

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Preaching about Everyday Life

By

Leif Nordenstorm

March 2022

A Doctoral Thesis Submitted to
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry in Preaching

Chicago, Illinois
2022
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
Association of Chicago Theological Schools
Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program
Class of 2022

Preaching about Everyday Life

BY

Leif Nordenstorm

Thesis Examining Committee

Dr. Niclas Blåder
KFP-Sweden Program, Academic Advisor

Dr. Kimberly Wagner
LSTC DMIN Program, Academic Advisor

Pastor Leila Mänttari
KFP-Sweden Program, Student Peer

Dr. Mark Swanson
Colloquy Chair

Accepted by
Dr. Mark Swanson
Director of Advanced Studies

Date: 03/29/2022

Thesis Abstract

The author wants to accomplish making sermons about “food” and “death”, in which Christian faith has something to say in the preaching ministry.

A Parish Project group, which has heard the sermons, give written answers and is interviewed to clarify how these sermons about everyday life themes are received by the congregation. The result was that the group members noticed that the sermons about everyday life addressed themes, which seldom are addressed in sermons in Church of Sweden. It was easy to start a conversation about these sermons in the group, which shows that there is a genuine interest to discuss everyday themes with biblical preaching as a catalyst.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	6
1.1	Background	6
1.2	My participation in the Preaching Program.....	11
1.3	Thesis statement, purpose, and method	16
2	Ministry Context.....	17
2.1	History and church history	17
2.2	Social and cultural context	19
2.3	Denominational context.....	20
2.4	Congregational context.....	23
2.5	Liturgical context	24
2.6	Corona pandemy context.....	25
3	Homiletics	27
3.1	Gustaf Wingren	28
3.2	Anna Carter Florence	30
3.3	Bernice Sundkvist.....	32
3.4	Martin Lönnebo	35
3.5	Charles Campbell	38
3.6	Joseph M. Webb	41
4	Theologians	42
4.1	Göran Larsson	43
4.2	Tore Johnsen.....	46
4.3	Jonna Bornemark.....	48
4.4	Bengt Kristensson Uggla.....	50
4.5	Jennifer Baldwin.....	52
4.6	Per Larsson	53
4.7	Benjamin M. Stewart.....	54
5	Project Plan and Process.....	56
5.1	The background of the thesis project.....	56
5.2	The parish project in 2019	57
5.3	The parish project in 2020	59
5.4	The Parish Project Groups and the Corona Pandemic.....	62
5.5	Interview method.....	64
5.6	Presentation of results	66

6	Results and Evaluation	66
6.1	Sermon I	66
6.1.1	Preparations and Theologians	66
6.1.2	Homileticians	69
6.1.3	Feedback and Reflections	72
6.1.4	Comments from my Swedish advisor	77
6.2	Sermon II	78
6.2.1	Preparations and Theologians	78
6.2.2	Homiliticians	80
6.2.3	Feedback and Reflections	84
6.2.4	Comments from my Swedish advisor	89
6.3	Results	90
7	Homiletical Significance.....	96
7.1	Impact of the Thesis Project on a personal level	96
7.2	Preaching about Everyday Life – Especially about the Human Life Cycle	98
7.3	Preaching about Trauma.....	99
7.4	Celebration	101
7.5	Impact of the Thesis Project for the Ministry Context	102
8	Bibliography.....	103
9	Appendices	105
9.1	Letter of Invitation.....	105
9.2	Post-Sermon Questionnaire	107
9.3	Sermon I in Swedish.....	107
9.4	Sermon I Translated into English	112
9.5	Sermon II in Swedish	118
9.6	Sermon II translated into English	122
9.7	Comments to Sermon I from the Swedish advisor	126
9.8	Comments to Sermon II from the Swedish advisor.....	129
9.9	Parish Project Group Final Response Form	131
9.10	Appendix F	134
9.11	Appendix G	136
9.12	Appendix J.....	138

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

I was baptized as a child in Church of Sweden, which is a Lutheran church, in which most of the Swedish population are members. My parents were not active in church, but they were glad that I went to church as a child. I went to Sunday school and to the boy scouts in our local Evangelical Covenant church, and to the boys' choir in our Lutheran church. I frequented services in both churches. I liked to go to church, but usually the sermons were not very interesting for me as a boy. I thought that the pastor every Sunday said that "we must confess our sins and then be forgiven, because Christ died on the cross". Since that time, I was split between two ideals. I understood that it was possible to preach about different themes and that there are a lot of different and interesting topics in the bible. At the same time, I thought that a "real" sermon must be like the ones which I listened to as a boy.

I was a parish priest for 25 years, mostly in the small-town Boden in the north of Sweden. I mostly preached there once or twice, sometimes thrice, every Sunday. The Sunday services with liturgy and sermons were one of my favourite tasks in my work. Another favourite task was funerals. Perhaps that seems strange, but funerals are very rewarding tasks, because you help the relatives in a situation, where they have none or only a little experience, and are very thankful for any help. In the funerals there is also a sermon. Some older pastors gave me advice how to preach. However, I noticed that their advice not always was good advice. I remember especially that an older pastor said to me that a sermon in a funeral never should address the deceased person, but the Bible text read in the funeral, because the relatives know more about the deceased than the pastor, and that it is more important to give them the gospel than to say what they already know. Shortly after that I met a person, who had been in a funeral where the

pastor had preached in this way about the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11). The person I met was very upset and said that her aunt was not like a woman like that. She had not felt that the bible text or the sermon were about the gospel. Her feeling was that the funeral should be about her aunt, but it was not. At that moment I decided not to follow the advice not to preach about the deceased, although I in many ways respected the pastor, who gave the advice. Since then, I usually form my funeral sermons in three parts: 1 about the deceased person, including thanks to God who gave us this person; 2 on death and about morning; 3 about the resurrection of Jesus and about the hope in eternal life. My experience from this was that what the congregation hear is not always what the pastor wanted to say. Another experience was that older colleagues not always give good advice.

I can also remember another episode which had influence on my preaching. All pastors in the northern Diocese of Luleå were invited to a meeting for pastors. There was a guest lecturer, an academic teacher in exegetics, who lectured for us. I remember that he in the beginning gave us a question and asked how we prepared our sermons. About what did we usually preach? I am not sure that I remember all the alternatives he gave, but I think that they were: 1 about the text; 2 from the tradition; 3 about current events. He asked us to raise our hands when he read the alternatives once again. His comment was that we of course should preach about the text (which in Church of Sweden is pre-chosen in a lectionary). This teacher never gave any arguments why it should be like that, but he just ascertained that a sermon must be like that.

In fact, I think that I almost always obeyed his advice. I liked and I like to preach about Bible texts from the lectionary, but I do not think that it is inappropriate to get inspiration also from the tradition and from current events. There are also themes, which are that important, that one must preach about them, even if it is hard to find any

affiliation to these themes in the text. However, sometimes it is possible to find an affiliation, even if it is a little far-fetched.

I am a father of five children. During many years I could spend only a little time watching TV-programmes and if I watched I did it often with my children and wife as a family activity. However, my late mother, often told me that I had to watch some programmes with Dr Phil, because he was absolutely fantastic. I knew nothing about this famous American television personality, but I obeyed to my mother and saw some shows with Dr Phil. I could immediately understand why my mother, and millions of other people, were enthusiastic about Dr Phil. Firstly, he did not hesitate to speak with people with totally different problems. Some of these people have had very hard lives with terrible problems. Others seemed to live ordinary lives with normal human problems, which they seemed to have enlarged. (But remember that I wrote “seemed to”. Perhaps these persons experienced that their problems were very hard.) Secondly, he did listen to everybody, but he did not hesitate to say what the problem was. Thirdly, he did always give somebody tasks to make changes in their lives. “If you want to improve this, you must...”

I began to understand why Dr Phil was that popular. He did not just mention possible problems in the world, but he met real people, talked with them, and taught them that they could solve their own problems if they wanted to.

I began to think that the method of Dr Phil perhaps could help me when preaching. A service or mass is not a TV-show, where people are talking about their problems publicly. But a pastor can meet a lot of people in the pastoral care and learn which problems are common in the congregation. In sermons, the pastor can mention problems and show possible methods to solve them. Though one must remember that it is not always a good idea to do as Dr Phil and show possible methods. Perhaps Dr Phil

dismissed some persons, to which he could not give good advice. A pastor who has pastoral care soon experience that it is not always possible to give good advice. Some problems must be solved within the other one as a process.¹

However, I was not sure that everyone would say that this is a good idea. As a Lutheran I was taught that it is very important to distinguish between law and gospel. In the Lutheran tradition the word “gospel” is often used about the forgiveness of sins. The word “gospel”, nonetheless, means “good news”. The message must include forgiveness of sins, but it cannot stop there. If a man or woman hears that his or her sins are forgiven, this does not mean that he or she begins a new lifestyle, without sin. We also need knowledge how to avoid sinning, and in this the method of Dr Phil can help us. However, Dr Phil does not forgive sins, nor bless the forgiven sinner. Therefore, the church has also other tasks, which we cannot learn from Dr Phil.

During my 25 years as a parish pastor, I came to some conclusions about preaching:

1. Always preach about the text but try to find something new in the text. Usually, the preacher should not say the same as the congregations already heard many times. It is better to find something new in the text, which can surprise the congregation. In fact, Jesus did like that. He surprised the persons who listened to him.
2. Work with pastoral care and speak with people in the congregation. That is a good possibility to learn what people are thinking about, about their sorrows and enjoyments. That gives you good stuff for sermons, and people can recognize themselves and their lives in the sermons, but do not give details in a way that people understand that you are preaching literally about them.

¹ Read more about this below, where I mention a book by the Swedish bishop, Esbjörn Hagberg.

3. Sometimes it is a good idea to preach to one person in the church. But one must not speak to the same person every Sunday. And do not address the person that openly, that other parishioners can guess to whom one preaches.
4. The pastor must not always preach to himself or herself. If the pastor thinks that a certain theme is very important, it is not sure that other people think so.
5. Listen to comments about the sermon. Listen especially much to the verger. Vergers have heard a lot of sermons. If a verger comments, his opinion is important.
6. If a person who belongs to a spiritual movement has a very fixed opinion how a sermon must be and rejects all other ideas, listen also to him or her, but do not necessary obey. There are people in some movement, who want to either approve, either reject pastors. Do not be bothered by this rating.
7. The sermon is not the only important thing in a service. Do not forget the liturgy. The liturgy is also important. A good liturgy can give the parishioners a good experience even if the sermon is mediocre.
8. The texts in the hymns and songs can support the sermon. If the songs repeat the same message as the sermon, it will be easier for the parishioners to remember the sermon.

Since 2011 I am director in the *Stiftelsen Fjellstedtska skolan*, “Peter Fjellstedt foundation”, in Uppsala. My work is to organize and realize further education for pastors in Church of Sweden. I have also organized short two-day courses with preparation for preaching in advent and Christmas, and in lent and easter. This gave me the possibility to regularly speak with other pastors about preaching. A common trait in these discussions is that many pastors would like to be more prepared for preaching and not preach on routine. When they have the possibility to come to Stiftelsen Fjellstedtska

skolan and discuss preaching in a course, this was very appreciated. The foundation also organizes the Swedish Preaching Program since 1994. When I began my work at the foundation, I had no plan to participate in the program, because there are good course leaders, who organize and realize the course without me. Later I realized that I needed to be a student in the course, because my situation was strange that I had not participated one of the most important and one of the oldest courses in the foundation.

1.2 My participation in the Preaching Program

I did the Swedish Preaching Program in the years 2018-2020. Before I write about my experiences in the program, I must give a background about why the Swedish Preaching Program was established. Church of Sweden is a Lutheran church, and this means that the theology of Martin Luther has had a strong influence on Church of Sweden. The Small Catechism of Martin Luther has had and has an important role, because it since 1695 has been reprinted in most hymnals and has been one of the few readings available in many homes.

Martin Luther in his Small Catechism in his Explanation of The Third Article states that:

the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.²

Later, the pietistic movement would project a time sequence into this, and so develop a doctrine of the *Ordo salutis* (Latin: “order of salvation”), which now refers to a series of

² “The Creed,” last modified 2019, <https://catechism.cph.org/en/creed.html>.

conceptual steps within the Christian doctrine of salvation.³ The Ordo salutis got an even stronger role during the 19th century, when it was considered that sermons must be in accordance with Ordo salutis. Some sermons in accordance with Ordo salutis were held in an authoritative way, with preachers who claimed that the different steps must be taken in the correct order. Preachers also were told that their sermons should not be about “worldly things”.

This is also one of the reasons why the Swedish Preaching Program started in 1995, inspired by the ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program:

The program started because of a need felt for a long time in the Church of Sweden. In an Evangelical Lutheran context such as ours preaching is foundational. However, preaching had been experiencing a crisis for some decades. [The promoters] Söderström, Larsson and Eriksson saw similarities in the homiletical struggles in the US with the situation in Sweden. Among other things they saw a reaction against a specific authoritative way of preaching, where the preacher made generalized statements about God, human life, Jesus, Palestine, and so on. Bible texts were used as if they had one single point that could be unpacked by making a proper exegetical interpretation.⁴

In the first year we listened to a lecture by the Swedish Theologian Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, quoting another Swedish theologian Gustaf Wingren “To abolish this undue theorization and to return the Christian faith to those human situations where it belongs is perhaps the most important task for contemporary theology.”⁵ I understood that this perhaps was the answer to my question if a “real” sermon must be like the ones I listened to as a boy. Preaching about sins and the cross every Sunday was perhaps the theorization, about which Wingren spoke. The human situations, i.e., everyday life, about which he also spoke, was what I would like to preach about.

³ “Ordo salutis,” Wikipedia, last modified December 17, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordo_salutis.

⁴ Carina Sundberg: The Qualified Swedish Preaching Program: The art of preaching and taking the creative process seriously

⁵ Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Gospel: The New Situation in European Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 1979/2004), 80.

In *Holy Clarity* by Sarah B. Drummond, I found this quotation:

Whereas Jewish and Muslim women in the group [Daughters of Abraham in First Church in Cambridge, a United Church of Christ congregation in Massachusetts,] were able to define clearly the ways in which their faith intersected with their daily lives, the Christian women in the group found it difficult to describe what made their lives Christian.⁶

When Gustav Wingren writes “human situations”, I think about daily life situations, as bringing up children, cooking, working, which could be intersected with and explained with the Christian faith, but is not, because we think that religion is one thing and everyday life another. Sarah B. Drummond uses the expression “daily lives” for the same issue. The quotation from Sarah B. Drummond inspired me even more to examine the relation between Christian faith and “daily life”.

Instead of the expression “human situations” of Wingren and “daily life” of Drummond, I chose the term “everyday life”, and I would like to define “everyday life” with a quotation from Wikipedia:

Everyday life, daily life or routine life comprises the ways in which people typically act, think, and feel on a daily basis.⁷

Another possible expression is “the human life cycle”. I have two certain memories about sermons about everyday life, which have inspired me to write about everyday life in this thesis.

Firstly, I can remember one Candlemas or Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ when I preached about Luke 2:21-40. When I read the last verse “The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was upon him” I suddenly realized that there were some young sportsmen and sportswomen in church. They were dressed as sportsmen and were on their way to the training but on the way, they came

⁶ Drummond, *Holy Clarity*, 109

⁷ “Everyday life,” Wikipedia, January 26, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Everyday_life.

to church. At the same time, I realized that when I thought about the text, I thought that “becoming strong” meant that Jesus got a strong mind, but when I saw the sportsmen, I understood that it perhaps meant that he got a strong body, the body of a carpenter, but at the same time filled with wisdom. I had an opportunity to say that there is no divergence between body and mind. You do not have to choose between training and reading the Bible. Even Jesus did not choose. He trained his body working as a carpenter, and he went to the synagogue to listen to the word. This sermon became much more practical, than I had planned. I was able to say that I preached about something that the young sportsmen and sportswomen did every week, but which almost never was mentioned in church.

Another time in the same church I preached about the period when Jesus was 12-30 years which is described in one verse: Luke 2:52. I showed a number of pictures of Jesus as a carpenter trainee or a little older carpenter together with Joseph. I preached about work and about the meaning of work and mentioned that Jesus was a worker for a major part of his life, and that most of us are. The work is not something, that takes time from our Christian faith, but a place where our Christian faith can become flesh. I also said that although Jesus was a worker, he had time to go to the synagogue, but perhaps only once a week. After the service a man came to me and said that his life was exactly like that. A lot of time to work, and a lot of time to commute to work, and only time to go to church once a week. It was good to hear that also Jesus had a life like that.

Martin Lönnebo (b. 1930), former teacher of homiletics in the Pastoral Institute of Church of Sweden, and later bishop of Linköping, also reacted against the authoritative way of preaching. In his book *Homiletik, En introduktion i kyrkans förkunnelse*, he writes

that the first demand on a sermon is that it responds to actual needs. The need should be real and not suggested or forced.⁸

Most needs of a person are needs about everyday life. My two experiences quoted above about preaching to young sportsmen and sportswomen, and preaching about work, have strengthen my conviction that there is a need for sermons about everyday life.

My plan is to strengthen my ability to preach about everyday life to which Christian faith belongs, and at the same time avoid preaching too far away from everyday life. When I found support in the waying of bishop Martin Lönnebo about “actual needs”, I got even more convinced.

I also read another book by a Swedish biskop, *Själavård vid köksbordet* (Pastoral care at the kitchen table) by Esbjörn Hagberg. The author states that good conversations among friends are enormously beneficial to help us with different problems in our life. However, it is not possible to solve the problems of the other one. It is not always possible to give good advice. Some problems must be solved within the other one as a process.⁹ Preaching and sermons are not the same thing as pastoral care, but there are similarities. The book gave me the idea that a sermon must be like a good conversation among friends about usual problems in life. The preacher cannot solve the problems of the listener, but must start a process, which perhaps, but not necessarily, helps the listener to solve a problem, or to process it. There is also a “kitchen table” in the church, i.e., the coffee table after the service. However, the coffee table is not always a place where two friends can discuss together, but sometimes a place where strangers meet. Perhaps a sermon can start a process, which ends in another place.

⁸ Martin Lönnebo, *Homiletik*, 20

⁹ Esbjörn Hagberg, *Själavård vid köksbordet* (Örebro: Libris, 2000)

My parish projects in the Swedish Preaching Program were also important experiences for me, when I decided to write about “Preaching about Everyday Life” in this thesis. I describe these projects in chapters 5.2 *The parish project in 2019* and 5.3. *The parish project in 2020*.

1.3 Thesis statement, purpose, and method

My thesis statement therefore is: **Given this context, this concern, and this theory I want to accomplish making sermons about “food” and “death”, in which Christian faith has something to say in my preaching ministry.** I think that sermons must address everyday life to be relevant for the majority, in the same way as the Bible addresses everyday life and not only (but also) spiritual questions. When I speak about human situations or everyday life I think about: to be a parent, to have a job, to be a pupil in school, to live in a family, to live without a family, to have old parents, to exercise sport and so on. (In this project the themes will be “food” and “death”.) These are not secular themes, because God has something to say about everything. God is not limited to a “spiritual sector” in life.

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how these sermons about the everyday life themes “food” and “death” are received by the congregation. Is it received as a spiritual sermon or is it received as something that is outside the domain of the Church and worship? How do the members of the Parish Project Group react to the sermons? Do they show an interest in discussing the everyday life themes addressed in the sermon or will they show disapproval that the sermon was about everyday life themes and not about spiritual themes in a narrower sense?

My role as an interviewer will be like a catalyst, which stimulates people to speak. The remote goal is to stimulate people to change, but that is not a part of this thesis. The essence is the process, and the key is to enable people to develop their own analysis of their issues.¹⁰ The results of this research will not be presented in the form of statistics, but as a summary of the conversations in the Parish.

The interview method will be described in chapters *5.4 The Parish Project Groups and the Corona Pandemic* and *5.5 Interview method*.

The experience and theories of some homileticians and theologians are important for my sermon project and for this thesis. In chapters *3 Homiletical issue* and *4 Some Theories on Preaching on Everyday Life* these homileticians and theologians are listed and. In these chapters I also explain why they are important for my thesis.

2 Ministry Context

2.1 History and church history

Uppsala is a municipality with 240 000 inhabitants. In the central town there is a population of 150 000 persons, out of which 85 000 are members in Church of Sweden. The history of the town is linked with the history of the Diocese of Uppsala. When St. Ansgar, the apostle of Sweden, in 829 came to the heathen area which is now Sweden he came to a land where pagan idols were worshipped. There was a heathen temple in Old Uppsala, some kilometres from the place which is now Uppsala. The archdiocese in Old Uppsala was established in 1164. In 1243 it was moved to the place which now is called Uppsala. The process to establish the church in Sweden was a slow process. Christianity and heathen religions lived at the same time in the same area. The question whether there are syncretistic traits in Swedish Christianity is a disputed question. The main

¹⁰ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Thesis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock), 42).

heritage from the heathen religion is probably the faith in lower beings, for example brownies (Christmas elves). These play no role in the central Christian faith, but is a folk belief, which lives parallelly with Christianity.

Another historical fact which is important to understand the context is that Sweden was a Catholic country until the reformation in the 16th Century. Most churches in the Diocese of Uppsala, especially in the countryside, are medieval ones, with paintings from that period. The church buildings are kept in a good condition, and many Swedes are fond of the church buildings, even if they do not attend services, or attend them very seldom. The reformation occurred in the 16th Century. Many Swedes do not know that the reformation in Sweden were milder than the reformation in other countries as Germany, Norway, and Denmark. In Sweden the Roman-catholic liturgy was kept with minor changes and statues of saints were kept in many churches. However, the education about history in Swedish schools for many years was hostile against the Catholic period and the Catholic church. Therefore, many Swedes have rigid opinions about Catholicism. Martin Luther for many years had the role of a saviour, who saved Sweden from Catholicism together with the Swedish king Gustav Vasa. Nowadays many Swedes have more critical thoughts about Martin Luther, and accuse him of making the Swedish people work addicts. However, Martin Luther, in our time is popular among theologians, but there are many different interpretations of "Lutheranism". This notion can be used to defend various theological ideas, which has their roots in the reformation or not, in the person Martin Luther or not, in Church of Sweden or not, in modern discussion or not.

2.2 Social and cultural context

The town has the main cathedral of Sweden and our Lutheran archbishop is living and working here. The town also has an old university, and five smaller universities. We also have a lot of pharmaceutical companies. Most of the inhabitants are well educated.

Uppsala can be described as a young town, because a large part of the population is young. Many young people come here to study in and many of them stay here after the studies. There are more than 40000 students here and Uppsala university is also one of the largest employers with 6500 employees. Another big employer is the Academical hospital with more than 8000 employees. Many people come to the hospital from the whole country to get medical treatment for short or long periods.

Uppsala is an international city in the way that one fourth of the inhabitants are born abroad. This makes Uppsala a very mixed city. We meet immigrants in the Lutheran churches, but there are also new non-Lutheran congregations, founded by immigrants. In Uppsala there are also new companies, especially bio-medical ones. The need for high-qualified staff has caused that the population has grown a lot, but also that the cost for apartments and houses are very high in Uppsala. This has caused that the town is very segregated, with poor and low educated in some areas and rich in other. Most of the population are however wealthy with high incomes. There are many young entrepreneurs in Uppsala, and the town has the lowest number of unemployed youths in Sweden. However, there are problems with drugs and psychical diseases. Both are frequent among young people. About 80 % of the pupils in high school high say that they feel well, but 40 % say that they feel pressure. 50 % used medicine against pain.¹¹ A common trait for the young people is that they are more optimistic about themselves

¹¹ The question is about medicine against pain in the body. However, anxiety or depression can also be reasons for some to use medicine against pain.

personally that about the world generally. They compare themselves with each other and try to give a good impression about themselves.¹²

Segregation is a reality in Uppsala. Many of the persons born outside Sweden live in some suburbs, where there are social problems. Especially in these areas there has been an increasing number of shootings in Sweden and in Uppsala. The number has become higher for many years. There are a lot of illegal weapons for sale. Many of them come from the Balkan peninsula, where a lot of weapons disappeared from the control of the armies during the wars in former Yugoslavia in the 1990-ies. The typical conflict in the segregated areas is between two gangs of immigrant (first or second generation) teen boys or boys in their 20-ies. The conflicts are related to selling of drugs and the typical victim in a shooting is a teenage boy, or a boy in his 20-ies. However, there are also older and younger victims, some of them are shot by mistake. I mention the disintegration and the shootings, because they are a real problem. Most of the congregations in Church of Sweden have no ideas how to deal with the shootings, although there are congregations, which do a lot of good job in the segregated areas. When I write this in the chapter about context in this thesis, I do not know if I myself can say anything wise about the shootings, in any of the sermons which I will preach. However, I think that this is one of the themes that a pastor should preach about.

2.3 Denominational context

My large context is Church of Sweden. The organization of Church of Sweden is very different compared with the churches in United States. One reason is that Sweden 150

¹² "Församlingsinstruktion Uppsala pastorat," Uppsala pastorat, January 26, 2022, <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/filer/F%c3%b6rsamlingsinstruktionen.pdf>

years ago was a homogeneous society, in which the whole population, with a few exceptions were supposed to be Lutherans, and members of the church. Church of Sweden had even not any name, except for “the church”, “the congregation” and similar expressions, until 1860, when the expression *Svenska kyrkan* “Church of Sweden” was used officialy the first time. In our time about 55 % of the population are members of the Church. Most of them are not very active in the church, but come to baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals. The attendance to the Sunday service is 1-2 % in Church of Sweden. (The smaller non-Lutheran congregations have higher attendance.) The organization of Church of Sweden has many levels. At the local level there is a *pastorat* with a vicar. The *pastorat* can consist of one or more parishes, with geographical borders in between. If the *pastorat* consist of many parishes, they have a common economy and a common administration. In each parish there can be one or several churches. There are also some (a few) independent congregations within Church of Sweden. They are independent in the way that they belong to a foundation but share the spiritual tradition of Church of Sweden. (*Samariterhemmet kyrka* in which in which I preach is one of those.)

Nowadays Church of Sweden is a shrinking church, and many people try to explain why. I think that one possible explanation is that many congregations in Church of Sweden does a very good work for many minorities, but not for the majority. Some years ago, I met a vicar, who himself is gay, who said: “I am very glad and proud that Church of Sweden worked a lot for the rights of HBTQ-people, but now it is enough. Now we must realize that we do a lot for the minorities, but not for the majority. That is the reason that they are leaving church. We for example don’t do anything for middle-age heterosexual men, who are interested in cars.” I think this vicar is right. Church of Sweden also pays a lot of attention to the ethnical minorities in Sweden, which is a good

thing. I am very happy about this because I am a mixture of three minorities, but I at the same time realize that we don't do the same work for the majority. I think that preaching about "everyday life", is a possibility to reach the majority and the minorities at the same time, because everyday life is relevant for all.

Even if Church of Sweden have these and other difficulties, we must in fact state that Church of Sweden somehow has a strong role in the Swedish people. If a catastrophe occurs, the general public, journalists and politicians usually think that a Church of Sweden congregation must open the church, so that people can go there during the crisis. In many places there is also a strong tradition that in the last day of the spring semester in school there must be a feast in church. Some thirty-forty years ago this was a service which the church organised for the school. In our time there are different ideas about what type of feast it must be. Some think that the school must borrow the church and organise something non-religious there. What I would like to say is that many think that the church – or the church building – is important, even if they do not go there themselves.

An important part of the context is the sermon ideals in Church of Sweden. One of the ideas of the reformation was that the sermon was one of the central parts of the mass. Later the mass in Church of Sweden became a service without communion. At some places the communion was held only once or twice a year. The sermon became an even more central part of the service. Sermon collections were sold and read in the homes, and by the pastors. The sermons were influenced by classical rhetoric. The sermons were built from a fixed schedule with a theme often in three parts. The character of the sermon should be educational. In the 19th century a new ideal about sermons came, especially among "modern" pastors in some times. The pastor could preach for example about how to do a good work at the farm. The simple people

protested. They wanted to hear sermons about God, Jesus, and the faith, not about farming. Since then, there is an ideal in Church of Sweden, not to preach about earthly things. To the author of this thesis this seems problematical, because if one avoids earthly things, the sermon easily becomes remote from the actual life of the ordinary people.

2.4 Congregational context

The church in which I will have my project, Samariterhemmets kyrka, is a church in an institution for social welfare work. The institution and its church were founded in 1882. It had a glorious history and was well known in Sweden. It was also for many years a place where deacons were educated. However, when the former pastor retired, the church was closed for two years, because there was no money to employ a new one. After two years one decided to reopen the church, but without employed clergy or musicians.

The church is situated in the area of the institution, but very close to a new residential area with 7000 people, many of the young, and many families with children. One problem and a real challenge for the church is how to reach the people in the new residential area, and to show them that they are welcome in the church, although it is situated in the area of the institution.

Most of the churchgoers are elderly, many of them retired pastors and deacons. Other churchgoers are young students of theology and immigrants in different ages. The church has no employed clergy or musicians, which means that voluntary persons are very important in this church. Mainly retired pastors, but also pastors like me, which are not working in parishes but in church institutions, alternate to lead the service. This means that the congregation is used to listen to sermons from different pastors with

different preaching styles. The churchgoers come from different spiritual traditions. Samariterhemmet's kyrka is different from other churches in Sweden in many ways. Many other congregations are quite rich with many employees. This is the cause of one problem that we have in Church of Sweden. It is hard for non-employed people to be volunteers in church because many congregations have that many employees, that volunteers are not needed. Therefore, Samariterhemmet's kyrka has an important role. It has place for volunteers, and it can be a model for other congregations to show how to use volunteers. This also means that many people with a clear will to be volunteers worship in the church.

There are also great differences in the level of knowledge about Christian faith. Some of the immigrants are new baptised Christians, newcomers in the faith. They are worshipping together with people who have lived in church all their life. However, most of the churchgoers in Samariterhemmet's kyrka know quite a lot about the Christian faith and have been attending church for almost all their life.

2.5 Liturgical context

The liturgical tradition of Samariterhemmet's kyrka is high church. "High church" is a word used for example in Anglican and in Lutheran tradition to describe churches using ritual practices associated with Roman Catholicism. However, when the high church movement describes itself, it says that it does not imitate the Roman-catholic church but seeks the common roots of the whole church. The high church movement is not only about liturgy and rituals. Important is also the faith that "we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church". There is a fellowship between the local congregation and the worldwide church. Not every visitor should describe Samariterhemmet's kyrka as "high church". The reason for that is that the high church movement has had such a strong

liturgical influence in Church of Sweden, that many foreign visitors think that they have come to a Roman-catholic service when the worship in Church of Sweden. The high church influence on the spirituality, however, is weaker. In church of Sweden there are many different spiritualities: high church, low church, traditional... The spirituality of the sermons depends on the pastors, who preach in the church. Samariterhemmets kyrka depends on voluntary pastors. For example, during the period September-December 2021, seven different pastors alternated to lead the service and to preach. This means that there different spiritualities are represented in the sermons. A spontaneous conclusion from the author of this thesis is that low church spirituality is the most common in the sermons. This means that in many sermons there is an emphasis on the sin and forgiveness, and the mercy and love of God.

Samariterhemmets kyrka, has been influenced of the fact that it is a part of an institution of social care, where deacons have been educated for about one hundred years. A deacon is active in many services. She (it is mostly a she) usually have three tasks in the liturgy: to read the gospel, to pray the intercession and to hold the chalice during the eucharist. It is a good idea that the deacon is visible and active in the service, but the service could also in other ways be a place for diaconia. The service could also be a place for individual intercessory prayer and for anointing. Until now, this has however, not become a reality.

2.6 Corona pandemy context

The autumn 2021 is a special autumn in the history of the world, and therefore also in Church of Sweden and in Samariterhemmets kyrka. During the years 2020 and 2021 the corona pandemic was a reality in all the world. In Samariterhemmets kyrka this meant that from the spring 2020 until October 2021 the number of persons allowed in the

church was very limited. From November 2021 until May 2021 the church was totally closed, and the churchgoers were asked to visit other churches or to worship online. From June 2021 there are services in the church and from October 2021 the situation is almost normal. There are not anymore, any other limitations of the number of worshippers, than the normal ones.

There is too early to describe how the pandemic has changed the worship tradition in Sweden. Some fear that many people will stop to worship, from fear or because they have noticed that a Sunday without activities offers a good possibility to rest. Another possibility is that some people will go on to worship online, because this offers the possibility to visit different churches. There was a similar fear when one begun to broadcast services on radio and tv. Would the competition between services on media end with the failure of the physical services? Now we have begun to see the answer to these questions. From September 2021 most churches in Sweden functioned almost as usually. In Samariterhemmets kyrka we have seen a tendency that mainly people, but not all, have begun to worship again. There are some people who have not found the way back to church after the pandemic. There can be different reasons for that. One of them is fear. Some people were scared more than others during the pandemic. We can also suppose that some of the churchgoers have grown older during the pandemic and therefore stay at home and are glad to worship online. A normal Sunday about 20-30 persons were present in the church service after the pandemic. When I preached the number was like a "normal Sunday".

The fact that some people stay at home out of fear shows us that there must be time to talk about the pandemic in the congregation, to give people the possibility to show their fear. The pandemic and its aftermaths must be a given theme of sermons in the future, and not only once or twice, but several times. Such sermons would really address

contemporary needs. However, there is also a risk to preach about the pandemic. Some persons think that they have already heard enough about the pandemic and go to church to be able to do something else, and to hear something else. Sermons about the pandemic should not be too numerous.

3 Homileticians

In this chapter six homileticians are described together with their teachings and theories. These homileticians were elected mostly because their books were used in the Swedish Preaching Program or in the Third Summer Residence in Chicago. The books by Bernice Sundkvist were read by the author of the thesis earlier. The book by Martin Lönnebo was a course book in Church of Sweden Pastoral Institute in the 1980-ies when the author of the thesis was a student.

The homileticians were elected before the work with the sermons in this project was started. This means of course that not every idea by the were used when the sermons were written. The idea was to first create a “picking box” with ideas, which can be used when sermons are created and then elect the ideas which can be used for every single sermon.

Especially useful for me were the ideas of Gustaf Wingren about “human situations” and “defamiliarization”, the ideas of Anna Carter Florence about “showing our own love of reading the bible, “being told vs. being seen” and “entertainment vs. true speech”, the ideas of Bernice Sundkvist about “emotional experience and “container function”, the ideas of Marin Lönnebo about “actual needs”, “existential needs” and that “the whole bible is our text”, the ideas of Charles Campbell about identifying the “powers”, and finally the ideas of Joseph M. Webb that the “preacher shall associate

freely about words and sentences in the Bible text, write down these associations and then sort out some of them and keep the good ones”.

3.1 Gustaf Wingren

The Swedish theologian Gustaf Wingren (1910-2000) and especially a quotation from him has become very important for me and for my thesis: “To abolish this undue theorization and to return the Christian faith to those human situations where it belongs is perhaps the most important task for contemporary theology.”¹³ This quotation attracted attention in *Becoming Human Again. The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren* by Bengt Kristensson Ugglå.¹⁴

In the theology of Wingren, the creation is very important. God is the creator of heaven and earth. Wingren thought that if church didn't relate to everyday life, theology would not be able to understand. Every person has a ministry – not only priests, doctors, nurses, and teachers, but also parents, economists, technicians, preschool teachers and so on. He also thought that the most important task of theology in our time is to support preaching, and not only to research about the history of church and religion. Wingren summarizes his theological method in the concept of "The double phenomenological approach". It means that both creation theology and kerygmatic theology are examined, but no one may be examined independently of each other. It must occur at the same time. Gustaf Wingren is very important to me because he is the source of my idea about sermons about human situations.

¹³ Wingren, *Creation and Gospel*, 80.

¹⁴ Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren* (Eugene, OR.: Cascade Books 2016), 143.

Gustaf Wingren began as a systematic theologian, but he soon understood that systematic theology is not helpful if it does not have influence on preaching. Therefore, he worked a lot with preaching during his career.

However, there is a question that must be answered. Is Gustaf Wingren a systematic theologian, which has been preaching, or is he also a homiletician? My answer is that he is also was a homiletician. However, his theories about homiletics were not systematically written, but must be sought in interviews, in articles and in books. His theories and his practice can be described in some items:

Every sermon must be directed towards one concrete person. Wingren himself often thought about one ordinary person which he knew since his childhood when he wrote his sermons. He also thought that this listener had questions and objections, that he or she agreed or would like to have some elucidations. His sermons therefore were like dialogues.

Another trait in the sermons of Wingren was “language of beauty”. His language was characterized by rhythm, power, alliterations, tasty language, and the quotation of poems by well-known Swedish poets like Dan Andersson and Erik Axel Karlfeldt. The latter won the Nobel Prize in Literature posthumously in 1931.

One more method of Wingren is what he in Swedish calls *främmandegöring*. One possible translation into English is “defamiliarization”. In the theories of Wingren defamiliarization means that the listeners sometimes are too familiar with some text in the Bible. They almost know it by heart, and they have heard sermons about them many times. Therefore, the listeners have become “deaf” about the text and have no expectations to find anything new in the sermon. Therefore, it is important to find the notable and striking details in the text, to show that the details in the text are not self-evidential.

Wingren uses present tense and often first-person plural pronouns: “we” and “us”. Wingren means that there is no difference between human beings when it concerns trouble and salvation. Therefore, the preacher must describe how the word touches himself, and not try to understand the spiritual life of the listeners. (This method is similar to the theories about “testimony” of Anna Carter Florence.) After the “testimony” of the preacher, Wingren addresses the listeners directly with appeals and promises. He also often uses quotations from the Bible in the end of the sermon.

Wingren uses quotations from the Bible, but also quotations from Martin Luther, from hymns and religious expressions and words. However, they are interwoven in the text a way that the uninitiated persons don’t remark them. The pious people, however, recognize them, and their confidence for the preacher increases.¹⁵

3.2 Anna Carter Florence

In her book, *Preaching as Testimony*, Anna Carter Florence, as the title says describes preaching as testimony. However, we have to define “testimony”. She uses the classical definition of testimony as both a narration of events and a confession of belief: “we tell what we have seen and heard, and we confess what we believe about it.”¹⁶ It is not honest to thank God for everything, when you are so fed up that you could spit.¹⁷ To be angry and disappointed is therefore also a form of honest testimony.

The authority of the preacher is rooted in the human experience. The goal of preaching is not consensus, when the listener agrees with the preacher, but the goal of

¹⁵ Jonny Karlsson, “Gustaf Wingren som predikant,” in *Gustaf Wingren predikar. Postilla*, redaktörer: Jonny Karlsson och Karin Larsdotter, 317-321. Skellefteå: Artos, 2010.

¹⁶ Anna Carter Florence, *Preaching as Testimony* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), xiii.

¹⁷ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 74-75.

preaching is *the preacher's* conversion. Preachers have the greatest authority when they are powerless and marginal in the eyes of the world.¹⁸

Anna Carter Florence gives the reader some opposites or “versuses”.

1. “Biblical Illiteracy” vs. A Love of Reading. Preachers cannot longer assume that their listeners have even a rudimentary knowledge of the Bible. One reason is that Sunday school attendance is shrinking, another reason that people do not read the bible in the same way as earlier. The answer of Carter Florence is that love of Reading the Bible is missing. The first task of the pastor is not to offer more bible studies, but to show our own love of reading the bible. We do not have to drill the congregation into the Bible, but we must show them that reading the Bible is wonderful and liberating.¹⁹
2. Being told vs. being seen. The human need is to be seen. Preaching must touch these human desires, and not immediately present answers to our questions or to questions, which we do not have.²⁰
3. Entertainment vs. true speech. Preachers who see church attendance shrinking, sometimes fall for entertainment. You give the people what they want to see, and what they want to hear. This has nothing to do with the gospel. Entertainment fears conflicts, but there are conflicts in human life. Sermons must be true speech also about conflicts and other human problems.²¹

I agree with many conclusions of Anna Carter Florence. But there are also statements which I question. The author states that “masculine” is just a cultural idea. “Real men may, in fact, eat quiche.”²² Of course there are cultural ideas which are associated with

¹⁸ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 107-108.

¹⁹ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 125.

²⁰ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 127-128.

²¹ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 128-129.

²² Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 102.

masculinity, but there are also differences between men and women. Modern research about the brain shows that there are even differences between male brains and female brains. Perhaps one earlier supposed that there were too big differences between men and women, but it is also not true to state that “masculinity” is *just* a cultural idea.

The author also states that testimony “is what a preacher has left when everything else is gone. When all the searches for absolutes (the right texts, words, interpretations, techniques, sources, authorities) come up empty...”²³ I am not sure. The word “testimony” has two meanings in English: 1. what we have seen and heard and 2. the tables of testimony. Are the tables of testimony an absolute... or are they what people have experienced...? If we obey the commandments, we have experienced that life will be better. Is there really an absolute border between experience and the absolute?

However, I accept most of the ideas of Anna Carter Florence, and she is one of my homileticians.

3.3 Bernice Sundkvist

Bernice Sundkvist (1956-) is Professor of Practical Theology at Åbo Akademi, Finland. Bernice Sundkvist has written several books about preaching. In 2003 she published *En predikan – nio berättelser, En studie i predikoreception*²⁴, “One sermon – nine stories, A study in the reception of sermons”. The study contains interviews with nine persons, which heard the same advent sermon. The conclusion is that what is heard, is not the same that what is said. This does not mean that the sermon was unsuccessful. A human being is a complicated creature, composed of many different factors. In the study

²³ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 110.

²⁴ Bernice Sundkvist, *En predikan – nio berättelser, En studie i predikoreception* (Åbo: Skrifter i praktisk teologi vid Åbo akademi, 2003).

Sundkvist tries to clarify which factors have influence on what is heard. The listener is in focus, and especially his or her spontaneous or short-range reaction.

Sundkvist thinks that a problem about the research on sermons is that the research often is just a theological one. The human being is a complex being, and many disciplines are necessary to understand the human being.

In the survey Sundkvist examines the reflections of the interviewed both on a knowledge-level and on an emotional level. The thoughts and the feelings are interwoven in the experience of the sermon. But the congregation is not only susceptible to impressions from the sermon. Also, the church building and the “atmosphere” are speaking together with the sermon.

Almost all interviewed people had a positive attitude to sermons as a phenomenon, but they also think that there is a large difference between different sermons. The best ones are those who affect the listeners and help the listeners to reflect about their situation. The listeners are also conscious that they themselves also are responsible to receive the sermon. They sometimes notice that “the thoughts sometimes fly away”, but they also try to be active and to silently confirm or contradict what is said.

One result of the survey is that the sermon and the service are strongly emotional experiences. The listeners want a sermon which gives meaning, power, and effect in faith more than facts. They want a sermon which touches deeper levels than the intellectual level. Metaphors are important and press deeper into the personality, than clear language. The non-verbal communication of the preacher is also important. Even if the listener does not understand everything, the non-verbal communication can give the impression that the preacher is authentic, and that means a lot for the listeners.

Therefore, one cannot simply use theology when building up the sermon.

If the emotional experience is important for the listener this means a challenge for traditional homiletics. Studies about sermons and theories about sermons has often been interested in what is said, in the contents and performance, from the perspective of the preacher. Preaching as communication, is however, a complicated process. The authority of the preacher lies in the credibility and authenticity of the preacher, which depends on the self-knowledge of the preacher. The preacher is also a representative of the tradition, of the mission of the church. Sundkvist writes that the context can support the preacher, but the listener can also close the communication, if the preacher is not supported by the tradition. The tradition is not only a preaching-tradition. The sermon, about which Sundkvist interviewed nine persons, was an advent sermon. Advent is a very important time in the liturgical year in Finland and Sweden and therefore the longing for tradition and togetherness was supported by the church building and the togetherness. The question about tradition was also a theme in the sermon.

One of the listeners said that an important trait in a good sermon is that it meets us as we are, not as those we will become. Other listeners had similar comments. They “need” to hear something. They want “something”, about which they can reflect during the week. However, they do not want a ready solution, because they want to reflect and to find a solution by themselves.

Sundkvist writes about a container-function. The worries, the uncertainty, and the shortcomings, which are a part of the listeners life are mentioned in the sermon. The preacher shares the worries, because he or she mentions them and describes them, in a way that the listener can recognise them. The worries are put in the sermon like in a

container. The sermon carries the problem, like the shepherd carries the lambs and like God carries the sins of the world.²⁵

In *Evangelium och existens, Predikan som helande dialog*, “Gospel and existence, Sermon as healing dialogue” also published in 2003, she says that the sermon means allowing God to have a voice in the world, but just as much to give voice to people’s experiences of their existence. When gospel and existence meet, a dialogue arises. The preacher becomes a fellow hiker who helps man to be healed and strengthened, with the tools gospel and preaching. Therefore, there is no divergency between the addressing of the word of God and the listener centred sermon.²⁶

I chose Bernice Sundkvist to become one of my homileticsians because I think that her theories about reception are important.

3.4 Martin Lönnebo

Martin Lönnebo (b. 1930), former teacher of homiletics in the Pastoral Institute of Church of Sweden, and then bishop of Linköping, in his book *Homiletik, En introduction i kyrkans förkunnelse*, “Homiletics, An Introduction to the Preaching of the Church” gives a broad introduction to homiletics. The book was the result of the experiences of years of work in the Pastoral Institute, and a book which later was used in the institute.

The book is a reaction against the authoritative way of preaching.

1. The author writes that the first demand on a sermon is that it responds to actual needs. The need should be real and not suggested or forced.

²⁵ Sundkvist, *En predikan*, 126–133.

²⁶ Bernice Sundkvist, *Evangelium och existens: predikan som helande dialog*, (Skellefteå: Artos, 2003).

2. The second demand is that the sermon must respond to the existential needs of the human being, preaching must not be psychology, politics, agronomy and even not theology.
3. The third demand, according to Martin Lönnebo, is that the preacher must put out to the deep water and let down the nets. Conversion and sanctification often occur at the unconscious level of a human being. To reach the unconscious levels a sermon must contain parables and metaphors.
4. The fourth demand is prudent homiletical hermeneutics. The sermon must contain the goals toward which the church must aim. In our time these are: the sense of life, peace and reconciliation, communion and participation, freedom and creation, love and fidelity, justice, peace, and freedom from misery.
5. The fifth demand is that the preacher must show empathy when preaching.²⁷

Beside the five demands, the author gives eight statements for the preacher:

1. Preach only the gospel but also mention the law. The law is not special for Christianity, but it is although important and only if the law is known in the unique situation, the gospel can set man free and heal him or her. The role of the preacher is to find the gospel in a text and to incarnate it in the actual circumstances of the congregation.
2. The sermon is not history or present time, but history AND present time at the same time. When reading a text, the preacher must ask himself: In which situations is this text gospel, a liberating force for the human being?
3. The whole Bible is your text. Every text is a part of the message of the whole Bible. We shall not despise history. Therefore, we must seek further in the Bible

²⁷ Martin Lönnebo, *Homiletik, En introduktion i kyrkans förkunnelse* (Stockholm: Verbum, 1977) 20–33.

and find the historical connections to the text. This does not mean that we should preach long quotations from everywhere in the Bible, but that we must read the whole Bible to understand it. (Not Lönnebo, but another person said that we should not read the Bible like going with the underground/subway, only stopping on a small number of stops.)

4. Use parables. This is the only language that helps spiritually. This does not mean that we only should use old Semitic parables, but that we also should find new parables from our own time. (Like the above-mentioned parable about the underground.) In the parables we are it often able to find many similarities. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the oil and wine can be the law and the gospel, the inn the church, the two denarii the baptism and the eucharist and so on.
5. Believe in miracles! The two worst mistakes are to seek the maximum or the minimum of faith. The fundamentalist asks how much he must believe, and the liberal asks how little. But Jesus does not call his disciple to an examination or interrogation about theology. Jesus says, "follow me", and then the life with Jesus begun. People in our time are open towards testimonies. (As Anna Carter Florence writes in her book.) Therefore, the preacher must preach about the miracles that he or her has experienced.
6. The meaning of language and preaching is communication. Therefore, we must use all resources of language. Our enemy is the "traditional preaching language", which is a language formed by a certain style, which hides the message, in a secret language understandable only by a minority. We must use all resources of the language. Our sermons can be made in a modern language, but we can also use classical expressions, if we think that this makes the message more understood.

7. Keep the sacramental and mysterious meaning of the sermon. This statement was not explained by Lönnebo, who wrote that the reader should understand the statement, if he or she has read what was written above.
8. Preach in the liturgical year. The sermon shall not be about the liturgical year, but in the year. One shall off course preach about the birth of Christ during Christmas and about his death and resurrection during Easter. During the great feasts the liturgy is more important than otherwise, perhaps more even more than the sermon.²⁸

The book *Homiletik* by Martin Lönnebo is a classic book among priests in Church of Sweden. I read it when I was a student in the Pastoral Institute of Church of Sweden in 1988-1989 and I repeated parts of it now and then during my years as a parish priest. What Lönnebo taught, has played a large role in my life and in my ministry. I think it is important to repeat such important books.

3.5 Charles Campbell

Charles Campbell in his book *The Word before the Powers, An Ethic of Preaching* invites us preachers to struggle against the “powers”, which is “not against enemies of blood and flesh”.²⁹ To understand the reason why the book was written, it is important to remember that it is “an ethic of preaching”. The book is not about moral in the traditional meaning of the word. Perhaps that is the reason why the author uses the word “powers”, a non-traditional word, that makes us to think about what the word really means.

²⁸ Lönnebo, *Homiletik*, 53-84.

²⁹ Charles L. Campbell, *The Word before the Powers. An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Know Press, 2002), 6.

The powers can be embodied and active in concrete structural realities such as the landowner and the bank in *The Grapes of Wrath*³⁰ by John Steinbeck. That is one example that powers can be identified with human institutions. Other interpreters, emphasize the spiritual reality of the powers and assert their existence as independent beings.³¹ In Matthew's version of the Beatitudes, Jesus begins with the recognition of the spiritual dimension: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3). Campbell states that this must not be in conflict with Luke's version "Blessed are you who are poor" (Luke 6:20). According to Campbell, Matthew recognizes both the material and spiritual dimensions of the powers in the world.³²

The temptation of Jesus is a model of resisting the powers. First the devil invites Jesus to use his power to meet his own needs. Then the devil invites Jesus to use his power to establish a political empire. Later the devil invites Jesus to make God an instrument for his own success and popularity. Jesus refuses every time and rejects the devil and the powers. In the temptation story we see the fundamental conflict between the way of God and the way of the powers.

Jesus also resists the powers in his preaching. "The kingdom of heaven" is the opposite of the domination system. In his opening sermons he announces a new reality or a new community. The last supper is the culmination of the "table ministry", in which Jesus eats with people who were considered unclean. The young church goes further when the early Christians even eat food which were considered unclean.

Jesus uses exorcisms not only in a personal, but also in a political way, for example when he makes exorcism with an possessed with the name Legion, a name for a Roman military division. The early church continues the exorcisms against the powers when

³⁰ Campbell, *The Word*, 10.

³¹ Campbell, *The Word*, 13-14.

³² Campbell, *The Word*, 17.

exorcism becomes a part of the baptism. When Jesus heals the bleeding woman the healing is not only physical, but also social, because she was accepted in the community. The cross becomes the subversion of the world's understandings of power and dominion. When Jesus says "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing", he resists the spirit of domination. However, the final victory over the powers is the resurrection.³³

Campbell describes preaching as "nonviolent resistance" against the powers: It can also be described as a rejection of silence, because silence can also be a form of violence, domination, and control. Good preachers embrace a kind of powerlessness, like the powerlessness of Jesus on the cross. But there are also preachers who used the pulpit as a way of dominating their congregations, if the purpose of the sermon becomes that of winning a victory over the people in church.³⁴

In the chapter "Preaching what we practice" Campbell quotes a question asked by many church members: "How do I come into the presence of Jesus now that he has been raised. The answer is that the church's resistance to the powers begins with its own communal practices. There are routine practices, unconscious, culturally shaped practices and intentional and disciplined practices. One small example about what this is all about is the conscience that Jesus is already outside the church. Christians do not "possess" Jesus but must know that he is already "outside the gate" and that believers and non-believers can meet him there.³⁵

Charles L Campbell is important because he teaches us to pay attention to the powers around us. However, when I read his book some years ago, I noticed that some of the powers are the same in U.S. and in Sweden, for example racism and tired toddler

³³ Campbell, *The Word*, 44-67.

³⁴ Campbell, *The Word*, 68-88.

³⁵ Campbell, *The Word*, 128-156.

parents, who fill their calendars with leisure activities and work. However, I noticed the Swedish powers, about which Charles L. Campbell is silent.

In Sweden one such power is the distance between the working class and the intellectuals. I suppose that you have a similar distance in America too, but in Sweden this distance is very visible in church. The workers very seldom come to church. I think the power behind this is that everything in church is organized in a middle-class style. Another power is the relation between the native Laplander people (or Saami) and the Swedish majority in the north. What is interesting is that many Swedes in the north (like me) are mixed Swedes, Finns, and Saami. However, in many places the relations between the Saami and the “mixed” Swedes are very tense. The relations between reindeer owners and other Saami are also sometimes tense. The problem is: Who is allowed to hunt and fish in the north?

During the Swedish Preaching Program, we read *The Word before the Powers, An Ethic of Preaching*, and then the book became important to me. Therefore, Charles Campbell will be one of my homileticians when I write this thesis.

3.6 Joseph M. Webb

The book *Preaching Without Notes* by Joseph M. Webb begins with the story about a pastor who asked the children to come and gather around here. For the next ten minutes she talked to them effortlessly, naturally, with spontaneity about a carefully prepared thought. The children were dismissed, and the service went on with a sermon for the adults. In the beginning there were a lot of energy, but the energy was diminishing and when the sermon was ended, the congregation was already bored.³⁶

³⁶ Joseph M. Webb, p. 9.

Preaching Without Notes is a book which advocate preaching without manuscript for many reasons. Such preaching enables better contact between the preacher and the congregation, because the preacher does not have any manuscript in which he can look. Therefore, the preacher becomes more sensitive to the reactions of the congregation and becomes able to adjust the sermon. Another advantage is that the language becomes more living and closer to the spoken language. In the book there are also good advice how to write the sermon. (Yes, the preacher shall write the sermon, but not use the manuscript when preaching.) A good advice about writing the sermon is that the preacher shall associate freely about words and sentences in the Bible text, write down these associations and then sort out some of them and keep the good ones.

My experience is that there are also disadvantages in the method. Important moments in the sermon can be forgotten. I also think that it is a disadvantage to see the preacher outside a pulpit and without a Bible. To preach with an open Bible before the preacher sends good signals – is my experience. I think that the open Bible is I sign of humbleness. “I do not preach by my own, but I am a servant of the Lord.”

However, Joseph M Webb has influenced my preaching especially about how to write the sermon – to associate freely about words and sentences in the Bible text – and to be sensitive to the reactions of the congregation. Therefore, I mention Joseph M. Webb as one of my homileticians.

4 Theologians

In this chapter seven theologians are described together with their teachings and theories. These homileticians and theologians were elected mostly because their books were used in the Swedish Preaching Program or in the Third Summer Residence in Chicago. Some books were used by the author of the thesis earlier. This gives the

opportunity to check whether the theories and ideas in the works of these homiletics and theologians will work in the project. There are also more individual reasons why these books by these authors were elected. That will be stated below.

Especially useful for me in the sermons for this thesis project were the teaching of Tore Johnsen about the holiness of nature and food in the Saami theology, the teaching of Jonna Bornemark about the non-knowledge about God, the teaching of Bengt Kristensson Uggla that different listeners have different interpretations of the same sermon, the teaching of Jennifer Baldwin about bodily experience in trauma and about meaningful rituals and finally the teaching of Benjamin M. Stewart about praying in the nature.

The teaching of Göran Larsson about the relations between Judaism and Christianity and the teachings of Per Larsson about ecological theology were not useful to me in this project. However, I decided not to take away the material about their theologies, because I am sure that I will use it in the future, when the lectionary gives me the possibility to preach about relevant themes. They will rest in my “pick box”.

4.1 Göran Larsson

Göran Larsson (1949-) is a Swedish theologian, ordained in the Church of Sweden and best known for his knowledge about and contacts with Judaism. Larsson studied theology at Lund University receiving his Bachelor of Theology in 1973 and his Ph.D. in 1980. He was the director of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem 1979-1993 and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Chicago Divinity School 1991-1992. He has published several books and articles about the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.

I know Göran Larsson personally. He taught me a lot about how to preach about Judaism and Christianity. The most significant difference is between the two words “but” and “and”. Don’t say “In Old Testament it is written that..., but in New Testament it is written...”, but say “In OT it is written that..., and in NT it is also written...”

Göran Larsson is an important scholar for me because he explains that Jews and Christians have more in common than we think. He is also important because he can also explain the differences between Christianity and Judaism with respect and warmth.

Göran Larsson has been helpful to my project, because he – with the terminology of Anna Carter Florence – taught me not to preach about Jews as “they”³⁷, but to see the common traits in Old and New Testament. The Jewish tradition is valuable for Christian sermons also in other ways. Anna Carter Florence quotes Brueggemann, who writes that testimony is not only the Christian way of speaking, but also the biblical way of speaking and knowing. It is not appropriate to thank God for everything. In the Bible there are also persons who show their anger and disappointment.³⁸

Göran Larsson is related to my project because in Judaism the influence on everyday life is very clear. Judaism for example teaches how to make food.

Göran Larsson also states some personal reflections and experiences about the relation between Judaism and Christianity:

- Jewish-Christian relations are not only about finding a lowest common denominator. It is also important to understand what is different. Both these sides are important and if we learn about them our relation can grow better.
- Many things which many Christians think are unique Christian, are not. The Lord’s prayer and The Great Commandment have Jewish roots. Many things

³⁷ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 121.

³⁸ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 74.

which many Christians think are unique Jewish, are not Jewish. For example: Jews do not follow Torah to earn a place in heaven, which many Christians think. Jews follow Torah to keep the covenant between the people of Israel and God.

- The question about what does detach and what does join Judaism and Christianity is a complex question. Usually, one says that the Old Testament unites us, because it is read both by Jews and by Christians, and that the New Testament detaches us, because it is not read by Jews. Another view is that the Old Testament detaches us because the covenant between God and Israel, makes Israel a different people than all other peoples, and that the New Testament unites us, because it makes it possible for all Christians to be grafted into Israel. This view can be a good soil for a dialogue.
- Many Christians think that the laws in the Old Testament are burdensome for the Jews. In Judaism one think that the laws about signs of the covenant (the sabbath, food, circumcision, clothes and so on) are all signs about a spiritual reality.
- Many Christians and Jews do not spontaneously know how to interpret the New Testament in a way that enables a good dialogue between the two religions. One example is that there are very seldom sermons about the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, which begins with Abraham as a fulfilment of the prophecy that “in you [Abraham] all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3).³⁹

I find that the work of Göran Larsson for a dialogue between Judaism and Christianity and for better understanding between the two religions is very important in our time, because there is an increasing antisemitism in Sweden and in other countries. Therefore, he is one of my theologians in this theses.

³⁹ Göran Larsson, *Judarna, Ers Majestät!* (Lund: Arcus, 2018), 31–43.

4.2 Tore Johnsen

Tore Johnsen (1969-) is a Saami theologian. He belongs to the Saami (Laplander) people, the native people of northern Scandinavia. He wrote a Christian Saami catechism which uses Saami experience, when explaining the creed and the prayer of the Lord. Some examples:

- “Hallowed be your name”: Names are holy in the Saami tradition. One think that the name is a bearer of certain properties. If one wants that a child should have certain properties one should chose the name of a forefather or relative, who have such properties. Persons with the same name, *gáimmežat*, are supposed to have a relation, as if related, even if they are not related. Names are important also in Biblical cultures. When Abram changed his name to Abraham, this also meant a change in his role and personality.⁴⁰
- “Give us this day our daily bread”: “You shall not waste food,” is a very old Saami tradition. People learned that the daily bread was not self-evident, but a gift from God, or from the gods. In our time with ecological awareness, the Saami tradition to care about food is more important than ever before. In the Saami hut, the food was kept in the inner part of the hut together with holy objects in a place called *boaššu*.⁴¹
- “And do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one.” In traditional Saami culture visible and non-visible beings existed side by side. The nature was also a power which could help and damage. The sign of the cross and

⁴⁰ Tore Johnsen, *Jordens barn, Solens barn, Vindens barn, Kristen tro i et samisk landskap* (Oslo: Verbum, 2007) 73-80).

⁴¹ Johnsen, *Jordens barn*, 94–99.

the Lord's prayer were powerful resources. The most powerful helper is Christ, but in the Saami tradition (and in other traditions) there are different meanings about in which way Christ helps us: in the creation because he is the son of God, on the cross triumphing over the powers or as risen above every name.⁴²

Tore Johnsen is an important scholar for me because he explains how an indigenous people can understand Christian theology. Once again there is sometimes an interpretation which is common with the ones I heard before, and sometimes a quite different interpretation. During many hundred years Saami were taught Christianity by Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and Russian. One did not pay attention to the fact that the Saami had their own contextual theology. Teaching Saami theology in Saami- and in non-Saami context in our time is a step forward for peace and justice between the majority and the indigenous peoples generally and especially the Saami people.

I would also like to compare this process with the four qualities of moral imagination of Robert Kennedy:

1 To envision equality and represent that by his physical presence.

2 Empathy as a catalyst or bridge to create opportunities to overcome the past and make new decisions for peace and justice.

3 One must find wisdom in ancient text, sources of ancient wisdom and truth, the wisdom of the ages.

4 Kennedy addressed the audience in the language of poetry and art that lifts and elevates the human spirit by touching the emotive chords of wonder, mystery, and hope.⁴³

⁴² Johnsen, *Jordens barn*, 121–128.

⁴³ Frank A. Thomas. *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*, 17-20.

I myself, have a personal relation with the Saami culture, because I am mixed Saami, Swedish and Finnish. Tore Johnsen is useful for my project because questions about native peoples and their rights are very actual in Sweden in our time. Some native contextual theologies are also useful for the church in general. In Saami tradition the feeling that nature, and food, are holy because they are created by God is very strong. Therefore, Saami tradition and Tore Johnsen are relevant for my project.

4.3 Jonna Bornemark

Jonna Bornemark (1973-) is a Swedish philosopher and author. She did research about phenomenology, philosophy of religion and practical knowledge.

Jonna Bornemark became a well-known scholar because she writes that documents, figures, and statistics are not that important that many persons in our time believe. She advocates a lifestyle which is more humanistic and life-affirming. Many Swedes welcomed this opinion and have in fact longed for support in what they already thought before. Jonna Bornemark has especially criticized New public management, a method which underlines the importance of planning, documents and evaluation.

Jonna Bornemark goes the opposite way, and states that humans must be conscious that it is not possible to plan everything. We live in a reality in which there is uncertainty about many things, and in which we must stand face to face to the uncertainty and handle it. (Bornemark uses the expression “non-knowledge” about uncertainty.)⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Jonna Bornemark, *Det omätbaras renässans, En uppgörelse med pedanternas världsherravälde* (Stockholm: Volante, 2018).

Some religions people claim that they have absolute knowledge about, dogmas, the method of salvation and other religious facts. This is often called fundamentalism. However, we shall not think that fundamentalism is only about religion. There is also a fundamentalistic way to think in some forms of atheism, liberalism and so on. But there is also a non-fundamentalistic form of religion. It admits that it does not have a totally complete knowledge about everything, and it can stand face to face against the “not-knowledge”. The not-knowing is a notion close to God. Different religions express this in different ways. However, both in Christianity and Islam there is an expression that “God is greater”, which means that we cannot understand God totally.

Jonna Bornemark describes religion as “different, but interwoven, practices of relating to non-knowledge and practicing an intellectus [which is the ability to be in relation to non-knowledge]. In this way, they are historical clusters of narratives, experiences, ideas and thought structures by which we can deal with our non-knowledge.”⁴⁵

She also quotes Nicolaus Cusanus (1401-1464) who stated that it is necessary to go into the area of non-knowledge to meet God.⁴⁶

The theories of Jonna Bornemark are very important. Sweden is a very secularized country. Christian pupils meet mockery in school. A scientific investigation stated, some years ago, that many teachers in natural science and [the scientific study of] religion, expose Christian pupils for criticism and humiliating questions. The theories of Jonna Bornemark show that “religion” is not one monolithic phenomenon and that there is fundamentalism also in non-religious movements. The theories also affirm the consciousness that there is non-knowledge and that we must face it.

⁴⁵ Bornemark, *Det omätbaras*, 226.

⁴⁶ Bornemark, *Det omätbaras*, 228.

4.4 Bengt Kristensson Uggla

Bengt Kristensson Uggla (1959-) is professor in philosophy, culture and business management in the University Åbo akademi in Finland. That is the same university, where also Bernice Sundkvist, quoted above, worked. This is perhaps an explanation why there are similarities in their theories. Bernice Sundkvist wrote about how different views of listeners give different interpretations of the same sermon.

Also, Bengt Kristensson Uggla writes about interpreting. How is it possible that we interpret our common world in many ways? The answer is that there is no “clean” objectivity. The meaning of a sentence takes form by interpreting.

There is also no “cleanly” objective definition of words. Therefore, it is not meaningful to try to teach the congregation the correct definition of words if they already use the words in another meaning. Kristensson Uggla mentions that Martin Heidegger had the idea that it makes more sense to use the words in the meaning, in which the people around use them, instead of searching the “correct” definition.

Kristensson Uggla also writes that people earlier thought that at least photos give a correct picture of the reality. Later one began to doubt about this and began to consider photos as historical artefacts. Photos are not objective because the photographer can decide what to photograph and what to not photograph. He or she can cut the photo. The publisher of a magazine or a book can decide which photos will be published, and which will not.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Bengt Kristensson Uggla, *Slaget om verkligheten* (Stockholm/Höör: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2012).

The theories of Kristensson Uggla seems very clear if we look at maps of the world. In European maps Europe is the centre. In American maps America is the centre and in Chinese maps China is the centre. This is only one example. In Sweden it is natural that people waiting on a bus stop form a queue. In China it is natural that one forms a huddle. This reminds us that also in church there are a lot of people with different ideas and expectations. It is more important to think about this in our time when people move between continents.

In some Christian traditions one says that pharisees thought that there was a “clean” interpretation of the scripture, and that Jesus showed that the scripture can be interpreted in many ways. I am sure that this is a mistake. Of course, there were some pharisees that thought that there was a clean interpretation of the scripture, but when I read the New Testament, it seems that pharisees liked to discuss about the meaning of the scripture and were prepared to meet and to listen to new interpretations. Perhaps the Christians which think that the pharisees thought that there was a “clean” interpretation, are the same persons who think that there is one, and only one, clean interpretation of Christian faith in our time.

Let us mention one text, which becomes much more interesting if we interpret it with help of the theories of Kristensson Uggla. The text about the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53-8:11), often is interpreted as a text about pharisees which would like to execute the woman, and about Jesus, who saved her. I think that there is also another possibility. The pharisees knew that there are many ways to interpret a text, as Kristensson Uggla also wrote two thousand years later. They did not want to execute the woman – because they were ordinary human beings like you and me – but they knew that it was written in the Bible that they had to. How was it possible to obey the Bible and at the same time let the woman go? In the pharisee tradition there was a tendency

to find good interpretations, which could soften the archaic severity of the law. The text is a text about searching and finding good interpretations.

Bengt Kristensson Uggla is helpful for my project, and for my sermons on food and death, because I will have to try to understand how it is possible that different people have such different opinions about food, and different methods how to prepare for one's own death.

4.5 Jennifer Baldwin

Jennifer Baldwin is Executive Director of Grounding Flight Wellness Center. In her book *Trauma Sensitive Theology, Thinking Theologically in the Era of trauma* she wrote about the bodily experience of trauma:

[T]he body retains the somatic memory of traumatic experiences either directly in tissue cells or indirectly through the body's natural changes in hormones that accompany fight or flight or dissociative escape responses. (---) The body's response in processing traumatic experience/s must be a component in building resiliency and promoting wellbeing.⁴⁸

The author also wrote about the acceptance of narratives about death⁴⁹ – in the sermon I mentioned that one can tell close friends about one's traumas. In the mentioned book I also learned a lot about the meaningful ritual process:

A second avenue for clergy to function as a primary care provider is as curator of meaningful ritual process that connect human beings with the divine. Two of the enduring strengths of communities of faith are as holders of rituals that mark and midwife us through life's significant milestones and as home of communities that hopefully embody the qualities of life, empathy, and love.⁵⁰

I think that these theories of Jennifer Baldwin will be important for my project. Somatic memories and ritual process are important knowledge in healing sermons. Therefore, Jennifer Baldwin is one of my theologians in this project.

48 Jennifer Baldwin, *Trauma Sensitive Theology, Thinking Theologically in the Era of trauma* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books), 7.

⁴⁹ Baldwin, *Trauma Sensitive*, 8.

⁵⁰ Baldwin, *Trauma Sensitive*, 56.

4.6 Per Larsson

Per Larsson (1938-) is a Swedish, priest, former missionary, and author about ecological theology. He wrote on book about ecological theology: *Skapelsens Frälsning, Ekoteologi i miljö- och klimathotens tid*, "Salvation of creation, Ecotheology in the age of environmental and climate threats". He states that there are three important challenges for the churches in the time of climate change.

The first challenge is a need for a qualified elaboration of the theology about environmental destruction and climate change. When the book was written in 2010 many Christians thought that other people must be engaged in these questions, because the church has another concern. Eleven years later it is a natural thing for most parishes to be engaged in ecology.

The second challenge is a need for the prophetic voice in this time. The author taught that the first (Genesis) and the last (Revelation) books in the Bible are the most useful if you want to preach about ecological issues. The apocalyptic vision of the Bible can be interpreted as an ecological one. There are also statements in the books of the prophets, which can be interpreted as ecological ones. Isaiah 11:7-9 and Hosea 2:18 tell us that in the future there will be no hostility between human beings and wild animals. There is a possibility to further life on earth, but the possibilities are the same for humans and animals. We depend on each other. Also, Paul in the letter to the Romans writes something which can be interpreted as ecology:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free

from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.⁵¹

He also listed some wrong theologies, which neglect ecological problems.

The third challenge is the preparation, or recovery, of a realistic Christian lifestyle, which could become a model for the society around. The Christian core values are also our greatest resource in the environmental struggle. The core values are described with these words: gratitude, humility, simplicity, and contentment in the way of life, justice, peace, love, hope and faith.⁵²

Per Larsson is important for me because he analyses theology and biblical texts in our time when ecological problems are an important issue. However, I do not think that one should preach about ecology every Sunday. But you cannot avoid the theme totally, even if it is a difficult theme to preach about. Questions about earth warming and ecological theology are very important in our time and for my sermon about Christian faith and food.

4.7 Benjamin M. Stewart

Benjamin M. Stewart in his book *A Watered Garden, Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology*⁵³ invites us to balance the care for earth in the time of climate change with the renewal from Christ's resurrection, and to adapt the liturgical language and the sermons to ecology. Ecological concern can seem like an awkward import into the Christian faith, but there can also be connections between ecology and Christian worship, which must become discovered.

⁵¹ Romans 8:19-21

⁵² Per Larsson, *Skapelsens Frälsning, Ekoteologi i miljö- och klimathotens tid* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2010).

⁵³ Benjamin M. Stewart, *A Watered Garden, Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2011).

The author pays attention to the fact that earth is not the centre of the world. On the contrary we know that earth is a unique place in the world. This phenomenon we have to mention in liturgy and in sermons.

I think he is right, but we must be careful when we accept his ideas. Ecology can be and must be a theme in sermons if the sermons should deal with problems in our time. However, we must not forget that there are also other problems in the world. A tendency in Sweden is that ecology is mentioned in many sermons, although preaching about ecology is a difficult task.

The preacher must not forget that there are already Christian traditions, for example lent, which can contribute to a sermons and liturgy in the time of climate change. One example is the hymn *The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended*. It concludes that earth is not the centre in the universe, saying that "We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping, / While earth rolls onward into light..."⁵⁴ The awareness that earth is not the centre in universe and consciousness that earth is a fertile planet in a death universe can give new understanding of the often-repeated sentence that "God saw that it was good".⁵⁵ The consciousness about ecology can also give new strength to Bible quotations, for example: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants" (Leviticus 25.23).

Praying near water can remember us that water is a valuable but also vulnerable gift from God. The pause to pray before eating may be a sacred sign for us of the limits of our consumption. According to Genesis 2 man and woman were created of earth. The earth was important when human beings were created, and earth is important for human beings now. Therefore earth, animals and human bodies can have a role in liturgy.

⁵⁴ *Hymns, Old & New, New Anglican Edition* (Bury St Edmonds: Kevin Mayhew, 1996), hymn 475.

⁵⁵ Genesis 1.

Seasons and days are important in liturgy, but not everyone think that there is a connection between the seasons of the nature and the liturgical year. If we are aware of this, we find new possibilities in liturgy.⁵⁶

Therefore, I want to mention Benjamin M. Stewart as one of my theologians because even if ecology must be an important theme in sermons, it cannot be the central theme in all sermons.

5 Project Plan and Process

5.1 The background of the thesis project

The Swedish Qualified Preaching Program started in 1994 and was inspired by the ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program in Chicago. The Swedish part of the program extends over three summers and the two years between them but corresponds to the first two summer residences and the years after these in the preaching program in Chicago.

The participants meet for ten days for three summers and five days for two autumns. When the Swedish participants have finished the three summer residences, they can participate in the third summer residency in Chicago, which constitute the fourth summer residency for the Swedish participants. (This can cause some confusion about the terminology, but I will try to avoid confusion.) The length of the program is important because this will make the process working. The 18 participants are members of advisory groups with six persons in each group. In these groups one listen to

⁵⁶ Benjamin M. Stewart. *A Watered Garden, Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology*.

another's sermons, reflect on the sermons and on literature. The participants get used to listen to the view of other people on their sermons and begin to understand that a sermon can be understood in many ways, not only in the way that the preacher intended. The participants also begin to stop defending themselves, but to listen to all comments as to help.

The participants of the Swedish Qualified Preaching Program also organize Parish Project Groups, in which 6-8 persons gives feedback to the preacher, in the same way as in the American program.⁵⁷

5.2 The parish project in 2019

In my parish project in 2019 the purpose of the project was to make clearer sermons. I was aware about some problems about my preaching. The first problem was that I often used very powerful metaphors. I of course meant to help the listeners to understand the message, but the result was the opposite. Many listeners began to think about the strong metaphors in a way that they were caught by them, and they therefore stopped to listen to the sermon.⁵⁸ My second problem was that I had difficulties to limit the sermons to one theme. I was used to an ideal that a sermon should explain the gospel or another Bible text and not only a part of the text, but preferably the whole text. Some of my sermons therefore contained many themes, but there was not space in one sermon to

⁵⁷ Carina Sundberg, The Qualified Swedish Preaching Program: The art of preaching and taking the creative process seriously. (Manuscript, which is not published in English, but in German translation.)

⁵⁸ One example was when I once preached about forgiveness. I mentioned that Jesus in fact did not say that we should forgive a person eternally. Jesus in fact said 77 times (or $7 \times 70 = 290$ times in other Bible translations). This means that there is a limit. God does not require that one should always forgive other persons. I gave an example about a woman that was raped, and said that this was perhaps the 291st time, when one does not have to forgive. Several members of my advisory group said to me that at this moment they stopped to listen and only thought about the terrible rape. Then I understood that this was a too strong metaphor or figure, which caught all the attention of the group, that they did not listen to the sermon anymore.

Another example was that I in one sermon said that 190 000 children and young people (1,9 % of the population of Sweden) feel bad and are not happy. I had no idea that the listeners should get stuck in this, but some did. I learned that I must avoid catching the audience in this way.

develop them all. Sometimes I just jumped from one theme to another. As I wrote above the purpose of my project was to make clearer sermons. However, this was not the whole purpose. It is not enough to know how one want to say something, one must also know what to say.

My third problem in the first-year report was to avoid teaching the congregation. I work with education, and I love teaching. However, I have learned in the preaching program that it often is more important that the congregation feel that they have been listened to, than that they have learned something new. I had also a fourth problem. Ludwig Wittgenstein recommenced people to use words as they in fact are understood, and not to seek the “correct meaning” of every word. Therefore, I decided to use a language which is easily understandable for the audience. I avoided, for example to use the expression “original sin” and to explain its meaning, because I thought that I would lose valuable sermon time if I tried to convince the congregation that the word has another meaning than they suppose.

Already during the first days of the first summer course I heard a quotation, which later became very important for me, for the first parish project and for this thesis: “To abolish this undue theorization and to return the Christian faith to those human situations where it belongs is perhaps the most important task for contemporary theology.”⁵⁹ This quotation by the Swedish theologian and homiletician Gustaf Wingren is quoted several times in this thesis. It was enormously important for me, because it was the answer to a question, which I had carried with me since my childhood, and which is described in the introduction. Must every sermon deal with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ or can a sermon deal with “human situations”? The name of

⁵⁹ Wingren, *Creation and Gospel*, 80.

my first project report was *I mänskliga situationer* (In human situations). I found a place where I was welcome to preach in three Monday evening masses, in the chapel of the Norrby student dormitory. My task therefore became to preach about human situations (everyday life) in a way relevant for students, not using too strong metaphors, and limiting myself not to touch too many themes in one sermon.

The feedback from the Parish Project Group taught me that I succeeded to avoid too many themes in one sermon, but that I still had to think about my tendency to use strong metaphors. Another observation was that many members of the PPG:s had positive feelings about my tendency to comment and explain some very well-known Bible quotations and hymns. These were texts, well known to most Christians, but seldom explained.

5.3 The parish project in 2020

My parish project in 2020 had some similarities with the one in 2019. I wanted to continue with sermons about human situations and everyday life.⁶⁰ However, I had to find another approach to the theme. I some years ago started to read a book called *A Treasury of Favorite Sermons by Leading American Rabbis*.⁶¹ Reading these sermons I noted that many of them touched themes about everyday life. It was very inspiring for me to read these sermons and sometimes I borrowed some ideas from them. When I read the Jewish sermons and compared them with the Lutheran ones, which I heard in Church of Sweden I found that the Jewish sermons very often addressed human

⁶⁰ "In Human Situations" is in fact the translation of *I mänskliga situationer*, which was the title of my first project report. However, when I planned my thesis, I realized that the expression "human situations", was unclear and many English language speakers were uncertain about the significance of the expression. I therefore began to use the expression "everyday life".

⁶¹ Sidney Greenberg (ed.), *A Treasury of Favorite Sermons by Leading American Rabbis* (Northvale & Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc.).

situations in everyday life⁶², while the Swedish Lutheran sermons, which I heard as a child, addressed salvation and heaven. I remember some of these Jewish sermons on everyday life. One rabbi stated that the day after a holy day there is always leftovers from the meal of yesterday. To handle these leftovers in a good way is valuable knowledge. It is the same about life. It is easy to be gay and happy when we are in good health, but we also must handle the leftovers of life when darkness comes and not be consumed with bitter memories.⁶³ Another sermon mentioned that Isaac perhaps became traumatized when his father wanted to offer him, but that he, however, could live his life with his wife Rebecca, but not a life without problems.⁶⁴ A third sermon was about the power of silence, and about different types of silence.⁶⁵

I therefore began to think more about the relation between Christianity and Judaism. I felt that it was necessary for me to be able to explain my thoughts about the relation between the two religions, because I borrowed ideas from Jewish sermons. I decided to combine the themes “everyday life” and “relations between Christianity and Judaism” in my parish project 2020. I chose the title *”Nu har Gud gjort det igen...”* *Relationen mellan judendom och kristendom i predikan,”* ‘God did it once again....’ The Relation between Judaism and Christianity in Sermons”. The title was inspired by the teaching of the Swedish theologian Göran Larsson, who said that “and” is a better word in sermons than “but” when speaking about Jews and Christians. Do not say that in the Old Testament this is said, but in the New Testament that is said. Say instead that in the Old Testament God did this, and in the New Testament he did also this.

⁶² For example, many sermons in: Greenberg (Ed), *A Treasury*.

⁶³ Greenberg (Ed), *A Treasury*, 129-135.

⁶⁴ Greenberg (Ed), *A Treasury*, 7-13.

⁶⁵ Greenberg (Ed), *A Treasury*, 113-118.

In the first sermon I addressed the theme about the relation between Judaism and Christianity together with a shorter part about the theme everyday life. I was surprised when the Parish Project Group commented almost only what I said about everyday life, and that with a clear interest, and almost no one said anything about relations between Judaism and Christianity. The part of the sermon about everyday life treated the life of Jesus when he was 12-30 years old and worked as a carpenter in Nazareth. I understood that this theme was very important for the PPG. Some members of the group who were full time workers, who felt that they would like to use more time for their Christian faith and for church and felt a lack that their work and commuting to their work took up that much time, that they could not use it for church. When they heard that Jesus lived in the same situation during the main part of his life, they recognized their own lives in the life of Jesus. This made such an impression on them that they did not comment the part of the sermon about relation between Judaism and Christianity. I understood that for most of the parishioners this relation is not very important. There are only a few Jews in Sweden, there is no synagogue in our town Uppsala and almost none of the members in our congregation have Jewish friends.

I understood that sermons about the relation would not catch the attention of the congregation. I decided that my second and third sermons during year two, should mainly treat everyday life, and only touch the question about interreligious relations. In one sermon I tried another method. I created an interest about Jewish culture, when I explained a Bible text, which the congregation knew very well. I asked the congregation why Eve quoted God incorrectly when she said that God said: "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." (Genesis 3:3). She added "nor shall you touch it", which God had not prohibited. The answer was that Eve did like a Jewish scribe, because she used the method "Make a fence

around Torah”, which means that you should not avoid only what god prohibits, but also things which are close to the prohibited ones, because that makes the risk to sin even smaller. The PPG showed a great interest in this. I understood that it was a better idea to create an interest about Judaism and Jewish theological method, than to explicitly teach about Jewish-Christian relations.

My experiences from the Qualified Swedish Preaching Program motivated me to write my thesis about preaching about Christian everyday life. I found that the theme was not exhausted in my first two project reports, but that I could explore it deeper.

5.4 The Parish Project Groups and the Corona Pandemic

I work as the director of an institute for further education of pastors and other church employees. This means that I am not a parish pastor. In the town of Uppsala there are a theological faculty in Uppsala university and several other universities and institutions for theological education. Located in the town are also the office of Diocese of Uppsala and the national office of Church of Sweden. This means that there are many tens of pastors, which are not parish pastors in the town. Many of us like to preach and lead the liturgy in the churches in the town, but the possibilities are limited, because the main Sunday services are mainly the responsibility of the pastors employed in the churches. Therefore, I had to preach my sermons in two different churches during year I and II. During year III, it was possible to preach the sermons in one church. This meant that it was not possible to form just one Parish Project Group for the whole program. During the first years I had to form different groups for each service. It was not possible to train the PPG as described in the program manual. Since the PPG:s were many different groups the group for the sermons of autumn 2021 was not able to answer most of the

questions in the “Parish Project Group Sermon Response Form” in the “Program Manual”. However, my impression is that the different PPG:s offered me a lot of constructive feedback. There are also both advantages and disadvantages to have several different PPG:s. The advantage with several PPG:s is that many there are more persons which express their opinions about the sermons, and one get a broader selection of opinions. The disadvantage with several PPG:s is that there is no time to form a group in which the group members are confident with each other. However, the members in the PPG:s of the two first years were regularly attending the services in their churches and therefore were acquainted with each other. Everyone in the groups were speaking and there were no persons who dominated the discussions totally.

During 2021 there was also another problem: the corona pandemic. During the summer I knew that I had to preach on September 12th and November 7th, 2021, and I knew that I could preach in Samariterhemmets kyrka these days. The church was open already in June, but the attendance was very low. Many parishioners did not know if they dared to attend the service. This was not a good time to try to form a PPG for my project. Only in the end of August my group was complete, and there was no possibility to invite the group for a meeting before the service. However, I informed the group members about the project by e-mail. I also invited them to read the text at home and to write a letter to me with thoughts and questions about the text. Before the sermon of November 7th, 2021. I used the same process: an invitation to read the text at home and to send thoughts and questions by e-mail.

There was a strong reason to use this process. Some people during the autumn were in two minds about the pandemic. At the same time, they wanted to go to church and meet people, and to stay at home to be sure. Therefore, I did not want to ask them to attend several meetings. I therefore asked for a minimum – two services and meetings

directly after them – and I was successful to form a PPG. Therefore, I had to refrain from asking the PPG-members to come to meetings before the services with my sermons.

5.5 Interview method

When I planned the interviews, an important choice was to choose between individual interviews and group interviews, to gather the data needed for the study. In the beginning I planned to start with a group interview and after that make individual interviews with the members of the group. However, I understood that the interaction and the synergy of the group “will often provide richer data than if each person in the group had been interviewed separately”,⁶⁶ but that the answers given by one group member, may affect and maybe even disturb another person’s way of thinking.⁶⁷ I also realized that some group members were strangers to each other and that there is a possibility that also this will have influence on the answers of the group members, especially if some members are shy, have a sense of inferiority⁶⁸ or belong to different spiritual movements.

In the first group interview I asked the group members to give written answers to the first two questions, to ensure that the above-mentioned causes would not have influence on the answers. After that I asked some more questions and invited them to give verbal answers. I was surprised that the interaction and synergy in the group were very good, and I therefore decided to ask all questions in the group after the first sermon.

⁶⁶ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 120.

⁶⁷ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 120.

⁶⁸ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 121f.

After the second sermon I did in the same way. This means that I finally did not do any individual interviews, but only group interviews.

The questions were:

- 1 Please, list three sayings in the sermon which you remember. (Written answer)
- 2 Mention one saying, which made you glad, angry, enthusiastic or which made you react. (Oral answer after sermon 1, written answer after sermon 2)
- 3 What was the objective of this sermon? Was the objective met?
- 4 How was the biblical text employed in this sermon? Was it confronted, avoided, distorted, transcended?
- 5 Did the sermon address contemporary needs? Did the sermon move smoothly from biblical text to the needs of people in today's world?
- 6 How did the sermon and the liturgical occasion relate?
- 7 Did anything in the service – except for the sermon – relate to the biblical readings?
- 8 What did the preacher expect from you?
- 9 What was the sermon like when compared to the last one? (Only after sermon 2)
- 10 The strongest aspect of this sermon was?⁶⁹

The written answers are kept by the author of the thesis. Recordings of the oral interviews are also kept by the author.

The answers will be quoted between “quotation marks”. However, this does not mean that the quotation is written exactly as the oral answer was. Spoken language has been re-written to written language, to avoid that the spoken forms should have taken too much attention from the message in the answers.

⁶⁹ Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 242.

5.6 Presentation of results

The PPG consisted of seven persons: four male and three female. After Sermon II one member brought a guest with him, and the number at that time was eight people: five male and three female. They were in different ages, all ethnical Swedes.

Presenting the results, sometimes I will summarize the comments of the PPG, listing the most common reactions. Sometimes, I will quote sayings of members of the PPG.

I will give no statistics about differences in the answers, compared with sex or age. Such an analysis would be useless because my PPG consisted of only 7-8 people.

In the PPG, six of the members usually worship in Samariterhemmets kyrka. One person usually worships in another church, and one was a guest who came to worship together with a member of the PPG.

However, one should remember that everyone in the group were ethnical Swedes. If there would be immigrants in the group, the answers would perhaps be different.

The results of the project will be summarized in chapter 6.3 Results and 7. Homiletical Significance. In chapter 6.3 the focus will be on the reactions of the PPG. In chapter 7 the focus will be on the experiences from the project and on their impact on future preaching.

6 Results and Evaluation

6.1 Sermon I

6.1.1 Preparations and Theologians

When I began to plan the sermon, I used the method from the book *Preaching without notes*. I began to read the Bible text several times. And then, for some days, I begun to

think about the text and especially about the theme “food”, comparing it with the theologies of the theologians mentioned above.

Göran Larsson teaches that we should not overemphasize the differences between Judaism and Christianity. It is more correct to pay attention to the similarities. This is especially important when preaching about Bible texts, in which there seems to be a conflict for example between Jesus and pharisees. (It seems to me that in many cases there is in fact no conflict but only a loud voiced and noisy conversation, to which we, as Scandinavians, are not used. Therefore, we think that a conflict is going on.) In Matthew 6:31-34 however, there is no such conflict and therefore I thought that I did not have to pay attention to the relation between Jews and Christians in this sermon. In the gospel Jesus criticizes the Gentiles. However, I early decided not to say anything about this in the sermon, because the relation between Jews and Gentiles is not an important issue in our time.

The indigenous Saami theologian Tore Johnsen stated that in the traditional Saami culture food is something holy. In the traditional Saami hut, the place for the food was in the inner part of the hut, opposite to the door, in the *boaššu*, at the same place where the holy objects were kept. Bread is mentioned in the Lord’s prayer, and the bread is “our” and not “mine”. When planning the sermon, I had the idea to preach about the holiness of the food, with reference to the Lord’s prayer and to the Saami culture. However, I later gave up the idea, because it seemed to me that there were more important questions about food, which must be addressed to answer to contemporary needs.

Per Larsson is an important theologian, who wrote an important book about ecological theology. Food and its influence on climate change are an important issue, and in the beginning of the sermon work I thought that I had to mention that in the sermon.

Also, Benjamin M. Stewart, as a homiletician, invites us preachers to address ecology in sermons. The more I thought about it, the more I hesitated. I thought that the congregation perhaps knew about this and had enough of tv-programs and sermons about this theme. I decided not to mention the word climate change, but to hint at the question, without putting it in the centre of the sermon.

The philosopher Jonna Bornemark wrote that documents, figures, and statistics are not that important that many persons in our time believe. She advocates a lifestyle which is more humanistic and life-affirming. I decided to connect with the life-affirming lifestyle of Jonna Bornemark. That means that food must be described primarily as a gift from God and as a source of joy for the humanity, and not as a problem. The problems about food (influence on climate change, and overweight) must not be denied, but just suggested when passing, to give the congregation the possibility to think themselves.

The possibility to think oneself connects us to the fifth theologian Bengt Kristensson Ugglå. He wrote about interpreting, and about the fact that different people and different cultures interpret the same thing in many ways. I accept his theories, but I must admit that I could not imagine in advance in which ways the congregation would interpret my sermon. When preaching I decided that this would be a good opportunity to check how the theories of Kristensson Ugglå worked. I decided to have an “open” sermon. Its purpose is to start a process of thinking, and not to exactly say “do this” or “do that”.

My Sermon purpose statement was:

In view of the congregation’s feeling of uncertainty because of the great variety of opinions about what is good and healthy food, I want the congregation to experience that what to eat and what to drink is not the most important questions

in our time, by means of the text in Matthew 6:31-34, which tells us that human beings already have enough troubles, and that we do not have to invent new ones.

6.1.2 Homiletics

Preparing the sermon, I used also thoughts of the five homiletics mentioned above.

I already mentioned a quotation by Gustaf Wingren: “To abolish this undue theorization and to return the Christian faith to those human situations where it belongs is perhaps the most important task for contemporary theology.”⁷⁰ This was the reason why I decided to preach about “food”.

Another idea of Wingren was that every sermon must be directed towards one concrete person. I didn’t follow this idea to 100 %, but when planning the sermon, I thought about the people in the parish project group. Some of them I knew personally. Others I knew only a little, but enough to be able to direct the sermon to them.

Another trait in the sermons of Wingren was “language of beauty”. I had an idea to end the sermon with celebration. This is not very common in Church of Sweden, but I have met it several times in Pentecostal churches in Sweden and during the ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching classes. I found that that type of celebration would be too odd in Church of Sweden. Instead of that I ended the sermon with the reading of some prayers and bible quotations, which had relation to the sermon. Also, Wingren used quotations from the Bible in the end of the sermon.

One more method of Wingren is “defamiliarization”. My idea to defamiliarize the bible text from Matthew 6:31-34 was to mention that the word “therefore” was omitted in the Swedish lectionary and that this is a problem, because the omitted word gives us

⁷⁰ Wingren, *Creation and Gospel*, 80.

the answer how to do to now worry: Look at the birds... consider the lilies... And that we should do literally. Another possibility to defamiliarize is to mentions the problems with the quotation: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness". If we strive too much for the kingdom of God, that can be misunderstood as if we compete about spirituality, although we must repost in the mercy of God.

Like Wingren I used the plural pronoun "we" regularly in the sermon to show that the sermon is not only directed to the listeners, but also to myself.

This idea connects the sermon also to the theories of Anna Carter Florence. Using the word "we" I showed that I myself is one of the listeners. I refer to the common experiences of me myself and the congregation.

I also followed the ideas of Carter Florence when I said that it is OK to have problems. Almost all persons have problems, also Christians, and Jesus knows that, because he says, "Today's trouble is enough for today." He tells us to not worry about food, beverages, and clothes, because that would give us even more trouble. When I mentioned that it is hard to invite many young persons for a dinner because almost everyone has different allergies or diets, I did not say that the listeners must stop to have diets. I began a conversation with the listeners, but I gave no answer. The goal of my sermon was not consensus.

Carter Florence states that we must show them that reading the Bible is wonderful and liberating. I quoted Ecclesiastes 9:7: "Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do." I mentioned that there is a positive interpretation of this quotation, as well as a negative. But we shall always begin with the positive one.

The homiletician Bernice Sundkvist influenced my sermon with her theories about the container-function of the sermon. I mentioned that we as Christians also have

problems in our lives. Christianity is not an insurance against troubles, and Jesus knows that: "Today's trouble is enough for today." In that way the worries, the uncertainty, and the shortcomings, which are a part of the listeners life was mentioned on a general level. Many listeners would be able to recognize themselves, although they had different problems and different situations in life.

One of the listeners in the survey of Sundqvist said that an important trait in a sermon is that it meets us as we are, not as those we will become. Also, this was enabled when it was mentioned that also Christians have enough of problems.

But a sermon shall not only meet us where we are. According to Sundkvist the best sermons are those who affect the listeners and help the listeners to reflect about their situation. The goal of my sermon was to help the listener to reflect about the problems in their lives. Which problems are forced on the person, and which problems has he or she created by themselves?

Martin Lönnebo writes that the first demand on a sermon is that it responds to actual needs. The need should be real and not suggested or forced. Obeying this advice, I thought that one actual need of many Swedes is to handle all the different ideas about diets, which are popular in certain groups in Sweden. How is it possible to invite ten people for dinner if there are three or four diets among the guests? And if I have a diet, it is OK to skip the diet to be polite. This is not only a question about cooking and health, but a question which touches the existential needs of people.

Lönnebo wrote that "The sermon must contain the goals toward which the church must aim. In our time these are: the sense of life, peace and reconciliation, communion and participation, freedom and creation, love and fidelity, justice, peace and freedom from misery." The question about food is not only a material one but touches many of these dimensions. Therefore, I felt supported by Lönnebo when I preached about food.

Lönnebo also encourages the preacher to keep the sacramental and mysterious meaning of the sermon. I mentioned “Look at the birds... consider the lilies...”, not as a parable, but as a commandment. I think that this can be described as a sacramental interpretation of the quotation.

Charles Campbell in his book invites us preachers to struggle against the “powers”, which is “not against enemies of blood and flesh”. In my sermon I did not point out any specific power. However, I suggested that ideas about diets or too big interest in what to drink or what to wear can be powers in our life, but I left the decision to the listener, if the diets are evil powers in their lives, or something valuable.

Another thought from Campbell, which was useful in my sermon was the thought about the “table ministry”, in which Jesus ate with people who were considered unclean. The young church goes further when the early Christians even eat food which were considered unclean. The ideas about table ministry and the acceptance of any food in the early church could be used prophetically in our time, when thoughts about “unclean” food are common. However, I gave up this idea, because this theme is so big, that it could be another sermon.

6.1.3 Feedback and Reflections

My plan was originally to make a group interview with some questions and leave some questions for individual interviews later in the week. However, when the group interview began the group showed such an enthusiasm to speak about the sermon in a group, that I did not want to stop the discussion and leave some questions for the individual interview. I therefore decided to ask all questions in the parish project group and wait with the individual interviews until after Sermon II. Nevertheless, I already

begun the group interview after Sermon I with two questions, for which I asked the group members to write down the answers. The reason for that was that I wanted them to form individual answers, without influencing each other. One of the members in the group was prevented from coming. Therefore, I made an individual interview with him. The questions and answers were the following. Many of the questions I borrowed from the book “Qualitative Research” by Tim Sensing.⁷¹

Please, list three sayings in the sermon which you remember

Several of the group members mentioned that it is normal to have problems, but Jesus said that we should not make more problems. “We should look at the birds and lilies, and in that way, we should not make more problems, than those which we already have.” “Do not make problems about food and drink.” Several group members also remembered the quotation from the bible: “Eat, drink and be merry.” (Luke 12:19)⁷²

Mention one saying, which made you glad, angry, enthusiastic or which made you react

Several group members said that they became happy when they heard the expression “Eat, drink and be merry.” One member became happy when he heard the sayings about the birds and the lilies. Another person mentioned that it is was thought-provoking that we Swedes worry that much about food. One group member became happy when he remarked that the “prayer of the day” (the collect) which always is read before the readings, was repeated after the sermon, and served as an abstract of the sermon.

⁷¹ Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011) 242.

⁷² In Luke 12:19 this expression is used in a negative sense, about the lifestyle of rich people. In Ecclesiastes 9:7 and in other places similar, but longer, expressions are used in a positive sense. In my sermon I used the short style of Luke, but in a positive sense.

What was the objective of this sermon? Was the objective met?

The group members were in accord that the objective of the sermons was not to make more problems than we already have. One variation was that one is already tired now without additional problems. Some persons added that we must go out to flowers and birds instead. One person thought that going out to see the birds and flowers was a clear recommendation how to avoid making problems about food. One added that the preacher said that if someone cannot go out, he or she can at least open a window.

How was the biblical text employed in this sermon? (Was it confronted, avoided, distorted, transcended?)

Many group members thought that the preacher began in the biblical text but expanded it or travelled in it.

One group member said that it was a biblical sermon. He liked that the preacher all the time was close to the text, not always in the text, also outside, but always came back. Another group member in the beginning of the sermon thought that the text was confronted, that the preacher confronted that Jesus told us not to worry about food, when there in fact are problems about food in the world.

Did the sermon address contemporary needs? Did the sermon move smoothly from biblical text to the needs of people in today's world?

The group members said "yes" like in a choir. Here are some quotations: "Do not make unnecessary problems." "We must separate unnecessary problems from real problems." "We live good lives in Sweden, we must not always seek the perfect ones." "We can have good lives in one way, and bad in another way."

“It was funny that you said that it is impossible to invite people below 45 years for dinner. It is true.” “However, sometimes we must think about how we eat. We cannot just eat and drink, and go fat, so that we must buy new clothes. That is not what Jesus says.” “Some people have problems with anorexia, others with over-weight.” “Perhaps the sayings about the kingdom of God are about that we always can hand over our problems to God, like we, when working, if we have too big problems in the work always can handle over them to the boss.”

“The sermon was in the opposite way. It began in today’s world and moved smoothly to the biblical text.”

How did the sermon and the liturgical occasion relate?

Some comments: “After the sermon I thought about that we sang *Blott en dag, ett ögonblick i sänder* “Day by day and with each passing moment”, a very popular Swedish hymn⁷³ before the sermon.” Another person said more generally that the selection of hymns was liked with the sermon. Other persons commented that the “prayer of the day” was repeated after the sermon and that a quotation from Our Father appeared in the end of the sermon.

⁷³ Day by day and with each passing moment,
Strength I find to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what He deems best--
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Did anything in the service (except for the sermon) relate to the biblical readings?

"The selection of hymns was linked with the biblical texts." "There was an extra verse in 'Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God.'" (In fact, in the English song books there are two or more verses, but only the first one is generally known in Sweden.) "The second verse was nice, but it was difficult to sing it, because we had not the text." "We sang 'Seek Ye First also during the communion." "There were also other hymns with relation to the biblical texts." "The commandments were read before the confession of sins."

What did the preacher expect from you?

Some comments: "He gave me a task: to handle the camera." "Go out in the nature." "There is a problem about the nature. Many people say that they go into the wood, to have a quiet place and to be spiritual. Isn't it a risk with that? That you only stay in the nature?" "But it was not said in the sermon that you only must stay in the nature, but also that you should read the Bible and be in the Christian community." "It was also said that we should eat, drink and be glad." "And not think about the clothes going tighter." "It was also said that it is important that we say grace, to remember that the food is a gift from God."

The strongest aspect of this sermon was?

The answers of the seven people in the group were:

- "Eat, drink and be glad. It has not to be in a party."
- "Life is difficult at it is. Everyone has problems. We have to avoid making more problems."
- "I also think exactly like that."
- "It is important to say grace to remember that food is a gift from God."
- "Do not worry. We need more of life without worries."

- “To thank for what you have received.”
- “It was good that you reflected about the basal needs of man. The goal is to be a real human being, like Jesus was a real human.”

6.1.4 Comments from my Swedish advisor

After the sermon was held, I got some feedback from my Swedish advisor Niclas Blåder, who saw my sermon on Youtube. In his comments about the performance, he wrote that the preacher is a calm person with only a little body language. It is visible that the preacher has eye contact with the congregation. He also writes that he would prefer that the preacher had been standing and preaching in the aisle, without a manuscript, and not at the pulpit with a manuscript. Some comments about the sermon were about the length of the sermon which was 22 minutes.⁷⁴ The advisor had problems to concentrate and listen actively for 22 minutes. A shorter and more “explosive” sermon would be preferred.

There were also comments about the content. It was said that that food was an exciting theme for a sermon, and perhaps the first sermon about food which the advisor had listened to. It was good that the sermon was close to the Bible and that the complicated relations between people in our time and food were problematized. There are a lot to say about that. However, the sermon is a bit theoretical, and has too little concrete to offer. “You open up for a very important subject, and you show what is the will of Jesus in relation to this – but I miss the connection to things, that I personally recognize as a listener.” Another listener would perhaps have heard other things and would also have commented other things.

⁷⁴ There are different traditions about the length of the sermon in Church of Sweden. Obviously, the advisor Niclas Blåder belongs to a tradition with shorter sermons, and the preacher to a tradition with longer sermons.

6.2 Sermon II

6.2.1 Preparations and Theologians

When I began to plan the sermon I, in the same way as earlier, used the method from the book *Preaching without notes*. I began to read the bible text several times, and then collected different thoughts which came to me on a paper. I also read some bible commentaries and collected various ideas.

Göran Larsson, which is my first theologian, teaches that we should not overemphasize the differences between Judaism and Christianity. In the texts of All Souls' Day, there is nothing written about conflicts between Jesus and other Jews and similar themes. Therefore, this was no problem for me. In the reading from Ezekiel 27:12-14 (mandatory reading in the lectionary) there is an old-fashioned saying that God will open the "graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel." Preaching about this text would offer some difficulties to explain the old-fashioned telling about death. However, I did not have to work with that, because I decided to preach about the gospel text.

The indigenous Saami Tore Johnsen does not write much about death especially, but about evil powers generally. He states that New Testament describes the power of Jesus Christ in three ways. First, as the supreme being in the creation which has the power over all powers. Secondly, as the one who won the victory on the cross. This was not only a death for the sake of our sins, but it was also a victory against the powers and spirits. Thirdly, after the resurrection Christ sits at the right hand of God, and he now has divine power. Therefore, we can trust in Christ and trust in our salvation.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Johnsen, *Jordens barn*, 126-127.

Per Larsson wrote an important book about ecological theology. The death of individual human beings is not an important issue in the book. Instead, the threats against the whole world and against the death of humanity are important issues. Also, Benjamin M. Stewart, as a homiletician, encourages preachers to preach about ecology. However, I found that such themes are too far away from the expectations of mourning people, which come to the church service on All Souls Day, that I did not mention ecology in the sermon of this day.

The philosopher Jonna Bornemark wrote about “not-knowing”, that we must admit that we, humans, do not know everything. There is a relation between not-knowing and religion. Religious people give a name to “not-knowing”, to something which we cannot understand, but which is necessary for our existence. This name is “Jahve”, “Brahman” or “Re”. For Christians this is God.⁷⁶ This idea of Jonna Bornemark is very important for my sermon. We, humans, cannot know exactly what death is. Therefore, we admit that and trust God.

The fifth theologian Bengt Kristensson Ugglå wrote about interpreting, and about the fact that different people and different cultures interpret the same thing in many ways. In his book *Slaget om verkligheten, Filosofi, Omvärldsanalys, Tolkning* the author notes that the previous chapters have shown the unsustainability of an external analysis with objectivist ambitions – i.e., ambitions that there is an objective truth. For example, the play “Three Men Without a Boat” is described: Three men are in a room in Rome. They interpret their situation in different ways. A captain seeks robust and reliable explanations in military tradition. A director is anxiously doubtful, and a professor seeks strictly rational and logical explanations.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Bornemark, *Det omätbara*, 215–217.

⁷⁷ Kristensson Ugglå, *Slaget om verkligheten*, 316–317.

Kristensson Uggla inspired me not to try to describe “This is what the Church teaches about death”, but to inspire the congregation to interpret their situation in their own way, but with Jesus and the Bible as a ground.

My Sermon purpose statement was:

In view of the congregation’s feeling of uncertainty because of death despite the fact that most people several times in life must mourn friends and relatives, I want the congregation to experience that death is a part of life and that we must handle with the knowledge that we will die, that we have no exact knowledge about afterlife, and that mourning is a natural process, by means of the narratives that Jesus did not give his friends any exact description about afterlife and that Jesus mourned his friend Lazarus of Bethany.

6.2.2 Homiliticians

Wingren has noticed a tendency of irresolution about All Saints’ Day (in Sweden always at a Saturday, October 31st – November 6th) and All Souls’ Day (in Sweden always at a Sunday, November 1st – November 7th). Some people mourned their dead on All Saints’ Day but are confused with the word “Saint”. There is also confusion about new traditions, to light candles on graves and to decorate the graves. Some people do not think that it is a good tradition to adore dead by decorating their graves. (Other ask if we can pray for the dead. Comment by LN.)

Wingren also touched the question about saints and dead in another way. Some people think that it is inappropriate to honour dead murderers, assailants or other

criminals during All Saints' Day or All Souls' Day. However, in our time we know that there is a heritage that makes some people to become criminals. Therefore, it is important to do as Jesus said: "Do not judge". It is appropriate to mourn all dead people during this weekend.⁷⁸

Wingren also states that Jesus Christ and his resurrection are essential for our faith. The church is not a channel in which faith is flowing. We must meet Jesus Christ which comes from the future and meets us today. We are moving towards the meeting with the risen Christ in the future.⁷⁹

In my sermon I followed the ideas of Gustaf Wingren when I touched the question of the meaning of decorating graves and lighting candles as a part of the mourning. I also tried to follow Wingren, and Jesus, by not judging, when I said that we cannot know who will come to hell and who will come to heaven.

Anna Carter Florence and her ideas about preaching as a testimony was described above. I used the ideas about testimony when I stated:

Grief often means being sad, but grief can just as easily manifest itself in the body, such as stomach pain, pain in the shoulders and back, headaches and insomnia. Grief can also manifest itself by getting angry or angry and bitter. It takes time and effort to grieve. The candles we light in churches and graves now in All Saints' Time may help us take a few steps in the way of getting through the grief of our loved ones.

Perhaps the testimony would be stronger if I had stated what the reactions of my body were when my mother died. However, I thought that it would be a bad idea to say exactly which my problems were. It was better to say something general about possible reactions in the body when one mourns. This would give the congregation better possibilities to recognize themselves. The important fact was that it is OK that your body mourns. If it does, you are just normal.

⁷⁸ Jonny Karlsson, "Gustaf Wingren som predikant," 311.

⁷⁹ Gustaf Wingren, *Credo: Den kristna tros- och livsåskådningen* (Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1981), 111–117.

Carter Florence states that we must show them that reading the Bible is wonderful and liberating. I quoted John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.* I also asked the congregation to repeat this verse, which they did, although they were not used that the preacher asked them to repeat bible verses. I think that this showed that reading the Bible is wonderful and liberation.

Beatrice Sundkvist (also quoted above) stated that the best sermons “are those who affect the listeners and help the listeners to reflect about their situation.” She also stated that the listeners “want a sermon which touches deeper levels than the intellectual level”, and that “Metaphors are important and press deeper into the personality, than clear language.” This gave me the idea to mention different possibilities to use symbols of the mourning: decoration graves and lighting candles in church and at graves. I also mentioned that it is OK to pray for the dead and I taught a short prayer, which is used in funerals, but which can also be used when visiting a grave or lighting a candle: “Give him, Lord, your peace and let your eternal light shine for him” or “Give her, Lord, your peace and let your eternal light shine for her.”

I also stated that the body also reacts when a person is mourning and have some examples of that: “stomach pain, pain in the shoulders and back, headaches and insomnia.” One could raise a question about this idea? Is it really a sermon which “touches deeper levels than the intellectual level” when I mention the reactions of the body? I think it is. At least the Bible often mentions human feelings in relation to parts of the body.

In the book *The Word before the Powers, The Ethic of Preaching* by Charles L. Campbell I read about “Preaching among Friends”. An important statement of the author is “The great challenge for preaching as a practice of nonviolent resistance is that it

makes claims – and even speak with authority – without becoming another form of domination.⁸⁰ I therefore avoided to say, “do like this and you come to heaven...”, but I think that I nevertheless spoke with authority when I said: “When we have reverence and respect for God, that is what all fear disappears. Reverence and respect mean that we step back and trust God to resolve this.”

Also, Martin Lönnebo is quoted above. I used his advice in several ways. The author wrote that the first demand on a sermon is that it responds to actual needs. The need should be real and not suggested or forced. The second demand is that the sermon must respond to the existential needs of the human being. The third demand is that the preacher must put out to the deep water and let down the nets. “Conversion and sanctification often occur at the unconscious level of a human being.” I wanted to obey to these pieces of good advice. I therefore preached about mourning, because I think that it responds to actual needs to touch such a theme, which is important in the existential needs of a human being. Did I put out to the deep water? I hope I did, because I did not say “do exactly like this and you become rescued”. I hope that I planted some new thoughts.

I also listened to another advice of Martin Lönnebo: “The whole Bible is your text.” I used not only the texts in the lectionary but also mentioned the text about Jesus and Lazarus and also quoted John 3:16, which has been called the most famous verse in the bible (among Christians): For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (Here quoted from King James version.)

⁸⁰ Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 161.

6.2.3 Feedback and Reflections

Please, list three sayings in the sermon which you remember (Written answers)

There was a large spread among the eight group members about which three sayings they remember. Four of them mentioned friendship and acquaintance and the difference between them and that friendship is something important. Two of these mentioned that it was interesting that also Jesus had a friend, Lazarus. (In the Swedish Bible translation Bibel 2000, the word *vän* "friend" is used about Lazarus). There were also some sayings which were mentioned by three group members: that the Swedish word *frukta* has a double significance – "fear" and "respect" – and that we shall respect God, but not fear him. Three persons also mentioned that death is a part of life and that it possible to pray for the dead, but that Martin Luther said that we should not do that too often.

Other themes mentioned by two or one group members: in the church we talk about death; it is OK or even a holy thing to cry; not only the mind but also the body is mourning; Jesus does only teach a little about heaven and hell.

Mention one saying, which made you glad, angry, enthusiastic or which made you react (Written answers)

There was a large spread concerting answers about this question. However, the group members mentioned interesting sayings, but did not say which their reaction was.

- "The prayer in the end."
- "Clever conceptual analysis: introducing another definition of "fear" that solved a seemingly contradictory formulation."
- "Fear God —respect and reverence that leads to trust. Dependence on God for life and that provides trust. We're not the ones in charge of life and death."
- "Lazarus as the friend of Jesus."

- “Heaven or hell: these places are not described. I was thinking about the mustard grain and the sourdough.”
- “That you said that the hell does not necessary is an eternal, active punishment. The narrative that it is necessary to mourn was very good. I have theological objections to prayers for the dead: What do one want God to do? Is there anything which God does not do if you don’t pray?”
- “That we can pray for the dead, but that we shall preferably pray for the living.”
- “Jesus rose from the dead and therefore we can believe in the resurrection of the dead, it gives us security about our future death. It was interesting that Jesus did not speak about afterlife with his friends. We can pray for the dead (but not too often according to Martin Luther). I heard the opposite before, that one should only pray for mourning people, but not for dead. Now we changed this in [our] church.”

What was the objective of this sermon? Was the objective met?

“That we need to talk about death.” “Security in the face of death, a security in life before death.” “I think it's more about security in grief. It's OK to grieve. In the beginning the sorrow is hard, but after a few years you live with grief in a different way”. “For me, the importance of mourning was significant.” “I remember a track at the beginning about friendship.” “It was something I got hooked on. It was a sermon that suited the day that was [All Souls’ Day], it not only based on the gospel text, but began in it and went further.”

How was the biblical text employed in this sermon? Was it confronted, avoided, distorted, transcended?

"It was a sermon that suited the day that was, it not only based on the gospel text, but went on like that." "You did not delve into the gospel text, but you proceeded from the text and went further." "When I heard the gospel text, I thought about "those who kill the body and the one who sends to hell". I was thinking about who they were. The first one, who is he? I thought. The bad guys are probably the devil, someone who kills and sends to hell, but this is something else." [The group read the gospel text once again.]

"You jumped to 'fear God' what does that mean? I thought it was good. Yes, there is another definition of fear. Fear God, what does that mean?" "It was nice that you got a different definition of fear, that it wasn't what you thought about first."

"I thought you brought up something I had been thinking about before when you sent out the text. The destination hell, is it a geographical place, is it an eternal torment?"

"When I compared it to the last sermon you gave, this time it was clearer that you started from the text. But I don't think you avoided it now either, but that was more the theme of the day." "And a few knockdowns in the text. You did dip your fingers in the jam jar..."

Did the sermon address contemporary needs? Did the sermon move smoothly from biblical text to the needs of people in today's world?

"I think so." "Absolute." "Yes." "It was linked to the coronavirus pandemic, and that we have not talked about death in connection with this." "I agree that there was such a tone in the sermon, it is inevitable that it is the day of all souls, serious caution."

How did the sermon and the liturgical occasion relate?

"To the liturgy?" [Silence] "The hymns were well connected. The theme is our eternal hope." "Isn't it the case in every service that it [theme, sermon and liturgy] should be

connected?" "I guess the liturgy is the same every time." "No. It wasn't like that. No, it was personal intercession this time. It's not always personal intercession." "I also thought intercession was talking about the same thing as the sermon." "That was the idea."

"I thought that it was... that we read [a Bible verse] together in the sermon. I am not used to it." "In the sermon you quoted the creed, and the funeral prayer... Give him, O Lord, your peace..." "And that we could light candles was directly linked to the service."

Did anything in the service (except for the sermon) relate to the biblical readings?

"[The hymn] They come from east and west." "The one with the melody of the summer hymn."

"It was in the sacrificial hymn that we sang about the friends of Jesus. But it's not easy to pay attention to it."

What did the preacher expect from you?

"Help to cry." "Cry!" "Mourn!" "Relieve the pressure. I cry so much, I should [relieve the pressure]." "That we should read a bible verse together. It worked well."

What was the sermon like when compared to the last one?

"That time you followed the lyrics more, now you were freer."

"Without remembering much from the last one, this one gave pastoral care."

"I was thinking about her, [name quoted], because she thought the last sermon was fuzzy because you talked about going out into nature. Now it was more Christian."

(Laughter.) "The last sermon was about food..." "I thought the sermon seemed more integrated into the service this time."

The strongest aspect of this sermon was?

The answers of the eight people in the group were:

- “We can pray for the dead, but above all we shall pray for the living.”
- “You gave help with a simple prayer that one can use.”
- “I was thinking about the grief. I've stopped expressing my condolences. I say:
“I'm sorry for your loss.” Grief is nothing to regret.”
- “Grief can take many forms, such as ill health, as aches.”
- “The Church has a special task to talk about death and sorrow.”
- “The difference between friends and acquaintances. Perhaps you should not be too involved with those with whom you are not friends. Maybe there should be a difference between friends and acquaintances. Although I've heard that anyone who grieves will be happy even if a distant acquaintance gets in touch.”
- “Maybe you can get in touch with others. Perhaps it is more about not sharing your own concerns with too many people.”
- “I will remember praying for the deceased. When we were kids, we always prayed evening prayers. We prayed for dead relatives every night. We were such a big family. The deceased at the time were not very many. Mostly we prayed for the living. You spoke about heaven and hell. But he gave pictures of the sourdough and mustard grain. But it could be that I... Isn't it different if you talk about eternal life as a place than about eternal death? The kingdom of God is like a place. The sky is a geographical location. But it is possible to be lost forever.”

Does anyone want to say anything else that hasn't been said?

"I'm thinking about something. I think both last time and today you had a prayer at the end of the sermon. Today it worked better. It appeared naturally..."

"I was thinking... Oh, now it became a prayer. But I thought I got into it easily. But I find it difficult..."

"Do you think that one has to say, 'Let us pray'? No, I think one has not to do that. It works well without. It is a little formal to say, 'Let us pray.'"

"Today the service began with the prayer 'Come, my light'.⁸¹ We started to pray in the beginning. Usually, you start the sermon with the ten commandments of God."

6.2.4 Comments from my Swedish advisor

The Swedish advisor began commenting the sermon style. It is calm and relaxed. The style is well adapted to the content of the sermon, which is like a meditation. If the preacher wanted to have influence on the congregation perhaps another style would be needed. Different types of messages request different types of sermons. Once again, the advisor proposed that I would try to preach without a manuscript and not in the pulpit. This sermon was like a meditation: many rooms and I could enter some of them in any order. There were many different themes in the sermon: friendship, speaking about

⁸¹ Come, my Light,
and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life,
and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician,
and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love,
and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart
with the flame of thy love.
- Dimitrii of Rostov

death, Lazarus, prayer for the death, the kingdom of heaven, fearing God, and supporting each other in the sorrow.

Another possibility would be to form a sermon like a line with only a few themes. It seems that the congregation consists of people who are used to going to church. Perhaps it would be better for those people to listen to a sermon about a few themes and to go deeper into two or three themes. However, no style is right, and no style is wrong. There are just different possibilities.

6.3 Results

My thesis statement was: **Given this context, this concern, and this theory I want to accomplish making sermons about “food” and “death”, in which Christian faith has something to say in my preaching ministry.**

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how these sermons about the everyday life themes “food” and “death” are received by the congregation. Is it received as a spiritual sermon or is it received as something that is outside the domain of the Church and worship? How do the members of the Parish Project Group react to the sermons? Do sermons about Everyday life themes as “food” and “death” stimulate the churchgoers to think and speak about such themes?

In this chapter I will compare some theories and ideas of the main homileticians and the main theologians with comments in the PPG, to examine how the sermons were received by the PPG.

A quotation from Gustav Wingren, which is quoted above, was very important for my project: “To abolish this undue theorization and to return the Christian faith to those human situations where it belongs is perhaps the most important task for contemporary

theology.”⁸² My sermons on “food” and “death” were an attempt to preach according to this idea. Comments from the PPG confirms that the members had interest in these questions. With the terminology of Martin Lönnebo the same comments shows that the themes “food” and “death” responds to actual needs of the listeners, not suggested or forced ones. I quote from the discussions in the PPG:

Did the sermon address contemporary needs? Did the sermon move smoothly from biblical text to the needs of people in today's world?

The group members said “yes” like in a choir. Here are some quotations: “Do not make unnecessary problems.” “We must separate unnecessary problems from real problems.”

Another idea of Wingren is that “defamiliarization” is necessary. The preacher has to find interesting details in the text, because the congregation is very familiar with the text.⁸³ An example of this was when I mentioned that Lazarus was a friend of Jesus and went on preaching about that friendship is very important. This caught the interest of several PPG-members, which had heard the text many times, but who were not used to the emphasis that Lazarus was a friend of Jesus.

“Lazarus as the friend of Jesus.”

An idea of Martin Lönnebo is that the preacher can use the whole Bible, and that the preacher must seek further in the bible.⁸⁴ I quoted the bible several times.

Anna Carter Florence gave the reader the opposite “being told vs. being seen”. The human need is to be seen, but the preacher should not immediately present answers.⁸⁵ In Sermon I about food it was mentioned that Jesus said that people should not make themselves no more worries, because we already have enough problems. I did not mention which type of problems we already have. However, during the discourse in the

⁸² Wingren, *Creation and Gospel*, 80.

⁸³ Karlsson, “Gustaf Wingren som predikant,” 317–321.

⁸⁴ Lönnebo, *Homiletik*, 53-84.

⁸⁵ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 127-128.

PPG it was evident that several members had listened to this and were influenced.

Several of the group members mentioned that it is normal to have problems, but Jesus said that we should not make more problems.

“We should look at the birds and lilies, and in that way, we should not make more problems, than those which we already have.” “Do not make problems about food and drink.”

Another idea of Anna Carter Florence is that the preacher must show that Bible is wonderful and liberating.⁸⁶ Two months after Sermon II, I was contacted by a PPG-member who asked for the questions, about which we spoke in the PPG, to be able to use them in a group. This shows that it is possible to preach in a way, which make the congregation interested in Bible reading.

Bernice Sundkvist in her study about sermons concluded that what is heard, is not the same what is said. Good sermons help the listeners to reflect about their situation. The sermon and sermons are strongly emotional experiences. Sundkvist wrote about the “container-function”, which means that when the preacher mentions problems which the listener can recognise, the sermon “carries” the problems.⁸⁷ After Sermon II, when the PPG discussed the sermon, several persons in the group repeated the saying in the sermon that it is normal to have problems, but that Jesus said that we should make more problems. Some group members even repeated the saying about unnecessary problems, when the question about contemporary needs was discussed later in the interview.

Charles Campbell invites preachers to struggle against the “powers”, a not totally univocal notion, which can be understood as “oppressors”, however not always embodied. In the sermons about “food” and “death” there is not any totally evident references to “powers”.⁸⁸ Perhaps can ideas about what a human being should eat and

⁸⁶ Carter Florence, *Preaching*, 125.

⁸⁷ Sundkvist, *En predikan*, 126–133.

⁸⁸ Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 6.

should not eat be a problem for a person. There is wise advice about what is healthy food, and what is not, but there are persons who become locked up because they listen too much to different advice about food and health. For those people advice becomes a power, which creates problems, more than it solves.

The theologian Göran Larsson advocated an awareness about the tight relations between Judaism and Christianity.⁸⁹ The Jewish tradition to pray for the dead inspired me to consider the possibility to mention such prayers in Sermon II. In Church of Sweden the prayer for the dead has been disparaged by the pietistic tradition, although there has always been a need for rituals for the dead among mourning people.

However, I did not mention that the prayer for the dead is a Jewish tradition, because it is not only a Jewish tradition, but also an Orthodox, a Catholic, and in fact also a Lutheran tradition. Several PPG-members noticed that it was said in the sermon that one can pray for the dead.

“That we can pray for the dead, but that we shall preferably pray for the living.”

“We can pray for the dead (but not too often according to Martin Luther). I heard the opposite before, that one should only pray for mourning people, but not for dead. Now we changed this in [our] church.”

Tore Johnsen wrote about the role of food as a gift from God, or from the gods, in the Saami tradition and in Saami contextual theology.⁹⁰ In this context we can also mention Per Larsson and his thoughts about sermons as a prophetic voice in the ecological struggle.⁹¹ These both traditions agree that food is a gift from God and that “you should not waste food”.

“Eat, drink and be glad. It has not to be in a party.”

“To thank for what you have received.”

⁸⁹ Larsson, *Judarna*, 31–43.

⁹⁰ Johnsen, *Jordens barn*, 94–99.

⁹¹ Larsson, *Skapelsens Frälsning*.

Jonna Bornemark wrote about the non-fundamentalistic form of religion and, which admits that it does not have a totally complete knowledge about everything and can stand face to face against the “not-knowledge”, practicing “intellectus”, the ability to be in relation to non-knowledge.⁹² This idea was adopted into Sermon II about “death”, in which the fact that Jesus did not teach exactly what would happen after death was established.

“Jesus rose from the dead and therefore we can believe in the resurrection of the dead, it gives us security about our future death. It was interesting that Jesus did not speak about afterlife with his friends.

Bengt Kristensson Ugglå taught that there no “clean” objectivity when we interpret the world. One word or one picture can be interpreted in many ways. This helped me to interpret the Biblical text in new ways.

When I interviewed the PPG, I also tried to check whether I could find any evidence for the theories of Bengt Kristensson Ugglå about words or pictures interpreted in many ways in the answers of the group members.⁹³ However, I did not. But when reading the answers, I understood that the group members placed the centre of the sermon in different places. For example, discussing Sermon II, one member of the PPG paid a lot of attention to the detail that Jesus had a friend, Lazarus. Another member paid the main attention to the saying that it is OK to pray for the dead.

Jennifer Baldwin taught about trauma theology. She mentioned somatic reactions to traumatic experiences, acceptance of narratives about death and about the role of the rituals in mourning.⁹⁴ I mentioned this in Sermon II about “death”, and explicitly mentioned that it is OK to pray for the dead. There was also a possibility to personal intercession in the service.

⁹² Bornemark, *Det omätbaras*, 228.

⁹³ Kristensson Ugglå, *Slaget om verkligheten*.

⁹⁴ Baldwin, *Trauma Sensitive*, 7, 56.

“(---). No, it was personal intercession this time. It's not always personal intercession.” “I also thought intercession was talking about the same thing as the sermon.”

To sum up, we can state that the homileticians quoted in chapter 3 above and the theologians quoted in chapter 4, contributed to the sermons and that their ideas were important for the forming of the Sermons I and II. However, the ideas of some homileticians and theologians were more important for these sermons. For example, the ideas about posttraumatic preaching of course were more important for a sermon about “death”, than ideas about ecological sermons.

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how these sermons about the everyday life themes “food” and “death” are received by the congregation. Is it received as a spiritual sermon or is it received as something that is outside the domain of the Church and worship? Do they show an interest in discussing the everyday life themes addressed in the sermon or will they show disapproval that the sermon was about everyday life themes and not about spiritual themes in a narrower sense?

The answer to the question is that the PPG-members noticed that the sermons about everyday life addressed themes, which seldom are addressed in sermons in Church of Sweden. It was easy to start a conversation about these sermons in the PPG, which shows that the PPG-members were interested in discussing everyday life themes like “food” and “death”. No one in the PPG said that the sermons were outside the domain of the Church and worship.

However, this does not mean that the congregation are not interested in spiritual themes in a narrower sense. This is very evident when words which cause emotions are mentioned. Here is one example from the discussions in the PPG:

When I heard the gospel text, I thought about “those who kill the body and the one who sends to hell”. I was thinking about who they were. The first one, who is he? I thought. The bad guys are probably the devil, someone who kills and sends to hell, but this is something else.

My conclusion is that the members of the Parish Project Group were interested in everyday life themes in sermons, but that the sermon also must deal with spiritual themes in a narrower sense, especially when words which cause emotions, as “hell”, mentioned.

7 Homiletical Significance

7.1 Impact of the Thesis Project on a personal level

The Swedish preaching program and the following fourth summer residency online with the thesis project has given me the possibility to work with several questions, which have followed me since my childhood. As quoted above my impression as a child was that every sermon was about “we must confess our sins and then be forgiven, because Christ died on the cross”. Later I met another preaching style. Now the sermon addressed the problems in the world and that we must work for a better world. I thought that it was important that the church also participated in the work for a better world, and therefore I thought that I had something to learn from this preaching style. However, I soon understood that not every sermon can address the work for a better world.

In 2010 I for the first time heard about W Paul Jones and his book *Theological Worlds: Understanding the Alternative Rhythms of Christian Belief*. I immediately understood that his ideas could be the answer to my thoughts about preaching. In fact, his theories are obvious. There are different people with different problems and therefore we must preach about different themes. I understood that for Martin Luther the question about sin and forgiveness was a very important question. Therefore, the Lutheran

tradition has emphasized the sin-forgiveness-perspective, although many members of the Lutheran churches have other needs and should hear sermons also about other themes. For me the meeting with the theological worlds was an important step towards another type of preaching.

In 2011 I began my work as the director of Stiftelsen Fjellstedtska skolan "Peter Fjellstedt Foundation", in Uppsala, Sweden. This is an institute for further education of pastors in church of Sweden. Already a long time before I began my work here, I knew that the preaching program was an important part of the course program of the institute. I was curious about the program and listened to some lectures when Swedish, American and other lecturers gave lectures in the program. As the director of the institute, I sometimes had to inform different people about our preaching program, but soon I realized that I did not know enough to give enough good information about the program. The only way to become able to give good information about the program was to participate the whole program myself. In the years 2018-2020 I participated the program. One of the first observations I made, was that when we in the small groups of six persons listened to and commented the sermons of each other, we in the beginning were sensitive about criticism. Sometimes we even defended ourselves against the criticism. However, this soon changed, and we began to understand that the others in our group wanted to help us to come to maturity as preachers. I was not any more sensitive about the criticism, but I longed to hear the comments of the others, because I began to understand that what I said could be understood in many ways and I was curious to know what the others had heard.

I hope that when the preaching program is completed, and the thesis written I will not stop to develop as a preacher. I will never be finished or completed as a preacher, but always on my way.

The preaching program and the thesis have been important for me as a preacher, but also for my faith. I am fascinated that it is possible to find new understandings in the text. I have read the Bible a lot, but I am not finished with it. I always find something new in it, and I am very happy with that.

7.2 Preaching about Everyday Life – Especially about the Human Life Cycle

In the end of the introduction to this thesis I wrote:

My thesis statement therefore is: Given this context, this concern, and this theory I want to accomplish making sermons about “food” and “death”, in which Christian faith has something to say in my preaching ministry. I think that sermons must address everyday life to be relevant for the majority, in the same way as the Bible address everyday life and not only (but also) spiritual questions. When I speak about human situations or everyday life I think about: to be a parent, to have a job, to be a pupil in school, to live in a family, to live without a family, to have old parents, to exercise sport and so on. (In this project the themes will be “food” and “death”.) These are not secular themes, because God has something to say about everything. God is not limited to a “spiritual sector” in life.

Now I have had the two sermons about “food” and “death” and it is time for evaluation. Was it correct to believe that sermons must address everyday life to be relevant for the majority? Of course, I cannot allege that the sayings in the PPG represent the opinions of the general public. However, the group represents members of the local congregation, and therefore it is more likely that their opinions mirror the opinions of the local congregation. When I analyse the conversations in the PPG, I notice that many sayings are about everyday life. The PPG-members show an interest in the themes of the two sermons “food” and “death” and the relation between each of these themes and Christian faith. How is it possible to think about “food” and “death” as a Christian? However, the interest does not stop with “food” and “death”. In the dialogues in the PPG the members also show interest about other everyday themes mentioned or suggested in the sermons. In Sermon I it was mentioned that Jesus said that we should not make problems out of food, because we have

enough with problems, without making problems out of food. This was commented by several PPG-members. In Sermon II it was mentioned that Lazarus was a friend of Jesus, and that Jesus mourned at his death. It was also mentioned that Jesus spoke about death with his friend, and therefore one could suppose that Jesus would teach them a little more about death, heaven, and hell because they were his friends, but he didn't. In the PPG this caused a talk about friendship (which was not the official theme of the sermon). The members started to talk about questions like: Which is the difference between a friend and an acquaintance? Is it appropriate to talk about serious themes (like personal problems) with acquaintances or should one speak about such things only with friends? It seemed that friendship was a hot topic of conversation.

I wrote above that sermons must address everyday life but also spiritual questions. The talks in the PPG showed that if the preacher does not pay attention to central spiritual terms in the text, some members of the congregation will feel that something is missing. In Sermon II about "death" I used a text from Luke 12:4-7. "Hell" was mentioned in the text, but still, I did only mention "hell" in an explanation that we cannot know exactly what heaven is and what hell is. I felt that at least one of the members in the PPG wanted to hear a clearer description about heaven, hell, and the salvation. But in fact, I do not know if this opinion mirrors his own need for that fact, or if it echoes an opinion that the salvation must be proclaimed in most sermons.

7.3 Preaching about Trauma

This summer I participated the elective course about preaching about traumas. When I wrote the evaluation about the course, I wrote that I thought that it was a good idea to mention traumas in sermons regularly.

In the first sermon about food, I did not mention any specific trauma situation explicitly. I just said that it is a natural thing to have problems:

Observe what he's saying and what he's not saying. He does not say, "You shall have no worries, for you are Christians, and Christians shall have no trouble." No, most of us have concerns, small or large, and that is as it should be. Do you have any concerns? ... Jesus knows that we have troubles. He says, "Every day has enough of its own torment." If you have any concerns, know that you are completely normal. That's life. Jesus has not promised us a carefree existence. What Jesus says, however, is: Make yourself no worries. So, the concerns we already have are enough. We do not need to inset any extra worries and put them on the concerns we already have.

In this way I wanted the congregation to begin to think about problems in a new way. Most of us have problems, small and big problems, and we are not bad Christians if we have problems. But I did not just want the congregation to think about the problems in a new way. I did also want the congregation to know that it is OK to speak about one's problems if one want to. It is OK to speak about serious things at the coffee table after the service, but of course one should not speak to much about one's problem.

In the PPG I heard one member that very clearly repeated my saying that Jesus tells us not to create new torments, because he knows that we already have enough of them. My interpretation is that this saying meant something special to this person.

In the second sermon I was more clearly mentioned the trauma: the death of a person, perhaps a family member or a friend, and the mourning which follows:

Jesus wept when Lazarus was dead. Friendship is great, but friendship also has a downside. It's hard when a relative dies. Grief often means being sad, but grief can just as easily manifest itself in the body, such as stomach pain, pain in the shoulders and back, headaches and insomnia. Grief can also manifest itself by getting angry or angry and bitter. It takes time and effort to grieve. The candles we light in churches and graves now in All Saints' Time may help us take a few steps in the way of getting through the grief of our loved ones.

This time I wanted to help the congregation to think about mourning in a new way. Perhaps some of them did not know that it is normal that also the body mourns together with the mind, and that you can mourn for years. In the PPG some persons commented this saying. This shows that many people have a need to talk about mourning and sorrow.

Now, when I have preached these two sermons, I have tested my idea that it is a good idea to mention traumas regularly. I think that both the “open” way and the “explicit” way are good ways. Both methods give the congregation an opportunity to think about their problems and traumas, and to think about them in a new way. “A new way” means an awareness that you are not a bad Christian if you have problems, but that problems and traumas are a part of life. I did also want to show liturgical methods to work with one’s traumas. In the quotation above I mentioned that one can light candles in churches and on graves, when grieving ones loved ones. In the service we also invited the congregation to personal intercession. Many came, but I do not know whether they wanted prayers for their grief, for their dead loved ones or for other themes, because the persons which pray individually for the churchgoers, do not speak about their requests afterwards.

7.4 Celebration

First, I have to clearly say that I neither did participate the course about Preaching as celebration during the summer residency, nor I mentioned celebration in the thesis proposal. However, during the summer residency, we saw some sermons on Youtube, in which the sermons ended with celebration. We also had the possibility to see and listen to some of the Afro-American participants in the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program, when they ended their sermons with celebration.

My spiritual tradition is the Lutheran one. Compared to Afro-American sermons, Swedish Lutheran sermons are generally very quiet and calm, even if they differ a lot in between. During my years as a parish pastor, my sermons were generally more like lectures and/or meditation in style. Often my sermons ended with an abstract in three lines to make it easier for the congregation to remember the sermon.

Preparing Sermon I for this thesis I got the idea to end the sermon with celebration, not in the Afro-American way but in a more quiet way, and I did. I ended the sermon with some prayers and some quotations from the Bible. Some PPG-members commented that I ended the sermons with more prayer that is common in services in Church of Sweden.

7.5 Impact of the Thesis Project for the Ministry Context

As I wrote above the church Samariterhemmet's kyrka was closed for two years and then reopened. After the reopening it worked again for a year and then had to close again according to the corona situation. In the summer 2020 it reopened again and at the same time I began to search members for the PPG. It was easy to find members for the PPG because many people lived isolated during the pandemic and longed to meet other people. However, some were still cautious with the corona situation and would not like to sit too close to other people. Because of this I understood that I should minimize the physical meetings. The PPG should gather only directly after the services in which I preached. All other contact with the PPG were on internet.

Nevertheless, the people showed up on the PPG-meeting. When I spoke with the group members after the meeting, I understood that this opportunity to speak about sermons and spiritual questions were most welcome. Some group members said that the congregation only seldom speak about spiritual matters at the coffee table, and the work in the PPG gave the members an opportunity to speak about such questions.

Did my sermon project have any impact on the congregation which will last after the project? I think that it is too early to answer this question. I do not work as a parish pastor, but as the director for an institute for further education. That is the reason why I couldn't preach all my eight sermons for the preaching program in the same church, but I had to search possibilities to preach in different churches. Therefore I had different PPG:s in the

different churches. I understand that if one PPG works in one church in a project for three years, the effect of the project will be more continuous.

The words above were meant to be the last words of this thesis. Before finishing the thesis, however, I must mention that in January 2022 I got a short e-mail message from one of the members in the PPG in Samariterhemmets kyrka, which discussed just two sermons during the autumn 2021. She asked me to send the questions about which we discussed in the PPG, because she would like to use them for further conversations about sermons. This e-mail inspired me a lot, because it showed that participating in two group talks about sermons - and about everyday life – was a such positive experience that this group member wanted to go on with another group.

8 Bibliography

Bornemark, Jonna. *Det Omätbaras Renässans: En Uppgörelse Med Pedanternas*

Världsherravälde. Första upplagan ed. Stockholm: Volante. 2018.

Campbell, Charles. *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. Westminster: John Know Press, 2002.

Carter Florence, Anna. *Preaching as testimony*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 2007.

“Everyday life,” Wikipedia, January 26, 2022,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Everyday_life.

Greenberg, Sidney (Ed): *A Treasury of Favorite Sermons by Leading American Rabbis*.

Northvale & Jerusalem: Jason Aronson Inc, 1999

Hagberg, Esbjörn. *Själavård vid köksbordet*. Örebro: Libris, 2000.

Hymns, Old & New, New Anglican Edition. Bury St Edmonds: Kevin Mayhew, 1996.

Johnsen, Thore. *Jordens barn, solens barn, vindens barn. Kristen tro i et samisk landskap*.

Oslo: Verbum. 2007.

- Jones, W Paul. *Theological Worlds: Understanding the Alternative Rhythms of Christian Belief*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- Karlsson, Jonny. "Gustaf Wingren som predikant." In *Gustaf Wingren predikar. Postilla*, redaktörer: Jonny Karlsson och Karin Larsdotter, 317–321. Skellefteå: Artos, 2010.
- Kristensson Ugglå, Bengt. *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren*. Eugene, OR.: Cascade Books, 2016.
- Kristensson Ugglå, Bengt. *Slaget om verkligheten: filosofi, omvärldsanalys, tolkning*. Stockholm/Stenhag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2012.
- Larsson, Göran. *Judarna, Ers Majestät!* Lund: Arcus, 2018.
- Larsson, Per. *Skapelsens Frälsning: Ekoteologi i miljö- och klimathotens tid*. Skellefteå: Artos, 2010.
- Lönnebo, Martin. *Homiletik: En introduktion i kyrkans förkunnelse*. Stockholm: Verbum, 1977.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011.
- Stewart, Benjamin M. *A Watered Garden – Christian Worship and Earth's Ecology*. Louisville & London: Augsburg Fortress 2011.
- Sundberg, Carina. *The Qualified Swedish Preaching Program: The art of preaching and taking the creative process seriously*. (Manuscript which is not published in English, but in German translation.)
- Sundkvist, Bernice. *En predikan – nio berättelser, En studie i predikoreception*. Åbo: Skrifter i praktisk teologi vid Åbo akademi, 2003.
- Sundkvist, Bernice. *Predikan som helande dialog*. Skellefteå: Artos, 2003.
- Thomas, Frank A., *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.

Uppsala pastorat. "Församlingsinstruktion Uppsala pastorat." Accessed September 27, 2021. <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/filer/F%c3%b6rsamlingsinstruktionen.pdf> 2021-09-27

Webb, Joseph M. *Preaching Without Notes*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 2001.

Wingren Gustaf. *Creation and Gospel: The New Situation in European Theology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 1979/2004, 80.

Wingren, Gustaf. *Credo: Den kristna tros- och livsåskådningen*. Lund: LiberLäromedel, 1981.

Wikipedia. "Ordo salutis." Accessed January 10, 2021.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordo_salutis.

9 Appendices

9.1 Letter of Invitation

Hej!

Jag skulle vilja inbjuda dig att delta i min referensgrupp.

Jag deltar i en predikofortbildning som anordnas av Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Nu under hösten har jag fått i uppgift att predika vid två tillfällen. Det kommer att bli vid gudstjänsterna

- 12 september, kl 10.00 i Samariterhemmets kyrka och
- 7 november, kl 10.00 i Samariterhemmets kyrka.

Jag behöver få ihop en referensgrupp som skall hjälpa mig med följande saker:

- Någon dag innan gudstjänsterna skickar jag ut ett brev till strategigruppen med en inbjudan att skriva någon rad till mig om vad ni tänker om temat som gäller för den kommande söndagen. (Om du inte har tid eller inte har något att säga kan du hoppa över den här uppgiften.)

- Direkt efter gudstjänsten samlas referensgruppen. Jag ställer några frågor om hur ni reagerade på predikan.

- Veckan efter gudstjänsten hör jag av mig per telefon eller zoom och ställer ytterligare några frågor individuellt.

Även om du är osäker om du kan vara med vid båda gudstjänsterna kan du ändå vara med i referensgruppen. Mina predikningar spelas in och läggs ut på Youtube. Om du är förhindrad kan du se den ena på Youtube: I så fall tar vi alla mina frågor per telefon eller på zoom.

Svara gärna till leif.nordenstorm@fjellstedtska.se Om du har några frågor svarar jag gärna på dessa.

Hälsningar
Leif Nordenstorm

Hello!

I would like to invite you to join my reference group.

I participate in a preaching event organized by the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. This autumn, I have been tasked with preaching on two occasions. It will be at the services

- 12 September, at 10.00 a.m. in Samariterhemmets kyrka and
- November 7, 10 a.m. in Samariterhemmets kyrka.
- A few days before the services, I send out a letter to the strategy group inviting me to write a line about what you are thinking about the theme that applies to the coming Sunday. (If you don't have time or have nothing to say, you can skip this task.)
- Immediately after the service, the reference group gathers. I'll ask you a few questions about how you reacted to the sermon.
- The week after the service, I get in touch by phone or zoom and ask a few more questions individually.

Even if you are unsure if you can attend both services, you can still be part of the reference group. My sermons are recorded and posted on Youtube. If you're prevented, you can see one on Youtube: In that case, we'll take all my questions by phone or on zoom.

Please answer leif.nordenstorm@fjellstedtska.se If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer these.

Regards
Leif Nordenstorm

--

There was no consent form, because the persons who accepted to become members of the PPG, gave their consent when answering by e-mail. There was also no opening questionnaire.

9.2 Post-Sermon Questionnaire

- 1 Säg tre saker som du kommer ihåg från predikan
- 2 Säg något som du reagerade på, som gjorde dig glad, ledsen, något där du kände igen dig o.s.v.
- 3 Vad var målet med den här predikan?
- 4 Hur användes bibeltexten i predikan? Blev den konfronterad, undviken, förvanskad eller utgick predikanten från texten och gick vidare?
- 5 Berörde predikan frågor som människor i vår tid har behov att tala om. Rörde sig predikan från bibelns värld rakt in i vår värld i dag.
- 6 Hur hängde predikan ihop med den övriga gudstjänsten? Fanns det något i predikan som anknöt till den övriga gudstjänsten?
- 7 Fanns det något i den övriga gudstjänsten som anknöt till bibeltexterna?
- 8 Vad förväntade sig predikanten av dig? Fick du någon uppgift?
- 9 Hur var den här predikan jämfört med den förra? (Enbart efter predikan 2).
- 10 Vad var det bästa med den här predikan?

- 1 Please, list three sayings in the sermon which you remember. (Written answer)
- 2 Mention one saying, which made you glad, angry, enthusiastic or which made you react. (Oral answer after sermon 1, written answer after sermon 2)
- 3 What was the objective of this sermon? Was the objective met?
- 4 How was the biblical text employed in this sermon? (Was it confronted, avoided, distorted, transcended?)
- 5 Did the sermon address contemporary needs? Did the sermon move smoothly from biblical text to the needs of people in today's world?
- 6 How did the sermon and the liturgical occasion relate?
- 7 Did anything in the service (except for the sermon) relate to the biblical readings?
- 8 What did the preacher expect from you?
- 9 What was the sermon like when compared to the last one? (Only after sermon 2)
- 10 The strongest aspect of this sermon was?

9.3 Sermon I in Swedish

Gör er därför inga bekymmer, fråga inte: Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka? Vad skall vi ta på oss? Allt sådant jagar hedningarna efter. Men er himmelske fader vet att ni behöver allt detta. Sök först hans rike och hans rättfärdighet, så skall ni få allt det andra också. Gör er därför inga bekymmer för morgondagen. Den får själv bära sina bekymmer. Var dag har nog av sin egen plåga.

(Matteusevangeliet 6:31-34)

1 Sverige är ett av de länder där vi lever längst i världen i genomsnitt. Det finns givetvis sådana som får sluta sitt liv alldeles för tidigt och det är sorgligt, men det ändrar inte på att vi i genomsnitt lever länge i Sverige. Varför lever vi då så länge? Jo, vi har bra mat och vi har friskt vatten i våra vattenledningar. Dessutom har vi – för det mesta – bra sjukvård och tillgång till vaccin när vi behöver det.

2 Vi lever alltså länge i genomsnitt i Sverige, bland annat för att vi har bra mat. Ändå tror jag att vi bekymrar oss för mat minst lika mycket som människor i andra länder. Men Jesus säger att vi inte skall göra oss bekymmer och fråga oss: *Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka?* Någon skribent skrev i en av våra tidningar att det är "omöjligt att bjuda folk under 45 på middag". Att det finns allergiker i gruppen som för sin hälsas skull måste få annan mat är en sak. En annan sak är att det med all sannolikhet dyker upp vegetarianer, veganer, personer som bara äter lchf (litet kolhydrater, mycket fett), personer som bara äter stenålderskost o.s.v. Även om det säkert finns argument för olika dieter blir det svårt att bjuda människor på middag och frågan *Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka?* är lika aktuell i vår tid som på Jesu tid.

Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka? Är det något vi svenskar lätt oroar oss för. När jag arbetade med den här predikan gick jag in på wikipedia och läste artikeln "mat". En mycket stor del av artikeln handlade om "matfusk". Den delen har sedan blivit bortredigerad, men att någon skrev tiotals rader om matfusk är ett tecken på hur mycket vi svenskar oroar oss för mat – trots att vi lever så länge i genomsnitt: 80,6 år för män och 84,3 år för kvinnor. Det ger Sverige niondeplatsen i världen i medellivslängd. Det finns länder där människor bara lever drygt 50 år i genomsnitt. Där har man nog större orsak än vi att oroa oss för maten. Det finns och det kommer alltid att finnas hungrande munnar att mätta. Därför kan vi som är så privilegierade av Gud föra Guds kärlek vidare. Vi är älskade och kan älska vidare. "Om någon som har vad han behöver här i världen ser

sin broder lida nöd men stänger sitt hjärta för honom, hur kan då Guds kärlek förbli i honom?" (1 Joh 3).

Men till oss säger Jesus: *Gör er därför inga bekymmer, fråga inte: Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka? Vad skall vi ta på oss?*

Observera vad det är han säger och vad han inte säger. Han säger inte: "Ni skall inte ha några bekymmer för ni är kristna och kristna skall inte ha några bekymmer." Nej, de flesta av oss har bekymmer, små eller stora, och det är som det skall vara. Har ni några bekymmer? ... Jesus vet att vi har bekymmer. Han säger ju: *Var dag har nog av sin egen plåga*. Om du har bekymmer skall du veta att du är helt normal. Sådant är livet. Jesus har inte lovat oss någon bekymmersfri tillvaro. Det Jesus säger är däremot: *Gör er därför inga bekymmer*. Alltså: Det räcker med de bekymmer vi redan har. Vi behöver inte hitta på några extra bekymmer och lägga dem på de bekymmer vi redan har.

Ett bekymmer vi ibland lägger på oss i onödan är just bekymmer för mat, dryck och kläder. Tänk att mat, dryck och kläder både kan vara en källa till sådan glädje och till bekymmer. *Ät, drick och var glad!* Så står det på flera ställen i bibeln. Det är ett härligt bibelställe. Ibland tolkar vi det negativt, som om det handlar om oansvariga människor. (Om vi bara läser det bibelstället kanske det däremot blir ett oansvarigt liv.) Men saker och ting kan ofta gå på tok om vi bara väljer ett bibelställe att leva av. Alltså: *Ät, drick och var glad!* Och i glädjen ingår det att tacka Gud för maten. Därför är det så viktigt att be bordsbön, åtminstone när vi äter lagad mat. Bordsbönen hjälper oss att få rätt inställning till maten. Vi lär oss att ta emot den som en Guds gåva. *Ät, drick och var glad!* Ibland lägger vi på oss bekymmer i onödan även för andra saker. Jesus säger: *Sök först [Guds] rike och hans rättfärdighet...* Det låter väl som en god regel. Men till och med det bibelordet kan ibland bli till bekymmer för oss människor. När Jesus säger: *Gör er inga bekymmer... Sök först hans rike och hans rättfärdighet, så skall ni få allt det andra också,*

så gör vi oss bekymmer eftersom vi bekymrar oss för hur vi skall söka Guds rike. Hur skall vi ordna med vår andliga tillväxt? Hur skall jag göra för att bli lika from som han... eller hon... Ibland blir det så att vi bara får mer bekymmer om vi söker Guds rike alltför intensivt. Då måste vi väl vara ute på fel spår...

3 Om vi tänker oss att Jesus säger *Gör er inga bekymmer* så missar vi ett viktigt ord: "därför". Jesus säger *Gör er därför inga bekymmer*. Ordet "därför" är viktigt. Det antyder att Jesus faktiskt just har sagt hur vi skall göra för att inte göra oss bekymmer och för att söka Guds rike. Vi går tillbaka några verser innan dagens evangelietext och ser var det är Jesus uppmanar oss att göra. Han säger *Se på himlens fåglar* och *Se på ängens liljor*. Det är alltså det vi skall göra. Jag tror att Jesus menar att vi bokstavligen skall göra som han säger. Vi skall se på himlens fåglar och ängens liljor varje dag. Det här bibelordet skall tolkas bokstavligt. Vi människor är så skapade att vi mår bra av att vara i naturen eller helt enkelt utomhus. Fåglarna och blommorna är Guds skapelse.

I den andra "dagens bön" för i dag ber om att få vila i Gud när oro och bekymmer får makt över oss. Fåglarna och blommorna hjälper oss att vila i Gud. Låt oss göra det till en god vana att varje dag se fåglarna och blommorna, så behöver vi säkert oroa oss mindre i onödan.

Och om vårt förhållande till maten leder till att vi får mer bekymmer är väl också det ett tecken på att vi är ute på fel spår. Jesus säger: *fråga inte: Vad skall vi äta? Vad skall vi dricka? Vad skall vi ta på oss? Allt sådant jagar hedningarna efter*. Han säger också: *Sök först [Guds] rike och hans rättfärdighet, så skall ni få allt det andra också*. Och när vi söker Guds rike och ser fåglarna under himmelen, då kanske vi har orsak att avundas dem som har ett så oproblematiskt förhållande till mat.

Att söka Guds rike... handlar inte om att göra upp storslagna planer för vår andliga utveckling. Att söka Guds rike... handlar för det mesta om att välja den enklaste och mest

okomplicerade vägen. Att söka Guds rike handlar om att våga släppa kontrollen och våga leva av Guds nåd.

4

O Gud, du som ger liv åt allt skapat,
lära oss att alltid först söka ditt rike
och din rättfärdighet,
så att vi litar på din nåd
och av din hand tar emot dina gåvor.
Genom din Son, Jesus Kristus, vår Herre.
Amen.

Barmhärtige Gud,
När oro och bekymmer
Får makt över oss,
Hjälpa oss då att vila i dag,
Skilja mellan stort och smått
Och lämna framtiden i dina händer.
I Jesu namn. Amen

Herre, vår Gud, du älskar din skapelse.
Du mättar himmelens fåglar och kläder liljorna på marken. Välsignad är du för jordens frukt och för den måltid vi nu skall äta. Låt ingen sakna mat och husrum.
Om detta ber vi genom Jesus Kristus,
vår Herre. Amen.

Vårt dagliga bröd, giv oss i dag.

Så älskade Gud världen att han gav den sin ende son, för att de som tror på honom inte skall gå under utan ha evigt liv. (Joh 3:16)

1. Söken först Guds rike

och hans rättfärdighet,

så skall det andra tillfalla er.

Halleluja! Amen.

2. Bed och det skall bli givet åt er.

Sök och ni skall finna.

Klappa och dörren skall öppnas för er.

Halleluja! Amen.

9.4 Sermon I Translated into English

Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

(Matthew 6:31-34)

1 Sweden is one of the countries where we have the longest lives in the world on average. There are, of course, those who end their lives far too early and that is sad, but that does not change the fact that we in Sweden live on average for a long time. Why do we have that long lives? Yes, we have good food, and we have fresh water in our water pipes. In addition, we have – for the most part – good healthcare and access to vaccines when we need it.

2 We live for a long time on average in Sweden, partly because we have good food. Nevertheless, I believe that we are concerned about food at least as much as people in other countries. But Jesus says we should not worry and ask ourselves: ‘What will we eat?’ ‘What will we drink?’ One writer wrote in one of our newspapers that it is “impossible to invite people under 45 to dinner”. The fact that there are allergy sufferers in the group who, for their health’s sake, must get other food is one thing. Another thing is that vegetarians, vegans, people who only eat lchf (Low-carbohydrate, high fat diet), people who only eat Stone Age diets, etc. will appear. Although there are certainly arguments for different diets, it will be difficult to invite people to dinner and the question ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ is as topical in our time as it was in the time of Jesus.

‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ Is that something we Swedes easily worry about? When I was working on this sermon, I checked Wikipedia and read the article “food”. A very large part of the article was about “food fraud”. That part has since then been deleted, but the fact that someone wrote dozens of lines about food fraud is a sign of how much we Swedes worry about food – even though we live so long on average: 80.6 years for men and 84.3 years for women. This gives Sweden the ninth place in the world in life expectancy. There are countries where people only live a little more than 50 years on average. I think on those places there is more reason to worry

about the food. There are and there will always be hungry mouths to feed. Therefore, those of us who are so privileged by God can pass on God's love. We are loved and can love. "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (1 John 3:17).

But Jesus says to us, Do not worry, do not ask: 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'

Observe what he's saying and what he's not saying. He does not say, "You shall have no worries, for you are Christians, and Christians shall have no trouble." No, most of us have concerns, small or large, and that is as it should be. Do you have any concerns? ... Jesus knows that we have troubles. He says, "Every day has enough of its own torment." If you have any concerns, know that you are completely normal. That's life. Jesus has not promised us a problem-free existence. What Jesus says, however, is: Make yourself no worries. So, the concerns we already have are enough. We do not need to inset any extra worries and put them on the concerns we already have.

One concern we sometimes put on unnecessarily is precisely concerns about food, drink, and clothes. Imagine that food, drink, and clothes can be both a source of such joy and of concern. Eat, drink and be happy! That's what is said in several places in the Bible. It's a lovely Bible quotation. Sometimes we interpret it negatively, as if it is about irresponsible people. (If we just read that Bible quotation and only that, however, it might become an irresponsible life.) But things can often go wrong if we just choose a Bible quotation and makes the centre of our life. I mean, eat, drink and be happy! And joy includes thanking God for the food. Therefore, it is so important to say grace, at least when we eat cooked food. Grace helps us get the right attitude to the food. We learn to receive it as a gift from God. Eat, drink and be happy!

Sometimes we put on worries unnecessarily for other things as well. Jesus says, But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness... Sounds like a good rule, doesn't it? But even that Bible quotation can sometimes become a concern for us humans. When Jesus says, "Don't worry... But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well", and we will because we are concerned about how to strive the kingdom of God. How are we going to arrange our spiritual growth? What am I supposed to do to become as pious as he is... or she... Sometimes we only get more trouble if we strive for the kingdom of God too intensely. Then we must be on the wrong track.

3 If we imagine Jesus saying Do not worry, we miss an important word: "therefore." Jesus says Therefore, do not worry. The word "therefore" is important. It suggests that Jesus has actually just told us how to do not to cause us trouble and to seek the kingdom of God. We go back a few verses before today's gospel text and see where it is Jesus urges us to do. He says Look at the birds of heaven and look at the lilies of the meadow. So that is what we are going to do. I think Jesus means that we should literally do as he says. We shall look at the birds of heaven and the lilies of the meadow every day. This Scripture should be interpreted literally. We humans are so created that we feel good about being in nature or simply outdoors. The birds and flowers are God's creation.

In the second "prayer of the day" for today we pray that we want to rest in God when anxiety and trouble take hold of us. The birds and flowers help us to rest in God. Let us make it a good habit to see the birds and flowers every day, and we will surely have to worry less unnecessarily. And if our relationship with food leads to more trouble, surely that is also a sign that we are on the wrong track. Jesus says: do not ask: 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles

who strive for all these things; He also says, "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." And when we seek the kingdom of God and see the birds under heaven, then perhaps we have reason to envy those who have such an unproblematic relationship with food.

To strive for the kingdom of God... is not about making grand plans for our spiritual development. To strive for the kingdom of God... is mostly about choosing the easiest and most straightforward route. Striving the kingdom of God is about daring to let go of control and dare to live by God's grace.

4

O God, you who bring all creation to life,
 teach us to always first to seek your kingdom
 and your righteousness,
 so that we trust in your grace
 and receive your gifts from your hand.
 Through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
 Amen.

Merciful God,
 When anxiety and worries
 Gaining power over us,
 Then help us rest today,
 Distinguish between large and small
 And leave the future in your hands.
 In the name of Jesus. Amen

Lord, our God, you love your creation.

You feed the birds of heaven and give clothes to the lilies on the ground. Blessed are you for the fruit of the earth and for the meal we shall now eat. Don't let anyone miss food and shelter.

We pray about this through Jesus Christ,
our Lord. Amen.

Our daily bread, give us today.

So God loved the world that he gave it his only son, so that those who believe in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Hymn 686

1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God

And His righteousness;

And all these things shall be added unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

2 Ask, and it shall be given unto you;

Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

9.5 Sermon II in Swedish

ALLA SJÄLARS DAG

Lukasevangeliet 12:4-7

2021-11-07 Samariterhemmets kyrka

Jag säger till er som är mina vänner: låt er inte skrämmas av dem som kan döda kroppen men sedan inte kan göra mer. Jag skall tala om för er vem ni skall frukta. Frukta honom som kan döda och sedan har makt att kasta ner i helvetet. Ja, jag säger er: honom skall ni frukta. Säljs inte fem sparvar för två kopparslantar? Men ingen av dem är glömd av Gud. Och till och med hårstråna på ert huvud är räknade. Var inte rädda, ni är mer värda än aldrig så många sparvar.

1 Man kan vara mer öppenhjärtig med vänner än med dem som är bekanta. Till vänner kan man avslöja mer. När man träffar en bekant frågar man "hur är läget?" När man träffar en vän frågar man "hur mår du... egentligen?" Dagens evangelium utspelar sig när Jesus just har talat med en stor grupp människor, som beskrivs som "människor i tusental", och sedan drar sig undan med en mindre grupp, sina vänner. Man skulle kunna förvänta sig att Jesus berättade litet mer för sina vänner än för den stora gruppen som bestod av "människor i tusental". Gör han det? Vi återkommer till det.

Apropå vänner. Det finns en person om vilken det uttryckligen sägs att han var vän till Jesus. Det är Lasarus, bror till Marta och Maria. I Johannes evangeliums elfte kapitel kan vi läsa om hur Jesus fick budskapet "Din vän är sjuk" och om hur Lasarus var död när Jesus kom fram till Betania och om hur även Jesus började gråta, inte på en gång, utan när han såg hur Maria och några andra grät. (Ibland behöver man hjälp av andra för att börja gråta.)

2 Jesus grät när Lasarus var död. Vänskap är härligt, men vänskap har också en baksida. Det är tungt när en anhörig dör. Sorg innebär ofta att man är ledsen, men sorgen kan lika gärna visa sig i kroppen, som magont, smärta i axlar och rygg, huvudvärk och sömnlöshet. Sorg kan också visa sig genom att man blir arg eller sur och bitter. Det tar både tid och kraft att sörja. Ljusen som vi tänder i kyrkorna och på gravarna nu i allhelgonatid kanske kan hjälpa oss att ta några steg i vägen att ta oss igenom sorgen efter våra nära och kära.

Får man be för de döda? I Svenska kyrkan har den frågan diskuterats. Somliga har menat att man inte skall be för de döda, eftersom sådan bön inte gör någon nytta. Martin Luther, som ofta är klok, menar att man gärna kan be för de döda, bara man inte gör det för ofta. Det är för de levande man skall be. I varje begravningsgudstjänst ber vi också för de döda med en enkel bön: "Ge honom, Herre, din frid och låt ditt eviga ljus lysa för honom." Den enkla bönen kan vi använda när vi tänder ett bönelys i en kyrka eller ett ljus på någons grav.

I den pandemi som vi just har gått igenom har det funnits gott om goda råd hur man skall göra för att förhindra smittspridning. Däremot är det få som har talat om hur vi förbereder oss för döden, något som vi alla skall gå igenom, förr eller senare. "Döden är en del av livet. Ändå talar vi så litet om att dö." (Anna Alebo).

Hur är det då med Jesus? Man kan ju tycka att han borde ha passat på att beskriva precis vad som händer efter döden nu när han sitter med sina vänner, och dessutom tydligt beskriva himmel och helvete och ge besked om vilka som kommer till det ena eller andra stället. Men det gör inte Jesus. Vi får aldrig någon komplett beskrivning vare sig av helvetet eller av himlen. Vi får aldrig reda på om de är geografiska platser eller symboler för någonting som inte kan beskrivas med ord.

Det är inte heller lätt att alltid förstå vad Jesus menar med det han säger om Gud. I ett det ena andetaget säger Jesus att vi skall frukta honom som kan döda och sedan har makt att kasta ner i helvetet - alltså Gud – och i nästa andetag säger Jesus att vi inte skall vara rädda. Frukta Gud, men var inte rädda?

Vad skall vi då tro? Skall vi frukta Gud eller skall vi inte göra det? Skall vi vara rädda eller inte?

3 För att få svar på den frågan måste vi veta att det svenska ordet "frukta" betyder två helt olika saker. "Att vara rädd för" och "att hysa vördnad och respekt för" någon. Nu blir det mer tydligt. Vi behöver inte vara rädda för Gud. Däremot skall vi "hysa vördnad och respekt" för honom.

När vi hyser vördnad och respekt för Gud är det som all fruktan försvinner. Att hysa vördnad och respekt innebär snarast att vi tar steget tillbaka och litar på att Gud kan ordna det här. Vi får lita oss tillbaka och inse att vi egentligen inte kan påverka vad som händer efter döden. Just därför blir vi helt beroende av Gud och hans nåd. Gud har låtit Jesus uppstå och det är ett mäktigt tecken som gör att vi kan tro på de dödas uppståndelse och ett evigt liv, men samtidigt som vi tror så vet vi inte hur de dödas uppståndelse går till. Därför kan vi samtidigt "frukta Gud" och "inte vara rädda". Så älskade Gud världen att han gav den sin ende son, för att de som tror på honom inte skall gå under utan ha evigt liv.

"Döden är en del av livet. Ändå talar vi så litet om att dö." Så sade vi nyss, men här är det faktiskt en skillnad mellan oss kristna och de sekulariserade svenskarna. I kyrkan har vi i alla tider talat om döden. Vi vet inte särskilt mycket om vad som händer efter döden, men det vet vi, att Jesus Kristus har uppstått från de döda. Det gör så att vi kan tro att vi också skall få uppstå. Vi vet inte hur det skall gå till, men vi får lita på Gud. I kyrkan är vi kanske mer bekväma än andra att tala om döden. Vi firar nattvard och går

till bikt. När någon är döende kan vi sjunga, läsa bibeln, fira nattvard och gå till bikt vid sjuksängen. När vi sörjer får vi stötta varandra i sorgearbetet.

I varje gudstjänst får vi be för både levande och döda. Ljusen får brinna både på gravarna och i ljusgloben. I våra gudstjänster finns också en symbol för Jesus uppståndelse och för att vi litar på Gud och tror att också vi skall få uppstå. Varje gång vi står upp i våra gudstjänster är det för att påminna oss om att Jesus Kristus är uppstånden.

4 Evige Gud,
Du som lät Jesus Kristus dö och uppstå
För att han skulle vara herre över både
Levande och döda,
Ge oss nåd att i tro ta emot honom som vår frälsare,
Så att vi med honom får gå in i det eviga livet,
Genom din Son
Jesus Kristus, vår Herre.
Amen.

Gud,
Du som omsluter både levande och döda,
Till dig sätter vi vårt hopp
Och ser fram mot den dag
Då vi skall få möte dig sådan du är.
Ge oss del av det liv som aldrig dör.
Genom Jesus Kristus, vår Frälsare.
Amen.

Så älskade Gud världen att han gav den sin ende son, för att de som tror på honom inte skall gå under utan ha evigt liv. (Joh 3:16)

9.6 Sermon II translated into English

ALL SOULS' DAY

2021-11-07 Samariterhemmets kyrka

This is a translation from Swedish to English mostly done by Google translate.

I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:4-7)

You can be more straightforward with friends than with acquaintances. You can reveal more to friends. When you meet an acquaintance, you ask "what's up?" When you meet a friend, you ask "how are you... really?" Today's gospel takes place when Jesus has just spoken to a large group of people, described as "a crowd gathered in thousands," and then retreats with a smaller group, his friends. One would expect Jesus to tell his friends a little more than to the large group of "a crowd gathered in thousands." Does he? We'll get back to that.

Speaking of friends. There is a person about whom it is explicitly said that he was a friend of Jesus. It's Lazarus, brother of Marta and Maria. In the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John, we can read about how Jesus received the message "He, whom you love is ill" and how Lazarus was dead when Jesus arrived at Bethany, and about how Jesus

also began to cry, not at once, but when he saw How Mary and some others cried.

(Sometimes you need the help of others to start crying.)

2 Jesus wept when Lazarus was dead. Friendship is great, but friendship also has a downside. It's hard when a relative dies. Grief often means being sad, but grief can just as easily manifest itself in the body, such as stomach pain, pain in the shoulders and back, headaches and insomnia. Grief can also manifest itself by getting enraged or angry and bitter. It takes time and effort to grieve. The candles we light in churches and graves now in All Saints' Time may help us take a few steps in the way of getting through the grief of our loved ones.

Can I pray for the dead? In Church of Sweden, this issue has been discussed. Some have meant that one should not pray for the dead, because such prayer does no good. Martin Luther, who is often wise, says that you can pray for the dead, if you don't do it too often. Your task is to pray for the living. In every funeral service we also pray for the dead with a simple prayer: "Give him, Lord, your peace and let your eternal light shine for him." We can use the simple prayer when lighting a prayer candle in a church or a candle on someone's grave.

In the pandemic that we have just gone through, there has been plenty of good advice on how to prevent the spread of infection. However, few have spoken about how we prepare for death, something that we will all go through, sooner or later. "Death is part of life. Yet we talk so little about dying." (Anna Alebo).

Then what about Jesus? One might think that he should have taken the opportunity to describe exactly what happens after death now that he is sitting with his friends, and also clearly describe heaven and hell and give information about who comes to one place or the other. But Jesus doesn't. We never get a complete description of either hell or

heaven. We will never know if they are geographical locations or symbols of something that cannot be described in words.

Nor is it easy to always understand what Jesus means by what he says about God. In one breath, Jesus says that we should fear Him who can kill and then has the power to throw into hell — that is, God — and in the next breath Jesus says we should not be afraid. Fear God, but don't be afraid?

So, what are we supposed to think? Should we fear God or shall we not? Are we going to be scared or not?

3 In order to answer that question, we must know that the [Swedish] word "fear" means two completely different things. "To be afraid of" and "to have reverence and respect for" someone. Now it's becoming clearer. We don't have to be afraid of God. On the other hand, we should "have reverence and respect" for him.

When we have reverence and respect for God, all fear disappears. Reverence and respect mean that we step back and trust in God to resolve this.

We must sit back and realize that we can't really influence what happens after death. That's why we become completely dependent on God and His grace. God let Jesus rise from the dead, and it is a mighty sign that allows us to believe in the resurrection and eternal life of the dead, but while we believe, we do not know how the resurrection of the dead was possible. Therefore, at the same time, we can "fear God" and "not be afraid". *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.* (John 3:16)

"Death is part of life. Yet we talk so little about dying." That is what we just said, but here there is actually a difference between us Christians and the secular Swedes. In the Church, we have always talked about death. We don't know much about what happens after death, but we do know that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. This

allows us to believe that we also will rise. We don't know how to do it, but we must trust God. In church, we are perhaps more comfortable than others to talk about death. We celebrate Communion and go to confession. When someone is dying, we can sing, read the Bible, celebrate Communion, and go to confession at the sickbed. When we grieve, we must support each other in our mourning.

In every service, we pray for both the living and the dead. The candles are allowed to burn both on the graves and in the candle globe [candlestick?]. In our services there is also a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus and of trusting in God and believing that we too will rise. Every time we stand up in our services, it is to remind us that Jesus Christ is risen.

4 Eternal God,
 You who let Jesus Christ die and rise
 For him to be the master of both
 Alive and dead,
 Give us grace to accept Him in faith as our saviour,
 So that we may join him in the eternal life,
 Through your Son
 Jesus Christ, our Lord.
 Amen.

God
 You who surround both the living and the dead,
 To you we put our hopes
 And looking forward to the day
 Then we'll meet you the way you are.
 Give us a part of the life that never dies.

Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

9.7 Comments to Sermon I from the Swedish advisor

Tack för manus och film! Här kommer mina kommentarer. Det är lätt när man framför tankar i skriftlig form att nyanser inte riktigt går fram. Jag hoppas dock att jag kommer att kunna kommentera såväl det som jag ser som roligt och bra som det som går att diskutera och vända lite på. Men kontentan är att jag tycker att du har gjort en fin och viktig predikan – mot det skall du förstå det jag skriver nedan!

Framförandet

Det allra första som slår mig när jag sätter på videon är längden på predikan. I verkligheten märker man ju inte det förrän efterhand i predikan, men när jag ser filmen så står det så tydligt redan från början hur lång den är. Jag återkommer till predikans längd.

Jag har nog inte sett dig predika tidigare, i alla fall inte på en huvudgudstjänst. Så jag vet inte vad som är ditt vanliga prediko-jag, men jag antar att det som jag nu har sett på filmen du skickade är en vanlig predikan för dig. Det jag ser är en lugn person som står tryggt vid ambon. Kroppsspråket är ganska sparsmakat. Du rör huvudet så att du ser på de som lyssnar. Ibland rör du händerna, men i allt väsentligt är det en stilla predikan. Rent kroppsligt. Ditt tonfall är också det ganska lugnt. Det är inga stora skillnader i ljudvolym inte heller är det stora skillnader i din talrytm. Det flyter helt enkelt på.

Det jag ser skänker som sagt lugn och trygghet till mig som lyssnare. Jag behöver inte vara rädd för att du skall komma av dig eller att något oförutsett skall inträffa. Predikan andas helt enkelt trygghet. Och det kanske den ska göra. Du vill ju prata om det "vanliga livet" och då handlar det ju om livet utan åthävor, det ganska vanliga och slentrianmässiga. Det vanliga livet är oftast inte skådeplatsen för det dramatiska eller teatraliska. Men jag kan inte låta bli att fundera på vad som skulle hända med mig som lyssnare om du lämnat ambons trygghet och delat det vanliga livet, som du vill prata om, i närheten av lyssnararen/gudstjänstbesökaren. Om du skulle stått i mittgången, sett på dem i kyrkan, inte haft manus i händerna – vad hade hänt då med din predikan? Själv tror jag att den skulle vuxit. Jag tror det helt enkelt eftersom en predikan utan manus och utan skyddande räcke i form av en ambo blir naknare, mer sårbar, men också mer naturlig, helt enkelt eftersom det är svårt att i minnet komma ihåg alla kloka och fina formuleringar man lätt skriver, men som inte alltid gör sig lika bra i det talade språket.

Detta med att släppa manus för mig också vidare till predikans längd. Jag vet inte om du alltid predikar så här länge, men jag antar att du gör det eftersom du inte kommunicerat att det blev osedvanligt långt. Man kan klart tycka olika om längden på en predikan – och visst har jag hört bra men långa predikningar. Men från mitt perspektiv är det ändå så att jag har hört fler mindre bra, än bra långa predikningar, helt enkelt eftersom jag inte förmår lyssna aktivt så länge. Men sedan tänker jag alltså också att en lång predikan för med sig problemet att det är svårt att memorera predikan så att man kan vara helt manusfri. Vilket jag alltså tycker är ett mål i sig (det behöver dock inte betyda att det är ett mål för dig!)

Innehållet

Spännande predikan med ett spännande innehåll – mat. Är inte helt säker men om det inte är den första så är din predikan en av mycket få jag har hört som handlar om

mat. Och det säger klart något. Du vill predika om det vanliga livet som vi alla lever och du predikar om mat som vi alla äter och då inser jag som flitig predikolyssnare att en sådan predikan har jag inte hört tidigare. Så greppet tycker jag är genialt. Jag tycker också att det är bra att du problematiserar vårt tillkrånglade förhållningssätt till mat. Du är bibelnära i dina reflektioner, vilket också gläder mig. Men – måste jag säga – predikan griper mig aldrig riktigt. Det kan klart ha med längden att göra. Men jag tror också att det till dels har med en aspekt av innehållet att göra.

Precis som du säger har vi lite till mans ett komplicerat förhållande till mat i västvärlden. Och här finns det verkligen stoff att plocka av, jordbrukssubventioner, skövling av regnskog för att föda upp biffkor, bulimi och anorexi, de stora summor människor lägger på nya kök samtidigt som fler och fler äter ute eller lagar enklare mat, måltidens förlorade plats som samtalsyta till förmån för ensamt telefontittande. Ja, möjligheterna är många. Jag tror att det jag försöker säga är att jag i denna predikan upplever att du gick halva vägen. Du öppnar upp för ett otroligt viktigt ämne, du visar på Jesus vilja i relation till detta – men jag saknar de kopplingar som gör att jag som lyssnare känner igen mig. Det vill säga, trots ämnet brännande aktualitet, blir behandlingen i predikan lite teoretisk. En annan lyssnare skulle kanske hört helt andra saker och kommenterat helt andra saker. Det jag skriver här rör bara mig som lyssnare – men jag saknar konkretionen.

Helheten

Som sagt förstår jag att man kan se predikans längd ut högst olika synvinklar, men för mig blir detta får långt. Jag tror också att det påverkar mitt intryck av predikan i stort. En kortare, mer "explosiv" predikan, men med ungefär samma innehåll från mittgången eller en längre predikan med starkare konkret koppling till livet – det hade

jag önskat. Men som sagt, detta är enbart mina tankar, men kanske i alla fall något för dig att bryta dina tankar mot.

9.8 Comments to Sermon II from the Swedish advisor

Tack för din predikan! Nedan kommer liksom förra gången några kommentarer. Och liksom förra gången är min utgångspunkt att du har haft en bra predikan!

Framförande

När jag kommenterade förra gången blev det en del om framförandet – det blir så nu också. Jag känner igen din predikostil från det förra tillfället. Det är lugnt, stilla och tryggt. Det ger mig som lyssnare möjlighet att vila i det som sägs och meditera över ord och meningar. Jag känner mig helt trygg i det som sker. Du har väl liksom jag varit på gudstjänster där man är rädd för att predikanten inte skall få ihop det på slutet eller ”tabba sig” på något annat sätt. Så är det inte här, det du gör är motsatsen, allt är mycket tryggt – och det är menat positivt.

Jag tycker också att det du gör i ditt framförande passar bra med innehållet i din predikan. Dina ord och ditt budskap passar – i alla fall för mig – väl samman med innehållet i din predikan. Det blir lite meditativt och det ger mig möjlighet att ibland zooma ut lite och fastna i en tanke, för att sedan komma tillbaka igen. Och det tycker jag är bra!

Men jag vill ändå ställa frågan, liksom förra gången, passar denna framförandestil/metod alla typer av predikningar? Jag vet ju heller inte om du har samma stil vid alla typer av predikningar. Jag har ju hittills bara sett två av dem. Men om vi bara gör ett tankeexperiment och funderar på ett innehåll där du verkligen vill påverka din församling. Ett ämne som är mer akut, som kräver handling, skulle du också

då predika som du har gjort nu på dessa två filmer? Jag säger inte att något är mer rätt än något annat, men jag tror att olika innehåll och budskap kräver olika predikometoder. Jag vet att du sa att du är formad av en viss tradition, men om jag får utmana dig skulle det vara att fundera kring vilket innehåll som passar med vilken form – och sedan pröva dig fram. Släppa manus, stå i mittgången eller göra på något helt annat sätt som just det innehållet kanske kräver.

Ja, hoppas att du förstår vad jag menar. Du gör detta bra! Mycket bra! Men kanske behöver du också utmana dig själv – och den tradition du står i.

Innehåll

Som jag sa ovan, tänker jag att din predikostil hänger samman med innehållet i din predikan. För mig blir det lite av en meditation, där jag kan gå in och gå ut lite som jag vill. Det är ungefär som att den har flera rum snarare än en linje. Du kanske tänker på annat sätt, men det är det jag tycker mig höra.

Dina teman är många: vem man berättar vad för, vänskap, samtala om döden, Lasaros, bön för de döda, förberedelse inför döden, hur ser himmelriket ut, frukta Gud och att stödja varandra i sorgen. För mig fungerar dina olika teman som olika rum där jag kan befinna mig mer eller mindre länge, för att sedan gå vidare till nästa rum. Och för mig går detta bra, men ett alternativ skulle kunnat vara att du valde ett eller ett par av dessa teman och borrhade lite djupare i det.

Utifrån texten kan man få ut en mängd viktiga och för dagens människor centrala teman – och det gör du, med råge. Men vad tror du skulle hänt om du valt något och grävt i det istället? Då hade det inte blivit vad jag kallar en meditation, utan något annat. Skulle det hjälpt dig och din församling att komma vidare eller var det just en överblick över en mängd frågor som du ville åt? Det vet jag inte, men jag inser att du skulle kunnat arbeta på olika sätt.

Jag har inte varit i kyrkan du predikade i och vet inte hur församlingen är funtad, men jag kan tänka mig att det är en ganska kyrkvan församling. Eller...? Om det är det och jag försöker sätta mig in i lyssnarens situation så kanske jag skulle önskat ett borrande i något av det du tar upp istället för pärlbandet – men som sagt, det du gör, gör du bra. Så frågan är egentligen vad du vill åt? På det sätt du gör så ger du lyssnaren möjlighet att gå in i egna tankar, med ett annat sätt så bidrar du kanske med djupare tankar och perspektiv istället. Det finns inget rätt – mera en fråga om vad du vill åt, egentligen.

Helheten i förhållande till det du ville framföra

Tack för fin predikan! Jag kan liksom föra gången tycka att den är för lång, men det är inom rimlighetens gränser tycker jag. I övrigt har jag uppskattat den, men ser också alternativa möjligheter att utveckla med en friare predikostil och med ett mer borrande fokus. Vill du kan du ju prova i framtiden.

9.9 Parish Project Group Final Response Form

APPENDIX E **ACTS**

<p>PARISH PROJECT GROUP FINAL RESPONSE FORM</p>
--

Preacher's Name: Leif Nordenstorm

Program Year # 3 (in the American program); 4 (in the Swedish program)

1. *State the learning goals for this Preaching Ministry Project as the group understands them. In what way and how appropriately does the group think they apply to the context?*
 - The goal is to preach in a form which at the same time is pastoral care. This is appropriate to the context. It is important that Christian faith becomes a foundation for everyday life.
 - One could also discuss whether the preacher misses important themes, if he or she listens to much on what people say about their own needs. However, the

risk that that will occur is small, because we use a lectionary, which makes the preacher to preach about different themes.

- In the first goal it is mentioned that the preacher should not give the congregation the impression that they have needs, which they in fact do not have. It was hard to understand this sentence.
2. *Evaluate the extent to which your group thinks the preacher achieved each of the Learning Goals. What process did the group use for the evaluation?*
 - The learning goals were achieved. The group members answered this question individually.
 3. Describe any specific changes, positive or negative, the group observed in the preacher's knowledge about, skills in, performance or attitude toward preaching.
 - It is almost impossible to answer this question because the preacher preached in different churches every year during this DMin in preaching course and had different PPG. This PPG has followed the preacher just during two sermons in the project. (He has preached in our church before, but not as a part of the project.)
 - One PPG-member observed that sermon 1 was more near the bible text, than sermon 2, but the reason was perhaps that the theme of the second sermon was "death", and there was much that had to be said.
 4. *Describe*
 - (a) *the role the group played in the sermon formation process,*
 - Because of the pandemic we had no meeting with the PPG early before sermon 1. The preacher invited all PPG-members in internet to play a role in the sermon process. Only one gave written answers (to sermon 1 and 2) and another gave oral answers (to sermon 2).
 - However, one group member wrote to the preacher before each sermon. He said that there was a little hesitation in this, because he did not want to say that he knew theology better than the others. He said: I read the text, and the spontaneously wrote what came from my heart. Then during the sermon, I remarked that the preacher used something from what I had written. That made me glad.
 - (b) *the methods the group members used to prepare to actively participate,*
 - * The group members got information about the lectionary readings before the services and could prepare themselves at home before the service. They also got information about the ideas about DMin in preaching course.
 - (c) *the procedure the group used to view the sermon recording and evaluate the sermon preached and*
 - * The group did not view the sermon recording, but the group met directly after the service and immediately began to evaluate the sermon. Only those PPG-members which could not come viewed the sermon recording and gave individual answers. (One person after sermon 1 and one person after sermon 2.)

The group members began to write individual answers to the two first questions. After that the group discussed the other questions. Sometimes we gave different answers, sometimes we thought in the same way.

The PPG-members did not interact with other people in the congregation before they answered the questions.

(d) the interaction with the congregation in the evaluation process. What impact has this experience had on you as a group? Please consider the question in light of your work with the formation and experience of the two or three sermons and the discussion of the sermons afterward.

* It was a good atmosphere in the PPG, although not all members knew each other personally. However, the majority met in church before.

Some of the PPG-members felt that they would like to participate in a similar group in the future, where it is possible to meet and discuss the sermon. Several members said that people in the congregation very seldom discuss the sermon at the coffee-table after the service. Some said that they would like to discuss the sermon more often in the future.

5. *Discuss the strengths of the experience and the challenges the group encountered with the process over the period. Be as specific as possible about what worked well and what did not.*

* The discussions in the group worked very well. Everyone said his or her opinion frankly. We did not feel that we had to think in the same way. The second time we invited a relative of two of the group members, who visited the church occasionally, into the group. This did not stop the discussions.

* The corona pandemic was a problem. However, we sat far away from each other in the group. The corona pandemic limited our physical meetings to two. But we had contact with e-mail and with the help of Zoom.

6. *Where do you see room for further growth in the preacher's preaching ministry in relation to the stated project?*

- Just go on in the same way, as you integrate the sermon in the service. These sermons did not interrupt the liturgy but was a part of it. Just go on in the same way.
- Be serious about the Bible, about God as you were now during the DMin in preaching course. Have the same ambition when the course is done, and the thesis written. Speak clearly as now.
- If you preach in a "mixed" congregations with active believers and seekers in the same church, you must preach to both these groups. This is not an easy task, but an important one.

Date of Meeting: December, 9th, 2021

Chair of the Parish Project Group
(---)

Signatures of the PPG Members
(---)

9.10 Appendix F

APPENDIX F

ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program Sermon/Preaching Rubrics

Student Leif Nordenstorm

Instructor/Advisor Kimberly Wagner (Advisor & Instructor)

Date January 2, 2022

Sermon: First (Core) _____ **Second (Elective)** X **Third** _____

Learning Outcome: Develop competency in creating sermons and in preaching that is relevant to their faith community and program focus.				
<i>Areas of Assessment (Orally and/or written)</i>	<i>Strong Ability Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Adequate Ability Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Marginal Ability Does Not Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Demonstrate Ability Not in Evidence</i>
Sermon represents understanding and depth of the ministry context that includes its social, cultural, institutional, geographic, theological, and socio-economic dimensions.	Includes detailed and integrated description of all relevant areas of the ministry context.	Includes some descriptive aspects relevant to the ministry context.	Makes vague reference to ministry context but with no specific description	Contains no mention made or attention given to the ministry context.
Sermon focuses on designated goals detailed in the Learning Covenant.	Responds specifically and in detail to the learning goals articulated in the Learning Covenant as appropriate for this sermon.	References some aspects of the learning goals specified in the Learning Covenant.	Alludes to the learning goals in the Learning Covenant, but without direct application.	No connection made to stated learning goals in the Learning Covenant.
Sermon utilizes the biblical text and relevant connections and interpretations to the sermon purpose.	Clear scriptural foundation and appropriately detailed interpretation of the biblical text in	Appropriate scriptural foundation, but with little interpretation of the biblical text.	Alludes to scripture but little application to sermon content.	No visible presence of the biblical text in the sermon.

	the contents of the sermon.			
Sermon demonstrates appropriate course and other homiletical learnings in both the specific contents and the delivery performance as appropriate.	Clear and deep engagement of course learnings and project focus in sermon content and delivery.	Sermon content and delivery gives adequate attention to course learnings and project focus.	Sermon alludes to course learnings and project focus.	Sermon gives no attention to course learnings or focus.
Sermon integrates the needs of the ministry context and the issue in preaching being addressed.	Sermon content clearly and deeply responds to the needs of the ministry context and the specific preaching issue.	Provides some reference to the needs of the ministry context and the specific preaching issue.	Sermon responds to either the needs of the ministry context or the specific preaching issue.	Sermon fails to address either the needs of the ministry context or the preaching issue.

9.11 Appendix G

APPENDIX G**ACTS Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program****Reflection Paper Rubrics****Student Name** ____ **Leif Nordenstorm** _____**Instructor/Advisor** ____ **Kimberly Wagner (Advisor & Instructor)** _____**Date** ____ **January 2, 2022** _____**Sermon: First (Core)** ____ **Second (Elective)** **X** **Third** _____

Learning Outcome: Demonstrate the ability to engage in self-analysis and critical reflection and to report with academic rigor on the homiletical theory and practice engaged in light of the learning goals and project plan.				
<i>Areas of Assessment (Orally and/or written)</i>	<i>Strong Ability Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Adequate Ability Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Marginal Ability Does Not Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Demonstrate Ability Not in Evidence</i>
Description of the congregational ministry context from social, cultural, geographic, theological and congregational dimensions.	Includes relevant analysis of and specific details about the ministry context geographically, socially, culturally, and theologically.	Includes partial but relevant information and analysis of the ministry context.	Includes minimal reference to the ministry context, but without analysis.	Contains only passing mention of the ministry context.
Relevance of Course Learnings in connection with sermon and project goals detailed in the Learning Covenant.	Directly engages and reflects on the goals in the Learning Covenant through the connection of the course learning evidenced in the sermon.	Connects the course learning and the sermon, but with little direct reflection on the goals in the Learning Covenant.	Refers to the goals in the Learning Covenant but without direct connection to the course contents or the sermon contents.	No connection made between the course contents and the goals in the Learning Covenant.
Critical analysis and synthesis of thought using the research and evaluative tools.	Clear evidence of critical analysis that synthesizes the theoretical material provided in course and related texts and including modes and tools used in evaluation.	Some critical analysis of course material, but with no additional material and minimal evaluation.	Includes but with very little analysis of course material included.	No direct applicability or use of course material.
Involvement and analysis of the Parish Project Group.	Includes detailed summary and analysis of the work and the contribution of the PPG.	Describes the work of the PPG clearly but with little analysis of contribution.	Lists the details of the work of the PPG but with no analysis.	Refers only to the presence of the PPG.

Writing structure, style, format and adherence to academic standards for contents such as quotes, footnotes and bibliography.	Reflection Paper is structured appropriately for a formal academic paper, without spelling, grammatical errors, and colloquial language. Bibliography included.	Minimal editing errors and other requirements such as footnotes and quotes are correctly used. Bibliography included.	Few spelling, grammatical, and other errors, but quotes and footnotes are used incorrectly. Minimal bibliography.	Contains many errors of multiple types. Much colloquial language. Minimal or no bibliography.
--	---	---	---	---

9.12 Appendix J

Appendix J

Oral Exam Rubric

Student _____ **Leif Nordenstorm** _____ **Class of 2022** _____ **Date March 29, 2022** _____

<i>Areas of Assessment (orally and/or written)</i>	<i>Strong Ability Exceeds Expectations</i>	<i>Adequate Ability Meets Expectations</i>	<i>Marginal Ability Does Not Meet Expectations</i>	<i>Fails to Demonstrate Ability Not In Evidence</i>
Learning Outcome 1: Preach out of an articulated theology of proclamation.				
Articulates a clear statement of the issue in the practice of preaching that is at the center of the project and research.	Statement is clearly worded, concise, and focused, presenting an important and timely issue.	Statement coherently presents issue in preaching.	Statement lacks coherence and/or focus or is undeveloped.	Statement is incomprehensible and bears no relevance to issue in preaching.
Provides a coherent rationale for the study of this issue in preaching.	Discussion is clear, concise, and focused, and presents a compelling and persuasive rationale.	Discussion coherently presents a thoughtful and reasonable rationale.	Discussion lacks coherence and a convincing or complete rationale.	Discussion of rationale is incomprehensible, absent, or bears no relevance to issue.
Learning Outcome 2: Assess the strengths and weaknesses of one's own style of preaching.				
Coherently expresses strengths and weaknesses of preaching events.	Appraisal of sermons illustrates thoughtful, articulate, and thorough assessment of the preaching events.	Critique of preaching is concise and complete.	Limited and incomplete evaluation of preaching.	Fails to identify attributes of preaching events
Makes connection between aspects of the preaching style and the results of the project.	Characteristics of preaching style are clear, focused, compelling and persuasive in relationship to the project.	Relationship between preaching style and project is coherent, thoughtful, and reasonable.	Relationship between preaching style and project is limited and the impact is unclear.	No relationship given between preaching style and project
Learning Outcome 3: Collaborate with members of the ministry site in an ongoing process of reflecting on one's preaching.				
Articulates relevant and reachable goals achieved in collaboration with the Parish Project Group or a broader	Project goals are relevant, reachable, clearly articulated and appropriately address the issue.	Project goals are mostly coherent, relevant, reachable, and appropriately address the issue.	Project goals lack coherence, and/or are not especially relevant/ reachable, or do	Lacks appropriate project goals.

group within the ministry site.			not address the issue.	
Analyzes how the project goals were achieved or not achieved with reasons for success or failure.	Skillful assessment with a clear understanding of the success and/or failure of each aspect the project.	Coherent assessment and some understanding of the success and/or failure of most aspects of the project.	Assessment of the success and/or failure of the project is incoherent or shows limited understanding.	Student unable to assess success and/or failure of project.

Learning Outcome 4: Demonstrate an acquaintance with leading authors in homiletics.

Uses and cites significant scholarly and other resources that show an understanding of the breadth of the field of homiletics.	Discussion of scholarly resources presents their ideas cogently and accurately. Resources used are appropriate to project and significant in the field.	Discussion of scholarly resources presents their ideas accurately. Resources used are appropriate to project or significant in the field.	Use of resources shows misunderstanding of the ideas discussed.	Fails to draw on leading authors.
Applies knowledge of scholarly resources in the field of homiletics to the project.	Project is founded on appropriate scholarly resources, which are used creatively and skillfully to enhance project.	Project is grounded in appropriate scholarly resources.	Use of resources is incidental to project, or use of resources is not appropriate to project.	Application of resources is not evident in project.

Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate an ability to think critically

Evaluate authors in the field of homiletics both in their own right and in the context of the project.	Creatively and persuasively present strengths and weaknesses of authors both in the context of the field of homiletics and in the context of the project.	Cogently present strengths and weaknesses of authors both in the context of the field and in the context of the project.	Evaluation of authors is incoherent or incomplete.	No attempt to evaluate authors in their own right or in the context of the project.
Offers a creative synthesis of project and authors in the field of homiletics.	Application of resources to project is innovative, imaginative, thoughtful, and relevant.	Application of resources is thoughtful and appropriate.	Application of resources is inappropriate and/or lack thoughtfulness.	Project and authors are not synthesized.

Learning Outcome 6: Demonstrate an ability to think theologically

Project brings sermons into conversation with student's own theological framework.	Discussion of sermons attends thoughtfully and insightfully to theological integrity, drawing clearly on student's theological framework.	Discussion of sermons attends to theological integrity, drawing on student's theological framework.	Discussion of sermons draws only shallowly on student's theological framework, or is incoherent in this area.	Discussion of sermons does not attend to student's theological framework.
--	---	---	---	---

Project brings sermons into conversation with the theological tradition.	Discussion of sermons attends thoughtfully and insightfully to the theology of the student's tradition and to many or all of the major theological loci (God, the church, salvation, etc.)	Discussion of sermons attends to the theology of the student's tradition and to theological loci (God, the church, salvation, etc.)	Discussion of sermons touches only lightly on the theology of the student's tradition and theological loci.	Discussion of sermons does not attend to the theology of the student's tradition or theological loci.
---	---	---	---	---

Result of the oral exam – select one.

Pass With Distinction	Pass	Pass with Stipulations	No Pass
"Strong" on 8 or more of the 12 areas.	"Strong" or "Adequate" in 8 or more of the 12 areas.	Examiners believe that with revisions as specified, student can achieve "Strong" or "Adequate" in at least 8 of the 12 areas.	Student receives "Marginal Ability" or "Fails to Demonstrate" in 3 or more areas.

Advisor Name ____ Niclas Blåder and Kimberly Wagner ____ **School** ____ **LSTC** ____

Comments and/or Stipulations (attach additional sheet if necessary):

Pastor Nordenstorm has offered a thoughtful thesis that has grown out of a question that he has been navigating for years as a preacher and teacher. We are grateful for the ways he is thinking intently about the power of preaching about everyday life in the pulpit in conversation with the biblical text. His question was well-framed and it is clear he has a gift for bringing together the wisdom of many homiletics and theologians to inform his work. The committee wants to affirm Pastor Nordenstorm's hard work with a unanimous affirmation to pass his thesis and oral colloquy.

However, we asked for Pastor Nordenstorm to make three adjustments to his thesis before submission. They were:

- In Chapter 3 where he reviews a great many homiletics, we request that he be sure to tie each homiletician clearly to how he used them in answering his question. We have recommended that if the homiletician turned out to be unhelpful in answering his thesis question, that he might leave that scholar out *or* think about how that scholar might be helpful in future projects or work. We also recommend that he move Benjamin Stewart (if he retains his work in his thesis) to the theologian chapter as he is not formally a homiletician.
- In Chapter 4 where Pastor Nordenstorm reviews his list of theologians, we want to invite him to connect those theologians more clearly to his thesis question and to one another. Our recommendation is to do so by adding an introduction to the chapter that frames his secondary field more clearly and how each of these theologians connects to answering his

thesis question. Again, we invite Pastor Nordenstorm to reconsider what theologians were helpful to his work and which he ended up not leaning upon in answering his thesis question.

- We want to invite Pastor Nordenstorm to edit his title to more accurately reflect the thesis topic by removing the subtitle.

Pastor Nordenstorm made the above adjustments and resubmitted the thesis to his advisors, Dr. Blåder and Dr. Wagner, for review. After review Dr. Blåder and Dr. Wagner, along with the committee, commend Pastor Nordenstorm for graduation with a DMin and affirm that he has passed his thesis and oral colloquy.