A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY STUDY OF CONTEXTUALISED PREACHING IN AUSTRALIA

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis studies current preaching praxis in Australia through a practical theology perspective. It is argued that Evangelical churches in Australia operate predominantly with a narrow applicational hermeneutical model in regard to preaching and hence communicate the gospel ineffectually to ordinary Australians. A need for contextualised and dialogical preaching is presented. Using Zerfass's model a situational analysis of the Australian context and the effects of modernism and postmodernism are explored. Theological tradition in regard to preaching is then analyzed with a focus on incarnational, Trinitarian and covenantal theology, scripture as public text and dialogue as scriptural pattern. Preaching is then analyzed using the communication theories of Gadamer, Searle, Ricoeur, and Habermas. The need for contextualised preaching is critiqued in light of the concerns of Barth regarding preaching and the concerns of Strom in regards to the nature of church in Australia. A new evangelical practical theological/ preaching model is then offered. Zerfass's model emphasises dialectic tension as the basis for moving from praxis to praxis. While movement from praxis to praxis does occur via dialectic tension there are also elements of change that are based on processes of continuity and evolution. A model that reflects this dynamic is forwarded. Finally an ideal praxis for dialogical preaching is presented with possibilities for further research. Throughout the thesis five interviews are used to illustrate the research, concepts and recommendations presented.

Key Words: Preaching, homiletics, hermeneutics, Zerfass, practical theology, contextualization, communication theories, church, ideal praxis, dialogical, incarnational, Australia.

DECLARATION

I declare that *A Practical Theology Study Of Contextualised Preaching In Australia* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references

…….
David Michie

…….
Date

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