

Integrating Pastoral Counselling and Preaching: A Contemporary Approach to Parishioners' Life Challenges in the ELCT-ND

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doi.org/10.26821/ijsrc.14.4.2026.140404

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the integration of pastoral counselling and preaching as a unified pastoral approach for addressing the complex challenges faced by parishioners in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Northern Diocese (ELCT-ND). Many pastors practice pastoral counselling and preaching as distinct fields, whereby preaching is understood as public proclamation and pastoral counselling as private care of parishioners' life challenges. This practice among pastors has developed a gap between sermons and lived realities of parishioners. The paper argues that the separation of these two fields limits the transformative potential of pastoral practice. The paper demonstrates that a right integration of pastoral counselling and preaching enhances the effectiveness of pastoral care within the ELCT-ND context. It used a qualitative methodology by critically reviewing the literature in pastoral theology and homiletics to examine the functional relationship between pastoral counselling and preaching. It demonstrates that incorporating counselling principles such as empathy, attentive listening, confidentiality, trust-building, and non-judgmental attitude into the preaching task empowers sermons to become more contextually grounded and pastorally effective. In this integrated approach, preaching functions not only as a proclamation but also as a medium of healing, guidance and transformation. It concludes that, when blended together, pastoral counselling and preaching complement each other in terms of saving time, as they are done by the same pastor, using the same Christian faith to serve same parishioners' life needs. It therefore offers a theologically grounded and contextually relevant approach for pastoral ministry in addressing the real-life challenges faced by the parishioners within the ELCT-ND.

Keywords: *Preaching, pastoral counselling, pastoral ministry, counselling-oriented preaching, parishioners' life struggles*

1. INTRODUCTION

Pastoral counselling and preaching are two approaches treated separately among pastors within the ELCT-ND. These two practices of pastoral care serve the same parishioners' life needs, sharing the same biblical foundations which fulfils Jesus's ministry given to Peter to tend and feed Jesus' sheep. The common practice of separating them creates a practical gap between pulpit and the parishioners' life challenges. This integration is a contemporary need because

parishioners in the ELCT-ND demonstrates minimal satisfaction with the separated functions of pastoral counselling and preaching. In order to meet their needs, a pastor is challenged to blend both methods during Sunday sermons. The integration of pastoral counselling and preaching can respond holistically to the complex life challenges faced by the parishioners in the ELCT-ND.

This paper explores the relationship between pastoral counselling and preaching in addressing the parishioners' life challenges. The elements of

counselling such as empathy, active listening and confidentiality can give pastors wide range of the parishioners' needs. This awareness of the basic needs of hearers, will enhance the preachers' Sunday sermon preparations to meet the identified challenges.

2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Albert Bandura's popular Social Learning Theory (1971) guided this study. His theory asserts that people learn primarily through observation, modelling and imitating others. This theory aligns with the study because pastoral counselling and preaching addresses parishioners' behaviours, which directly influence how they interpret and respond to their life challenges. Parishioners learn by observing and imitating their pastors, whom they respect as role models. When parishioners reach a level of understanding their pastors as both counsellors and preachers, the pastors' personalities positively influence them to expect both guidance and teaching. Parishioners' life struggles are often shaped by their behavioural responses to such challenges. The integration of pastoral counselling and preaching as a contemporary African alternative can function as a behaviour-shaping method of pastoral care. It enhances parishioners' ability to change behaviours regarding the challenges they bring to the pulpit.

When this theory is applied to the integrated approach of pastoral counselling and preaching, parishioners are influenced to observe biblical models and testimonies related to what they are going through. The pastors' personality, testimonies from the Bible, as well as examples from parish members who have undergone similar experience, help the parishioners develop positive thinking and transform their behaviour.

Beck (1963), in his "Cognitive Behaviour Theory" notes that depressed people develop personal and distorted ways of interpreting experiences (pp. 325-327). This applies to this paper because some parishioners are depressed due to negative thinking in relation to the challenges they faced. Some consider themselves as abandoned by God and even close relatives.

The researcher recalls several stories from parishioners who link their challenges to inherited 'chains' within their families. Some say that, in their family, when women marry, their unions do

not stay long but end in separation. They claim that whatever one begins rarely succeed. They also believe that, historically, their family fails to achieve their educational or economic advancement. Others say that, without performing the required traditional rituals for their ancestors, they never succeed. Some associate their personal misfortunes with witchcraft practiced against them. They believe their cattle do not produce milk because a neighbour is believed to possess an 'evil eye'.

Some insist that new-born children must be hidden from people believed to have an 'evil eye'. It is also said that a child cries frequently because the umbilical cord was not brought home to connect with the ancestors. Finally, others claim that some people fail to achieve their goals because they have not offered accordingly to God. Parishioners affected by cognitive distortions tend to underestimate their success, exaggerate their failures, and attribute adverse circumstances either to personal inadequacy or external causes.

Peale (2006), adds that without having faith in your own abilities you cannot be contented. Individual's hope can be interfered by inferiority complex and inadequacy and feeling lonely. These are mental attitudes which leads to negative thinking. He adds that a peaceful mind generates power (pp. 6, 23).

Some parishioners' challenges originate from their social environments in which they live (Kau, 2019). The behaviours which this integrated model can address include superstitious beliefs, reliance solely on prayer without hard work, and a culture of silence despite having many pressing issues.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pastoral counselling and preaching are traditionally practiced as two separate functions of pastoral care among pastors. The individualised practices of pastors are associated with pastoral counselling which aims to enhance parishioners' emotions and guidance. Pastors' pastoral practice currently demonstrates the functional gap between the pastoral counselling and preaching. Up to 2025 parishioners' habit to seeking pastoral counselling services has been declining, and their interest in sermons also been decreasing. The cultural factors

contributing to the parishioners' habit of not seeking for counselling services include culture of silence and fear of privacy which brings insecurity depending on the nature of the challenge. The paper examine how pastoral counselling and preaching can be applied in a unified approach to address parishioners' life challenges in the ELCT-ND.

4. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

This paper aims to examine the relationship between pastoral counselling and preaching, and how they complement each other in addressing life challenges faced by the parishioners.

5. GENERAL COUNSELLING

“Counselling is the art and skill of helping individuals and groups to understand themselves better and relate to fellow human beings in a mature and healthy manner” (Waruta and Kinoti, 2000, p. 2). Waruta and Kinoti, explaining counselling from African perspective, say that it was practical informally before the establishment of professional counselling. Counselling was done through family relationships, friends, peers, neighbours, elders, religious leaders and teachers (p. 2). The majority of people in contemporary Africa still depend on informal counselling because it is available within their own families and communities. However, professional counsellors are trained people in a variety of specialized psychological approaches (Waruta and Kinoti, 2000, p. 2). Ademola (2024), define pastoral counselling as a process of helping people with their problems. Therapy is a synonymous name with counselling (P. 218).

Defining counselling, Oates (1974) says:

Counselling generally speaking, is a nonmedical discipline, the aims of which are to facilitate and quicken personality growth and development, to help persons to modify life patterns with which they have become increasingly unhappy, and to provide comradeship and wisdom for persons facing the inevitable losses and disappointments in life (p. 9).

Through formal counselling, a counselee consciously accepts the counsellor as counsellor to help his or her internal suffering and intrapersonal conflict (Oates, 1974, p.9). Capps (2003), writing

from the views of Henri Nouwen (1971), defines the role of counsellor as to express solidarity with the counselee and offers insight so that the counselee can see new possibilities in LIFE (P. 26).

6. PASTORAL COUNSELLING OVERVIEW

As described by Waruta and Kinoti (2000):

The adjective “pastoral” from the noun pastor, is derived from Latin term *pascere*, which means ‘to feed’. In view of this Latin root, the adjective ‘pastoral’ suggests the art and skill of feeding or caring for the well-being of others, especially those in need (p. 5).

Waruta and Kinoti (2000), say that pastoral counselling is religious, theological and Bible based approach as in Psalm 23:1, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”. Jesus Christ declares himself the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep John 10:1. They suggest that the term ‘pastor’ is not popular currently because many of the church servants calls themselves reverends, excellences instead of pastors. The term ‘pastor’ is the most appropriate Biblical term to name persons set apart to render spiritual services in the church (p.5). There are four elements or procedures of the counselling: “(1) Identification of the problem, (2) reconstruction of the problem, (3) diagnostic interpretation, (4) pastoral intervention” (Capps 2003, p. 37). The four elements are explained deeply in the section of the relationship between preaching and pastoral counselling.

Pastoral counselling is wrongly assumed to be the work of pastors and priests in their parishes. Some people may avoid it thinking that as long as it is done mostly by pastors, it is judgemental and loaded with impractical demands. It is mostly avoided by those outside the church, especially urban environments as they think it is for the devoted members of the church (Waruta and Kinoti, 2000, p. 4). “To be effective, pastoral counselling is to encourage the afflicted people to live with their problems until such a time as solutions would be found or God to intervene” (Waruta and Kinoti, 2000, p. 6). A pastoral counsellor can comfort and encourage the suffering person by prayer and reading a Bible. Tjernae, Ringnes and Stalsett (2024), commenting on a role of pastoral counsellor, says that such person meets the client in various life situations where directly or

indirectly clients present challenges they are facing (p. 759).

Oatesn (1974), says that pastoral counselling is not different from general counselling, but it is an area of expertise. When faith in God is involved by the two sides and become the third person it is no longer a dialogue but 'trialogue' relationship (p.11). Capps (2003) shows the common stand of Oden and Wayne E. Oates who says that the awareness of God as a reality makes counselling pastoral (p. 21).

Commenting on the significance of pastoral counselling for the church, Clinebell (1984), says it help the church to be a lifesaving station and not a club, a hospital and a garden of spiritual life – not a museum. Pastoral care and counselling provide instruments for the renewal of persons, relationships and groups (p.14).

From the pastoral counselling discussion above, the researcher though not having a problem with calling pastors reverends, agree with those who suggest preachers who are ordained pastor be called pastors. In the entire ELCT the researcher had never heard pastors or even bishops and parishioners using this noun, "pastor". All pastors in the ELCT are named reverends, the noun that signifies preachers to be respected than signifying their pastoral duty they are called for.

The discussion related to pastoral counselling demonstrates the great role that can be done by pastors through pastoral counselling. However, since many especially in ELCT ND, do not have a tradition to seek for pastoral counselling from their pastors, the significance of doing it on Sunday sermons sounds inevitable. It is right time for pastors to apply pastoral counselling preaching method so that they can help on a public scale many parishioners who are dealing with life issues but are still hiding until they are late.

7. PREACHING OVERVIEW

Preaching is proclaiming with authority the word of God (Cardo, 2021, p. 35). Adams (1982), understand preaching to cover both evangelistic (heralding, announcing the good news to the unsaved and pastorally speaking (teaching and caring the members of the church) (p. 20). Cardo argues that the current state of preaching

needs to be improved. Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, he adds that the faithful parishioners and preachers suffer as they listen to many contemporary preachers. Preaching is often done by inexperienced preachers who end up discourage the laity. Pope Benedict XVI call pastors to consider the current situation of the preaching ministry's distortions. Some commonly identified distortions include unpreparedness, as a leading problem in the preaching ministry.

Another distortion is self-centeredness, where preachers speak too much of themselves, personal stories, testimonies and opinions. Paul exhibited his personal example for the Corinthians who were the followers of Christ (I Cor. 11:1). While this can be beneficial, it may become excessive if preachers frequently focus of themselves instead of keeping the gospel as the centre of the sermons (pp. 35-38).

Kim (2008), agrees with Robinson (2008), who says, "Preaching is a live and moving process involving all of God, preachers and believers. And no definition would be able to accurately express this dynamic shape (p. 24)." This understanding of preaching as a living and dynamic process signifies the needed for careful handling, because any living thing may be led to death when mishandled. The most vulnerable area is the role of preachers to parishioners and their accountability to God.

Isaiah (2012), presents definitions of preaching as understood by the various scholars. While Sangstaer states, "Preaching was, is, and ever will be God's chief way of communicating his will to the world". While William Edward Manning defines it saying, "Preaching is the manifestation of the incarnate word from the written word, by the spoken word". Additionally, Preaching should be defined in terms of what essentially is being done and why, rather than where and when it happens, and what corporate expectations it fulfils (p. 21).

Pembroke (2019), defines therapeutic preaching, drawing on Capps (1980, 1984), who as the proclamation of Gospel that involves theological diagnosis and pastoral intervention for common existential, intrapsychic and interpersonal pathologies (p. 1).

8. PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND PREACHING COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER

According to Adams (1982), God joined counselling and preaching as two sides of the same coin. Preaching and counselling deal with the same individual, same biblical authority, same content and same intention. Individual counselling sessions informs a preacher about issues parishioners are going through. These problems if not clearly known by the preacher may hinder the effectiveness of a sermon. Adams even see the problem of many homiletics books dealing with only one side of pastoral ministry (homiletics), forgetting the other side of counselling (p. 126).

Fosdick (2004) and Pembroke (2019), says that through integration of pastoral counselling into preaching, the preacher should expect that lives of parishioners will be made over, families will be saved, young people guided in to right ways and down broken hearts become happy (p. 2). Their views signify that when the two methods of care are blended together, they save the same curative outcome to parishioners.

The integration of pastoral counselling into preaching in African congregations is not questionable. This is due to the sociological settings of many African communities, which are marked by numerous challenges such as poverty, corruption, diseases, limited democracy, and family issues including-gender based violence. The African community economic challenges, specifically led to uncontrolled preachers who led many to misleading theology and prosperity gospel.

The wide range of challenges according to Magezi (2019), need different sectors' intervention so as to be effectively addressed. Insisting on the relationship between pastoral counselling and preaching, he adds:

People's life issues are complex, which call for holistic approaches when engaging in real-life issues. Pastoral ministry as a frontline ministry of the church inevitably bears the burden of dealing with people both at practical and spiritual levels. Pastors assume various roles such as counsellors, community leaders, public officials, and so on. Thus, pastors cannot adopt a single approach in interfacing with

communities but rather adopt multiple approaches in an eclectic manner (pp.3).

Also, from the words of Graham (2000:12), Magezi shows the significance of pastoral ministry to integrate public pastoral strategies, for healing, sustaining, guiding, liberating individuals and cultures (p. 5).

Both preaching and pastoral counselling ought to promote holistic peace. Writing about shepherding through pastoral preaching, Mbweve (2017), says that the method restores straying believers, feeds the people of God and strengthen those who are weak (p. 84).

The integration of pastoral counselling and preaching is a contemporary ELCT-ND alternative for many reasons. When it comes to marital conflicts most of African parishioners still may shy off from consulting their pastors for international advice. Therefore, preaching and pastoral counselling blended together as one method of care remains the active approach to help the married couples. Phillips (2009) suggests that when couples have marital conflicts tend to hide the reality and its implications to avoid the congregation's awareness of their difficulties (p. 103). Still, the congregation sessions like Sunday worships remain both public and private chance for family conflicts resolutions. The wife and husband may be helped though separately through blended method of care if the preacher is aware of the existence of range of marital problems and their impacts to his or her parishioners. The sermon may empower victims to the point of helping them see the need to forgive, reconcile and love unconditionally.

The personality of a pastor includes shepherd, preacher, administrator and counsellor. Solving conflict challenges in the congregation pastors are mediators, moderators, counsellors and spiritual coaches. When the conflict is not marital but involving group of members, a pastor may start individual and group pastoral counselling before reaching at the pulpit and summarize the achievement of peace among the members. Some conflicts may have been caused by former pastor and group or groups of parishioners such as choir, fellowship, youth and church elders. The situation here according to Phillips is not using the pulpit to blame the pastor, but to show them that still God

loves them and things will be okay. Preachers using counselling preaching approach are warned to be careful avoiding siding any of the conflicting sides (Phillips p. 103).

The two methods of care have common theological base as they share the same Christian faith and same. This is the second approach of understanding the relationship between preaching and pastoral counselling. Some authors believe that preaching and pastoral counselling have similar theological base which enables them to contribute to an integrated ministry. Cox (2012), emphasise that the basic impression of the Bible is healing (wholeness, completeness and both horizontal and vertical reconciliation (p. 61). This suggest that both preaching and pastoral care and counselling should aim to lead the hearer toward wholeness.

Preaching and pastoral counselling are often considered not only the most important, but also the most demanding of our time and energy. However, Cox challenges the seminary curricula which acknowledge the importance of preaching and pastoral care by offering two separate courses in these two areas of ministry while rarely giving attention to the relationship between them. He also challenges the preaching courses and texts for their silence on investigating the contribution of preaching to pastoral care (Neufeld, 2009, p. 67).

9. COUNSELLING-ORIENTED PREACHING: A PRODUCT OF INTEGRATED MODEL

Fosdick was against those who considered preaching and counselling as two different responsibilities of a pastor. That is preaching happens regularly at the pulpit during Sunday worship while counselling happens at a confidential place. Even the skills are taught as different courses in the theological seminaries. One overlooked truth is that the pastor's office makes him/her a full-time counsellor. This challenge of separating a pastor while at the pulpit from a counsellor was identified by Fosdick in his work. A preacher is influenced by pastoral functions on what to say and how to say it during counselling

preaching. *The view of parishioners seeing their preacher as a pastor is not a new phenomenon; it is as old as the church itself* (Oladejo & Ajibade, 2024, PP. 41-42).

Capps (2003), in his book "*Pastoral Counselling and Preaching: A Quest for an Integrated Ministry*", discusses the relationship between Pastoral counselling and preaching. He starts his book by asking himself these questions; "Does one's counselling influence one's preaching? Does one's preaching influence one's counselling? Do these two functions of ministry go together or not" (p. 9)? As he says, these questions challenge the assumption that the primary role of a protestant minister is to preach. In the area of study this assumption is also the same. These questions are challenging the methods or approaches used to preach the Gospel. Quoting Edger Jackson (1961), Capps says that the average pastor has difficulty synthesizing the functions of preaching and counselling (p. 10).

Answering those questions, Capps (2003) says, "Not only can preaching benefit from pastoral counselling, but pastoral counselling has much to gain from preaching" (p. 10). However, he says that it is rarely proposed that pastoral counselling can benefit from preaching even by those who advocate the integration of the two forms of ministry. He further observes that the relationship between pastoral counselling and preaching has been understood in three ways;

1. Some authors say that preaching itself is an act of pastoral counselling. That, "When preachers enter the pulpit, they become counsellors". This happens when preachers proclaim the Gospel, exhort parishioners to lead more Godly lives, instruct them on Christian faith and speak against social injustice. Generally, this is giving parishioners wise counsel on how to manage their daily life's problems (p. 13).

2. Also, some take the view that preaching and pastoral counselling has a common theological base. This group of scholars agrees that while pastoral counselling and preaching differ in style and mode of communication, their objectives guide parishioners to their understanding of their relationship to God (p. 13).

3. Finally, some say that the relation between preaching and pastoral counselling is mediated by clinical psychology where the theories are applicable to preach as to do pastoral counselling (p. 14). He summarizes the characteristics of the counselling sermon according to Edmund Linn's list saying that counselling sermon expresses clear convictions on personal experience. He advises preachers to have a clear position on the problem he/she preaches. These personal experiences come from; direct observations, his or her own personal life, the behaviour and reactions from his immediate family members and the acquired knowledge of human nature. When these challenging experiences are blended with the way the preacher experiences God's power transforming people, it enables the preacher to have a clear personal stand and faith on what he/she preaches (p. 15).

Counselling sermon involves speaking as to a single person, addressing the specific problems and relating to people where they are. This means a preacher can be more effective if he/she has understood the congregant's local challenges and the universal complications. A preacher should therefore be close to people so as to observe their needs. Capps adds saying; "Effective preaching depends on the minister's capacity to know where people are and to speak to that situation" (pp.15-16).

The preacher is advised to anticipate listener's objections while connected together as two people in the pulpit at once – the preacher and the antagonist – and the later will have genuine doubts, questions and yearnings (Capps, 2003, p. 16).

Counselling sermon applies the Gospel to persons. Through the pastor's personal experiences and observations, the preacher has witnessed the power of God transforming individual lives, the situation which gives him/her the truth of the Gospel. The experience will encourage the preacher to believe that while doing counselling preaching, "no person is ever beyond the reach of correcting, healing and consoling power of this Gospel". Therefore, counselling preaching proclaims the power and saving grace of Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Counselling sermon retains the values of older methods. Edmund Linn through Capps review suggests that counselling preaching though not expository, but the Bible remains the primary source of the light of wisdom and solution for every modern problem. He also says that though counselling sermon is not topical, but it applies the best topical preaching methods to show the origins of human challenges in the society and the world at large.

Preachers should learn peoples' strengths and weaknesses so as to understand their questions seeking answers from the preacher. Failure to do so, a preacher cannot be effective in the pulpit even if he/she applies counselling preaching.

The summarised above seven characteristics of counselling sermon, Capps and Linn agree that preaching is an act of pastoral counselling (pp. 16-17). Capps (2003), in his book "Pastoral Counselling and Preaching" to describe the relationship between the sermon act and counselling sessions. He tries to show their relationship through the basic elements of both methods of pastoral ministry. He summarises four elements of the counselling session as described in his earlier book called "Pastoral Care: A thematic approach" as follows:

The first element is identification of the counselee's problem. This is to identify the problem which brought the counselee to the pastor/counsellor. This is always a difficult part of counselling. This happens when a counselee is reluctant to reveal the problem or be ready to say it while for sure he/she is not aware of the real problem.

The second element is reconstruction of the problem. This is discovering the causes of the problem, assuming its current form and experiences. Considerable listening is needed here so as to have a clear understanding of the problem. The counsellor's role is listener and clarifier.

The third element is diagnostic interpretation. At this stage the counsellor interprets the positive and negative implications of the problem to the counselee. This stage does not mean now a counsellor is a main speaker while a counselee is silent. But this is rather a tentative

option which a counselee is involved to contribute by supporting or refuting some of the elements.

The fourth element is pastoral intervention. When the counsellor and counselee agree to have the same understanding of the problem, it allows the pastoral intervention to take place. A pastor at this level selects a best intervention method. A counselee at this stage is expected to discover the best way to deal with the problem without being influenced or dictated by the counsellor as an authority (pp. 37-39, Capps, 1980, Capps, 1984).

The elements of counselling according to Capps (2003), are also applicable to the sermon. He cautioned his readers very early that he is not intending to generalize that the sermon is an act of counselling. He is not even saying that preaching is counselling, or one form of ministry is under the other. He then says:

The sermon remains a sermon, with its unique objectives and the counselling session remains a counselling session, with its own particular objectives. The sermon is not a counselling session the counselling session is not a preaching event. I am simply claiming that the two structures are remarkably similar (Capps 2003, pp. 41-42).

Capps builds upon Fosdick's boldness and detailed work regarding the relevance of pastoral counselling preaching on parishioners' life issues.

Witt (2012), wrote an article entitled, "Care Through preaching: Reflections from Parish Life". In this article he says in order for a preacher to be effective she or he must first of all dedicate most of his time and talents to understand his or her parishioners. This is even cost full because a preacher should be available and present so as to be curious about different challenges facing parishioners. Being present for another person is a tremendous gift we can offer.

A preacher should avoid the assumptions made by many preachers that they know what their parishioners are going through without being present for them. *Good counselling preachers take time to listen to what parishioners are saying, and they observe their actions.* Otherwise, preachers may be tempted to create the story and speak of it

as a failure to have time for a client. Witt goes on saying, "During times of crisis, doubt, exhaustion and deep pain, there is no one size fits all cure, other than to be present for the other person, paying attention to what (s)he is saying verbally and nonverbally" (pp. 26-27).

Witt's ideas suggests that, pastors in order to be effective through counselling-oriented preaching, they should have enough knowledge regarding their parishioners' life challenges which also shape their sermon preparations and delivery. They should bold their pastoral identity by giving time to their parishioners so that when they stand up on Sunday, they carefully heal the hearts they understand their challenges, feelings and actions. Counselling preaching should be done carefully to avoid speaking the challenges and secrets/privacies of parishioners in public. If a preacher fails to keep secret and privacy of the victims/clients he/she visited, parishioners will shut down their outer and inner doors preventing their pastor from speaking their secrets at the pulpit next Sunday.

10. INFLUENCE OF PASTORS' PERSONALITY IN INTEGRATED PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND PREACHING APPROACH

This section intends to investigate how pastors' personality can enhance or hinder the effectiveness of pastoral counselling preaching in addressing the parishioners' life needs. Pastors' personality include communication, wearing and hairy dress styles, foods and drinks at the public, faithfulness and family relations, reading. The personality intentionally or unintentionally influences the behaviours of parishioners positively or negatively. The warm and welcoming personality of a preacher creates a safe and friendly environment and relationship that encourages parishioners to trust what the pastor says during Sunday sermons.

Nekemiah (2003), wrote on "the impact of Pastor's Lifestyle on the Pastoral Ministry in [sic] ELCT-North Western Diocese". His findings include the life styles of two pastors and how they influenced sermons they preached to their parishioners. He states that pastor Ronnie Dikko, was accepted and heard by nearly all parishioners because of his life style. The pastors' life style, admired by many as he was caring his family and

maintaining closeness with his parishioners. His sermons related to his life style of sharing duties with his family members, a quality that was admired by many (p.17). Nekemiah's finding align with Bandura (1971), who through his 'Social Learning Theory' asserts that people learn primarily through observation, modelling and imitating others. In contrast, pastor Cameo Mike, was also a good preacher who wrote his sermons accordingly, but his life style hindered his parishioners from seeing the relevance of his sermons. This pastor according to Nekemiah was accused of stealing a sack of beans brought by his parishioners as an offering. Since that time, whenever he preached about faithfulness, people neglected his sermons. And the attendance dropped by 19%. If parishioners observe their pastor behaving differently from what he preaches, it leads to the dormant effect of the sermons (pp. 22-23). Nekemiah's finding align with Bandura (1971), who through his 'Social Learning Theory', asserts that people learn primarily through observation, modelling and imitating others.

Phillips (2009), challenges preachers to, first of all be in harmony with God, revealing it through personality and behaviour, which, as a result, can help the parishioners to trust their message. 1 Timothy 3:2-3, insists a bishop to be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher. Additionally, Bishops are to avoid drinking alcohol, not to be violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not lover of money. Also 1 Timothy 6:11 says, "But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness" (p.99).

Lischer (1987), in his review, says that preaching has two essential elements which are truth and personality. Emphasizing on their necessity, he says neither any of the two can be skipped and still be preaching. He defines preaching as the bringing of truth through personality (p. 14). The researcher takes the personality element from Lischer as more related to this paper.

Killinger (1996), says, "Preaching is an enormous personality" (p. 200). He intended to say that preaching in order to be effective, is influenced by not only the content, but also the life of the preacher. Illustrating how a sermon cannot easily be separated from the personality of a preacher,

Killinger even says a sermon, "It is the result of the preacher's entire spiritual life, the preacher's moral convictions, the preacher's personal experiences and relationships, the preacher's reading and reflection, even the preacher's health and diet and fun and relaxation". Killinger heard ministers when asked how long it took them to prepare a sermon, reply by saying, "All my life" (p. 200). This illustration suggests that a preacher's personality affects a sermon beyond what they think it could or used to be. That if a preacher read widely, set time for prayer and reflection, promotes and enjoys positive family and community relations, their sermons will reflect this personality regardless the text and method they use. That even if parishioners pray saying, God, "Hide our pastor behind the cross so that we may see not him but Jesus only", yet no place where a preacher may hide. Robinson adds that the audience hears a human being saying a sermon and not simply a sermon.

Robinson (1986), through his findings, observes criticisms that rejects the common definitions of preaching such as, "Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it". Then the Bishop defines preaching as the art of making a preacher and delivering that. Applying this definition to the role of the preacher's personality, he says, "When a man prepares sermons, God prepares the man" (p. 24). He intended to say that sermon preparations transform a preacher. That before a preacher preach the word to others he or she should live with the message. Robinson adds saying, "Ultimately God is more interested in developing messengers than messages" (25). Again, Robinson mentions the three types of preachers saying, "Those to whom you cannot listen; those to whom you can listen; and those to whom you must listen" (p. 167). This decision is done the moment the parishioners see the preacher before he/she speaks.

Collins (1986), insists that the life of a preacher also help listeners who knew him to accept what he says as something practical or just mere words. This means that preachers who know people intimately and take counselling seriously, find that this deepens their preaching". Preachers, in order to be effective, need to deeply understand human needs while their sermons reflect that essential sensitivity (p. 37).

The researcher relates Nekemiah and Robinson's findings with reflections from the

ELCT parishioners' comments as they see the preacher at the pulpit on Sunday. Some even say they are tired of the uninspired preachers. As a result, some of them end up finding another alternative preacher during the afternoon Sunday or weekdays. The preacher's personality according to the reviewed authors, may affect pastoral counselling outcomes at large because if the relationship and personality are welcoming and trusted, the parishioners may see a counsellor and a preacher during Sunday sermons. In contrast, if the personality of a pastor demonstrates a negative image, parishioners' emotions and trust tends to shut down, hoping that even if what he says from the pulpit is correct, is already contaminated by the preacher's personality. The pastor's personality may push away from him or her the parishioners who would ask for private counselling.

11. CONCLUSION

The paper reveals that when pastoral counselling and preaching approaches are blended together, they enhance a contextually relevant and theologically grounded approach to addressing the multiple life challenges faced by contemporary parishioners. The unified approach bridges the gap between the pulpit and parishioners' lived experiences. When pastors apply this unified approach, they respond holistically to parishioners' emotional, spiritual and social challenges. They do so through Sunday sermons shaped by empathy and attentive listening attained during individual counselling sessions. That counselling sessions inform sermon preparations while shaping sermon delivery. Aligning with theoretical perspectives such as Bandura's "Socio Learning Theory and Beck's Cognitive Theory, the paper demonstrates that parishioners' negative beliefs and behaviours can be positively transformed when pastoral counselling and preaching are blended as one approach during Sunday sermons. The blended approach is a contemporary alternative regarding parishioners' life challenges in Africa where cultural barriers limit private pastoral counselling. As a result, the unified approach enhances guidance, healing and transformative growth among parishioners

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