

## “UN-CLASSIFYING” EXPOSITORY PREACHING: PATHWAY TO EFFECTIVE PULPIT MINISTRY IN AFRICA

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### ABSTRACT

Topical preaching is very rampant on the pulpits in Africa, and it has not helped the administration of God’s Word or deepened the knowledge of the people in the Scriptures. The problem partly lies in the notion that there are different types of sermons and a preacher is free to choose the one that is most convenient. This negates the fact that biblical exposition should be the norm in the task of *rightly dividing the word of truth*, and, therefore, places expository preaching as the method, not a method. This paper, advocated isolation of expository preaching from the usual academic classification, agreeing that all biblical preaching is expository. The advantage of doing so is to engender a paradigm shift that will help preachers in Africa develop a pulpit ministry that is both biblical and African in form and content.

### INTRODUCTION

Much of the preaching that goes on in Africa is topical, and the result of such orientation to preaching suggests an unhealthy future for the administration of God’s Word to a society in need of such knowledge that can transform it. That topical preaching is in vogue is a fact supported by literature and is easily substantiated by observation.<sup>2</sup> It is likely to be the way most preachers learn to preach even if they will grow up into other ways of doing it as they advance in ministry. The reasons are that it was likely to be the way they were used to hearing sermons from their childhood and the way they also learned to prepare or deliver it ever before they had any theological training. As a facilitator of the course, Christian Preaching in a foremost seminary in Africa, and with more than 150 mature students to interact with annually, one of the first assignments this writer gives is to prepare any two sermon outlines. At such first encounter, the majority of the outline reflects an orientation towards topical preaching, and it takes a semester, less or more, of seeing other ways to do it before many of them come to that *eureka* moment.

How did these students and those they learned from miss out on the core concept of biblical preaching? They taught them, most likely, that there are different types of preaching – topical, textual, expository, narrative, biographical, testimonial and few others, depending on the one who taught them or the books they read. The reason for a preference for topical preaching above expository, especially, is not farfetched. Topical sermons are flexible, easy to prepare and deliver, and can help one cover a wide range of subjects. These classifications are helpful, but they also seem to be the foundation of the problem of lack of biblical preaching which is the primary assignment of those called to the pulpit ministry. This paper posits that biblical preaching is expository and does not need to be classified along with other “types” if there will be an effective preaching ministry in Africa. The task ahead, therefore, is to look at the issue of classification of preaching methods or styles and the attending dilemma; the need to clarify the concept of expository preaching and attempt to detach it from the traditional classification; and the value of such an effort in making preaching more effective in Africa. The word “un-classifying” in this paper is used to mean

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removing expository preaching or sermon from the classes, types or kinds of sermon and letting it stand substantively as the way to do preaching.

### The Dilemma of Classification

As far back as 1898, when John Broadus published his famous book, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, classification was already an issue in homiletic. Before he went into the discourse, he premised it on the fact that, “various elaborate and unsuccessful attempts have been made to classify sermons. From the nature of the case, no exact or scientific classification is possible; the various kinds will overlap and mingle in every conceivable way.”<sup>3</sup> Some of such attempts include classification into doctrinal and practical; explanatory, illustrative, argumentative and hortatory; and the one that has survived for so long and based on homiletical structure, subject-sermon, text-sermon and expository-sermon.<sup>4</sup> By subject sermon, he also meant topical sermon.

In a subject or topical sermon, a certain subject is drawn from a text, the text furnishes the thought but plays no further role in the formation, treatment or outlining of the sermon structure.<sup>5</sup> Simply put, a topical sermon is one “whose subject (topic) is based on a given scripture text while the main points and the sub-points are not based on that text.”<sup>6</sup> A textual sermon is usually a little more complex to define as it attempts to share from both the definition of the topical and expository sermon. Broadus considered textual sermons as governed by the same principle as topical sermons but distinguished between a single subject textual sermon and that of several subjects.<sup>7</sup> Hamilton described textual sermons as based on one or two verses of Scripture, with the main points of the message coming from the text itself, often from phrases or clauses that are of somewhat equal weight in importance.<sup>8</sup> He added, however, that while the main points are built around the central theme found in the text, sub-points are sometimes inferred from the text, but are “usually taken from parallel passages or from outside the scripture.”<sup>9</sup> This arrangement might make a textual preacher move round and round several scriptural passages outside his or her main text or pericope many times.

Several other ideas of what textual sermon means have surfaced over the years, some aligning with Broadus’ definition and some taking exceptions. Merrill Unger saw the difference between textual sermon and expository sermon as only in the length of the text. H. Grady Davis saw the two as essentially the same. Sidney Greidanus proposed that all textual preaching should be understood as expository because it is based on a biblical text and expounds the message in that text. Al Fasol rejected the idea that a textual sermon is to be defined by the length of its text. Rather, it should be by how the topic and division are drawn from the text.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the divergence of opinions and build-up of ideas on this distinctions and classifications grew.

Expository sermon was equally defined by Broadus as “one which is occupied mainly, or at any rate very largely, with the exposition of Scripture. It by no means excludes argument and exhortation as to the doctrines or lessons which this exposition develops. It may be devoted to a long passage, or to a very short one, even a part of a sentence.”<sup>11</sup> The unique characteristic of this classification is that it draws its

<sup>3</sup> John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1870), 306.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 307

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 308

<sup>6</sup> Donald L. Hamilton, *Homiletical Handbook* (Nashville TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 25. Also see Samuel T. Logan, ed., *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1986), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Broadus, 311-314

<sup>8</sup> Hamilton, 26.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Steven D. Matthewson, “What Makes Textual Preaching Unique.” In *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*, edited by Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, 412-417 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christianity Today International, 2005), 414.

<sup>11</sup> Broadus, 322

main points and sub-points from the natural flow of thought as found in the text or pericope.<sup>12</sup> It may be in the form of *Lectio selecta* where a preacher chooses the text to preach service by service, and it may be *lectio continua* where a preacher systematically preaches through a book of the Bible or uses a lectionary to follow the church year.<sup>13</sup> However, varying the portion of text to a long passage, short one or even part of a sentence as Broadus postulated is arguable. David L. Allen, for example, argued that there is a volume of text that could suffice for an effective expository preaching. Linguists, according to him, have come up with the fact that the structure of meaning goes beyond the sentence level. The paragraph unit is what provides the best volume from which meaning could be derived while expositing a text. He stated that “expository preaching should at minimum deal with a paragraph (as in Epistles), whereas, in the narrative portions of Scripture, several paragraphs that combine to form the story should be treated in a single sermon since the meaning and purpose of the story itself cannot be derived when it is broken up and presented piecemeal.”<sup>14</sup>

Apart from the basic categories discussed above, some other authors have made efforts to give more classifications. An example is Alfred Gibbs who propounded such other classifications as personal testimony, historical incident and biographical sermons.<sup>15</sup> Oyemomi added another, called inferential sermons.<sup>16</sup> For all of these classifications, advantages and disadvantages are often enumerated. Expository preaching, however, stands unparalleled among other classifications. Even authors state the so-called disadvantages, the wording of the advantages speaks volume as to where biblical expositions should occupy when it comes to preaching. Broadus, for example, thought he needed not share any advantages of expository sermon because he agreed with another author who enumerated such advantages in these words:

(a) This method better corresponds with the very idea and design of preaching. (b) It is the primitive and ancient method, (c) It ensures a better knowledge of the Scriptures, on the part of preacher and hearers—and of the Scriptures in their connection. (d) It causes sermons to contain more of pure Scripture truths, and scriptural modes of viewing things, (e) It gives occasion for remarking on many passages of the Bible which otherwise might never enter into one's sermons; and for giving important practical hints and admonitions which might seem to some hearers offensively personal if introduced into a topical discussion, but which are here naturally suggested by the passage in hand. (f) it greatly diminishes the temptation to misinterpret texts by excessive allegorizing, by “accommodation,” for men are often driven into such misinterpretation by the difficulty of finding for every sermon a short passage which will legitimately afford the requisite amount of material.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, what was classified as expository sermon was viewed as the sermon that depicts the real idea and design of preaching; practiced by those who first engaged in preaching; engenders better understanding of the scriptures; inclusive of all biblical themes and portions; and serving as an antidote to allegorisation, and probably, heresy.

These advantages, which should rather be regarded as the character of expository preaching, speak volumes about the error of lumping it with other categories. Larson also corroborated this by stating that expository preaching is “biblicality at its very best and models for the congregation the way the word of God is to be handled and studied as does no other kind of preaching.”<sup>18</sup> Hamilton after his classification

<sup>12</sup> David L. Larsen, *The Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying Issues in Preaching Today* (Ibadan: Christ and We, 2000), 32.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid,

<sup>14</sup> David L. Allen "Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at Heart of Every Sermon*, edited by David L. Allen & Ned L. Matthews Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 107.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Gibbs

<sup>16</sup> Emmanuel O. Oyemomi, *Essentials of Christian Preaching: With Sample Sermons for African Theological Institutions* (Lagos: Praise Publications Ventures, 2013), 35

<sup>17</sup> Broadus, 319

<sup>18</sup> Larsen, 32

exercise concluded that “while these traditional categories may be somewhat helpful in our efforts to distinguish between kinds of sermon, it should be understood that they are rather arbitrary.”<sup>19</sup> More succinctly, he observed that,

Every sermon, regardless of arrangement, should allow the text of Scripture to make its own statement about truth and then apply that truth to the lives of the hearers. When this is done, the sermon might be said to be “expository” even if it is arranged topically or textually. It is “expository” in the sense that the meaning of the text is being exposed or expounded. In this sense, “all true preaching is expository preaching.”<sup>20</sup>

These would have been enough to promote expository preaching as a best among its kinds, but this is not the goal of this paper, nor the intention of Hamilton and others who hold this opinion. The goals, instead, are to isolate expository preaching not as a class among other classes but as the idea of preaching that would represent the true face of biblical preaching and one that would make preaching more effective if imbibed. It is to substantiate the claim that “all true preaching is expository preaching.”<sup>21</sup>

### The Need for “Un-Classification”

Before adducing reasons for the claim that preaching expositoryly is the ideal, there will be a mention of few more definitions and positions of some homileticians. Stephen Olford defined expository preaching as “the Spirit-empowered explanation and proclamation of the text of God’s Word with due regard to the historical, contextual, grammatical and doctrinal significance of the given passage, with the specific object of invoking a Christ-transforming response.”<sup>22</sup> Preaching expositoryly is not first of all a matter of structure or pattern. It is a task of allowing the Holy Spirit lead a preacher in the task of discovering the historical, contextual, grammatical and doctrinal significance of a given text, then helping him or her to open it up for the transformation of the life of the hearers. The word “exposition” is from the Latin root *expositio* which means “a setting forth.” When biblical exposition is done, therefore, the preacher “expounds, expresses, and exposes the Bible to an audience and the audience to the Bible.”<sup>23</sup> This also informs David Lim’s simple definition of expository preaching as “a homiletical art, which takes into account authorial intent in delivering God’s Word to the contemporary listeners.”<sup>24</sup>

Haddon Robinson defined expository preaching as “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher to the hearers.”<sup>25</sup> All these definitions have nothing to do with structure of a sermon but rather with the text of God’s Word, the life of the preacher and the listeners to the message. The definitions are all about preaching, and they display an underlying philosophy. Robinson projected this philosophy when he stated that “the type of preaching that best carries the force of divine authority is expository preaching.”<sup>26</sup> He then nailed it by these profound assertion that “expository preaching at its core is more of a philosophy than a method. Whether or not we can be called expositors starts with our purpose and with our honest answer to

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<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, 27

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 125-125.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen F. Olford and David Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1998), 69.

<sup>23</sup> Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 19

<sup>24</sup> David Lim, “Expository Preaching and Generation X: Honoring 2 Timothy 4:-5,” in *Preaching to Postmodern-minded Listeners* (Oradea, Bihor: Emmanuel University Press, 2007), 9

<sup>25</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Wheaton, Illinois: Oasis International Ltd, 2012), 21

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 20

the question: Do you, as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scripture, or do you use the Scripture to support your thought?"<sup>27</sup>

When David Allen saw that the classification confusion is giving expository preaching different coloration than biblical preaching, he proffered the idea of a synonym – Text-Driven Preaching. According to him, “authentic biblical preaching must by definition be text-driven and hence expository in nature.”<sup>28</sup> It has nothing to do with an enslavement to artificial outlining techniques in the form of three-point structure or alliteration, and its communication can follow whatever style or structure. It indeed has nothing to do with verse by verse explanation of a passage nor consecutive interpretation or “practical enforcement of a book” of the Bible as some claim.<sup>29</sup>

The question at this juncture is, how did the idea of classification begin and why should expository preaching be expunged from such classification? Two reasons – biblical and historical, will be adduced. The Bible is replete with men and women who spoke for God. Stitzinger opined that preaching in the Bible was in two basic forms—revelatory preaching and explanatory preaching. There were those who revealed God to man like the prophets who spoke a divine word from the Lord, the priests who spoke the law and the sages who offered wise counsel.<sup>30</sup> Something common to the Old Testament is that “after a body of revelation had been given, the people would return to it with a need to have it expounded or explained.”<sup>31</sup> Ezra gave a classical example in Nehemiah 8, where he read the book of the Law and had a group of Levites who helped “gave the sense” and “helped them to understand the reading.” (cf. Ezra 8:8 NKJV). This, according to Stephen Olford is biblical exposition as seen in the Old Testament.<sup>32</sup>

Preaching of the Word by exposition continued in the New Testament. Jesus’ use of the Prophet Isaiah in his sermon of Luke 4:16-21 has great significance. There, he established the fact that all good preaching is expositional and exegetical, based on the reading of a portion and expounded.<sup>33</sup> In Luke 24:27, Jesus expounded to two disciples the things that concern himself. Peter rooted his message on the day of Pentecost in Joel’s prophecy and two other Psalms (Acts 2:14-36; Joel 228-32; Psalms 16:8-11; 110:1). Stephen did some expositions of portions of Genesis and Exodus in his sermon of Acts 7 and Philip did the same while ministering to the Ethiopian eunuch. Paul was a great expositor who admonished Timothy to rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Tim 2:15). This instruction ultimately meant, “the skillful application of parts or aspects of truth adapted to affect persons specially in need of instruction.”<sup>34</sup>

According to Stitzinger, revelation ended at the close of the New Testament, and the work of the preacher became one of explanation. He, therefore, concluded that “All preaching must be expository preaching if it is to conform to the pattern of Scripture. It is an extension of the explanatory or expositional dimension of preaching by OT and NT preachers.”<sup>35</sup>

History continued after the New Testament but the deterioration of Christianity at the post-apostolic period brought a scarcity of expository preaching as the integration of Greek philosophy brought an erosion of biblical theology and affected the perspectives of many church fathers.<sup>36</sup> For almost a century and a half,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>28</sup> David L. Allen, "Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon," in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at Heart of Every Sermon*, edited by David L. Allen & Ned L. Matthews Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 105

<sup>29</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 10.

<sup>30</sup> James F. Stitzinger, "The History of Expository Preaching." *Masters Seminary Journal* TMSJ 03:1 (Spring 1992): 8

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 10

<sup>32</sup> Olford and Olford, 69-71.

<sup>33</sup> Yngve Brilioth, *A Brief History of Christian Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 8-10

<sup>34</sup> Olford and Olford, 72

<sup>35</sup> Stitzinger, 12

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 15



expository preaching was abandoned.<sup>37</sup> A few men like John Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose and Augustine, however, stood out. The Middle age experienced another famine until Pre-reformers like John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, John Huss and Girolamo Savonarola emerged as men who allowed the text to influence their sermon.<sup>38</sup> By the time of the Protestant Reformation, the use of biblical text and its exposition came to fore when the mantra for Christian preachers became *sola scriptura*.<sup>39</sup> That was the philosophy of such men as Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. The trend continued as the Puritans furthered the culture of expository preaching in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century and on to the modern era.<sup>40</sup> David Allen summed this history by concluding that “the best preaching throughout church history has always been expository preaching.”<sup>41</sup>

Where, when, and how then, did the idea and era of classification come in? Sidney Greidanus has a simple answer:

Biblical preaching has often been identified with expository preaching, especially in contrast to topical preaching. Unfortunately, some homileticians brought confusion into the terminology when they contrasted the category of “expository preaching” not only with the category of “topical preaching” but also with that of “textual preaching.” With that complication, the term *expository preaching* took on so many misleading connotations as to make it practically useless... With all these additional connotations, the term *expository preaching* has lost its original, plain meaning – “to exposit the word of God.” The way out of the confusion is to disregard all the barnacle-like connotations that have encrusted the term “expository preaching” and concentrate on the original meaning of the term.”

To heed the counsel of Greidanus is to remove expository preaching from the arbitrary classifications and let it be what it is – biblical preaching done by expositing the Word of God in its original meaning and intent and applying it for the transformation of lives. That is what this paper intends by the idea of “un-classifying.” The task may not be done by removing it from the volumes of books that have been written in the past centuries nor the ones that will still be written if such authors are not persuaded. It may not even be done by neglecting teaching such classifications at the basic level of homiletics and Christian Preaching as courses in theological institutions. However, there could be at least a consciousness that regardless of any ancient or modern classifications, biblical preaching is basically expository preaching, not in a contest with other classes of preaching but substantively the ideal way of communicating the text of God’s Word.

## EXPOSITORY PREACHING AND EFFECTIVE PREACHING IN AFRICA

There are three implications of the above to effective preaching in Africa. The first is that preaching will become essentially, biblical. How much biblical preaching has been going on in the pulpits around Africa has always been a subject of doubt. Conrad Mbewe expressed this when he stated that,

It has been correctly observed that preaching in Africa is almost always topical, and with time the topical preaching has gone from the weird to the most absurd. God’s people are surviving on what the preachers want them to hear even if it has little or no relation with the Bible passage that is read at the start of the sermon. Platitudes of common sense have replaced the exposition of God’s Word. In other cases, preaching amounts to nothing more than a tirade of scolding at the top of a preacher’s voice. In the light of all this, there is little surprise that the churches are largely terribly

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<sup>37</sup> Jim Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching.” In *Text-Driven Preaching: God’s Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*, edited by David Allen and Ned L. Mathews Daniel L. Akin, 37-54 (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 40.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 43

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-53

<sup>41</sup> Allen “Preparing a Text-Driven Sermon.”

malnourished. As long as this continues to be the staple diet of the churches, there is no hope for the African church to be the salt and light that this continent needs.<sup>42</sup>

While there are exceptions to this, which Mbewe also admitted, there is the need to move from exceptions to the norm. Africa (along with Asia) is the centre of attraction when it comes to world Christianity, and it cannot afford to tow the path of the West which was once a bastion of God's move but has lost the fire of revival that spread through it to the then world.<sup>43</sup> The only way to sustain what God is doing in Africa is through a preaching ministry that is centred on biblical exposition.

The second implication is that recognition of the other "types" will be subsumed in exposition. It has been mentioned earlier that topical and textual preaching may have one advantage or the other and whether they are helpful or not, they will remain a part of the homiletical culture for a long time. The solution to this has been proffered. Textual and topical preaching can still be made expository or rooted in the Scripture when the need arises to do them. Steven D. Matthewson had argued that textual preaching when done properly, can supplement exposition to meet two specific needs which are, providing "an effective vehicle for preaching on some of the Bible's grand statement," and it can provide an "effective vehicle for evangelistic preaching."<sup>44</sup> Timothy Warren also submitted that topical preaching can be expository when a preacher starts with a topic and lets the topic be addressed in a text or texts through exegetical-theological-homiletical process.<sup>45</sup> This will involve lots of homiletical skill and will be something to attempt once in a while in the spirit of dynamism on the pulpit. The bottom line remains that any preaching, ultimately must be expository and the better choice would always remain a sermon coming out of a textual unit of thought.

The third implication of putting expository preaching where it belongs is that there will be a freedom of form in preaching that will be African. Form and content in preaching is a broad but vital subject. The content is generally agreed to be the Scripture, properly exegeted. However, form could vary to suit the communication need of the people. Robert A. Allen captured this succinctly when he stated that,

Accepting a view which makes a distinction between expository content and organization enables the preacher to maintain fidelity to Scripture by means of a historical-grammatical hermeneutic, while adapting to an audience in the way those biblical truths are communicated. In this way narrative preaching, dialogue preaching, debate, drama, storytelling, and inductive preaching can serve as viable communicative styles while at the same time the preacher faithfully expounds the God-given meaning of any text.<sup>46</sup>

Africa has its communication system which is deeply rooted in orality—use of songs, drama, proverbs, myths, folklore, poetry, dance and related expressions. Once this is understood, the task of the African preacher is to find the most appropriate channel of communicating God's Word, having due consideration for the genre of the text and the communication need of his or her people, and minister to them. What he or she must not compromise is the exposition of the text used to preach.

One more implication is that when expository preaching takes its rightful position, then it will be time to enjoy its fruit. Stephen Olford official *Statement of Belief* is, "I believe that the expository preaching of God's infallible Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit, concerning Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, is the ultimate hope for humanity deepest need, church-wide renewal, national righteousness, and social

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<sup>42</sup> Conrad Mbewe. <http://www.conradmbewe.com/2011/03/wanted-faithful-expository-preachers-in.html>. 21/03/17. Also see Ronald J. Allen, "African Christianity: A Soft Report." *Homiletic* 16, no. 1 (1991): 5-9.

<sup>43</sup> Albert Strydhorst, "Emerging World Christianity." *Calvin Theological Seminary Forum*, Winter 2015, 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> Matthewson, 413

<sup>45</sup> Timothy S. Warren, "Can Topical Preaching also be Expository?" In *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*, edited by Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson, 418-420. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Christianity Today International, 2005 421.

<sup>46</sup> Robert A. Allen, "The Expository Sermon—Cultural or Biblical?" *Journal of Ministry and Theology JMAT* 02, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 229.

justice in the world.”<sup>47</sup> These are the things that Africa need in its present social-political and economic situation and the sooner African preachers imbibed preaching expositoryly, the earlier they prepare for a harvest of transformation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has suggested “un-classifying” expository preaching as a pathway to effective preaching in Africa. It posits that biblical preaching is basically expository and does not need to be classified along with other “methods.” This is substantiated by biblical, theological, historical and homiletical facts. Not possessing such understanding has weakened the effectiveness of preaching in Africa as more preachers emerge to embrace the topical method with so much of its disadvantages. Once it is registered in the mind of the African preachers that biblical exposition is the norm, they can then, fashion out what contextualized mode of communication they would use in transmitting God’s message to their hearers. Even when they need to try their hands of what is classified as topical or textual sermon as a matter of exploring variety, they can still be rooted in biblical exposition. When biblical exposition becomes the norm in Africa, then the church is ready for spiritual growth in all dimensions, and social, political and economic transformation will not be far from the society as a result of the impact of the body of Christ.

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Olford and David Olford, *Anointed Biblical Preaching and Teaching* (Memphis: The Stephen Olford Ministry Legacy, nd), np.



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