such ministry training centers. She states:

> Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath-school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts. (p. 150)

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The Age of the Sons of the Prophets

There is little information as to what was the age of these disciples or of the prophets. In 2 Kings 5:22 the expression "*young men* of the sons of the prophets" is used. Thus, we learn that they were young, but we do not know how young they were. The concept of "young men" could cover a wider range of individuals with their age varying from teenagers to young adults. The Hebrew word נַעַר (na'ar) translated here as "young men" can also be rendered as "boy, lad," or even "child." Its Greek correspondent used in the Septuagint (LXX) is παιδάριον (paidarion). This is a diminutive of the noun παῖς (pais), which means "child." Consequently, παιδάριον can be translated as *little child*.

According to this reading, in 2 Kings 5:22 Gehazi would be talking about some needy children that had just attended the school of the prophets. Obviously, that is not the case. In its context, Gehazi's false statement contains a nuance of exaggeration, which aims to impress Naaman and to persuade him of the fictitious need of two of the sons of the prophets. However, we cannot safely infer that Gehazi came up with his concoction having some "little children" in mind. The sons of prophets were not little children. In 2 Kings 4:1 it is suggested that some of them were married and had children. There is no evidence that being married was a prerequisite for attending the schools of the prophets. Moreover, it is not clear whether this passage talks about someone who is married and has children while still a student, or rather about an alumnus of one of the schools of the prophets. In that historical context, being married and having children did not necessarily imply being older than a teenager. People used to establish a family at an early age; it was not abnormal for mature teens to get married and have children. Therefore, we can safely assume that among the sons of prophets there were at least some teenagers.

The Mission of the Sons of the Prophets

The mission of the sons of the prophets is not explicit in the Bible. Nevertheless, since the sons of the prophets were disciples and assistants to the prophets, we can deduce that their mission was similar to that of their masters': a prophetic mission. Although they were not called by God to function in the same prophetic office as their masters, to a certain extent, they must have emulated the life and work of their mentors. They were prophets under training and after spending some time in the school of the prophets, God could call them to a full prophetic office. In this sense, Elisha's call, who used to be Elijah's disciple, is a suggestive example (2 Kgs 2:1-15). White (n.d.b) clarifies the difference between the prophets and their mentees:

> In the highest sense, the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. For the training of such a class of teachers, Samuel (…) established the schools of the prophets. (p. 46)

Thus, the sons of the prophets were not prophets in the sense of the prophetic office, but they were called by God to become spiritual teachers that will instruct His people to faithfully resist and act upon the widespread evil of their time. This is exactly the mission of the prophetic preacher today, teenagers included.

Teenage Prophetic Figures

People usually envision the prophets of the Bible as old people, when, in fact, the Bible offers strong evidence that many of them started their prophetic ministry early on, in their teens. In this section, I will present some conclusive examples of people God called and empowered to carry out effective prophetic ministry early in their lives.

The Prophetic Office of Samuel

Samuel is one of the most prominent and prolific prophets in the Bible. His name is closely connected with the schools of the prophets; according to 1 Samuel 19:20, he was the leader of the sons of the prophets. God called Samuel to prophetic office when he was very young. It was a time of great spiritual darkness and social injustice when God first appointed him as His prophetic messenger. In 1 Samuel 3:1 it is stated that "the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation." In such circumstances, God spoke to a child and entrusted him with the difficult prophetic mission of disclosing the terrible end of some ungodly priests. The Jewish historian, Flavius (n.d.), states that Samuel was only 12 years old when he began to prophecy against the injustice and impiety practiced and promoted thy them. He writes:

> These sons of Eli were guilty of injustice towards men; and of impiety towards God; and abstained from no sort of wickedness. Some of their gifts they carried off, as belonging to the honorable employment they had: others of them they took away by violence. They also were guilty of impurity with the women, that came to worship God [at the tabernacle] obliging some to submit to their lust by force; and enticing others by bribes. Nay the whole course of their lives was no better than tyranny.

Thus, at an early age God spoke to Samuel and revealed to him the judgment that was about to fall upon the house of Eli (1 Sam 3:11-14). It was a fearsome mission to pass on that prophetic message (v. 15), and yet, Samuel truthfully and faithfully communicated the message to its recipient (v. 18). In fact, this first prophetic mission was only the commencement of a series of prophetic communications through which soon "all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD" (1 Sam 3:20). Undoubtedly, at the time of this public recognition of his prophetic office Samuel was still very young.

The Prophetic Profile of Joseph

The story of Joseph, the son of Jacob, is a fascinating narrative of the Bible. When Joseph was a 17 years old boy (Gen 37:2), his half-brothers sold him into slavery. The motivation behind their profoundly unjust act was hatred (v. 4) and envy (v. 11) triggered by Joseph's intriguing prophetic dreams and probably by the bad report he brought to his father about his brothers (v. 2). The bad report about his brothers does not speak of a tattletale boy; it rather reveals the sensible heart of a loving young man, who being unable to bear with the evil deeds of his siblings had to report their acts to the right human authority, his father. Moreover, early traits of an emerging prophetic figure can be noticed in his confrontation with the wickedness of his brothers.

Later, Joseph's prophetic profile is also discernible in his firm and unyielding reaction to the seductive assault of Potiphar's wife: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9) He prefers to bear the consequences of his trustworthiness and suffer the unfairness of false accusation, rather than giving in to pressure and becoming a slave of the seductive power of sexual immorality. For such a brave character, the prison is nothing but a new ministry context where God uses him to minister to others who have suffered injustice. Adversity and injustice could not divert him from the trajectory of divine providence and did not distract him from fulfilling his prophetic mission. His commitment to God and God's way of communicating with him provides the contour of the prophetic profile of a young man who, from an early age, stands for the good and fights against the evil. A similar prophetic mission awaits our generation of teenagers.

The Prophetic Call of Jeremiah

In Jeremiah 1:4-7 a young man is called to the prophetic office:

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Then said I: "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." But the LORD said to me: "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

This passage reveals the fact that before Jeremiah was born, God had already "ordained" him to become a prophet. However, there came a time when God revealed and addressed this prophetic call to Jeremiah. His response to the divine call makes it obvious that this happened sometime early in his life. In verse 6, Jeremiah said, "I cannot speak, for I am a *youth*" (NKJ) or "I cannot speak: for I am a *child*" (KJV). His words reveal the fact that he sees himself unqualified for the prophetic office. The question is, why did he feel unfit for that call?

The Hebrew word used here is the same נַעַר (na'ar) as in 2 Kings 5:22. It carries the meaning of "young man," but also means "child." Since here Jeremiah uses his young age as an evidence for being inapt or unprepared for the prophetic office, translating נַעַר (na'ar) with "child" seems to be a better rendering than "youth." Moreover, in response to Jeremiah's attempt to avoid becoming a prophet, God tells him, "Do not say, 'I am a *child*,'" meaning, "Don't try to use your young age as an excuse! Being young, even a child, does not necessarily disqualify you." It is noticeable that God does not tell Jeremiah, "You are not a *child!*" Most probably, he was a child, that is, he was young enough to regard himself a child. It is right to assume that at the time of his call to prophetic ministry, Jeremiah was a mere teenager. Consequently, God can call teenagers to serve as His spokespeople and convey His prophetic message.

The Prophetic Ministry of Daniel

Daniel is another teenage prophetic figure of the Bible. We do not know when he was called to the office of prophet, but we know that he started his prophetic ministry at a very young age. Although his exact age is not indicated in the Bible, a careful investigation of biblical and historical data reveals that Daniel was taken into captivity when he was only about 16 years old. Notwithstanding his age, from the very beginning of his captivity it became obvious that God had been preparing him for a prophetic ministry (Dan 1:9) that was to start unfolding right away. He needed to become a prophetic voice and model that would be a point of reference for not only a succession of kings, but also a succession of empires.

Soon after his deportation to Babylon, while he was still a teenager, Daniel had to face a death decree, the application of which clearly would have been an act of utmost injustice. King Nebuchadnezzar decided to kill all the wise men of his kingdom and started hastily to put his plan into effect. Obviously, Daniel's own life was at stake since he was one of the wise men of the kingdom. In spite of the danger of being executed, Daniel's focus was not his own life; he was more preoccupied with the life of the other wise men of Babylon (Dan 2:24). He was eager to minister on behalf of his colleagues and raised his voice in order to stop an act of utter injustice. In his intervention before the King, he carried out a prophetic mission. The effectiveness of His prophetic voice against injustice was doubled by his just character and conduct that could not be altered by any trial, not even by the lion's den. Such prophetic characters are sought after among our young people today.

The Prophecy of Joel

Joel 2:28-29 is a prophecy about an all-encompassing outpouring of God's Spirit, which would include young people, even children. It says:

> And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

The apostle Peter confirmed an initial fulfillment of this prophecy on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-21). Nevertheless, in its original context, the continuation of Joel's prophecy talks about eschatological events happening right "before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord" (Joel 2:30-31). This eschatological setting justifies the expectation of an ultimate end-time fulfillment of Joel's prediction, which entails a special end-time prophetic ministry the scope of which is hardly predictable. According to the prophecy, God will pour out His Spirit "on all flesh," meaning *sons* and *daughters*, *old men* and *young men*, and *menservants* and *maidservants* (vv. 28-29). This inclusive language clearly points to a non-discriminatory outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all social categories and all age groups, both males and females.

Two observations are in order. First, *young people* and *children* are included among the recipients of this special outpouring of God's Spirit, which enables them to serve as prophetic messengers. This suggests that *young people* and *children* can be and should be involved in end-time prophetic ministries. Second, there is no gender distinction when it comes to this special outpouring of God's Spirit. Therefore, it is right to conclude, that both *teenage boys* and *teenage girls* can receive the Spirit of God and qualify for prophetic ministry.

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Spiritual Profile of the Prophetic Preacher

Prophetic preaching is a spiritual mandate. The prophetic message originates in God and the prophetic messenger speaks exclusively under the leading of the Holy Spirit. "Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21). Therefore, the prophetic messenger must work under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Three indispensable features contour the spiritual profile of the prophetic preacher: the courage to criticize what is evil, the ability to tell the truth in love in all circumstances, and the power to energize and engage people in promoting and performing whatever is God's will.

Courage to Criticize

In the Bible, the prophetic message often takes the shape of a loud and sharp remonstration (see Amos 5). The prophetic messenger has a divine mandate to confront sin. For instance, God commanded the Prophet Isaiah to call out the sins of his people: "Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa 58:1). Similarly, God instructed the Prophet Ezekiel to proclaim the destruction of His people because of their sins: "Cry and wail, son of man; For it will be against My people, Against all the princes of Israel. Terrors including the sword will be against My people" (Ezek 21:12). Often the prophetic proclamation is bold and striking. And yet, it is not a cold-blooded, heartless cry. It is criticizing with tears and sighs; censure through grief and mourning. The heart of a genuine prophet is deeply touched by the sin-produced suffering and he or she cannot help but express genuine compassion for those afflicted by evil.

The attitude of the Prophet Jeremiah accurately illustrates what it means to criticize lovingly, that is, to tell the uncomfortable truth to whoever needs to hear it, but with a broken heart. He shares the grief of his people and laments with anguish over its deplorable state before the anticipated destruction.

> O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, Because you have heard, O my soul, The sound of the trumpet, The alarm of war. (Jer 4:19)

> Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery For the health of the daughter of my people? Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people! (Jer 8:22-9:1)

Telling the Truth in Love

According to the Apostle Paul, criticism must be done in love; we must "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). Here the meaning of the Greek verb ἀληθεύω (alétheuó) is "telling the truth," or "speaking the truth." Paul teaches that the "speaking of the truth" must be done in love. The same verb appears in Galatians 4:16: "Have I therefore become your enemy because *I tell you the truth?*" In both cases, the present participle of the verb refers to the act of telling the truth to someone who needs to hear it. Some translations render it with a wider meaning as "being true" (YLT) or "live by the truth" (NJB). With such reading, the expression could be translated as, "being true in love" or "living (by) the truth in love." Although this translation is grammatically correct, the literary context, especially the connection with the previous verse, favors the reading "speaking the truth in love."

In Ephesians 4:15, the apostle Paul contrasts the idea of "speaking the truth in love" with the false doctrine of crafty deceivers that are mentioned in verse 14: "every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait

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to deceive." This contrast in itself reveals a prophetic mission, that is, the mission to rebuke and expose the false and deceitful teachings of those false teachers. Paul's emphasis is clear: the prophetic mission of challenging the status quo, and unmasking and debunking falsehood should always be carried out in love. In the larger literary context of the passage, the application to the prophetic messenger is even more obvious. In verse 11, among other agents of propagating the truth, Paul also lists the prophets, thus making it clear that it is mandatory for the prophetic messenger to "speak the truth in love."

Pointing out lessons that we need to learn from the ancient schools of the prophets, White (n.d.a) states:

> All the varied capabilities that men possess – of mind and soul and body – are given them by God, to be so employed as to reach the highest possible degree of excellence. But this cannot be a selfish and exclusive culture; for the character of God, whose likeness we are to receive, is *benevolence* and *love*. (p. 595)

These varied capabilities, of course, include the ability to speak. Therefore, we should use this God-given ability to tell the uncomfortable truth, but always in accordance to God's character, which is benevolent love.

Jesus' prophetic ministry reveals the same approach to telling the truth. He was a Master of always speaking truth in love. John expresses the fact that in Jesus' interactions with humankind *grace* and *truth* were interwoven. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of *grace and truth*" (John 1:14). Grace and truth must always go together; they belong together. The order is also important: first grace and then the truth. It is grace that makes the truth effective; without grace, the truth is dangerous.

Jesus' loving attitude in telling the truth becomes even more obvious in Luke 19:41 where Jesus weeps over the city of Jerusalem. The Greek verb κλαίω (klaió),

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used by Luke, is loaded with feelings; it means "to mourn, to bewail," or "to lament."

Jesus' lamentation was a cry of love and compassion. With broken heart and among tears

Jesus expressed the uncomfortable truth,

> If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation. (Luke 19:42-44)

Power to Energize

The prophetic messenger must also bring the great news of liberation, salvation

and restoration. Telling the truth, even in love, is not enough; a way out is needed. The

loving attitude of the prophetic messenger that criticizes must be fructified in proclaiming

comfort and hope to those confronted with the dire consequences of their sins. God gave

Zechariah an energizing message of restoration: "Again proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the

LORD of hosts: *My cities shall again spread out through prosperity; The LORD will*

again comfort Zion, And will again choose Jerusalem'" (Zech1:17).

One of the most energizing prophetic passages is chapter 40 of the Book of Isaiah.

It starts with a powerful proclamation of comfort. "'Comfort, yes, comfort My people!'

Says your God. 'Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is

ended, That her iniquity is pardoned'" (vv. 1-2). The chapter gradually grows in intensity

and it reaches its zenith in the beautiful imageries of the transformation and delight that

the weak and weary experience when energized by God's power.

> He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. (Isa 40:29-31)

Therefore, in chapter 52 of his book, Isaiah eulogizes the harbinger of good news and glad tidings and makes those that experienced injustice and distress, but also received courage and hope, part of a powerful proclamation of life's joy.

> How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. (Isa 52:7-9)

In any critical situation, the role of the prophetic messenger is to deliver a divine message that will bring about a turning point in the life of those who have neglected or rejected the divine precepts.

> Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. *Turn at my rebuke*; Surely I will pour out *my spirit on you*; I will make my words known to you." (Prov 1:20-23)

Through a strong rebuke, the Spirit of God is ready to bring about a turning point in the life of sinners and to collaborate with those who have experienced the change. In the passage above, the words "I will pour out my spirit on you" and "I will make my words known to you" are powerful expressions of energizing. It is the responsibility of the prophetic messenger to inform his or her addressees about God's willingness to go as far as to grant them a prophetic mission once they turn their lives around at His rebuke.

Preparation for Prophetic Preaching

God calls people to prophetic ministry and He empowers them to carry out their mission. Nevertheless, as in all areas of ministry, excellence in prophetic ministry requires training, which comes through human instrumentalities under divine leading.

Customized Training Needed

Proverbs 22:6 expresses the value of training for children in general: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." As we have already seen, the Hebrew word נַעַר (na'ar) translated here as "child" can also be rendered as "boy, lad," or "young men." Consequently, we are justified to apply the imperative of training in this passage to the age group of teenagers. The basic meaning of the verb חָנַךְ (khanak) translated here as "to train" (in the imperative mood) is "to put something into the mouth" or "to give something to be tasted." The idea is to give a child a taste of something. This suggestive imagery originates in the natural reflex of a child to test and taste things with his or her mouth. Therefore, the connotative meaning of the word is that of giving someone elementary instruction or training about something. The Hebrew literary construct is "train a child in the mouth of his way." Obviously, the verb חָנַךְ ("to put something in the mouth") and the "mouth of the way" together convey the message that the right food needs to be put in "the mouth of the way" of the child, that is, the right experience needs to be placed at the beginning of a child's journey to acquire knowledge.

Another possible meaning of the Hebrew literary construct is "train the child in accordance with his way." Consequently, the child needs the help of an instructor not only to start his journey with a meaningful experience, but also to help the child find the right way. The imperative mood of the verb indicates that the instructor must be intentional about helping the child to start out on the right way and the right way.

Moreover, the child should be trained in "his (own) way," not necessarily in "the teacher's way." The passage seems to suggest that the instructor must take in account the abilities and learning styles of the child. In this sense, "the child's way" may refer either

to his future calling or to his natural abilities, or to both. Children have different abilities and learn differently; therefore, the instructor should incorporate in the training process specific features that will help the child "taste" his way. In addition, the training must start when the trainee is still a child. The long-term benefits of early training cannot be emphasized enough. If a child is trained the right way and at the right time, "when he is old he will not depart from it." The principle of training is simple: what a child learns "in the right way" in his or her early years becomes second nature and will never fade away.

White (n.d.b) expresses the benefit of the right training for young people as follows: "With such an army of workers as our youth, *rightly trained*, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world" (p. 271). White (n.d.a) also expresses the right attitude teachers should have in training young people for God's service: "Instead of appealing to pride and selfish ambition, kindling a spirit of emulation, teachers would endeavor to awaken the love for goodness and truth and beauty – to arouse the desire for excellence" (p. 595). Therefore, training must start at an early age with the use of the right attitude. Done the right way and at the right time, the educational effort will always produce great dividends. This was the basic educational approach in the schools of the prophets: they started the training early on so that later in life they would not forget what they learned.

Spiritual Preparation of the Preacher

The spiritual preparation of the preacher is an integral part of preaching. Tewell (2003) intimates that it "may be the most important and yet most often overlooked aspect of preaching" (p. 52). White (n.d.a) states that the students of the schools of the prophets were "to search deeper into the truths of the word of God and to seek wisdom from

above" (p. 593). Two basic sources of inspiration are indicated: the truth of the Word of God (the content of the Holy Writings) and wisdom from above (the insights of the Holy Spirit). Therefore, their spiritual preparation had two main components: knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

At this point I am not trying to prove that prophetic preachers need to have sound knowledge of God's Word and have to submit to the guidance of God's Spirit; these elements I consider to be self-understood. What I intend to show is that these two elements should be essential components of the training process itself.

Knowledge of the Scriptures

The schools of the prophets offer the right training context for teenage prophetic ministry. Although the Bible does not give much information with regard to the subjects taught in those education centers, it is reasonable to assume that the Holy Writings, that is, the divine instructions that the prophets put in writing, were foundational to their curriculum. In the Jewish culture, teaching children the Word of God was the sacred duty of each parent (see Gen 18:19; Deut 11:19; 2 Tim 3:14-15). Therefore, we would expect the spiritual parents of the sons of the prophets to make the sacred oracles foundational to their instruction.

White (n.d.b) brings clarity to the matter: "The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instructions given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry" (p. 47). In other words, the sons of the prophets were studying the corpus of Sacred Writings of the Old Testament extant at that time. Consequently, the "chief subjects" of study for those "sons of the prophets" that are preparing today for prophetic ministry should include the sacred writings extant now, that is, the entire Bible.

Talking about God's justice and mercy, White (n.d.a) warns:

The existing ignorance of God's word among a people professedly Christian is alarming. Superficial talk, mere sentimentalism, passes for instruction in morals and religion. The justice and mercy of God, the beauty of holiness and the sure reward of right-doing, the heinous character of sin and the certainty of its terrible results, are not impressed upon the minds of the young. Evil associates are instructing the youth in the ways of crime, dissipation, and licentiousness. (pp. 594-595)

In face of such a deplorable situation, White (n.d.e) also cautions: "A great injury is often done to our young men by permitting them to begin to preach when they have no sufficient knowledge of the Scripture to present our faith in an intelligent manner" (p. 539). This, of course, does not mean that the prophetic witness has to be a trained theologian (Johnson, 2015a, p. 23), but rather that he or she has to experience the transformation of God's Word. In accordance with this, Luke (2015) states that preachers

must experience the power of the biblical text impacting their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior. They must allow the Word to transform their lives first; then — and only then — can they be used by the Holy Spirit as effective agents for change. (p. 8)

Consequently, a sound knowledge of the Bible is crucial for the spiritual preparation of the young prophetic witness. The prophetic message is rooted in and emerges from God's Word and shows the way out from this terrible situation, starting the transformation with the prophetic preacher.

Guidance of the Spirit

The teachers of the schools of the prophets were Spirit-filled people called by God to represent Him in the office of prophet. Their spirituality was at the basis of their authority; people acknowledged them as God's messengers because they were known for the manifestations of God's Spirit in their lives. The story of Elijah's departure to heaven well illustrates this reality. Elisha asked for a double portion of his master's spirit (2 Kgs 2:9) and he received that favor. Later, that special endowment, followed by concrete

manifestations of God's Spirit, conferred him spiritual authority. Consequently, the sons

of the prophets immediately recognized him as the right successor of Elijah.

White (n.d.b) maintains that there was a difference between the inspiration of the

prophets and that of their students. She writes:

> In the highest sense, the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. (p. 46)

White (n.d.a) also states:

> These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God and studied His word and His works, *wisdom from above was added to their natural endowments*. The instructors were men not only well versed in divine truth, but those who had themselves enjoyed communion with God and *had received the special endowment of His Spirit.* (p. 593)

Nevertheless, the Bible testifies that at various moments, the students of the

schools of the prophets themselves, as well as some other individuals who joined them,

started prophesying as the Spirit came upon them (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 19:20, 23).

It is hard to understand this difference between the spiritual endowment of the

prophets and that of the sons of the prophets. What is clear, is that in each case the

endowment of the Spirit was complementary to their natural endowments. Moreover, it

seems that, in a way, the spiritual endowment of the students came as a result of the

training process, which focused on understanding and obeying the teaching of the Spirit.

White (n.d.a) explains:

> A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught *how* to pray, *how* to approach their Creator, *how* to exercise faith in Him, and *how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit*. Sanctified intellects brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and *the Spirit of God was manifested* in prophecy and sacred song. (p. 594)

It is not easy to understand the ways and means of the Holy Spirit, but one thing is unambiguous: there is no authentic prophetic message without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the training of the prophetic messenger must focus on understanding and obeying God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit enlightens the Word of God and gives the prophetic messenger the right message to proclaim. Consequently, the prophetic witness will proclaim the "thus says the Lord" under divine instruction. As a result, the prophetic messenger will fulfill what God commended the prophet Jeremiah: "For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak" (Jer 1:7).

Conclusions

This chapter offered a theological reflection in which relevant Bible passages and Ellen G. White writings were examined in order to obtain a sound theological framework to the topic of training, equipping and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching ministry. I found that the legitimacy of teenage prophetic ministry is substantiated in the Bible by the legacy of the schools of the prophets, by teenage prophetic figures and by Joel's eschatological prophecy about the all-encompassing outpouring of God's Spirit. The spiritual profile of the prophetic preacher must include three essential features: the courage to criticize injustice and abuse, the ability to tell the truth in love at all times, and the power to give hope to the desperate and energize people in promoting and doing the right things. Although prophetic preaching is not an exclusively human enterprise, in this aspect of God's service, just like in any other area of ministry, excellence asks for both spiritual preparation and practical training. The two basic components of spiritual preparation for the prophetic preacher are acquiring a sound knowledge of the Bible and obeying the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to my endeavor of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching ministry. I will explore the following topics: learning theory for teenagers, critique of prophetic preaching, prophetic sermon preparation, and evaluation of prophetic preaching.

Learning Theories for Teenagers

For a long time, learning was understood primarily as memorization of facts and specific skills. Caine and Caine (1991) acknowledge that "the immense capacity of the brain to deal with and instantly remember the moment-to-moment events that constitute life experience" was long ignored (p. 4). Similarly, Dames (2012) is aware that postmodern students cannot only be taught facts. "They have to reflect on their own cognitive, attitudinal, affective, behavioral experiences and practical knowledge." Therefore "participative learning in action," recommended by Biggs and Tang (2007, p. 50), seems to be the best way to teach postmodern and metamodern teenagers.

Traditional classroom practices are not efficient when teaching teenagers. Starting with Hart (1999) researchers came to realize that those practices "have significantly impaired student's cognitive process" (Degan, 2011, p. 5). Medina (2008) emphatically states: "If you wanted to create an education environment that was directly opposed to

what the brain was good at doing, you probably would design something like a

classroom" (p. 5). Consequently, the focus of educators has moved from the traditional

classroom learning methods toward a more participative and formative approach. This, of

course, does not mean that the classroom is to be discarded altogether. It only means that

educators need to consider the recent findings of research and, as Harmin and Toth

(2006) suggest, they must transform the classroom in a milieu of inspiring active learning

(pp. 3-17). Moreover, "learning must be continual and extended beyond the classroom"

(McNeal, 2011, p. 84).

<div align="center">The Effective Learning Process</div>

The effectiveness of the learning process depends on the functionality of the

learner's brain. Consequently, for an effective learning experience postmodern and meta-

modern learning strategies have to take into account "the way the brain is naturally

designed to learn" (Jensen, 2008, p. 4).

Effortless Learning

It has been long debated by scholars whether learning should be effortful or

effortless. Brown, Roediger III, and McDaniel (2014) argue that "learning is deeper and

more durable when it's effortful" (p. 3). However, Jensen (2008) explains that memory

forms automatically when content is embedded in context (pp. 163-164). Caine and Caine

(1991) show that memorization (e.g. memorizing a list) is effortful, while the recall of a

meaningful life experience (e.g. recalling dinner) is effortless (p. 37). The brain is a

psychological organ; therefore, any disorder in the psychological functioning of the

student affects his or her learning capacity (p. 80). The optimal state of mind for

effortless learning is "relaxed alertness" (p. 126), which is a state of low threat and high challenge where the student is both relaxed and excited with the learning experience.

The same optimal cognitive state was termed by Csikszentmihalyi (2008, pp. 71-76) as *flow*. According to him, *flow* occurs only if the learning challenge is neither too easy, so that the student would become bored, nor too difficult, so that the student would become frustrated. For a continuous *flow* the learning challenge has to grow proportionally with the skill development of the student until the learning goal is achieved. Jensen (2008) completes the picture explaining that when the learning challenge is adequate positive stress (eustress) occurs and the body releases chemicals that enhance learning abilities (p. 43). Additionally, the memory of the student is also influenced by emotions. Rosenfield (1988) established that emotions help the brain store and recall information (p. 12). Likewise, Caine and Caine (1991) reinforce that emotion and cognition cannot be separated (p. 82). Learning experiences of strong emotional impact create effortlessly long-term memories.

The Instructor as Facilitator of Learning

According to Gardner's (2011) theory of multiple intelligences, a teacher cannot expect all the students to learn in the same way. For each student, teachers must employ a differentiated teaching approach; they should help the student discover and affirm his or her unique way of learning. Medina (2008) agrees with Gardner and concludes: "Given that every brain is wired differently, being able to read a student's mind is a powerful tool in the hands of a teacher (p. 59).

For an effective learning process, Caine, Caine, McClintic, and Klimek (2009) propose a model of guided experiences in an optimal teaching environment (pp. 266-

270). This learning setting should provide three critical prerequisites of learning (pp. 6-7): relaxed alertness (optimal emotional climate), orchestrated immersion in complex experience (optimal learning opportunity), and active processing of experience (optimal way to consolidate learning). In this approach, the traditional direct transmission of knowledge from teacher (who knows) to learners (who do not know) is replaced by the learners' search for meaning during the active processing of that learning experience. However, such learning experience will only be effective if an authentic partnership will be established between instructor and learner. As Belvel (2010) rightly expresses it, "personal relationships between teachers and students have a strong impact on achievement" (p. 66).

<center>Preaching as a Holistic Experience</center>

According to Gane (1997), religious learning deals with attitudes more than with content. Moreover, "the way you learn has a lot to do with commitment, how you feel about things, whether Jesus is lord of your life" (p. 25). After talking about the four learning styles (imaginative, analytic, common sense, and dynamic) proposed by McCathy (1990), Gane concludes: "It is clear that experience-based learning works for all different learning preferences" (p. 34). Similarly, Borich (2007) points out that facts rules and action sequences are assimilated the most effectively by all learners when they are taught through examples, practice and feedback (p. 226). Along the same line of thought, Long (2008) considers preaching as a holistic, integrative Christian practice. In his view, "a practice is a constellation of actions that people have performed over time that are common, meaningful, strategic, and purposeful" (p. 12). Because preaching not

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only applies theory, but also embodies it, "students learn most effectively when they are actively engaged in the material at hand" (Lose, 2008, p. 42).

Nieman (2008) goes even further stating that "a practice-based approach also means that teaching preaching is unavoidably concerned with the formation of preachers, not just learning a practice" (p. 37). Thus, it is expected that a formative "divine encounter" will occur within the teaching-learning experience (p. 36). This confirms MacKeracher (2012) statement that "experience plays a crucial role in all aspects of the transformative learning process" (p. 353).

The Learning-centered Approach

Theological education has moved from a teacher-centered approach toward a student-centered approach. Macaskill (2007) believes that a model "which is person centred, affective, moulded to fit the needs of the student rather than the faculty, might possibly be closer to what theology as an art form is itself" (p. 34). The book *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy,* edited by Long and Tubbs (2008), goes even further and contends for a move from teacher-centered or learner-centered pedagogy to a learning-centered methodology (p. vii). Such an approach revolves around the process of learning, entailing that there are standards of excellence in preaching based on which preaching "can be taught and learned" (p. 16). In the words of Arrais (2016), "preaching is a science that may be developed and improved by those who make appropriate preparations" (p. 5).

This approach, of course, does not overlook the instructor as role model. Talking about the interaction of modeling and student performance, Osmer (2008) proposes as strategy "the presentation of a model of good practice, which is followed by student

performances that seek to embody certain features of this model" (p. 226). The model-student interaction can effectively unfold in the context of the intentional learning outcome activities recommended by Biggs and Tang (2007), which are the following: motivational context, well-structured knowledge base, relevant learner activity, formative feedback, reflective practice, and self-monitoring activities (pp. 91-92).

Learning, Preaching and Giftedness

Preaching skills have often been perceived as a natural unfolding of innate gifts. Gagné (2013) sees a causal relationship between outstanding natural abilities (gifts) and outstanding competencies (talents). He states: "Because gifts are the constituent elements (or raw materials) of talents, it follows that the presence of talents implies underlying gifts" (p. 198). Long (2008) presents a rather contrasting understanding; he does not diminish the importance of giftedness, but emphasizes critical learning. He explains:

> Becoming a competent preacher is not simply a matter of drawing out and strengthening inner traits and gifts, important as that is, but it is instead a matter of critical learning about traditions and patterns of thinking and acting that have been honed over the centuries of Christian preaching. (p. 4)

The tension between Long (2008) and Gagné (2013) is solved by Simonton's (2013) nature-nurture integration view. He maintains that "nature and nurture are both intimately intertwined in the generation of greatness" (p. 23). Consequently, greatness in preaching would be both *born* and *made*, and since the act of preaching is a divine-human enterprise, here both the *nature* and the *nurture* aspect are divinely shaped. Goetz (2016) holds a similar view, stating that although someone may have gifts, abilities and a personality that would recommend him or her for preaching, "excellence in preaching is not an innate activity," but rather "a learned and developed practice" (p. 17). Speaking about the need of those that are supposed to present the last message of mercy to the

world to be thoroughly trained by experienced teachers, White (n.d.e) emphatically

states: "Nothing less than constant cultivation will develop the value of the gifts that God

has bestowed for wise improvement" (p. 538).

Critique of Prophetic Preaching

Prophetic preaching is a method and a style of powerful proclamation. Williams

(2015a) clarifies that prophetic preaching is "distinct from preaching prophecy, although

prophecy can be preached prophetically" (p.10). Prophetic preaching is rooted in the

biblical concept of the prophet. Wogaman (1998) explains that the prophet is someone

who speaks for God (p. 3), and "through the prophet the people have a window into the

reality of God and how the reality of God can shape and direct their existence" (p. 4).

This role of the prophet must be at the basis of any definition of prophetic preaching.

Summarizing the main definitions from recent literature about prophetic

preaching, Williams (2018) states:

> Prophetic preaching is a homiletical genre in which divine authority is exercised in
> the mode, if not exact manner, of Old Testament prophets to (a) critically question the
> status quo; (b) speak truth to power; (c) offer biblical/theological insights into current
> situations; (d) challenge listeners to repent; and (e) exercise God's righteousness as
> well as His justice. (p. 52)

The Need for Prophetic Preaching

Today prophetic preaching is rather neglected. Tisdale (2010) senses that "we

have lost our will to preach prophetically because we have lost the prophetic vision that

comes from being intimately connected with God, with God's world, and with God's

people" (p. 20). Similarly, McMickle (2006) laments that nowadays prophets have gone

in search of mega churches, faith-based funding, personal comfort, political correctness, or "into a ministry that places praise over speaking truth to power" (pp. 2-3).

The prophetic witness is needed today more than ever. Due to the ever-increasing phenomenon of injustice, people are experiencing distress and despair. We cry for justice; we need a divine response of hope through the prophets of God who have always been "harbingers of hope, naming reality as it is and placing before us a vision of the new future God will bring to pass" (Tisdale, 2010, p. xii).

Young people should be actively involved in the prophetic proclamation. They are especially receptive to the prophetic message of divine justice and hope and they are willing to become God's agents of restoring justice and sharing the hope of a better future. Hoang (2011), director of the *International Justice Mission Institute,* eloquently expresses this reality:

> This generation knows that some of the greatest heartaches of our globe are wrought by human disasters of violent injustice, and they want to make it right. This, therefore, is the generation that will grow to know, love, and follow Jesus because they discover in Jesus the one true God of justice who restores a world breaking under the weight of darkness. When we seize opportunities to lead this generation by demonstrating how the body of Christ is a vessel of rescuing and restoring justice, we will see their hearts won by the King who has ultimate victory over the gravest evil. (p. 237)

<div align="center">The Content of Prophetic Preaching</div>

Brueggemann (2001) suggests that "the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and a perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us" (p. 3). He proposes two main components for prophetic preaching: *radical criticism* and *energizing*. On one hand, through radical criticism the abusive power is "shown to be fraudulent" (p. 11) and the dismantling of the dominant oppression-consciousness of the political, economic, social and religious

powers is predicted (p. 13). On the other hand, the energizing aspect offers hope through

Gods promises to those oppressed and brings "people to engage the promise of newness

at work in our history with God" (p. 60). Conversely, Ottoni-Wilhelm (2003) talks about

three essential elements of prophetic preaching: voice God's passion for others, proclaim

the promises of God, and point the way to new possibilities (pp. 84-91). She is not so

determined to do criticism, but places a strong emphasis on the aspect of hope.

Corporate Issues vs. Individual Issues

According to Tisdale (2010), prophetic preaching "is often more focused on

corporate and public issues than on individual and personal concerns" (p. 10).

Nevertheless, Williams (2015b) urges us to "avoid thinking that a prophetic message

must always challenge an institutional status quo." The prophetic message can address

"the wretched excesses of materialism or immorality in a person, congregation,

denomination, or society" (as cited in Morris, 2012, p. 113). She explains:

> Corporate sin is intimately connected to personal transgression. In fact, corporate sin
> begins in the head of an individual long before it gets into the system to pollute or
> pervert it. That's why it's important to confront individual sin before it becomes the
> root of corporate evil. (p. 119)

West (2004) also keeps in balance the corporate and the individual aspect of

injustice. He emphasizes that the prophetic witness calls attention to the causes of social

injustice by highlighting "personal and institutional evil, including the evil of being

indifferent to personal and institutional evil" (p. 114). Brueggemann (2001) goes further

suggesting that the primary focus of prophetic ministry is not the specific public crisis but

the dominant enduring crisis which "manifests itself in any given time around concrete

issues," and "runs from concrete issues to concrete issues" (p. 3).

Countercultural vs. Politically Correct

Prophetic preaching challenges the status quo. Williams (2012) frankly admits that "prophetic preachers are not preoccupied with being politically correct." On the contrary, they are "willing to confront injustice in the nation as well as in their local communities with divine authority" (p. 118). Similarly, Tisdale (2010) affirms that "prophetic preaching invites courage in its hearers and empowers them to work to change the social order" (p. 10). Talking about the radical criticism of Brueggemann (2001, p. 13), Tisdale (2006) acknowledges that sometimes the countercultural prophetic witness will even pronounce a death sentence upon the old social order. Prophetic preaching often goes against societal norms and pronounces not only grace, but also divine judgment on human action or inaction, therefore it can "get ministers in trouble" with both their society and their congregation (p. 3).

Both Williams (2012) and Tisdale (2010) are in agreement with McMickle (2006) that prophetic preachers must combat the single vision of those who "only offer to people a vision of the future that allows them to remain in power and requires that masses of people remain marginalized in society" and must "show that God can and will bring about a future different from that envisioned by the ruling elite" (p. 11). With all this, Wogaman (1998) is convinced that "to be prophetic is not necessarily to be adversarial, or even controversial" (p. 3). Williams (2018) agrees and notices that "McMickle and his colleagues are not suggesting that a prophetic preacher is combative and is always in conflict with society" (p. 50). Nevertheless, there is a clear countercultural feature to prophetic preaching which derives from following the agenda of "an alternative vision of God's future" (McClure, 2007, p. 177).

The Authority of the Prophetic Preacher

Prophetic preachers speak *about* God. "They preach about a God who is known by them, can be known by all, and who can be trusted in all things" (Williams, 2018, p. 56). But prophetic preachers also speak *from* God. They open a window into the reality of God (Wogaman, 1998, p. 4) and negotiate "a hearing for the faith in, with, and for the world" (Long, 2009, p. 33). Tisdale (2010) explains what it means to speak from God:

> To speak from God also means to speak on the cutting edge of what is just and what is unjust in the local communities in which we find ourselves; to bring God's Word to bear on key events and at crisis moments in the life of church, nation and world; and to have a bias in our preaching toward the liberation of God and the upending of powers and principalities, thus bringing in a reign marked by peace and equality and justice for all." (p. 10)

Wogaman (1998) is convinced that although the prophetic preacher "cannot claim to know the whole mind of God," to speak for God means to grasp, first, His mind (p. 4). Nonetheless, the message is shaped by the messenger. Osmer (2008) reminds us that even the "prophets played an active role in shaping the message they delivered" (p. 133). He calls this interplay of divine disclosure and human shaping "prophetic discernment."

According to Williams (2012), prophetic preachers are willing to confront injustice with divine authority (p. 118). However, MacDonald (2012) is reluctant when it comes to using the concept of preaching with authority, because, in his view, that would ascribe authority to the messenger, when, in fact, the authority is in the message (p. 37). Similarly, Koessler (2012) states:

> Preaching with authority has to do with my confidence in the basis for my message. I am confident that I have a word from God and that the reason you have to listen to me is because this is what the Lord has said. (p. 98)

Williams (2018) agrees that "any discussion of the Christian preacher's authority must begin with its negation because it seeks not its own" (p. 35). Authority belongs to

Jesus, but He gives authority to His disciples. Listeners will perceive it as "holy boldness" in the preachers that are empowered by Him. Therefore, she emphatically states: "Power, without this authority is eventually oppressive, but when it springs out of authority, it is always redemptive" (p. 48).

Divine Directive

Tisdale (2010) deems that pastors "avoid or are fearful of becoming prophetic witnesses" (p. 11). She lists the following possible causes: an inherited model of biblical interpretation that marginalizes the prophetic dimension of Scripture; personal concern for parishioners; fear of conflict; fear of dividing the congregation; fear of being disliked, rejected, or made to pay a price for prophetic witness; feelings of inadequacy in addressing prophetic concerns; and discouragement that our own prophetic witness is not making a difference (pp. 11-20). She leaves us with the impression that every preacher should take action and preach prophetically.

Williams (2018) views things differently. To Brueggemann's (2001) two basic components of prophetic preaching (radical criticism and energizing) she adds the concept of *divine directive*. According to her, prophetic message can come exclusively as the result of divine directive. The preacher must wait until he or she receives instructions from God regarding any prophetic message. The preacher will be tempted to fake divine directive, but "not only will the congregants know if one is faking a divine directive, the devils will also recognize it" (p. 54). Therefore, she concludes:

> A prophetic preacher is not free to challenge a status quo or address issues that may have their genesis in his or her own angst, lack of early childhood developmental needs, or spurious complaints he or she is too cowardly to speak about to power. Rather the message must be the result of a divine directive. (p. 49)

Truth in Love

Prophetic preaching means speaking God's truth. Prophets do not "mince words" (Williams, 2018, p. 56). And yet, divine truth must be spoken in love. Wogaman's (1998) book title *Speaking Truth in Love* expresses this imperative. He rhetorically asks:

> If the whole point of the prophetic word is God's love, how on earth can that message be heard if it is not expressed in a context of love? If the very concept of justice finally depends, for its ultimate meaning, upon the love of God, how can even that word take on reality apart from love? We cannot preach about love unlovingly; it is a self-contradiction. (pp. 20-21)

Chan (2012) calls the lack of love for others the dark side of prophetic preaching. This is his challenge: "At times I am focused on what God wants me to say, but I forget that God also wants me to love people in the process of preaching" (p. 15). Then he concludes: "Ultimately prophetic preaching begins and ends with love" (p. 16). With all this, God's justice and His love are interwoven in prophetic preaching. Quicke (2011) believes that prophetic preaching positively "proclaims all that God's loving and just kingdom stands for, while, negatively, it discerns and confronts all that threatens God's love and justice" (p. 173). Similarly, Ortberg (2012) considers that the most important message is that justice matters because of Jesus. He affirms: "His kingdom is a place where justice prevails, so I cannot love Him without loving the justice He prizes" (p. 57).

Lischer (2005) is convinced that "the last thing human beings need is a god that turns away from us at critical moments or in desperate situations" (p. 57). This reminds one of Brueggemann's (2001) statement that "real criticism begins in the capacity to grieve" (p. 11).

Tisdale (2010) also asserts that "prophetic proclamation requires of the preacher a heart that breaks with the things that break God's heart" (p. 10). She warns:

If prophetic preaching is born out of thinly disguised anger at a congregation, out of frustration with a congregation, or out of a desire to appear loving so that the message will be heard and accepted, people will know it. We cannot fake love in the pulpit. (p. 43)

"Sympathy is human participation in God's pathos, God's suffering over the life of the covenant people and creation as a whole" (Osmer, 2008, p. 136). Consequently, Lorrits (2012) convincingly argues that "prophetic preaching gets off track when I use the word of God as a sledgehammer to bludgeon people," where there is no graciousness in presenting the truth" (p. 44). Long's (2009) strong criticism is legitimate:

Preachers who have misunderstood or willfully distorted the gospel, preachers with small-minded and mean-spirited versions of the Christian faith, have scorched the earth before us, and gospel preachers must now proceed assuming that, for far too many hearers, the words of grace, wonder, and joy that form the vocabulary of the faith now sound like a harsh language of an invading army. (p. 33)

Nevertheless, referring to Scott (2002), Williams (2015b) affirms that "fierce conversation is the backbone of prophetic preaching" (p. 65). Koessler (2012) contrasts preaching with authority with authoritarian preaching which he calls "preaching as bullying" (p. 98). But fierce conversation is not bullying. According to Scott, a fierce conversation is not one that uses menacing, cruel, barbarous or threatening language, but rather "one in which we come out from behind ourselves into the conversation and make it real" (p. 7). Thus, prophetic preaching is a fierce conversation conducted in love.

Prophetic and Pastoral

Prophetic preaching and pastoral preaching were frequently seen in contrast. Long (1995) talks about an "antagonistic captivity" of prophetic preaching and discards the assumption that "to preach prophetically is to side for justice against charity, to be prophetic against pastoral" (p. 387). He emphatically declares: "Prophetic preaching is the most pastoral of activities" (p. 388). Wogaman (1998) explains that this antagonistic

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view of prophetic and pastoral is due to the fact that while the prophet is viewed as one who "busily tells people what they ought to do to make themselves acceptable to God," the pastor "is taken to be one who concentrates on helping people with their personal problems" (p. 3). In his understanding, prophetic and the pastoral are two sides of the same coin. "One cannot be very prophetic without being pastoral; one cannot be very pastoral without being prophetic" (p. 27). He explains:

> The prophetic is greatly enhanced by the pastoral. And by the same token, the pastoral is enhanced by the prophetic. If by prophetic we mean our reach for the deep truth about God's love as it is expressed in the circumstances of human life, than it is not possible to minister to real needs of people without being prophetic. (p. 26)

Prophetic Preaching and the Community of Faith

McMickle (2006) points out that the prophetic critique not only confronts society but also the local churches and Christian denominations that know about the ongoing injustice but say and do nothing to improve the situation (p. 90). He declares: "Prophetic beings have as their special aim to shatter deliberate ignorance and willful blindness to the suffering of others and expose the clever forms of evasion and escape we devise in order to hide and conceal injustice" (p. 121).

Ward and Ward (1995) acknowledge that the natural inclination of the Christian community is to focus on its most immediate human needs, and thus "the community always runs the risk of obscuring the wider dimensions of the gospel, particularly the wider implications of God's demand for righteousness and justice" (p. 11). Prophetic preaching runs against this natural inclination. It "is not a tantrum that screams at only bad people" (Williams, 2015b, p. 80). Williams (2018) urges that prophetic preaching is "designed to immediately shift the focus of a community of faith from what may or may not be affecting their lives to what will ultimately do so" (p. 52). She declares:

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Prophetic preaching never allows the community of faith to believe that mere participation in the rituals of its religious life can ever be adequate substitutes for that form of ministry that is designed to uplift 'the least of these' (Matthew 25:40), Christ's brothers and sisters in the world. (p. 52)

Long (1995) admits that prophetic preaching often appears antagonistic not only to the wider environs, but also to the community of faith (p. 386). The false assumption that "prophetic preaching sets the preacher against the faith community" (p. 387) often makes the church unable to hear a prophetic word and those who speak prophetically often have to pay a great cost (p. 388). Unless we assume that the prophetic preachers speak from within the community of faith and are not opposed to it, we cannot hear what they say. The prophetic preacher is not a heroic, isolated, and self-sufficient figure who does not need the community of faith for the truthfulness of his or her word. Long states:

The prophetic preacher should never conceive of her or himself as the isolated individual standing against the community of faith trying to move the community of faith into a future it stubbornly resists, seeking to create for it a new future. (p. 388)

Conversely, "the prophetic preacher stands under the community of faith; he or she is not set over and against it" (p. 387). Brueggemann (1990) suggests that the preacher should not team with the Bible text against the community of faith as against a hostile outsider, but rather stand with the community of faith against the text, so that the radical word of God could offend both (pp. 237-247). Willimon (2008) agrees that "in this manner the people of God are nourished and strengthened because you, their pastor, have listened to them and to the Word, with all the skills and gifts you have, and have dared to speak" (p. 62). Tisdale (2010) recognizes that prophetic preaching can confront people with stumbling blocks; the challenge is how to eliminate the "wrong" stumbling blocks and keep the "genuine" ones that are at the heart of prophetic preaching (p. 42).

The Purpose of Prophetic Preaching

Prophetic preaching is salvific in purpose. It starts with informing people regarding injustice, moving from the familiar toward the unfamiliar issues (Lundblad, 2001, pp. 53-55). Brueggemann (2001) believes that "bringing hurt to public expression is an important first step in the dismantling criticism that permits a new reality, theological and social, to emerge" (p. 12). For him, grieving is "the most visceral announcement that things are not right" (p. 11). However, as Wogaman (1998) states it, "prophetic preaching deals not only with problems and evils to be overcome; it offers hope that they can be overcome" (p. 82). Likewise, McMickle (2006) asserts that prophetic preaching is not limited to words alone; it challenges us "to return to the ways of the Lord our God (p. 9). He also states that "the things about which the prophet is willing to speak must be the things about which the prophet is also prepared to act" (p. 17). Therefore, the purpose of prophetic preaching is *words* and *action* against injustice both on the part of the preacher and on the part of the congregation. Williams (2012) agrees that "rather than to simply inform, prophetic preaching aims to redeem and transform, to bring people back to a saving relationship with God" (p. 120). It "provides divinely orchestrated strategies on how to move out of despair with determination and hope" (p. 119). Prophetic preachers need to show how to urgently get back on track with God, individually and corporately, because we do not have much time to return (p. 120).

Indeed, prophetic preaching "calls true believers to actively pursue justice and righteousness for every member of society, no matter what the personal cost" (Williams, 2018, p. 52). Childs (2003) recognizes that this prophetic task is extremely demanding. It can expose the individual to negative feelings and fear which often lead to inappropriate

attitudes like resignation or attack (p. 40). And yet, Volf (2011) aims for a public faith in the service of the common good in which each person participates (p. 130). Tisdale (2010) considers that using an invitational, confessional, provocative, or inspirational tone in prophetic preaching "can lead people to weep, to think more critically, to see the world with new eyes, or to engage in advocacy or action" (p. 88). Just like Brueggemann (2001), she believes that "prophetic preaching requires the preacher to name both what is not of God in the world (criticizing) and the new reality God will bring to pass in the future (energizing)" (p. 10). Here Williams (2018) recommends balance; otherwise one can focus "on the evil acts of the royal consciousness regimes, but fail to point the listener to the awesome, redemptive power" of God (p. 55).

Prophetic Sermon Preparation

Tisdale (2010) affirms that "prophetic preaching can be as varied in content, form and tone as any other kind of Christian preaching" (p. 87). Nevertheless, since prophetic preaching is both a method and a style of proclamation, it must contain specific features that differentiate it from other preaching methods and styles.

The Art of Prophetic Preaching

McMickle (2008) points out three specific things prophetic preachers do: take a text from the biblical prophets; emphasize themes of justice and righteousness, and deliver the sermon with zeal and fervor (pp. 16-18). Wogaman (1998) strongly believes that "great truth can be enhanced by its packaging" (p. 74). He lists ten principles that can help the preacher toward the art of prophetic preaching: speaking to the listeners; establishing the legitimacy of preaching on controversial issue; appealing to values held in common; dealing responsibly with objections; doing the homework before preaching;

dealing with part of an issue when the whole issue cannot be addressed; striking a balance between principle and detail; appealing to our common stake on justice; offering hope; and suggesting responsibilities (pp. 75-83). He also points out a number of traps that must be avoided: inconsistent appeals to authority; generalizing from single cases; treating contraries as necessarily contradictory; the "straw man;" poisoning the well; the non sequitur; the "ritual function;" and the naturalistic fallacy (pp. 86-92). Tisdale (2010) also proposes ten sermon design strategies: speaking truth in love; starting with the familiar and moving toward the unfamiliar; standing in the shoes of another and viewing the world from a different perspective; using a congregation's history as a bridge to a prophetic vision for its future; using a congregation's current mission involvement as a bridge for prophetic witness; inviting someone personally involved in the concern to participate in preaching on it; articulating the opposing viewpoint in a manner that is fair and accurate; and taking the long view (pp. 42-60). All these principles and strategies can enhance the value and effectiveness of prophetic sermons.

The Form of the Prophetic Sermon

According to Long (1989), a good sermon form grows out of the particularities of preaching God's truthful word "on this day to this people" (p. 105). Tisdale (2010) generously lists a dozen of possible prophetic sermon forms: invitation to dialog; problem–resolution–new possibility; narrative structure (my story, the biblical story, our story), thesis–antithesis–synthesis; structure around an image; letter form; action structure (biblical models, areas needing action, call to action); Socratic teaching (moving from questions to answers); play on words; upsetting the equilibrium (moving from ease to dis-ease); invitation to lament; and confessional (pp. 63-86).

Willimon (2008) seems to be much stricter suggesting that "in order for the text to be heard today as it was heard at that time, we must attempt to use the same literary form" (p. 56). He proposes three different models of building a sermon, which lead to different sermon forms. In the first model the preacher starts with the biblical text (what it says), moves to the exposition of the text (what it meant) and then applies the text to the contemporary situation to which it speaks (what it means). The second model starts with the contemporary problem (which illuminates the text) to which the preacher brings the relevant biblical text and answers the question "what would happen if the text were applied to this problem." In the third model, a contemporary story portrays some aspect of the human condition and then a biblical story illuminates the situation (p. 61).

Carter et al. (2005) suggest that "most effective sermons include the following: a reading of the text, introduction, text explanation, main points, illustrations, applications, and conclusions" (p. 26). They also show how the use of deductive and inductive methods has a bearing on the sermon's form. Inductive sermons move from specific truths, examples, or ideas to the general truth of the sermon unfolded progressively, while deductive sermons move from general to specifics declaring first the conclusion of the sermon and then stating propositions, points, or spiritual truths that lead to it (p. 34). These methods of creating a sermon which largely determine its form can also be used for prophetic sermons construction.

<div align="center">The Steps of the Prophetic Sermon</div>

A sermon is a form of methodical communication; therefore, any step-by-step sermon preparation method must be informed by the basic principles of rhetoric. Toye (2013, pp. 36-40) presents the five cannons of rhetoric: *invention/discovery* (coming up

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with the arguments); *arrangement* (ordering of the material); *style* (choice of words and figures of speech); *memory* (techniques for training the memory); and *delivery* (accent, posture, gesture, tone of voice, etc.).

Williams (2012) delineates two basic steps in the preparation of a prophetic sermon. The first step is the study and integration of God's word into the mind and soul of the preacher. The second step is a careful examination of the present cultural, social, or religious situation and the placement of that situation into a theological and biblical perspective (p. 119). These two specific movements of prophetic sermons can be harmonized with most step-by-step methods. For instance, they can be applied to Wright's (as cited in Jones, 2005) eight-step sermon preparation method: select the passage and write down first impressions; look at key words; hammer out a theme statement; gather illustrative material; write down the sermon; start anticipating the appeal; use the measuring rod (check continuity, movement, unity of thought, golden chord of purpose, point of intersection); and rehearse aloud (pp. 109-110).

Carter et al. (2005) propose a very practical ten-step sermon process, which can also be applied to prophetic sermons: grasp the meaning of the text in their town (original meaning); measure the width of the river; cross the principlizing bridge; grasp the text in our town; exegete your congregation; determine how much background material to include in the sermon for audience understanding; determine sermon thesis and main points; develop text centered applications for sermon; find illustrations to make points more relevant to audience; write out complete sermon and practice delivery (pp. 38-39).

Sermon preparation is an intense and laborious work. It asks for special attention given to all the details concerning both content and form. Willimon (2008) is right:

No sermon is complete until you have carefully gone over your manuscript or outline and deleted any superfluous or extraneous ideas, details, or illustrations that do not contribute to the development of the one-sentence theme that you defined at the beginning of the sermon construction process. (p. 62)

Dealing With the Text

Dealing with the text starts with selecting a text for the sermon. Carter et al. (2005) suggest four possible ways for choosing the passage: personal study of Scripture, need of the congregation, book or theme series, and church calendar or events (p. 24). To these we add the need of *divine directive* advocated by Williams (2018, p. 49).

Willimon (2008) and Carter et al. (2005) teach us how to work with the text and describe in practical terms the exegetical process. Willimon (2008) recommends the following steps: read through the whole book in one sitting, establish the text, do detailed word study, read the entire text again with an ear toward its general trust, state the theme in one sentence, answer the question "how shall I say it", and jot down ways in which your congregation can relate to the text (pp. 55-57). Carter et al. (2005) offer similar guidelines, such as: read the text and notice details; consider genre; translate passage from the original; note literary and historical-cultural context; consult commentaries and other resources; and write out your "text thesis statement" and "text outline" (p. 38).

Dealing With the Audience

Carter et al. (2005) use the concept of "bridge to your audience" (p. 38) in order to suggestively describe the hermeneutical process through which the message of the biblical text reaches the audience. The preacher must define similarities and differences between then and now and identify the universal timeless theological principles that are applicable to today's audience. Additionally, he or she needs to exegete the audience to

see spiritual maturity, biblical and theological literacy, social and cultural setting, factors of communication, and possibilities of adapting the message to the listeners (pp. 38-39). Furthermore, according to Farris (1998), in order to avoid a one-sided approach of the audience, the preacher has to carry out what may be the most difficult exegesis, that of the self, to see what issues she or he might be tempted to overemphasize (p. 35).

Both Carter et al. (2005, p. 28) and Willimon (2008, p. 62) emphasize the role of the introduction of the sermon, because this is where the preacher establishes relevance and generate interest in the audience; this is where the preacher hooks the listeners or loses them. In Tisdale's (2010) view, a good prophetic sermon can start with a biblical text, a narrative from everyday life, an image, or a problem to be pondered (pp. 87-88).

Equally important is the conclusion of the sermon, because it can draw the audience to a point of decision. According to Williams (2018), here the preacher can "stir the mind, emotions and will of every hearer of the truths of Scripture to become complete in Christ" (pp. 43-44). To this end, she proposes creative and unpredictable endings, such as: a story, a symbolic action, a celebration, prayer, a poem or a song, or Scripture (pp. 200-201). Carter et al. (2005) warn:

> Unfortunately, sometimes preachers deplete all their energy, discipline, and time in the writing of the body of the sermon and then have nothing left to develop a solid, creative, and powerful conclusion. This is a tragedy that leaves the audience perplexed and unsure of the sermon's relevancy. (p. 32)

Evaluation of Prophetic Sermons

Evaluating a sermon is no easy task. Clader (2003) points out the difficulty:

> The 'real' sermon is the one received, not the one delivered. And the assembly, made up of a variety of people and just as many stories, imparts to the preaching event a dynamic and a meaning far beyond what you or I may originally have intended. (p. 160)

Resner (1999) shows that persuasion and efficacy are two different things. In his view, "it is conceivable that a hearer may be persuaded by the preacher and yet remain unsaved; or, conversely, be unpersuaded by the preacher, and yet be saved by the reconciling word of the Gospel" (p. 182). Persuasion can be evaluated from a rhetorical standpoint, but efficacy, from a theological perspective, is beyond human evaluation.

Nonetheless, Long (2008), is convinced that the practice of preaching possesses "namable standards of excellence" (p. 16). There are many valuable resources for sermon evaluation. Carter et al. (2005) list four main criteria for a good biblical sermon:

> 1. Does the sermon grow out of a biblical text and does it connect closely to it? 2. Does the sermon have elements that generate interest, connect truth to real life, and engage the listener? 3. Does the sermon form leave the audience with clear, sound biblical truth that communicates to them and can be applied to life? 4. Does the sermon challenge them to make changes in life based on the principles found in the biblical text? (p. 37)

Furthermore, Resner (2010) has a long list of evaluating questions (pp. 342-343); Willimon (2008) recommends the sermon reaction questionnaire designed by Stokes (pp. 105-106); while Arnold (2008) proposes a much shorter evaluation form (p. 108). None of these resources deals specifically with prophetic preaching, but with some adaptation, they could also be used for evaluating prophetic sermons.

Conclusion

This chapter offered a review of relevant literature in four areas of my study: learning theory, critique of prophetic preaching, prophetic sermon preparation, and prophetic sermon evaluation. In my review, based on current learning theories, I found that for an effortless learning process, prophetic preaching should be taught to teenagers as a holistic experience. Moreover, the surveyed sources revealed that prophetic preaching is designed to confront the prevalent individual and corporate injustice, and the

generalized indifference to it. Nevertheless, prophetic preachers must always proclaim

truth to the abusive power, in love, under divine directive, offering hope and the chance

of returning to God's ways. Furthermore, through the examination of the particularities of

prophetic sermon preparation I learned that in order for the message to effectively touch

the audience, much attention must be given to both the sermon's content and its form.

And finally, I found that the effectiveness of prophetic sermons could only be evaluated

partially due to inherent human limitations. All in all, the findings acquired through my

Literature Review helped me develop my intervention methodology.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Introduction

This chapter describes the intervention strategy I developed for the

implementation and evaluation of my teenage preaching project in an exigent, relatively

large church. As Bryan (2015) points it out, "congregations with a more numerous

membership have come to expect (even demand) higher quality preaching" (p. 96).

Good practice is based on solid theoretical information; therefore, my intervention

methodology was derived from the Theological Reflection and Literature Review

provided in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, and was prospected to bring about solutions to

the situation described in the Statement of the Problem. Johns (2015) recommends that if

we are to retain our young adults, we should identify areas they are passionate about and

develop projects for them (p. 71). This project aims to capitalize on teenagers' passion for

social justice. In this chapter I first describe the process of intervention, and then outline

the methodology of evaluation of this ministry project.

Implementation of Ministry Project

This section looks at three major aspects of the implementation of this project:

recruitment of participants, theoretical foundation of the training process, and sermonic

process (producing the sermon, practicing the sermon, and preaching the sermon).

Recruitment of Participants

The implementation and evaluation of this preaching ministry project involved three categories of participants: adult preaching mentors, teenage preaching mentees, and adult project evaluators.

Recruitment of the Mentors

Mentors were selected first because they assisted the researcher in the recruiting process of teenage preachers. Numerous authors (Fortune & Fortune, 2009, pp. 17-18; Krause, Putnam, Willis Jr., & Guidon, 2010, p. 166; Brantley, Jackson, & Cauley, 2015, p. 151; Cauley, 2016, pp. 77-85), emphasize that ministry should not be limited to those that have formal education in one specific area of the church's mission. Kidder (2011) believes that "when it comes to equipping and training, no one who does ministry should ever do it alone" (p. 56). White (n.d.d) confirms:

> Ministers should take the officers and members of the church into their confidence, and teach them how to labour for the Master. Thus the minister will not have to perform all the labour himself, and at the same time, the church will receive greater benefit than if he endeavourd to do all the work, and release the members of the church from acting the part which the Lord designed that they should. (p. 20)

Accordingly, the researcher of this ministry project equipped and empowered spiritual mentors that demonstrated knowledge in the area of preaching. He hand-picked and verbally invited six adult mentors (4 males and 2 females) from among people connected with the preaching ministry of Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church and well-respected for their preaching ministry, to serve as mentors for the preaching mentees. The main criteria for their selection were experience in preaching ministry, and ability to train and equip others in the practice of preaching.

Recruitment of the Preaching Mentees

This was the most challenging part of the recruiting process. According to Kinnaman (2011), recognizing their giftedness and inviting them to participate in a project are some of the most effective ways to approach the youth (pp. 217-218). However, because teenagers are often unaware of their spiritual gifts, the classical "spiritual gift inventory" approach (see Dick & Dick, 2011, pp. 25-47) would not have been of much assistance in determining their giftedness. Moreover, asking teenagers to fill out a long spiritual gift inventory would not have made participation attractive. Furthermore, most spiritual gift inventories are rather vague with regard to the gift of preaching, let alone prophetic preaching.

In addition, for prophetic preaching divine call should play the most decisive role. And God may call people before their giftedness becomes evident to themselves or others. The question was: How could we help preaching mentee prospects recognize their divine call? Here the role of the mentors came into picture. In their personal interactions with preaching prospects, they helped them recognize their giftedness and divine call for prophetic preaching and invited them to become part of this project.

The selection process played out in four steps. First, all teenagers of the church were invited to attend an orientation meeting where, based on my Literature Review and Theological Reflection, I made a strong case for the need and legitimacy of prophetic preaching in the younger generation. Second, mentors expressed their desire to mentor teenagers for prophetic preaching ministry. They invited the teenagers to sign up for a discussion with one of them, irrespective of how they felt about it at that moment, with collaboration in view, in case they would be deemed fit for prophetic preaching. Third,

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based on the assessment conducted by mentors in their prayerful individual discussions with the trainee prospects, mentors created a pool of pre-qualified prospects. Fourth, each mentor extended a personal invitation to the pre-qualified preaching prospect with which he or she envisions the best teamwork. In case the invitation had not been accepted, the project mentor would have extended an invitation to another pre-qualified preaching prospect.

Recruitment of the Evaluators

The evaluators of this ministry project were ordained, active elders of Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. At one of the regular meetings of the Board of Elders, the researcher verbally invited all elders that have not been previously selected to serve as mentors to become evaluators of this ministry project. This choice was based on two main premises: First, their familiarity with the preaching mentees and the church helped them carry out an informed evaluation of the effectiveness of the ministry project in its particular context. Second, their involvement in this ministry project helped them to develop a vision for integrating young people in the leadership process of their church.

Protocol of Participation

Participation in this ministry project was strictly voluntary; all subjects were free to join or leave at their discretion. All adult participants signed a consent form expressing their informed decision to be involved in this project. Teenage participants provided assent to participate, while their parents signed a consent form through which they express their approval, and support for their children to be trained, equipped, and deployed for prophetic preaching ministry. The consent and assent forms were completed and signed prior to the commencement of the implementation of this project.

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Theoretical Foundations for the
Training Process

Teaching metamodern teenagers is a demanding task. As I have shown in my

Literature Review, they cannot be taught only facts (Dames, 2012) and the traditional

classroom approach is not efficient (Medina, 2008, p. 5). A more participative approach

is needed to transform the classroom into a center of formative active learning (Harmin &

Toth, 2006, pp. 3-17). Moreover, the learning process must be extended beyond the

classroom (McNeal, 2011, p. 84), and its methods should take into account "the way the

brain is naturally designed to learn" (Jensen, 2008, p. 4).

The Learning Experience

Preaching is a holistic, integrative practice (Long, 2008, p. 12). Consequently,

"teaching preaching is unavoidably concerned with the formation of preachers, not just

learning a practice" (Nieman, 2008, p. 37). Throughout the learning process, we aimed to

help our mentees to reach their optimal state of mind, which is "relaxed alertness" (Caine

& Caine, 1991, p. 126), and experience *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008, pp. 71-76), which

only occurs when the learning challenge is neither too easy so that it becomes boring, nor

too difficult so that it creates frustration. Both in my Literature Review and in my

Theological Reflection I showed that students learn differently, therefore they need

customized approaches. Nonetheless, as Gane (1997) concluded, "experience-based

learning works for all different learning preferences" (p. 34).

The Mentor-Mentee Relationship

Mentorship is deeply rooted in the discipleship and ministry concept of the Bible.

Kidder (2017) rightly observes that "Jesus focused a major portion of His ministry on

mentoring the disciples spiritually and in ministry" (p. 21). In this holistic learning experience, the role of the mentor is rooted in Christ's model of sharing everyday life with his disciples (Dodson, 2012, p. 30). Being a mentor essentially means "collaborating with God's heart-shaping project" (McNeal, 2011, p. 187), or "building people in depth" (Johnson, 2015b, 131). Warren (2012) believes that the role of a mentor is to open the mentee's perspective and bring out "the best in you in three areas: your roles, your goals, and your soul." In the "mentoring partnership, both individuals benefit and both are strengthened" (Cassimy, 2015, p. 114). Therefore, in this project it was the responsibility of the mentors to facilitate the development of a close partnership with their mentees and provide each mentee with a guided and customized learning process. They helped their mentees discover their unique way of learning, and affirmed their uniqueness and encouraged them to employ it in the creation and delivery of their sermons. At the same time, the mentors also intervened with "corrective mentoring" (Tilsra, 2014, p. 298) whenever such intervention was needed.

In my discussion about Proverbs 22:6, I pointed out that the mentee needs the help of the mentor not only in starting the journey with a meaningful experience, but also in finding the right way to follow. Accordingly, mentors were intentional about helping their mentees to start their preaching journey the right way and on the right way, which is each mentee's own and unique way. For this, mentors were encouraged to share their own preaching experience with their mentees, but "refrain from putting up their own experience as the standard" (Schulze, 2015, p. 73).

As I showed in my Literature Review, "participative learning in action" (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 50) seems to be the best way to teach teenagers in the 21st century.

Therefore, mentors functioned as facilitators and motivators of a participative and formative learning process. They were involved in the classroom training sessions where the theoretical foundations of prophetic preaching were introduced to the mentees. Additionally, each mentor worked individually with one mentee endeavoring to adapt training methods to the specific learning abilities of that mentee. In order to avoid any incident that could discredit the mentor-mentee relationship, all meetings happened in the presence of at least one more person (friend or family member).

The researcher and the mentors of this ministry project also consistently served as "model of good practice" Osmer, 2008, p. 226) to their mentees. Modeling is central because much of learning happens by imitation (Spalding, 2014, p. 134). That is why the sermon of each mentee was also preached as a demonstration of good practice by the mentee's personal mentor and the researcher. This way, mentees had the possibility to embody certain features of their models. The mentor-mentee interaction unfolded in a motivational context where mentors provided immediate formative feedback (Borich, 2007, p. 226; Lauber, 2007, p. 194) to their mentees and encouraged their self-monitoring endeavor (Biggs & Tang, 2007, pp. 91-92) toward an improved version of themselves.

<center>The Sermonic Process</center>

Teenagers that have been recruited for this prophetic preaching project were offered a complete learning cycle through a *sermonic process.* This learning process coordinated by the researcher unfolded over a period of nine months in three phases that moved the mentee step by step from virtually no preaching experience to his or her first real preaching experience in front of the congregation.

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The sermonic process included the preparation of the preacher. Unlike Belcher (2010), who sees the preparation of the preacher and the preparation of the sermon as two different parts (pp. 102-103), since I proposed a hands-on training method, I decided that the preparation of the preacher should be part of the sermon preparation. For the same reason, I did not use one specific manual. Because all mentors were seasoned preachers validated by their effective preaching ministry, I relied on their expertise completed by the training and coordination I provided to them and their mentees.

During the dynamic sermonic process accountability was vital. Goetz (2015) persuasively recommends peer accountability partners (pp. 78-79), however, in our sermonic process that would have been problematic, given that mentees were teenagers. Therefore, mentees were accountable to their mentors and mentors were accountable to the researcher who functioned as their project coordinator. To ensure accountability, the project coordinator periodically checked up on the mentors, and the mentors periodically checked up on their mentees.

The three phases of the sermonic process were producing the sermon, practicing the sermon, and preaching the sermon.

Producing the Sermon

The first phase of the sermonic process was sermon production. It played out over a period of three months and consisted of three 90-minute training sessions, one session per month. They were conducted by the project coordinator and were followed by assignments completed by each mentee under the guidance of her or his personal mentor.

Speaking about adult learning, Spalding (2014) suggests that learners retain content more effectively if the presentations are short (p. 131). His observation also

applies to teenagers. Consequently, each training session was composed of short, approximately 15-minute presentations followed by Q&A sections. To make the presentations more compelling, Jensen (2008) convincingly recommends the use of visuals and objects that can enhance the ability of the brain to recall memories (pp. 55-57). Accordingly, the project coordinator used PowerPoint presentations with pictures and graphics that were made available after the training session to mentors and mentees.

During these training sessions, the project coordinator provided the theoretical foundations for prophetic sermon production. Mentors that were not familiar with prophetic preaching were encouraged to intentionally expand their knowledge regarding this homiletical genre by reading the Literature Review (Chapter 3) of this research manuscript and observing prophetic sermons preached and modeled by the researcher. Three major aspects of sermon production were addressed during these training sessions: spiritual preparation of the preacher, selection of the sermon text and topic, and construction of the sermon script.

Training session 1: spiritual preparation
of the preacher

This 90-minute training session was composed of three 15-minute presentations, each followed by a 15-minute Q&A section. The main purpose of this session was to help preaching trainees understand that prophetic preaching can only happen when the preacher is under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The first 15-minute presentation focused on the spiritual profile of the prophetic preacher as described in my Theological Reflection, emphasizing its three main features: courage to criticize what is evil, ability to tell the truth in love, and power to energize people in fulfilling God's will. This presentation aimed to stir the mind and heart of

mentees to realize how challenging their mission was and how desperately helpless they were if they embarked on such an adventure without a divine mandate. It was expected that a bothering question would arise in the heart of mentees: "Is there any way I could ever meet these expectations and become an effective prophetic preacher?"

The second 15-minute presentation brought the answer and the solution to that question. Mentees were introduced to the two main components of the spiritual preparation for the act of prophetic preaching, as pointed out in my Theological Reflection: knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The third 15-minute presentation outlined the responsibilities of mentees and mentors in this pre-preaching spiritual preparation. Mentees were encouraged to study their Bible daily and prayerfully ask for the leading of the Holy Spirit in understanding its message. It was the role of mentors to model Spirit-guided Bible study to their mentees and to support them through prayer, words of affirmation, and encouragement.

Training session 2: selection of the
Sermon Topic

This 90-minute training session was composed of three 15-minute presentations, each followed by a 15-minute Q&A section. The main purpose of this session was to help mentees recognize the message the Holy Spirit wants them to preach.

The first 15-minute presentation focused on discovering the Bible passage that speaks into to the current social injustice situation. Two possible approaches were suggested: moving from the Bible passage to the current social injustice reality, or from the current social injustice reality to the Bible passage. It was emphasized that mentees must prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to point them to the topic that they should deliver.

The second 15-minute presentation taught mentees how to narrow down their sermon topic to be compellingly addressed in a 20 to 30-minute sermon. Mentees were encouraged to express their sermon topic in one single phrase.

The third 15-minute presentation outlined the responsibilities of mentees and mentors in the selection of the sermon topic. Mentees had to research and discover current social injustice realities and Bible passages that speak into them, and share them with their mentors. Searching the Bible, looking up Bible commentaries, searching the web, watching videos, scrutinizing everyday-life, and brainstorming with other people were some of the methods recommended. Mentors were encouraged to pray with their mentees, provide constructive feedback, and encourage them to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in choosing the topic. Mentees were asked to share their impression from the Holy Spirit and reason with their mentors in order to clarify and narrow down their topic.

Training session 3: construction of the
sermon script

This 90-minute training session was composed of three 15-minute presentations, each followed by a 15-minute Q&A section. The main purpose of this session was to help mentees understand the construction process of the prophetic sermon from the sermon idea to the full script of the sermon.

The first 15-minute presentation focused on gathering content material for the prophetic sermon. According to Carter et al. (2005, p. 26) most effective sermons include introduction, explanation of the text, main points, illustrations, application, conclusion, and appeal. The project coordinator exemplified the exegesis of a Bible passage and explained the role of these components in a prophetic sermon, highlighting the two main content features of prophetic preaching: criticizing and energizing.

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The second 15-minute presentation taught mentees how to write a sermon outline and a sermon script. The project coordinator illustrated the use of deductive and inductive methods in the construction of a protest and emphasized the importance of writing the sermon script with the oral transmission of that message to a specific congregation in mind. At this point, mentees were emboldened to use writing tools and skills acquired and developed in school (essay writing, debate, etc.) or in other learning experiences (TED Talk, Talks at Google, etc.) and express their Spirit-led thoughts in unique and creative ways. Use of technology and object lessons was also encouraged.

The third 15-minute presentation outlined the responsibilities of mentees and mentors in the sermon construction. Mentors were encouraged to share their step-by-step sermon construction methods with their mentees and encourage them to selectively apply what they deem helpful in developing their own step-by-step method. Additionally, they were requested to walk their mentees through the "from their town to our town" journey of exegeting the Bible passage. Mentees were asked to allow their mentors and the project coordinator to review their sermon scripts at different stages of their development in order to provide constructive feedback. Moreover, they were encouraged to revise and edit until their script satisfied the expectations of their mentors and project coordinator.

Practicing the Sermon

The second phase of the sermonic process was practicing the sermon. This phase started for each mentee approximately one month prior to the actual preaching event and consisted of three practice sessions: in front of the mentor and the project coordinator, in front of trainee colleagues, and in a regular Adventist Youth (AY) Meeting.

The order in which the preaching trainees practiced and preached their sermons in front of the congregation was established based on their willingness and availability. Once one mentee completed the practice sessions, the next started to practice. The location of the sermon practice was the church sanctuary where the actual preaching would later take place. All practice sessions were video recorded and made available to mentees and their mentors for future analysis and improvement.

Feedback was an essential part of the sermon practice. If rightly provided, feedback strengthens relationships within the group and also offers the mentee the opportunity to tap into the collective wisdom of the group (Burden & Byrd, 2013, p. 159). Consequently, each sermon practice session was followed by feedback provided by peers, mentors, and the project coordinator. All participants were asked to intentionally exude sympathetic and supportive attitude toward mentees during their practice.

Practice session 1: In front of mentor and project coordinator

In this practice session, the preaching mentee preached the sermon in front of her or his personal mentor and project coordinator. The session started with a short preliminary discussion in which basic practical aspects of sermon delivery were addressed (e.g. stature, eye-contact, use of microphone, projection of voice, etc.). Next, the mentee was asked to read his or her sermon script aloud, using the sound system, in order to become familiar with his or her amplified voice. The mentor and the project coordinator stopped the mentee whenever they deemed observations and explanations were in order. After the loud reading of the script, the actual uninterrupted sermon delivery happened. The time allotted for that was 20 to 30 minutes.

At the end of the sermon delivery, the mentor and the project coordinator affirmed the strengths of the mentee and provided encouragement in areas where she or he faced challenges. Constructive feedback was provided with regard to form and content for the improvement of the script and for a more effective personal practice.

Practice session 2: In front of trainee colleagues

In this practice session, the preaching mentee preached in the presence of peers, mentors, and project coordinator. All participants were encouraged to foster a positive growth environment and exude sympathetic and supportive attitude toward the mentee. Before sermon delivery, the mentee was reminded about critical aspects to focus on based on observations from the previous practice session. Then the preaching mentee delivered the sermon and participants offered feedback, pointing out strengths first, and then weaknesses. After that, the mentee's personal mentor and the project coordinator delivered, successively, the same sermon, followed by feedback.

Practice session 3: In a regular AY meeting

In this practice session, the preaching mentee practiced her or his sermon in a regular AY Meeting. This allowed the mentee to experience preaching as close as it can get to the actual preaching experience in front of the congregation. Additionally, the close succession of the two sermon deliveries simulated the actual preaching experience where the mentee would preach twice in a short period of time in the church's two worship services. The AY Meeting was organized in the church sanctuary. After the sermon, the project coordinator allowed attendees to share words of affirmation and critique. Practical suggestions were provided by mentors and project coordinator for the actual preaching experience in front of the congregation.

Preaching the Sermon

Preaching in front of the congregation was the culmination of the mentees'
preaching experience. A preaching training process is not complete if the trainee does not
have the possibility to unfold in an actual preaching setting. For the teenage preachers, it
was affirming and confirming to see adult preachers open the door for them (Joiner,
2016, pp. 14-15) to becoming a real preacher now, instead of being referred to as the
"future church" (Duncan, 2018, p. 67). Mentees preached to the church over a period of
five months, one preacher per month, according to the schedule provided by the pastoral
team and agreed upon individually by teenage preachers.

The night before the actual preaching experience, the project coordinator and the
personal mentor called the mentee for prayer and encouragement. Saturday morning the
project coordinator and the personal mentor met with the teenage preacher for prayer and
encouragement. They ensured that the entire worship team of the church would support
the teenage preacher throughout the worship experience. Given that Plantation Seventh-
day Adventist Church has two worship services, teenage preachers were given the
possibility to decide whether to preach in both services, or only in one. In case the
teenage preacher had not been able to deliver the sermon twice, the mentor would have
helped in one of the services. The project coordinator would have been ready to take over
if any unexpected circumstance had prevented the teenage preacher or the mentor from
delivering the sermon.

After the first sermon, the project coordinator and the personal mentor gave
feedback to the teenage preacher through words of affirmation and critique with
improvement in mind for the second preaching experience. Constructive feedback was

also provided after the second sermon. At the end of the worship service, the project

coordinator joined teenage preachers at the door in order to protect them from any harsh

criticism they could possibly encounter as they greeted service attendees.

At the end of this project, the researcher recognized mentors and mentees in a

worship service. Additionally, mentees that completed the learning cycle were invited to

participate in a special luncheon organized at the time of the launching of the new

preaching cohort. They were also rewarded with certificates of completion.

Evaluation of Ministry Project

Evaluation was an essential part of this ministry project. It was carried out by the

project coordinator, preaching mentors and a special group of project evaluators made of

active church elders. All evaluators were intentional about exuding sympathetic and

supportive attitude toward the mentees during the evaluation process of this project.

Throughout the intervention of this project, qualitative data was collected through sermon

evaluation forms, focus groups, reflective journals, sermon scripts and video recordings.

Sermons were evaluated through the *Andrews University Grading Rubric for

Sermon Delivery* (see Appendix E) by evaluators. After the AY Meeting and the actual

preaching in front of the congregation, evaluators shared insights based on questions

provided in the form *Post Preaching Focus Group Questions* (see Appendix A). At the

end of the implementation, a general evaluation of the entire ministry project happened in

a joint meeting of mentors and evaluators based on questions provided in the form *Final

Focus Group Questions* (see Appendix A).

Mentors, mentees, and the project coordinator kept reflective journals of the

training process with special focus on progress. Sermon scripts were also collected at

different stages of their development, and sermon production seminars, practice sessions, and preaching events were video recorded in order to provide analytical data for the final evaluation. All collected data was stored on a password-protected personal computer of the researcher, backed up on a password-protected external hard-drive, and treated as confidential. Those sources are used in this Doctor of Ministry Project document under corresponding code names (e.g. Mentor 1, Mentee 1 and Evaluator 1; Mentor 2, Mentee 2, and Evaluator 2, etc.). Data will be stored for at least three years.

Conclusion

This chapter delineated the methodology of the implementation and evaluation of this ministry project. It described the step-by-step process of the intervention of this project starting with the recruitment of its participants, continuing with the sermonic process, and ending with the technicalities of its evaluation. It also presented protocols adopted for the management of project participants throughout the intervention process.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter offers the implementation narrative of the preaching training project.

It follows the methodology presented in Chapter 4 and describes the recruitment of

participants and the step-by-step sermonic process from the spiritual preparation of the

prophetic messenger to the actual preaching experience before the congregation.

Narrative of the Recruitment Process

The success of this complex ministry project depended largely on the ability of all

participants to work as a team. This project presupposed the collaboration of three

categories of volunteers from the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church: preaching

mentors, teenage preaching mentees, and project evaluators.

Recruitment of Preaching Mentors

The recruitment process started with the selection of mentors. Given that the

prospective mentees of this ministry project were teenagers, the recruitment of their

mentors had to happen before the IRB approval was obtained. The project coordinator

verbally invited six preachers (see Appendix B: *Mentoring Team Recruitment Script*),

based on spiritual maturity, experience in preaching ministry, and ability to train others

for preaching, to serve as preaching mentors for this project. Some of these preachers had

previously received academic preaching training; some have never been formally trained to preach. These are the preachers (two females and four males), that formed the initial mentoring team: two elders of the local church well-respected for their preaching ministries; a ministry leader of the local church with formal pastoral training; the principal of the church's school; the associate pastor of the church; and the leader of an independent ministry that is a recognized preacher in the area.

After recruitment, one of the female mentors had to withdraw from the mentoring team due to responsibilities associated with pregnancy. This was a challenging moment because it was difficult to find another female preaching mentor as a replacement. Nevertheless, a female associate pastor was assigned to the church and she was recruited to be part of the mentoring team.

All mentors underwent a background check prescribed by the IRB of Andrews University and signed a written consent form of participation in this academic research before the recruitment of teenage mentees.

<center>Recruitment of Preaching Mentees</center>

The first step in the recruitment of teenage preachers was an orientation meeting on August 10, 2018, to which all the teenagers of the church were invited. The invitation was made by the project coordinator during the regular Sabbath morning *Pastor's Corner* and it was repeated over a period of three consecutive Sabbaths. An announcement was also published in the church's newsletter. Lunch was provided before the meeting. Approximately thirty teenagers attended.

At the orientation meeting, the project coordinator offered a presentation of the research project focusing on the need for and legitimacy of teenage prophetic

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messengers. Teenage participants were prompted to analyze their giftedness for public speaking. The researcher emphasized that more important than giftedness, is to be called by God to be a prophetic messenger. When asked if anyone had a sense of call to become a preacher, three teenagers expressed conviction.

At one point, preaching mentors were introduced. Then the presenter asked teenagers to sign up for a discussion with one of the mentors if interested to be part of this project. At this first appeal four teenagers signed up. Next, mentors expressed their desire to provide mentorship for preaching ministry and extended a heartfelt invitation for mentees to sign up for a discussion with one of them, regardless what their feelings were at that very moment about becoming a preacher, knowing that immediate feelings could be misleading. At this second appeal eight more teenagers signed up.

After the orientation meeting, one teenager informed the project coordinator that he had only signed up because of peer pressure and did not really want to be part of the project. After a short conversation his name was removed from the sign-up sheet. Two other individuals were left out because by the time of the preaching phase they would have fallen outside the age limit of the project. Each of the nine remaining teenagers were approached by the mentor with whom they had signed up for a discussion and were assessed with regard to call, giftedness, and willingness. After these discussions, seven teenagers confirmed their interest to be part of this prophetic preaching project. Nevertheless, one of them was going to move to a different location for school, so he could not be part of the training process.

At the end of the selection process, a group of six teenagers of different nationalities, four males and two females, received a personal invitation from one of the

mentors (see Appendix C: *Mentee Recruitment Script*). The mentor-mentee matching was done based on the preference of the mentee and the availability of the mentor. Female mentees were assigned to female mentors and male mentees to male mentors. All six teenagers accepted the invitation. Nonetheless, in the process of signing the consent forms, one of the prospective mentees was unable to obtain parental endorsement. Consequently, we started the training with five mentees, three males and two females.

<center>Recruitment of Project Evaluators</center>

The recruitment of evaluators for this ministry project took place before the preaching phase started. Evaluators were recruited from among the ordained elders of Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church that were familiar with mentees and their context, in the hope that their involvement would lead to more support for integrating young people in the leadership of the church.

The project coordinator made a general announcement regarding the need for preaching evaluators at one of the regular meetings of the Board of Elders (Appendix D: *Evaluation Team Recruitment Script*). Later, they were verbally asked to serve in this capacity, depending on their availability and willingness to commit. The complete team of evaluators was formed of ten ordained elders; all of them signed a consent form. Before the evaluation of the first preaching event, the researcher explained to the evaluator how to use the *Andrews University Grading Rubric for Sermon Delivery*.

<center>**Narrative of the Sermonic Process**</center>

The sermonic process of the ministry project unfolded over a period of nine months in three phases: producing the sermon, practicing the sermon, preaching the sermon.

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Narrative of Producing the Sermon

This phase of the sermonic process played out over a period of three months. It consisted of three 90-minute training sessions, one session per month, that took place on Sabbath afternoons in the Fellowship Hall of the church. Date and time of the meetings were communicated to mentors one month in advance and they were asked to pass the information on to their mentees. Lunch was provided before every session. All sessions started and ended with prayer.

In these sessions, the project coordinator provided the theoretical foundations for prophetic sermon production. He also outlined the responsibilities of mentors and mentees in the process. Both mentors and mentees were requested to journal their interaction in the mentor-mentee relationship. Between sessions, the project coordinator kept constant communication with mentors through text messages, phone-calls and emails, encouraging them to ensure progress on the assignments they were supposed to complete with their mentees. Each training session was video recorded. At the end of training sessions, Power Point presentations and video recordings were made available to mentors. Additionally, a follow-up email was sent to mentors after each training session.

Narrative of Training Session 1

The first 90-minute sermon production training session happened on October 12, 2019 and focused on the spiritual preparation of the prophetic preacher. All mentees were present; two mentors could not attend.

In the first 15 minutes of his presentation, the project coordinator introduced the three main features of the prophetic preacher: courage to criticize the abuse, ability to

speak truth in love, and power to energize people to fulfill God's will. A short Q&A followed this section.

The second short presentation focused on the interaction between two main elements of the prophetic preacher's spiritual preparation: knowledge of the Bible and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Mentors were asked to share their experience of how the Holy Spirit enlightened them to understand the Bible. In the Q&A, the discussion centered on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures.

In the third mini-presentation, the project coordinator talked about the crucial nature of communication and accountability. The responsibilities of both mentors and mentees were also outlined. On one hand, mentors were asked to guide their mentees in listening to the Holy Spirit and model meaningful Bible study to them. For a thorough and genuine experience, they were encouraged to allow their mentees to be part of their personal daily spiritual walk. On the other hand, mentees were asked to prayerfully study the Bible on a daily basis and listen to the Holy Spirit.

It was observed that the presence of the mentor made a difference in the attitude and attention of the mentee. Mentees whose mentors were not in the meeting had the tendency to be distracted. In the final Q&A, one of the mentees expressed that he expected the training to be "more fun." The project coordinator assured him that it would become "more and more fun," especially in the practical part of the project.

After this first training session, in a follow-up email sent to mentors, besides a detailed description of assignments, the project coordinator also reinforced the importance of building a trust-based relationship with their mentees. Moreover, he offered clarifications on accountability and communication among project participants:

the project coordinator would not keep direct communication with mentees; the flow of information would circulate from the project coordinator to mentors, and from them to mentees. The three completed chapters of the Doctor of Ministry Project documents were also attached to the email for mentors' perusal and a clearer picture of the scope of this ministry project.

Narrative of Training Session 2

The second training session happened on November 9, 2019, and aimed to help preaching mentees to recognize the sermon topic toward which the Holy Spirit was leading them. All mentors and mentees attended; one mentee was late. Because of some church calendar issues, this session had to be compacted to 60 minutes. It started with a brief check-in where mentors and mentees share from their mentorship journey.

The first short presentation focused on discovering the Bible passage speaking into a current social injustice situation that God wants prophetic preachers to address. As methodology, two possible movements were suggested: from the Bible passage to the current social injustice reality, or from the current social injustice issue to the Bible passage. At the end of this section there was no question.

The second mini-presentation aimed to teach mentees how to clarify and simplify their sermonic topic so it can be addressed in a 20 to 30-minute sermon. Practical examples were given to narrow down a topic and express the sermon idea in one single phrase. In the Q&A, mentors reinforced the importance of "driving the message home."

In the third part of this session the project coordinator offered practical advice regarding mentor-mentee collaboration in the selection of the sermon topic. Mentees were encouraged to research and create a list of current social injustice realities and Bible

passages that answer to them and share it with their mentors. Mentors were asked to provide constructive feedback and encourage their mentees to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in choosing the right topic, and help them narrow it down. Furthermore, participants were reminded that spiritual preparation for preaching has to be an ongoing process. Mentors and mentees were asked to continue to journal their experience.

Following the training session, in a follow-up email sent to mentors, the project coordinator reminded them to assist mentees in their endeavor to put together a list of social justice issues and Bible passages that respond to them, plus finding, clarifying, and narrowing down their sermon topic. Between the second and third training sessions the project coordinator was intentional about personally taking the pulse of each mentor-mentee team. Additionally, in the reminder that was sent out repeatedly during the week before the last training session, mentors were prompted to assist their mentees to have their one-sentence sermon ideas ready for the upcoming training session.

Narrative of Training Session 3

The third training session took place on December 8, 2019, and focused on the construction of the script from the one-sentence sermon idea to the full sermon script. All mentors and four mentees attended. The project coordinator started by asking participants about their progress in discovering their sermon topic. Mentees and mentors shared some of their findings; three of the mentees had a clear idea of their sermon topic.

The first 15-minute presentation elaborated on gathering content material for the main elements of the sermon. The project coordinator illustrated the role of sermon building-blocks in a prophetic sermon that has two main features: criticizing (pointing out what went wrong) and energizing (showing how God wants us to be part of His solution).

In the Q&A, mentors underlined the importance of appropriate illustrations that make the message practical and drive it home.

In the second 15-minute presentation the project coordinator outlined the main steps of sermon writing: draft an outline, decide on the method of argumentation (deductive or inductive), and write as you talk, verbatim, with your congregation in mind. Moreover, he illustrated the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning in the construction of homiletical argumentation. Mentors were asked to briefly describe their own sermon writing process. Mentees were encouraged to be creative and innovative using tools and skills acquired in different learning contexts, instead of simply adopting someone else's method or style. It was pointed out that use of technology and props is also welcome if it helped convey the message more convincingly. In the Q&A, a question was asked with regard to the use of Ellen G. White writings. The project coordinator affirmed the inclusion of such writings and advised that a passage should never be quoted out of its context.

In the third 15-minute presentation the project mentor talked about the responsibilities of mentors and mentees in the sermon writing process. Mentors were advised to help their mentees exegete the Bible passages they would be preaching from. Mentees were requested to allow their mentors and the project coordinator to review their sermon script at different stages of its development, receive constructive feedback, and edit the script until their mentors and the project coordinator would be satisfied with its form and content. The session ended with technicalities related to the next phase of the sermonic process: practicing the sermon.

Narrative of Practicing the Sermon

Practicing the sermon was the second phase of the sermonic process. This phase of the implementation played out over a period of five months and consisted of five series of three practice sessions for each preaching mentee: in front of personal mentor and project coordinator, in front of mentee colleagues, and in a regular AY Meeting. All practice sessions took place in the church sanctuary and were recorded and made available to the practicing mentees and their mentors for further analysis and reflection. At each stage, all participants were encouraged to foster a positive growth environment and show a supportive and affirming attitude toward the practicing mentees.

The practice phase started two weeks prior to the actual preaching to the congregation. The order in which mentees practiced their sermons was determined by the order in which they were scheduled to preach. Once one mentee completed the full sermonic process, the next participant started the practice. After each practice session mentees received constructive feedback from participants. All sessions started and ended with prayer. Throughout the practice mentees continued to develop their sermon script.

Narrative of Practice Series 1

This first sermon practice series consisted of three practice sessions of *Team Mentee 1–Mentor 1*. The practice phase of the preaching project started with Mentee 1 because she volunteered to be the first to preach during a regular worship service.

Mentee 1 was a 15-year-old girl who recognized her call for preaching and giftedness for public speaking from the beginning of this project. She was born in a family with solid preaching tradition; her grandfather and great-grandfather were Seventh-day Adventist ministers. This was not her first preaching experience. At ages six

and nine she delivered assigned homilies to the congregation as part of a Children Sabbath School project. Nevertheless, this was her first preaching training in which she was supposed to not only deliver a message, but also produce her sermon.

Mentor 1 was one of the associate pastors of the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although she just started out as a pastor, she came to the team with more than 25 years of preaching experience. As someone who started to preach at the age of 13 and as a mother of five children, two of which were teenagers, Mentor 1 was well-qualified to serve as a mentor for this project.

Narrative of practice session 1 of team mentee 1–mentor 1

This practice session took place on January 15, 2019, in the presence of Mentor 1 and project coordinator. After a short preliminary discussion about practical aspects of sermon delivery, Mentee 1 was asked to read her sermon aloud focusing on the management of her voice amplified by the sound system. Next, she was asked to preach her sermon as if the sanctuary was full of people, mindful that her voice had to reach people seated in different areas of the sanctuary.

After the sermon, compliments and constructive feedback were provided. At this stage, Mentee 1's sermon script was fairly developed; it had a clear and easy-to-follow structure and it presented prophetic preaching features. Delivery was persuasive but the pacing of her movement needed further attention. Content was deemed to be enough for a 30-minute sermon. Mentee 1 was affirmed for her choice of topic and relevant content. She was also asked to practice a slower delivery and work on the details of her language. Finally, she was encouraged to memorize sections that would help impact the audience, especially personal illustrations and the final appeal.

**Narrative of practice session 2 of
team mentee 1–mentor 1**

This practice session happened on the Sabbath of January 19, 2019, in the presence of mentees, mentors and project coordinator. First, mentees and mentors had lunch together; then they met in the church sanctuary. After preliminary instructions provided by Mentor 1 and the project coordinator, Mentee 1 was asked to deliver her sermon. In the feedback it was appreciated that she had improved her stage management and had memorized sections of her sermon script. Progress was also noticed in her use of Bible passages. Additionally, her message had a title.

A major learning moment capitalized on use of technology in preaching. Toward the end of her presentation, the mentee's laptop shut down. This resulted in cutting short the conclusion and appeal of the sermon. Therefore, it was suggested that a hard-copy of the script may be much more reliable in the pulpit. Next, Mentor 1 and the project coordinator also delivered the same message highlighting elements of the sermon that could increase its effectiveness. After both sermons, participants were asked to give feedback regarding linguistic differences and nuances they noticed.

**Narrative of practice session 3 of
team mentee 1–mentor 1**

This practice session took place on January 19, 2019, in a regular AY Meeting. Before Mentee 1 preached her sermon, the project coordinator introduced the preaching project to the audience and encouraged participants to actively listen and react to the sermon. Next, one of the young people introduced Mentee 1 and welcomed her to the platform. She had a good delivery, yet it seemed that her energy level had dropped

compared to the previous practice session. The larger audience had an inhibitive effect on the teenage preacher.

With all this, Mentee 1 had excellent flow and transitions were great. At some points she was able to step away from her notes and establish good connection with her audience. After the 30-minute sermon, the project coordinator congratulated her in front of the audience and asked for constructive feedback. All commentators were excited about this ministry project and affirmed the giftedness and courage of the teenage preacher. After the meeting, Mentor 1 and the project coordinator collected verbal critiques from evaluators for their conversations with Mentee 1.

Narrative of Practice Series 2

This second sermon practice series consisted of three practice sessions performed by *Team Mentee 2–Mentor 2*. The practice phase continued with Mentee 2 because he had volunteered to be the second to preach in front of the congregation.

Mentee 2 was a 15-year-old boy that had recognized his call to preach from the beginning of this project, but was not certain regarding his giftedness for public speaking. His father is a Seventh-day Adventist pastor and that gave him confidence he could also become a preacher, but not necessarily a pastor. This was not his first preaching experience; as a child he delivered an assigned homily in front of the congregation. However, this was his first training in which he had to both produce his sermon and preach it in a regular worship service.

Mentor 2 was the Family Life Ministry leader of the church who also worked as a Bible and Social Studies teacher at Sawgrass Adventist School. He was formally trained

as a pastor and functioned for a while as a youth pastor. His experience as a preacher and educator recommended him to serve as a preaching mentor of this project.

Narrative of practice session 1 of team mentee 2–mentor 2

This practice session took place on February 13, 2019, in the presence of Mentor 2 and project coordinator. The session started with observations on basic practical aspects of sermon delivery. Then Mentee 2 was asked to practice elegant walking to the stage and correct posture in front of the lectern. Next, he was requested to read his sermon aloud focusing on the inflections of his voice amplified by the sound system. Next, Mentee 2 preached his sermon that was less than 15 minutes.

After the sermon words of affirmation and constructive feedback were provided. At this point, the sermon had a title. Nonetheless, some issues had to be addressed. Obviously, the sermon was lacking content material and it needed more structural clarity. Additionally, at some points the mentee's voice had a tendency to drop. Mentee 2 and Mentor 2 were encouraged to intensify their collaboration in order to develop the sermon for the AY Meeting practice.

Narrative of practice session 2 of team mentee 2–mentor 2

this practice session happened on the Sabbath of February 16, 2019, in the presence of mentees, mentors and project coordinator. After lunch, mentees and mentors gathered in the church sanctuary. First, preliminary instructions were provided by Mentor 2 and the project coordinator. The importance of posture and movement management was emphasized. Then Mentee 2 was asked to deliver his sermon as if the sanctuary was full

of people. The sermon grew to 20 minutes but some of the content material was not well worked into the body of the sermon. Also, Mentee 2 skipped prayer due to nervousness.

In the feedback, Mentee 2 was appreciated for his natural style and humor and encouraged by peers and mentors to be more confident and overcome his nervousness. It was suggested that prayer should be written down so it will not be omitted. Mentors and mentees showed supportive and affirming attitude toward Mentee 2. Next, Mentor 2 and the project coordinator also delivered the same message highlighting the prophetic elements of the sermon. After each sermon, participants were asked to point out elements that would make a good addition to Mentee 2's sermon.

Narrative of practice session 3 of team mentee 2–mentor 2

This practice session took place on February 16, 2019, in a regular AY Meeting. Mentor 2 could not attend. One of the young people introduced Mentee 2 and welcomed him to the platform. Mentee 2's delivery was much better than in the previous practice. His body language and voice improved, and he had the courage to move away from the pulpit. Despite some hesitation, his natural humor helped him connect with his audience.

Following the sermon, the project coordinator congratulated him in front of the audience. After a few words of affirmation, the project coordinator described to the audience the remarkable progress Mentee 2 had made in the last few days. Participants were given the possibility to share their thoughts; they affirmed Mentee 2 for his storytelling style. At the end of the meeting, elders were asked to surround the mentee and pray over him. After the meeting, the project coordinator gathered observations from evaluators that he would later share with Mentee 2.

Narrative of Practice Series 3

This practice series consisted of three practice sessions performed by *Team Mentee 3–Mentor 3*. After the sermon production training sessions, Mentee 3 had to leave for school. Therefore, the sermon practice and the actual preaching event had to accommodate his visit with the church.

Mentee 3 was an 18-year-old young man. He was aware of his giftedness for public speaking even before this project started, but he had doubts regarding his call to preach. His mother is an associate pastor at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church and she encouraged him to participate in this preaching project. Mentee 3 tried preaching before, but this was his first time learning how to create his own sermon.

Mentor 3 was the Principal of Sawgrass Adventist School, an outstanding educator and preacher with over 30 years of teaching and preaching experience, which recommended him to serve as a mentor of this project.

Narrative of practice session 1 of
team mentee 3–mentor 3

This practice session took place on March 1, 2019 – later than normal because Mentee 3 had just come home from school – in the presence of Mentor 3 and project coordinator. It started with a short update regarding the progress of the project. Mentee 3 informed his mentor and the project coordinator that his sermon script was insufficiently developed. Consequently, he was asked to present what he had in his script and go beyond it freely sharing his thoughts on his topic. The mentee's tentative sermon was no longer than 10 minutes and it was lacking the basic features of a prophetic sermon.

After the presentation, Mentee 3, Mentor 3 and the project coordinator consulted regarding the steps that should be implemented to expeditiously develop the sermon for

the AY Meeting practice the next day. Mentor 3 offered to spend the next day with Mentee 3 to work on the sermon together. Mentee 3 accepted his mentor's offer.

Narrative of practice session 2 of
team mentee 3–mentor 3

This practice session happened on the Sabbath of March 2, 2019, in the presence of mentees, mentors and project coordinator. Mentees and mentors had lunch together, after which they gathered in the church sanctuary. The session started with preliminary instructions provided by Mentor 3 and the project coordinator. First, Mentee 3 was asked to practice walking to the platform and standing in front of the lectern. Then he was asked to deliver his sermon as if the sanctuary was full of people. The sermon was about 20 minutes long; it had come a long way since its practice on the previous day. The project coordinator expressed gratitude toward Mentor 3 for his effort in facilitating such progress. Sermon content was relevant but transitions were difficult. Moreover, the sermon did not have a title. In the feedback, Mentee 3 was appreciated for his preaching voice, passion for the topic and moderate use of slangs. He was encouraged to use humor without becoming a comedian, and pay attention to non-verbal language. It was also recommended that he should write out his prayers so that they will express carefully selected thoughts.

Subsequently, Mentor 3 and the project coordinator delivered the same message. They both intentionally brought in additional material and highlighted features that could help Mentee 3 further develop his sermon. Unfortunately, the sound of the recording was unintentionally muted by the assisting technician; consequently, Mentee 3 could not benefit much from the recorded material. Nevertheless, Mentor 3 and the project coordinator assured Mentee 3 of their total support in further developing his sermon.

Narrative of practice session 3 of
team mentee 3–mentor 3

This practice session took place on March 2, 2019, in a regular AY Meeting. One of the young people introduced Mentee 3 and welcomed him to the platform. Mentee 3 preached with passion and persuasion, but the pacing of his movement was too accelerated. He also had difficulties securing his microphone on his ear. Furthermore, his conclusion was abrupt and he had no closing prayer.

After the sermon, the project coordinator congratulated him in front of the audience for the notable progress he made practice after practice. Participants praised Mentee 3 for his dramatic opening and the relevance of his topic. At the end of the meeting, elders surrounded the mentee, laid their hands on him, and prayed over him. After the meeting, Mentor 3 and the project coordinator consulted with evaluators in order to better assist Mentee 3 in the development of his sermon.

Narrative of Practice Series 4

This practice series consisted of three practice sessions performed by *Team Mentee 4–Mentor 4*. The sermon practice phase continued with Mentee 4 because Mentee 5 expressed his desire to be the last to preach and Mentee 4 did not have any preference.

Mentee 4 was a 14-year-old girl that was attracted to public speaking from the beginning of this project but was uncertain regarding her call to preach. She has no preaching tradition in her family, however, her mother is very active in ministry as the Youth Leader of the church. This was Mentee 4's first preaching experience.

Mentor 4 was an elder of the church. Although not formally trained in preaching, over the last decades she developed a flourishing preaching ministry that has reached beyond her local church. As a powerful preacher, motivational speaker, and enthusiastic

ministry leader, she is well respected by the young people of the church and perceived as a prominent mother figure. These features recommended her to serve as a mentor of this ministry project.

Narrative of practice session 1 of
team mentee 4–mentor 4

This practice session took place on April 4, 2019, in the presence of Mentee 4 and project coordinator. The initial scheduled date was April 17, 2019, but because of some overlapping ministry projects, it had to be changed. Due to some rehearsals in the sanctuary, the read-through of Mentee 4's sermon had to take place in the church's Prayer Room. After that, there was a short discussion about practicalities of preaching and Mentee 4 preached her sermon in the sanctuary with focus on her voice management.

Feedback valued impactful introduction, solid biblical content and powerful illustrations. Nevertheless, it was noticed that the sermon script presented traces of an initial sermon topic that was later changed. Mentee 4 and Mentor 4 agreed to review the script and remove any superfluous material. Mentee was also encouraged to memorize illustration-stories and the final appeal.

Narrative of practice session 2 of
team mentee 4–mentor 4

This practice session happened on the Sabbath of April 6, 2019, three weeks before the actual preaching before the congregation, in the presence of mentees, mentors and project coordinator. Mentees and mentors had lunch together, then they started the practice session. The project coordinator provided some preliminary instructions after which Mentee 4 was asked to deliver her sermon.

She had a good sermon delivery. Her peers appreciated her light-hearted, conversational approach. Mentors valued her courage to take on such a difficult topic. The project coordinator noticed that most traces of the previous sermon were removed and new content was added. Mentee 4 was not sure what the title of her sermon would be but the direction of the sermon was clear. After feedback, Mentor 4 and the project coordinator delivered the same message. The attending mentees found it interesting to compare the two sermons presenting the same message from two different, and yet complementary perspectives of a female and of a male preacher.

Narrative of practice session 3 of
team mentee 4–mentor 4

This practice session took place on April 6, 2019, in a regular AY Meeting. Mentee 1 introduced her good friend, Mentee 4, and welcomed her to the platform. She had an effective delivery, but nervousness became detrimental to the pacing of her movement, eye-contact, and pulpit presence. The introduction, which was not written out, was too long; nonetheless, it was balanced out by a very effective call to action at the end of the sermon.

The project coordinator congratulated Mentee 4 in front of the audience and asked for constructive feedback. It was appreciated that she had a good command of the English language and the ability to express her thoughts with clarity and without effort. Moreover, she was acclaimed for her research on a difficult topic and sound biblical reasoning. At the end of the meeting, elders surrounded Mentee 4 and dedicated her to God. After the meeting, Mentor 4 and the project coordinator listened to evaluators for observations that could help further develop Mentee 4's sermon.

Narrative of Practice Series 5

This practice series consisted of three practice sessions performed by *Team Mentee 5–Mentor 5*. The sermon practice phase ended with Mentee 5 because he had asked to be the last to preach.

Mentee 5 was a 16-year-old young man that had doubts both with regard to his call to preach and his giftedness for public speaking. As the only child of a single mother, he was struggling with specific age and status related issues. He was shy and lacked self-confidence, but he assented to give God a chance to use him as His messenger. This was his first preaching experience and during the project he was tempted to give up.

Mentor 5 was an elder and the Worship Ministry Leader of the church. With no formal training in the area of preaching, he is recognized as a gifted preacher not only in his church, but also in the surroundings. The young people of the church see a preeminent spiritual father in him and gravitate toward him. His dedication, approachability, and youthfulness also contributed to the contours of a seasoned preacher that qualified to serve as a preaching mentee of this project.

Narrative of practice session 1 of
team mentee 5–mentor 5

This practice session took place on May 6, 2019, in the presence of Mentor 5 and the project coordinator. When the project coordinator entered the sanctuary, Mentee 5 was already practicing his sermon in front of his mentor. After the project coordinator made some practical observations on sermon delivery, Mentee 5 was asked to preach his sermon making sure his voice reaches all the areas of the sanctuary. His sermon delivery was unexpectedly good for an introvert.

After the sermon, Mentor 5 and the project coordinator expressed their appreciation for his conscientious efforts to leave his comfort zone and move toward excellence. The project coordinator shared that Mentee 5 had a penetrating preaching voice and his personal experience of overcoming his own limitations was a real inspiration. He also expressed gratitude toward Mentee 5 for the investment of time and energy in building a relationship with Mentee 5 and inspiring him to move forward.

Given that Mentee 5 could not attend the next practice session, he also delivered his mentee's sermon in this practice session, demonstrating how one can emphasize and drive home the important points of the message.

Narrative of practice session 2 of
team mentee 5–mentor 5

This practice session happened on the Sabbath of May 11, 2019 in the presence of mentees, mentors and project coordinator. Mentor 5 could not attend this session. This time there was no special lunch provided for mentees and mentors because the Men's Ministry of the church sponsored a Mother's Day lunch for the entire church.

After lunch, mentees and mentors gathered in the church sanctuary. First, the project coordinator provided some preliminary instructions. Then Mentee 5 practiced walking to the platform. Consequently, the project coordinator offered instruction regarding posture and use of hands in non-verbal communication. Afterwards, Mentee 5 was asked to deliver his sermon as if the sanctuary was full of people. The sermon delivery was promising; however, the presence of preaching colleagues seemed to be an inhibitor to the introvert mentee. As a result of nervousness, there were moments of hesitation, mistakes and loss of energy. With all this, the personal testimony of Mentee 5

helped his audience to engage. Participants were supportive and expressed appreciation for his vulnerability in sharing his own story.

Next, the project coordinator also delivered the same message. During his presentation, he suggested that some props could also be used to make the message more effective. Finally, Mentee 5 was offered practical advice that would help manage his energy resources in the following practice session.

Narrative of practice session 3 of
team mentee 5–mentor *5*

This practice session took place on May 11, 2019, in a regular AY Meeting. One of the young people introduced Mentee 5 and welcomed him to the platform. Mentee 5 delivered his sermon with conviction. His body language improved but his nervousness made him dependent on his notes. Moreover, at some points his voice would become monotonous and hesitant. With all this, thanks to his personal testimony, the majority of his audience perceived his presentation as a powerful sermon.

After the sermon, the project coordinator congratulated and affirmed him in front of the audience. He also shared a few thoughts about the challenges an introvert faces when it comes to public speaking. Additionally, he emphasized that God is able to use anybody as His messenger, regardless of temperament. Participants expressed amazement to have heard a withdrawn and silent boy give his testimony so convincingly. They also voiced their wish that God would use Mentee 5 as his messenger the following Sabbath.

At the end of the meeting, elders surrounded the mentee and prayed over him. After the meeting, the project coordinator listened to evaluators in order to share their observations with Mentor 5 and Mentee 5.

Narrative of Preaching the Sermon

Mentees preached to the church during the first five months of 2019, according to the schedule provided by the pastoral team and agreed upon by them. The order of preaching was established based on willingness and availability. They all preached topical sermons, which means that they elaborated specific injustice topics based on two or more biblical units that share that common subject, rather then one single scriptural text or passage (Williams, 2018, p. 85).

Each mentee preached in both worship services. The night before the preaching, the project coordinator called the scheduled teenage preacher over the phone and they prayed together. Saturday morning, project coordinator and personal mentor met with the mentee at the church for prayer. They also offered practical observations regarding the flow of the worship service, assured the teenage preacher of the full support of the entire worship team, and made sure the mentee was properly equipped and connected to the sound system of the church. Between services, project coordinator and personal mentor made the teenage preacher aware of the fact that the dynamics of the second worship service were going to be different from the first. After each sermon they affirmed the teenage preacher for his or her ministry.

Narrative of Preaching Series 1

Mentee 1 preached her sermon titled, "But Why?" on January 26, 2019. The sermon topic was the injustice of expecting the youth of the church to conform to rules without being given a rationale. Her key text was Genesis 2:17. In both services, the teenage preacher was introduced and welcomed to the platform by her mentor.

In first service, Mentee 1 preached with energy and confidence. A slight

nervousness was also noticeable; she tended to stick to her script more than when she

rehearsed. When she spoke off-script her connection with the audience was strong; that

could be sensed in the reaction of her listeners. And yet, to some people it was somewhat

misleading that Mentee 1 spoke against jewelry but she appeared on the scene with

elaborate hairstyle. In second service, Mentee 1 gave a solid presentation from the

introduction to the appeal. Her platform management improved considerably and her

transitions were smooth. Although the congregation was not as responsive as in the early

service, people were attentive and agreed. Especially meaningful to them was her call to

action at the end of her sermon.

Narrative of Preaching Series 2

Mentee 2 preached his sermon titled, "United We Stand; Divided We Fall!" on

February 23, 2019. Sermon topic was the injustice of discriminating against young people

in family, society, and church. His key text was 1 Samuel 16:1-13. In both services, the

teenage preacher was introduced and welcomed to the platform by his mentor.

In first service, the introduction of the sermon reflected nervousness, but that

changed as he continued his message. It was remarkable that Mentee 2 did not lose track

when the sound system acted up. His natural humor created great connection with the

congregation and toward the end of the sermon he was able to bring more feeling and

passion to his message. In second service, Mentee 2 looked more comfortable and

confident. He maintained good balance between focusing on his script and looking at the

congregation. His open and honest sharing made his sermon personable and relatable,

although uncomfortable to some. After the sermon, the project coordinator and Mentor 2 congratulated Mentee 2 for his great message.

Narrative of Preaching Series 3

Mentee 3 preached his sermon titled, "Are You Sure You Are in the Promised Land?" on March 9, 2019. The topic of his sermon was the crisis and the unfair treatment of the immigrants. His key text was Genesis 12:1-5. In both services, the teenage preacher was introduced and welcomed to the platform by his mentor.

In first service, Mentee 3 had the attention of his audience throughout his sermon. His sermon had improved considerably compared to rehearsals. His delivery was smooth and his style relevant, especially to the younger segment of the congregation. He also used some slangs, but his audience did not perceive that as something negative. In second service, Mentee 3 had an animated and captivating sermon delivery. He used humor and came across as being passionate about his topic. His personal experience as an immigrant and his self-reflection stimulated a reciprocal effect for his audience. At some points he tended to speed, but that was counterbalanced by slower moments in his call to action. After the sermon, the project coordinator and Mentor 3 congratulated Mentee 3 for a timely and well-delivered message.

Narrative of Preaching Series 4

Mentee 1 preached her sermon titled, "Women: Mother or Minister?" on April 27, 2019. The topic of her sermon was the injustice of discriminating against women in ministry. Her key text was Romans 16:1-16. In both services, the teenage preacher was introduced to the congregation and welcomed to the platform by the project coordinator because Mentor 4 could not attend.

In first service, at the beginning of her sermon Mentee 4 looked nervous but after a short while she became comfortable and her delivery was fairly smooth. Eye-contact improved considerably since last rehearsal. Her introduction, the story about how she chose her controversial topic, was too long, but it was an effective disclaimer with regard to any possible political agenda. Additionally, her appeal and call to action included both women and men. In second service, Mentee 4 was more confident and that allowed her to speak with more clarity. Her conversational style and humor held the congregation's interest and made her topic, although uncomfortable to some, more palatable. Toward the end of the sermon Mentee 4 displayed a real preaching mode, in that she was firm in her protest, and yet, loving and energizing in moving people on to fulfilling God's will.

Narrative of Preaching Series 5

Mentee 5 preached his sermon titled, "Don't Steal Your Grandma's TV!...", on May 18, 2019. His sermon topic addressed the disparities and drawbacks children raised in single-parent households face. His key text was Romans 12:1-2. In both services, the teenage preacher was introduced and welcomed to the platform by his mentor.

In first service, some uncontrollable sound issues created discomfort to Mentee 5. In spite of that, Mentee 5's presentation was fairly smooth. The convincing nature of his personal testimony effectively balanced out his monotonous tendencies. The hesitation of the Worship Team to come back to the platform at the right time brought his sermon to a rather abrupt end. In second service, the energizing discussion with his mentor before he walked to the platform brought about an almost incredible change for Mentee 5. He was in his element and his testimony produced an enthusiastic celebration in his audience. At the end of the sermon, many people stood up acclaiming God for a great message.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I offered the narrative of the implementation of this ministry project. After describing the recruitment process of participants, I focused on the three phases of the sermonic process: producing the sermon, practicing the sermon and preaching the sermon. The journey of each prophetic preaching mentee was described in details from the moment of their recruitment to their preaching to the church. The implementation of this project closely followed the plan of intervention described in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, due to unforeseen ministry circumstances, in the process of implementation some aspects of the project had to be slightly adjusted.

CHAPTER 6

EVALUATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter describes the evaluation process of the Doctor of Ministry Project conducted at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. It offers the conclusions drawn from interpretation of data collected throughout the intervention process. The evaluation was carried out as an ongoing process by the project coordinator assisted by preaching mentors, preaching mentees, and a group of project evaluators. I gathered qualitative data through sermon evaluation forms, focus groups, reflective journals, sermon scripts and video recordings.

Description of the Evaluation Process

Project evaluators assessed the sermons of preaching mentees during the three public preaching sessions: AY Meeting, First Worship Service, and Second Worship Service. After the two preaching events before the congregation, a focus group of evaluators were asked to share their observations guided by the questions provided in the *Post Preaching Focus Group Questions* (see Appendix A). Similarly, at the end of the intervention process of this ministry project, a general evaluation focus group shared insights, based on questions provided in the form *Final Focus Group Questions* (see Appendix A).

At the end of their sermonic process, mentors and mentees were asked to offer a brief description of their step-by-step experience, both positive and negative, in the mentoring relationship throughout the sermonic process, based on their reflecting journals and memories. The project coordinator also kept a reflective journal throughout the entire process. In addition, sermon scripts were also collected at different stages of their development, and the entire sermonic process was video-recorded in order to provide analytical data for the final evaluation of the ministry project.

Interpretation of Collected Data

Sermon Grading Data Interpretation

The individual preaching performance of all mentees was evaluated by different groups of 5 evaluators that were able to commit to participate in all three preaching sessions of the same preaching trainee. A comparison of consecutive evaluation forms administered to the same preaching trainee provided information regarding growth and improvement in the preaching skills and abilities of the preaching mentees.

Introduction of Sermon Grading Data

This section introduces *Andrews University Grading Rubric for Sermon Delivery* data collected from project evaluators during the three preaching events of each preaching mentee in which they evaluated their sermons. This rubric was designed for graduate students. Therefore I recommend that for future usage it will be modified and adapted to the specific situation of teenage preachers.

Data is presented in a separate table for each preaching mentee. Additionally, I present tables of average percentage data for mentees and preaching events.

Table 1

Sermon Grading Data for Mentee 1:

Evaluators	AY Meeting	First Service	Second Service	Average
Evaluator 1	70	91	94	85
Evaluator 2	93	95	97	95
Evaluator 3	88	91	93	90.6
Evaluator 4	92	98	99	96.3
Evaluator 5	93	96	98	95.6
Average	87.2	94.2	96.2	**91.8**

Table 2

Sermon Grading Data for Mentee 2:

Evaluators	AY Meeting	First Service	Second Service	Average
Evaluator 1	82	98	100	91.3
Evaluator 2	84	87	96	89
Evaluator 3	68	66	85	73
Evaluator 4	69	80	85	78
Evaluator 5	74	74	83	77
Average	75.4	81	89.8	**82**

Table 3

Sermon Grading Data for Mentee 3:

Evaluators	AY Meeting	First Service	Second Service	Average
Evaluator 1	83	98	98	93
Evaluator 2	86	96	98	93.33
Evaluator 3	89	91	95	91.66
Evaluator 4	75	80	80	78
Evaluator 5	75	75	80	76.66
Average	81.6	88	90.2	**86.6**

Table 4

Sermon Grading Data for Mentee 4:

Evaluators	AY Meeting	First Service	Second Service	Average
Evaluator 1	78	85	84	81.33
Evaluator 2	86	90	96	90.66
Evaluator 3	84	95	98	93.33
Evaluator 4	70	81	81	77.33
Evaluator 5	69	69	89	75.66
Average	77.4	84	89.6	**83.6**

Table 5

Sermon Grading Data for Mentee 5:

Evaluators	AY Meeting	First Service	Second Service	Average
Evaluator 1	98	100	100	99.33
Evaluator 2	80	80	82	80.66
Evaluator 3	84	97	98	93
Evaluator 4	81	89	98	89.33
Evaluator 5	100	100	100	100
Average	88.6	93.2	95.6	**92.4**

Table 6

Average Percentage for Mentees:

Mentees	Mentee 1	Mentee 2	Mentee 3	Mentee 4	Mentee 5	Average of the Average
Average	91.8	82	86.6	83.6	92.4	**87.2**

Table 7

Average Assessments of Evaluators for Preaching Events:

Event	Mentee 1	Mentee 2	Mentee 3	Mentee 4	Mentee 5	Average of the Average
AY Meeting	87.2	75.4	81.6	77.4	88.6	**82**
First Service	94.2	81	88	84	93.2	**88**
Second Service	96.2	89.8	90.2	89.6	95.6	**92.2**

Analysis of Sermon Grading Data

Sermon grading data revealed growth and improvement in the preaching skills of preaching mentees. As shown in the tables above, the personal average grade of preaching mentees ranged from 82 to 92.4. The total average grade of preaching mentees was 87.2. In the grading rubric that average falls in the range of proficient preaching. Within this range, Mentees 1 and 5 were valued as exceptional preachers, while Mentees 2, 3, and 4 were assessed as proficient preachers. It is remarkable that the first and the last mentee happened to be exceptional preachers. That helped to start and end the public part of the preaching project on a high note and positively impact the congregation.

Growth and improvement were visible throughout each series of three preaching events. With very few exceptions, evaluators perceived consistent growth from one preaching event to the other. The total average point of preaching events also indicated that the growth observed between the AY Meeting and First Service preaching (from 82 to 88) was more significant than the growth between the First and Second Service (from 88 to 92.2). That is explainable given that between the first and second preaching event mentees had at least one week to practice, while between the First and Second Service they had less than two hours to make the necessary adjustments.

Focus Group Evaluation

Focus group is "a small group of people whose response to something (…) is studied to determine the response that can be expected from a larger population" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*). In our case, it was a group of evaluators whose response to some specific questions regarding this preaching ministry project was studied to determine the possible response of the church congregation. What follows is a summary of the conclusions of focus group observations collected after each preaching series and at the end of the implementation of this ministry project.

Sermon Evaluation Focus Group

Focus group members were asked five questions addressing (a) performance of the teenage preachers, (b) appropriateness of the prophetic message, (c) overall reaction of the congregation, (d) general leadership lessons, and (e) involvement of young people in the leadership of the church.

Question 1: What do you think about the overall performance of the teenage preacher?

By and large, evaluators were captivated by the performance of teenage preachers. They appreciated the growth in confidence and comfort level they could observe throughout the three preaching events. They also considered that the nervousness of some of the teenage preachers did not affect negatively the quality and effectiveness of their message. Moreover, they valued the teenage preachers' naturalness, spontaneity, wittiness, honesty, candidness, passion, and energy. In some cases, the conversational style and personal testimony of the teenage preacher also made a positive impact.

Question 2: Was the prophetic message appropriately articulated in the context of current realities?

Evaluators recognized that in each case the injustice issue was appropriately articulated and conveyed in a loving manner. The messages of teenage preachers were relevant and eye-opening, and they spoke to the current realities of church, society and individuals. It was also acknowledged that although in some cases further research would have been useful, teenage preachers presented a balanced biblical view on their topics.

Question 3: What was the overall reaction of the congregation to the message?

Evaluators expressed that in subsequent conversations with other church members it was clear that they received the message and were energized to change their attitude and action. The use of personal experience appealed to the audience and brought a desire to improve in attitude and action. One evaluator stated that after hearing a young person's perspective on a specific injustice issue it would be hard to imagine that older church members would not ponder their past, present, and future actions. Additionally, it was observed that the younger generations were extremely receptive and engaged, applauding and cheering during the sermons of the teenage preachers. With all this, there were also people in the audience that were not so enthusiastic and some even expressed their uneasiness with some of the messages.

Question 4: What leadership lessons can be learnt from this preaching experience?

The most important leadership lesson recognized by evaluators was that young people are capable of reaching their highest potential when adults provide them with tools and guidance needed for their advancement. Therefore, it is crucial for them to be given the chance to develop their potential.

Another leadership lesson related to discrimination: judging people based on opinions or perceptions can keep certain vulnerable groups from reaching their potential. God is able to use anyone, even the most unlikely. Therefore, we should be intentional about discovering young people with hidden talents and untapped potential who are just waiting for an opportunity to ministry.

And lastly, providing visibility to a young person brings encouragement to peers showing them that they too have the ability to cultivate hidden talents that can glorify God. When we allow young people to be visible in the church it helps other youth to see a place for them in the church. Moreover, those who become visible may more easily become mentors to other young people.

Question 5: How could this preacher and sermon shape the mentality of the church regarding the integration of young people in the leadership of the church?

All evaluators agreed that teenage preachers and their sermons have raised awareness that young people should be more integrated in the leadership of the church. While some believed that a culture of mentorship is needed to prepare young people for future leadership and mentorship, some others emphasized the present urgent need to integrate more youth in church leadership. Even the most unlikely young person has the potential to lead when someone invests in him or her. It was noticed that preaching to the congregation provided visibility and visibility is crucial in becoming a leader. One evaluator stated: "Leaders are made when given the platform!" Those that are visible can be recognized as leaders and are more likely to be integrated in the leadership structure. This confirms the crucial nature of unlocking "keychain leadership" (Powel, Mulder, & Griffin, 2016, pp. 50-87), which has a bearing on the church's retention of young people.

Thus, preaching can become a springboard to someone's activation into leadership. Recommendation was made that young people should be nominated for leadership responsibilities with adult mentors carefully guiding and nurturing them in their leadership roles. Through mentoring they gain confidence to acquire and build skills necessary to become proficient church leaders.

Project Evaluation Focus Group

The focus group was asked five questions addressing (a) impact of the preaching project, (b) awareness of the church regarding social injustice, (c) empowerment of the church to speak out against social injustice, (d) general leadership lessons that derive from this preaching project, and (e) impact of the ministry project on the mentality of the church regarding the involvement of young people in its leadership.

Question 1: What do you think about the overall impact of the teenage preachers in this project?

In the opinion of evaluators, the most impacting part of this ministry project was mentoring. It was proved that mentoring can impact individuals, families and, the church. Those involved as teenage preachers and their families have experienced transformation with possible eternal consequences. All participants believed that mentorship should be incorporated in the flow of church life.

Question 2: Did the prophetic messages raise awareness regarding social injustice?

The answer was unanimously affirmative. Teenage preachers successfully raised awareness with regard to the ongoing cruel realities people are confronted with in society,

church and family. Evaluators were surprised to find that social injustice is also present in the church and the younger generation is quite sensitive to it.

Question 3: Was the church encouraged to speak up and act against social injustice?

The answer was affirmative. It was remarked that this preaching project helped the congregation better understand the purpose of the church's Justice Ministry. Moreover, it was stated that it is imperative for the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church to continue to actively take a stand for social justice in the community.

Question 4: What leadership lessons can be learnt from this teenage preaching project?

Evaluators recognized that this ministry project entailed some outside-the-box thinking which convinced the congregation that teenagers can become real preachers that can deliver a sermon in a normal worship context, not only at special events. Moreover, if leaders engage the youth of the church and give them responsibilities, they will exceed expectations; they will come with a perspective and style that helps share the Gospel in fresh ways. The church would become more relevant in today's culture and could begin a resurgence of interest in the church and God for the youth of this generation. Consequently, leaders should constantly, intentionally, and lovingly invest in the younger generation, create opportunities for young people, and build their confidence to help them grow. It is the responsibility of the leaders to train leaders that will be able to replace them and the best time to begin is while they are young, teachable, and willing.

Question 5: How does this project shape the mentality of the church with regard to the involvement of young people in the leadership of the church?

Evaluators confessed that in the past the youth were not always embraced lovingly and afforded the opportunity to grow and be mentored, and that had delayed and

slowed the growth of the ministry of soul winning at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. However, a positive change is happening and the "senior" leadership is more supportive toward youth leadership than it was in the past. According to evaluators, the unique contribution of this project toward a better retention of young people and their integration in church leadership is that it provided not only an opportunity, but also visibility to young people with great leadership potential. Additionally, the involvement of young people can motivate the older people to accept and fulfill their responsibilities.

Sermon Script Evaluation

In the sermonic process, sermon scripts were the most tangible evidence of growth and improvement. Before their AY Meeting preaching, mentees worked together with their mentors focusing mainly on the content of their sermons. In the week before preaching in front of the congregation, mentee, mentor and researcher worked together to clarify structure and give the sermon script its final form. Feed-back from mentors and researcher was facilitated by the use of free online editable document (Google Docs) in which they could introduce content material and make observations needed by the mentees. In some cases, the final product was an elaborate word-for-word discourse; in others, the sermon script purposely allowed for sections of improvisation. The printed version of some of the sermon script also contained the personal annotation of the teenage preacher with regard to intonation, cadence, pauses, emphases, etc.

Reflective Journal Evaluation

A reflective journal is a personal record of someone's learning experiences. It is a space where learners can "record and reflect upon their observations and responses to situations, which can then be used to explore and analyze ways of thinking"

(*WikiEducator*). What follows is a summary of the reflections of mentors and mentees provided in the description of their mentorship experience.

Summary of Mentors' Reflective Journal

The mentor-mentee relationship enhanced the spiritual experience of mentors. The first challenge mentors faced in their interaction with mentees was their spiritual preparation. Some of the mentors frankly admitted that early on in the process they were unaware of the spiritual journey ahead of them and the level of spiritual responsibility they were asked to take on. Their new responsibility prompted them to be more intentional about their own spiritual journey. Because they were asked to introduce their mentees to their own devotional life, mentors had to find creative ways to approach them and ensure consistency in their spiritual development. It was especially challenging to deal with those mentees that had no spiritual life and just little Bible knowledge.

Moreover, sometimes, teenage mentees were bored, listless, and unengaged, or they tested the mentor just to see his or her reactions. Furthermore, some mentees tended to bring their relational issues at home into the mentorship relationship. One mentor had to deal with his mentee's constant sense of worthlessness and temptation to give up.

In the selection of the sermon topic, some of the mentees needed little help because they had been already preoccupied with some specific injustice issues; to others, the process was more difficult and needed a lot of support and time investment from their mentors. Three of the mentees decided to change their topics in the process; one was an almost last-minute change. Decision was especially consuming where the topics were somewhat controversial (e.g. women discriminated in church, or injustice committed by

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elders against young people of the church). There the mentees needed encouragement and empowerment from their mentors that they would be able to handle those issues.

Most mentors managed to incorporate the critiques given to them in the previous rehearsal or preaching sessions. There were, however, situations where mentees were hesitant with regard to some of the changes asked for. In the end, all mentors agreed that the benefits and blessings of mentorship outweighed the difficulties. Despite all the challenges, they expressed personal satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity to invest time, energy, and experience into their mentees.

Summary of Mentees' Reflective Journal

For mentees, the constant interaction with their mentors in the sermonic process was crucial. Encouraging devotional text messages, casual or prayer phone calls, and work meetings were all instrumental in building a trust relationship. Mentees appreciated the assistance of their mentors elaborating on their sermon ideas and pointing out flaws in their thinking process. Moreover, the presence of the mentor in practice and preaching sessions gave the mentee confidence and comfort. Likewise, keeping in touch with them when their mentors were not able to attend a session meant a lot to the teenage preachers. Additionally, mentors preaching in front of their mentees conferred meaning and value to the sermon of the teenage preachers. Also, sharing insights before and after each rehearsal or preaching session contributed to an unforgettable experience.

<div align="center">

Outcomes of the Intervention

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Through this ministry project we learned how to develop, implement, and evaluate a model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for preaching with a prophetic emphasis at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. Throughout the

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process, we experienced the impact and benefits of mentorship and hands-on learning. Sermon grades and scripts showed that mentees experienced significant growth in their skill level. Focus groups revealed that the project impacted the congregation by raising awareness and inspiring change in two critical aspects of the church's life: retention of youth and integration of youth in leadership. Evaluators recognized that young people can exceed expectations if their gift are recognized and employed in areas of the church's ministry that attract them, such as social justice. Moreover, visibility is needed in their process toward leadership. Personal reflections of mentors and mentees reinforced the crucial nature of trust-based relationship between mentor and mentee.

The preaching mentorship program continued after the completion of this ministry project. Mentors were encouraged to continue mentoring their mentees and in most cases the mentor-mentee relationship continues. Mentees that completed the learning cycle of the sermonic process continue to be part of the preaching mentorship team as they further develop their skills as preachers and share the experience they acquired throughout the process with our new preaching mentees. In the long run, the preaching ministry that originated as a Doctor of Ministry Project is hoped to have a bearing on both the church's low retention of youth and on their poor representation in the leadership of the church.

Personal Conclusions

In this section, the researcher and coordinator of this ministry project offers his most important personal findings gained in the course of developing implementing and evaluating this ministry project. I will present three conclusions, each deriving from one of the three main sections of this research: theological, theoretical and methodological.

First, my main theological conclusion is that this ministry project was successful because it was built on solid biblical foundations. As shown in Chapter 2, prophetic preaching is a divinely ordained duty in the younger generation. Just as in the schools of the prophets of biblical times, teenagers who worked under the guidance of experienced spiritual leaders can become spirit-filled leaders with a loving and decisive influence for divine grace and justice. Recognizing the giftedness of our youth, tapping into their resources, and employing them in areas of our mission about which they are passionate (such as social justice), will help them recognize God's purpose for their lives.

Second, my principal theoretical conclusion is that hands-on training is the most effective learning method when it comes to preaching. Nothing can equal the exponential growth mentees experience, when immersed in something they are passionate about, in a supportive and caring context. Walking through the step-by-step process of prophetic preaching along with a trustworthy mentor that serves as a model of good practice is the best training for which a young preaching mentee could ask.

Third, my most significant methodological finding is that the key for a successful implementation of a ministry project, which unfolds over a longer period of time and involves different people with different roles, is accountability on all levels.

Personal Transformation

My involvement in this ministry project has affected my life, leadership, and ministry in several significant ways. First, this training project has brought back a component of my earlier life that I was missing. As someone who spent years in the classroom as a high school teacher, I was longing for the satisfaction of interacting with and impacting the life of teenagers. This ministry project allowed me to combine two of

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my major spiritual gifts, preaching and teaching, in serving and changing the perception about the age-group that is the closest to my heart.

Second, as a leader, I have come to realize that my church would support my ministry projects if I involve the leadership of the church and the entire congregation. Moreover, I have come to recognize that a mentorship-based ministry project, led by the pastor of the church, can set the tone for other ministry projects of the church and change its ministry culture. This gives me confidence that God is using me as a leader to move his people on to His agenda.

Third, this groundbreaking ministry project, which focuses on the currently most neglected segment of our church population, has enhanced the perceived value of my ministry. The impact of this ministry project has reached beyond the boundaries of our church. Some of the teenage preachers have already received preaching invitations. Moreover, some churches in the area have shown interest in implementing similar preaching projects. I am satisfied to see that God is using my leadership and the ministry of our church as an inspiration to other leaders and churches.

Recommendations

This section offers several recommendations for improving future teenage preaching projects based on personal observations and participant feedback. These recommendations address the main challenges encountered in the three phases of the sermon production: sermon production, sermon practice and sermon preaching.

First, I recommend that the classroom training sessions in the sermon production phase be shorter. If these sessions take place on Sabbath afternoons, lunch is indispensable before the training. As a result, the attention span of teenagers will

decrease significantly. In such a situation, 90-minute sessions are too long. Sixty-minute sessions composed of three 10-minute presentations, each followed by a 10-minute Q&A, seem to be more effective with teenagers.

Second, the sermon practice phase has to be adapted to the local context of the preaching project. In our case, practice sessions closely followed one another because we wanted to simulate the actual preaching context in which there were two consecutive worship services where the teenage preachers had to deliver their messages. I recommend that in contexts where the preaching phase consists of one single preaching event, the practice sessions will be spaced out by a larger period of time so that, between practice sessions, the preaching mentee will have more preparation time.

Third, I suggest that in larger churches, in order to avoid scheduling difficulties, instead of preaching once a month, teenage preachers will be spaced out over a longer period of time.

Final Word

Why should a church pastor develop, implement, and evaluate a model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers? Because this age group has an immense potential that has often been neglected. Our churches create programs in which children recite homilies created by others, and that's great. However, once they become teenagers, it often seems that everything stops for them in church. They/we think they are too old for those assigned homilies, but too young for real sermons. As a result, their potential remains unused and their skill set is often lost. Statistics show the tendency for young people is to leave the church while they are still in their teens. In some churches, entire generations are missing because the church lost them at their most critical stage of life.

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What if experienced, Spirit-filled, mentors came along and tapped into the extraordinary potential of these teenagers? I pray that this project will motivate church leaders to be intentional about mentoring young people at the age when their need for guidance and support is the greatest and their resources the most abundant. Moreover, I hope that it will inspire pastors to train, equip and deploy young people for preaching ministry, especially prophetic preaching ministry. For this, I will publish the findings of my research and will encourage and assist leaders of other churches in recovering prophetic preaching in the younger generation.

APPENDIX A

POST PREACHING FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of the overall performance of the teenage preacher?
2. Was the prophetic message appropriately articulated in the context of current realities?
3. What was the overall reaction of the congregation to the message?
4. What leadership lessons can be learnt from this preaching experience?
5. How could this preacher and his/her sermon shape the mentality of the church with regard to the integration of young people in the leadership of the church?

FINAL FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What do you think of the overall impact of the teenage preachers in this project?
2. Did the prophetic messages raise awareness regarding social injustice?
3. Was the church encouraged to speak up and act against social injustice?
4. What leadership lessons can be learnt from this teenage preaching project?
5. How does this project shape the mentality of the church with regard to the involvement of young people in the leadership of the church?

APPENDIX B

MENTORING TEAM RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello _____. I will be conducting a Doctor of

Ministry research project titled "Training, Equipping and Deploying Teenagers for

Prophetic Preaching at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church."

The purpose of this ministry project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a

model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching in the

Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The subjects of this ministry project will be teenagers (adolescents aged from 13

to 18 years) from Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. Five or six teenagers of both

genders will be selected based on their giftedness and willingness to participate in this

project.

Given the fact that you are an experienced and valued preacher, I would like to

utilize your experience and expertise in this ministry project. Would you be interested in

joining a team of mentors that will provide mentoring to teenage preaching mentees?

If you are interested in being part of this ministry project as a mentor, we will

review together a consent form that outlines your specific responsibilities. Upon

acceptance of this invitation, you will be asked to sign that consent form.

Thank you for your interest in helping to train, equip, and deploy teenagers for

prophetic preaching ministry!

APPENDIX C

MENTEE RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello _____. Pastor Joseph Salajan will be

conducting a Doctor of Ministry research project titled "Training, Equipping and

Deploying Teenagers for Prophetic Preaching at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist

Church." I am one of the mentors of this ministry project.

The purpose of this ministry project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a

model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching in the

Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The subjects of this ministry project will be teenagers like you (adolescents aged

from 13 to 18 years) from Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. Five or six

teenagers of both genders will be selected based on their giftedness and willingness to

participate in this project.

I would like you to know that I see great potential in you and I believe you could

become an excellent preacher. Would you be interested in joining a team of mentees that

will be mentored individually toward a prophetic preaching ministry?

If you are interested in being part of this ministry project as a mentee, we will

review together an assent form that outlines your specific responsibilities. Upon

acceptance of this invitation, you will be asked to sign that assent form.

Thank you for your interest in becoming a prophetic preacher!

APPENDIX D

EVALUATION TEAM RECRUITMENT SCRIPT

Hello _____. I will be conducting a Doctor of

Ministry research project titled "Training, Equipping and Deploying Teenagers for

Prophetic Preaching at the Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church."

The purpose of this ministry project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a

model of training, equipping, and deploying teenagers for prophetic preaching in the

Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church. The subjects of this ministry project will be

teenagers (adolescents aged from 13 to 18 years) from Plantation Seventh-day Adventist

Church. Five or six teenagers of both genders will be selected based on their giftedness

and willingness to participate in this project. Given the fact that you are an ordained elder

of Plantation Seventh-day Adventist church and you are familiar with both the preaching

trainees and the local church context, I would like to invite you to help me in the

evaluation of this ministry project.

If you are interested in being part of this ministry project as an evaluator, we will

review together a consent form that outlines your specific responsibilities. Upon

acceptance of this invitation, you will be asked to sign that consent form.

Thank you for your interest in helping to train, equip, and deploy teenagers for

prophetic preaching ministry!

APPENDIX E

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY GRADING RUBRIC FOR SERMON DELIVERY

STUDENT NAME:

	Exceptional 90-100 points	Proficient 60-89 points	Satisfactory 50-59 points	Unsatisfactory 0-49 points	Pts
Introduction	Audience is grabbed, main theme clear, Bible text very apparent.	Audience is caught, main theme somewhat clear, Bible text is apparent.	Audience is here, main theme almost clear, Bible text somewhat apparent.	Audience is wandering, main theme unclear, Bible text unclear.	**0**
	(9-10)	(6-8.9)	(5-5.9)	(0-4.9)	
Scripture	Text(s) at the very center of the message. Main points are obviously derived from the text(s).	Text(s) at the center of the message. Main points are derived from the text(s).	Text(s) present in the message. Main points are somewhat derived from the text(s).	Text(s) not the center of the message. Main points not derived from the text(s).	**0**
	(9-10)	(6-8.9)	(5-5.9)	(0-4.9)	
Sermon Content, and Application	Demonstrates excellent exegesis; contains creative illustrations; clear alliterations; outstanding research; analysis of pericope, structure & organization of sermon. Applications are inspiring, relevant and meaningful. Conclusion & Appeal are very clear and persuasive	Demonstrates very good exegesis, illustrations, alliterations, research and analysis of pericope. Presents a very good structure & Organization of the sermon. Applications are relevant and meaningful; Conclusion and appeal persuasive	Demonstrates good exegesis, but lacks interesting illustrations, insightful research and analysis of periscope, has acceptable structure and organization. Applications, conclusion and appeal are good.	Demonstrates poor exegesis, has little or no illustrations; lacks good exercise of research and analysis; structure and organization lacking; conclusion and appeal poor	**0**
	27-30	18-26.99	15-17.99	0-14.99	
Method/Form/Type (Mechanics)	Demonstrates excellent understanding and adherence to sermon definitions. Effective use of Inductive and/or Deductive methods and is devoid of eisegesis or Proof-texting. No grammatical errors. No umms, ahs, or other awkward hesitations.	Demonstrates very good understanding/ adherence to sermon definitions. Clear use of Inductive and/or Deductive method with little or no eisegesis or Proof-texting. Few grammatical errors, umms, ahs, or other awkward hesitations.	Demonstrates good understanding and adherence to sermon definitions. Uses Inductive and/or Deductive method and has little or no eisegesis or Proof-texting. Many grammatical errors or umms, ahs, or other awkward hesitations.	Shows mediocre understanding and adherence to sermon definitions; does not demonstrate creativity and good use of the forms, methods or types of preaching as discussed in class. Grammatical errors or umms, ahs, other awkward hesitations, distractions	**0**
	18-20	12-17.99	10-11.99	0-9.99	
Delivery Style: Expository; Narrative; Biographical; Prophetic; Extemporaneous; Manuscript; Memorization; Noteless	Passion and flow is smooth, vocal variety was very helpful. Excellent employment of any of the styles of preaching.	Passion and flow is fairly smooth, vocal variety was helpful. Very good employment of any of the styles of preaching	Passion and flow is rough, vocal variety was lacking. Good employment of any of the styles of preaching	Passion and flow is lacking, vocal variety missing. Mediocre use of styles of preaching, voice and oral communications skills	**0**
	18-20	12-17.99	10-11.99	0-9.99	
Conclusion	The point is summed up clearly concisely and the challenge is clear.	The point is summed up concisely and there was a challenge.	The conclusion is unclear or there was little challenge.	The point is left hanging or no challenge.	**0**
	(9-10)	(6-8.9)	(5-5.9)	(0-4.9)	
Total					**00**

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Background: I was born on February 12, 1982 in Crasna (Salaj County, Romania) to an Adventist family of farmers as second of the 4 children. I was baptized at the age of 17 in the Crasna Seventh-day Adventist Church where I started to serve in different capacities with the youth and other departments of the church. In 2013, I emigrated to the United States of America. My motto is: "All I have is gift; All I am is grace!"

Family: I Married Minodora Anda Moldovan from Ibanesti (Romania) on December 1, 2013. We are the happy parents of Alessandra and Byan Eduard.

Education:

2015-2020	Doctor of Ministry – Homiletics/Preaching, Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI)
2007-2013	MA in Religion, Andrews University (extension site, Cernica, Romania)
2001-2005	BA in Pastoral Theology (Minor: Religion Teacher), Adventist Theological Institute (Cernica, Romania)
1996-2000	High School, George Sincai Pedagogical High School (Zalau, Romania)

Ordination:

2011	I am ordained in the North Transylvania Conference (Romania); I currently hold ministerial credentials with the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Experience:

2017-Present	Senior Pastor, Plantation Seventh-day Adventist Church (FL)
2013-2017	District Pastor, Romanian Adventist Temple (Hollywood, FL) and North Miami Beach Seventh-day Adventist churches
2011-2013	Senior District Pastor, Verveghiu, Cehu Silvaniei and Ulciug Seventh-day Adventist churches (Romania) Religion and Bible Teacher at "Maranatha" Seventh-day Adventist Academy (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)
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