Introduction

“What images run through your mind when you hear the phrase Pentecostal preaching? I hear a mighty rushing wind sweeping through the auditorium. Electricity crackles in the air and builds to a rising crescendo of fire. It sends a trembling through the limbs of those poised on the edge of their seats, their faces enraptured by the inspired words of the speaker. The speaker? He is dripping from the exertion of his preaching, his hair and ties askew, his face alternately glowing and distorted, the words tumbling out of his mouth as fast as he can say them. There’s a fire blazing in his eyes, a reflection of the Pentecostal fervor planted within him by the Holy Spirit. His words are divinely inspired easy to understand, powerful in context. They have the power to drive a stake through the heart of a sinner until he is doubled over in agony and crying out for forgiveness. That is Pentecostal preaching!”

Ernest Moen, a statesman pastor and evangelist in the Assemblies of God (AG) in the later 20th century, wrote the above words in an AG textbook for pastoral theology courses called The Pentecostal pastor: A mandate for the 21st century (1997). Since the general editor of this text was the General Superintendent himself, the book may be viewed as a strong unofficial statement of classical pentecostal priorities.

Preaching is a vital aspect of Christian ministry. Vocational ministers-in-training need to learn the basic elements of preaching which include the intricacies of homiletical structure as well as core traditional approaches to preaching (i.e., topical, textual, and expository sermons). These fundamentals are like learning scales at the beginning of a career in the playing of a piano.

Courses in Homiletics at AG and PAOC (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) colleges and seminaries are certainly concerned with the ‘scales’ aspects of preparation for preaching. In addition to the foundational aspects of homiletics shared by most evangelical settings, this course has particular interest in exploring the ‘plus’ dimension that pentecostal preaching affirms and/or strives to achieve. Ultimately, of course, it is audience response that determines what value, or ‘plus’ value, there is in any preacher’s offerings.
**Prerequisite**

Students in this course should have taken an introductory Homiletics course as a prerequisite.

**Required Textbooks** (see ‘Course Requirements’ for details on assignments)


   On the cover jacket of this book, the author expresses the concern that “over the years there has been a decline in bold, authoritative and powerful preaching. In many churches this has resulted in a leakage of spiritual power, declining numbers and stunted spiritual growth.”

   As pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, Greg Haslam organized a preaching school where 20 contributors (including people like John Stott) came together to address the call and challenge of preaching today. The mandate for all topics related to preaching was that the ministry of the Word of God be married to a strong dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit. This book is the result.


   While on sabbatical in England with the opportunity to spend hours leaning on Spurgeon’s pulpit, Anderson rounded out his comprehensive model for the description and analysis of different approaches to preaching. He connects psychologist David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model to four different combinations of homiletical structure used by preachers today (i.e., declarative, pragmatic, narrative, and visionary) then presents his own integrative model. An accompanying CD has audio samples of sermons from four of the five approaches. Anderson’s website: [http://www.preaching.org/](http://www.preaching.org/) provides resources based mainly on his integrative model of preaching.

   Anderson’s book is useful to assess diverse approaches to being effective as a preacher in a postmodern culture. Also of interest to the present course is the question of where ‘pentecostal’ preaching fits on the quadrants of Anderson’s paradigm.

**Supplementary Reading** (see ‘Course Requirements’ for details on assignments).

Select two books from the following list:

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, the student will be able:

1. To examine the relationship of ‘pentecostal’ preaching to core traditional sermonic forms and alternative approaches to preaching.

2. To recognize distinct characteristics and methodologies that are part of pentecostal preaching.

3. To explore theoretical and practical issues related to a pentecostal/charismatic approach to preaching.

4. To assess the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the preaching function including the distinctive positive and potentially negative qualities of pentecostal/charismatic perspectives and methodologies.

5. To value the goals, purposes and priorities which pentecostal perspectives aim to bring to the act of preaching.

6. To experience the challenge of sermon preparation and presentation that benefits from a combination of traditional, alternative and pentecostal approaches to preaching.

7. To demonstrate the positive contributions which pentecostal perspectives may bring to the ongoing development of a personal philosophy and theology of preaching.

Course Content

Note: The ‘Course Content’ listed below describes the content of the one-week module version of this course. The Distance Education format expands the required readings and may cover some alternate items to the module content list.

Review of traditional core sermonic forms
  • expository, textual, topical, etc.

Some alternative approaches to preaching
  • narrative, dramatic, first-person, pragmatic/principle/problem-solving, preaching as counseling

Additional modes of preaching that are of interest to pentecostals
  • evangelistic, revivalist, healing, campmeeting, prophetic, extemporaneous, impromptu, preaching without notes, use of contemporary media in preaching, ‘black’ preaching, etc.

Going back to the beginning
  • preaching in the Gospels and the Book of Acts
• developing a theology of preaching

Attitudes/perspectives that are inherent in pentecostal perspectives on preaching
• being open to the ‘moving of the Spirit’
• use of spiritual gifts in preaching (e.g., discernment, word of knowledge, word of wisdom)
• preaching expressed through the five-fold ministries (apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral-teacher)
• the ‘anointing’
• preaching ‘in the moment’
• integrating worship and the Word
• etc.

Issues related to ‘pentecostal’ preaching
• ‘study to show yourself approved’ versus ‘open your mouth and let the Lord fill it’
• charismatic versus pentecostal perspectives (i.e., is there a difference?)
• women as preachers (e.g., where have all the Aimee Semple McPherson’s gone?)
• ‘wearing out’ your people (e.g., who said that good pentecostal preaching has to be long preaching?)
• the role of appeals and altar calls (e.g., to what extent is the ‘after-service’ an essential part of pentecostal preaching?)
• living as a preacher in the shadows of charisma (e.g., why should my people choose me over the preacher on television at 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning?)
• the impact of literalism and fundamentalisms on pentecostal preaching (e.g., is the pentecostal preacher ‘boxed in’ by restrictive worldviews?)
• ethics in the pulpit (e.g., do pentecostal preachers exercise integrity in altar calls, discipline and non-plagiarism in the use of sources, etc.?)
• etc.

Finding a place for pentecostal/charismatic preaching within the context of Anderson’s model
• what combination of declarative, pragmatic, narrative, and visionary?
• what blend of inductive/deductive and cognitive/affective?

Preaching practicum (for application of concepts and contexts covered in this course)
• critique sermons of others
• prepare, preach, and self-evaluate sermons

Course Requirements

1. **Sermon Analysis and Critiques** (2x5% each)

   • Due dates: TBA
   • Purpose: to practice the technical analysis of sermons and reflect on what may be some distinctive characteristics of pentecostal/charismatic preaching
   • Assignment: experience two different sermons preached in a pentecostal/charismatic
church setting and complete a written critical analysis of each sermon

2. **Preparation and Preaching of Two Sermons** (2x20% each)

   - Due dates: TBA
   - Purpose: to practice the application of pentecostal perspectives to the preparation and delivery of sermons
   - Assignment: prepare and preach two sermons of 28-30 minutes in length each

   Elements of the preaching practicum:
   - video both sermons
   - enlist a qualified observer to view each sermon (live or the video) and complete an evaluation form for each sermon
   - view the video recordings and complete a self-evaluation form for each of the two sermons

3. **Required Readings/Reports** (35%) -due dates: TBA

   **Haslam text**
   - Select 20 chapters from the 49 chapters of the book
   - Write a one-page synopsis (one page for each chapter) of personal value taken from each chapter selected
   - When finished all 20 selections, write a 2-3 page personal statement of what you have learned from the Haslam text about preaching in general and Pentecostal/charismatic preaching in particular
   - Note: This writing will serve as a ‘feeder’ for the final writing assignment.

   **Anderson text**
   - Browse through Part 1 (Options) to get oriented to the author’s four questions:
     - Are you going to preach?
     - Are you going to preach the Bible?
     - How will you discern your message from the Bible? (deductive and/or inductive)
     - How will you communicate the message? (cognitive and/or affective)
   - Read more carefully the pages that relate to David Kolb’s experiential learning styles model (which undergirds Anderson’s overall model)
   - Read Part 2 (Structures) more carefully to grasp the five approaches to preaching outlined by Anderson:
     - Make an Argument – the declarative sermon
     - Solve a Mystery – the pragmatic sermon
     - Tell a story – the narrative sermon
     - Paint a picture – the visionary sermon
     - Sing a song – the integrative sermon
   - Write a 3-4 page personal analysis of how effective Anderson is in his ‘integrative’ approach to provide a comprehensive approach to preaching

   **Haslam/Anderson/Supplementary readings combined**
• When finished the above Haslam and Anderson assignments and the supplementary two books assignments, reflect on all of these sources and their impact on your awareness of ‘preaching’ and ‘pentecostal preaching’
• Write a description (5 pages minimum) of your own perspective of ‘pentecostal’ preaching in theory and practice and its relationship to ‘evangelical’ preaching and to ‘mainstream’ (or ‘mainline’) church preaching

4. Supplementary Readings (15%)

• Due dates: TBA
• Select and read two of the books listed in the Supplementary Textbook list (above)
• Write a 3-4 page critical analysis of each book (include: brief overview of content, positive features/strengths of the book, issues/problems raised by the content, perceived weaknesses or shortcomings of the book, etc.)

Resources/Bibliography

Extensive resources for preaching (books, journals, web materials, etc.) are available in the library and through the internet. Be cautious, however, and take time to assess the credibility of the source for each website before using the material therein. The web is not subject to any formal screening or editing process. You cannot always tell a book by its cover. Many ‘wingbats’ have placed material on the web. The Pentecostal-charismatic culture has more than our fair share of them.

Every preacher should have a website like Bible Gateway.com at their fingertips. It is a fine resource with a large number of Bible translations available for immediate Bible searches. [http://www.biblegateway.com/](http://www.biblegateway.com/)

Some books related to preaching, published since 2004, that are of particular interest to me are:


Graves, Mike and David Schlafer, editors. *What’s the Shape of Narrative Preaching?* St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008.


Robinson, Haddon and Torrey Robinson. *It's All in How You Tell It: Preaching First-Person


