TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY IN CHRISTIAN PREACHING: A THEMATIC AND HERMENEUTIC ANALYSIS OF 50 SERMONS FROM 5 DENOMINATIONS

by

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A thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Theology and Religion
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The University of Birmingham
April 2006

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ABSTRACT

An investigation of 50 Christian sermons from 5 denominations in Britain preached between May 2002 and November 2004. Recordings of the sermons and results of structural, semantic, and content analyses are presented. An introductory chapter sketches salient features of contemporary religious, secular, and academic contexts. Chapters on methodology and the data collection process follow. Chapter 4 combines detailed quantitative findings with general conclusions concerning two broad hypotheses about contemporary Christian preaching. The Subject analysis maps topics on four different classificatory schemes and concludes that the first hypothesis - that, for all its claims to be relevant to the whole of life, the church is in practice concerned with only a narrow slice of it - is perhaps stretched but not overturned. The Traditional language analysis finds that the second hypothesis - that Christianity, certainly at the local level, refuses to address the 'credibility gap' from which it suffers today - emerges much more patently unscathed. Given the implied 'literalism' predominant in these sermons, it further maps the applications of traditional Christian terminology to modern life. Chapter 5 reviews the findings in the light of the contemporary context as outlined in chapter 1.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Human communities, in their attempt to articulate religious experience
and to order social life by that shared experience, preach.

(Rice 1987, p.494)

A. Project outline

Within the universalising perspective of the quotation from Rice above, this dissertation
presents research into Christian preaching in contemporary Britain. It focusses on 50 sermons
from five mainstream denominations preached between May 2002 and November 2004. The
specific aim of the project was described in the initial letter to churches as

> charting the range of topics discussed in sermons, and in particular the connections
> made between traditional biblical or credal themes and the modern world.

50 churches and 49 preachers are represented. All of the sermons were in the English
language. 10 were broadcast, one from Cardiff, the rest from churches in England: the data
from the remaining 40 was obtained by personal visit, the services being recorded using
unobtrusive minidisc equipment. Brief interviews were conducted subsequently with 46 of
the preachers, either by phone, post, e-mail, or face to face.

The twin aims of the research as described above, analysis of topics discussed and analysis of
connections between the traditional and the modern, together represent a considerable
broadening of interest from the initial proposal submitted to the University. That proposal had
referred only to an intention

to investigate the range of approaches to biblical themes and concepts which are offered from the pulpit to local Christian congregations in the U.K. today.

Extension of this to include credal themes alongside biblical obviates the need for debate about the precise origins of some of the key Christian doctrines and ideas chosen for attention. But the more significant broadening of the terms of reference is the addition of the first aim indicated above, the general analysis of sermon topics, whether based on biblical or credal themes or not. This focusses the study on the sermon as a whole, rather than one very specific aspect of it.

As a result, the dissertation offers, subject to the limitations of sample size, a contemporary 'landscape' of mainstream preaching in Christian churches in Great Britain (effectively England) in the opening years of the 21st century of the Common Era. The 'landscape' is mapped here using a number of different 'projections'. Together they present (or such is my hope) a broad but meaningful overview of what aspects of the world are, and by extension which are not, discussed from these pulpits today.

Variations in this 'landscape' related to a number of factors are highlighted with a view to suggesting questions for future research. The sample is too small for definitive conclusions to be drawn from these findings alone. But denomination, geographical area, and community setting, as well as type of service, preaching strategy, and other sermon characteristics, and also preacher's experience and training seem to have some influence on sermon themes. In addition, the interviews afforded the chance to make comparisons between preachers' expressed general strategies and their actual preaching as represented by the sermons studied.

Within the overall 'landscape' the connections made between certain central themes of the Christian tradition and aspects of the modern world are separately charted. This specific mapping is offered as an insight into how religious language functions in the church today.

Underlying the twin aims of the project are two broad hypotheses about contemporary Christian preaching. The first arises from my impressionistic judgment that, for all its claims to be relevant to the whole of life, the church is in practice concerned with only a very narrow

slice of it. The second represents the strong personal perception, from which the project chiefly originated, that Christianity suffers today, in Western societies at least, from a serious 'credibility gap' which, certainly at the level of the local congregation, it refuses to address.

These are, if true, I believe, important factors for understanding the situation of contemporary Christianity. Not everyone will agree with this assessment or with the assumptions underlying it. But the hypotheses themselves are here subjected to empirical testing. The results are presented in chapter 4 (sections C and D). There I claim that the first hypothesis, while perhaps stretched, is not overturned, and that the second emerges much more patently unscathed.

The rest of this chapter and chapter 2 present discussions of context and background, assumptions, and research methods. The data collection phase is reported in chapter 3. The primary data for the investigation, the sound recordings of the sermons themselves, are included with the thesis in the form of two CD-Roms (CD-Rom A Sermons I and CD-Rom B Sermons II) inserted into pockets in the inside back cover. The 'secondary' or 'processed' data, the results of the first stage of the analyses described in chapter 2 are summarised in Appendix E and accessible in full from a third CD-Rom (CD-Rom C Thesis workbench), also inserted into the back cover. Appendices A to D contain details of churches, preachers, dates of visits, interview questions, transcripts of two poorly recorded sermons, and other matters.

The main findings are set out in chapter 4, supplemented by a selection of more detailed results in Appendix F: CD-Rom C contain some of the data and computing routines used to produce the results. The final chapter of the dissertation offers some comments on the significance of the findings in the light of the context and background highlighted in sections 1.B and 1.D below. A machine-navigable and searchable copy of this dissertation is also included on CD-Rom C.

B. The context of the Project

'Think globally, act locally'. Translated into the language of an essentially academic research project, this popular motto of the world development movement may be seen as requiring that a narrowly local investigation such as this study of Christian preaching maintain an appropriately broad perspective on the issues with which it is concerned.

In 2006 C.E. a minimum demand would appear to be to take due account of

       i.   the interfaith context

       ii.   the secular context

       iii.   the context of world Christianity

       iv.   the spiritual revolution context

Many other candidates for the list may suggest themselves, *e.g.* economic and cultural globalisation, 'postcolonial' concerns, issues relating to gender, race, and sexuality, liberation and democratisation movements, and of course the environment. If Christianity is relevant to the whole of life, it fails if it ignores any of these themes (and many more besides).

The four contexts selected for attention here are clearly germane to the aims and assumptions of the project. The others are not, however, totally ignored. They are indirectly addressed in as far as the general subject 'mappings' reveal their representation or otherwise in the sample sermons.

A full perspective would of course require parallel analyses of sermons or some equivalent of the sermon for each of the domains mentioned. That is not possible here. But salient factors from these four areas are briefly explained in the following subsections. A final subsection (1.B(v)) brings into topical focus the searching imperative under which theological research is always undertaken.

(i) The interfaith context

In late summer 2003 Aram I, Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia, presented his Moderator's report to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Geneva. In it he spoke of the global interfaith context:

> Religiously homogenous societies are being replaced by multi-religious societies. Now that religions are living in permanent and close interaction with each other, religious plurality is no longer a conceptual issue; it affects the very texture of societal life and creates new paradigms, new ways of life, and a new self-understanding. It also shapes multiple relationships and multiple belonging within our institutions, our families and even within ourselves.

Later in his report he added:

> By defining ourselves in isolation from the other, we reject the other. Living together is to define our identity in relation to the other. Religious identity should not lead to exclusive and absolutist self-understanding. This will isolate a religion, and isolation breeds hate and violence.

And again:

> Dialogue is no longer an academic activity involving only historians, scholars and theologians. People from all walks of life are engaged in a living dialogue. We are experiencing a *dialogue of life,* which embraces all aspects and spheres of human life.

This new feature of our world is well recognized in the Department of Theology and Religion in the University of Birmingham. The principal interests of the academic staff of the department, as detailed on the University's website as I write this paragraph (12 January

2006), demonstrate the degree of its commitment to interfaith studies. Of the 32 members listed, their chief areas of current work may be classified as follows:

Interfaith	4	Christianity	14	Hinduism	1
Islam	10	Judaism	2	Sikhism	1

Although the research reported here concentrates exclusively on Christian preaching, a consistent attempt has been made to avoid unduly privileging Christianity against other faiths in the conceptual frameworks against which the results are presented. One early example of this related to the choice of classification schemes to be used for the subject 'mappings'. The Dewey Decimal Classification System was the original candidate of first choice for this function. For a fuller discussion of why it was quickly relegated to a minor role, see section 2.B and Appendix G below. One of the main reasons was the continued dominance, even in the latest (22nd) edition (Dewey 2003), of Christianity over other faiths.

In terminology, too, throughout the dissertation I have tried to avoid the carelessness of thought and expression that equates theology with Christian theology, worship with Christian worship, devotion with Christian devotion, *etc.* Full consistency in this respect has no doubt eluded me, and if so, I apologise..

Christian thoughtlessness is particularly endemic in respect of the sacred texts which it shares with Judaism. Dewey 22 at least adds 'Tanakh' as a subtitle to the heading for classification 221 Old Testament. But this does not go very far to redress the balance. The further steps taken in this dissertation are outlined in subsection 2.B below (see especially p.54).

(ii) The secular context
The Church seems to find it easier to enter into meaningful relations with other faiths today than it has in the past, and easier than with the contemporary Western secular humanism which is in a significant sense Christianity's direct heir. Indeed, as was demonstrated in the

University of Birmingham, for instance, in a lecture in May 2004 given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, the case for better relations with other religions is often based on a call to unite against the common secularist enemy.

This is unfortunate. Dialogue is vital in the secular arena too. If a conflict of religions could seriously damage world peace, this is equally true of a conflict of philosophies between religion and secularism (as of course it is true of a conflict between parties within a religion, whether Catholic against Protestant, Sunni against Shi'ite, or any other groupings).

A major impetus to undertake this research came from conversations with a number of non-churchgoing friends. Their rejection of Christianity is at heart, I believe, a rejection of a 'literalist' faith, and they find it difficult to acknowledge that the church might hold and propound any more tenable variety of belief. Well aware as they are of a few well-publicised clerics who challenge orthodoxy in one degree or another, they sympathise with their reasons but see their continued adherence to the church as fundamentally inconsistent. Such figures do not in any way modify my friends' view of Christianity or the Church as a whole as intellectually unacceptable.

Such friends and the millions of others like them who would be embraced by the secular-humanist label, at least as widely and loosely understood, are one of the 'reference groups' I attempt to keep in mind in writing this thesis. Very much of academic theology over the last 200 years must of course be seen as a response to the problems of credibility which rationalism and secularism have raised for religious faith. But there are widespread disagreements about the success of the enterprise as a whole and about the relative merits of the approaches adopted by different scholars. Many are couched in such intricate language as to substitute (or add) incomprehensibility to incredibility. Perhaps as a result of this, the 'credibility gap' remains largely unbridged as far as the general perception extends in the 'secularist' direction.

An encouraging development came with the publication in 1975 of *Understanding Religious Convictions*. This was a book jointly written by a practising Christian theologian, James

McClendon, and a secular atheist, James Smith. They explain (McClendon and Smith 1975, p.vii):

> we are, in apparent disregard of the Apostle's warning, 'unequally yoked together' (2 *Corinthians* 6:14) as writing partners and hence are in better position than some to know the conflicts and paradoxes of a pluralistic world.

> Nevertheless, the book that has grown from our discussion and trial drafting is not a debate or a dialog; we have composed it together and are alike responsible for every paragraph, every word.

They go on to suggest that such collaboration between atheist and theologian is

> itself a reason for hope regarding wider convictional conflicts . . . which the worlds of religion, of race, of politics need even more desperately than does the academic world in which we both live.

If so, the promise has unfortunately yet to be fulfilled.

Even if secularism is more a Western than a global phenomenon, and even if its representation in the West amongst the general populace is small or in dispute, it looms large in my experience and represents to my mind the outlook of the future. What is sometimes termed 'postmodernism' does not, it seems to me, provide any sort of refuge against the secularising tendency of its correlative 'modernism'. Terrence Tilley refers in the introduction to his 1995 symposium to 'the postmodernism of completion', and continues (p.*vii*):

> This postmodernism finds the contemporary problematic not how to reject or repudiate the intellectual categories and social practices of the modern world, but how to *extend and complete* the modern project (Tilley's emphasis).

From my point of view, certainly, secular humanism is not just an inescapable feature of the milieu in which I find myself here in early 21st century Britain. The 'credibility gap' to which I refer is not simply a division between the religious and the non-religious. It represents an internal divide between modes of thought well formulated within the minds of many, perhaps all, believers themselves. It may be impossible, it may be explosive, to bridge that divide. But it would seem like 'living in denial' not to attempt to.

(iii) The context of world Christianity

At the other end, perhaps, of the spectrum of belief from secularism lies the vast majority of the world's Christians. However, as I indicated in the previous subsection, they share with my 'secularist' friends what may be termed a 'literalist' understanding of the faith. This commonality of thinking is a salutary challenge to theology. Increasingly involved hermeneutic ingenuity will make little impact on either group.

But there is a dilemma here. Academic theology and biblical studies must not sell out to popular prejudice and ignorance on the highest common factor principle: but equally it must never lose sight of its grass roots clientèle. The dual requirement has been forcefully stressed recently in a collection of essays by African biblical scholars edited by West and Dube. Moiserale Prince Dibeela, for instance, and Justin Ukpong are two contributors who give clear expression to the tension between academic and what they term 'experiential' methods of reading the Bible (Dibeela, p.384; Ukpong 2001, p.593). But this is of course by no means exclusively an African concern. The same tension is evidenced time and again, I am certain, up and down the United Kingdom, probably most often as churchgoers discuss the sermon over the Sunday lunch table.

Nor is it an exclusively theological problem. The underlying issue of communication between expert and lay person affects many disciplines. In the ecclesiastical situation, the ideal could perhaps be expressed in terms of never asking academic questions that church members aren't asking except as a means of answering the questions they are asking. And if that challenges

cherished values of academic freedom too radically, hermeneutic theory can legitimately demand of academics, theologians included, continual vigilance in ensuring that their theorising retains a clear grip on meaningfulness. It is not hard to take a step too far in the direction of 'the bewitchment of intelligence by the means of language' (Wittgenstein and Anscombe 1967, p.47).

This dissertation focusses extensively on the traditional language and concepts of Christianity. These are in an important sense Christianity's distinguishing marks. They are certainly the pivotal features around which its life and worship are organised. To 'literalists' and 'secularists' alike the issue seems clear-cut. Here are the doctrines: you believe them or you don't.

By contrast, those who would describe themselves as 'radical' or 'liberal' Christians are a minority group within world Christianity but an important presence in the Western church. They are very much part of the context of this thesis. As I have indicated, their 'non-literalism' marks them off from both 'literalists' and 'secularists'. In these terms they appear as jokers in the pack, spin-doctors, word-jugglers. They thus have an urgent need to establish their credentials as honest brokers. In as far as this thesis shares their viewpoint, it shares the problem too.

The Traditional language analysis outlined in section 2.C below attempts to establish a measure of common ground between the parties by asking some very basic hermeneutic questions about how this terminology is, and by extension therefore is not, employed in its specific contexts in the sample sermons. This is certainly to take seriously the 'literalists'' language, and it does not of itself make judgments about their 'literalist' faith in it. But it would be naïve to suggest that the selection of traditional themes for such analysis is not motivated by doubts about their 'face value' credibility.

In defence of my claim to be taking the 'literalists' seriously in spite of such inbuilt scepticism, I can only enter two pleas. In the first place, I suspect that they are themselves conscious that the articles of their creed are indeed articles of faith and not conclusions of

everyday commonsense. They are, from this point of view, challenges to faith. And secondly, I accept the need – though I certainly do not go far to meet it – for an accessible hermeneutic that accounts generously and constructively for the impressively life-enhancing vigour of much 'literalist' Christianity.

The world Christian scene is best represented by the plethora of churches where a vibrant and close-knit fellowship draws in adherents of all ages and provides a stimulating, supportive, and stable environment which fosters balanced and principled living. Fierce and loyal commitments are engendered, but in the majority of cases this is a far cry, even among so-called 'fundamentalist' churches, from political extremism or violence. There may be a downside to such fellowships, and on the whole, I recognise, the world would be a poorer place without them.

Another important aspect of world Christianity is the Christianity of the non-churchgoer. Forming a deep and strong undercurrent to many people's lives, particularly in the West, it surfaces powerfully at moments of especial personal or communal significance. Birth, funerals, marriage, national disasters, the death of a young princess are such moments. It comes perhaps closer than more self-conscious versions of Christianity to the anthropological roots of religion. 'The heart of a heartless world'? Maybe, but it too must not be ignored.

(iv) The 'spiritual revolution' context

Attention has been focussed in recent years on the emergence in Western culture of a sector outside organised religion to which the label 'spiritual' has come to be widely applied. In a book based on research in Kendal, Cumbria Heelas, Woodhead, Seel, Szerszynski, and Tusting show (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p.41*ff.*), for the period since the 1960s, a decline in the numbers participating in Christian congregational activities from 11.8% to 7.9% of the population (matching national figures), while participation in 'holistic milieu' activities, seen as having a non-religious but 'spiritual' dimension, has grown from virtually nil to include 1.6% of the population.

Taken together these figures allow the tentative prediction that 'subjective-life spirituality' will overtake 'life-as religion' in 'the next 40 or 50 years' (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p.150), but that this will happen within an ever-advancing secularisation, *i.e.* as much by the further decline of the churches as by growth in the 'holistic milieu'. Explaining all these trends on the hypothesis of the increasing subjectivisation of society, the authors examine evidence from within the churches of more subjective styles of association, and find any such tendency very limited (*e.g.* p.60*ff.*) and always subordinated to 'a life-as frame of reference' (p.75).

The current research was planned and largely completed before the results of this Kendal-based project were fully known, although I was aware through earlier contacts with the team at the University of Lancaster of the broad outlines of their data-gathering strategies and had assisted briefly with some peripheral comparative surveys undertaken in particular communities around Kendal. The analysis of the themes and language of sermons presented here has very different assumptions and aims from the Kendal project. Most importantly, it does not cover the 'holistic milieu' at all, and it is not concerned with diachronic analysis. Where it does impinge, positively or negatively, on the Kendal project and its hypotheses about subjectivisation within the churches, this is pointed out in the relevant sections below (p.59, 109, 130, 167).

(v) The ever topical imperative

The real world context against which this section is being written includes the earthquake-induced tsunami of 26 December 2004 and its harrowing aftermath. Links between traditional Christian themes and the contemporary situation are a central concern of this research. The tsunami was one of those events which compel such links to be made and which at the same time test and expose the quality of those links. And by extension any attempted assessment of such linkage must also answer to the searching scrutiny of overwhelming human tragedy.

'It is the question of questions for religious belief,' declared the opening sentence of Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' article in *The Times* on New Year's Day 2005. Loose logic, flimsy flannel, and wishful thinking will stand up no better to public impatience than did the seaside villages to the weight of water that descended on them.

A discussion group convened at my local parish church to talk over these issues illustrated very effectively the challenge for theology which such tragedies pose. Talk centred at first and very rightly on the realities of the situation in East Asia and on immediate practical responses to the manifest human suffering involved. We discussed what had been done, locally and internationally, and what was still needed in the way of aid. But we also pinpointed in a wide-ranging critique errors of judgment, lingering Western paternalism, the inevitable inefficiencies and corruption of a massive operation. Turning to causes, we wondered to what extent the disaster was man-made and not entirely due to natural forces beyond human control. But eventually questions were asked about Christian explanations and the role of God.

A variety of views were expressed by clergy and laity alike. Can we believe in a God of love who could cause such tragedies? But you've got to say God allowed it. 'Allow' / 'cause', what's the difference in the realm of omnipotence? God in the event, suffering alongside the victims. The New Year's Day article in *The Independent* by Rt. Rev. Tom Wright, Bishop of Durham, which was introduced into the debate by the Vicar, focussed the Christian answer on Christ's crucifixion: the Bishop wrote,

> In this death God has taken upon Himself the full force of the world's evil . . . and thereby encourages us to embrace the same sense of helpless involvement in the sorrow of the world, as the means by which the world is to be healed.

Whatever theological approach we adopted, we were fully agreed that the myth promulgated by post-enlightenment humanism that humanity is master of its own destiny had once again been exploded.

But what of Godtalk in this situation? The claim that evil is irrational and that therefore the quest for explanation is pointless rightly emphasizes the 'givenness' of the forces of nature: this is how the world is, and no theology can change that. It also seems a fair summary of the maelstrom of theological nuggets which we had tossed around in our talk but never satisfactorily integrated. The one clear impression I came away with that evening (perhaps I had taken it with me to the meeting) was that, far from helping us come to terms with such tragedies and disasters, our theology was itself left reeling and impotent by them. The reading of *Psalm* 46 with which the evening closed tellingly underlined the difference between today's theology and the Bible's.

That evening's discussion functioned for me as a healthy corrective to the analysis in this dissertation of the links made by preachers between traditional and contemporary. The preacher is in a privileged position. The links to be made in a sermon are in his or her gift and as such are selected for their relevance and usefulness. Our discussion started from the given topical situation. The movement was therefore essentially not from traditional theme to modern world but *vice versa*.

We were searching, as it were, for traditional themes which could be linked meaningfully to what had happened. It is relevant to record the discussion here, not simply in tribute to the million and more people affected by the tsunami, but also as a reminder that a full perspective on contemporary preaching needs to take account not only of the actual links made, as analysed in this dissertation, but also of that greater throng of links which preachers did not feel able or inclined to make. That too is signposted, but perfunctorily and in crude and unarticulated mode, by the glaringly obvious gaps in the subject charts of chapter 4.

C. General hermeneutic presuppositions

Hermeneutics is integral to this dissertation. 50 sermons are here analysed for subject-matter and contemporary links. Such analysis involves interpretation. And 'hermeneutics' is defined in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (Little, Onions et al. 1973, *s.v.*) as

> the art or science of interpretation, esp. of Scripture. Commonly distinguished from *exegesis* or practical exposition.

This section sets out some basic assumptions about interpretation underlying the research. Assumptions relevant to specific sections of the thesis will be discussed later (see subsections 2.B(i) & 2.C(i)).

Introducing hermeneutics, however, while essential academically, does not square well with the intention to take seriously the multiple project contexts outlined above. The term 'hermeneutics' is hardly part of everyday vocabulary. In the context of world Christianity the 'liberals' may be the least suspicious of it, if they have seen hermeneutic theory as offering support for their reinterpretation of traditional Christian doctrine. But by the same token, 'literalists', and 'secularists', the 'holistic milieu', and adherents of other faiths will probably all be sceptical of what may seem a devious device to avoid the plain meaning of Scripture and the Creeds.

However, hermeneutics cannot be avoided. It is today, *pace* the dictionary definition, not particularly concerned with biblical interpretation. Its central claim is, I suppose, that in any act of interpretation the interpreter brings his own attitudes, conceptions, and awarenesses to bear on the material being interpreted. There is an element of subjectivity in all listening or reading. This research claims no exemption.

(i) Hermeneutic subjectivity: separating the threads

Multiple threads intertwine to create the hermeneutic tapestry which is the sermon - as prepared, constructed, heard, applied, and now analysed. Seven threads seem to me particularly relevant to this investigation. But each is complex, and the selection is to a great extent arbitrary and certainly not exhaustive. The list comprises:

1. *Authorial hermeneutic*: the process of interpretation by the biblical writer through which he writes what he writes.

2. *Exegetical hermeneutic* (I am aware that, on the definition quoted above from the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, this phrase is an oxymoron): the process of interpretation of the text by the preacher.

3. *Pulpit hermeneutic*: the further process of interpretation by the preacher from which the sermon emerges.

4. *Auditor's hermeneutic*: the process of interpretation by which each individual member of the preacher's congregation understands the sermon.

5. *Practical hermeneutic*: any further process of interpretation by which the sermon is incorporated into individual practice.

6. *Dissertational hermeneutic*: a special case of the practical hermeneutic, differing from it in two particular respects.

    a. Its input is the combined output of my own version of auditor's hermeneutic for all 50 sermons in the study, together of course with the specific assumptions and objectives of the research.

    b. Its output is this thesis, including, it should be noted, this section on hermeneutic presuppositions.

7. *Examiner's hermeneutic*: a reminder that a dissertation is essentially text, and like all text therefore, a set of inherently meaningless symbols hazarded by the researcher on some degree of community of understanding with the 'significant others'.

Although in the present case the research process, strictly understood as the study of a clearly defined set of sermons, directly instantiates only the fourth, fifth, and sixth of these threads (in as far as the fifth and sixth can be meaningfully distinguished), indirectly it involves the

remaining four as well. The Subject analysis may be seen as an attempt to reconstruct an important element of the pulpit hermeneutic. And in as far as the Traditional language analysis aims to illuminate the use of biblical material, it involves, if at second and third removes, the exegetical and authorial hermeneutics which underlie, but are mediated through, the pulpit hermeneutic.

The seventh thread is different. It is beyond the researcher's ken or control. Also, the degree of community of understanding between, in this case, classically trained researcher and theologically trained examiners is both a determinant of the hermeneutic process and also itself an essential object of the evaluation. Examiners in theology are charged, among other things, with ensuring that the candidate is sufficiently fluent in the language and assumptions of that discipline. In that cause, it must be admitted, the hermeneutic of suspicion is a more effective tool than the hermeneutic of charity – unless there is a middle way.

Of the threads directly instantiated in the current research, it has already been indicated that the practical-dissertational hermeneutic contains a significant element of self-reference. This is evidenced not only by the current discussion but by all the methodological sections. A more precise analysis would classify these elements of the thesis separately from the dissertational hermeneutic. But whether that is done or not, the whole thesis without exception functions as input to the examiner's hermeneutic.

(ii) The layers of subjectivity

Much has been written on hermeneutic theory over the last three or so decades. In identifying the seven threads above, I base my discussion on a recent book by O'Leary, *Religious Pluralism and Christian Truth* (1996), which highlights the essential fragility of meaning. Owing much to the work of Derrida, O'Leary nevertheless refines it at various critical points. He stresses the contextual constraints on language and the further scope for confusion that inevitably arises when language is committed to the permanence of writing

Each of the seven threads listed above identifies one source of the subjectivity inherent in a hermeneutic process like the present research. At each stage, in O'Leary's terms, that subjectivity may be understood as a complex of different layers. As such these layers constitute the major hermeneutic presuppositions underlying this thesis. The layers are not always clearly differentiated in O'Leary's work. But I list four here, as I have found it possible to disentangle them.

1. The signs used in language are essentially arbitrary. Scratches on a page or vibration patterns in air, they have no natural or inherent significance independent of what those who wield them understand by them. Witness the experience of trying to read a text or understand a speaker in an unknown language. O'Leary is at times well aware of this essential meaninglessness of language 'in its brute materiality as a collection of letters' (p.44 – *cf.* also Searle 1995, p.73), but as the book progresses and his concern strengthens to justify retaining traditional Christian formulations, he becomes readier to turn a blind eye to it (see *e.g.* p.179*f.*, 248*f.*).

2. The system of signs available even to fluent speakers of a language is inevitably finite. Language is not static, of course, and vocabulary is for ever being extended, refined, and in technical subjects certainly, made more precise: but even so, everywhere, it seems, there are enormous gaps in the coverage. Speaker and hearer alike have to proceed in makeshift mode, making heavy use of contextual clues, or their tasks would often be insurmountable. Many of the newest and most exciting developments involve for this reason frequent resort to metaphor: computers have 'memories', 'programs', 'ports', *etc.,* motor cars have 'wings', 'boots', and 'hoods' or 'bonnets'. Know the context, and such metaphors can aid understanding: but if context is not apparent, the scope for confusion is obvious. O'Leary takes over Derrida's term 'dissemination' for this aspect of language (p.41).

3. The problem is compounded in the case of written material - or any other permanent medium. Not all the contextual clues disappear in such circumstances, but many do. Particularly serious is the progressive loss of the shared situation between

writer and reader the further the text travels, chronologically or otherwise. The reader comes to the text from his own situation and may therefore be actively misled in attempting to interpret it by a significantly different set of clues.

4. There is a particular problem with religious language. This 'fourth' factor about religious language is that by definition it deals largely with the big issues, big, immaterial, abstract - God, for instance, time and eternity, ultimate value, the meaning of the universe itself. It is difficult, though even more essential, to 'earth' statements of this kind fully in the broad context which alone can give them defined meaning.

Layers 1 to 3 above apply as much to, let us say, the language of shopping as to theology. But a question which tends to be ignored in contemporary theological writing, including O'Leary's, is whether the difference between everyday speech and religious language is one of kind or merely degree. It would be wrong to conclude, for instance, on the basis of the above features of language that theological statements do not refer to real entities or cannot be true: we manage well enough in buying, selling, and returning goods despite the very same limitations of language. But the invalid negative conclusion does not automatically validate a positive judgment that truth is equally available to religious language. A lot of effort has gone into developing a commercial language that is sufficiently unambiguous to be viable (and where a party appears to be introducing ambiguities beyond the accepted usages, we take our custom elsewhere): theology so far has come nowhere near a similar, generally accepted precision.

The first three layers, applying, as I have indicated, to language in general, not just to religious language, make a vital point about the essential arbitrariness of language's raw materials. Wherever hermeneutics goes thereafter is really only variation and ornament on this theme. Text does not of itself possess meaning. Meaning has, as it were, to be thrust upon it (*pace* Stringer, quoted below, p.21: but the context of his comment is significantly different).

(iii) Signs and meanings in language

As O'Leary seems to weaken in his insistence on this fundamental meaninglessness of the signs used in language, the point needs elaboration. If I don't know Japanese, I won't understand the notices in that language on Oxenholme the Lake District railway station. Substitute 'English' for 'Japanese' in the previous sentence, and it is equally true.

At another level, however, the fact that words and phrases, in and of themselves meaningless, can, when employed as tools of communication within a shared language system, bear meaning for users schooled in that language, is nicely illustrated by a situation envisaged by Hirsch and reported by Vanhoozer. Hirsch imagined a number of pebbles on a beach washed by the waves 'into a pattern that resembles the phrase, "to be or not to be"' (Hirsch Eric 1967).

Vanhoozer's comment tells part of the story:

> It would be a mistake to try and interpret the pebbles, for strictly speaking, they have no message (Vanhoozer 1998, p.75).

He adds, 'For there to be meaning, there must be intention.' Clearly, if there is no author, no message can be intended. It is therefore wrong - and to this extent Vanhoozer is right - to interpret the pebbles as a message. But equally, like every other unusual situation, they cry out for interpretation: what natural forces can have produced this phenomenon? And of greater relevance in this context, they cry out, at least from the viewpoint of any observer with a working knowledge of English, to be read. To such a person they certainly 'mean something'.

The example highlights a sense in which letter shapes formed into words have no meaning, but also a sense in which they do carry meaning. And it makes clear that meaning is located not in the letter shapes themselves but in the mind of a human being. The pattern of the pebbles is what it is whether there is an author or a reader or not. There is no meaning in this text. But come a reader, and once they are perceived by that reader as having meaning, the

meaning is inevitably thought of as located in the words on the sand. It is, we may say, projected on to the pebbles – but by virtue of the subjective linguistic skills which the reader brings to the text.

Stringer (1991) came to a similarly ambiguous conclusion in an article on liturgical text. He asked (p.181) whether meaning is located 'entirely within the texts of the liturgy, and in the way in which those texts were used within the actual performance of the rite' or 'primarily in the minds of those who attended it and . . . different for each one of them'. Stringer comments: 'Obviously the "answer", if there can be an answer, must lie somewhere between these two extreme points'. He attempts to resolve the paradox thus highlighted by stressing the importance of the non-verbal symbolism in the liturgy, both symbolic objects and symbolic actions. But even these, he has in the end to admit, are characterised by a similar ambiguity. He concludes (p.194):

> Symbols do not, of their nature, possess 'meaning', nor, as has been shown, can they easily have 'meaning' thrust on them; rather, they appear to accumulate 'meaning'.

As a rider to Hirsch's example we may envisage a situation where an observer arrives whose knowledge of English is defective. He confuses the words 'be' and 'me', so reads the pebbles differently. But he too projects meaning on to them. The wrong meaning? No doubt. But just as authentic a hermeneutic process as in the case of a more competent English speaker – and it must also be stressed that there is nothing in the pebbles themselves to confirm or correct either reading. The difference in meaning, in interpretation, lies solely in what the interpreter brings to the text. Meaning is subjective

(iv) Beyond language: context and other factors

Linguistic knowledge is, as O'Leary's discussion makes clear, only one aspect of the subjectivity which the interpreter brings to the act of interpretation. But it is the most basic, and also perhaps the one most taken for granted. There are reasons for this. So much time and effort is invested in language, which has by and large been developed into an extremely

effective tool of communication. Like a well-tuned car, it does not require attention – until something goes wrong.

The other subjective elements which hermeneutics reminds us the interpreter brings to the text are many and varied, and therefore hard to catalogue or assess. They include values, commitments, interests, knowledge, experience, prejudices, and sensitivities, in short virtually anything or everything which goes to explain how the interpreter's brain works, and which therefore cannot help but affect, to a greater or lesser degree, the understanding of whatever text is being handled. They include the centuries old tradition of Christianity.

From one point of view that tradition is objective and supraindividual, and as such gives an established meaning to the signs and symbols of the religion, verbal or otherwise. But the tradition is only carried in the minds of its adherents. It is therefore subject to individual variations. The cut and thrust of community living may 'normalise' the variations to some extent, though rarely to the complete eclipse of individuality (see Searle 1995, p.98 on the primacy of the 'microlevel' in 'institutional facts'). Further, the resulting 'normality' itself can and does change significantly over time. There is nothing in the signs themselves to underwrite orthodoxy.

(v) Author to interpreter: bridging the gap

Given this situation, the closer author and interpreter are in time, space, training, experience, commitments, *etc.*, the more likely they are to share a common linguistic framework. But there is in many situations no direct link between author and interpreter except the text. And therefore there is no direct check on linguistic compatibility.

The present research benefits, in respect of the sample sermons, from working within restricted timescale, geography, churchmanship, *etc.*, factors which greatly assist understanding. For 40 of the sermons I had the advantage of being present when they were delivered, and for the other 10 of at least hearing and / or viewing them as they were designed to be broadcast and received. Broadcasting gives a partial awareness of context and some

access to non-verbal means of communication such as gesture and facial expression (television only) and tone of voice. The sermon recordings included with this dissertation are the equivalent of sound broadcasts, but with loss of contemporaneity.

But in any case the circumstances of a single visit to each church, even when supplemented by such things as a church magazine and the Preacher's questionnaire (see Appendix C), did not make possible anything like a full understanding of the background of church life which the sermon was presumably addressing.

Largely, perhaps, because the specific analyses undertaken here exempted me from providing complete interpretations of the sermons, I am not aware of any cases where the results are seriously affected by deficiencies in contextual awareness. This may, however, be an idle claim. A few cases of potential difficulty are discussed in the notes to individual sermons (see Appendix D): the possibility remains that many more have gone undetected.

Because there is a much wider time gap in relation to biblical material and other traditional Christian terminology, there is ample room for misunderstanding. The differences in the linguistic framework between origin and interpretation are obvious. They include, of course, the major discontinuity represented by the need for translation from the ancient languages of the Hebrew Scriptures and of early Christianity.

The Traditional language analysis is intended specifically to elucidate some aspects of this problem, and the particular hermeneutic presuppositions relevant to it are discussed in subsection 2.C(i). But hermeneutics is involved at every stage of the Subject analysis too (see subsection 2.B(i)). The more general points made so far, in as far as they describe how all language works, may serve as a warning against setting too much store by particular verbal formulations in any sphere of life. This is certainly a major plank in O'Leary's attempt to weaken the attraction of biblical fundamentalism: he writes, for instance,

> If all particular truths as well as truth in general - divine revelation - are inscribed in and exceeded by the textual play which stages them, then it becomes very difficult to say in what sense the Bible communicates truth (O'Leary 1996, p.120).

The principle of contextuality is a general theory of language with wide application. The imperative which it establishes of examining texts in their complex individual detail rather than simply assuming that words are always used in straightforward modern senses, and of bringing every possible exegetical tool to bear on the process, is very much what historical literary criticism has been practising for 200 years in the fields of biblical and of classical studies. The theoretical formulation of the problem in hermeneutics is new, the problem itself and a provisional methodology to deal with it is not. Hermeneutics clarifies such matters, and in doing so throws a new light on particularly difficult cases. It does not overthrow everything just for the sake of it.

(vi) *Religious language: the complicating factor*

The most serious hazards arise when O'Leary's fourth factor, specifically religious language, comes into play. Recognising that the problem with religious claims is not so much what McClendon and Smith (1975, p.29) term their 'convictional' status and the consequent difficulty of establishing their truth, but rather the difficulty of adequately fixing their meaning in the first place, O'Leary (1996, 9.211*f.*) responds by drawing a clear distinction between phenomenological and dogmatic instances of religious language and playing down the latter. His comment has a broader relevance than the specific, interfaith context which gives rise to it:

> This lesser emphasis on dogma comes from the fact that the religions present themselves as vital forces, whose impact is a concrete, historical matter, whereas their dogmatic claims concern invisible realities, scarcely verifiable.

But as O'Leary admits, the problem remains that 'dogmatic claims and questions are implicit' even in what he calls the 'first-order language'. His hope, interestingly, is (p.212):

Perhaps the concrete aspects that come to the fore on the interreligious plane will react on the internal debate of each religion, reducing their insistence on what they take to be their pillars and allowing them to become more aware of the problematic character of these ancient claims.

It is an enormous mountain to climb, and to judge from the current research, there is no concerted effort yet from the Christian side to surmount it, at least as far as makes any impact on the ordinary churchgoer, let alone the ordinary member of the public.

The 'credibility gap' central to the formulation of this research project is located precisely here, at the point where, in O'Leary's terminology, the phenomenal and the dogmatic abut. There is a long tradition of academic investigation around this area: the philosophy of religious language antedates hermeneutics. I pinpoint some of the chief theories in subsection 2.C(i) below. Here it may not be unfair to say that such investigation is, for a start, not geared to dealing with 'invisible realities' and tends either to stop short at this point or alternatively to beg questions by assuming that anything on the 'dogmatic' side of the divide is either analytical, symbolic (or at least in some sense non-cognitive), or simply meaningless.

An exception to this is perhaps the distinction drawn between analogical and metaphorical instances of religious language by, for example, McCabe (58) and Barrett (65*f.*) in Warner (ed., 1992). In as far as the distinction can be substantiated, analogy, most at home in the apophatic area of theology, seems to state the problem rather than provide a solution, but I say more about this in section 2.C (p.71).

There are strong arguments for these academic reactions to religious language. Wittgenstein's *wenn die Sprache feiert¸* translated by Anscombe as 'when language goes on holiday' (Wittgenstein and Anscombe 1967, §38), the 'grammatical' interpretations of *e.g.* the Yale school (Lindbeck 1984, p.???), and the symbolic tradition which can be traced back to Schleiermacher at the end of the 18th century but still flourishes today (*e.g.* in the 'narrative theology' movement) all, however, have this one failing that they do scant justice to the faith of the bulk of the world's Christians. Religious belief instinctively glories in the dogmatic: this is the stuff of faith, meaningful in the highest degree, and mostly seen by believers as

cognitively and ontologically and certainly literally true. Alternative approaches must offer an adequate explanation, on their respective theories, of its compelling and life-changing hold on its adherents.

Ukpong (2001) highlights the problem from the African perspective, adopting the approach of what he terms 'inculturation hermeneutics'. Of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation, he writes (p.24):

> In its positivistic form, it involves bracketing out the presence of the supernatural in the Bible. Inculturation hermeneutics is informed by the ideals of African culture. It seeks to make the message of the Bible come alive in contemporary contexts, and is strongly affirmative of the presence of the supernatural in the Bible.

While my project relates only to preaching in Britain, it must take account of the worldwide background of contemporary theology. But in any case there are many sections of the British church where Ukpong's comments would be warmly welcomed.

In terms of the Project context outlined in section 1.B above, only the 'liberals' are likely to be sympathetic to non-cognitive interpretations of religious language. The others, from atheists to fundamentalists, probably all have reasons for insisting on cognitive and literal readings, whether to affirm the claims, or to deny them. The challenge is to bridge these divides. The small steps in this direction attempted here are introduced in the methodological sections below on Subject analysis (2.B) and Traditional language analysis (2.C).

(vii) A hermeneutic anomaly?

Here, though, some general remarks about the treatment of such language relevant to both analyses. The method which I have adopted for the initial identification of traditional Christian themes and concepts in the sermon texts may be questioned on two counts. In the first place, apart from the inadequate grip on context inherent in my method of 'sermon tasting', the selection of references to traditional themes is made after only the most

perfunctory process of hermeneutic filtering and at a largely verbal level. The methodology was adopted to avoid loading the scales against the 'literalists' and their partners in 'face value' hermeneutics. But it carries the opposite danger of biasing them too strongly in their favour.

Certainly all interpretation begins with the words, because the words are the main tangible link between preacher and recipient. But in the normal scenario interpretation proceeds apace from that point onwards. Here on the other hand, at this very early stage the hermeneutic process is interrupted, and the terminology in question is separated out and marked for special treatment on the basis of little more than verbal form.

In the second place, although I may claim justification on the grounds of the controversies triggered by these and similar words in the wider context of the contemporary Western intellectual world, this only marks my procedure as a 'counterfeit' auditor's hermeneutic (p.26). It is counterfeit or unreal in that I am attempting to listen with the ear of the average 'literalist', but more particularly of the average 'secularist', rather than with my own personal assumptions and predilections.

This approach arises from the project's concern with the 'credibility gap' outlined above. But there are serious limits to how far one can ever listen with the ear of another. Whether it is acceptable at all in this case depends on how far the intellectualist assumption is allowed to run that all groups except, perhaps, the 'liberals' and some academic hermeneuts do in fact take a preacher's words and the words of the Christian scriptures 'at face value'. It is certainly true that the polarisation between 'liberals' and 'secularists' does seem to rest very much on the latter's 'face value' readings of the language of Christianity. But hermeneutics casts doubt on 'face value' readings. And of course neither the 'literalists' nor I handle this language in totally mechanical fashion. What I referred to above as 'the most perfunctory process of hermeneutic filtering' is not trivial, and cannot be sidestepped in any serious use of language.

Given the ambiguity and richness of language, the 'surplus of meaning' or 'dissemination' of words that goes beyond any one-to-one relationship between terms and concepts, it is always

necessary to separate out irrelevant instances of a term and to include instances of other terms which cry out to be treated as synonyms or near-synonyms. That is done here, at a surface, commonsense level, by all parties. Variant expressions like, for instance, 'the Easter story', 'Christ's victory over death', and 'God raised Jesus from the dead' are quickly grouped together under the heading of 'the resurrection of Christ'.

'Literalists' and 'secularists' will be quite happy with such a first stage hermeneutic, and will want to remind us that this terminology asserts or implies as facts, among other things, the existence of God, the existence of Jesus Christ, and the historical miracle of resurrection. If academic hermeneuts and the 'liberal' reference group prefer some more complex approach, these 'face value' supporters will claim, they will have to prove its worth, and they must at least start with the literal meaning of the terms.

Clear, plain, straightforward speaking is certainly a virtue, especially in the realm of a religious faith which preaches a universal gospel: if it doesn't mean what it seems to say, many will conclude that it is not worthy of the attention of anybody but a historian of religion. From this point of view, 'literalism' possesses the semantic high ground. But there is another side to the question. So many of the 'face value' meanings which the 'literalists' claim are by their own admissions paradoxical, and from any other standpoint illogical and therefore meaningless, that the 'liberals' need not feel their own position to be necessarily inferior.

This is not the place to detail the hermeneutic problems with 'literalist' understandings. Instead, a reference may suffice to the theological impasse described in section I.B(v) in connection with the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004. 'Face value' understandings of the old traditional language were felt in that context quite simply not to work.

And if hermeneutics is given free rein here, it holds out the hope of recovering a deeper, more satisfactory meaning for the terms in their original context. And such meanings, if established, for 'God', 'Christ', 'resurrection', *etc.* would rank as the new 'literal' meanings of the terms. Or, more precisely, they would rank as the contemporary formulation of what the biblical and early church authors thought it appropriate to express in the terminology we are

familiar with. And so such new interpretations would represent not disrespect for the traditional texts but rather the only way of doing them full justice.

From this point of view, the so-called 'face value' meanings represent an interrupted hermeneutic, frozen at the level of verbal forms, largely ignoring historical context, and therefore not running its full course. And an interrupted hermeneutic, all can agree, is not likely to yield any valid interpretation.

However, because concentration on 'face-value' interpretations of traditional terminology is an escapable factor in the controversy over religion today, this suspect strategy seems to be forced upon me. But to avoid Wittgenstein's charge that this is 'language gone on holiday' (see p.25), a close investigation into how the wielders of such language use it in practice may be seen as a reasonable interim substitute for the fully-fledged hermeneutic envisaged above. Within its obvious limits as a narrow study of 50 sermons, this is one objective of the Traditional language analysis of section 2.C.

D. Survey of earlier work

In the voluminous literature on Christian preaching, histories and other descriptive studies occupy a small but significant place alongside a plethora of textbooks and the cascade of published sermons. But while the preacher's subject-matter and use of biblical and credal language and concepts have figured frequently enough in this material, discussion has more often been conducted in broad and general terms, and has not involved detailed quantitative research. Exceptions to this rule of which I am aware are mentioned in subsection (iii) below. But first a few remarks on more general treatments relevant to the present project.

The literature surveyed here mixed the descriptive with the more or less strongly evaluative, often no doubt with an eye to influencing future practitioners of the art. But in as far as these writers detail both trends they approve and those they disapprove, they contribute to the overall 'landscape' of Christian preaching. I am concerned in this brief survey of earlier work, quantitative or not, both with the range of sermon subjects identified and with any steps taken towards the king of subject typology on which the present project is based (see subsection 2.B(i)).

(i) General studies

Ker and MacEwen (1888) survey the range of approaches adopted by preachers from the early centuries of Christianity up to their own day. They see the distinction between text-based and topic-based sermons as fundamental and write (p.390) that 'preaching has constantly varied between these two'. But as the later coalescence into the 'textual-topical' and the 'topical-textual' modes indicates, the distinction is by no means absolute. It is a matter of form as much as content. As far as this project is concerned, the salient point is that the most firmly text-based sermon is open to subject analysis.

In this vein Ker and MacEwen find within the textual category many 'different ways of drawing the substance of the sermon from Scripture' (Ker and MacEwen 1888, p.392ff.).

They criticise (p.9) the narrowness shown in this respect by some of the Evangelical school 'of the last century', and contrast it with the recommendation to aim at 'the widest application to the lives and ways of men'. But when they turn to the topical sermon they are much less expansive, commenting very unfavourably on the broader range of subjects which its practitioners have sometimes embraced. The so-called 'Illuminists' or 'Rationalists' of the 18th century, for instance, whom they discuss on p.241-287 dealt with economic, social, and scientific matters, including practical themes like agriculture, vaccination, making wills, animal anatomy, and 'trivial events of domestic or municipal affairs'. Ker and MacEwen describe such things as 'subjects of passing interest', which 'only attract the curious, and do not keep them for long' (p.11).

Dargan (1905, 1912) takes a wider view of the preacher's remit, but still within strict limits. He describes Robert Hall's Baptist sermons of the early 19th century, for instance, as a 'fine combination of philosophical thought with Biblical truth', citing as two of his most famous the sermons on the French Revolution and on the death of Princess Charlotte. Much of the abstract reasoning of Scholastic Age preachers, on the other hand, Dargan finds 'dry, sophistical, and unsatisfactory' (vol.I, p.287*f.*).

While insisting on the 'often full and cordial mutual recognition' between science and religion, Dargan laments the fact that that has by no means always been the case, and urges that

> the herald of God's saving grace in Christ should not be the enemy of the searcher after God's wondrous thought in creation (Vol.I, p.8-13).

But he classes it as one of the 'affectations' of 17th century Italian preaching when Giuglaris immerses his hearers too deeply in Averroes' anatomical dissections in a sermon entitled 'The Anatomy of Nothingness', or when Orchi spends too much time elaborating an analogy of the preening peacock to the same end (Dargan 1912, Vol.II, p.36ff.). He also echoes (Vol.II, p.205*ff.*) Ker's criticism of the Rationalists mentioned above.

The type of sermon which Dargan prefers has a firm biblical or doctrinal content but draws from it moral conclusions relevant to life. And even better, he implies, if those conclusions connect, as they often did from both Catholic and Protestant preachers in 19th century France, with the political and social movements of the day. Sprinkled with philosophical insights, they are further enhanced. The last preacher discussed in Dargan's work, Alexander MacLaren of Union Chapel, Manchester, seems amply to satisfy this prescription.

At vol.II p.292*ff.* Dargan discusses 18th century British preaching, finding a heavy stress on moral teaching but too little on Christian doctrine. To illustrate the point he introduces an informal 'research project' which in some respects (but not in its findings) reads like an early forerunner to the project described in this thesis. Dargan quotes Ryle's description of it:

> The celebrated lawyer, Blackstone, had the curiosity, early in the reign of George III, to go from church to church and hear every clergyman of note in London. He says he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher were a follower of Mahomet, or of Christ (Ryle 1902, p15).

The majority of writers on preaching in fact express a clear disapproval of the 'topical' sermon as opposed to the 'textual'. Greidanus, for instance, has recently summoned Smart as witness in this cause (Greidanus 1988, p.15). Smart writes:

> It inhibits the function of the sermon as a channel between the Scriptures and the church of today (Smart 1970, p.22).

Questionable as both assumption and conclusion here may be, they are certainly typical of the literature on Christian homiletics.

The major studies published respectively in 1926 and 1940 by Owst and Smyth are no exceptions to the general rule. Smyth's work covers English preaching from 747 to 1939

C.E., Owst's preaching in England in the medieval period. But whatever their judgments on the practice, both give ample testimony to the fact that wide-ranging preaching beyond the confines of the narrowly biblical is no new phenomenon in the Christian pulpit.

Owst comments that 'certain types of popular sermon might almost be described as the forerunners of the modern University Extension Lecture' (Owst 1926, p.188). This remark is part of his assessment of

> the medieval preacher's contribution to the beginnings of the demand for intellectual enlightenment on the part of the people, which is another and yet more important mark of the new era.

His criticism centres on the self-defeating nature of a strategy 'originally designed to steer a safe middle course in the moral and mental instruction of lay-folk' (p.189), those same lay people 'be they highly educated laymen or more rustic boors', as he had described them a few lines earlier, 'for whom initiation into theological mysteries was considered so palpably dangerous'.

Smyth mentions many types of sermon subject in his comprehensive survey (Smyth 1940). He does not attempt a systematic classification of sermons by subject. Nonetheless from various references to sermon theme dotted through his work, we can glean the following collection of topics:

> a. Creation, Roman history, hagiography, literature (p.14*f.*), quoting Owst on the Preaching Friars of the fourteenth century (Owst 1926, p.81*f.*).
> b. Vain and frivolous things (Smyth p.39), quoting from Waleys' censure of 'preachers who have studies to please' (Waleys c.1340).
> c. Natural science (Smyth, p.69*f.*, 78, 118, 240*ff.*).
> d. 'A moral essay . . . rather than a proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God ' (Smyth's criticism of Tillotson (p.160), and *passim*).

e. Theology contrasted with grammar, textual criticism, philosophy, history, and parallels 'from Profane Authors, or Rabbies (*sic*), or Fathers, with which they think they enrich their sermons' (Smyth, p.187*f.* , quoting from Claude in Charles Simeon's republication of Robinson's translation (Claude and Simeon 1827)).

f. Psychological study of character and motive (Smyth, p.229).

g. Human judgment, war, nature, duty to equals (Smyth, p.230*f.* : these are the subjects of four of James Mozley's University Sermons, published in 1876 (Mozley 1876).

h. Social and political themes (Smyth, p.232).

This is in addition to Smyth's preferred Bible-based type of sermon where theme is dependent on the passage being expounded. With the exception of item *b* above, there are obvious connections here with the main outlines of the categorical schemes adopted in section 2.B (p.53).

Sangster offers a classification of the subject-matter of sermons (see Table 1. 1 below). But it is not comprehensive, its categories overlap, and it is heavily biassed - not unreasonably for its own purposes - in favour of the religious. Although intended as a textbook for would-be preachers widely used textbook, *The Craft of the Sermon* owes its place here to the author's prominence in the field and to his claim that his typology 'can almost be called "classical"' (Sangster 1954).

1.	Biblical interpretation.
2.	Ethical & devotional.
3.	Doctrinal.
4.	Philosophical & Apologetic.
5.	Social.
6.	Evangelistic.

Table 1. 1. Sangster's typology of sermon subjects.

This amounts to a division of sermons by function, and no doubt affords maximum assistance to the practising preacher. But Sangster in effect admits its deficiencies as a classification of subject-matter, when he claims for the first category here, biblical interpretation, that

> by preaching through the Bible, and applying it to modern life, the preacher could cover (either directly or by implication) nearly every human need (p.26).

With more rigorous logic, perhaps, Edwards offers the preacher attempting to mediate between biblical text and contemporary situation a typology of 'areas of application' (see Table 1. 2 below). He comments:

> Implicit to this has been a claim that all of these areas are not only legitimate areas for preaching but are in fact areas to which the homily must extend on occasion to be an adequate response to the gospel (Edwards 1990, p.53).

How far the sermons in this sample practice this principle is revealed by the results set out in chapter 4 and Appendix G below.

1.	Personal
2.	Litugical
3.	Parochial
4.	Theological
5.	Ethical
6.	Social

Table 1. 2. Edwards' typology of 'areas of application'

(ii) The Lectionary question

The Lectionary has an interesting role in the interplay between textual and topical preaching. The issue is explored further in section 4.C below (see p.104). Apart from arguments about the value of worship following the same themes throughout a larger or smaller section of the

Christian church (but never in any likely scenario the whole church throughout the world), the Lectionary principle is often justified (see, for example, Allen (1980), p.39) as broadening the scope of preaching beyond the individual preacher's predilections.

Paul Scott Wilson, however, puts a couple of question marks against the system. He suggests that it runs counter to the nature of biblical preaching as practised over history because it tends to narrow attention down to individual passages rather than opening the hearers' minds to the perspective of the whole canon of Scripture. And he makes the further point that

> More focus on the Lectionary also implies less opportunity for thematic or doctrinal preaching, at least as we have come to know these (Wilson 1995).

It seems to be true that existing Lectionaries have been compiled more with an eye to achieving a comprehensive coverage of Scripture than of topics as such (Allen 1980, p.3), although of course that need not always be the case.

(iii) Studies from overseas churches

In recent years groundbreaking studies of Christian preaching have emerged from many different parts of the world. A comprehensive survey of this literature would be out of place here. Where specific comparisons with the results reported in this thesis can usefully be drawn, they will be discussed at the appropriate places below (see p.91, 165). At this point it may be useful to mention a few pieces of work which have a broader methodological or thematic relevance to the concerns raised here.

1) Studies of women preachers

From the U.S.A. Smith and Brown stress the undoubted importance of the contribution which women are increasingly making in a still nonetheless male-dominated milieu. Smith talks of 'the feminist vision and its impact on preaching' (Smith 1989), demanding:

This raging against injustice must be incorporated into feminist images of God, for it is one of many appropriate responses to the realities in the world (p.74).

Brown's study of 116 Black women preachers in the U.S.A. has some methodological affinities, in its use of personal visits, recorded material, and preacher's questionnaires, to the present project, although her main goals and objectives are very different (Brown 2003). On p.17 Brown promises 'an analysis of the particularities of contemporary black women's call, models, sermon preparation, content, delivery, and personhood'. She claims on p.219 that her work is 'one of the first homiletical research projects using a large number of "live" cohorts'.

Brown's respondents were drawn from 18 denominations, though the largest group by far, almost 40% of the total, belonged to the African Methodist Episcopal Church (p.20). For the most part her book presents the data in respondents' own words, but she does make some limited use of statistical methods of presentation, including bar charts (see especially her Appendix, p.238*f.*). She comes closest to an overall conspectus in a subsection of chapter 3 headed 'Text Selection' (p.91-98) and in a paragraph about 'the role of the black preacher' (p.122).

The former of these two passages begins by detailing the particular biblical stories, texts, and subjects 'that are known in black congregations regardless of theology, denomination, size, or location'. They are listed in Table 1. 3 below.

In chapter 4 Brown writes:

The role of the black preacher is to assist the listeners in the identification of spiritual, social, cultural, psychological, and economical issues that affect their daily life. The sense of disenfranchisement stagnates personal pursuit of relationships, goals, and objectives (Brown 2003).

a. Stories	
(1) Daniel in the lions' den	
(2) 'These are they' (*Revelation* 7.14: *cf.* Brown p.92)	
(3) Woman with the issue of blood	
(4) Crossing of the Jordan	
b. Texts:	
(1) *Hebrews* 11.1-2	
(2) Luke 4.18-19	
(3) Micah 6.6-8	
(4) *Psalm* 23	
(5) Ezekiel 37	
c. Subjects:	
(1) The Son	
(2) Salvation	
(3) Favour	
(4) Liberation	
(5) Resurrection	

Table 1. 3. Themes familiar in black congregations (Brown 2003).

All or most of the items on these lists are mentioned elsewhere in her book in connection with individual preachers, but without any indication of the relative frequency of each. Two things, however, emerge. One is the predominance of biblical sermons. The other is the equally striking emphasis on social and political liberation. Not surprisingly issues of racial and gender discrimination and the resulting need for empowerment run through the study as continuo (see the author's own comments from introduction (p.15) to conclusion (p.217)). The Tanakh (Old Testament) is extensively used because it 'resonates with themes of justice, fairness, mercy, and God's redemption and love of a people, despite sin' (p.93, quoting a reply from Kimberley Detherage). In her concluding chapter Brown challenges 'black women proclaimers everywhere' to emulate

> 'the freedom of the black pulpit that enabled cries for justice and civil rights to ring throughout this country and around the world' (p.217*f.*).

Economic issues were mentioned more rarely by the preachers Brown reviews. But on p.35 she lists economic empowerment as one of the foci of the sermons of a preacher licensed in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church before 1900 C.E. And Dallesteen Yates includes 'socioeconomic phenomena' within her very wide-ranging purview in sermon preparation (Brown 2003, p.103). If each subject area on her list finds its way into the finished sermon even only once or twice a year, say, her preaching covers an exemplary breadth of themes from the conspectus of human knowledge. Apart from the tools of biblical study, her interests include the following (in addition to 'specialist interests' on the one hand and 'everyday life experiences' on the other):

> a. Media.
> b. The arts.
> c. Academic subjects, *e.g.* sciences, maths, civics, languages.
> d. Current events.
> e. Sociopolitical, sociocultural, socioeconomic phenomena.

A largely biographical work by Larson, *Daughters of Light* (Larson 1999), charts the prominence of women preachers in the Quaker community in both America and the United Kingdom (in Appendix 3 (p.334) Larson cites a 1908 memoir by Doncaster on J.S. Rowntree for figures from Hoyland's *Yearly Meeting Statistics* showing that deaths of Quaker women ministers in London during the period 1700-1819 were running as high as 40% of the total (Doncaster 1908, p.252). However, Larson does not discuss the subjects of their sermons in any detail. But for one preacher, Elizabeth Wilkinson, whose travel journal for 1761-1763 survives, she lists themes Wilkinson preached about in different places (Larson 1999, p.189ff.). They range over commercial ethics, the lure of materialism, respect of persons, and child-rearing as well as exhortation to greater spiritual awareness and humility before God.

2) Large-scale studies from Africa

Research carried out over recent decades in Africa is also instructive. Turner reports a study covering 8,000 sermons preached in the Church of the Lord in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana, undertaken as a World Council of Churches assessment of that body's Christian credentials (Turner Harold and Bible 1965). It also refers for comparative purposes to studies of a further 6,000 sermons, mostly from Anglican pulpits in E. Nigeria. Turner presents some analyses of subject-matter. But his data consists not of the sermons themselves but solely of records of the biblical texts on which they were based. I have not attempted to extract comparative figures for the sermons studied here. My sample size is too small for significance, and in any case the results would no doubt say more about the *Revised Common Lectionary* than about preachers' personal choices.

Ross uses student observers' reports and questionnaire-based interviews to analyse 'the message being preached and its effects in the life of the people' (Ross and Moyo 1995) in mainstream Christian churches in Malawi between 1990 and 1992. 500 sermons were analysed and some 470 interviews conducted (almost equally divided between preachers and members of their congregations). Ross's focus is chiefly on the interface between Christianity and traditional African beliefs and on 'community-strengthening' and 'nation-building' emphases in the sermons. In this latter respect he documents an important shift, following a bishop's pastoral letter, from issues of personal life and faith to attempts 'to relate biblical teaching directly to social and political affairs in Malawi' (p.28).

Mijoga reports a parallel study of preaching in the African-instituted churches in Malawi in 1996-1997 (Mijoga 2001). The study covers 229 sermons, which were recorded and transcribed. It found a strong emphasis on personal morality, which had also figured prominently as an underlying theme in Turner's results from Nigeria reported above.

3) African perspectives on biblical hermeneutics

West and Dube also reprint a number of other articles which offer a new perspective on preaching in the African context (West and Dube Shomanah 2001). Lemarquand stresses the

prominence of suffering as a theme of African sermons (Lemarquand 2001), quoting a sermon by Gitari entitled 'The Good Shepherd: Ezekiel 34, John 10' (Gitari 1996, p.128ff.). McEntire offers a study from Ethiopia in 'competing hermeneutics' applied to the story of Cain and Abel. Confirming my comments above (p.15) on the suspicion of hermeneutics, McEntire's point is to stress that historico-political readings of the story (in terms of liberation, class struggle, and invasion) are all dismissed by Protestant Bible students in Ethiopia in favour of spiritualizing interpretations (McEntire 2001).

Several of the authors represented in West and Dube offer an African critique of missionary preaching. Nkomazana, for instance, writes about the reception of the Bible by the Bakololo people of Botswana in the time of David Livingstone (Nkomazana 2001):

> Unfortunately the biblical interpretation of the missionaries did not seem to relate to the pertinent questions which directly face the people. Nevertheless, Sekeletu eventually granted Livingstone permission to teach his people (to read) the Bible
> . . . .

> As Livingstone continued to teach the Bakololo to read the Bible for themselves, they began to interpret it in their own language and within their own cultural context. This made their experience of the Bible meaningful and real. They turned the Bible into a kind of medicine for acquiring clothes, rifles, and beads, *etc.*

Two contributors highlight the impression left by even the earliest missionary preaching of having moved a long way in the direction of rationalism when compared to the Bible itself, as it became available to African readers. Lemarquand refers to 'the deist world view which pervaded even the most pious of missionaries' (Lemarquand 2001), quoting the description of it by Abogunrin as 'quasi-scientific' and retaining 'only a veneer of Biblical world-view' (Abogunrin 1988).

Mafu, in an article entitled 'The Bible and rain-making institutions in Zimbabwe', gives a telling example of the 'dichotomous state of affairs on the part of Christian missionaries'. He writes (Mafu 2001):

> Their duty called for the Christianisation of communities in Africa and this involved teaching them to trust and pray to God for the supply of their needs. Yet they themselves were constrained by the mechanical philosophy imbibed by Protestantism. . . . A large number of phenomena which used to be explained in religious terms were now explained in terms of scientific cosmology. The weather especially was now explained in theoretical terms, from which the supernatural was totally removed.

The credibility gap for the early missionaries' African hearers was not the distance between the Bible and their everyday life but the distance between the missionaries' interpretations of the Bible and what the Bible and everyday African life had in common. It is salutary to realise that the distance between Bible and preacher can only have widened in the case of the contemporary, 21st century sermons analysed in this research. But just as the 19th century missionaries themselves were no doubt unaware in their day of the gap between their message and the Bible, and were therefore able genuinely and sincerely to insist on the authority of the Bible, so the Church today continues, for whatever reasons, to present those same Scriptures to the world as the ultimate foundation for its faith and worship.

4) The postcolonial world
The challenge of freeing the biblical material from 2,000 years of ecclesiastically conditioned interpretation and rediscovering the original thrust of the story it tells in fully rounded historical and political perspective is being met most determinedly today by what is termed 'postcolonial theology'. Shaking off the Westernised blinkers with which biblical criticism was inevitably born in the age of the Enlightenment, postcolonial theology is a global phenomenon and very much a movement of the turn of the century. Drawing on the experiences of the victims rather than the perpetrators of imperialism to achieve its aims, it subsumes under its wing the largely South American project known as 'liberation theology'.

Liberation theology was perhaps the most practically effective theological movement of the later 20th century. Its hermeneutic achievement was to give voice to the political thrust of the biblical message of liberation, and its genius was to inspire action on this message in the social and political spheres. How far its approach to biblical material finds an echo in the sermons studied in this project is indicated where relevant in the analysis of links (see section 4.D and especially the comments on p.165).

Liberation theology bases itself on the biblical story: it does not criticise it in the way that postcolonial theology insists is necessary. In 'going global', therefore, it has also been significantly transformed. Sugitharajah writes in *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpetation*

> It is important to be mindful that this same Bible contains elements of bondage and disenfranchisement. What postcolonial biblical criticism does is to make this ambivalence and paradox clear and visible (Sugirtharajah 2002).

This is one tine of the postcolonial fork, whose desired outcome is, in Sugirtharajah's words that 'the Bible will not be seen as a rampaging and intruding text but as a chastened and ambivalent text' (p.101). The other prong of the attack is seen earlier (p.98*f.*) where Sugirtharajah has offered a postcolonial reading of the biblical passages which present Christ as the 'one mediator' between God and man. By applying a thoroughly contextualised hermeneutic he seeks to remove the exclusivist, missionary implications of these texts.

Later in his book he refers to a Palestinian reading of *Genesis* 13.15, where the promise of the law is said to be 'for ever'. His claim is that in context this phrase means no more than 'for all your life'. If this reading can be substantiated, well and good: if not, the verse is further proof of Sugirtharajah's point that the Bible itself is part of the conundrum (p.100).

(iv) The interfaith: a disclaimer

It would be inappropriate here to attempt a survey of studies of preaching in other religions. Neither space nor knowledge suffices to do justice to a field that is as extensive as it is important. The quotation from Rice with which this chapter is headed must stand as my recognition at this point of the interfaith context. Preaching is, to use his phrase, 'virtually universal in human societies' (Rice 1987, p.496). The 'snapshot' of Christian preaching presented in this thesis cries out to be understood, with all due academic rigour, against a fully global perspective. It is a challenge I fear I must leave with the reader.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

"What does it mean 'I'll pray for you'?" She hesitated for a second.
"Should I feel bad? Am I not a good person?" . . . .

"Translate it into 'have a nice day.'" I'm thinking wittgenstein(*sic*).
Language gone on holiday. "And if you really don't like it, just say, 'I
love you too. And I'll pray for you also.'

<div align="right">(Wilkins 2005, Sep 09, 2005)</div>

The methodology governing the collection of the 'primary data' for this research, the 50 recorded sermons, is set out in this chapter. How Subject and Traditional language analyses proceed is also explained: each analysis involves its own hermeneutic presuppositions, described in subsections 2.B(i) and 2.C(i).

As indicated above (p.2), no claim is made to statistical significance for the findings. But a clear methodological explanation will, it is hoped, allow the results to be replicated and, more important, comparable figures obtained from a larger sample on any points which merit further investigation.

A. Collecting the data

(i) Selection of churches

Rather than operate a process of purely random selection, it seemed desirable to organise the project around specific categories of church. The image of the church as a body that espouses an incredible and irrelevant set of beliefs may or may not be something to worry Christians. It is one of the working hypotheses behind this research (see above p.63) that this image is at

least justified by the church's failure, with one or two notable but controversial exceptions, to modify it in its public pronouncements from the pulpit.

The selection strategy adopted was intended to maximise the chance of finding evidence against the hypothesis. 30 of the 50 churches would be drawn from categories most likely to provide it. So, 10 sermons were drawn from each of the following three categories:

1. Broadcast services (national or regional radio or TV, but not local radio).
2. University or college chapels and churches connected with educational institutions or known to serve students.
3. Cathedral or 'central' denominational churches.

The remaining 20 churches are drawn equally from, on the one hand, urban or large town and, on the other, rural or small town settings. It was unfortunately impractical to include a further group of 'occasional services', *viz.* weddings and funerals, although these events probably still attract the most genuinely broad-based congregations found today.

Denominational spread within each category was also important. Each main group of 10 churches mentioned above was to include 4 Anglican churches, 3 Roman Catholic, 1 Methodist, 1 U.R.C., and 1 Baptist. This distribution reflects, in very crudely rounded figures, the relative size of each denomination in England. It was decided in advance, in recognition of progress achieved in the direction of church unity, to accept as a suitable substitute for a church of a particular denomination a Local Ecumenical Project church or an ecumenical occasion involving the target denomination. This happened on 5 occasions (sermons 2, 4, 5, 18, 39).

Geographically, the project needed a clear West Midlands dimension, based on Birmingham, where I was studying, and Worcester, where I had decided to live. 20 churches were, therefore, drawn from the area of the Anglican diocese of Birmingham and 10 from the area covered by the Diocese of Worcester. This is broadly in proportion to the respective populations (1,010,400 in 2000 C.E. for the Birmingham local authority area and 541,400 for

the County of Worcestershire - both dioceses in fact extend some way beyond these local government boundaries). The remaining 20 churches would, for comparative purposes, be drawn from elsewhere in England, dictated by broadcasting schedules (one broadcast service in fact came from a Cardiff church) and my personal movements.

Categories and denominations were allocated to particular weeks on a random basis. The initial allocation was made by throws of the dice at my then home in Dent, Cumbria on 21 November 2001 with the kind assistance of a friend, George Brown, J.P. of Sunderland. Already the intended starting date of Advent Sunday 2001 looked unduly optimistic, so for this and other reasons clear provision was made for dealing with delays to the schedule of visits which might occur from time to time.

The simple expedient to be adopted where this happened was to transfer the category / denomination combination for the relevant Sunday to the next available week at the end of the schedule. This would extend the visiting period beyond the intended 50 weeks, but it would take pressure off a tight programme.

Geographical allocation was left to be made as plans clarified from week to week. But once it had become possible to establish a category / denomination / area combination for a particular Sunday, the final selection of church would be made by random selection - from as complete a list as possible of churches that satisfied the relevant criteria. In the case of the Birmingham and Worcester areas, selection for the urban and rural categories would be from the complete listings published in denominational handbooks or websites. In other cases a list of nearby churches would be drawn up, in some cases very short (in the 'central' and 'educational' categories there might be only one candidate), in others longer but never containing more than 10 or 12 possibilities. Selections at this stage were made, again by throws of the dice, by the researcher himself.

Details of further adaptations incorporated into this plan as the project progressed are given in chapter 3.

(ii) Initial approaches to churches

1) Personal visits

To prepare the way for visiting the 40 churches in the four 'non-broadcast' categories an introductory letter was sent seeking permission to include the church in the project. Enclosed were a covering letter from Dr. Martin Stringer, my supervisor, and a *pro forma* reply sheet and stamped addressed envelope. The text is included at Appendix B below.

The letter outlined the purpose of the research. It also asked for permission to record the service for the limited purposes of the research only, and to

> check one or two other details with you, relating chiefly to the preacher's
> qualifications and experience both theological and secular.

It promised qualified anonymity to church and preacher in the following terms:

> An appendix of churches and preachers will need to be included in my
> dissertation, but no person or church will be individually identified (unless by
> permission) in any detailed discussion or publication.

No date was specified for the visit. The intention was to minimise the chances of influencing the preaching on the day. In many cases months elapsed before I attended the church, my minidisc recording equipment was extremely unobtrusive, and my age is well above that of the typical postgraduate student. In the event, from conversations I had with the preachers after the services, the strategy was apparently entirely successful in this respect: none had been aware during the service of who I was or why I was there.

The letter also gave an undertaking that

If someone other than yourself is preaching on the day I visit, I will seek
further permission before using the recording.

The majority of letters met with ready, and in many cases speedy, agreement. A number of
refusals were encountered. Concerns about participation felt by some churches were
sometimes satisfied by subsequent contact, sometimes not. In a few cases, I was unable to
take advantage of permission given, either because of difficulties travelling, technical
problems with the recording, or changes necessitated by broadcasting schedules.

In the final outcome, to organise the 40 personal visits 69 churches were approached. 13 did
not reply, 4 refused permission, 6 permissions could not be taken up, and 6 churches had to be
dropped for a variety of other reasons. On the 18 occasions where I had to seek further
permission of a preacher after the service I was never refused.

With the *pro forma* reply slip giving permission for my visit several churches included further
details of their programme, together sometimes with a schedule of preachers. The information
about location and times of services was useful, as it would have had to be obtained by one
means or another. However, in order not to compromise the element of randomness in the
selection of sermons, I did not allow details of services and preachers to influence the final
choice of date for my visit.

2) Broadcast services

As few details of the broadcasting schedules are available very long in advance, a different
procedure was devised in respect of the 10 services recorded from radio or television.
Permission would be sought *ex post facto* - from the Executive Producer of the programme,
the preacher, and if appropriate the church itself.

Approaches were made in this way in 12 cases. Agreement was forthcoming in 11 of these, no reply was received in the twelfth. One service for which permission had been received was not included in the final selection, because an alternative had appeared in the programme schedules which better fitted the pattern of denomination and area combinations as it took shape.

(iii) Preachers' information

The questionnaire devised to collect relevant details from the preachers relating to training, qualifications, experience, preaching strategies, and (where relevant) supporting church activities is explained in section 3.D below and included in full in Appendix C. The information was to be requested from preachers after listening to the sermons. In the case of the broadcast sermons, a considerable lapse of time was often involved before this could be done.

B. Subject analysis

As described in the opening paragraph of chapter 1, the first aim of the project is to 'chart the range of topics discussed in sermons'. Associated with this was the hypothesis that

> for all its claims to be relevant to the whole of life, the Christian church is in practice
> concerned with only a very narrow slice of it (p.2).

To test this hypothesis a two-stage process was devised (see p.3). This section sets out in more detail the methodology which leads from 'primary data' *via* the relevant 'secondary data' to the analytic results.

Classification is never straightforward. But it is essential to the aims of the Subject analysis that the classificatory strategy is independent of the data, as far as that is ever possible. The specific hermeneutic presuppositions explained in subsection (i), therefore, consist largely of the details of the multiple typologies devised for the purpose (and adapted as the research proceeded in only very minor aspects). The reasons for adopting multiple schemata are also set out in subsection (i). These frameworks are not the results of the analysis. As a substantial part of the subjective input brought by the researcher to the dissertational hermeneutic (see p.16), they are rather – for better or for worse - determinants of the findings.

Subsection (ii) then explains the methodology devised to prepare the raw data, the sermons as recorded, for classification under the defined schemata. This preparatory procedure aims to identify the logical 'skeleton' of the sermon by analysing it into a meaningful series of constituent parts. The 'secondary data' that result, consisting of longer or shorter sections depending on the flow of the preacher's argument, are the material for classification. The lengths of each section will then form the basis to the calculations presented in section 4.C.

(i) Specific hermeneutic presuppositions

The Subject analysis, as also the Traditional language analysis (see section 2.C below), proceeds under the general hermeneutic presuppositions discussed in section 1.C above. In particular, the diagnosis in subsection 1.C(vii) of the interrupted hermeneutic applied to the traditional Christian language in the sermons must not be forgotten. The Subject analysis does not break free of its constraints (see subsection 2.C(i) below for discussion of attempts to resolve the problem in the Traditional language analysis).

With these provisos, the Subject analysis may be seen as a special case of interpretation whereby the material is classified on the basis of a number of different conceptual schemata. This process has its own supplementary presuppositions. These consist chiefly of the explicit classificatory frameworks on which the analysis is based and the working rules governing their application.

It is of the essence of the research that the analytic frameworks are independent of the data being analysed. Their function is to reveal in clear perspective not only what subjects are discussed in the sermons but also what subjects are not. In as far as the schemata and the rules for applying them were modified in the course of the research, something of a hermeneutic spiral is in operation. But the aim of the resulting adjustments was never to narrow the perspective so that the data, as it were, filled the screen, but rather to preserve a broad canvas and specifically prevent any unwarranted encroachment on 'unoccupied' territory.

Quite apart from the long-standing Christian bias of the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme referred to in subsection 1.B(i) above (see also p.250 below), a number of reasons suggested the need for more than a single classificatory framework. The essential subjectivity of hermeneutics was one. There are often many possible ways both of analysing sermon structure and of classifying the subjects of the structural units thus determined. Rules were devised to maximise consistency of treatment: they are set out in the following subsection (see p.60) and indicated in the full analyses contained on CD-Rom C Thesis workbench (see Appendix E(v) for access instructions). It is hoped that by this means it may be possible for others to replicate, or at least understand, my procedures and results.

The multiple classificatory methodology has other advantages. It enables comparisons to be made between the sermons as preached and the normal preaching strategies revealed by the responses to the Preacher's questionnaire. It also allows the broad perspective integral to the overall context and aims of the research to be counterbalanced by a finer-scale investigation which does more obvious justice to the professional theological and homiletic concerns of the pulpit practitioner. This latter, more peripheral purpose is served by applying the Dewey Decimal schema, but within the area of Dewey range 200s Religion only: the relevant presuppositions and the Dewey results are set out in Appendix G (p.).

The schemata are outlined in the immediately following subsections. Hermeneutically, it must be emphasised that all (except the Dewey schema, which is only partially used: see Appendix G) are intended to be comprehensive typologies, although all admittedly suffer from some conceptual overlap.

1) Survey schema

To begin with the simplest of the frameworks, the Survey schema (so called because it is taken from the Preacher's questionnaire – see section 3.B and Appendix C) consists of 11 categories, as shown in Table 2. 1 below.

	Survey category	**Short name**
1	Personal life & growth	Personal
2	Family	Family
3	Economic	Economic
4	Community	Community
5	State and nation	Nation
6	Global	Global
7	The arts	The arts
8	Science	Science
9	Ideas and communication	Ideas & media
10	Religion: Christian	Christianity
11	Religion: Other	Other religions

Table 2. 1. Survey schema

As presented in the questionnaire, and therefore as applied here, the Survey schema has the perhaps unexpected characteristic that category 10 Christianity functions chiefly as a classification of last resort for material – material with Christian content, of course - that could not realistically be placed under any of the other headings.

As applied here, this includes Tanakh (Old Testament) content. Because the Old Testament is so pervasively regarded in Christian churches as Christian scripture, sermons preached from Christian pulpits on themes taken from it would not normally be regarded – by preacher or congregation – as sermons about Judaism. Hence in their replies to the questionnaire preachers were clearly including such discussions under the heading Christianity. For comparability, therefore, the Survey schema analysis followed suit, unless the context explicitly indicated otherwise. However, the strategy was reversed under the 'Faith-aware' analysis (see subsection (2) below). There, without any implication that these are not still Christian sermons, discussions in them of Tanakh passages and themes are classified as Jewish in subject-matter.

Comprehensiveness under the Survey schema is achieved by making use of category 6 for the most general themes (except abstract, metaphysical, or religious subjects). This is in line with the pervasive emphasis in categories 1 to 6 on the scope of reference. Categories 7 to 11 suffer from possible conceptual overlap with the earlier categories: in such cases categories 7 to 9 and category 11 normally take precedence (the role of category 10 has already been indicated).

As this is a survey of Christian preaching, default category 10 is still of paramount importance. It covers discussions of Christian doctrine, Church practice, and Bible knowledge that are not explicitly linked by the preacher to everyday life outside the doors of the church. What is not implied, of course, is any suggestion that sections classified under other headings (even what is said about other religions) do not have a Christian orientation.

The suspect 'secondary data' in the realm of traditional Christian terminology resulting from the incomplete hermeneutic described in subsection I.B(vii) receive limited further analysis here, where such material can be accommodated in categories 1 to 9. Where this happens, it

suggests a possible completion, admittedly with extremely broad brush, to the hermeneutic process. But where the 'face value' emphasis is too clearly on invisible realities and eternal truths for this to be appropriate, this schema does nothing to resolve the hermeneutic anomaly.

The topics on the list distilled from Smyth's review of English preaching (see p.33 above) can all be accommodated fairly straightforwardly under the Survey schema - with the exception, perhaps, of (*b*) Vain and frivolous things. Dallesteen Yates' concerns (see p.39) also all find their places readily enough in the Survey scheme. There are not many obvious gaps either in Smyth and Yates – Smyth perhaps neglects Survey categories 2 Family and 3 Economics, and Yates categories 6 Global and 11 Other religions.

2) Faith-aware schema

The second classificatory framework employed, what I term the 'Faith-aware schema', may be seen as in counterpoint to the Survey schema. Its distinctive feature is that religion is here very much the genus of first choice. Categories in the 20s gather together all material that assumes commitment to one or other faith community.

The Faith-aware schema also allows a more detailed analysis to be undertaken, as its 10 top level categories each contain up to 10 second level classes. Table 2.3 below indicates the full two-level structure. It borrows from Dewey the convention by which categories ending in zero normally function as hold-all categories for themes covering more than one lower-level subject.

Comprehensiveness rests on the availability of category 0 for the highest degree of generality. Conceptual overlap causes some problems here too. Table 2.4 shows how the top level categories of this and the previous schema relate. Overlap is solved by following clear orders of precedence, which are different, as indicated, from the policy adopted for the Survey schema. Here categories in the 20s Religion have first claim and the 30s Society come last.

Faith-aware category		Faith-aware category		Faith-aware category	
0	**General subjects**	40	**Personal themes**	80	**Family themes**
1	Bibliography	41	Physical	81	Physical environment & standard of living
2	Information science	42	Mental	82	Family education
3	Encyclopedic	43	Spiritual	83	Rites & celebrations
4	Language	44	Emotional	84	Quality time
5	Mathematics	45	Psychological	85	Dynamics and loyalties
6	Not assigned	46	Interpersonal relations	86	Rules, relationships, values
7	Media, publishing	47	Individual in society	87	Relations with wider community
8	Not assigned	48	Biographical	88	History and achievements
9	Other general subjects	49	Other personal topics	89	Other family themes
10	**Philosophy**	50	**Science & technology**	90	**Sport, Leisure & other subjects**
11	Metaphysics	51	Physics & cosmology	91	Athletics
12	Epistemology & causation	52	Chemistry	92	Physical sports
13	Mind	53	Human sciences	93	Power sports
14	Philosophical schools	54	Other life sciences	94	Games
15	Not assigned	55	Electricity & electronics	95	Holidays & trips
16	Logic	56	Construction & engineering	96	Not assigned
17	Ethics	57	Environmental sciences	97	Creative hobbies
18	Not assigned	58	Not assigned	98	Collecting hobbies
19	Other philosophical topics	59	Other scientific topics	99	Other subject areas
20	**Religion**	60	**Economics**		
21	Hinduism	61	Work		
22	Judaism	62	Money		
23	Buddhism	63	Property		
24	Christianity	64	Standard of living		
25	Islam	65	Trade & industry		
26	Sikhism	66	Communications		
27	Paganism, etc.	67	Transport		
28	Humanism	68	Charities		
29	Other religions	69	Other economic topics		
30	**Social themes**	70	**The arts**		
31	Global	71	Music		
32	Supranational	72	Theatre & cinema		
33	National, regional	73	Dance		
34	Work & leisure associations	74	Sculpture		
35	Local community	75	Architecture & design		
36	Interest groups	76	Painting & drawing		
37	Groups & networks	77	Photography		
38	Friends	78	Literature		
39	Other social groups	79	Other arts		

Table 2. 2. Faith-aware schema

The Smythian typology (see p.33 above) fits equally well here, as does the list from Dallesteen Yates (p.39).

This schema offers no help at all with the incomplete hermeneutic applying to traditional Christian terminology. All such subjects are gathered together in category 24 Christianity and must look to other schemata for more careful interpretation.

Survey code	Survey category	Faith-aware range		Faith-aware range	Faith-aware category	Survey codes
1	Personal life & growth	40s		0s	General	6, 9
2	Family	80s		10s	Philosophy	9
3	Economic	60s		20s	Religion	10, 11
4	Community	34-37		30s	Social themes	4–6
5	State and nation	33		40s	Personal themes	1
6	Global	30-32		50s	Science & technology	8
7	The arts	70s		60s	Economic	3
8	Science	50s		70s	The arts	7
9	Ideas and communication	0s, 10s		80s	Family themes	2
10	Religion: Christian	24		90s	Sport, Leisure & Other subjects	1, 4-6
11	Religion: Other	20-23, 25-29				

Table 2. 3. Survey schema & Faith-aware schema: comparison of categories

3) Neutral schema

By contrast again, religion is excluded as a specific category from the third typology. In the face of the ambiguity of the term 'religion' the Neutral schema takes as its starting-point the plethora of 'totalising' definitions of 'religion', and the views of the world which underlie them, according to which no particular sphere of life or aspect of the world can be marked off from the rest as 'religious'.

In practice the Neutral schema may be seen as similar to the Survey schema but (a) without the default category Religion and (b) with a second level of analysis. The categories available are shown in Table 2. 4 below. Codes 14 and 23 are kept as categories of last resort.

Comprehensiveness is again achieved through the presence of category 0. Conceptual overlap is less of a problem with categories for Religion removed from the field. The 30s Social themes is divided here by function rather than scope.

Material that is classified in the 'Religion' categories of the first two schemata is variously treated, but is chiefly classified under the headings shown in Table 2. 5 below. The Neutral schema therefore makes some impact on the incomplete hermeneutic of subsection 1.C(vii). Its two-level structure gives it a significant advantage here over the Survey schema. However, classification in terms of 'real-world' relevance is by no means always possible, and where it is not, instances have reluctantly been labelled 14 Philosophies & systems.

Neutral category		Neutral category		Neutral category	
0	**General subjects**	**40**	**Economics**	**80**	**Friends & family**
1	Bibliography	41	Work	81	Relationships
2	Information sciences	42	Money	82	Decisions & discipline
3	Encyclopedic	43	Property	83	Rtes & celebrations
4	Not assigned	44	Standard of living	84	Quality time
5	Not assigned	45	Trade	85	Conflict & cooperation
6	Not assigned	46	Communication	86	Welfare & support
7	Media, publishing	47	Transport	87	Education & training
8	Not assigned	48	Charities	88	Environment & events
9	Other general subjects	49	Other economic subjects	89	Other friends & family themes
10	**Philosophy**	**50**	**Science**	**90**	**Sport, leisure & other subjects**
11	Metaphysics	51	Mathematics	91	Athletics
12	Epistemology & causation	52	Astronomy & cosmology	92	Physical sports
13	Mind	53	Physics	93	Power sports
14	Philosophies & systems	54	Chemistry	94	Games
15	Language	55	Environmental sciences	95	Holidays & trips
16	Logic	56	Computer science	96	Not assigned
17	Ethics	57	Human sciences	97	Creative hobbies
18	Not assigned	58	Other life sciences	98	Collecting hobbies
19	Other philosophical topics	59	Other sciences	99	Other subject areas
20	**Personal themes**	**60**	**Technology**		

Neutral category		Neutral category		Neutral category	
21	Character & values	61	Medicine		
22	Personal decision-making	62	Building & construction		
23	Spiritual	63	Agriculture		
24	Emotional	64	Domestic science		
25	Conflict & cooperation	65	Electronics & computers		
26	Action & achievements	66	Biotechnology		
27	Mind	67	Transport		
28	Physical themes	68	Other manufacturing		
29	Other personal themes	69	Other technologies		
30	**Social themes**	**70**	**The arts**		
31	Social: culture & values	71	Music		
32	Politics & decision-making	72	Drama		
33	Ceremonies & practices	73	Film		
34	Law & administration	74	Dance		
35	Social conflict & cooperation	75	Architecture & design		
36	Welfare & support	76	Painting, drawing & sculpture		
37	Education & training	77	Photography		
38	Social environment & events	78	Literature		
39	Other social themes	79	Other arts		

Table 2. 4. Neutral schema

Subject	Neutral category	
Doctrines	14	Philosophies & systems
Ethics & morality	17	Ethics
Personal values	21	Character & values
Spiritual commitments	23	Spiritual
Church, etc. principles	31	Social: culture & values
Church, etc. government	32	Politics & decision-making
Sacraments and ceremonies	33	Ceremonies & practices
Church, etc. officers and rules	34	Law & administration
Welfare activities	36	Welfare & support
Teaching and evangelism	37	Education & training
Church, etc. history	38	Social environment & events
Bible & other sacred books	78	Literature

Table 2. 5. Treatment of religious themes under Neutral schema

Category 23 Spiritual is also used with reluctance, in spite of the 'spiritual revolution' context (see subsection 1.B(iv) above), because the absence of any clear and accepted definition of 'spirituality' makes it somewhat problematic. For many the term 'spiritual' seems to be set

today in opposition to 'religion': such people will no doubt be unhappy that the category is used here for material explicitly classified elsewhere under Religion. I can only agree that a large question mark hangs over such use: for meaningful debate to continue over these terms, serious efforts must be made to resolve the ambiguities.

(ii) Subject analysis procedure

The two-stage process mentioned above (p.51) attempts first to produce an outline 'skeleton' of each sermon which distills its logic and scope into brief compass for subsequent analysis. The aim is to be true to any structure signposted by the preacher, supplemented as necessary by the researcher's own reconstructions of the argument. The resulting 'skeleton' should not only clarify the logical flow of the sermon: its individual units should amount to an inventory of subjects that is amenable to reasonably unambiguous classification (subject to the provisions for multiple tagging inherent in the parallel schemata discussed above). Together the 50 'skeletons' so produced comprise what I term the 'secondary' or 'processed' data for this part of the project.

In preparing the 'skeletons' brief summaries of each section are produced, and notes on timing, function, and procedural rule followed are added, together with a 'normalised' version of the theme to facilitate classification. Function and procedural rule serve different purposes in the analysis. The function tag enables certain useful distinctions to be drawn in the ensuing calculations according to the logical function of the section in the sermon. The procedural rules, on the other hand, aim to maximise consistency in classification (see p.52 above).

Table 2. 6 below groups the available functions into the three major types which will be used in the presentation of the results (see p.106*ff.*, also Table 4. 25). Given the Christian commitment of the preachers, as well as the difficulty of separating fact from value in any sphere, the most commonly identified function is 'Desc./Eval.' Some preachers illustrate their

points more generously than others. Frequency of 'structural' signposting also varies considerably.

Function group	Function tag	Explanation
Core functions		
	Descriptive	Factual assertion
	Evaluative	Value judgment
	Desc./Eval.	Value-laden assertion
	Normative	Pattern for consideration
	Prescriptive	Imperative to be obeyed
	Parenthetic	Significant aside
Illustrative function		
	Illustrative	Example or analogy
Structural functions		
	Introductory	Preview of sermon or other preliminaries
	Summary	Summary review of sermon

Table 2. 6. List of function tags available.

Table 2. 7 lists the analytic rules developed as the project proceeded. Rule ASIS implies no particularly difficulty in classifying a section: it has a clearly identifiable subject, and classification under all three or four schemata is relatively straightforward. This is the most common classification. CRIT (never used) and BIBL (infrequent) are virtual equivalents of the ASIS rule, but intended specifically for artistic (including literary) and biblical material where the emphasis is on the 'medium' rather than the 'message'. By contrast XART and XBIB indicate that the Faith-aware schema (and Dewey, where relevant) classifies the 'medium' (*viz.,* in the case of XBIB, its biblical provenance) , while the 'message' is handled under the Survey and Neutral schemata. XREL indicates a similar split for more general religious material, which is given the appropriate religious Faith-aware and Dewey codes, but classified under the Survey and Neutral schemata by the aspect of life to which the section relates. These rules seem to give apt effect to the principles underlying the multiple classificatory approach.

Norm	Rule
ASIS	Analyse normally – 'as is'
CRIT	Analyse as media criticism
BIBL	Analyse as biblical criticism
XREL	Dual analysis Religion / life
XBIB	Dual analysis Bible / subject-matter
XART	Dual analysis Media / subject-matter

Table 2. 7. List of procedural rules for Subject analysis.

The aim is that once the 'skeletons' are produced, the second stage of the analysis can proceed. The 'secondary' data consist, in effect, of a series of labelled sections. The labels can then be classified on the basis of the schemata set out in subsection 2.B(i) above (and the Dewey schema where relevant), and calculations made of the time devoted to different categories of subject under various circumstances. For the results see chapter 4 (and for the Dewey schema Appendix G).

C. Traditional language analysis

The second aim of the project was described in the opening paragraph of the Project outline (section 1.A) as to chart 'the connections made between traditional biblical or credal themes and the modern world'. This aim takes its motivation, as described there, from a desire to test the hypothesis that Christianity refuses by and large to address the 'credibility gap' associated with such terminology today, in Western societies at least. The research proposal submitted to the University of Birmingham in autumn 2001 referred to this refusal in terms of a 'conspiracy of silence' and continued:

> The project aims to examine, at the level of the worship of the local congregation, how far . . . .   the silence is in fact breached by preaching which assists congregations to face up to the issues of credibility inevitably surrounding a faith whose foundational texts are around 2,000 years old and more.

This subsection sets out the specific hermeneutic presuppositions underlying the Traditional language analysis and the methodology by which in this case the road from 'primary data' *via* the relevant 'secondary data' to analytic results is traversed.

(i) Specific hermeneutic presuppositions

The best chance of resolving the interrupted hermeneutic discussed in subsection 1.C(vii) above lies in the Traditional language analysis. The Subject analysis can make only limited progress in that direction (see p.54, 58). The Traditional language analysis operates with a dissertational hermeneutic (see subsection 1.C(i.6) above) that should offer benefits to all parties. The Analysis of hermeneutic strategies (see 2.D(ii.1) below) focusses on the pulpit hermeneutic and the exegetical hermeneutic behind it (see subsection 1.C(i) above), in as far as they are made explicit in the sermon. And the Analysis of contextual indicators (2.D(ii.2)

below) charts the evidence that can be gleaned from how the preacher relates occurrences of the traditional terminology to other themes and concepts.

This strategy certainly progresses the aborted hermeneutic. But this is not necessarily to 'rewind the tape' and run the process to completion as though without interruption. The identification and labelling of certain verbal formulations as 'traditional language' obtrudes on the natural flow of the hermeneutic movement. It is not always possible to undo the interruption.

50 Christian sermons, some 50,000 words in total, and packed by and large with traditional Christian terminology. To keep the investigation within manageable limits while at the same time maintaining consistency, it seemed important to define clearly the target terminology to be analysed. I therefore adopted the following principles of selection - still working, it will be seen, with the suspect hermeneutic discussed above.

1. Themes from the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds chosen as most likely to be discussed in sermons and to avoid unnecessary overlap.
2. Certain other central themes from the Bible and Christian doctrine and experience.
3. Biblical 'miracle stories' mentioned in the sermons.

The biblical 'miracle stories' earned their place alongside doctrinal themes because of their frequent occurrence in the sermons, and because attitudes to them expressed or implied from the pulpit are likely to have an important influence in determining the general perception of what a Christian is required to believe.

These principles of selection were treated as open-ended during the course of the study. Items were added, amended, or regrouped to accommodate themes and episodes encountered in the sample. Table 2.8 below shows the final amalgamated and hierarchical list on which the Traditional language analysis operates. The two stages of this analysis are explained in the subsections below.

I God			
A Trinity			
1 Father		**II Angels good & evil**	
2 Son			
a Eternal Word			
b Christology		**III Biblical 'miracle' stories**	
c Saviour		A Pentateuch narratives	
d Lordship of Christ		1 Garden of Eden	
3 Holy Spirit		2 Israel out of Egypt	
B Power & authority of God		3 Other Pentateuch narratives	
1 Creation		B Other Tanakh (O.T.) narratives	
2 Providence & intervention		C Life of Christ	
a Historical		1 Annunciation	
b Individual		2 Birth narratives	
3 Law of God		3 Signs & wonders	
a Sin & the fall		4 Transfiguration	
b Reward & punishment by God		5 Resurrection	
c Final judgment		6 Ascension	
4 Word of God		D Pentecost	
5 Kingdom of God		E Other New Testament narratives	
C Love of God			
1 God's chosen people			
a Israel & the Promised Land			
b Holy catholic church			
2 Salvation			
a Forgiveness of God			
b New birth and life			
c Christ within us			
d Christ beside us			
e Vocation & guidance			
f Eternal life			

Table 2. 8. Selected themes for Traditional language analysis.

1) Analysis of hermeneutic strategies

The research faces its biggest challenge at this stage. The attempt to balance an academic approach with 'face value' interpretation, keeping in sight the fivefold project context of section 1.B, stands or falls here. What I have called the 'credibility gap' is the focus of concern. Opinions differ, as I have indicated above (see p.3*f.*), as to how wide the gap is in each case, whether it can be bridged, and indeed whether it exists at all.

It exists, I think I may at least claim, for some people, myself obviously included, as the select list of terminology implies. I hope I may also claim, as common ground between the 'literalists' and the other parties to the debate, the recognition mentioned earlier (see p.10) that the themes and doctrines of Christian tradition are 'articles of faith', and somehow different from the data of everyday experience. Those for whom that difference amounts to a serious problem of credibility see it as not simply a question of what may be termed 'evidential credibility', *i.e.* are there reasons for believing that *x* happened in situation *y*? For them it is rather a matter of 'conceptual credibility': is event *x* or entity *z* something we can conceive of as possible or meaningful at all? To the literalists, however, how could the all-consuming faith by which they live fail to have meaning?

The Analysis of hermeneutic strategies aims to gather data relevant to the debate by classifying the strategy of interpretation adopted in each sermon for each of the selected traditional themes. Table 2. 9 below sets out the list of strategies drawn up for this purpose.

Stance	Code	Strategy
Confirmed 'literalist'		
	LE	'Literalist' interpretation endorsed
	CC	Credibility problem as challenge to faith
Implied 'literalist'		
	LI	'Literalist' interpretation implied ('conspiracy of silence' category)
'Non- literalist'		
	DE	*La différance* emphasised
	CQ	Credibility questioned
	RP	*Regulative interpretation propounded*
	SP	Symbolic interpretation propounded
	FP	*Functional interpretation propounded*
	NP	*Narrative interpretation presented*
	TP	Translation proposed
	AP	Amendment proposed
Rejected		
	RJ	Rejected on any interpretation

Table 2. 9. List of hermeneutic strategies by stance.

(*N.b.* Strategies shown in italics were not found in the sermons.)

They range from the explicitly 'literalist' to complete rejection, and are grouped in the Table under four broad 'stances' to aid presentation of the results in subsection 4.D(ii) and in descending order of 'literalism'.

The list combines what may be called 'commonsense possibilities' (LE, CC, LI, CQ, AP, RJ) with some of more technical pedigree derived, as indicated in the relevant subsections below, from approaches current in philosophical theology (DE, RP, SP, FP, NP, TP). As will emerge in chapter 4, several of the available strategies (indicated in italics in the Table) turned out not to be represented in the sermons as analysed. That in itself is noteworthy.

Identifying particular instances in the sermons of strategies derived from theories in philosophical theology is a very selective application of what are intended as general theories of religious language. As such, of course, their exponents would claim that they apply to Christian doctrine, the Bible, and the traditional language of these sermons *in toto*. These theories all assume, as I understand them, a 'credibility gap'. Their reinterpretations of traditional Christian language aim, for the most part, to bridge the gap and so extend the currency of that language, with or without significant modification. It may well, therefore, be that instances classified here as LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied stem not so much from any 'conspiracy of silence' as from the licence given under one or other of these theories to continue using such traditional language as newly understood. My concern in this research, however, as I have indicated earlier, is only with such strategies as are made explicit by the preacher beyond misunderstanding.

a) 'Literalist' strategies of interpretation

Subject to the *caveat* in the last paragraph strategy LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied is the 'conspiracy of silence' strategy *par excellence*. And under the 'face value' approach of the project it is the default category. LE 'Literalist' interpretation endorsed is only used where the preacher has put a 'literalist' interpretation beyond dispute by an explicit comment. Apparently emphatic adverbial expressions like 'really', 'actually', or 'in fact' are not

normally sufficient, since they may be part of the web of dramatic illusion spun under some variety of narrative interpretation.

As wielded here, therefore, strategy LI is a broad receptable accepting the committed 'literalism' of preachers who might be proud to call themselves 'fundamentalist' and the incidental 'literalism' occasioned simply by the lack of explicit alternative explanation. If this seems like academically unacceptable woolliness, it stems directly from the deliberately 'secondhand' hermeneutic of the project. What would be unacceptable in terms of my second hypothesis would be to import greater clarity and precision into the sermons than might be recognised by an average member of the congregation.

Methodologically, the criterion for LI is simple. It applies when traditional Christian terminology is used naturally and without hermeneutic commentary. To this extent it needs no further definition. But in terms of the project rationale it is more problematic.

Questions about credibility centre around 'literalism' in interpretation. And that implicates not only the three strategies of 'literalist' stance in Table 2. 9 above, but also, in its own way, CQ Credibility questioned. I discuss DE *La difference* emphasised separately in subsection (c) below.

I print the words 'literalist' and 'literalism' in inverted commas for two reasons. The first is because of the ambiguity of these and cognate terms. The second relates to the interrupted hermeneutic.

The definition of what counts as 'literal' interpretation of Scripture and what does not is discussed by Vanhoozer (1998) . He settles for a very broad use of the term which appears to give blanket shelter to interpretations like the metaphorical, which would in everyday speech be strongly contrasted with the literal. He contrasts 'literal' with 'literalistic'. He writes (p.312), 'The literal sense is the sense of a literary act'. He is anxious to avoid an overwooden verbalism which might seem to require even the most anthropomorphic talk about God to be

understood as true in every last precise detail (his example here is 'The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous' from *Psalm* 34.15) before qualifying for the description 'literal'.

I share Vanhoozer's concern, but want a label here for an intermediate position between Vanhoozer's 'literal' and his 'literalistic'. If the 'literalistic' interpretation understands God as having an optic system like our own, the adjective 'literalist', as I use it here, is intended to refer to a position that certainly emphasises, in Lindbeck's terms, 'the cognitive aspects of religion' and the function of doctrine as 'informative propositions or truth claims about objective realities' (1984, p.16): but more than that, the issue is rather whether God takes concerned cognisance of the actions and experiences of human beings, of whether, in fact, the deity is personal and a player alongside us in the universe or whether such language is metaphorical symbolism enshrining something different. An interpretation which chooses the first option in answer to that theological question is classified here as 'literalist': others would count as 'non-literalist' and require further explanation.

The second reason for the quotation marks round the word 'literalist' in Table 2. 9, the interrupted hermeneutic, is not so easily resolved. The Traditional language usages classified under these 'literalist' or 'literalist-related' strategies do not, unlike most of the 'non-literalist' strategies, advance the hermeneutic, but remain at the verbal level. I have struggled for this reason to find the right words in the preceding paragraph for the description of the 'literalist' position, aware of the danger, in Wittgenstein's terms, of being taken in by 'language gone on holiday' (see p.60 above).

I hope that those within the context of world Christianity whom I label 'literalist' will accept both label and description. They are unlikely, perhaps, to raise any difficulty. Traditional Christology, for instance, seems to me to attribute to Jesus so many contradictory opposites – finite / infinite, physical / spiritual, vulnerable / omnipotent, fallible / omniscient, and so on – as to defy logic front on. A genuinely 'charitable hermeneutic' would surely assume a 'non-literalist' interpretation and proceed to explore precisely what that might be. But the rationale of my research forbids me to rule out the 'literalist' interpretation *tout court*. And for those

who hold it, the logical problem is as nothing when set against what they see as the surpassing grandeur of the divine condescension demonstrated in the incarnation.

I also hope that those of an opposite persuasion will allow me to continue with the interrupted hermeneutic, at least as far as the 'literalist' or 'literalist-related' strategies are concerned. Progress in these cases must await the Analysis of contextual indicators (see subsection 2.C(ii) below) and concluding comments in chapter 5.

Strategy CC Credibility problem as challenge to faith counts as one of the 'literalist' strategies of interpretation while CQ Credibility questioned does not. Each is related to LE and LI, but in crucially different ways. Both may be seen as recognising difficulties in 'literalist' understandings, and neither offers an alternative. But CC takes the harder line of leaving the matter as a challenge to faith. CQ's approach is more sympathetic and leaves the door ajar for 'non-literalist' interpretations.

b) Symbolic strategies of interpretation

The label SP Symbolic interpretation propounded requires particular comment for two reasons. (1) Language is a system of symbols, and therefore any reading of a text could be described as 'symbolic interpretation'. The sense in which I use the phrase here is much more restricted. (2) SP might be thought to cover any non-literal interpretation and so render many of the other alternatives redundant. Again I understand the category in a more restricted sense. It is intended primarily to identify what Lindbeck calls the 'experiential-expressive' approach to religious language(Lindbeck 1984, p.16), stemming from Schleiermacher and his often varied followers, but beyond that, admittedly, also for instances of non-literal interpretation which do not fall clearly under any other alternatives.

Pace Lindbeck, however, I do not regard symbolic language as 'noninformative and nondiscursive' just because it refers to 'inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations' rather than to 'objective realities'. Symbols themselves, like any term or concept, have no truth value, and some of the sentences they feature in may be analytic or express value-

judgments. But some will be substantive claims about one aspect of life or another. The crucial hermeneutic significance of SP, though, is that by definition a symbol symbolises something: defined with greater or less precision, that is its meaning in context.

c) Hermeneutic of différance

DE has a recent provenance in the work of Barth but an intellectual pedigree going back *via* Aquinas' 'analogical language', to the Fathers, famously Augustine. I distinguish the rare and valiant affirmation of the principles of negative theology, stressing the limits of language even as it uses it to make statements about God, from cases of ordinary metaphorical description, which here fall under SP above. Green uses the phrase 'hermeneutical space' (1999, p.183) for Barth's *différance*, linking it too with Frei's 'breathing space' and Derrida's 'uninterpreted remainder'. O'Leary credits Derrida with 'a series of apophatic techniques worthy of negative theology' (1996, p.66).

Commonly advocated hermeneutic strategy though it is, DE is nevertheless something of a logical enigma. A balancing act between assertion and denial, it sets warning flags rather than providing answers. Support is supposedly given by similar indeterminacies in physics, but the comparison is, I suspect, misleading.

DE is perhaps close enough to the 'literalist' strategies of interpretation for many 'literalists' to welcome it as giving acceptable expression to the split they already recognise between religious and everyday language (see p.10, 66). But by the same token, DE does not go far towards resolving the underlying problems of 'literalism'. It is virtually identical with CQ, but with a particular linguistic angle on the problematic credibility. In this it may be seen as some justification of the defective hermeneutic in operation here (see subsection I.C(vii)).

d) Wittgensteinian strategies

Two strategies, FP Functional interpretation propounded and RP Regulative interpretation propounded, which I expected to find employed in the sermons but which were conspicuously

absent, reflect Wittgenstein's much-quoted but also much-debated *dictum* that meaning is located in the use of an expression. In the full Wittgensteinian application this is a theory describing all language. It enshrines the important principle that meaning cannot always be put together from dictionary definitions of the individual words in an expression. Meaning is dependent on the expression's role in a language 'game' specific to a particular 'form of life'. And religion is one such 'game'.

The rules of meaning have to be learnt by playing the 'game': one 'game' is not easily commensurable with another and has to be learnt separately. Lindbeck attempts on these grounds (1984, p.86) to 'immunise' religious language from rational criticism. But the incommensurability of 'games' is a crucial matter of current dispute. O'Leary rejects Lindbeck's position and calls for a 'logic of relativity' (O'Leary Joseph 1996, p.12) to overcome the problem. The language metaphor in the Wittgensteinian theory seems to me to imply that incommensurability is not insuperable: translation between languages may never be exact, but is never hopeless either.

A bold version of FP was applied to the religious language of the Homeric Greek epics by Dodds writing in 1951. He explained it by means of a theory.of 'overdetermination' (Dodds 1951, p.7, 16, 30f.). Events in Homer are frequently attributed to intervention by one god or another. Dodds' argument was that this was not seen as detracting from human responsibility for heroic or for shameful deeds, but rather as a way of marking their superhuman or subhuman extraordinariness. The strategy has, it seems to me, a wider than classical relevance.

To Wittgenstein and Lindbeck, doctrines are the rules of the 'game', the grammar of Christianity, or rather, as Lindbeck describes them later, 'exemplary instantiations or paradigms of the application of rules' (Lindbeck George 1984, p.81). This is a central plank in the 'cultural-linguistic' argument that all Christian doctrine should be understood as 'regulative' in intent and not as itself making concrete 'truth-claims'. It is uncertain, however, both how doctrine so understood relates to other instances of religious language, and also

whether the thrust of this approach is to support faith or to undermine it. It was perhaps therefore unlikely that preachers would make much use of so two-edged a sword.

e) The strategy of translation

TP Translation proposed is reserved for cases where a preacher explicitly claims to be translating the traditional terminology into the language of today. It may be seen as an extension of FP. It accepts the cultural-linguistic stress on religious talk as a self-contained language interpretable only in its own terms, but doesn't hesitate to take the further step of translation. This seems to justify treating it as a separate strategy, on the grounds that it demonstrates a possible path from religious language to everyday talk which seems to offer significant hope for the future of religion.

f) Narrative strategy

NP Narrative interpretation presented relates to the movement in theology which appears to be widely favoured at the present time by both 'literalist' and 'liberal' preachers. It includes cases of what Le Poidevin (Le Poidevin 1996, p.118*ff.*), would term 'make-believe', following Walton's analysis of the emotional impact of fiction (Walton 1978) and quoted extensively by Boulton (Boulton 2002). But it can adopt a fully biblical, almost fundamentalist, dress. However, as identification here has to be explicit, the criterion for NP would be a story clearly described by the preacher as non-factual or whose historicity is emphasised as irrelevant.

As narrative theology is widely espoused at the present time, I had expected to find frequent instances of this strategy in the sample sermons. I suspect it was represented, but if so, it was never acknowledged.

g) Radical alternatives

AP Amendment proposed and RJ Rejected on any interpretation give up the task of interpreting the traditional material as it stands. AP salvages something from the remains of the terminology in question, RJ nothing. They count as hermeneutic strategies in their own

right only where the interpreter identifies a case of 'language gone on holiday' (see p.25 above), a purely verbal play ungrounded in reality. Normally, however, AP and RJ will be responses to a reading emerging under some other, probably 'literalist', strategy.

'Chastening' the text as envisaged by postcolonial theology (Sugirtharajah 2002, p.101: see p.??? above), discussed in section 1.D above (p.43), would be an example of one or other of these radical alternative strategies, depending on the severity of the 'punishment'.

Classification under AP or RJ in respect of one particular item on the list of target themes above does not, tt must be stressed, necessarily imply anything about the preacher's attitude to other traditional terminology.

2) Analysis of contextual indicators

As the Analysis of hermeneutic strategies has only limited potential to advance the interrupted hermeneutic (see subsection 1.C(vii)), the main burden of that assignment must fall on the Analysis of contextual indicators. Contextuality of meaning is, along with subjectivity, one of the twin legs which hermeneutics requires to rise above the mire of meaninglessness of the physical symbol. So this analysis attempts to map the contextual clues to the meaning of the traditional themes given in the sermons.

Since mapping links in this way complements - and may on occasion overlap - the general Subject analysis, it seems appropriate to proceed on a similar basis to that discussed in the preceding section (2.B). Clearly, aspects of the world invoked in this connection are in some sense themes of the sermon, maybe only themes raised in passing, but sometimes forming an independent section which features in the Subject analysis. For present purposes the Faith-aware and Neutral schemata developed for the Subject analysis are employed.

A general map of all contextual indicators will still not fully chart every passing reference to a subject in every sermon, because it relates only to items linked to the selected themes. But it will, it is hoped, usefully signal the aspects of life which preachers see or do not see as relevant to the traditional language of Christianity. For the hermeneutic objective, however, of clarifying the meaning in context of the terms in question, a detailed exegesis of each occurrence would be necessary. That is, unfortunately, impossible within the bounds of an M.Phil. thesis. But an attempt is made to identify patterns of contextual meaning attaching to particular items or groups of items.

Contexts link indicators to terminology under different 'modes'. All shed some light on how the preacher is using the language, although O'Leary adds a note of caution (1996, p.42*ff.*) when he endorses Derrida's stress on the 'indetermination of every context'. Table 2.10

Mode group	Code	Mode label	Description
Causal			
	OCC	Occasion	*X* is OCCasioned by *Y*
Contrast			
	CON	Contrast	*X* and *Y* presented as in CONtrast
Focal			
	EFF	Effect	*Y* is EFFect of *X*
	FOC	Focus	*X* if FOCussed on *Y*
	INS	Instance	*Y* is INStance of *X*
Logical			
	CAT	Category	*X* belongs to CATegory *Y*
	DEF	Defnition	*Y* is DEFinition of *X*
	EVI	Evidence	*Y* is EVIdence for *X*
Response			
	REQ	Requirement	*X* REQuires *Y*
	RES	Response	*Y* is RESponse to *X*
Imagery			
	ICO	Illustration	*Y* is ICOn (illustration) for *X*
	SYM	Symbol	*X* is SYMbol of *Y*

Table 2. 10. List of link modes
(N.b. *X* - Traditional term. *Y* - Linked contextual indicator.)

lists the possibilities identified in the sermons, and groups them into 6 main sets to assist presentation of the results in section 4.D below.

In preparing the summaries of contextual indicators for each sermon, the 'secondary data' for the analysis, I have included details of which link mode, if any, applies. There is not necessarily anything sinister in the absence of links, indicated by the tag 'No specific link or illustration given'. There are any number of good homiletic reasons for NUL links on any particular occasion. But especially where the hermeneutic strategy is implied rather than explicit, a critical approach is perhaps appropriate. Given Wittgenstein's warning about 'language gone on holiday' (see p.25 above), it cannot be taken for granted that the preacher is purveying significant meaning at every point and not sometimes mere verbiage.

The 6 groups and 12 modes identified in Table 2.10 above need, I hope, little explanation beyond the information given in the 'Description' column. As indicated, the variable X in that column stands for the traditional term under investigation, and Y for the related contextual indicator. In the summaries in the 'secondary data' Y is represented by the entry labelled 'Link analysed as'.

The single-member Contrast group (link mode CON) in fact embraces a number of different relationships. Preachers commonly illuminate a point by setting one term or idea in contrast to another. Creation, it may be, against evolution; divine foreknowledge against human free will; prayer against modern medicine; and so on. Such contrasts take various forms. All are classified as CON here, in the belief that if a sermon opposes X to Y, with acceptable logic or not, Y says something significant about the meaning of the term X in context, categorising it in effect by implication.

'Focal' links indicate the field of operation or concern which the preacher sees as relevant to a traditional theme or concept. 'Response' indicators illuminate the terminology by pinpointing a real or desired reaction provoked by or appropriate to it. 'Logical' links show the positive categories to which a preacher is assigning a concept or what is being used as evidence of that

concept. A 'Causal' indicator registers its place in a chain of cause and effect by identifying an antecedent condition. And the 'Imagery' group includes links which illuminate a theme *via* the realm of imagery, specifying either what the concept symbolises (SYM) or what it is symbolised by (ICO).

The Analysis of contextual indicators proceeds by a simple count of the number of links classified under each category of the relevant analytic framework. As indicated above, only two of the schemata used in the main Subject analysis are applied here, the Neutral and the Faith-aware.

(ii) Procedure for Traditional language analysis

As with the Subject analysis (see section 2.B(ii)), a two-stage procedure was devised. The first step aims to produce an 'inventory' of the traditional terms found in each sermon. In the full inventory a code is added to each item representing the hermeneutic strategy applied by the preacher (see subsection 2.C(i.1) above, and in the case of the traditional themes (but not the 'miracle' narratives) the number and 'modes' of any associated contextual indicators (see subsection 2.C(i.2). Summaries of the contexts are also included, and 'normalised' versions of any indicators.

Strictly, in a study of contextual meaning the second stage should be close and comprehensive examination of individual cases. In any meaningful sense this task is clearly beyond the scope of an M.Phil. project. Four sample exegeses are set out in Appendix F(iii). But for the rest, to facilitate such generalisations as can be drawn, the second stage is to classify the 'normalised' links (using the Faith-aware and Neutral schemata only, as indicated above) and to perform simple frequency counts of strategies, indicator modes, and codes, and to calculate percentages from these as relevant. The time dimension used in the Subject analysis is not appropriate here.

Chapter 3

DATA COLLECTION PHASE

> The entire enterprise of preaching is predicated upon the assumption
> that there are analogies between the situation addressed by the biblical
> writer and situation in your parish today.
>
> (Edwards 1990, p.45)

A. The schedule as amended

After a number of trials of recording equipment and analytic methods in different churches, data collection began officially on Rogation Sunday, 5 May 2002, the Sixth Sunday of Easter. Appendix A contains details of churches, preachers, dates of visits, interview questions, and other matters. The results emerging from the analyses are presented in chapter 4.

Planned originally to be completed in one year, thus ensuring an even coverage of all the seasons of the liturgical year, the collection period was extended as a result of various difficulties, personal and otherwise, in establishing a schedule of visits. The 50th sermon was not recorded until 7 November 2004, the Third Sunday before Advent some 30 months later.

Even this date would not have been met, if further flexibility had not been introduced into the schedule as originally determined (see section 1.A(i) p.47) by two subsequent decisions. One, made early on in the data collection period, related to the broadcast sermons: if no service of the required denomination was being broadcast on the designated week, the first available broadcast service from that denomination was used instead. The second adjustment was a later decision that after Advent 2002 the strict sequence of deferred weeks would be modified, to the extent that on any given Sunday I would visit the first church on the schedule which

was reasonably accessible in terms of my personal movements and from which the necessary permission had been received.

In the event 40 different Sundays from the Christian Year are represented in the research, one (Pentecost) three times, and eight others twice (two Sundays in Easter, Trinity Sunday, three Sundays after Trinity including the Last Sunday after Trinity, the Fourth Sunday before Advent, and Christ the King). Sundays not represented include two in Lent, three in Easter, and seven during the period of Ordinary Time after Trinity.

The category, area, and denominational proportions set out in subsection 2.A(i) above were maintained as consistently throughout the sample as mathematics and practicalities allowed. It was mathematically impossible, as is clear from Table 3. 1 below, to carry the overall proportion of areas represented within the sample down to the allocation of denomination / category combinations to areas. There is therefore a certain arbitrariness at this level.

Anglican				Roman Catholic				Methodist				U.R.C.				Baptist.			
-	*T*	*B*	*W*	*O*	*-*	*T*	*B*	*W*	*O*	*-*	*T*	*B*	*W*	*O*	*-*	*T*	*B*	*W*	*O*	*-*	*T*	*B*	*W*	*O*
T	**20**	**7**	**5**	**8**	*T*	**15**	**5**	**3**	**7**	*T*	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**	*T*	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**	*T*	**5**	**2**	**1**	**2**
B	**4**	1	-	3	b	**3**	-	-	3	b	**1**	1	-	-	b	**1**	-	-	1	b	**1**	-	-	1
c	**4**	1	1	2	c	**3**	1	-	2	c	**1**	1	-	-	c	**1**	1	-	-	c	**1**	-	-	1
e	**4**	2	1	1	e	**3**	1	1	1	e	**1**	-	-	1	e	**1**	-	-	1	e	**1**	1	-	-
u	**4**	2	2	-	u	**3**	2	1	-	u	**1**	-	-	1	u	**1**	-	1	-	u	**1**	1	-	-
r	**4**	1	1	2	r	**3**	1	1	1	r	**1**	-	1	-	r	**1**	1	-	-	r	**1**	-	1	-

(This table spans the five denomination groups; each group has subcolumns T, B, W, O.)

T = Totals
B = Diocese of Birmingham area   W = Diocese of Worcester area   O = Other areas
b = Broadcast   c = Cathedral / Central   e = Educationally-oriented
u = Urban / large town   r = Rural / small town

Denomination, Category, and Area Totals				
Anglican	Roman Catholic	Methodist	U.R.C.	Baptist.
20	15	5	5	5
Broadcast	Cathedral / Central	Educational	Urban / Large town	Rural / Small town
10	10	10	10	10
Birmingham	Worcester	Other		Overall total
18	11	21		50

Table 3. 1. Numbers of churches visited
by denomination, category, and area

]

Practicality intervened too with respect to the 'broadcast' category. Few services were broadcast during the period of the research from the Birmingham and Worcester areas. The resulting preponderance of broadcasts from other areas (8 instead of the desired 4) is partly balanced by an overrepresentation of Birmingham and Worcester in the non-broadcast categories. The original denomination / category allocations are, however, maintained. The Table shows the final distributions.

B. The visits

On the date of a visit as determined, and armed with my minidisc recording equipment, I arrived at the church a few minutes before the service began (only twice was I late - by a matter of seconds). The minidisc recorder fits comfortably inside a jacket pocket, although to avoid unwelcome microphone noise it proved best to carry it in a shopping bag.

Most of the churches had good public address systems in operation, but even where that was not the case the recorder proved well up to the job in all but 3 instances. One church was holding a Rogationtide service in a windswept farmyard: the recording was, with a struggle, usable. And two other recordings turned out, for some acoustic or other technical reason, to be even less clear: the transcripts of these two sermons included below in Appendix D, although seriously incomplete, hopefully capture enough of the preacher's words for the purposes of the relevant analyses.

Apart from perhaps noting down the size of the congregation and occasionally certain visual aspects of a service which would not be preserved in an audio recording, I was able to leave the machine to amass the necessary data for later analysis. This was important from the point of view of not drawing attention to the purpose of my visit during the service.

After the service, at the time if possible or occasionally by telephone, post, or e-mail later, I introduced myself to the preacher and made arrangements to make contact to obtain the simple background information requested in the Preacher's questionnaire (see section 3.D below). In the 18 cases where I had to obtain the further permission of a visiting or other preacher, this was always done immediately after the service and was accompanied by an offer to hand over the recording should permission not be forthcoming.

C. The broadcasts

Recording the 10 broadcast services was, of course, even simpler. Initially a video or audio tape recorder was used, and the recording converted to digital format later. Permissions were sought by letter after the event, from broadcasting company, preacher, and if requested, church as well. The Preacher's questionnaire was not sent until after permissions had been received. As the questions were general and not based on features of the specific sermon studied, this delay did not appear to be a problem.

D. Preacher's questionnaire

On one occasion a visiting preacher opted to take time there and then, immediately after the service, to sit with me in a pew and answer my set of questions. I preferred to have the chance to listen to the recording of the sermon and make slight adjustments to the wording of the questionnaire (questions 1 and 10) to fit the particular situation of service and preacher. My first choice of 'medium' for asking the questions was the personal interview. But telephone, post, and e-mail proved acceptable substitutes.

Whichever 'medium' was used, there was a demand, hopefully not too heavy, on a preacher's time. This was willingly given in the great majority of cases. No preacher refused my request for assistance over the questionnaire, but of the questionnaires sent by post or e-mail, 3 were never returned, in spite of reminders. In all 46 responses were received, 16 by e-mail, 9 by telephone, and 3 by post: 18 personal interviews were conducted. A response rate of 94% cannot be considered bad.

A standard copy of the questionnaire is included below as Appendix C. After an introductory question, preachers were asked about their preaching strategies (questions 2, 3, 9, and 13), frequency of preaching (question 2a), training, experience, and status (questions 4 to 8), and (where relevant) the opportunities offered by their church outside regular services for discussions of problems of belief.

Questions 1, 2a, 3, and 9 asked for answers on a scale of frequencies, *viz.*

W - Most weeks	M - At least monthly	Q - At least quarterly
A - At least annually	L - Less often	N - Never

In converting these answers into numerical form, a number of assumptions had to be made which may or may not be justified. This introduces a further element of subjectivity into the results, as do differences in the way preachers understood or reacted to some of the questions. The questionnaire cannot therefore be regarded as doing more than suggesting possible lines for future investigation.

After some experimentation, the following assumptions seemed to fit the responses best:

  i. Preachers preach – or at least – prepare on average one sermon per week.

  ii. There is an average of 2.5 main themes per sermon.

  iii. A passing mention is equivalent to 1/6 of a main theme.

  iv. Frequency answers should be converted as shown in Table 3. 2 below.

Response	Sermons per annum	Response	Sermons per annum	Response	Sermons per annum
W - Most weeks	40	M - At least monthly	15	Q – At least quarterly	5
A - At least annually	2	L - Less often	0.4	N - Never	0

Table 3. 2. Frequency conversion assumptions: numerical equivalents for questionnaire responses.

E. The collected data

It is not possible within the scope of this dissertation to discuss 50 sermons at any great length individually. Appendix D annotates specific features of some of the sermons that are relevant to the analyses. Audio recordings of all 50 sermons are contained on the 2 accompanying CD-Roms A and B (entitled 'Sermons I' and 'Sermons II'). In two cases, sermons 35 and 41, a poor quality recording, due to an unfortunate echo in the acoustics of the operation, makes listening very difficult. The text of these two sermons, as reconstructed, is included in printed form in Appendix D: the transcripts become, effectively, the 'primary data' for analysis in these two cases.

Outline 'skeletons' of the sermons are contained in Appendix E together with inventories of the traditional themes referred to in each sermon. CD-Rom C Thesis workbench contains, as a Microsoft ACCESS database, the complete 'processed data' for the project together with routines used to produce some of the tables, charts, and other results presented in this dissertation.

How much difference it would have made to the content of a sermon if the preacher had known I was in the congregation conducting my research is uncertain. But the question is irrelevant in the circumstances. Although each church I visited (with one exception) had given advance permission for my research, they did not know when I would appear during the research period. And they probably expected a researcher of more normal postgraduate age. In any event I was relieved to discover, from the reactions when I introduced myself after the service, that in no case had my identity been suspected.

Table 3. 3 below gives further details of services and sermons. Of the 40 services I attended, 26 were Eucharistic, 10 were formal services of other kinds, and 4 could be classified as informal. The ratios were different in the case of the 10 broadcast services. Only 1 of these, a

No.	Sermon title	Sermon type	Service type		No.	Sermon title	Sermon type	Service type
1	Pray for vocations	Free topic	Eucharistic		26	Baptism	Text anchor	Informal
2	Bible Sunday	Lectionary	Eucharistic		27	Resurrection hope in a world of turmoil	Expository	Formal
3	The significance of Advent	Lectionary	Eucharistic		28	God beyond all names	Text anchor	Informal
4	'Am I my brother's keeper?'	Expository	Informal		29	Decisive moments	Lectionary	Formal
5	Challenges in the way	Text anchor	Informal		30	Harvest thanksgiving	Expository	Informal
6	The theological opening of Mark's Gospel	Lectionary	Eucharistic		31	A day that shook the world	Lectionary	Formal
7	The Eucharist (Arch-bishop's Pastoral Letter)	Free topic	Eucharistic		32	Jesus welcomes the humble and the burdened	Lectionary	Eucharistic
8	Light in the darkness	Lectionary	Eucharistic		33	Bishop's job, God's law, judgment, forgiveness	Part Lectionary	Eucharistic
9	God's plans & human plans	Lectionary	Eucharistic		34	Mission from a small village church	Part Expository	Informal
10	Cured - or healed?	Lectionary	Eucharistic		35	The pearl of great price	Lectionary	Eucharistic
11	Journeyings into the unknown	Expository	Informal		36	Faith I: Faith in Jesus	Expository	Formal
12	Better to light a candle than curse the dark	Lectionary	Informal		37	Holy Week Observances	Text anchor	Eucharistic
13	Values of Christ's Kingdom	Lectionary	Eucharistic		38	The meaning of Pentecost	Lectionary	Eucharistic
14	Faith in Action	Expository	Informal		39	People first	Lectionary	Eucharistic
15	What is the Christian faith really about?	Free topic	Formal		40	Taking risks in the search for reconciliation	Free topic	Informal
16	Interpreting nature: science and faith	Text anchor	Informal		41	Demonstrating what we believe	Lectionary	Eucharistic
17	Dedication of a Shrine of Peace & Justice	Lectionary	Eucharistic		42	Racial Justice	Text anchor	Formal
18	Transfiguring	Lectionary	Eucharistic		43	The last will be first and the first will be last	Lectionary	Formal
19	Where is God?	Lectionary	Eucharistic		44	Standing Firm when the Foundations Crumble	Free topic	Formal
20	Parents, children, and the religious heritage	Expository	Eucharistic		45	Endurance in Christian commitment	Expository	Formal
21	The sovereignty of God	Expository	Eucharistic		46	Right priorities	Lectionary	Eucharistic
22	Loving one another	Lectionary	Eucharistic		47	The risen Christ	Lectionary	Formal
23	God's generosity	Lectionary	Informal		48	Abraham to Moses: the last episode	Lectionary	Eucharistic
24	Christian Service in Imitation of Christ	Lectionary	Eucharistic		49	Requiem for All Souls	Expository	Eucharistic
25	The work of the Holy Spirit	Lectionary	Eucharistic		50	Two biblical dances & their aftermaths	Lectionary	Formal

Table 3. 3. Sermon & service details

televised service, was Eucharistic. The 6 radio services were all broadcast in the 'Sunday Worship' series on BBC Radio 4. One followed a formal order, the rest together with the 3 other examples of televised religion, taken from ITV-1's *My Favourite Hymns* programme, were either briefer acts of worship or orders accommodating multi-part presentations rather than single set-piece sermons.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

> If, as we have seen, God is concerned with the whole of creation – the
> universe, 'nature', beasts & birds, crops & seasons, people and
> institutions – his followers must be concerned with no less. All
> aspects of human activity, all politics, must come under their scrutiny
> because they are under God's eye.
>
> (Coggan 1996, p.59)

4.A Introduction

Of the twin general hypotheses underlying this research, namely:

  i.   That the range of subjects covered in sermons does not extend very frequently or very
       far beyond the confines of the Christian faith narrowly conceived,

  ii. That few preachers make any significant attempt from the pulpit to bridge the
       credibility gap between the language and concepts of New Testament and early
       Christian creeds,

the first is, as I claimed in section 1.A, challenged by the findings presented here but in the
end not overturned: the second emerges virtually untouched. The basic results behind these
verdicts are given, hopefully in readily assimilable form, in sections 4.C and 4.D(i) below,
headed respectively 'Subject Analysis Results' and 'Analysis of hermeneutic strategies'.
Section 4.D(ii), 'Analysis of contextual indicators', presents a 'map' and other significant
features of the links by which the meaning of traditional Christian terminology is illuminated
in the sermons, whether or not the credibility problem is addressed.

Section 4.B presents basic results from the Preacher's questionnaire, but the analysis of answers relating to preferred preaching strategies will be found in section 4.C, where comparisons can be drawn with preachers' actual practice in the sample sermons (see Table 4. 13).

The chapter pays some attention to differences between various identifiable subsets among the 50 sermons, but the strong *caveat* issued earlier (see p.2, 40) must be reiterated. Because of the limited sample size, no claim is made to statistical significance for findings presented here. As features of one particular 'snapshot' of contemporary preaching, some may be thought to merit further, more scientific investigation. They are not intended to be taken as more reliable than they are.

The results must also be seen in the light of the historical and the hermeneutic backgrounds outlined above in sections 1.D and 1.C respectively. The sketch of Christian preaching in Britain over the centuries provides perspective relevant chiefly to the Subject analysis and the first working hypothesis. The hermeneutic process discussed in section 1.C operates to control both Subject and Traditional language analyses and the associated hypotheses. Stretching from authorial to dissertational hermeneutic (see p.15*f.* - the examiner's hermeneutic is yet to come) and from the basic meaninglessness of the symbol to the intricate patterns of significance proposed by the analyses, it stands as a serious qualification over all findings set out below.

The interfaith, secular, world Church, 'spiritual revolution', and of course many other realities of the contemporary world (see section 1.B) are also crucial to any proper evaluation of the results. Reference is made to aspects of this composite background throughout the chapter. The final chapter attempts to draw a few more general conclusions in the light of the contemporary situation in which Christianity finds itself.

Timing is the main criterion on which the Subject analysis calculations here are based. Timings are shown in the Tables below in minutes and seconds (hours, where relevant). To set the scene for this, Table 4. 1 to Table 4. 4 give basic data about sermon length overall and

as classified by structure, denomination, area, and research category. It should be noted that the longer sermons inevitably have a disproportionate influence on the results. No satisfactory means was found to correct for this factor.

The Tables largely speak for themselves. The overall figures, based on the full sample of 50 sermons, may perhaps be taken as reasonably typical of contemporary Christian preaching in mainstream British denominations. But differences between the smaller groupings within the sample may provoke curiosity but, as indicated above, cannot be taken as statistically significant.

Some of the differences are unsurprising. For instance, the informal, modern style of multi-part discourse adds up to a homiletic input to the service on average almost 40% longer than the traditional continuous format. The broadcast sermons, tightly controlled by programme schedules, are shorter than the other categories, by almost 45%. Among the denominations, the Roman Catholic sermons are 34% below and the Baptist over 80% above average: the three other denominations represented do not deviate far from the norm.

However, while the two shortest sermons were both Roman Catholic sermons, one was a deliberately brief homily following the long Passion narrative from the Palm Sunday Gospel, the other formed part of one of the brief acts of worship that frequently close ITV's Sunday morning *My Favourite Hymns* programme. The longest sermon was Baptist, a multi-part sermon, but arising from a very untypical church situation: even disregarding that sermon, though, the Baptist average is still easily the highest (52% above the average).

Sermon structure	Sermons	Shortest	Average	Longest	Total lengths
Unitary	**40**	3:00	12:41	30:29	8:27:50
Multi-part	**10**	6:42	17:41	40:52	2:56:45
Overall figures	**50**	**3:00**	**13:41**	**40:52**	**11:24:10**

Table 4. 1. Sermon lengths by structure

Research category	Sermons	Shortest	Average	Longest	Total lengths
Broadcast	**10**	3:22	8:32	13:55	1:25:23
Central / Cathedral	**10**	4:20	16:12	30:18	2:42:02
Educational	**10**	5:24	14:50	30:29	2:28:17
Rural / small town	**10**	4:41	13:03	40:52	2:10:27
Urban / large town	**10**	3:00	15:48	29:15	2:38:01
Overall figures	**50**	**3:00**	**13:41**	**40:52**	**11:24:10**

Table 4. 2. Sermon lengths by Research category

Denomination	Sermons	Shortest	Average	Longest	Total lengths
Anglican	**20**	4:41	13:21	30:29	4:27:07
Baptist	**5**	9:03	24:48	40:52	2:04:02
Methodist	**5**	8:21	17:15	25:10	1:26:15
Roman Catholic	**15**	3:00	8:39	16:41	2:09:45
U.R.C.	**5**	8:42	15:24	21:10	1:17:01
Overall figures	**50**	**3:00**	**13:41**	**40:52**	**11:24:10**

Table 4. 3. Sermon lengths by Denomination

Area	Sermons	Shortest	Average	Longest	Total lengths
Birmingham	**18**	3:00	14:27	30:29	4:20:11
Other	**21**	3:22	12:08	30:18	4:14:57
Worcester	**11**	4:41	15:22	40:52	2:49:02
Overall figures	**50**	**3:00**	**13:41**	**40:52**	**11:24:10**

Table 4. 4. Sermon lengths by Area

The 'skeletons' analyse sermon structure in more detail, as described in subsection 2.B(ii) above. The segments into which they divide the sermons, following as far as possible the logic of the preacher's argument, vary considerably in length. The average is 50 seconds, but this hides a range stretching from a shortest section of 6 seconds to a longest of 5 minutes 20 seconds. As analysed, the average sermon contains just over 16 sections, the complete sample 819.

Table 4. 5 below gives sermon length calculations arranged by biblical basis, with a separate category for Lectionary sermons. For the purposes of this research 'Lectionary' is perhaps arbitrarily defined as meaning based on the readings specified for the day in the *Revised Common Lectionary*. Sermons based on schemes of prescribed readings other than the *Revised Common Lectionary* will be classified here as Expository (though the preachers themselves, in answering the questionnaire, will no doubt think of them as falling into the Lectionary category).

Even if the two sermons where biblical and extra-biblical interests were juxtaposed are ignored, Table 4. 5 reveals an interesting difference. Lectionary-based sermons, which account for just over half the sample, are at 11 minutes 54 seconds an average of 18.3% shorter than the expository and non-biblical groups put together.

Biblical basis	Sermons	Shortest	Average length	Longest	Total lengths
Expository	**10**	3:22	14:58	30:29	2:29:44
Lectionary	**27**	4:20	11:54	22:05	5:21:06
Mixed	**2**	16:41	28:46	40:52	0:57:33
Non-biblical	**11**	3:00	14:10	29:15	2:35:47
Overall figures	**50**	**3:00**	**13:41**	**40:52**	**11:24:10**

Table 4. 5. Sermon lengths by biblical basis

Whatever the historical fluctuations between biblical and non-biblical sermons (see section 1.D), the Table above shows that over ¾ of these sermons are Bible-based. Further, 6 of the 11 labelled 'Non-biblical' here are in fact anchored in a definite biblical text, and 6 (4 of these and 2 others) are on specifically Christian themes (see Table 3. 3 above). Only five are on more general topics, *viz.* science and religion, racial justice, two 'State of the nation' or 'State of the world' reviews (as a backdrop to Christianity), and one rare sally into interfaith relations – respectively sermons 16, 42, 44, 15, 40.

B. Preacher's questionnaire results

The main importance of the Preacher's questionnaire was the comparison it afforded between expressed strategies and actual practice. For these results see section 4.C and Table 4. 13 below. The present section summarises the more general information about preachers and churches obtained from respondents.

The ratios of ordained to lay and male to female preachers and of preachers with or without training outside theology and jobs (present or past) outside the church are shown in Table 4. 6 and Table 4. 7 below. There were no female lay preachers in the sample (one high-ranking female Salvation Army officer is treated as ordained). For the relation between the figures in Table 4. 7 and the Subject analysis see Table 4. 18 below.

Status	Totals	Female	Male
Lay	**6**	0	6
Ordained	**40**	5	35
Totals	46	5	41

Table 4. 6. Ordination by Gender

Jobs outside church	Totals	No outside training	Outside training
None	**14**	4	10
At some time	**32**	3	29
Totals	46	7	39

Table 4. 7. Outside jobs by Outside training

Table 4. 8 shows the correlations between the answers to questions 2 and 13 and the actual sermons preached. One respondent preached two of the sample sermons, so the figures here are based on 47 sermons in all.

Strategy preference (Question 2)	Lectionary sermons in normal practice (Question 13)	Totals	Lectionary sermon	Non-lectionary sermon
Lectionary	V. typical	27	20	7
Lectionary	Typical	8	3	5
Other	V. typical	1	-	1
Other	Typical	4	2	2
Other	Unusual	1	1	-
Other	V. unusual	6	-	6
	Totals	47	26	21

Table 4. 8. Lectionary sermons - principle and practice

Of the 35 preachers who espouse a Lectionary-based strategy for preaching, 1/3 preached Non-lectionary sermons when I visited. 5 preachers claimed that although they follow a Non-lectionary strategy, their sermons turn out typically to be Lectionary sermons: this was true of 2 of the 5 on my visit. The remaining 7 preachers claim to pay little attention to the Lectionary either in principle or in normal practice: I encountered only 1 exception.

Table 4. 9 compares the number of Lectionary sermons with claimed frequencies for dealing with problems of belief from the pulpit. Two respondents did not answer question 9.

Sermons discussing problems of belief (Question 9)	Totals	Lectionary sermon	Non-lectionary sermon
Weekly	5	2	3
At least monthly	17	10	7
At least quarterly	13	9	4
At least annually	6	3	3
Less often	2	1	1
Never	2	-	2
Totals	45	25	20

Table 4. 9. Lectionary sermons by Problems of belief

Table 4. 10 shows the number of preachers with differing lengths of (a) preaching experience and (b) ordained ministry (if applicable).

Years preaching	Preachers	Years ordained	Preachers
0 – 9	6	Lay	2
		0 – 9	4
10 – 19	11	Lay	1
		0 – 9	4
		10 - 19	6
20 – 29	15	Lay	2
		20 - 29	12
		30 - 39	1
30 - 39	6	20 - 29	1
		30 - 39	5
40 – 49	6	20 - 29	2
		30 - 39	2
		40 - 49	2
50 – 59	2	Lay	1
		50 - 59	1
Totals	46		46

Table 4. 10. Preaching by Ordination

C. Subject Analysis Results

(i)   *Overall figures*

The basic results of three of the four classification schemes used in the analysis of subjects (see subsection 2.B above, p.53) are set out below in Table 4. 11 to Table 4. 13. For the Dewey results see Appendix G below. The Tables are presented in a form appropriate to each schema. Timings are shown as percentages of the whole sample. For the Faith-aware and Neutral classifications results for the 100 categories are grouped into the 10 major ranges involved Survey schema figures are given alongside preachers' own assessments of their normal practices as gleaned from the Preacher's questionnaire.

Range	Range total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	1.7%	-	-	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	-	-	1.1%	-	-
10-19 Philosophy	1.0%	-	0.1%	0.3%	-	-	-	-	0.6%	-	-
20-29 Religion	75.6%	1.5%	-	7.8%	-	65.6%	0.2%	-	0.2%	0.4%	-
30-39 Social themes	9.5%	-	1.5%	1.5%	2.9%	0.1%	2.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.4%	-
40-49 Personal themes	3.0%	-	-	0.5%	-	0.4%	0.2%	0.7%	1.2%	0.1%	-
50-59 Science & technology	3.3%	0.4%	0.4%	-	0.7%	1.3%	0.1%	-	0.4%	-	-
60-69 Economic themes	1.7%	-	0.2%	0.1%	-	0.8%	0.2%	-	0.4%	0.1%	-
70-79 The arts	2.1%	0.2%	-	1.6%	-	-	0.1%	0.1%	-	-	-
80-89 Family	0.9%	-	-	0.0%	0.1%	-	-	0.5%	-	0.3%	-
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	1.3%	-	1.1%	0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total length of sermons	11:24:10										

Table 4. 11. Distribution of time between Faith-aware categories

Range	Range total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	1.1%			0.1%	0.2%				0.8%		
10-19 Philosophy	17.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%		13.0%	0.5%	0.1%	2.8%		
20-29 Personal themes	22.4%	1.6%	6.3%	2.6%	5.8%	0.8%	2.7%	1.8%	0.5%	0.2%	
30-39 Social themes	41.1%	0.7%	7.4%	3.4%	7.8%	2.9%	3.2%	2.9%	4.4%	8.4%	
40-49 Economic themes	2.8%		0.6%	0.3%		1.3%	0.2%		0.4%	0.1%	
50-59 Science	2.7%	0.2%		0.3%	0.2%		0.3%		0.7%	1.0%	
60-69 Technology	1.3%	0.2%	0.5%		0.4%		0.1%				
70-79 The arts	6.4%	0.2%		0.2%		0.1%	0.5%	0.3%		5.0%	
80-89 Friends & family	3.7%	0.1%	1.1%	0.5%	0.3%		0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	0.3%	
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	1.3%		1.1%	0.3%							
Total length of sermons	11:24:10										

Table 4. 12. Distribution of time between Neutral categories

Code	Category	All 50 sermons	47 respondents' sermons	Questionnaire responses
1	Personal	23.7%	23.3%	21.9%
2	Family	2.5%	2.7%	6.6%
3	Economic	2.8%	2.6%	3.9%
4	Community	10.9%	11.3%	6.7%
5	Nation	5.6%	5.7%	4.7%
6	Global	4.3%	3.7%	5.6%
7	The arts	1.4%	1.4%	2.8%
8	Science	2.8%	3.0%	2.0%
9	Ideas	3.3%	3.3%	3.1%
10	Religion Christian	40.1%	40.4%	40.3%
11	Other religions	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%
	Totals	11:24:10	10:36:25	
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4. 13. Distribution of time between Survey categories
(sermons and questionnaire responses compared)

At first reading there seems to be significant evidence against the first hypothesis (see p.87) that

> the range of subjects covered in sermons does not extend very frequently or very far beyond the confines of the Christian faith narrowly conceived.

As the Dewey schema is applied only within the area normally termed 'religious', it is irrelevant in this context. The Neutral schema is also irrelevant, for the opposite reason that it recognises no specifically 'religious' or Christian aspect of life. But the Faith-aware schema scores category range 20-29 Religion at 75.6%, thus apparently freeing 25% of sermon time for subjects outside the sphere of religion and Christianity. And the Survey schema opens the field even more widely, as Christianity rates no more than 40.1% on this typology. However, the results bear closer scrutiny.

The genesis of the Survey schema in close association with the Preacher's questionnaire restricts its usefulness. Survey category 10 Religion Christian became a category of last resort: wherever possible the material labelled 24 Christianity under the Faith-aware schema is here reclassified, without of course being any less Christian in orientation than it was. So the Faith-aware figure paints the more meaningful picture in this context. How is it to be assessed in terms of the hypothesis?

The full answer to that question occupies the rest of this section. Table 4. 11, however, makes immediately clear that while the other major categories are all represented, only the 30s Social themes make much impact at 9.5%. The 40s Personal themes and the 50s Science & technology come next, each mustering an average of approximately 25 seconds per sermon. Other ranges receive much less attention.

Over half of the 9.5% of time devoted to Social issues falls at the upper end of the spectrum – national to global concerns (see Table 4. 14 below). Attention is also paid to local community

matters, but very little to interest and informal groupings outside the family. Personal themes discussed (outside the specifically Christian area) centre on 26 Interpersonal relations and 25 Individual in society. Within Science Human sciences (53) and Other life sciences (54) predominate. To the extent that there are empty or sparsely populated categories in the charts, support is given to the hypothesis: the subsections below look further into the treatments of subjects that are represented.

Meanwhile a quick overview of the Neutral schema results presented in Table 4. 12 shows the effects of distributing the material classed as Religion in Table 4. 11 over the other categories. The main beneficiaries are the 30s Social themes, 20s Personal themes, 10s Philosophy, and 70s The arts. Here discussions of, respectively, the Christian church and its activities (especially categories 31, 33, and 37), Christian spiritual and moral life and values (categories 23, 25, 21), Christian faith and doctrine (14, 17), and the Bible (78) find their home. But take away the reclassified Christian and Tanakh (O.T.) content, and the 87.3% recorded for these four areas taken together is reduced to a much less impressive 14%.

Table 4. 14 below compares the distribution of Social themes under the Faith-aware and Neutral schemata. In both cases specifically Christian material is excluded, and only 'core' treatments (*i.e.* not introductory or illustrative material, *etc.*) are covered. Because the classification schemes operate differently, the material analysed under the 30s differs slightly between the schemata, but the vast majority is common to both. With the specifically Christian material removed, the Neutral analysis here looks very different to the relative proportions shown in Table 4. 12 above: category 37 Education & training dwindles almost to nothing. The Faith-aware 30s are not affected by this change, and the removal of peripheral material does not alter very much the balance of interests shown in Table 4. 11.

Overall, the Survey schema shows a wide but uneven spread. Table 4. 15 tracks how material classified as Christian or Jewish under the Faith-aware schema is distributed over the Survey schema categories. 40.1% retains the Christian label. For the rest category 1 Personal

	Neutral schema: Social themes					Faith-aware schema: Social themes		
Code	Category	Length	% of range		Code	Category	Length	% of range
30	General social themes	4:44	7.6%		30	General social themes	-	-
31	Social: culture & values	11:36	18.7%		31	Global	8:54	15.3%
32	Politics & decision-making	9:17	14.9%		32	Supranational	9:31	16.4%
33	Ceremonies & practices	9:56	16.0%		33	National, regional	16:50	28.9%
34	Law & administration	4:29	7.2%		34	Work & leisure associations	-	-
35	Social conflict & cooperation	11:12	18.0%		35	Local community	15:13	26.2%
36	Welfare & support	3:32	5.7%		36	Interest groups	1:47	3.1%
37	Education & training	0:15	0.4%		37	Groups & networks	3:43	6.4%
38	Social environment & events	7:08	11.5%		38	Friends	2:13	3.8%
39	Other social themes	-	-		39	Other social groups	-	-
	Total time	**1:02:09**				**Total time**	**0:58:11**	

Table 4. 14. Social themes (Core treatments excluding Christian) by Neutral code

	Survey category	Christian	Jewish (inc. Tanakh)	Other	Combined share
1	**Personal**	18.4%		3.3%	23.7%
2	**Family**	1.3%	0.3%	1.0%	2.5%
3	**Economic**	1.1%		1.7%	2.8%
4	**Community**	4.1%	0.7%	6.1%	10.9%
5	**Nation**	0.9%	0.4%	4.3%	5.6%
6	**Global**	1.7%	0.1%	2.5%	4.3%
7	**The arts**	0.4%		1.0%	1.4%
8	**Science**	0.1%		2.8%	2.8%
9	**Ideas**	0.2%	0.1%	3.0%	3.3%
10	**Christianity**	36.5%	3.4%	0.2%	40.1%
11	**Other religions**	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	2.6%
	Total timings	**08:14:27**	**00:39:24**	**03:16:13**	**11:24:10**
	Percentages	**65.6%**	**7.8%**	**26.7%**	**100.0%**

Table 4. 15. Analysis by Survey category (Christian / Jewish / Other)

benefits most (23.7%). Community, Nation, and Global (codes 4 to 6) account for 20.8%.
The six remaining classes vary from 1.4% (The arts) to 3.3% (Ideas, media, communication).
But if the sweep is fairly broad, it is still true that virtually ¾ is of Christian orientation,
40.1% irreducibly so (category 10).

The comparison afforded in Table 4. 13 with preachers' perceptions of their normal spread of
subjects does not advance the argument because the figures are so similar to their actual
practice. This similarity is partly contrived. Because approaches to the questionnaire by
preachers differed, a simple normalisation was performed on the scores for category 10
Christianity so that they matched the relevant sermon score for that category with some
precision. But that single adjustment having been made, a remarkable consistency emerged
over the other categories. The preachers turn out to be, as seen through these spectacles,
pretty accurate assessors of their own practice.

There are differences. Most noticeable are the preachers' underestimate, within the
limitations of this survey, of the attention given to category 4 Community and a corresponding
overestimate with regard to category 2 Family. Smaller overestimates emerge elsewhere,
balanced by a small underestimate in category 5 Nation.

(ii) Introducing variables

A closer look at the evidence is required for anything more than a perfunctory assessment of
the hypothesis. The serious issue at stake is whether Christianity is selling itself short by
possible inconsistency in this respect. Evidence towards a much fuller answer is available in
the data, 'primary' and 'processed', collected in the course of this research.

As a first step, Table 4. 16 below shows a breakdown of the Survey results by denomination,
where (subject always to the limitations of sample size) some striking but confusing
differences appear. Most obvious is the extent to which the Baptist and U.R.C. sermons stand
out against the rest, especially against the Methodist. In the case of categories 1 and 8 the
Methodist sermons are virtually the polar opposites of the Baptist and U.R.C. They are close

to U.R.C., however, and also to the Roman Catholic sermons, under categories 3 Economic, 7 The arts, and 9 Ideas and communication, and to Baptists under category 10 Christianity.

Methodists and Anglicans, potential partners, differ markedly under all categories except 2 and 4. Anglicans and Roman Catholics, on the other hand, manage affinity in 5 categories, but differ on the other 6. Anglicans share average scores with U.R.C. for categories 6 and 8, above average scores with Baptists under category 9, and are on their own well above average in category 3 and only just above average under 7.

Survey category	Total	Anglican	Baptist	Methodist	Roman Catholic	U.R.C.
1 Personal	23.7%	23.7%	18.4%	34.7%	27.9%	12.9%
2 Family	2.5%	3.0%	-	2.8%	5.3%	-
3 Economic	2.8%	4.5%	0.3%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%
4 Community	10.9%	8.7%	19.0%	8.6%	7.7%	13.4%
5 Nation	5.6%	2.1%	14.1%	5.1%	2.4%	10.1%
6 Global	4.3%	4.8%	0.9%	8.8%	3.4%	4.8%
7 The arts	1.4%	1.9%	3.4%	-	-	-
8 Science	2.8%	3.3%	4.9%	0.8%	1.0%	3.5%
9 Ideas	3.3%	4.5%	5.7%	1.5%	0.9%	1.0%
10 Christianity	40.1%	42.1%	29.6%	32.3%	47.5%	46.8%
11 Other religions	2.6%	1.5%	3.9%	3.1%	1.6%	5.3%
Total length of sermons	11:24:10	4:27:07	2:04:02	1:26:15	2:09:45	1:17:01
No. of sermons	50	20	5	5	15	5

Table 4. 16. Distribution of time between Survey categories (by Denomination)

Further light is thrown on denominational differences by Table 4. 17 below, which looks specifically at the balance between 'Core' discussions classified under the Neutral schema as Personal (range 20s) and those classified as Social (range 30s). Figures are calculated separately for specifically Christian themes and other themes within these two ranges. Percentages are shown for the five denominations, but also for the five research categories. Considerable differences emerge on both parameters.

In terms of denominations, the Anglican sermons in the present sample came close to the overall average, *i.e.* social themes outweighing the personal by a small margin within the area of Christian topics and by a much bigger margin elsewhere. The Baptist sermons show significantly greater preferences for the social. In the Roman Catholic sermons social and personal are much more in balance, the latter surpassing the social in the Christian area, though not by as much as the Methodist sermons. On the other hand, social themes have a virtual monopoly of Methodist discussions elsewhere. The U.R.C. preachers involved were keener than average on Christian social topics (*i.e.* Church matters) but less so on general social topics.

Social / Personal balance by Denomination					Social / Personal balance by Research category			
Denomination	Vector	Total (Christian)	Total (ex Christian)	Research category	Vector	Total (Christian)	Total (ex Christian)
Anglican	Personal	42.3%	20.6%	Broadcast	Personal	34.5%	17.5%
	Social	57.7%	79.4%		Social	65.5%	82.5%
Baptist	Personal	21.0%	8.5%	Central / Cathedral	Personal	48.0%	33.3%
	Social	79.0%	91.5%		Social	52.0%	66.7%
Methodist	Personal	63.1%	2.0%	Educational	Personal	37.4%	32.6%
	Social	36.9%	98.0%		Social	62.6%	67.4%
Roman Catholic	Personal	53.2%	33.3%	Rural / small town	Personal	37.2%	13.0%
	Social	46.8%	66.7%		Social	62.8%	87.0%
U.R.C.	Personal	25.1%	30.8%	Urban / large town	Personal	47.6%	2.8%
	Social	74.9%	69.2%		Social	52.4%	97.2%
Total timings	**Personal**	**2:11:40**	**0:11:59**	**Overall averages**	**Personal**	**41.8%**	**16.5%**
	Social	**3:03:28**	**1:00:49**		**Social**	**58.2%**	**83.5%**
	Combined	**5:15:08**	**1:12:48**		**Combined**	**81.2%**	**18.8%**

Table 4. 17. Personal and Social themes: Core discussions by denomination and research category.

Differences between the research categories were less pronounced. Personal Christian themes scored slightly above average in the Central and Urban churches, below it in the other categories, most markedly in the case of the broadcast sermons. But the broadcast sermons

were as close as one could expect to the overall 5:1 average for general topics. In these areas the Rural and Urban churches concentrated heavily on social themes, while the Central and Educational categories set surprisingly high store by the personal.

Some of the data elicited in the questionnaire explored possible differences between preachers according to age, experience, and other factors. Table 4. 18 below shows how the spread of subjects relates to training and employment or lack of it outside the church or theological domain. However, as Table 4. 7 above has shown, numbers in each category bar one are small. For instance, only 3 preachers have had secular employment but no secular training: the fact that their sermons concentrate on Christian or Jewish themes must be a chance result, and certainly not obviously linked with the 'secular revolution' context (see section 1.B(iv)).

Code	Faith-aware category	Total	No secular T or J	Secular job	Secular T & J	Secular training
2	Information science	0.1%	0.7%			
3	Encyclopedic	0.2%			0.3%	
4	Language	0.4%	0.8%		0.4%	
7	Media, publishing	1.1%			1.2%	2.2%
11	Metaphysics	0.1%			0.1%	
12	Epistemology & causation	0.3%			0.5%	
17	Ethics	0.6%			0.2%	3.3%
20	Religion	1.5%			1.7%	2.3%
22	Judaism	8.1%	2.6%	5.4%	6.2%	20.9%
24	Christianity	65.2%	70.3%	91.5%	64.5%	51.5%
25	Islam	0.2%			0.1%	0.7%
27	Paganism, etc.	0.2%	1.3%			
28	Humanism	0.3%			0.5%	
31	Global	1.1%			1.1%	2.4%
32	Supranational	1.4%			2.2%	
33	National, regional	2.8%	1.0%		3.5%	2.8%
34	Work & leisure associations	0.1%			0.1%	
35	Local community	2.4%	15.4%		0.6%	
36	Interest groups	0.3%			0.3%	0.4%
37	Groups & networks	0.7%			0.9%	0.8%
38	Friends	0.4%			2.1%	
42	Mental	0.5%	0.2%	3.1%	0.4%	

Code	Faith-aware category	Total	No secular T or J	Secular job	Secular T & J	Secular training
44	Emotional	**0.5%**			0.7%	
45	Psychological	**0.2%**			0.3%	
46	Interpersonal relations	**0.7%**			1.0%	0.6%
47	Individual in society	**1.2%**	1.0%		1.0%	2.8%
48	Biographical	**0.1%**	0.5%			
50	Science & technology	**0.4%**			0.6%	
51	Physics & cosmology	**0.5%**	0.7%		0.4%	0.8%
53	Human sciences	**0.7%**	0.5%		1.0%	
54	Other life sciences	**1.4%**	0.9%		1.2%	3.2%
55	Electricity & electronics	**0.2%**			0.2%	
57	Environmental sciences	**0.4%**			0.7%	
61	Work	**0.2%**			0.3%	
62	Money	**0.1%**			0.2%	
64	Standard of living	**0.7%**			1.2%	
65	Trade & industry	**0.2%**	0.5%		0.1%	0.5%
67	Transport	**0.2%**			0.3%	
68	Charities	**0.1%**	0.5%			
70	The arts	**0.2%**			0.4%	
72	Theatre & cinema	**1.7%**	0.5%		2.6%	0.4%
75	Architecture & design	**0.1%**			0.2%	
76	Painting & drawing	**0.1%**			0.2%	
82	Family: Education	**0.05%**				0.3%
83	Family rites & celebrations	**0.1%**			0.1%	
86	Family rules, relationships, & values	**0.5%**	0.5%		0.6%	0.6%
88	Family history & achievements	**0.3%**			0.1%	1.5%
91	Athletics	**1.2%**	1.3%		1.6%	
92	Physical sports	**0.2%**	0.7%		0.2%	
	Grand Totals	**10:44:45**	**1:22:38**	**0:50:04**	**6:44:55**	**1:47:08**
		100%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**
	Average sermon length	**00:13:43**	**00:16:32**	**00:16:41**	**00:13:58**	**00:10:43**

Table 4. 18. Faith-aware codes by Jobs and training
(N.b. 'T' and 'J' in the headings above refer to Training and Jobs respectively)

In the light of Wilson's doubts about Lectionary preaching (see 1.D p.36), Table 4. 19 compares Lectionary and Non-lectionary sermons using the Faith-aware classification. To allow for the inbuilt bias in Lectionary sermons, biblical sections have been excluded from the

calculations for all groups. Lectionary sermons scored above the average in the two categories singled out for individual treatment (22 and 24), in the Personal and Family ranges, and surprisingly also in the 70s (The arts), and below average elsewhere. Further research is needed to confirm the result, but it does appear that Lectionary preaching narrows rather than broadens the range of topics covered.

	Totals	Lectionary	Non-lectionary	Part Lectionary
No. of sermons	50	27	22	1
Faith-aware range				
0-9 General subjects	2.3%	1.3%	3.1%	
10-19 Philosophy	1.3%	1.0%	1.6%	
20-21, 23, 25-29 Religion	2.4%	1.3%	3.3%	
22 Judaism	1.3%	2.3%	0.7%	
24 Christianity	62.1%	67.0%	57.9%	89.2%
30-39 Social themes	13.3%	9.2%	16.3%	3.9%
40-49 Personal themes	4.2%	4.9%	3.9%	
50-59 Science & technology	4.6%	4.2%	5.0%	
60-69 Economics	2.4%	1.8%	3.0%	
70-79 The arts	2.9%	3.8%	2.4%	
80-89 Family themes	1.2%	2.2%	0.4%	6.9%
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	1.8%	1.2%	2.3%	
Grand Totals	8:08:42	3:10:31	4:48:16	0:09:55

Table 4. 19. Faith-aware ranges by Lectionary basis
(excluding sections of direct biblical exegesis)

The admittedly broad spread of subjects identified under the classification schemes in use here has to be set against the big differences in timing apparent in the Tables above. There is no doubt where the preachers' main emphases lie. The next 8 Tables make clear what this means in practice. Not only do many subjects receive scant attention overall, but any attention given turns out to be much more perfunctory or peripheral than for the rest.

Table 4. 20 distinguishes 'core' treatments that are part of the main theme of a sermon from 'illustrative' material presented by way of analogy or light relief and 'structural' passages signposting or reviewing the logical flow of the sermon. There are substantial differences in the distribution of these 'functions' between subjects. Several minority subjects are included mainly (or even only) for such peripheral purposes. They cannot be counted as sermon subjects in any strict sense.

Faith-aware range	Total lengths	Core	Illustrative	Structural
0-9 General subjects	0:11:27	63.6%	15.0%	21.4%
10-19 Philosophy	0:06:35	93.7%	6.3%	
20-21, 23, 25-29 Religion	0:15:13	100.0%		
22 Judaism	0:53:20	100.0%		
24 Christianity	7:28:33	91.3%	2.6%	6.1%
30-39 Social themes	1:04:51	89.7%	6.5%	3.8%
40-49 Personal themes	0:20:36	66.3%	19.7%	13.9%
50-59 Science & technology	0:22:34	40.0%	57.7%	2.4%
60-69 Economics	0:11:54	81.0%	19.0%	
70-79 The arts	0:14:13	13.6%	86.4%	
80-89 Family themes	0:05:59	82.5%	17.5%	
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	0:08:55		93.8%	6.2%
Grand Totals	11:24:10	9:48:57 86.1%	0:59:01 8.6%	0:36:12 5.3%

Table 4. 20. Faith-aware ranges by Function

Table 4. 21 below sets the idea of 'function' into a denominational context. Much of the extra length of Methodist and U.R.C. sermons appears to be put to 'illustrative' use. The Baptist sermons, however, although showing the highest average length, were (but probably untypically) very sparing with illustrations.

Denomination	Total sermon lengths	Average sermon lengths	Core	Illustrative	Structural
Anglican	4:27:07	13:21	89.8%	5.5%	4.8%
Baptist	2:04:02	24:48	87.3%	3.5%	9.2%
Methodist	1:26:15	17:15	74.6%	18.0%	7.4%
Roman Catholic	2:09:45	8:39	88.6%	7.5%	3.9%
U.R.C.	1:17:01	15:24	79.9%	19.2%	0.9%
Grand Total	11:24:10		9:45:51	0:57:01	0:41:18

Table 4. 21. Function by Denomination

(iii) Depth of treatment

Another way of answering the question of breadth is to look at depth of treatment. Depth and time are certainly not to be confused, but time is in most cases a necessary condition for worthwhile discussion. So in order to extract the greatest possible value from the data, Table 4. 22 shows the maximum time devoted to each category in any one sermon, analysed by

Neutral range		Core / Christian	Core / Other	Illustrative / Christian	Illustrative / Other	Structural / Christian	Structural / Other
0-9	General subjects		1:49	0:36	0:42		1:15
10-19	Philosophy	17:47	4:23	0:30	0:41	1:26	
20-29	Personal themes	4:10	4:51	0:32	1:25	1:22	1:26
30-39	Social themes	7:39	7:35	4:34	5:20	3:10	1:46
40-49	Economics	3:12	4:13		1:27		
50-59	Science	1:03	1:15		2:18	0:56	
60-69	Technology	0:48	1:05		1:14	1:36	0:32
70-79	The arts	6:35	2:29	1:06	1:05	0:56	
80-89	Friends & family	1:22	2:57		0:37	0:51	
90-99	Sport, leisure, & other subjects				6:39		0:33

Table 4. 22. Subject lengths (max) by sermon and Neutral code range

(Timings shown are for maximum length of treatment given in any one sermon
to subjects in the relevant Neutral range analysed by Function/Faith combination)

function and faith orientation. It emerges that, compared to the subjects of prime concern (10s, 20s, 30s) and with two notable exceptions in the 70s and 90s, even the meagre total time devoted to the 'fringe' subjects is parcelled out over a large number of very brief mentions rather than concentrated into a few, more extended treatments.

Table 4. 23 shows what happens to the picture presented by Table 4. 12 if only core material is included and a minimum is set of 2 minutes per sermon for discussions of any given Neutral

Range	Range total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	0:00										
10-19 Philosophy	1:11:50	2:02				1:01:03			8:45		
20-29 Personal themes	1:03:49	4:57	21:56	12:05	16:33		5:53	2:25			
30-39 Social themes	2:09:51	4:44	25:02	16:10	29:40	6:03	10:38	7:39	2:45	27:10	
40-49 Economics	9:29		2:04			7:25					
50-59 Science	0:00										
60-69 Technology	0:00										
70-79 The arts	20:43						2:29			18:14	
80-89 Friends & family	5:10		2:57				2:13				
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	0:00										
Grand Total	5:00:52										

Table 4. 23. Subject lengths by Neutral codes

(Total lengths for core subjects totalling more than 2 minutes in any given sermon)

category. Over half the content of the sermons (56%) fails to meet the criterion. Higher or lower thresholds of selection would reduce or increase the 'population' of the chart to a greater or lesser extent. 2 minutes is an arbitrary figure, but it may be allowed to stand here as a watershed between passing mention and significant treatment.

A fair representation remains of the 10s, 20s, and 30s (Philosophy, Personal themes, and Social themes) – much of it discussion, respectively, of Christian doctrine, Christian spirituality, and Church life and organisation – but little else. The significant score under category 78 (Literature) is no real exception: it consists largely of discussions of Tanakh and New Testament.

Table 4. 24 below retains the 2-minute watershed but excludes the Christian and Tanakh material. All main ranges represented in the previous table retain a presence, but more individual classes are now empty. Only 44 minutes 31 seconds of material remains, just 6.5% of the whole.

In particular, it is worth noting in the light of the 'spiritual revolution' context (see the discussion on p.11*f.* of the Kendal Project (Heelas and Woodhead 2005) that the strong representation in Table 4. 23 above of Neutral class 23 Spiritual has evaporated. All the instances of 'Spiritual' subjects in the sample are specifically Christian in content except one. That one is a discussion in general terms in sermon 20 (5:18) of how children must in due time make their religious heritage their own: it lasts 22 seconds, so does not meet the threshold for these Tables. There are no treatments at all of (to use the Kendal Project's terminology) the 'holistic milieu' or 'subjectivisation' within the churches.

Further to clarify the evidence against the first working hypothesis, the individual subjects covered in the 'non-Christian' material are listed in Table 4. 25 in below together with the total time devoted to each. As this Table deals with individual subjects rather than categories (unlike Table 4. 23 and Table 4. 24 above), the time requirement here is reduced to 1 minute.

Range	Total length	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	0:00										
10-19 Philosophy	6:25	2:02							4:23		
20-29 Personal themes	2:17	2:17									
30-39 Social themes	23:57	4:44	6:29	5:02	2:42		5:00				
40-49 Economics	4:13					4:13					
50-59 Science	0:00										
60-69 Technology	0:00										
70-79 The arts	2:29						2:29				
80-89 Friends & family	5:10		2:57				2:13				
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	0:00										
Total	44:31										

Table 4. 24. Length of Core subjects Neutral codes

(Excluded are specifically Christian and Tanakh material, and also subjects totalling less than 2 minutes in any given sermon)

Neutral category		Length		Neutral category		Length
0	**General subjects**					
1	Bibliography			7	Media, publishing	
2	Information sciences				'Sunday Worship'	1:49
3	Encyclopedic				*TV*	*1:15*
	General knowledge	*1:12*			TV & religion	1:13
				9	Other general subjects	
10	**Philosophy**					
	New humanism	2:02		16	Logic	
11	Metaphysics			17	Ethics	
12	Epistemology & causation				Ethical systems	1:30
	Problem of evil	1:41			Ethics	2:02
13	Mind				Tarrant on TV / Ethics	2:21
14	Schools & systems			19	Other philosophical subjects	

	Neutral category	Length			Neutral category	Length
15	Language					
20	**Personal themes**					
	Social identity	2:17		26	Action & achievements	
21	Character & values				*Biographical*	*1:25*
22	Decision-making			27	Mind	
23	Spiritual				Faith	1:34
24	Emotional				*Faith*	*1:22*
	Pressures of life	1:42		28	Physical themes	
25	Personal conflict & cooperation			29	Other personal themes	
	Interpersonal relations	*1:02*				
	Social interaction	*1:26*				
30	**Social themes**					
	Local community	4:44		34	Law & administration	
31	Social: culture & values				*Cinema / Penal system*	*5:20*
	British culture	4:44			Prisoners	1:21
	Lystra Culture & institutions	1:07			*Public administration*	*1:44*
32	Politics & decision-making			35	Social conflict & cooperation	
	Monarchy	1:02			Community relations	2:33
	Political action	1:30			Middle East conflicts	3:16
	Political organisation	2:30		36	Welfare & support	
	Political process	1:28			Culture & institutions	1:31
	Public administration	1:38		37	Education & training	
33	Ceremonies & practices				*Cinema / Education*	*3:56*
	Charity auctions	1:03		38	Physical environment & events	
	Culture & institutions	1:01			Local needs	1:52
	Folk religion	1:02			Street children	1:24
	Jewish festivals	2:42			Worcestershire	1:01
	Myths of exclusion	1:12			*World affairs*	*1:08*
	Political ceremonial	1:17		39	Other social themes	
40	**Economics**					
41	Work			45	Trade	
	Working conditions	1:02		46	Communication	
42	Money			47	Transport	
43	Property				*Seafaring*	*1:27*
44	Standard of living				Emergency transport in Korea	1:20
	Standard of living	1:48		48	Charities	
	World poverty	1:26		49	Other economic subjects	
50	**Science**					
51	Mathematics			57	Human sciences	
52	Astronomy & cosmology				*Human science*	*1:03*
	Cosmology	1:15		58	Other life sciences	
53	Physics				*Dogs & strangers*	*2:18*

Neutral category	Length			Neutral category	Length
54 Chemistry				*Monkeys*	*1:37*
55 Environmental sciences				*Wasps*	*2:04*
56 Computer science			59	Other sciences	
60 **Technology**					
From cookery to D.I.Y.	*1:14*		64	Domestic science	
61 Medicine			65	Electronic & computer systems	
Healing	*1:36*		66	Biotechnology	
62 Building & construction			67	Transport	
63 Agriculture			68	Other manufacturing themes	
Plant growth	1:05		69	Other technologies	
70 **The arts**					
John the Baptist in art	1:17		75	Architecture & design	
71 Music				Civic art	2:29
72 Drama			76	Painting, drawing & sculpture	
Drama	*1:05*		77	Photography	
73 Film			78	Literature	
74 Dance			79	Other arts	
80 **Friends & family**					
81 Friends & family: relationships & values			86	Friends & family: welfare & support	
Personal relationships	2:57			Jewish beliefs / Family	1:08
82 Family decisions & discipline			87	Family education & training	
83 Family rites & celebrations			88	Friends & family: environment & events	
84 Friends & family: quality time				Relations with parents	1:39
85 Friends & family: cooperation & competition			89	Other friends & family themes	
Practical friendship	2:13				
90 **Sport, leisure, & other subjects**					
91 Athletics			95	Holidays & trips	
Athletics	*7:42*		97	Creative hobbies	
92 Physical sports			98	Collecting hobbies	
93 Power sports			99	Other subject areas	
94 Games					
				Total length of subjects listed	**1:57:44**

Table 4. 25. Subjects with total length of discussions

(N.b. Christian and Tanakh subjects excluded, and also any discussions of a subject
amounting to less than 1 minute in any single sermon.
Items in italic type indicate material used for illustrative or introductory purposes only.)

Also, 'Illustrative' material and 'Introductory' sections are included: they are shown in italic type. The Table shows the full Neutral classification scheme in order also to highlight the subjects not (on these criteria) represented.

As emerged earlier from Table 4. 11, the specifically Christian material plus discussions of Tanakh (O.T.) passages labelled 'Jewish' amounted to something over 70% of the total length of the sermons. The total time devoted to the discussions listed above works out at just over 17% of the total (but *cf.* p.114 below), or something like 3/5 of the overall 'non-Christian' time. The other 2/5 of this time, therefore, is filled with passing mentions of a large number of topics not allowing for any significant treatment.

Appendix F(i) expands on the details given in Table 4. 25 above. It provides, alongside the bare subject labels, fuller details of theme and discussion. From this it is possible to form some estimate of the significance of the specific points made.

Table 4. 25 demonstrates the fact that the most extended treatments are often found in introductory or illustrative material. The purpose and impact of such material within the sermon is a question which goes well beyond the scope of this dissertation. But it is often an important part of what the congregation takes away. It widens the range of topics that the preacher brings within the Christian consciousness.

But, to judge from this sample, the topics that never impinge on the worshippers' thoughts are many times more numerous. Put another way, the range of their everyday concerns and interests that worshippers seem expected to slough off on entering the church is frighteningly extensive. The Neutral schema used in the above Table is an extremely rough and ready 'map of the universe'. Its categories, major or minor, are not all equal in importance. It is probably appropriate that the 30s Social themes should be well populated. But some categories which would also appear to be quite central to a Christian understanding of the world have little or no representation.

This situation is not materially altered if a group of sections excluded from the previous two Tables because of their basically Christian orientation are now brought into the reckoning. These are sections which were treated under the XREL or XBIB rules (see p.61). These rules were devised to deal with Christian material which seemed to call for dual classification. In many cases the secondary classification is itself essentially Christian, *e.g.* the spiritual life, Christian morality, personal biographies of biblical characters, and so on. Such instances are not included here. But Table 4. 26 below lists other examples which are more significant. These are passages which have of course already featured in earlier Tables in this subsection.

Neutral code	Subject for analysis	Length
17	Ethics	3:44
20	Personal devotion	1:13
20	Strength to cope	1:37
20	Value of individual	1:27
21	Individuals	2:16
21	Personal challenge	1:05
21	Personal decision	1:07
21	Personal maturity	1:42
21	Personal values	1:08
22	Conflicting priorities	1:13
22	Personal	1:26
25	Personal conflict	2:41
31	Judaism	2:33
31	The local community	2:53
32	Iraq	2:40
32	Politics	2:02
33	Princess Diana's funeral	1:23
35	Social exclusion	1:36
38	Jewish history	1:48
38	Local communities	1:34
41	Careers	1:49
41	Fair wages	1:02
44	The poor	1:00
57	Death	1:03
61	Healing	1:36
76	Art	1:41
86	Friends	1:08
Total length of subjects listed		**46:27**

Table 4. 26. Additional material (XBIB and XREL rules)

They are mentioned here, with the 1-minute threshold used in Table 4. 25 above, for the sake of completeness, even though they do not make any great impact on the overall subject 'map'. They muster between them no more than 3 categories previously unrepresented (21, 22, and 76).

One final corrective to the paltry totals for category 7 (Media) and the 70s range (The arts) in Table 4. 25 above. In Table 4. 27 material classified by subject under the Neutral schema according to the XART rule (p.61) is reconsidered. Classified by medium it would swell the ranks of Neutral categories 7 and 73 by 2 minutes 21 seconds and 9 minutes 16 seconds respectively.

Code	Subject for analysis	Subject Length
7	TV / Ethics	2:21
73	Cinema / Education	3:56
73	Cinema / Penal system	5:20

Table 4. 27. Additional material (XART rule)

D. Traditional Language Analysis Results

(i) Analysis of hermeneutic strategies

The average sermon in the sample made reference to 10.34 traditional themes from the specified list (see Table 4. 28 below). Often there were multiple references to the same theme in a sermon. The 'processed data' summaries for each sermon (see Appendix E(iii) and the associated CD-Rom C Thesis Workbench) do not record all these separately, but at a rough estimate they would double the above figure.

97.3% of the references fall into the 'literalist' categories (see Table 2. 9, p.66). The vast majority are classified LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied. Explicitly 'literalist' interpretations account for only 2.5% of cases. The proportion of 'non-literalist' interpretations is 2.8%.

This result alone, therefore, suggests that the second working hypothesis of this research,

> that few preachers make any significant attempt from the pulpit to bridge the credibility gap between the language and concepts of New Testament and early Christian creeds,

remains unrefuted. In just a few places, as this subsection shows, preachers found that the 'credibility gap' chafes sufficiently not to be totally ignored. For a full analysis of the contextual indicators of meaning associated with this traditional language see subsection 4.D(ii) below.

Table 4. 28 below details results for each of the themes on the select list. It shows the number of sermons in which each theme is mentioned, and the number of sermons in which each of the four main groups of hermeneutic strategies (see above p.66) is applied to that theme. The first column shows, where applicable, the number of sermons in which mention is made of the

	Theme	No. of sermons referring to		No. of sermons by hermeneutic stances			
		(a) theme & dependants (if any)	(b) this specific theme	CONF	IMPL	N-L	REJ
1	God	**50**	**32**	1	30	1	–
2	Trinity	**45**	**3**	–	3	–	–
3	Father	**–**	**15**	–	15	–	–
4	Son	**41**	**22**	2	20	–	–
5	Eternal Word	**–**	**7**	–	7	–	–
6	Christology	**–**	**14**	–	14	–	–
7	Saviour	**–**	**27**	–	27	–	–
8	Lordship of Christ	**–**	**16**	–	16	–	–
9	Holy Spirit	**–**	**25**	–	24	1	–
10	Power & authority of God	**47**	**9**	–	9	–	–
11	Creation	**–**	**13**	–	13	–	–
12	Providence & intervention	**36**	**10**	–	10	–	–
13	Historical	**–**	**17**	–	16	1	–
14	Individual	**–**	**22**	–	21	–	1
15	Law of God	**20**	**10**	–	9	1	–
16	Sin & the fall	**–**	**6**	–	6	–	–
17	Reward & punishment by God	**–**	**5**	–	4	1	–
18	Final judgment	**–**	**3**	–	3	–	–
19	Word of God	**–**	**9**	–	8	1	–
20	Kingdom of God	**–**	**19**	–	19	–	–
21	Love of God	**50**	**35**	3	32	–	–
22	God's chosen people	**25**	**5**	–	5	–	–
23	Israel & the Promised Land	**–**	**13**	–	12	1	–
24	Holy catholic church	**–**	**13**	–	13	–	–
25	Salvation	**40**	**22**	–	22	–	–
26	Forgiveness of God	**–**	**9**	–	9	–	–
27	New birth and life	**–**	**20**	1	19	–	–
28	Christ within us	**–**	**4**	–	4	–	–
29	Christ beside us	**–**	**9**	2	7	–	–
30	Vocation & guidance	**–**	**22**	–	22	–	–
31	Eternal life	**–**	**17**	1	15	1	–
32	Angels good & evil	**–**	**5**	–	4	1	–
33	Biblical 'miracle' stories	**37**	**–**	–	–	–	–
34	Pentateuch narratives	**16**	**–**	–	–	–	–
35	Garden of Eden	**–**	**3**	–	3	–	–
36	Israel out of Egypt	**–**	**4**	–	4	–	–
37	Noah's flood	**–**	**2**	–	2	–	–
38	Other Pentateuch narratives	**–**	**9**	–	8	1	–
39	Other Tanakh (O.T.) narratives	**–**	**2**	1	1	–	–
40	Life of Christ	**25**	**–**	–	–	–	–
41	Annunciation	**–**	**3**	–	3	–	–
42	Birth narratives	**–**	**5**	–	3	2	–
43	Signs & wonders	**–**	**6**	–	6	–	–
44	Transfiguration	**–**	**2**	–	2	–	–
45	Resurrection	**–**	**16**	2	14	–	–
46	Ascension of Christ	**–**	**–**	–	–	–	–
47	Pentecost	**–**	**3**	–	1	2	–
48	Other New Testament narratives	**–**	**4**	**–**	4	–	–
	Totals	**n/a**	**517**	**13**	**489**	**14**	**1**

Table 4. 28. Traditional themes by number of sermons referring

given theme or one of its dependent themes (for the hierarchy see Table 2. 8 above). The other columns relate solely to the specific theme itself.

There is clear testimonial here to the predominantly orthodox, biblical, and indeed trinitarian nature of the sermons. As Table 4. 28 shows, every sermon in the sample referred directly or indirectly to God, 41 of these, again directly or indirectly, to God the Son. Some aspect of divine power and authority was mentioned in all but three sermons. The love of God featured in every sermon. Salvation or its derivatives was mentioned in 40 sermons – or 43, if references to Christ as Saviour are included.

Angels were mentioned in only 5 sermons (10%), but 37 retailed 'miracle stories' from either Tanakh (Old Testament), New Testament, or both. 'Miracles stories' from the life of Christ featured in 25 sermons - the Resurrection in 16, but the Ascension in none. 16 referred to Pentateuch narratives.

All the items on the list show a majority, usually overwhelming, of 'literalist' strategies (with the exception of theme 47 Pentecost). Most show no 'non-literalist' strategies at all. Perhaps surprisingly, this includes themes such as Creation, Sin and the fall, Final judgment, and the Holy Catholic Church, together with the Pentateuch narratives and events in the life of Christ (except the birth narratives - see second paragraph below).

The 15 instances where some 'non-literalist' strategy of interpretation is followed are scattered across 13 sermons. Although this amounts to 26% of the sermons in the sample, even in these sermons 'non-literalist' interpretations are a small minority. In three sermons which refer to only 4 traditional themes each, one 'non-literalist' strategy is invoked, a frequency of 25%. 'Literalist' interpretations dominate overwhelmingly elsewhere.

Three sermons balance a 'non-literalist' interpretation by explicitly confirming 'literalist' understandings of other themes. Sermon no. 6 (3:18-58, 7:31-57) treats the birth narratives in

Matthew and Luke symbolically but sees the symbolism as an emphatic assertion 'that Jesus is indeed the Son of God'. Sermon 29 similarly contrasts the 'rather sentimental scenes' of the nativity stories with the 'real world' (2:38), but equally strongly asserts a belief in eternal life (10:34). Sermon no. 23 questions the idea of reward and punishment by God as represented by the advocates of the 'Prosperity Gospel', but in fact strongly endorses other understandings of the idea (see 2:46-3:3).

The 'non-literalist' references do not stray very far from 'literalism'. Sermon 2, for example, merely puts a tentative question mark over Scripture as the Word of God by acknowledging 'its tensions, ambiguities, even contradictions' and stressing the need to avoid 'too orthodox' interpretations (see 1:45, 4:45). The mention of eternal life in sermon 22, classified SP, is somewhat ambiguous:

> ultimately we may find that our joy can be complete, no matter the difficulties we may encounter on the way – I think that's what Jesus is talking about when he refers to the eternal life (12:20).

All instances of 'non-literalist' interpretation are fully documented, with reference summaries, in Appendix F(ii), together with instances of explicit 'literalism'.

Among the 'non-literalist' strategies DE *La différance* emphasised is perhaps the most marginal (see p.71). It is followed in three sermons – in sermon 26 to stress that God and the Holy Spirit are 'hard to explain', and in sermons 31 and 38 similarly warning that the events of Pentecost were 'beyond human language'. Perhaps none of the different groups discussed in section 1.B Project context would accept these instances as significant departures from 'literalist' readings of Scripture: if so, my second hypothesis has even less to challenge it.

The same may even be said of the references classified RJ Rejected on any interpretation and AP Amendment proposed in sermons 8 and 43. In sermon 8 the concept of divine intervention in individual lives is rejected (5:10), but perhaps unexceptionably in a context where it is seen as the opposite of human free will (but see p.149 below). Sermon 43 claims

that the Law of Moses has been replaced and that there is no such thing any more as a chosen race – replaced, that is, by 'the law of God's love' and the 'new spiritual Israel' (7:34, 7:5).

One other instance is classified AP. Sermon 48 asserts that when 'Abraham thought God was telling him to sacrifice Isaac', he was wrong (1:14). An uncompromisingly critical hermeneutic is here in action, but on a highly problematic passage from the Pentateuch. At least this preacher cannot be accused of glibly ignoring the credibility question.

One final instance, classified TP Translation proposed because it seems to amount to an example of demythologising, forms perhaps the strongest part of the case against the hypothesis. Sermon 34 introduces the idea that

> We have an enemy who walks around, sometimes dressed as an angel of light, sometimes like a roaring lion, whose object is to destroy the purposes of God's kingdom (Part 7 12:15).

But it immediately casts a question mark over this statement with the rare suggestion that alternative terminology is acceptable:

> You might not use that kind of language: it might just be that you know that life is like that. Just when the sun is shining and all seems clear, a bird poohs on you!

However significant or otherwise these 16 cases may individually be, they do not go far to redress the balance of the 498 on the other side. The situation is not greatly changed even if category CC Credibility as a challenge to faith is accepted as evidence against the hypothesis. In these instances the preacher recognises that there is at least a subjective problem of credibility, but does so in uncompromising vein. Of the 13 cases labelled CONF (Confirmed 'literalist' interpretation) in the table above, six belong to this category. In none of these did the preacher suggest that the problem lay in any objective incredibility of the doctrine itself, nor was anything like theodicy attempted.

The select list contains a comprehensive set of biblical and credal terminology central to the Christian faith, augmented by some of the most frequently read incidents from the Bible. Many, if not all, of these themes raise serious intellectual problems in the minds of my putative 'secular' reference group, and their doubts are, in significant measure at least, shared by the 'liberals' and probably also the 'holistic' milieu. Some of these doubts will also be felt by those who would accept the label 'literalist', and others, probably for different reasons, by the 'multi-faith' community. In the face of such doubts the preachers of this sample, with extremely few exceptions, maintain a stony, if not conspiratorial, silence.

Table 4. 29 below shows how this silence varied within the sample by research category, denomination, area, Bible basis, and service type. Two sets of figures are given. The first shows the proportion of sermons in which a credibility problem was explicitly recognised, *i.e.* sermons in which any strategy other than LI and LE appears. The second counts only sermons in which 'literalist' interpretation was somewhere seriously questioned (*i.e.* excluding strategy CC on the 'literalist' side, but also excluding DE as the mildest of the 'non-literalist' alternatives).

Expectations were almost completely wrong in respect of the three research categories where 'non-literalist' interpretations seemed most likely, *viz.* broadcast, central, and education-related sermons. Only the first score for the education-related churches is above average. Otherwise it was the sermons preached in rural churches which showed the highest proportions.

Other factors may be noted. Anglican scores are approximately twice the average. Both Roman Catholic scores are zero. Worcester is the most 'radical' area . Lectionary sermons offered more scope for pulpit hermeneutics and Eucharistic services less than other types: Expository sermons produced the lowest scores of all biblical orientations (bar one dual-purpose sermon). Informal services top score by a modest margin.

		Total sermons in category	'Non-literalist' strategies (plus CC) No. of sermons		'Non-literalist' strategies (excl. DE) No. of sermons	
All sermons		**50**	**16**	**32.0%**	**10**	**20.0%**
Research category						
	Broadcast	10	3	30.0%	1	10.0%
	Central	10	2	20.0%	1	10.0%
	Education	10	4	40.0%	2	20.0%
	Rural	10	5	50.0%	5	50.0%
	Urban	10	2	20.0%	1	10.0%
Denomination						
	Anglican	20	12	60.0%	8	40.0%
	Baptist	5	1	20.0%	1	20.0%
	Methodist	5	1	20.0%	0	0.0%
	R.C.	15	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	U.R.C.	5	2	40.0%	1	20.0%
Area						
	Birmingham	18	5	27.8%	4	22.2%
	Other	21	5	23.8%	3	14.3%
	Worcester	11	6	54.5%	3	27.3%
Bible basis						
	Lectionary	27	11	40.7%	8	29.6%
	Text anchor	6	2	33.3%	0	0.0%
	Free topic	5	1	20.0%	1	20.0%
	Expository	10	1	10.0%	1	10.0%
	Part-lect	1	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Part-exp	1	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
Service type						
	Eucharistic	27	7	25.9%	5	18.5%
	Formal	11	4	36.4%	2	18.2%
	Informal	12	5	41.7%	3	25.0%

Table 4. 29. 'Non-literalist' strategies by research category,
denomination, Bible basis, and service type.

It is instructive to compare the results of Table 4. 28 of with the picture emerging from the

Preacher's questionnaire on this issue. Preachers were asked in Question 9 how frequently

they dealt with 'the problems facing Christian belief in today's world' – weekly, monthly,

quarterly, *etc.* On the basis of their 46 answers I calculate that one would expect some 4 to 7

of any average group of 50 sermons to tackle the issue (the variation is due to the fact that

some preachers may preach more than one sermon per week but also that some clearly

interpreted the question as referring more widely to challenges of commitment rather than specifically to intellectual difficulties).

Most of the 'non-literalist' interpretations identified involve passing reference to particular problems. Credibility issues are not a main focus of attention. Of the sample perhaps only sermon 2, a Bible Sunday sermon specifically devoted to problems of scriptural authority, and sermon 6, a detailed exposition of historical problems in the *Gospels*, have any claim to be regarded as serious exceptions. The second hypothesis is not seriously challenged by these few examples. The questionnaire replies seem to have exaggerated somewhat the amount of time devoted in sermons to problems of credibility. What is very clear is that if this sample is at all representative, the vast majority of contemporary Christian preaching promulgates, implicitly or explicitly, a 'literalist' view of traditional themes and doctrines.

(ii) Analysis of contextual indicators

1) Introductory

The Analysis of contextual indicators is concerned first with the hermeneutic task of illuminating the meaning of the traditional terminology through the clues provided by the contexts of its occurrences. An associated aim is to supplement the Subject analysis by mapping the areas from which these links are drawn.

As indicated above, the number of individual mentions of the traditional themes is not calculated here. All appear under one heading or another in the 'processed data' on the CD-Rom C Thesis workbench (for access procedures see Appendix E(v)). But similar references are amalgamated wherever possible for efficiency. The statistics below must be understood in the light of this *caveat*.

In the Traditional language inventories (Appendix E(iii)) 714 mentions are listed. 67 relate to biblical 'miracle' narratives. The narratives are not terms requiring definition and are omitted from the present analysis.

647 mentions remain for consideration, an average of 12.94 per sermon or 20.2 per theme. Table 4. 30 gives overall totals and figures for each theme. After allowing for the 94 cases where no indicator was present (NUL linkages), the remaining 553 cases are associated with an average of 1.47 identified contextual indicators each, representing 3.9 link modes per theme.

	Theme	Sermons	Mentions	Sermons/ mention	NUL linkages	Linked mentions	Modes	Links	Links/ mention
1	God	32	54	0.9	6	48	9	62	1.3
2	Trinity	3	3	16.7	0	3	3	5	1.7
3	Father	15	16	3.1	3	13	3	14	1.1
4	Son	22	24	2.1	4	20	6	25	1.3
5	Eternal Word	7	7	7.1	1	6	4	8	1.3

	Theme	Sermons	Mentions	Sermons/ mention	NUL linkages	Linked mentions	Modes	Links	Links/ mention
6	Christology	14	17	2.9	5	12	8	15	1.3
7	Saviour	27	35	1.4	10	25	9	49	2.0
8	Lordship of Christ	16	25	2.0	1	24	7	32	1.3
9	Holy Spirit	25	49	1.0	2	47	8	70	1.5
10	Power & authority of God	9	18	2.8	2	16	9	23	1.4
11	Creation	13	19	2.6	2	17	7	20	1.2
12	Providence & intervention	10	12	4.2	2	10	7	14	1.4
13	Historical	17	24	2.1	1	23	6	30	1.3
14	Individual	22	40	1.3	1	39	6	64	1.6
15	Law of God	10	10	5.0	0	10	4	15	1.5
16	Sin & the fall	6	9	5.6	2	7	7	13	1.9
17	Reward & punishment by God	5	7	7.1	1	6	4	7	1.2
18	Final judgment	3	3	16.7	0	3	1	4	1.3
19	Word of God	9	14	3.6	1	13	5	25	1.9
20	Kingdom of God	19	26	1.9	5	21	7	30	1.4
21	Love of God	35	56	0.9	5	51	10	85	1.7
22	God's chosen people	5	6	8.3	2	4	3	5	1.3
23	Israel & the Promised Land	13	14	3.6	6	8	6	9	1.1
24	Holy catholic church	13	13	3.8	3	10	8	13	1.3
25	Salvation	22	30	1.7	6	24	8	38	1.6
26	Forgiveness of God	9	11	4.5	4	7	5	9	1.3
27	New birth and life	20	26	1.9	5	21	6	29	1.4
28	Christ within us	4	4	12.5	1	3	4	4	1.3
29	Christ beside us	9	15	3.3	2	13	8	21	1.6
30	Vocation & guidance	22	37	1.4	0	37	6	60	1.6
31	Eternal life	17	18	2.8	10	8	6	8	1.0
32	Angels good & evil	5	5	10.0	1	4	5	6	1.5
	Totals	**50**	**647**		**94**	**553**		**812**	
	Averages	**12.94**	**20.22**	**4.5**	**14.5%**	**17.3**	**3.9**	**25.38**	**1.47**

Table 4. 30. Sermons, mentions, NULs, modes, and links by traditional theme.

The first objective above would ideally require a full exegesis of each of occurrence: contextual meaning is not necessarily transferable from one context to another. This is clearly impossible within the limits of an M.Phil. dissertation. Four sample exegeses are offered in Appendix F(iii): also, Appendix E(iii) contains a sermon by sermon 'inventory', summarising the full Thesis workbench database on CD-Rom C. The subsections below draw some general conclusions emerging from the data.

For the second aim a broad overview is more appropriate. Subsection 4.D(ii.5) provides this in tabular form using both Faith-aware and Neutral schemata.

The sample exegeses in Appendix F(iii) were chosen to illustrate a range of modes of linkage. Some of the contextual indicators found in these cases are themselves familiar parts of the Christian tradition, 'internal' links (see subsection (2) below), while some are drawn from outside that tradition ('external' links). All throw light on the contextual meaning of the relevant terminology.

2) *'Internal', 'external', and NUL indicators*

Table 4. 31 below presents totals for each theme of 'internal' and 'external' indicators', as well as the NUL links already referred to. 'Internal' indicators are links which illuminate the meaning of one traditional theme by other Christian concepts, practices, organisations, or experiences. They are classified under the Faith-aware schema in categories 24 Christian, 22 Jewish (all cases in fact involve Tanakh or biblical reference), or 43 Spiritual. They throw little independent light on the terminology, and do nothing to refute the Wittgensteinian view of religious language as a self-contained 'game' interpretable only from within.

'External' indicators, by contrast, are drawn from areas outside the specifically Christian sphere. They therefore offer clear points of contact between Christian language and the everyday world. If 'the meaning is the use', they have the potential, given the full exegesis required, to rescue interpretation from the interrupted hermeneutic diagnosed in subsection

1.C(vii) above. The sample exegeses in Appendix F(iii) can do no more, however, than offer pointers to a possible way forward.

The variation displayed in Table 4.31 highlights the fact that the themes on the select list do not form a homogeneous set. The 'credibility gap' is wider in some cases than others and on some people's assessment rather than others, *e.g.* Creation and Providence, the Trinity and Eternal life, Angels and the Holy Spirit. And the logical status of themes differs, *e.g.* God and the Law of God, Christology and Reward & punishment, Forgiveness and the Word of God. The variations present, however, do not neatly fit with these conceptual differences. They point again to the need for detailed study of each individual occurrence. Some limited conclusions do emerge, though, from the few unusually high scores shown.

	Theme	NUL linkages as % of all mentions	Linked mentions	Links	'External' indicators as % of links	'Internal' indicators as % of links
1	God	11.1%	48	62	58.1%	41.9%
2	Trinity	-	3	5	60.0%	40.0%
3	God the Father	18.8%	13	14	14.3%	85.7%
4	God the Son	16.7%	20	25	32.0%	68.0%
5	Eternal Word	14.3%	6	8	87.5%	12.5%
6	Christology	29.4%	12	15	53.3%	46.7%
7	Jesus the Saviour	28.6%	25	49	71.4%	28.6%
8	Lordship of Christ	4.0%	24	32	46.9%	53.1%
9	God the Holy Spirit	4.1%	47	70	37.1%	62.9%
10	Power & authority of God	11.1%	16	23	69.6%	30.4%
11	Creation	10.5%	17	20	80.0%	20.0%
12	Providence & intervention	16.7%	10	14	64.3%	35.7%
13	Intervention in history	4.2%	23	30	80.0%	20.0%
14	Intervention in individual life	2.5%	39	64	60.9%	39.1%
15	Law of God	-	10	15	33.3%	66.7%
16	Sin & the fall	22.2%	7	13	84.6%	15.4%
17	Reward & punishment by God	14.3%	6	7	85.7%	14.3%
18	Final judgment	-	3	4	50.0%	50.0%
19	Word of God	7.1%	13	25	20.0%	80.0%
20	Kingdom of God	19.2%	21	30	66.7%	33.3%
21	Love of God	8.9%	51	85	56.5%	43.5%
22	God's chosen people	33.3%	4	5	20.0%	80.0%
23	Israel & the Promised Land	42.9%	8	9	33.3%	66.7%

	Theme	NUL linkages as % of all mentions	Linked mentions	Links	'External' indicators as % of links	'Internal' indicators as % of links
24	Holy catholic church	23.1%	10	13	46.2%	53.8%
25	Christian salvation	20.0%	24	38	42.1%	57.9%
26	Forgiveness of God	36.4%	7	9	66.7%	33.3%
27	New birth and life	19.2%	21	29	55.2%	44.8%
28	Christ within us	25.0%	3	4	50.0%	50.0%
29	Christ beside us	13.3%	13	21	81.0%	19.0%
30	Vocation & guidance	-	37	60	63.3%	36.7%
31	Eternal life	55.6%	8	8	62.5%	37.5%
32	Angels good & evil	20.0%	4	6	50.0%	50.0%
	Totals	**94**	**553**	**812**	**454**	**358**
	Overall averages	**14.5%**	**17.3**	**1.5**	**55.9%**	**44.1%**

Table 4. 31. 'Internal', 'external', and NUL indicators by theme

High 'external' scores (80% or over) are recorded for Eternal Word, Creation, Historical intervention, Sin & the fall, Reward & punishment, and Christ beside us. It is here that the traditional language makes its firmest contacts with hard fact. Theme 5 Eternal Word is an unexpected member of this group, but of the eight references to the theme in the sermons, four relate to creation and one to the historical Jesus.

By contrast, high 'internal' scores appear for God the Father (mostly introductory formulae to the sermon itself), the Word of God (mostly direct references to the Bible), and God's chosen people. Slightly less frequent (over 60%) are 'internal' links to God the Son, God the Holy Spirit (in both cases mostly references to sacrament, sermon, or mission), Law of God (general references to the 10 Commandments outnumber specific applications to actual behaviour) and Israel & the promised land (see also comments in the next paragraph).

The high NUL scores (over 30%) seem to be due to a number of different causes. I have already discussed in general terms the significance or otherwise of NUL links (see p. 75 above following Table 2. 10). For God's chosen people and Israel & the promised land high NULs may be due to the easily identifiable real-world reference. On the other hand, Eternal life and

Divine forgiveness perhaps have no analogue in the modern world. Neither do many of the themes with lower NUL scores.

3) 'Internal' indicators

Although not referring beyond the Christian sphere, 'internal' indicators can throw useful light on how traditional terminology functions within it. Composite totals are no substitute for close exegesis of individual contexts. But the 'internal' link figures given in Table 4. 32 below for eight overlapping theme groups based on the conceptual hierarchy of the select list show a clear general pattern. In all groups links from Church life and organisation outnumber Christian doctrine by a clear, though varying, margin. Spiritual responses standardly fall somewhere between them.

Hierarchical theme group	Themes covered	Total links	'Internal' links as %	Church	Doctrine	Jewish	New Test-ament	Spiritual	Other
God	1-31	806	44.0%	19.7%	5.8%	4.3%	1.2%	12.5%	0.4%
Trinity	2-9	218	52.3%	31.2%	7.3%	1.8%	1.4%	10.6%	-
God the Son	4-8	106	52.8%	25.5%	12.3%	3.8%	1.9%	9.4%	-
Power & authority of God	10-20	245	37.6%	13.1%	6.9%	8.2%	1.2%	8.2%	-
Love of God	21-31	281	43.8%	18.9%	4.6%	2.8%	1.1%	15.3%	1.1%
God's chosen people	22-24	27	63.0%	37.0%	7.4%	3.7%	-	14.8%	-
Salvation	25-31	169	40.8%	18.3%	3.0%	2.4%	0.6%	15.4%	1.2%
Angels good & evil	32	6	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	-	-	-	-
	Totals	812	358	161	48	35	10	101	3
Percentages of total links			44.1%	19.8%	5.9%	4.3%	1.2%	12.4%	0.4%
Percentages of 'internal' links				45.0%	13.4%	9.8%	2.8%	28.2%	0.8%

Table 4. 32. 'Internal' link sets as percentages of all links for groups of traditional themes

The variations in the scores are due partly to the changing balance between 'internal' and 'external' links in the different groups (see subsection (2) above). But beyond that, certain groups stand out from the rest, *e.g.* the Power & authority group and God's chosen people. It is also noteworthy that Tanakh links (which represent 21 out of the 35 Jewish links shown in Table 4. 32) appear nearly twice as frequently overall as the New Testament. Appropriately, the Love of God group, together with the Salvation and Chosen people groups contained within it, demands, it seems, a Spiritual response: 31 of the 43 links classified as Spiritual belong to link mode REQ Requirement..

The Spiritual links merit further comment in the light of the 'spiritual revolution' context identified in Project outline 1.B(iv). Heelas *et al.* recognise the semantic ambiguity surrounding the word 'spiritual'(Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p.5). But their distinction between 'subjective-life spirituality' and 'life-as spirituality', as expressed in terms of the notion of 'self-surrender' to an objectified being labelled 'God', may be misleading (see subsection 1.B(iv), p.11). 'Spiritual', as I use it here, refers to any aspect of Christian life and practice that belongs to the most personal, inner life of the individual. Mostly that is expressed in the sermons, I agree, in terms of a relationship to God or the Holy Spirit. But whether that is fairly described as 'something which is and remains external to and higher than the self' depends, perhaps, on whether the language is understood in 'literalist' or 'non-literalist' mode.

However that may be, the 79 cases here labelled 'Christian devotion' virtually all occur in the context of language involving the name 'God'. Just a few have a passive, contemplative, or meditational aspect with which 'holistic practitioners' might recognise some affinity. Examples are:

- Open hearts to God's Spirit (as trigger for spiritual motivation - sermon 38 8:7-20)
- Abide in my love (as required response to the Love of God - sermon 22 11:14)
- Transfigured through prayer & fasting (as means to 'new life' - sermon 18 14:00)
- Travel . . . in the Spirit to the Cross (as required response to God - sermon 39 7:50)

But, even if these four examples are accepted as evidence of an interest in 'spirituality' in the sense used in Heelas *et al.*, they do not amount to any serious involvement with the 'holistic milieu', let alone any imitation of it. Neither, it may be admitted here too, do the seven 'external' links from Faith-aware category 43 Spiritual.

4) 'External' indicators

To facilitate discussion of the 454 'external' indicators, the themes were divided into four groups by means of a computerised routine developed within the Microsoft ACCESS database held on CD-Rom C Thesis workbench (see Appendix E(v) for details). The division was based on calculated similarities in respect of the Neutral code and mode group combinations

Group A			Group B			Group C	
6	Christology		4	God the Son		20	Kingdom of God
13	Intervention in history		7	Jesus the Saviour		24	Holy Catholic church
15	Law of God		8	Lordship of Christ			
17	Reward & punishment by God		9	God the Holy Spirit		**Group D** (unattached themes)	
19	Word of God		10	Power and authority of God		1	God
23	Israel & the Promised Land		11	Creation		2	Trinity
26	Forgiveness of God		12	Providence & intervention		3	God the Father
			14	Intervention in individual life		5	Eternal Word
			16	Sin & the fall		18	Final judgment
			21	Love of God		22	God's chosen people
			25	Christian salvation		28	Christ within us
			27	New life & birth		29	Christ beside us
			30	Vocation & guidance		31	Eternal life
						32	Angels good & evil

Table 4. 33. Grouping of traditional themes by similarity of link mode

represented by the links attaching to each theme. Some conceptual coherence can be recognised within the groups, shown in Table 4. 33 below, but it is a byproduct, and to some extent confirmation, of the analytic process of grouping. Group D is a *pot pourri* of unrelated themes, each showing a variance of over 70% from all other themes.

Table 4. 34 shows the overall scores (Group F percentages are not calculated, but the totals are given for completeness) and Table 4. 35 analyses these scores in more detail by Neutral code range (and for Group D by individual theme). 'Internal' scores are included in both Tables for comparison. To facilitate comparisons, scores are shown in Table 4. 35 as percentages of all links for the given theme or theme group.

The 'internal' scores featuring in the Tables below were discussed in the previous subsection (see p.129). Groups A to C, and particularly the Focal links associated with them, are the subjects of subsections (*a*) to (*c*) below, and certain individual themes in subsection (*d*). Subsection (*e*) is devoted to Science & Technology indicators (Neutral ranges 50s and 60s). Subsections (*f*) to (*i*) review other modes of linkage than the Focal. Subsection (*j*) concludes the chapter by presenting overall distribution maps for all links.

Theme Group	Total links	'Internal' links	Causal links	Contrast links	Focal links	Imagery links	Logical links	Response links
A	**110**	48.2%	0.9%	7.3%	39.1%	0.9%	1.8%	1.8%
B	**522**	43.9%	0.6%	6.7%	39.8%	4.0%	2.7%	2.3%
C	**43**	39.5%		7.0%	27.9%	7.0%		18.6%
D	*137*	*59*	*1*	*26*	*27*	*8*	*9*	*7*
Totals	**812**	**358**	**5**	**72**	**290**	**33**	**25**	**29**
		44.1%	**0.6%**	**8.9%**	**35.7%**	**4.1%**	**3.1%**	**3.6%**

Table 4. 34. Mode groups by theme group

Neutral range	Themes	All modes (% of theme or group)		Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
0	**General subjects**	**7**	**0.9%**							
	Group B	**5**	**1.0%**			0.8%	0.2%			
	Theme 1 God	**2**	**3.2%**			1.6%	1.6%			
	Other themes		**-**							
10	**Philosophy**	**82**	**10.1%**							
	Group A	**15**	**13.6%**		2.7%	0.9%		0.9%		9.1%
	Group B	**47**	**9.0%**		1.0%	1.3%		0.8%		5.9%
	Group C	**5**	**11.6%**			9.3%				2.3%
	Theme 1 God	**6**	**9.7%**		6.5%				1.6%	1.6%
	Theme 2 Trinity	**1**	**20.0%**					20.0%		
	Theme 5 Eternal Word	**1**	**12.5%**							12.5%
	Theme 18 Final judgment	**2**	**50.0%**							50.0%
	Theme 22 God's chosen people	**2**	**40.0%**							40.0%
	Theme 31 Eternal life	**2**	**25.0%**							25.0%
	Theme 32 Angels good & evil	**1**	**16.7%**							16.7%
	Other themes		**-**							
20	**Personal themes**	**245**	**30.2%**							
	Group A	**24**	**21.8%**	0.9%		6.4%	0.9%		1.8%	11.8%
	Group B	**165**	**31.6%**	0.2%	1.3%	13.8%	0.4%	0.6%	2.1%	13.2%
	Group C	**14**	**32.6%**			4.7%			18.6%	9.3%
	Theme 1 God	**24**	**38.7%**		1.6%	9.7%	1.6%		1.6%	24.2%
	Theme 2 Trinity	**1**	**20.0%**					20.0%		
	Theme 5 Eternal Word	**2**	**25.0%**		12.5%	12.5%				
	Theme 18 Final judgment	**1**	**25.0%**			25.0%				
	Theme 28 Christ within us	**2**	**50.0%**					25.0%		25.0%
	Theme 29 Christ beside us	**8**	**38.1%**		9.5%	4.8%		4.8%	9.5%	9.5%
	Theme 31 Eternal life	**2**	**25.0%**		12.5%		12.5%			
	Theme 32 Angels good & evil	**2**	**33.3%**						33.3%	
	Other themes		**-**							
30	**Social themes**	**290**	**35.7%**							
	Group A	**45**	**40.9%**		3.6%	25.5%				11.8%
	Group B	**179**	**34.3%**		1.7%	10.0%	0.4%	0.2%		22.0%

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Neutral range	Themes	All modes (% of theme or group)		Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
	Group C	19	44.2%		4.7%	11.6%				27.9%
	Theme 1 God	14	22.6%		1.6%	3.2%		3.2%		14.5%
	Theme 2 Trinity	2	40.0%							40.0%
	Theme 3 Father	13	92.9%						7.1%	85.7%
	Theme 5 Eternal Word	1	12.5%			12.5%				
	Theme 18 Final judgment		-							
	Theme 22 God's chosen people	2	40.0%							40.0%
	Theme 28 Christ within us	2	50.0%			25.0%				25.0%
	Theme 29 Christ beside us	9	42.9%	4.8%	19.0%	9.5%				9.5%
	Theme 31 Eternal life	1	12.5%							12.5%
	Theme 32 Angels good & evil	3	50.0%				16.7%			33.3%
40	Economic themes	26	3.2%							
	Group A	3	2.7%		0.9%	0.9%		0.9%		
	Group B	18	3.4%		0.8%	2.5%			0.2%	
	Group C	1	2.3%		2.3%					
	Theme 18 Final judgment	1	25.0%			25.0%				
	Theme 22 God's chosen people	1	20.0%			20.0%				
	Theme 29 Christ beside us	1	4.8%			4.8%				
	Theme 31 Eternal life	1	12.5%		12.5%					
	Other themes		-							
50	Science	87	10.7%							
	Group A	1	0.9%			0.9%				
	Group B	64	12.3%	0.2%	1.0%	7.9%	2.3%	1.0%		
	Group C	2	4.7%			4.7%				
	Theme 1 God	10	16.1%		9.7%	1.6%		4.8%		
	Theme 2 Trinity	1	20.0%				20.0%			
	Theme 3 Father	1	7.1%			7.1%				
	Theme 5 Eternal Word	4	50.0%			50.0%				
	Theme 29 Christ beside us	3	14.3%		4.8%	4.8%	4.8%			
	Theme 31 Eternal life	1	12.5%		12.5%					
	Other themes		-							

Neutral range	Themes	All modes (% of theme or group)		Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
60	**Technology**	**18**	**2.2%**							
	Group A	3	2.7%			2.7%				
	Group B	12	2.3%		0.2%	1.9%	0.2%			
	Group C	2	4.7%			2.3%	2.3%			
	Theme 31 Eternal life	1	12.5%			12.5%				
	Other themes		-							
70	**The arts**	**34**	**4.2%**							
	Group A	16	14.5%							14.5%
	Group B	16	3.1%			0.2%		0.2%		2.7%
	Theme 1 God	2	3.2%		1.6%					1.6%
	Other themes		-							
80	**Friends & family**	**21**	**2.6%**							
	Group A	3	2.7%			1.8%				0.9%
	Group B	15	2.9%	0.2%	0.6%	1.5%	0.6%			
	Theme 1 God	3	4.8%		1.6%		3.2%			
	Other themes		-							
90	**Sport, leisure, & other subjects**	**2**	**0.2%**							
	Group B	1	0.2%		0.2%					
	Theme 1 God	1	1.6%		1.6%					
	Other themes		0							
	Total links	**812**	**100.0%**	**5**	**72**	**290**	**33**	**25**	**29**	**358**
	Percentages			**0.6%**	**8.9%**	**35.7%**	**4.1%**	**3.1%**	**3.6%**	**44.1%**

Table 4. 35.   Distribution of links by Neutral range, theme group, and mode group
(Scores are shown as percentages of the total links identified for a theme or theme group.)

Major comparative features which may be highlighted here include, from Table 4. 34, the disparity in Imagery links between the groups, the high proportion of Response links shown by Group C themes at the expense of Focal, and the fact that Groups A to C are all substantially below average in respect of Contrast links. The overall Contrast link tally of 8.9% relies heavily on 15 indicators associated with theme 1 God (24.2% of the theme total: see Table 4. 40).

Misleadingly perhaps, some of the high percentages recorded for Group D themes in Table 4. 35 are chance functions of small numbers of occurrences overall. But after due allowance has been made for this, it is noteworthy that the extreme paucity of 'external' indicators relating to the individual themes of Group D under any of the Neutral ranges outside the 20s to the 50s is again relieved mainly by theme 1 God. Also, in spite of a high calculated variance, Group B and theme 1 God seem to shadow one another fairly closely in Table 4. 35 (see especially Contrast and Imagery modes and Neutral ranges 0s, 20s, 30s, 80s, and 90s).

a) Group A

Table 4. 36 collects together the Group A results from Table 4. 35. Noticeable particularly are the Focal links, where range 30s Social themes outnumbers its nearest rival the 20s Personal by a ratio of 4:1. The themes in Group A (see Table 4. 33 above) have a distinctly authoritarian stamp. To use the terminology of the Kendal Project (see (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p.5f.), they belong to 'life-as' religion.

Neutral range	Totals	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
0 General subjects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 Philosophy	**13.6%**	-	2.7%	0.9%	-	0.9%	-	9.1%
20 Personal themes	**21.8%**	0.9%	-	6.4%	0.9%	-	1.8%	11.8%
30 Social themes	**40.9%**	-	3.6%	25.5%	-	-	-	11.8%
40 Economic themes	**2.7%**	-	0.9%	0.9%	-	0.9%	-	-
50 Science	**0.9%**	-	-	0.9%	-	-	-	-
60 Technology	**2.7%**	-	-	2.7%	-	-	-	-
70 The arts	**14.5%**	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.5%
80 Friends & family	**2.7%**	-	-	1.8%	-	-	-	0.9%
90 Sport, leisure, etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total links in Group A	**110**	**0.9%**	**7.3%**	**39.1%**	**0.9%**	**1.8%**	**1.8%**	**48.2%**

Table 4. 36. Theme Group A: Distribution of links by Neutral range and Mode group.

Of the 15 Philosophy links 10 are 'internal' links to aspects of Christian doctrine (coded 14 Schools & systems or 17 Ethics): the 5 'external' links relate the traditional terms in various ways to general ethical ideas.

b) Group B

By contrast with Group A the themes in Group B may be broadly described as representing the more 'comfortable' face of Christianity. Appropriately, Personal indicators (20s), ignoring 'internal' links, surpass Social themes (30s). For details see Table 4. 37 below.

Neutral range	Totals	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
0 General subjects	**1.0%**	-	-	0.8%	0.2%	-	-	-
10 Philosophy	**9.0%**	-	1.0%	1.3%	-	0.8%	-	5.9%
20 Personal themes	**31.6%**	0.2%	1.3%	13.8%	0.4%	0.6%	2.1%	13.2%
30 Social themes	**34.3%**	-	1.7%	10.0%	0.4%	0.2%	-	22.0%
40 Economic themes	**3.4%**	-	0.8%	2.5%	-	-	0.2%	-
50 Science	**12.3%**	0.2%	1.0%	7.9%	2.3%	1.0%	-	-
60 Technology	**2.3%**	-	0.2%	1.9%	0.2%	-	-	-
70 The arts	**3.1%**	-	-	0.2%	-	0.2%	-	2.7%
80 Friends & family	**2.9%**	0.2%	0.6%	1.5%	0.6%	-	-	-
90 Sport, leisure, etc.	**0.2%**	-	0.2%	-	-	-	-	-
Total links in Group B	**522**	**0.6%**	**6.7%**	**39.8%**	**4.0%**	**2.7%**	**2.3%**	**43.9%**

Table 4. 37. Theme Group B: Distribution of links by Neutral range and Mode group.

The Group also includes, however, such themes as Power and authority, Creation, and Sin & the fall. Creation rates 22 identified references and 20 contextual indicators (16 'external', 4 'internal'). 4 of these latter are Contrast links, 7 are from Neutral range 50s Science: they are

discussed more fully in subsections *(e)* and *(f)* below. The scope of the term as defined by these links is very wide. To invoke creation sometimes seems to be a recognition of the 'givenness' of things, but often an implied or explicit value-judgment is involved: Table 4. 38 below gives details.

Link status	Mode group	Mode code	Neutral code	Normalised category	Link analysed as	Count
External	Contrast	CON	22	Decision-making	Human decision	1
External	Contrast	CON	32	Politics & decision-making	Social divisions	1
External	Contrast	CON	50	Science	Evolution	1
External	Contrast	CON	60	Technology	Home & family	1
Internal	Logical	EVI	78	Literature	Genesis	1
External	Focal	FOC	27	Mind	Mental processes	1
External	Focal	FOC	31	Social: culture & values	Human cultures	1
External	Focal	FOC	53	Physics	Light	1
External	Focal	FOC	57	Human sciences	Humankind	1
External	Focal	FOC	57	Human sciences	Life	1
External	Focal	FOC	81	Friends & family: relationships & values	Partnerships	1
Internal	Focal	FOC	14	Schools & systems	Christian eschatology	1
Internal	Focal	FOC	37	Education & training	Christian sermon	1
External	Focal	INS	20	Personal themes	Individual gifts	1
External	Focal	INS	50	Science	Natural world	1
External	Focal	INS	57	Human sciences	Humankind	2
External	Response	REQ	25	Personal conflict & cooperation	Christian kindness	1
External	Response	REQ	44	Standard of living	Lifestyle	1
Internal	Response	RES	78	Literature	Psalms	1

Table 4. 38. Theme 11 Creation: links by mode, code, and subject

c) Group C

Consisting of two themes only, the Kingdom of God and the Holy Catholic Church, Group C musters 43 indicators, 60% 'external' and covering 4 out of 6 link modes. Table 4. 39 below shows a high frequency of 'external' Response links in range 20s. 'Focal' indicators for both themes, however, are geared to range 30s Social themes, 'external' as well as 'internal'.

Neutral range	Totals	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
0 General subjects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10 Philosophy	**11.6%**	-	-	9.3%	-	-	-	2.3%
20 Personal themes	**32.6%**	-	-	4.7%	-	-	18.6%	9.3%
30 Social themes	**44.2%**	-	4.7%	11.6%	-	-	-	27.9%
40 Economic themes	**2.3%**	-	2.3%	-	-	-	-	-
50 Science	**4.7%**	-	-	-	4.7%	-	-	-
60 Technology	**4.7%**	-	-	2.3%	2.3%	-	-	-
70 The arts								
80 Friends & family	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
90 Sport, leisure, etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total links in Group C	**43**	**0.0%**	**7.0%**	**27.9%**	**7.0%**	**0.0%**	**18.6%**	**39.5%**

Table 4. 39. Theme Group C: Distribution of links by Neutral range and Mode group.

d) Group D (unrelated themes)

1) Theme 1. God

62 contextual indicators for this theme fall into a significantly different pattern from all other themes. As Table 4. 40 below shows, Contrast links (discussed further in subsection (*f*) below) even outnumber Focal. Apart from the high score in range 50s Science, largely Contrast indicators, this theological term *par excellence* is - appropriately - illuminated by an above average representation of link mode Logical and range 10s Philosophy indicators (though none that fall into both sets).

2) Theme 2. The Trinity

In spite of the strongly trinitarian orientation of the preaching, only 3 generic references to the Trinity (as distinct from the persons of the Trinity) are identified in the sermons. 3 associated 'external' indicators come from a 2nd century Syrian hymn referred to in sermon 28, in which

Neutral range	Totals	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response	Internal
0 General subjects	**3.2%**	-	-	1.6%	1.6%	-	-	-
10 Philosophy	**9.7%**	-	6.5%	-	-	-	1.6%	1.6%
20 Personal themes	**38.7%**	-	1.6%	9.7%	1.6%	-	1.6%	24.2%
30 Social themes	**22.6%**	-	1.6%	3.2%	-	3.2%	-	14.5%
40 Economic themes	**-**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50 Science	**16.1%**	-	9.7%	1.6%	-	4.8%	-	-
60 Technology	**-**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
70 The arts	**3.2%**	-	1.6%	-	-	-	-	1.6%
80 Friends & family	**4.8%**	-	1.6%	-	3.2%	-	-	-
90 Sport, leisure, etc.	**1.6%**	-	1.6%	-	-	-	-	-
Total links for theme	**62**	**-**	**24.2%**	**16.1%**	**6.5%**	**8.1%**	**3.2%**	**41.9%**

Table 4. 40. Theme 1 God: Distribution of links by Neutral range and Mode group.

the Trinity is celebrated through androgynous imagery as 'growth, nurture, goodness, and divine life' (see also p.144, 153 below). This was an unusually clear contextual definition for a term that preachers often brand as particularly hard to explain.

3) Theme 3. God the Father

12 'internal' indicators, all in standard liturgical formulae, but only 2 'external', classified 35 & 55 and found in sermon 38:

> God the Father has told us what to do: . . . to be his carers for his creation in wisdom & justice (3:40).

4) Theme 18. Final judgment

Only three references to this theme were identified. The two 'external' indicators associated with them are Focal links relating to the parable of Dives and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16.

Judgment is here linked to the social awareness and attitude to poverty demonstrated during one's life - in this case by default, the preacher warned.

5) *Theme 28. Christ within us*

4 links only identified for this pivotal theme of Paul's soteriology. One is sacramental, sermon 7 describing Mary as 'receiving Christ again into her heart at the Eucharist' (2:17). Another was a topical reference in sermon 5 to 'glimpsing Christ in Stephen Oake's father (praying for his son's killers) and in himself (in his selflessness, passion for God, joy & laughter to those around him)' (Part 6 0:36-50).

6) *Theme 31. Eternal life*

References in 17 sermons to Eternal life lead, as Table 4. 41 below shows, to only 8 links, 5 of them 'external'. In as far as this doctrine of central pastoral importance in Christianity receives independent contextual elucidation, it is in terms, first of all, of Contrast links (discussed in subsection (*f)* below), and then of the 'wholeness and healing' which death brings (sermon 10 8:13). But most interesting is the Imagery link from sermon 22 which relates Eternal life to joy (see above p.119 and below p.151 for details).

Link status	Mode group	Mode code	Neutral code	Normalised category	Link analysed as	Count
External	Contrast	CON	26	Action & achievements	Short-term prizes	1
External	Contrast	CON	44	Standard of living	Standard of living	1
External	Contrast	CON	57	Human sciences	Death	1
External	Focal	FOC	61	Medicine	Health	1
Internal	Focal	FOC	14	Schools & systems	Church	1
Internal	Causal	OCC	14	Schools & systems	Jesus Christ	1
Internal	Response	REQ	37	Education & training	Christian mission	1
External	Imagery	SYM	24	Emotional	Joy	1

Table 4. 41. Theme 31 Eternal Life: links by mode, code, and subject.

10) Theme 32. Angels good & evil

There are 5 references to angels in the sermons, 3 to the devil, 1 to Gabriel's role in Luke's birth narratives, and 1 to the angels seen by Mary Magdalene at Christ's tomb. As Table 4. 42 shows, 3 'external' indicators are identified for this theme. In addition to the paraphrase in sermon 34 referred to on p.120, sermon 9 (4:15) describes the reactions of first Zechariah and then Mary to Gabriel's visitations. These are classified here as 'external' links, because the fear and the questioning curiosity, respectively, which the archangel was described as provoking are both common subjective reactions and readily recognisable in ourselves. As such they demonstrate certain conditions of use of the language of angels, whether or not objective causes are attributed to the experiences.

Link status	Mode group	Mode code	Neutral code	Normalised category	Link analysed as	Count
Internal	Contrast	CON	14	Schools & systems	God	1
Internal	Contrast	CON	33	Ceremonies & practices	Christian baptism	1
Internal	Focal	FOC	37	Education & training	Christian mission	1
External	Response	RES	24	Emotional	Fear	1
External	Response	RES	27	Mind	Questions	1
External	Imagery	SYM	38	Physical environment & events	Circumstances of life	1

Table 4. 42. Theme 32 Angels good and evil: links by mode, code, and subject.

e) Science & Technology indicators

Science and technology notably provide 23.1% of the 'external' indicators identified in the sermons (compared with a total of 4.0% in the Subject analysis - see Table 4. 12). Here is a firm grounding in physical reality for the traditional terminology. The three tables below, Table 4. 43 to Table 4. 45, analyse the figures on various combinations of parameters.

Two clear preponderances emerge from the Tables – Focal links at 61% and Human sciences at 56%. But after these, the most salient features are shared by Group B themes and theme 1 God. These include the affinity of Imagery links for Physics (Faith-aware 51), the Human sciences (53) Contrast links, and (with theme 5 Eternal Word) the 9 general Science links

Code	Faith-aware category	Total	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical	Response
50	**Science & technology**	**9**		1.9%	4.8%		1.9%	
51	Physics & cosmology	20		1.0%	3.8%	11.4%	2.9%	
52	Chemistry	0						
53	Human sciences	59	1.0%	9.5%	41.0%	2.9%	1.9%	
54	Other life sciences	7			5.7%	1.0%		
55	Electricity & electronics	0						
56	Construction & engineering	2				1.9%		
57	Environmental sciences	8		1.0%	5.7%		1.0%	
58	Not assigned	0						
59	Other scientific topics	0						
	Totals	**105**	**1**	**14**	**64**	**18**	**8**	**0**
	Percentages		**1.0%**	**13.3%**	**61.0%**	**17.1%**	**7.6%**	**-**

Table 4. 43. 'External' Science & technology links by Faith-aware code and mode group

(Faith-aware code 50). (For Contrast and Imagery links see further subsections (*f*) and (g) below). As always, the empty or sparsely-filled rows and columns and the 4 missing individual themes from Group D are also revealing.

The 59 Human sciences indicators vary greatly. Some are familiar – *e.g.* God created, loves, *etc*. humankind, God as the logical contrary of human beings, the human body as an image of

Themes	Total	50	51	53	54	56	57
Group A	**4**			1	3		
Group B	**76**	6	15	43	4	1	7
Group C	**4**			3		1	
Theme 1 God	**10**	1	3	6			
Theme 2 Trinity	**1**			1			
Theme 3 God the Father	**1**						1
Theme 5 Eternal Word	**4**	2	1	1			
Theme 29 Christ beside us	**3**		1	2			
Theme 31 Eternal life	**2**			2			
Totals	**105**	**9**	**20**	**59**	**7**	**2**	**8**
Percentages	**100.0%**	**8.6%**	**19.0%**	**56.2%**	**6.7%**	**1.9%**	**7.6%**

Table 4. 44. 'External' Science & technology links by Faith-aware code and theme group

Themes	Total	Causal	Contrast	Focal	Imagery	Logical
Group A	**4**			4		
Group B	**76**	1	6	51	13	5
Group C	**4**			1	3	
Theme 1 God	**10**		6	1		3
Theme 2 Trinity	**1**				1	
Theme 3 God the Father	**1**			1		
Theme 5 Eternal Word	**4**			4		
Theme 29 Christ beside us	**3**		1	1	1	
Theme 31 Eternal life	**2**		1	1		
Totals	105	1	14	64	18	8
Percentages	10-	1.0%	13.3%	61.0%	17.1%	7.6%

Table 4. 45. 'External' Science & technology links by theme and mode group

the Church, salvation as dependent on Christ's experience of physical death. Some are challenging - Christ found in the child we welcome, Christ's love as called into question by, but also found in, bereavement. Some are quite unexpected, like the androgynous imagery for the Trinity in 2nd century C.E. Syrian hymnology (see p.139, 153). 9 of these links fall under Neutral category 61 Medicine - physical healings, past and present, as the work of God, death as the 'entry into wholeness & healing', or the late Pope's physical deterioration as a modern instance of how 'the Lord has been pleased to crush his servant with suffering'.

5 Focal links are drawn from Neutral category 63 Agriculture - the love and providence of God evidenced by a good harvest, which is also a key aspect of Israel's 'promised land'.

More solidly scientific, perhaps, are the 16 Focal links which assert God's interest in the physical universe or features within it – as *e.g.* creator (universe, light, Worcestershire countryside, *etc.*), sustainer (sun, rain, hairs of head, sparrows, *etc.*), or encourager of environmental concern: some half of these links are direct quotations from the Bible. Also, 6 Logical links cite the physical world as evidence of God's existence and sovereignty (astronomy, the universe itself), his love (nature), and Christ's deity (confirmed by his

walking on the water and stilling the storm). The 4 Contrast links in this group of subjects are discussed below.

f) Contrast indicators

At 15.9% of 'external' indicators and because of their particular effectiveness as determinants of contextual meaning, Contrast links form another important subset. Table 4. 46 analyses these 72 links by Neutral range and category. Table 4. 47 lists them by traditional theme and linked subject. It also adds a flag to each entry indicating eight main types of contrast, explained in more detail in the panel below the Table and in the rest of this subsection.

Neutral range	Range Total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	+9
0	**0**										
10	**12**		2	2		5	1		2		
20	**12**	1		3		1	4	1	1	1	
30	**19**		6	9			1			4	
40	**8**		2	3		1	1				
50	**13**	2		1			1		9		
60	**1**	1									
70	**1**	1									
80	**4**		2		1					1	
90	**2**			1					1		
Grand Total	**72**										

Table 4. 46. 'External' Contrast links by Neutral category.

One important group are links that emphasise the transcendence of God, flagged 'T' in Table 4. 47. 'God invisible and unknown' from sermon 17 may serve as an example. These links have a clear ancestry in the apophatic tradition of theology. In four references, which arise from the paradox of incarnation, Jesus' life and fate as an individual in Roman-occupied Palestine contrast strikingly with the transcendent status of the eternal Word. 'Literalists' as

Flag	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Total links		Flag	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Total links
1	**God**				**13**	**Intervention in history**		
T	Time	11	1		I	Religion for evil ends	14	1
T	Epistemology	12	1		I	Wrongdoing	17	1
T	Other gods	14	1		E	Other religions & world-views	31	1
T	Language	15	1		I	Political process	32	1
H	Human minds	27	1		**14**	**Intervention in individual life**		
Q	Values of world	31	1		H	Human free will	12	1
S	Science	50	1		**19**	**Word of God**		
T	Cosmology	52	1		V	Slavery	31	1
VV HT	Humankind	57	4		V	Usury	42	1
H	Personal pursuits	70	1		**20**	**Kingdom of God**		
H	Family relationships	81	1		VV	Political power	32	2
A	Sport	92	1		V	Wealth	42	1
4	**God the Son**				**21**	**Love of God**		
T	Political power	32	1		H	Doubt	11	1
H	Human weakness	57	1		Q	Human evil	25	1
5	**Eternal Word**				Q	Personal hardship	38	1
T	Abraham	28	1		Q	Natural evil	55	1
6	**Christology**				H	Human friends	81	1
H	Human sin	17	1		Q	Family bereavements	88	1
7	**Jesus the Saviour**				**25**	**Christian salvation**		
E	Other religions	14	1		E	Other religions	14	1
V	Trade & commerce	45	1		V	Values of society	31	1
T	Hobby	97	1		Q	Human weakness	57	1
8	**Lordship of Christ**				**26**	**Forgiveness of God**		
A	Political leader	32	1		E	Modern culture	31	1
T	Roman crucifixion	32	1		**29**	**Christ beside us**		
V	Systems of government	32	1		A	Emotions	24	1
9	**God the Holy Spirit**				Q	Murder	25	1
E	Other religions	14	1		A	International relations	35	1
V	Personal failings	20	1		AA	Daily life	38	2
V	Human weakness	57	1		I	World situation	38	1
10	**Power & authority of God**				V	Human weakness	57	1
H	Human free will	22	1		**30**	**Vocation & guidance**		
I	Human plans	25	1		H	Human plans	22	1
I	Systems of government	32	1		A	Social status	31	1

Flag	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Total links	Flag	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Total links
11	**Creation**			A	Jobs	41	1
H	Human decision	22	1	A	Paid career	41	1
H	Social divisions	32	1	A	Money	42	1
T	Evolution	50	1	A	Trivia of family Christmas	83	1
T	Home & family	60	1	**31**	**Eternal life**		
12	**Providence & intervention**			V	Short-term prizes	26	1
H	Human interaction	46	1	V	Standard of living	44	1
				I	Death	57	1

Table 4. 47. 'External' Contrast links by traditional theme and Neutral code

Symbols used in Table 4. 47

A   Alternative claims on our attention

E   Exclusivist links

H   Human and divine contrasted

I   Intervention by God

Q   Question marks against God

S   Links to scientific method

T   The transcendence of God implies

V   Values contrasted

well as 'liberals' will, I believe, be glad to recognise these links as warning against crudely 'literalistic' interpretations (see p.69). They suggest a DE *La différance* emphasised hermeneutic strategy.

A second group contrasts human actions and intentions with divine powers to intervene to frustrate or redirect those intentions (flagged "I"). Sermon 27, for instance, asserts that 'God can bring new things to birth, however much sin has taken over the world'. The implication is that this involves intervention over and above the laws of nature. But a functional hermeneutic strategy might understand the traditional language here as signalling the fear which arises from the malevolence of other people but welcoming the unexpected turns of events which allay those fears. Projected into a future existence, the same pattern is seen in sermon 3's assertion that out of death comes resurrection (also coded "I" under theme 31 Eternal life in Table 4. 47).

A third group of contrasts presents the other side of the coin. These links recognise that the prevalence of evil in the world, natural and human evils, is evidence against the existence of a God of love (tagged "Q"). The message in context, however, is always that evil is a challenge to faith: we must fight against it, affirming the God of love who brings light into dark corners of the world. So ultimately this group of links approaches very closely to the second group above ("I" links).

The largest Contrast group is tagged "V". God's values are set against human values in a range of areas - from political power through vindictiveness, commercialism, moneylending, *etc.* to overenthusiastic evangelism. In all these cases, it may be noted, there are elements of what may be termed 'projection': good and approved aims are 'split off' from the human and attributed to God, while the less desirable are labelled 'human'. The traditional terminology thus acquires utopian connotations in these contexts.

A related group of links contrast God directly with human activities. Tagged "A" they include sport, job, politics, trivia, the general busyness of daily life. These are all, God included, it seems to be implied, alternative claims on our attention. The difference from the previous group of references is that here the approved alternative is unspecified beyond being labelled 'God', 'Christ beside us', or 'Vocation' or similar. But there is the same obvious 'splitting'. The 'Godtalk' plays, perhaps, a placeholding role, stimulating self-critical reflection but leaving the subject to supply substantive direction to the evaluation.

A small group of five instances contrast Christianity with other faiths or world-views. Although several of the sermons identified by the Subject analysis as discussing other religions adopted a co-operative or even pluralistic stance, the Contrast links under discussion here take, at least on face-value interpretation, exclusive attitudes on the matter. All are tagged "E" in Table 4. 47: perhaps sermon 34 should be recognised as an exception, but its syncretistic struggle at Part 4 8:40 to reconcile Derbyshire well-dressings with Christian belief remains ultimately ambiguous.

The relationship between God and humankind is the focus of 14 links (tagged "H"). Many of the possible different readings of this frequently drawn contrast are represented here. God's love unchanging in spite of human failings. God creating human diversity, but not the social divisions which convention imposes on nature. God as the rival and superior of human beings on several parameters, *viz.* understanding, friendship, sinlessness. God and man as co-operative partners in the progress of history. Apparent contrasts which evaporate when variant meanings of words are taken into account, *e.g.* loving God, loving walking, loving one's spouse (sermon 22).

The specific question of free will is explored from different angles in several of the sermons. Sermon 8 rejects, in the name of free will, the idea that God is in control of human thoughts and actions (see p.119). Sermon 21 sees divine sovereignty and human responsibility as two sides of a coin, marvelling at one point that God can combine human freedom of choice with a predicted and guaranteed outcome (21:1-22:30: 'Jesus handed over by God's set purpose'). Sermon 9, on the other hand, musing on the way 'the Creator of the universe places himself entirely in the hands of this young woman', continues (7:6) 'If she'd said "No", God would have had to alter his plan to save the world'.

The concept of 'free will' is of profound philosophical complexity, and the traditional terms in question here, God, Providence, Intervention, *etc.,* are at the heart of Christian theology. Contextual meanings suggested by these passages vary considerably. A much more careful and penetrating analysis is needed than is possible here. But much, though not all, of the preachers' arguments seems to rest on a conception of God as a player alongside human beings in the arenas under discussion. In other words, the language of story is taken literally and not mythologically.

In the terms of narrative theology, this may be exactly how story should be treated. But the application of strict logical deduction, as for example in sermon 9, has a more dubious place. And outside narrative theology it still suggests, I believe, a category confusion. Treating God as another individual capable of relating one-to-one, as it were, with human beings ignores not only much Christian theology but also approaches to religious language from other disciplines

{e.g. the theory of 'overdetermination' cited above from Dodds (1951, p.7, 16, 30f. - see p.72 above}.

One 'external' Contrast link remains to be considered. Sermon 21 accuses enlightenment science of failure to realise that God is a person. God is not here being opposed to humankind, as in the links just considered, but apparently to laws and principles which can be discovered by the careful application of scientific method. On the analogy of human interaction, God as personal chooses, the preacher claims, when and what to reveal of himself and to whom.

> He is the master-revealer - he's plastered information about himself everywhere for everyone to know' (14:42).

The analogy with human personality may suggest a similar category confusion to that mentioned in the previous paragraph, but in context the point is, I believe, different. God's 'sovereignty' (the theme of the sermon) in revelation explains two aspects of the world, the fact that awareness of God is not universal and that it does not correlate with intellectual ability. The link is tagged "S" in Table 4. 47 above.

g) Response indicators

The 29 'external' Response links (see Table 4. 34 above) fall overwhelmingly – and almost by definition - into Neutral range 20-29 Personal themes. They see Christian love and morality as the appropriate response to one or other aspect of traditional Christian teaching. They are classified as 'external' links, however, because there is a clear, 'real world' reference in the practical standards of interpersonal behaviour involved.

One of the three exceptions from other code ranges is a generalised claim that people do in fact 'recognise that there is a God' (Neutral code 14 - sermon 34 Part 4 5:55). The other two understand Creation as 'abused' by affluent lifestyles (code 44) and God the Father as

requiring a commitment to justice (code 35) in environmental stewardship (see subsection (*d*.3) above, p.140).

The twin themes of Group C, Kingdom of God and the Holy Catholic Church, attract a remarkably high proportion (18.6%) of Response indicators. The average is 3.6%. Other high percentages in the 20s and 30s ranges represent no more than 1 or 2 links each. In the cast of Group C, moral obligation and privileged status respectively appear to be particularly strongly felt, proportionately far outdoing Groups A and B.

h) Imagery indicators

Imagery indicators stand in a looser, but still revealing, logical relation to the traditional terminology. Of the 'external' Imagery links all but 2 fall under mode ICO as offering similes and analogies for traditional themes. In the 2 cases the movement is the other way (link mode SYM Symbol): in sermon 22 joy is said to be 'what Jesus meant by "eternal life" ' (see also p.119, 141 above), and sermon 34 sees the concept of the devil as symbolising the effects of adverse turns of events (see above p.120). The divergence in the distribution of the ICO indicators from the overall 'external' totals is clearly seen in Table 4. 48 below.

	Neutral range	'External' totals	'External' %	ICO totals	ICO %
0	General subjects	7	1.5%	2	6.5%
10	Philosophy	31	6.8%		
20	Personal themes	141	31.1%	4	12.9%
30	Social themes	119	26.2%	2	6.5%
40	Economic themes	26	5.7%		
50	Science	87	19.2%	16	51.6%
60	Technology	18	4.0%	2	6.5%
70	The arts	3	0.7%		
80	Friends & family	20	4.4%	5	16.1%
90	Sport, leisure, etc.	2	0.4%		
	Overall totals	**454**	**10-**	**31**	**10-**

Table 4. 48. 'External' Illustration indicators by Neutral range.

As the Table shows, science (Neutral range 50s) is a dominant source of ICO Illustration indicators, followed by the 80s Family & friends. Because symbolism is a potent and free-ranging communicatory tool, Table 4. 49 below lists themes and associated ICO links individually.

Theme illustrated	Neutral code	Illustration	Links		Theme illustrated	Neutral code	Illustration	Links
God	2	Computers	1		Kingdom of God	62	Building	1
God	28	Jesus Christ	1		Love of God	24	Emotions	1
God	81	Social interaction	1		Love of God	25	Christian morality	1
God	86	Parenthood	1		Love of God	33	Wedding feast	1
Trinity	57	Androgyny	1		Love of God	81	Parental love	1
Christology	28	Moses	1		Love of God	86	Parent-child relations	1
Jesus the Saviour	53	Light	4		Holy catholic church	57	Human body	1
Jesus the Saviour	62	Building	1		Christian salvation	34	Law courts	1
God the Holy Spirit	53	Fire	2		Christian salvation	53	Light	1
God the Holy Spirit	83	Kiss	1		New birth and life	53	Light	1
Power & authority of God	7	Media	1		New birth and life	53	Physical phenomena	1
Providence & intervention	53	Fire	1		New birth and life	58	Vines	1
Sin & the fall	53	Light & darkness	1		Christ beside us	53	Light	1
Kingdom of God	57	Children	1					

Table 4. 49. 'External' Illustration (ICO) indicators with traditional themes

i) Causal and Logical indicators

The link modes covered by the 30 'external' indicators in these two groups are OCC Occasion

(5 links), ATT Category (6), DEF Definition (3), and the largest and most significant of these modes, EVI Evidence (16).

The OCC links are a miscellaneous collection offering some noteworthy insights into familiar themes, *viz.* the Promised Land as Lot's choice (sermon 9), the role of family in 'nurturing' vocations to priesthood or religious life (sermon 1), and tensions over Iraq as an opportunity for meeting Christ (sermon 17).

The nine ATT and DEF links form a very limited set related entirely to Trinitarian doctrine, 5 of them to the Second Person of the Trinity. They are drawn from 4 sermons in which a 'face value' reading suggested something more fundamental than imagery. The ATT links represent the description of Christ as 'the way, the truth, the life' in two sermons (5 and 12). The DEF links are found in sermon 14 ('In an extraordinary way Jesus is the poor', 15:28) and in sermon 28 ('Growth, nurture, goodness, divine life are celebrated . . . in a 2nd century Syrian hymn - the Trinity is abundant life', Pt.4 0:58, *cf.* p.139, 144).

The 16 'external' EVI links (compared to 21 'internal') refer to phenomena offered as evidence for traditional concepts. History and personal experience are invoked as evidence for God's existence or nature (*e.g.* sermons 3 and 48). Children's instinctive sense of right and wrong confirms the concept of Reward and punishment by God (sermon 36). The crucifixion is evidence of what the Lordship of Christ, emphasized by Pilate's 'inscription', really means (sermon 13).

The crucifixion again and the incarnation itself demonstrate the Love of God (sermons 8 and 36). In sermon 27 evidence of the Love of God - 'for all the diverse riches of everything that is, surely including cultural phenomena' – is drawn from Koran, Bible, and nature. And reference has already been made to sermon 5 (p.141 above) for the evidence it draws for theme 28 Christ within us from the area of interpersonal relations.

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5) Overall mappings

Although the Analysis of contextual indicators must inevitably centre on the individual and particular, it has been possible to draw some general conclusions about limited subsets of the data. A look at the global picture of the subject areas from which contextual indicators are drawn may appropriately conclude the discussion. Table 4. 50 and Table 4. 51 below offer comparative distributions for the two classification schemes in use in this analysis, the Faith-aware and the Neutral typologies.

Range	Faith-aware category	Totals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0s	General subjects	**9**	0.2%	-	0.2%	-	0.2%	-	-	0.4%	-	-
10s	Philosophy	**20**	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	-	-	-	-	0.9%	-	-
20s	Religion	**267**	1.0%	-	4.3%	-	27.3%	0.1%	-	0.1%	-	-
30s	Social themes	**99**	0.5%	4.2%	2.1%	2.5%	0.1%	1.6%	0.1%	0.4%	0.7%	-
40s	Personal themes	**268**	1.7%	0.4%	2.0%	13.3%	1.6%	0.4%	5.5%	4.9%	3.2%	-
50s	Science & technology	**105**	1.1%	2.5%	-	7.3%	0.9%	-	0.2%	1.0%	-	-
60s	Economics	**26**	-	0.2%	1.0%	-	1.6%	0.1%	-	0.1%	0.1%	-
70s	The arts	**2**	0.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%	-
80s	Family themes	**14**	-	0.5%	-	0.1%	-	-	0.6%	-	0.5%	-
90s	Sport, leisure, & other subjects	**2**	-	-	0.1%	-	-	-	-	0.1%	-	-
	Total links	**812**										

Table 4. 50. Distribution of contextual indicators by Faith-aware category

Under both these schemata two categories account for 66% of the field. Ranges 20s Religion and 40s Personal themes dominate the Faith-aware analysis. The Neutral schema shows Social themes (range 30s) just comfortably ahead of Personal (range 20s). Add the two next ranges in each case, Faith-aware 50s Science & technology and 30s Social themes and Neutral schema 50s Science and 10s Philosophy, and between 87% and 91% of the data is included. Each map, therefore, leaves six major areas with no more than from 9% to 13% of the total between them.

Range	Neutral category	Totals	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0s	General subjects	**7**	0.2%	-	0.2%	-	-	-	-	0.4%	-	-
10s	Philosophy	**82**	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%	-	7.0%	0.2%	-	1.2%	-	-
20s	Personal themes	**245**	1.0%	5.0%	1.0%	12.7%	1.6%	4.4%	2.0%	1.2%	1.2%	-
30s	Social themes	**290**	0.7%	3.8%	2.2%	8.5%	1.0%	3.2%	1.8%	8.4%	6.0%	-
40s	Economics	**26**	-	0.2%	1.0%	-	1.6%	0.1%	-	0.1%	0.1%	-
50s	Science	**87**	1.1%	-	0.6%	1.8%	-	1.0%	-	5.9%	0.2%	-
60s	Technology	**18**	0.1%	1.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	-	-	-	-	-
70s	The arts	**34**	0.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.1%	-
80s	Friends & family	**21**	-	1.5%	-	0.4%	-	-	0.2%	-	0.5%	-
90s	Sport, leisure, & other subjects	**2**	-	-	0.1%	-	-	-	-	0.1%	-	-
	Total links	**812**										

Table 4. 51. Distribution of contextual indicators by Neutral category

The Analysis of subjects revealed a not totally dissimilar, but less even, spread. There Table 4. 11 showed, predictably enough, an overwhelming monopoly by the 20s Religion under the Faith-aware schema (75.6%): with the 9.5% recorded for the 30s Social themes, eight ranges were left to share 15% of the remaining sermon time. And as Table 4. 12 indicates, the two largest Neutral ranges, the 20s and 30s (Social and Personal), together with the 10s Philosophy accounted for 80% of the material.

In terms of the distinction drawn throughout subsection 4.D(ii) between 'internal' and 'external' indicators, it should be noted in Table 4. 50 above that Faith-aware codes 22 and 24 (Judaism and Christianity) together with the majority of code 43 (Spiritual) represent the 358 (44.1%) 'internal' indicators. Because contextual indicators are by definition links made from traditional Christian themes to other concepts, it is not surprising that these maps do not show the 76% dominance of Religion found in the Subject analysis. At no more than 33% the designated Religion category under the Faith-aware schema (range 20s) manages less than half that score.

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Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

> For Mr Blair to invoke God as the ultimate arbiter of this decision to
> go to war in Iraq suggests marks (*sic*) a change. In the past, the Prime
> Minister took the secular view that history would be his judge.
>
> 3rd leader, *The Independent,* 4 March 2006.

General overall conclusions can rarely do justice to detailed quantitative research of the kind undertaken in this project. In attempting, therefore, to draw together some of the threads running through the preceding pages, I would stress that nothing that follows is intended to detract from the detailed findings, quantitative or otherwise, presented in the tables and discussions of chapter 4 or the 'secondary data' and listings of the Appendix or CD-Rom C Thesis workbench. I emphasise too that this chapter, as much as, if not more than, the rest of the thesis, must be read under the hermeneutic caution of subjectivity emerging from section 1.C. In fact perhaps only the 'primary data' of CD-Roms A & B Sermons I & II can claim an acceptably clean bill of health on that score.

Subject to these provisos, I offer here a few general remarks organised around the two working hypotheses, themselves very general and loosely defined, which underlay the whole project. Section A deals with the issues of credibility focussed by the second working hypothesis and explored in the Traditional language analysis, most directly in the Analysis of hermeneutic strategies but also taken up as relevant by the Analysis of contextual indicators. Section B returns to the first working hypothesis and surveys the breadth of interests demonstrated by the sermons, and explored particularly in the Subject analysis but derivatively as well in the Analysis of contextual indicators.

My aim in the course of these two sections is not to duplicate or even summarise what has already been said in chapter 4, but rather to draw out aspects and implications of the research which assume particular importance in the light of the overall context in which it is set. The remarks offered in chapter 1 under the Survey of earlier work (section 1.D) and the Context of the project (section 1.B) have been referred to as relevant throughout the preceding pages. They play a more formative role in these final paragraphs.

A. Credibility

Subsection 4.D(i) above, the Analysis of hermeneutic strategies, reveals a general failure of these 49 Christian preachers to address the 'credibility gap' between traditional Christian concepts and the modern worldview. In the light of 'the ever topical imperative' (see subsection 1.B(v)) this failure is no trivial idiosyncrasy of the Church community. It is an irony of the human situation that people living in the same world and looking out on it with the same curiosity, the same faculties, and even the same 21st century technology can come to see it in such different ways. But when these differences harden into barriers, bigotries, and hatreds that can spawn terrorism and destruction, it seems to me that the time for complacency is past. Whatever the pastoral or homiletic reasons may be for the pervasive silence in these sermons about problems of credibility, it does little or nothing to promote mutual understanding, or even self-understanding, in the global melting-pot of faiths.

The concept of a 'credibility gap' is, I hope, no longer controversial at this stage in the thesis. 'Liberals' and 'radicals' in the context of world Christianity (see subsection 1.B(iii)) certainly recognise its existence, but as I have indicated earlier (see p.10, 127), I believe that 'literalists' too, the overwhelming majority within the Christian community, also recognise it, if only in their ready insistence that religion is matter of faith, not logical proof. That being so, it is all the more remarkable that this research found so little attempt to bridge the gap.

That so clean a sweep of the references in the sermons to traditional Christian themes had to be classified LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied propagates the 'face value' readings that are the stuff of which Christian fundamentalists are made. Without wishing to suggest that religious fundamentalism necessarily leads to violence and terrorism, whether among Christians, Hindus, Muslims, or any other faith community, it is often used by the violent minority to justify acts of sometimes extreme ruthlessness.

The question that matters academically is, as always, whether a belief is true or not. But there is an urgency in the current world situation to address that question responsibly and incisively. It would be interesting to know how widespread overall in the Christian church, and indeed among the other world religions, is the abdication of that responsibility reported here.

The almost unrelieved impression of 'literalism' emanating from these 50 sermons disguises, I am sure, a much wider range of approaches to traditional Christian themes among the preachers in their own theological reflections. The research did not document these. And in any case they are irrelevant to its deliberate 'face value' methodology. But they are not, perhaps, irrelevant to future prospects for the role of Christianity in the world community.

In addition to attributing to all 'literalists' an awareness of the 'credibility gap', I suggested in subsection 2.C(i.1c) that they would be sympathetic to strategy DE *La différance* emphasised. Also, from hints in the sermons (see p.145 above, p.244 below) and from the inherent paradoxes of certain central Christian doctrines (*e.g.* Christology, free will, the Trinity – see p.28), it does not seem unfair to suggest that the language of Christian orthodoxy uses words in senses subtly different from their everyday meanings. Strategy DE recognises this. It is a direct descendant of Aquinas' analogical language category. In the Analysis of hermeneutic strategies I treat DE as 'non-literalist', but it runs 'literalism' closest of all the alternatives.

Understood as a licence to use the traditional terminology under *caveat* of its inadequacy, DE in fact reflects very closely what I have termed the 'defective hermeneutic' of this thesis. Both focus on language with a conscious admission that its hold on meaning is in some degree

precarious. Or to put it in terms of the general hermeneutic presuppositions of section 1.C, the basic meaningless of the physical symbol is beginning to show through.

This situation sets the stage nicely for the Analysis of contextual indicators, the specific function of which is to illuminate the meaning of the terminology by reference to the context of each occurrence. How far it achieves this aim may be judged from subsection 4.D(ii) and from the accompanying material in Appendix E and the Thesis workbench database on CD-Rom C. It points the way, perhaps, or at least the need, for further research.

But before that, the Analysis of hermeneutic strategies opens up a range of more radical approaches. Instances in the sample were surprisingly few, but the strategies are in the literature (see subsection 2.C(i)) to be explored. They offer a better hope of remedying the 'defective hermeneutic' which DE too closely resembles. The question is, do they address the current world situation at all realistically?

The same issue can be put in two other ways. The first is to ask whether any radical 'non-literalist' hermeneutic strategy can ever expect to command acceptance from a significant majority of the world's Christians, given the entrenched 'literalism' evident among them currently. The second is – and it is not unrelated to the first – would any 'non-literalist' version of Christianity have anything to offer either to 'secularists', to the interfaith community, or to the 'holistic milieu' in the cause of global self-understanding?

These questions, posed as they may be with great urgency by 'the ever topical imperative' of the world situation, are however, in this form, within neither the remit nor the competence of the present researcher. Instead, I can only offer here a glimpse into what one such strategy might involve and what Christianity might look like if it were given full rein. The strategy selected for this purpose from the few possible candidates emerging from the research is TP Translation proposed.

In subsection 4.D(i) I put considerable emphasis on the single identified occurrence of strategy TP – more emphasis perhaps than the somewhat casual and flippant tone of its context in

sermon 34 justified. That was partly *faute de mieux*, because it was, as I indicated on p.120, the most clear-cut case of a 'non-literalist' strategy in the sample. But it was also because TP, along with FP Functional interpretation propounded, of which it is a special case, seems to me to point to a promising way forward for the global community of the 21st century.

Underlying TP is the premise that there is always more than one way of saying something. TP and FP are grounded firmly in the hermeneutic view of language sketched in section 1.C. The principle of contextual meaning prevents words acquiring exclusive rights to meanings independent of usage. And therefore, if there is any real-world reference outside the verbal play of a particular 'language game', there must be multiple ways of expressing it. And being essentially context-defined, there is no limit to the number of possibilities.

TP makes room, too, for the elements of incommensurability in language which have led some Wittgensteinians to deny that translation is possible (see p.72). Translation is indeed an impossible art, if one demands absolute equivalence. *Traduttore traditore* is a wise maxim. But translation nonetheless flourishes – by shifts and indirections, imprecisions, circumlocutions, even innovations (language is a living thing). Essentially translation proceeds by full hermeneutic analysis of the original text and full hermeneutic awareness of the connotations of the target language. Like all else hermeneutic it is suffused with subjectivity. But something can always be hammered out, more or less satisfactory, depending on the linguistic and general contextual knowledge of the translator.

All the strategies on the hermeneutic spectrum, except AP and RJ, leave the original texts intact. That is, they are attempts to interpret their originals, and if that aim succeeds, the interpretation gives some status and credence to the original. TP has the advantage over the other strategies in that it offers a clear alternative. If expression *e* in language *A* is equivalent to expression *f* in language *B*, either is acceptable, if both languages are known. One or another may be preferable, for any number of reasons, in particular contexts.

In the same edition of *The Independent* which carried the leading article quoted at the head of this chapter, an item by John Rentoul gives a more perceptive analysis of the Prime Minister's

television interview with Michael Parkinson. Rentoul explains Tony Blair's comment in terms very reminiscent of the point discussed above from sermon 34 (p.120).

> The language of God's judgement is a religious person's way of saying that the ultimate assessment of the right or wrong of his actions will not be for him to make. Non-believers would ascribe such a judgement to the collective wisdom of the people, or historians, or posterity. Believers, unless they are literalist fundamentalists, and Blair is not one of those, use a different formulation to express precisely the same idea (John Rentoul, in *The Independent,* 4 March 2006, p.2).

This is a vigorous and commonsense approach to religious language. Very much in line with strategy TP, it is extremely radical and may seem to some shocking and even blasphemous. One reason for this, is that Rentoul's comment does not exempt the word 'God' from the process of paraphrase. Similarly, sermon 34 was happy to eliminate the concept of the 'angel of light', our 'enemy', from the proferred alternative form of words. Whatever the reference in either case, the words used are no more than linguistic entities, and as physical symbols therefore, if the point bears repetition, meaningless.

But it is not appropriate to pursue this or any of the other issues involved in the question at this point in the concluding chapter of the thesis. It must suffice to emphasise that TP, and more generally FP on which it depends, is truest to the requirements of hermeneutic theory, it gladly accommodates the findings of biblical scholarship and historical theology, and it is more than open to such theories of Dodds and others as 'overdetermination' (see p.72, 149 above) and to similar insights into the nature of human language.

Most important of all, it calls language back to its roots in reality – back from the verbalism of its Wittgensteinian 'holiday' to the discipline of referring to extra-linguistic entities and experiences. Freeing interpreters from the tyranny of words, I see real hope of progress in the conversation that it opens up between adherents of previously opposed beliefs, as each

separately – and why not all together? – explores the meaning of cherished formularies by submitting them to our common touchstone, the one world which we all share.

The crucial factor in any such rethinking of traditional belief seems to me to be the realisation, heavily underlined in hermeneutic theory, that words are no more than words. Unlocking interpretation with that key, I believe, can free Christians to read their Scriptures anew, 'secularists' to attend less defensively to the resulting insights, and the interfaith community to concentrate as much on similarities with Christianity as on differences. The 'holistic milieu', who probably need such a lesson less than any other party to the debate, perhaps therefore have most to contribute to the process.

Meanwhile, the confirmation presented here of what I have called the 'conspiracy of silence' hypothesis may provide some justification for what might otherwise appear a questionable aspect of the Kendal Project's conclusions. Their assessment of the relationship between Christianity and the 'spiritual revolution' rests heavily on a sharp dichotomy between, to use their vocabulary, 'life-as' and 'subjective' approaches to religion. Traditions where stress is laid on divine authority and on being guided by God rather than one's own desires and preferences are classified with the first of these categories. The argument is that submitting one's life to another in this way compromises one's subjective independence.

This conclusion does not, it seems to me, necessarily follow. Too many claims to divine guidance turn out on examination to smack far too much of megalomaniac self-indulgence. And in any case how is 'Godtalk' generally to be understood on any reasonable hermeneutic? The Kendal Project takes it at a raw linguistic 'face value'. The current research demonstrates that that is precisely how the majority of preachers imply that it should be taken, and therefore probably how the majority of Christian congregations do take it.

Attempts by preachers to disabuse their congregations of such *prima facie,* verbal understandings of religious language are shown here to be minimal to the point of vanishing. But if this is true at the level of faith as articulated, it is apparently not necessarily true also at the experiential level. The more radical hermeneutic set out above could help everyone, I

suggest, to a much closer integration between the two – to, if I may dream, the salvation of the world.

B. Breadth of Field

The first working hypothesis claimed that

> the range of subjects covered in sermons does not extend very frequently or very far beyond the confines of the Christian faith narrowly conceived.

While the evidence presented in section 4.C above does not, I suggested, amount to a refutation of the hypothesis, it must be admitted that the picture is not entirely unambiguous. Table 4. 11 to Table 4. 13, which set out the raw scores as calculated under the three main analytic schemata, show reasonably well-populated universes. On the other hand, Table 4. 24, based on non-Christian themes discussed for at least 2 minutes in any given sermon, presents a different picture. Over 93% of the sermons is excluded. And apart from Neutral range 30s Social themes the universe is very sparsely populated. Table 4. 25, constructed on similar but different principles, tells much the same story.

For the most complete picture possible of the range of subjects covered in the sermons, Table 5. 1 below combines the results of the Subject analysis with the mapping of links produced for the Traditional Language analysis of Section 4.D. For this purpose the Faith-aware schema is used. Table 4. 11 from section 4.C is matched with Table 4. 50 from section 4.D.

Unlike the data underlying Table 4. 11, the contextual indicators that are the focus of Table 4. 50 do not represent the whole span of a sermon but are scattered through it at varying intervals. Hence the two sets of data have not been given equal weight in the composite mapping. The relative weights of the two analyses have been fixed here in the ratio of 3:1.

Faith-aware range	Range total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	**1.5%**	0.1%	-	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	-	-	0.9%	-	-
10-19 Philosophy	**1.3%**	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	-	-	-	-	0.7%	-	-
20-29 Religion	**64.9%**	1.4%	-	6.9%	-	56.0%	0.2%	-	0.1%	0.3%	-
30-39 Society	**10.2%**	0.1%	2.1%	1.6%	2.8%	0.1%	2.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.4%	-
40-49 Personal themes	**10.5%**	0.4%	0.1%	0.8%	3.3%	0.7%	0.2%	1.9%	2.1%	0.8%	-
50-59 Science & technology	**5.7%**	0.6%	0.9%	-	2.3%	1.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	-	-
60-69 Economics	**2.1%**	-	0.2%	0.4%	-	1.0%	0.2%	-	0.3%	0.1%	-
70-79 The arts	**1.6%**	0.2%	-	1.2%	-	-	0.1%	0.1%	-	-	-
80-89 Family	**1.1%**	-	0.1%	-	0.1%	-	-	0.5%	-	0.3%	-
90-99 Sport, leisure, & other subjects	**1.0%**	-	0.8%	0.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total percentage	**10-**										

Table 5. 1. Combined subject mapping (Faith-aware schema)

(N.b. Relative weighting of % scores Subject analysis : Traditional language analysis = 3:1.)

The most notable feature of Table 5. 1 above is the familiar preponderance of categories 24 Christian and, to a much lesser extent, 22 Jewish (basically subjects relating to the Tanakh). But second to that, perhaps, is the number of occupied slots in the Table. Whereas in Table 4. 11 only 49 out of a possible 95 codes (100 in all, but under the Faith-aware schema 5 are not assigned) were actually exemplified, and in Table 4. 50 the number was only 51, combining the two increases the subjects represented to 56. There is in all, therefore, a coverage of almost 60% of subjects in the sermons. It is the lack of depth and penetration of that coverage that is revealing.

The hypothesis under investigation here was not presented with any assumptions about what spread of subjects might be appropriate for the Christian pulpit in the early 21st century. The summary of earlier work (section 1.D) showed tremendous variation in practice over the centuries in this respect. Most of the historians of preaching mentioned in section 1.D and many of the other writers cited there express strong preferences for bible-based preaching (see, for example, the quotation from Smart above, p.32). These writers would therefore be glad to note the predominance of biblical preaching (39 sermons out of 50: see Table 3. 3 above). Blackstone could not charge these sermons, unlike those he listened to in Georgian London, with 'having no more Christianity in them than the writing of Cicero' (see p.32). Nor could Owst compare them to the medieval preachers he saw as 'almost the forerunners of the modern University Extension Lecture' (p.33).

After the 20s Religion the ranges best represented in Table 5. 1 are the 30s Social themes and 40s Personal themes at just over 10% each. Section 1.D suggests that personal and social themes have always been present in Christian preaching, but the varying balance between them was not quantified there with any precision. To confine the discussion to the results of the Subject analysis, Table 4. 24 shows that of the significant and substantive treatments of non-Christian subjects in the sermons Social themes (Neutral range 30s) account for over half (53.8%), against a score of no more than 5% for Personal themes (Neutral range 20s). This result has to be judged against Table 4. 23, which includes specifically Christian material, where the disproportion is very substantially reduced (43.2% to 21.2%). Table 4. 17, which covers all Core treatments of social and personal material shows an even narrrower gap (58.2% to 41.8%).

It is instructive to look in more detail at the predominance of social over personal discussions in the light of the experience reported by Ross from Malawi in 1990-1992 (Ross and Moyo 1995), and also of the emphasis in Brown on social and political liberation from racial and gender discrimination in the U.S.A. (Brown 2003) and of the Liberation Theology movement in S. America (see p.39*f.*, 43*f.* above). In these three areas pressing social situations produced a line of socio-political preaching very much focussed on action for change. In the Malawan case Ross points to a shift in emphasis in the early 1990s from the personal to the social which

was prompted by an episcopal pastoral letter. For all the preaching analysed here as dealing with social themes, there is nothing to match the political campaigning spirit of these three movements.

One sermon forcefully preached principles of non-violence and reconciliation between the major faith communities as a response to global terrorism. Another expressed strong opposition to the Iraq War, but the call to the congregation was not to active protest but rather to work for harmony and reconciliation among their neighbours and their local community. A third did urge people to get involved in letter-writing campaigns to politicians – for the purpose of opposing liberalising legislation on abortion and sexual morality. And one sermon challenged high-earning careerists to rethink their personal calling in the face of poverty and deprivation locally, nationally, and indeed globally.

In Table 5. 1 Faith-aware range 20s Religion scores 64.9%, the vast bulk of that figure accounted for by 24 Christianity. It is clear that there were very few references or links to other religions, whether positive or negative. The exception is Judaism, which is accorded overall 53 minutes 20 seconds (7.8%) of sermon time and 35 links (4.3%): this result, however, is largely a function of the strategy adopted in this research for handling references to the Tanakh.

Otherwise two sermons (27 and 40) focussed on the theme of co-operation between different faith communities. In addition, sermon 41 uses a 13th century C.E. Muslim prayer, and sermon 44 contains a 27-second parenthesis on Islam, where admiration for Muslim commitment and principle and the potential of Islam as an ally against humanism is tempered with reservations about features that are less attractive to the Christian.

Sermon 34 was preached by somebody who had learnt to co-operate with the folk religion behind the Derbyshire well-dressings in spite of early doubts (see p.148, 166). But intentionally or unintentionally exclusivist views are voiced in sermons 15 and elsewhere in 44. For these references see the discussion on p.148. There was certainly no attempt in any of

the sample sermons to bridge the gap between Christianity and other faiths on any of the major points of difference such as Trinitarian doctrine or Christology.

Secularism receives even less explicit attention in these sermons than the minimal amount accorded to other religions. It is, however, the unexamined background against which much of the preaching is conducted. Also, the 'secularist' reference group has had a formative influence, along with the 'literalists', on my research, in as far as I have understood both as requiring a straightforward, 'face value' interpretation of the language of the pulpit and as excluding the application of an excessively complex theological hermeneutic.

Sermons 15 and 44, mentioned in the preceding paragraphs on non-Christian religions, also refer to humanism. Sermon 15 includes humanism (section 4d) in the grudging but ultimately exclusivist admiration accorded to non-Christian religions, and goes on (section 7b) to quote Bertrand Russell in support of the principle that 'it is necessary to care deeply for things which will not come to pass until long after we've gone'. And 'that,' the preacher adds, 'is the Christian faith'. Sermon 44 is less ambivalent in criticising what is termed 'the new humanism' in British culture today: but even so, the detailed and wide-ranging description the sermon gives of it is objective enough for those of a different point of view to form a different judgment of its merits.

The 'spiritual revolution' is to all intents and purposes ignored. Instances of the 51 sermon sections and 103 contextual indicators classified under Neutral code 23 Spiritual were discussed above (see p.109, 130). In addition, there are other sections and links which make reference to 'spiritual' matters or to the 'Holy Spirit' (see Appendix 5.E and CD-Rom C Thesis workbench for details). Two sermons refer to the Holy Spirit's work in creating a new awareness (sermon 31) and in helping us to understand 'God stuff' (sermon 26). Sermon 38 mentions 'mystical experience' in a passing allusion (5:17-50), where it is explicitly contrasted with the Pentecost event. And sermon 5 (Part 4 2:18) presents Jesus as the unrecognised goal of the spiritual searching manifested at the time of Princess Diana's death. Another two sermons refer to 'meditation', but in the context of the sermon itself: sermon 4

talks of the preacher's meditation in preparation, and sermon 19 of the congregation's thoughts as they listen.

These examples all certainly fall foul of the distinction, by which Heelas *et al.* set great store, as I have indicated above (see p.130, 162), between the subjective life and the individual who submits his or her self to objective, external influences such as God and his Holy Spirit, and would therefore probably not be accepted by the 'holistic milieu' as references to the 'spiritual revolution' at all. But some, I believe, could be reinterpreted to their satisfaction under a hermeneutic such as I advocated in section 5.A above.

But the last word must be given to 'the ever topical imperative'. Tsunami then, and now Hurricane Katrina, the South-East Asia earthquake, the Birmingham tornado, the continuing death toll in Iraq. These factors combine with Christianity's own claim to speak to the whole of life to demand that theology faces a 'real world' relevance challenge. It must go beyond defective hermeneutics and bare mathematics, or give up the struggle.

The analyses offered here do not and cannot take that extra step. Table 4. 24 and Table 4. 25 (p.110 above) perhaps already go too far in imposing arbitrary time criteria, but even so they probably paint too optimistic a picture of the breadth of significant pulpit discussion. Timing is in any case no proof of meaningfulness, but no practicable alternative was available within the limits of this M.Phil. project.

However, in acknowledgment of the 'ever present imperative' I may be permitted, indeed required, to hazard in these final paragraphs an impressionistic 'real world' check on the quantitative results presented. Table 5. 2 below lists 10 sermons that in my judgment offered unusually comprehensive and informative discussions. These are sermons which might just be worth going some distance to hear for this reason, but I do not imply that this is the only or even the main task of preaching or that these are better as sermons than the rest of the sample. 4 of the group impressed for their presentation of specifically Christian topics (entries in italics), and 6 for topics of more general interest (which in the case of sermon 45 consisted of illustrative rather than core content).

Sermon	Sermon title	Bible basis	Selected topic	Orientation of topic
7	*The Eucharist (Archbishop's Pastoral Letter)*	*Free topic*	*Eucharist*	*Christian*
8	*Light in the Darkness*	*Lectionary*	*Problem of evil*	*Christian*
14	Faith in Action	Expository	Affluence & poverty	General
21	*The sovereignty of God*	*Free topic*	*God*	*Christian*
22	Loving one another	Lectionary	Love	General
34	Mission from a small village church	Part Expository	Local community	General
42	Racial Justice	Text anchor	Racial justice	General
44	Standing Firm when the Foundations Crumble	Free topic	EU & humanism	General
45	Endurance in Christian commitment	Expository	Olympic Games	General
48	*Abraham to Moses: the last episode*	*Lectionary*	*Pentateuch*	*Christian*

Table 5. 2. Sermons offering particularly worthwhile discussions.

As a link with the quantitative results, Table 5. 3 shows the distribution of non-Christian subjects in the 6 sermons of Orientation General in Table 5. 2 (applying the same 2-minute threshold used in Table 4. 24 above). It is some confirmation of the strategy behind Table 4. 24 and Table 4. 25 that the earlier Tables included these 6 sermons in their purview (along with others: but Table 4. 24 omitted the illustrative material of sermon 45).

Range	Duration	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0-9 General subjects	**0:00**										
10-19 Philosophy	**6:25**	2:02							4:23		
20-29 Personal themes	**2:17**	2:17									
30-39 Social themes	**22:44**	4:44	6:29	5:02			2:33		3:56		
40-49 Economics	**4:13**					4:13					
50-59 Science	**2:18**									2:18	
60-69 Technology	**0:00**										
70-79 The arts	**2:29**						2:29				

80-89 Friends & family	**2:57**		2:57								
90-99 Sport, leisure, etc.	**6:39**		6:39								
Total	**50:02**										

Table 5. 3. Subjects of significant sermons by Neutral code
(N.b. Christian themes excluded, as are any subjects totalling
less than 2 minutes in any one sermon.)

The number of Neutral schema categories represented here is reduced – drastically from the 56 of Table 5. 1, but even from 19 in Table 4. 24 - to 13 here. In broad perspective, whereas the Neutral schema defines 94 categories, the preachers studied in this sample of 50 sermons ignored, according to the criteria underlying Table 4. 24 above, 75 of them. And using the impressionistic assessments of significance applied in this final subsection, that figure rises to 81.

On 25 December 2005 Channel 4 Television transmitted a programme entitled *Tsunami: Where was God?* It seems appropriate to close this dissertation with a quotation from an article on Channel 4's webpage associated with the programme in which David Rosenberg outlines the issues. After reviewing responses to the disaster from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim sources, he writes:

> For all their power of explanation, all religions seem to be obscuring and deflecting from some of the basic questions that need to be asked such as: what can religion learn from the advances in science? Who creates poverty and how is it sustained? What effects are humans having on eco-systems, who is responsible and what will be the consequences? And, whether or not we believe in a higher power and an afterlife, what can we as human beings do about it in the here and now?

> (Rosenberg 2005, ad fin.)

What signs of counter-evidence to Rosenberg's generalisation do we find in Table 5. 2 above? One hard-hitting challenge in sermon 14 to a congregation of the affluent young focussing on

individual response rather than structural analysis. Otherwise nothing. Rosenberg's are not, of course, the only questions that need to be asked in the modern world. Alongside them the local community, racial justice, love, E.U. & humanism, and the Olympic Games are all very valid issues aired, if but briefly, in the sermons. I forbear even to begin a list of the other themes stamped with the *imprimatur* of 'the ever topical imperative' - themes to which over the course of 50 Christian sermons of the early twenty-first century not even this lip service is paid. Maybe the non-churchgoing Christian community awaits a pulpit reformation in this direction.

Under pressure of 'the ever topical imperative' and of the wider context that generates it, this research has attempted, starting from the basic meaninglessness of the linguistic symbol, to identify – or perhaps construct – first the broad areas addressed in the sample sermons, and then at least the contextual meaning of the traditional Christian terminology they employ. Subjectivity blankets the process at every turn. It is perhaps, therefore, a fond hope that it has been able to cut through this and achieve some foothold in reality and not only in language for its findings. A better hope is that its faltering, tottering progress may stimulate others to take up the challenge.

<div align="right">

Gordon Neal
Worcester
25 April 2006

Length 38,963 words
(excluding Tables, Appendix,
and many section headings)

</div>

APPENDIX

A. Church details

(i) List of churches by means of contact

Index	Church	Index	Church

(ii) List of preachers by Research category and Sunday

Index	Preacher	Sunday index		Index	Preacher	Sunday index

(iii) List of dates by area

Sermon	Date of visit	Sunday index		Sermon	Date of visit	Sunday index
1. Churches within area of Diocese of Birmingham						
32	07.07.2002	3		22	25.05.2003	34
42	15.09.2002	5		38	08.06.2003	46
48	27.10.2002	10		7	15.06.2003	38
6	08.12.2002	14		45	22.06.2003	39
20	29.12.2002	17		50	13.07.2003	37
21	09.03.2003	23		39	20.07.2003	31
37	13.04.2003	27		44	10.08.2003	40
36	04.05.2003	32		43	22.09.2002	7
27	04.05.2003	48		41	07.11.2004	35
2. Churches within area of Diocese of Worcester						
23	05.05.2002	1		34	06.04.2003	26
49	03.11.2002	11		47	20.04.2003	29
9	22.12.2002	16		24	19.10.2003	42
29	12.01.2003	18		13	23.11.2003	45
18	02.03.2003	22		26	06.06.2004	47
33	23.03.2003	24				
3. Churches outside Diocesan areas of Birmingham and Worcester						
25	19.05.2002	2		5	19.01.2003	19
35	28.07.2002	49		12	02.02.2003	20
40	08.09.2002	4		17	23.02.2003	21
28	15.09.2002	6		1	11.05.2003	33
30	22.09.2002	8		31	08.06.2003	36
46	13.10.2002	9		19	21.09.2003	41
4	17.11.2002	25		2	26.10.2003	43
16	24.11.2002	12		14	02.11.2003	44
3	01.12.2002	13		15	01.02.2004	30
8	15.12.2002	15		10	10.10.2004	28
11	05.01.2003	50				

(iv) List of visits by Denomination and Christian Year

Index	Sunday	Church index		Index	Sunday	Church index
1. Anglican churches						
14	Advent 2	18		47	Trinity Sunday	55
15	Advent 3	30		37	Trinity 4	33
16	Advent 4	24		7	Trinity 17	11
19	Epiphany 2	36		4	Trinity 15	3
21	Second Sunday before Lent	37		28	Trinity 18	29
22	Sunday Next before Lent	34		10	Last Sunday after Trinity	16
23	Lent 1	23		43	Last Sunday after Trinity	40
1	Easter 6	1		11	Fourth Sunday before Advent	17
34	Easter 6	20		44	Fourth Sunday before Advent	35
46	Pentecost	49		25	Second Sunday before Advent	28
2. Baptist churches						
26	Lent 5	27		41	Trinity 14	42
32	Easter 3	22		12	Christ the King	31
40	Trinity 8	12				
3. Methodist churches						
13	Advent Sunday	14		48	Easter 3	48
18	Epiphany 1	25		39	Trinity 1	26
30	Epiphany 4	53				
4. Roman Catholic churches						
17	Christmas 1	21		3	Trinity 6	6
50	Christmas 2	32		49	Trinity 9	7
20	Candlemas	38		6	Trinity 16	46
24	Lent 3	8		42	Trinity 18	52
27	Palm Sunday	45		9	Trinity 20	15
33	Easter 4	39		35	Third Sunday before Advent	56
2	Pentecost	2		45	Christ the King	54
38	Trinity Sunday	19				
5. U.R.C. churches						
29	Easter Day	43		5	Trinity 16	10
36	Pentecost	41		8	Trinity 17	50
31	Trinity 5	9				

B. Initial contact

(i) Letter to churches

<div align="center">

Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion
University of Birmingham
Elmfield House
Bristol Road, Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6LQ

</div>

Home phone and fax: **E-mail address:**

<div align="center">

Date: *Day Month Year*

</div>

Addressee:

Dear

<div align="center">

Birmingham University M.Phil. Project:
'The Preaching of the Christian Faith Today'

</div>

The research project I am working on involves attending public
worship in 50 churches of mainstream denominations over 12 or 15
months or so.

As one of the 50 I should like, if I may, to visit **(your church)**
for a main Sunday service. I enclose a covering letter from my
supervisor in support of this request.

To avoid taking notes, I intend to record services - extremely
unobtrusively, using a pocket mini-disc audio recorder. This is for
thesis purposes only, copyright otherwise remaining entirely with
you. If you record services regularly yourselves and are able to
let me have a copy tape, that would of course be even more useful.

If someone other than yourself is preaching on the day I visit, I
will seek further permission before using the recording.

My interest is in charting the range of topics discussed in sermons,
and in particular the connections made between traditional biblical
or credal themes and the modern world. If you would be interested
in a summary of the findings in due course, I will gladly send you a
copy.

An appendix of churches and preachers will need to be included in my
dissertation, but no person or church will be individually
identified (unless by permission) in any detailed discussion or
publication.

To provide a context for the sermon, reference may sometimes be
necessary to the service in which it is set. And some idea of how
it relates to other activities at your church will probably emerge
from newsletter or magazine.

But I would hope to be able to check one or two other details with
you, relating chiefly to the preacher's qualifications and
experience both theological and secular. 10 minutes at a mutually

convenient time would suffice for this, or it could be done by post, telephone, or e-mail?

A reply slip and envelope are included for your response - or see my fax and e-mail addresses above.

<div align="right">

Looking forward to a 'Yes' response,

Yours gratefully,

Gordon Neal
</div>

(ii) Reply slip

To: Gordon Neal
Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion
University of Birmingham
Elmfield House
Bristol Road, Selly Oak
Birmingham, B29 6LQ

Fax:
E-mail:

Church:

From:

Project on 'The Preaching of the Christian Faith Today'
Department: **Theology, Birmingham University**
Researcher: **Gordon Neal**

- **I am** / **I am not** willing to allow Gordon Neal from Birmingham University to include

  (my church) on the list of churches to be visited for the research purposes set out in his letter

  of *(date)*.

- **We can / We cannot** supply a recording of the service.

- **I do / do not** wish to receive a summary of the research findings when available.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

C. Preacher's questionnaire

Birmingham University M.Phil. Project:
'**The Preaching of the Christian Faith Today**'

Preacher's Questionnaire

Date of Sermon:

Sunday:

Church:

Preacher:

(1) Your sermon **last Sunday** dealt with *(topic 1)* and also with *(topic 2)* **.**

How frequently would you **normally** preach on such subjects?
Please enter the appropriate code.

> W - Most weeks   M - At least monthly   Q - At least quarterly
> A - At least annually   L - Less often

> ( )   ( )

(2) Which of the following best describes the overall strategy you usually follow in choosing sermon themes? Please type 'x' in the appropriate space.

  ( ) Follow the Lectionary
  ( ) Choose topics in the news
  ( ) Choose issues of local concern to the church members
  ( ) Follow systematic programme of Christian teaching
  ( ) Follow systematic programme of general adult education
  ( ) Other (please specify in a phrase)

(2a) How frequently do you normally preach? Please enter the appropriate code here.   (between W and M   )

> W - Most weeks   M - At least monthly   Q - At least quarterly
> A - At least annually   L - Less often

(3) How frequently would you expect to devote all or part of a sermon to themes from any of the following broad subject areas? Please enter one of the following letter codes in any relevant slots below.

> W - Most weeks   M - At least monthly   Q - At least quarterly
> A - At least annually   L - Less often   N - Never

Subject area	As a major theme in the sermon	By way of passing mention
a. Personal life and growth		
b. Family life		
c. Economic life (work, money, etc.)		
d. Community (local life)		
e. State and Nation (law, politics, etc.)		
f. Global Village (world issues)		
g. Music, literature, the arts		
h. Natural sciences		
i. Ideas and communication (e.g. philosophy, logic, natural theology, IT, mathematics, language, the media)		
j. Religion - Christian		
k. Religion - other faiths		
l. Other areas regularly covered (Please specify here)		

(4) How long have you been ordained?

(5) How long have you been preaching regularly?

(6) What training or qualifications do you have outside theology?

(7) Did you / do you have any job outside the church, and if so, what?

(8) When and where did you do your theological training?

(9) Your sermon   **did / did not**   deal with aspects of the problems facing Christian belief in today's world. How frequently would you normally preach on such matters? Please type 'x' in the appropriate space.

      ( ) Most weeks ( ) At least monthly ( ) At least quarterly
          ( ) At least annually ( ) Less often   ( ) Never

(10) Sermons are not necessarily the best place for dealing with problems of belief: what other opportunities do folk at   have to discuss such issues?

(11) What percentage of the regular congregation there take advantage of such opportunities?

(12) How many people from outside the regular congregation do?

(13) And one last question: your sermon   **could / could not**   be described as a 'Lectionary sermon' - how typical is that of your preaching? Please type 'x' in the appropriate space.

 ( ) Very typical   ( ) Fairly typical   ( ) Unusual

Signed   _____

Date   _____

D. Sermon memoranda

This section presents notes on certain matters relating to individual sermons which are of significance for the analyses. Whether an entry for a particular sermon is present here or not, all results are subject to the limitations arising from the hermeneutic presuppositions and methodological decisions explained in chapters 1 and 2 above. Information given in the following subsections can only supplement and certainly not override the inbuilt limitations of the project. Entries are given below for 26 of the 50 project sermons: as a result of the poor quality of the original recordings, the entries for sermons 35 and 41 consist of full transcripts.

(i)   Sermon 4

Meaningless probably to talk about 'the best sermon in the sample'. Not my task to judge, anyway - but if it was, this sermon would have my vote. Rhetorical, emotive, original, and very well tailored to the disparate audience a broadcast sermon must address.

(ii)   Sermon 5

This is one of six sermons in the sample broadcast in BBC Radio-4's *Sunday Worship* series. These programmes allow for a service, usually informal, some 37 minutes in length. Often, as here, instead of a single sermon a number of separate contributions are interspersed with other elements throughout the service. This is a fairly common practice in church services, and I have therefore had no difficulty in treating them as a multi-part sermon for the purposes of this research. In this case five members of the congregation were involved besides the leader of the service. Sermon 5 is therefore a multi-part, but also multi-speaker, 'sermon'. Only the worship leader was asked to complete the Preacher's Questionnaire

(iii)   Sermon 7

Some 12½ minutes of this 13 minute 38 second sermon was taken up with a reading of the Archbishop's Pastoral Letter for *Corpus Christi*. It was so central to the service, and presented so clearly as fulfilling the role of sermon that it was natural to include it in the

analysis. Elsewhere on another occasion, however, I had made the decision not to include a 3½ minute tape recorded Bishop's statement. It was played after the Creed, and was clearly not being regarded as part of the sermon (which had itself lasted nearly 15 minutes).

(iv)   Sermon 9

In singling this sermon out for special discussion of its hermeneutic strategy in handling traditional themes and concept I do not wish to imply that it differed in any marked way from the rest of the sample. It stands here in fact as a representative of many of the other sermons, where I was tempted to categorise the hermeneutic strategy adopted as LE ('Literalist' interpretation explicit) rather than LI ('Literalist' interpretation implied) but resisted. Just as I demanded unambiguous statements of 'non-literalist' interpreters before abandoning the default LI in the 'liberal' direction, so it seemed only fair to demand equally lucid statements before deciding on a more 'conservative' classification.

    But what is the criterion of lucidity in this situation? Sermon 9 presents an extended exploration of an apparently 'literalist' reading of the Annunciation narrative citing as parallels other Tanakh (O.T.) instances where God is presented as waiting on the 'say-so' of a human 'interlocutor'. The preacher laid considerable emphasis on the idea of God's vulnerability in such situations. This was reinforced by some *ex hypothesi* speculation on how radically different salvation history would have been if the human beings involved had exercised their free choice differently.

    No attempt was made to 'deconstruct' the God-human encounters. No hint was dropped that the stories might not be factual. The result was a reading of the texts which was certainly 'literalistic' by modern criteria - and probably also by the criteria that the original readers would have brought to bear.

    But on reflection I could not persuade myself that anything had been said which was inconsistent with the approach of 'narrative theology'. I do not know and did not enquire (the Preacher's Questionnaire is concerned with other issues) whether this preacher is or is not an adherent of that school of thought. But LI told as little against my first hypothesis as would have LE. So there was no advantage to be gained from LE in that respect, although LE would surely be the reaction of the 'secularist' reference group portrayed in 1.B(ii). If I have therefore deviated – in this instance and many similar instances throughout the research - from

the principle of taking their views into account, it has been to avoid the possible risk of attributing to the preacher a degree of literalism of which they are entirely innocent.

(v) Sermon 11

This short sermon (lasting 3 minutes 22 seconds) was delivered as part of an informal 10-minute 'Act of Worship for Epiphany' included in ITV-1's *My Favourite Hymns* programme. Although this is the format most commonly followed in the series, the other two televised sermons from *My Favourite Hymns* included in the research were part of the alternative, 'full service' format which the programme occasionally adopts. Under this format the programme is entirely devoted to an extended but still informal act of worship 50 or 55 minutes in length.

(vi) Sermon 12

This was an informal service in which the preacher interspersed his remarks between other elements of the service. I have put these together and treated them as a 4-part sermon because they all contribute significantly to the 'message' of the whole, including much of the exposition of the Lectionary readings. However, the fourth and last part here is much more substantial at 7 minutes 25 seconds than the rest, and could well be regarded as constituting the sermon by itself.

(vii) Sermon 14

The audio version of this sermon presented here on CD-Rom 8.A is taken from the tape of the sermon produced and circulated by the church. The timings used in the analysis are taken from this version in spite of a slight discrepancy from the timings registered by my minidisc recorder. The difference is small: 30 minutes 18 seconds as against 30 minutes 30 seconds.

This sermon, though quiet and far from declamatory in style of delivery, was notable for the emotive force of its direct address to the listener's conscience. Preached by a layman, it employed a considerable arsenal of rhetorical devices to achieve this effect.

(viii) Sermon 15

The logical structure of a stretch around the middle of this sermon was unusually difficult to identify. The problem affects mostly sections 3 to 6 as analysed. In what was a fairly long

sermon (25 minutes 10 seconds) there is an increased danger of losing one's place momentarily. That seems to have been the main problem here, resulting in some unintended repetition of material from earlier sections. The 'skeleton' I have produced reflects some of these problems, but hides some too – the best compromise, I hope, within the limitations of the analytic framework in operation.

(ix)   Sermon 17

Described by the main speaker as 'an active sermon', this 20 minute 16 second presentation stands out amongst the sample for its combinations of a range of different elements. On the basis, chiefly, of the description quoted, I have treated all these elements as parts of the sermon. After the main speaker's exposition of the Lectionary readings (section 1), three other speakers highlight in different ways the situation of military personnel and their families (section 2): a 'silent procession' follows (section 3) to a newly constituted shrine of peace and justice in the south aisle, leading to an act of dedication (section 4). Only the main speaker was asked to complete the Preacher's Questionnaire.

(x)   Sermon 18

A sermon which combined substantial discussion of three Lectionary readings with say something of considerable significance about both the forthcoming season of Lent and the threatened invasion of Iraq. Problems for analysis centred mainly on the sections of biblical comment early in the sermon. This sermon helped considerably with developing the analytic procedural rules referred to in subsection 2.B(ii) above (p.60) and identified in the full 'processed data' held in the Subject analysis database (CD-Rom 8.C(i)).

   The preacher alternated here between discussing the literary imagery of all three readings (rule BIBL applied), expounding the meaning of these and other biblical narratives (XBIB rule), and offering broader perspectives on doctrinal and ritual issues (ASIS rule).

(xi)   Sermon 21

The logical structure of this sermon was very fully and clearly signposted. In the main exposition of God's sovereignty (section 2), each subsection began with a comment on the 'sovereign' implications of the theme (creation, revelation, redemption, judgment) and ended

with encouragement to give thanks to God for that aspect of his 'sovereignty'. After some hesitation, I classified these introductory and concluding subsections as, respectively, Language (under rule ASIS) and a composite of Christian devotion and either God or Christian salvation (under rule XREL).

(xii)   Sermon 22

Many sermons are preached on Christian love, but few go into the theme in such a practical and helpful way as this one did. And fewer still recognise that that love has boundaries which it cannot cross without turning into something unhealthy.

(xiii)   Sermon 23

The first and in many ways the severest test of my recording equipment, this was a Rogationtide service held in the open air in a working farmyard.

(xiv)   Sermon 26

A multi-part sermon set in a service which I have described as informal. It was in fact a liturgical baptismal service, but it was conducted very much in family service style and involved the children present at every point. A video rather than an audio recorder was required to do it full justice.

(xv)   Sermon 27

A sermon reporting on the results of a Christian-Islam seminar held in Qatar, as it happened at the height of the Iraq War.

(xvi)   Sermon 30

A particularly carefully constructed (multi-part) sermon. Its cunningly interwoven imagery and cross-referencing allusion defeats capture by either Subject or Traditional language analysis.

   Part 5 blends, in 1 minute 10 seconds, Tanakh history, multicultural celebration, nature of God, and an idealised picture of Church fellowship. Disentanglement seems impossible. Best

solution available: rule XREL, function Normative, subject label Christian values, and codes Faith-aware 24, Survey 6, Neutral 31 (and Dewey 241).

(xvii)   Sermon 32

The arbitrary subjectivity of classification is well illustrated by section 2d of this sermon. The section passes very quickly under review several clearly defined sources of worry arising from everyday life. These in one sense cry out for classification under family, finance, health, *etc.* But as less than 10 seconds' time is devoted to each, this seems rather overprecise. I have therefore treated the section as a whole under the label 'Worry'.

(xviii) Sermon 34

A 5-part discussion in an informal service, this was the longest of the 50 sermons at 40 minutes 52 seconds, and one of the most complex to analyse. In the course of the second part a 2-minute period of congregational participation took place in response to a call for answers to the question 'What kind of a community is . . . ?' I have included this sequence in the analysis (subsection 2b).

   Along with 2b subsections 2c(ii) and 2c(iii) range widely over various features of the community which could be further analysed (*e.g.* economics, geography, health, jobs). To avoid overelaborating an already detailed structural analysis, I opted for a blanket classification in all three cases. The generic Neutral code 30 (Social themes) seemed appropriate for subsections 2b and 2c(ii), and the more specific 38 (Physical environment & events) for subsection 2c(iii). Whether to analyse or consolidate is a decision I have had to take in several other sermons too: I hope the choice in each case is appropriate to the context.

   I hope I have done justice to the 11 or 12 (not entirely regular) cycles of alternation in section 4 between the situation of Lystra described in *Acts* 14, general comments arising, the situation in the village community in which the sermon was being preached, and community life in other parts of England.

(xix)   Sermon 35

Because of technical problems with the recording of this sermon (see also sermon 41 below) a full transcript is given here. The transcript contains a number of uncertain conjectures and a

number of gaps. Conjectures are enclosed in angle brackets. Where it has been impossible even to guess at what was said, a lacuna is indicated thus: '. . . . .' Assumed hesitations in delivery are also indicated, in order to give the reader a better chance of assessing the merit of the decipherment at these points. Timings are given in the margin to facilitate cross-reference to the recordings themselves and to the relevant analyses.

0:0   I forgot to welcome < in my earlier remarks visitors > with us from other parts, er, from the UK itself and from abroad. You are of course very, very welcome < to join in with our > celebrations this morning.

0:13 And I'd start by saying, 'What a fantastic summer it has actually been for sport so far!'
If you of course don't like sport, er, you don't < know this. > Sorry about that. . . . . .

We had the World Cup first of all.

0:29 Er, Wimbledon, a fantastic < contest > on the Saturday I didn't see, < but it made > quite exciting reading matter later on. Er, I'm sure some of you, most of you, were glued to the screen watching that < great finish. >

Oh, I'm talking to golfers there!

0:46 And now of course the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. Er, I'm sure you all feel inspired perhaps to throw away the remote control for the tele once and for all and climb into your hiking shorts and go cycling, running, or whatever. Well, one or two nodding vaguely. Er, not such enthusiasm from the rest, I see. Well, you know the Commonwealth Games < then. >

I can't wait to see if Paula Radcliffe will finally get her first gold . . . . .

Paula Radcliffe. She's < got her > heart and her mind . . . . .
And she runs flat out, < knows the only way of going. And >. . . . .
She's always been the leading man, leading woman rather. < You know >
she always gets down there about . . . . .
< gold and > really looks for a win this time.

If she does, I know she would feel, as every triumphant winner does feel, that all the pain, all the hard work, the training 7 days a week, winter and summer, has been worth it to obtain < gold, for > that great prize.

1:49 And the reason I'm talking about her achieving gold in this way is a very similar (um) use of the parable that Jesus gave about the pearl of great price in the gospel for today. < This > actually < says we have to > work hard to

get to heaven, have to work hard. **<** He cites heaven as a **>** Kingdom where we should be prepared to sacrifice everything in order to obtain. And it's hard, it's hard, because in life, **<** as you know, **>** many, many things **<** do **>** distract us from the Kingdom, legitimate, **<** lovely, and **>** precious as they are, and they distract us from keeping our eye on the main thing.

2:30 In this morning's reading King Solomon, **<** the Jewish **>** King, could have had anything he wanted, riches, ...
< power, **>**   . . . . .
Sort of things. And remember that Solomon was taking over from King David, his father, the greatest **<** general, **>** the greatest personality, perhaps after Moses, in the whole of the history of the Jewish people. He had conquered the world for them, and he had led the world 40 years uniting the two Kingdoms. He'd seen it all, done it all. There was nothing to improve on **<** David. **>**   And then there was this boy about to step into his father's shoes. And God realised . . . . .
big job now. . . . . .
'What would you like, Solomon, in order to follow your father?' And instead of asking for all those material comforts with **<** trappings of **>** power, he said something, 'Give me . . . . . .
wisdom, **<** what I need to govern. **>** These people are headstrong people. You know they've **<** seen it all, done it all with **>** my father. Give me wisdom, give me wisdom,' he said, 'to rule and er, to know how to **<** lead them on. **>** '

3:38 And like Solomon, we too have choices. And what Jesus is trying to show us today is how important it is to choose well and to see short term prizes for what they are, good in themselves, very precious, and worth winning that sort of thing. But very small in comparison with the greatest treasure of them all, which is heaven, **<** where Christ will take us all when we leave this world. **>**

4:3 Heaven is priceless. You can't put a price on it, because   **<** it was bought and **>**
paid for us by the blood of his Son. There's no way we could . . . . .
in order to pay that price. But God **<** gave the most **>** precious gift to us, the blood of his only Son.

4:20 And from the very beginnings of the church people have realised that and given anything to obtain it, sometimes even shedding their own blood, as Christ himself did.

4:30 Now it's highly unlikely that any of us would be asked to do that. But thankfully there are many other ways of obtaining the kingdom.

4:39 It's very interesting in our Lord's parable that the first man found his treasure which was hidden, found it by accident. I mean, if he'd known it was there, he would have been the first one to find it. No, he come across it by accident, while going about his daily work.

4:55 And hundreds of people I know have actually done the same, finding God in

the ordinary circumstances of the day, in a pleasant surprise, a kind word or something that somebody has done for them that's given them little bits of heaven, and made them stop and think and say 'Where are we going?', you know, 'What am I doing with my life?' Maybe you know . . . . .
this person's action, er, **<** leads me to think in **>** another way in . . . . .

Sees it all . . . . .

5:22   By contrast, the second man, the pearl of great price man, he's . . . . .
he's actually dedicated to the search for the pearl of great price. He constantly seeks God with a sincere heart, and perseveres through let-downs and disappointments and other things where he thinks he's almost there and then falls flat on his face again, till he actually finds what he's looking for. He is singleminded in the pursuit of this pearl of great price.

5:54   Now, whatever our approach, whether we do stumble upon the thing by accident, or whether we . . . . .
< ministration, **>**
the one certain thing is that it doesn't come cheap. It's not easy, we have to work for it.

6:11   The man who found it by accident still had to risk everything, sell everything he had, in order to obtain the field with the treasure in.   **<** But note **>**   . . .
. .
It says in the parable, he went away happy. You know, Imagine . . . . .
one night after dinner   **<** along he comes **>** to his wife and says, 'Look, I've found this treasure in a field and . . . . .
Quickly everything away . . . . .
And go and admire this gift, this treasure.'

Oh yes! You can imagine!

. . . . .
risk everything. He had to have it, he knew its true value, knew its true value.

6:56   As for the pearl, **<** it was the same principle, **>** the pearl of great price.   **<** He gave everything in order to buy it. **>**

7:0   But there's another little thing that I'd like to draw from this story of the pearl which you might find useful.

Where are pearls normally seen? They're either seen on a curious bed of blue velvet waiting to be sold in a jeweller's shop, or in earrings, in . . . . .
Earrings, or a little gold pendant or perhaps more likely strung, er, in a necklace of pearls.

7:26   And isn't it strange how much pearls are valued when you know where they come from? As you know, they come from a very ugly, shell-like creature that clings to a rock in the seas never really seen very much, except by the boat owner, of course. And what happens is that a grain of sand enters into the soft fleshy body of the oyster, causing the creature, **<** the oyster, **>**

pain and discomfort.   So in order to dull that pain, it secretes (er) layer after layer of . . . . .
which it hardens round the grain of sand, insulates it from the pain, and produces eventually this exquisite pearl, **<** which people pay a lot of good money to get. **>**

8:10 And I . . . . .
that similarly, the treasure of the gospel is not contained in pure and beautiful vessels of gold, but actually in weak, flawed, earthen vessels   **<** in human hearts. **>**

8:24 As earthen vessels . . . . .
New to me . . . . .
And they weren't very much . . . . .
They were usually thrown away and discarded.

8:39 So it's a strange sort of thing to contain something very, very precious. And yet when you think about it, if the container were too precious, we might be distracted and miss the beauty of the treasure within, the pearls within **<** there. **>**

8:55 And so in the same way the choice of a less than perfect man or woman by God to contain the treasure of his word demonstrates the beauty of God's power, which can bring treasure on earth in the way we **<** serve the **>** Kingdom, in the way we look after each other, in the way we use our gifts and talents to make the world a better place.

9:17 So what we're really saying is that, altho Jesus was talking about the kingdom, he's saying at the same time that we are the pearl of great price, we are the pearl of great price, that Christ gave everything for, including his life. That's how much he thought we were worth.
In spite of the **<** shell **>** . . . . .
< old cabinet that's **>** cracked and worn and falling to bits, it contains something . . . . .
< diamonds, pearls, or emeralds. **>**

9:47 So the Kingdom of heaven . . . . .
And as he was saying, Don't let's exchange it for something worth less.

9:58 **End of sermon 35**

(xx)   Sermon 37

Shorter even than sermon 11, where the constraints of a restricted television format applied, this sermon holds the record for brevity at 3 minutes exactly. It followed the reading of the long Palm Sunday passion narrative.

(xxi)   Sermon 40

Preached during a service which contained contributions from a Jewish and an Islamic speaker and marked the first anniversary of the 9 September terrorist attacks in the U.S.A..

The structural analysis, very unusually, ignores an obvious tripartite division in section 5a, where the 3 well-known examples of non-violent resistance from the Sermon on the Mount (turning the other cheek, handing over cloak as well as shirt, and going the 2nd mile) are given new and interesting explanations in section 5a. The Subject analysis is not affected: all three sections would have shared the same label 'Gospel / Christian values' and have been coded identically according to the XBIB rule.

(xxii)   Sermon 41

There were also problems with the recording of this sermon (see also sermon 35 above). A full transcript is given here. The transcript contains a number of uncertain conjectures and a number of gaps. For explanations of how these are indicated see the introduction to sermon 35.

0:0   The 1st reading tells us a terrible story of torture, of people being put to the point of being threatened with their lives to see if they really believe in what they say. Are they really going to stand up for that, put their lives on the line? It's a very stark < type > of choice. And it's not one that perhaps < faces us > often. We don't < come > quite to that point of being asked to demonstrate the truth, or belief, in what we have said.

0:35 There are many other ways of actually demonstrating . . . . . over others what is really < apparent > in what we do. There are times when we stand out and put ourselves in trouble for the sake of others.

0:51 Thankfully there are many good times when we're invited to celebrate anniversaries, or to celebrate a party or a birthday, or something, some happy occasion, something that we look forward to, go to trouble for, spend money for, to show that we are connected, or the depth of our connection, with other people. We take the trouble because these people matter to us. And these are the high points of life.

1:22 There are the other times too, when perhaps we have forgotten about them, moved away from those good events. And the test might come in a phone call or a word given to us by a friend which says, 'Have you heard about . . . . ?
       Did you hear what happened to them?' And when < the news is told them, > we might feel a real challenge to say, 'Well, I went with them, I travelled to

celebrate **<** that event with **>** them. Am I going to go the trouble now to journey with them in this more difficult time?'

1:56   And we are put to the test. Are we going to perhaps write the letter or make the call
or spend time with them in illness or in bereavement or in difficulty? And that's when we show the quality of our connection, that we balance the good times with the **<** being prepared to be **>** with them **<** in the bad **>**.

2:20   We make those choices, and we show how dearly we are connected with people. We know that there are people whom we have met, enjoyed with their company, and left saying, 'We'll be in touch' – and haven't been.
  < And our being . . . about **>** our promise to be in touch, well, shows that that friendship wasn't of that kind, and we **<** haven't begun **>** . . . .
.
something.

2:48   When we think of the dead in November, we're invited to consider the depth of our connection with them, how it is that we really share life with them. And if we pray for their eternal rest,
for their eternal life, we try to see how **<** it is we **>** live with them, and share with them in this life. But while we cannot share the joy or the company of heaven, we can continue to grow in love for them and in appreciation of them by realising what they have done for us.

3:24   There are people for whom November is something like a sad month, a month of gloom and darkness . . . . .
< every type of thought **>**.   But for us as Christians we pray that we will have the strength to realise where we might do better and to bring back to the fold, and to help those who are in need, especially those who are suffering bereavement perhaps at this time, to be people of hope and faith, by putting our spirit and God's spirit into the way that can bring them **<** to light **>**.

4:2   There are many ways in which we are called to appreciate again the strength of our connections **<** in faith **>**.

4:11   **<** A short **>** prayer **<** that comes to mind **>** , a prayer written by a Muslim some time in the 13th century – a long time ago, when **<** Gulai was preaching **>** about life appearing to like to be something of a prison or a **<** thing that can't fully be **>** understood **<** in its own limits **>**.
And he says, 'I cannot stop asking. If I could **<** taste one sip / reach one sixth **>** of an answer, I could break out of this prison **<** that **>** I find myself in. I didn't come here of my own accord, and I can't leave that way.
Whoever brought me here will have to take me home.'

4:54   And we pray that God will help us to remember during this November that we have been brought to this life by God, the God who wants to take us home. And we commend all our departed into God's hands and ask that the God who brought them to life will bring them fully home.

5:16   Lord, you have given us life, and asked us to live for your glory and for the service of one another and for our own growth. As you have given us life,

you call us home to be with you.   Help us to live fully in the Spirit < of love >
, so that we will be happy to recognise that our true home is with you.

 5:39 **End of sermon 41**

(xxiii) Sermon 44

A 2-part sermon unusual in its logistics. The main part of the sermon, 26 minutes 3 seconds
in length, preceded the one Scripture reading in the service. A much briefer exposition of the
passage read immediately followed (2 minutes 45 seconds).

(xxiv) Sermon 47

If sermon 18 played a formative role in the development of the procedural rules for subject
analysis (see p.60), especially rules BIBL and XBIB, this sermon led to the creation of a
parallel rule XART to allow a two-pronged analysis of discussion of works of literature and
other art forms. On one level such discussion is about whichever art is involved, in this case
the cinema with the film *The Green Mile*. On another level, unless discussion focusses
principally on the techniques of the art itself (rule CRIT available, but never in fact required),
the subject is the subject of the work of art, in this case the American penal system.

(xxv)   Sermon 48

A Lectionary sermon with a difference. It reviewed 3 months of readings in the Pentateuch
following the Lectionary's 'Continuous' option for Year A Old Testament readings during
Trinity.

(xxvi) Sermon 50

The preacher made a special feature of introducing both Tanakh (O.T.) and New Testament
readings with some fairly detailed background comment. Although the exposition following
the readings was nonetheless clearly regarded as the sermon in the strict sense, the earlier
contributions played an important role in the presentation of the argument. The analysis
therefore proceeds on the basis that this is a 3-part sermon.

E. 'Secondary' data

(i) Sermon 'skeletons'

Skeleton of sermon no. 1   *Title:* **Pray for vocations**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Working with young people	0:00	24	10	37	268
2 Ways of life	2:11				
a Introductory: all called by God to something	2:11	24	1	22	265
b Marriage & family life	2:47	24	2	81	242
c Single life	3:20	24	1	21	242
d Religious life	4:13	24	10	31	242
e Ministerial priesthood	4:53	24	10	36	242
3 Why don't people in developed countries answer the call to the priesthood?	5:09	24	10	36	242
4 All ways of life must be supported	5:45	24	1	22	261
5 Pray today for vocations in thankfulness	7:02	24	10	36	242
End of sermon	8:12				

Skeleton of sermon no. 2   *Title:* **Bible Sunday**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	0:00				
a Bible Sunday: poignantly topical theme	0:00	24	10	78	283
b Today's readings: Scripture is one	0:35	20	10	78	220
2 Gospel reading	0:58	24	10	78	226
3 1st reading	1:58				
a Uses of Scripture	1:58	24	10	78	227
b What is righteousness?	2:40				
(i) Changes over time	2:40	24	6	31	220
(ii) Some unchanging Biblical standards	3:37	24	4	17	220
c Duty to interpret the Bible for ourselves	4:18	24	10	78	227
End of sermon	5:24				

Skeleton of sermon no. 3   *Title:* **The significance of Advent**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Reprise of Christ the King 2002	0:00	24	1	21	232
2 Advent Sunday: another important day	0:35				
a A day to look forward & reflect	0:35	24	1	23	263
b Not just looking forward to Christmas	0:47	83	2	83	
c Time to reflect on coming of God in Christ to us now	1:09	24	1	23	234
d Looks forward to the consummation at the end of time	1:32	24	10	14	236
3 Season of Advent	2:04				
a Season of repentance	2:04	24	1	23	242
b Also season of hope & expectation	2:38	24	1	24	234
4 Lectionary Gospel	3:49				
a Introduction to Mark (Year B Gospel)	3:49				
(i) Historical background to the Gospel	3:49	24	10	78	226
(ii) Confusing time for Gospel's first readers	4:20	22	11	38	214
(iii) Many false prophets add to confusion	5:00	24	10	38	281

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
b Today's passage	5:31				
(i) Synopsis	5:31	24	1	21	226
(ii) Digression on an eschatological sect	5:49	24	10	31	289
(iii) The parable re-read	6:59	24	1	21	226
(iv) Exegesis of parable	7:47				
(1) Jesus will come again	7:47	24	10	14	226
(2) Meanwhile, be like the servants in the parable	8:26	24	1	23	226
5 Summary of Advent message	9:51	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	10:30				

Skeleton of sermon no. 4   *Title:* **'Am I my brother's keeper?'**

Section Theme	*Position*	*Faith-aware*	*Survey*	*Neutral*	*Dewey*
1 The planning meeting I	0:00	7	9	7	
2 Strong justice	0:57				
a A moment of weakness	0:57	47	4	34	
b Abel's murder punished	1:22	22	10	78	222
3 Strong mercy	2:19				
a Prejudice, loneliness, & fear	2:19	47	4	34	
b The mark of Cain	3:15	22	10	78	222
4 Planning meeting II	3:48	7	9	7	
5 Another meeting: peacemaking in the Middle East	4:40	32	6	35	
6 Transforming initiatives & actions	5:21				
a The twin bases	5:21	22	10	14	223
b Nothing that God cannot redeem	5:36				
(i) At work in our worship today	5:36	24	10	33	264
(ii) Unlimited potential to move history	5:42	24	6	38	248
(iii) Blood of Abel crying from the ground	6:00	24	10	14	232
(iv) Forgiveness and freedom from whatever imprisons us	6:08	24	1	24	234
c Amazing grace	6:17	24	10	14	234
End of sermon	6:47				

Skeleton of sermon no. 5   *Title:* **Challenges in the way**

Section Theme	*Position*		*Faith-aware*	*Survey*	*Neutral*	*Dewey*
1 Welcome & introduction	1	0:00				
a Challenges in the way	1	0:00	24	10	37	252
b Ecumenical challenge	1	0:24	24	10	32	262
c Challenges of the Christian life	1	0:36	24	1	20	240
End of section	1	1:05				
2 Challenge of belief	2	0:00	24	10	14	231
End of section	2	0:53				
3 Challenge of joining a church	3	0:00				
a Introduction	3	0:00	24	10	31	262
b Eleanor's experience	3	0:20	24	10	31	262
4 Pressures to conform	3	1:35				
a Introduction	3	1:35	24	1	21	242
b Michael's experience of teen age	3	2:04				
(i) Living standards	3	2:04	64	3	44	
(ii) Broken homes	3	2:28	86	2	81	

Section / Theme		Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
(iii) Drugs & sex	3	2:40	37	4	32	
(iv) Confirmation & an inner friend	3	3:26	24	1	23	265
End of section	3	3:48				
5 Growing into faith	4	0:00				
a Introduction	4	0:00	24	1	23	231
b Richard's experience of Princess Diana's funeral	4	0:20	24	5	33	265
6 Challenge of tragedy I	4	1:43				
a Questions raised for faith: where is God in it all?	4	1:43	24	10	14	214
b But latent spirituality of people in Britain revealed at such times	4	1:59	33	5	31	
End of section	4	2:25				
7 Challenge to be one	5	0:00				
a Introduction	5	0:00	24	4	31	262
b Katie Hunt's experience	5	0:21				
(i) Disagreements in perspective	5	0:21	24	10	21	267
(ii) Discomfort of a Catholic at an Anglican school communion	5	0:54	24	1	25	265
c Kate Ayre's experience	5	1:07	24	10	35	262
End of section	5	2:15				
8 Challenge of tragedy II	6	0:00				
a Stephen Oake's murder (4 days ago)	6	0:00	24	10	14	214
b Glimpsing Christ in Stephen Oake & his father	6	0:31	24	1	21	240
c God recognised as friend by millions of Christians	6	1:02	24	1	23	214
d Encountering God: a backpacker's experience	6	1:22	24	1	25	241
9 Summary	6	2:54				
a Ultimate challenge to follow even when God seems remote	6	2:54	24	1	23	242
b What we are rather than what we say	6	3:06	24	1	21	241
End of section	6	3:29				

Skeleton of sermon no. 6   *Title:* **The theological opening of Mark's Gospel**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Gospel openings compared	0:00	24	10	78	226
2 Analogy of theatre	2:32	72	7	72	
3 Theology in Mark ch.1	2:59				
a Proclaimed directly at start	2:59	24	10	78	226
b Theology, not history, re John the Baptiser	4:13				
(i) Geographical inconsistency: wilderness or Jordan?	4:13	24	10	78	226
(ii) The wilderness context of the first reading from	5:08	22	11	31	221
(iii) Mark sets John in this wilderness context	5:37	24	11	31	226
(iv) Details of John's lifestyle only in Mark	6:05	24	11	14	226
4 2 challenges	7:06				
a To interpret the Christmas story similarly theologically	7:06	24	10	78	226
b To focus on who John is and to whom he points	8:01	24	10	78	226
End of sermon	9:00				

Skeleton of sermon no. 7 *Title:* **The Eucharist (Archbishop's Pastoral Letter)**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	0:00				
a Comment on Gospel	0:00	24	10	14	231
b Recall of morning service	0:27	24	10	33	265
c Archbishop's Pastoral letter for Corpus Christi	1:13	24	10	37	253
2 Meaning of Eucharist	1:48				
a Mary's viewpoint	1:48	24	2	81	265
b What is the Mass?	2:45				
(i) Makes present saving words & actions of Christ	2:45	24	10	33	265
(ii) Sacrifice	3:37	24	1	23	265
(iii) Banquet	4:26	24	1	25	265
(iv) Real presence of Christ	4:55	24	10	33	265
c How action of the Mass comes about	6:16	24	10	34	265
d What Mass is for	7:29				
(i) Centre & source of unity of Church	7:29	24	10	34	265
(ii) By communon with Christ we share his mission	10:11	24	6	31	265
(iii) Christ's presence in Blessed Sacrament an abiding presence	11:05	24	1	23	242
e Summary & conclusion: do treasure the Mass	11:38	24	1	23	265
End of sermon	13:38				

Skeleton of sermon no. 8 *Title:* **Light in the darkness**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	0:00				
a Contrasting themes of darkness & light dominate the Advent services	0:00	24	10	33	264
b Advent as coming: celebration & anticipation	0:59	24	1	23	263
2 A world of darkness	2:17				
a Natural evil	2:17	50	8	50	
b Human evil	2:38	17	6	17	
3 End of year review of state of the world	2:58				
a International relations	2:58	32	6	35	
b Wealth & poverty	3:14	64	3	44	
c Crime	3:23	35	4	38	
d Negative traits	3:31	46	1	21	
e Pollution	3:39	46	8	55	
f Religious extremists	3:45	33	5	35	
g General comment: timeliness of the Advent message	4:00	24	10	14	234
4 The mystery of evil	4:15				
a Many attempted explanations over the years	4:15	20	9	12	214
b Evil as a practical challenge	5:23	24	1	21	241
c Criticism of misguided justifications of evil	5:54	20	9	12	214
d God shares our suffering: the Advent message	6:27	24	10	14	234
5 3rd Sunday in Advent	6:43				
a Themes of the Advent readings	6:43	20	10	33	220
b The good news 2,000 years ago	7:09	24	10	14	226

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
c Good news today	7:40	65	3	45	
d Christ's offer of peace & war v. world of darkness	7:57	24	1	23	234
6 Liturgical symbolism of Advent	8:20				
a The Advent wreath	8:20	24	10	33	265
b Purple for royalty - and suffering	9:06	24	10	33	265
7 Conclusion: the greatest event in history	10:03	24	1	23	234
End of sermon	10:36				

Skeleton of sermon no. 9　　　　　*Title:* **God's plans & human plans**

Section　Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Making plans	0:00				
a Planning for Christmas	0:00	24	2	83	263
b Plans for long & short terms	0:51	42	9	22	
2 Mary & God: taking risks with each other	1:19				
a Mary's risky choice I	1:19	24	2	82	226
b God's risks I	2:41				
(i) God's plans rest on human agreement	2:41	24	10	14	226
(ii) God's incredible risk	3:00	24	10	14	234
c Mary's risky choice II	3:19				
(i) Limited knowledge about Mary	3:19	24	1	21	226
(ii) Real human being given real human choice	4:44	24	1	22	226
d God's risk II	6:04	24	10	14	234
3 God's vulnerability	7:10				
a Old Testament examples	7:10				
(i) Moses	7:10	22	1	22	222
(ii) Lot	7:45	22	1	22	222
(iii) Many other examples in the history of God's people	8:07	20	1	22	220
b The heart of Christmas: God placing himself in human hands	8:28	24	1	38	231
c Mary's free response to the angel	9:13	24	10	14	226
4 Choosing God's plans	9:43				
a Saying 'Yes' to God as great risk	9:43	24	1	22	226
b Times when God shows us his plans for world & ourselves	10:07	24	1	22	231
c If we wish to be his disciples	11:01	24	1	21	242
End of sermon	11:27				

Skeleton of sermon no. 10　　　　*Title:*　**Cured - or healed?**

Section　Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction: difference between being cured & being healed	0:00	24	1	61	252
2 Illustrated from Gospel reading	1:36				
a 10 lepers	1:36	24	4	35	226
b Jesus cured them all	3:12	24	1	61	226
c Only 1 healed (n.b. different word)	4:00	24	1	21	226
3 Application to life today	5:42				
a Cured but not healed	5:42	53	1	61	
b Healed but not cured	6:17	45	1	21	

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
c Death as the final healing	7:14	24	1	57	236
d How do we react to adversity?	8:17	24	1	21	248
4 Harvest Thanksgiving: the Festival's proper name	9:16	24	10	33	264
End of sermon	11:00				

Skeleton of sermon no. 11   *Title:* **Journeyings into the unknown**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introductory	0:00				
a An officer with a map	0:00	33	5	35	
b Columbus' discovery of America	0:10				
(i) '1492: The Conquest of Paradise'	0:10	72	6	38	
(ii) Columbus' belief in himself & his theories	0:37	42	1	21	
(iii) Navigation by the stars	0:47	51	8	52	
2 The wise men discover the light of all nations	1:22				
a The story retold I	1:22	24	1	38	226
b First to fulfil prophecy of Isaiah 60	1:57	22	6	38	224
c The story retold II	2:07	24	1	21	226
3 Journeying into 2003	2:29				
a Unknown territory	2:29	48	1	38	
b A guiding star in the uncertainty	2:55	24	1	21	242
End of sermon	3:22				

Skeleton of sermon no. 12   *Title:* **It's better to light a candle than curse the dark**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Part I	1 0:00				
a Candlemas: welcome & introduction to broadcast	1 0:00	24	10	33	252
b Presentation of Christ in the temple	1 1:15	22	10	31	222
End of comment	1 1:51				
2 Part II	2 0:00				
a The meeting: old name for Candlemas in Eastern	2 0:00	24	10	33	263
b The Jewish ritual: firstborn sons offered to God	2 0:22	22	11	33	296
c Meeting of Simeon & Anna with Jesus	2 0:48	24	10	14	226
End of comment	2 1:17				
3 Part III: 2nd welcome & introduction to 3rd reading	3 0:00	24	10	31	227
End of comment	3 0:42				
4 Part IV: the main sermon	4 0:00				
a One candle power	4 0:00	67	3	47	
b 1st hymn: gifts of the Lord	4 1:27	24	1	20	234
c 3rd reading: a people called from darkness to light	4 3:09	24	10	31	227
d Candlemas a day for insight into our status as people of light	4 4:03	24	10	31	263
e 2nd reading: model yourselves on Christ	4 4:43	24	1	21	227
f Gospel reading: Simeon & Anna	4 6:04	24	1	23	226
g Summary: the light of our one world	4 6:40	24	10	21	232
End of main sermon	4 7:25				

Skeleton of sermon no. 13 *Title:* **Values of Christ's Kingdom**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	State visit of President Bush	0:00	33	5	33	
2	Gospel reading I: Jesus' different idea of kingship and rule	1:17	24	10	31	226
3	1st reading: Jesus' future return in glory	2:55	22	10	14	224
4	2nd reading: Jesus will come on clouds of glory	3:17	24	10	14	228
5	Security, publicity, & power	3:51				
a	President Bush's security measures	3:51	33	5	34	
b	Gospel reading II: Jesus reveals his kingship	4:48	24	10	14	226
c	Pilate's inscription: the truth proclaimed	6:11	24	10	14	232
7	Christ the King: our message of hope	7:07				
a	Christ our King has won battle over sin & death	7:07	24	10	14	236
b	Unitl that time we pray for the coming of the kingdom	7:27	24	1	20	240
. . .						
End of sermon		8:00				

Skeleton of sermon no. 14 *Title:* **Faith in Action**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Introductory material	0:00				
a	Appearances are deceptive	0:00				
(i)	Greetings & prefatory remarks	0:00	4	9	15	
(ii)	Story of bank customer	0:20	62	3	42	
(iii)	The tramp, the battleship, and the ceremonial	0:43	47	1	26	
(iv)	Parable of the theatre from St. John of the Cross	2:08	72	7	72	
b	Subject of sermon: Passion for Jesus	3:13	24	10	37	252
c	A prayer	3:43	24	1	23	242
d	An easy quiz	4:21	3	9	3	
e	Questions about the poor	5:33	24	4	36	266
2	Challenge of poverty	6:05				
a	The global scene	6:05				
(i)	Global statistics: the real news in heaven	6:05	64	3	44	
(ii)	Meeting with street kids in Brazil	7:07	36	4	38	
(iii)	War correspondent in Bosnia	8:31	33	5	36	
(iv)	The war on poverty: more statistics	9:15	64	3	44	
b	The U.K. situation	9:39				
(i)	Experience of the Besom Foundation I	9:39	64	3	44	
(ii)	Impact of abortion statistics on U.K. poverty	10:38	53	1	57	
(iii)	Experience of the Besom Foundation II	11:14	35	4	36	
c	The challenge	11:51				
(i)	How can we . . . , when they . . . ? The hardness of our hearts	11:51	64	4	44	
(ii)	Painter's bill from 17th century Morlais monastery	13:17	76	7	76	
(iii)	The 2 Ananiases	13:56				
(1)	Ananias of Damascus (Acts 9)	13:56	24	1	26	226
(2)	Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)	14:10	24	1	26	226
3	What should be our reaction?	14:28				
a	Pray for eyes to see the poor	14:28	24	1	23	242

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
b Channel passion for Jesus towards places where he is at work today	14:58				
(i) A bias for the poor? No, he is the poor	14:58	24	3	44	232
(ii) Almost sacramental view of the poor	15:49	24	3	44	261
(iii) Central to the faith of every believer	16:21	24	1	21	241
(iv) Called to imitate Jesus in identification with poor	17:06	24	1	21	242
4 Things that might stand in our way	17:36				
a Convention	17:36				
(i) Power & limitation of tradition: [Nicodemus], Renaissance (1944) & Mark Twain	17:36	47	4	31	
(ii) The Church & convention	18:16				
(1) Duty rather than passion	18:16	24	4	36	241
(2) Works increasingly indistinguishable from other agencies	18:49	24	4	36	266
(3) One key distinctive	19:17	24	10	14	232
(4) Compassion a passion for Jesus matured into action	19:28	24	4	31	266
(iii) Rich man in torment (Luke 16)	19:47	24	3	44	226
b Calling	20:06				
(i) Good teaching around about the workplace	20:06	24	3	41	266
(ii) Another question: are we where God would have us be?	20:21	24	1	22	242
(iii) Careers & high pressure jobs	20:48	24	3	41	242
(iv) If not clearly called, need to reassess	21:33	24	3	41	242
(v) 'Farmer Barns' (Luke 12) and the 'when-thens'	22:37	24	3	42	226
c Compromise	22:49				
(i) Often held back by compromising the truth in an area of our lives	22:49	24	1	21	241
(ii) Example of David, 'a man after God's own heart' (Psalm 78)	23:10	22	1	21	223
(iii) No compromise in Christ	23:31	24	10	14	232
(iv) Compromise & the British	23:44	33	5	31	
(v) Priest, Levite, or Samaritan (Luke 10)?	23:52	24	1	25	226
d Cost	24:04				
(i) Love doesn't come without a cost	24:04	24	1	21	248
(ii) Cost in practical terms	24:59	24	1	21	242
(iii) Think of becoming wholly accountable in your group	25:37	62	3	42	
(iv) The rich young ruler misses the point (Luke 18)	26:12	24	3	42	226
(v) Global perspective on wealth	26:46	64	3	44	
5 Conclusion	27:08				
a A model the world hasn't yet seen	27:08	24	3	44	242
b Tracking our Lord down among those in need in the community	27:38	24	3	44	266
c 'Others'	28:38	24	1	25	241
d A tough prayer	28:59	24	1	37	266
End of sermon	30:18				

Skeleton of sermon no. 15   *Title:*   **What is the Christian faith really about?**

Section Theme	*Position*	*Faith-aware*	*Survey*	*Neutral*	*Dewey*
1 Introduction	0:00				

	Time				
a The most difficult question	0:00	24	10	37	252
b Background	0:30				
(i) International scene	0:30	31	6	38	
(ii) Tragedies at home	1:38	35	4	38	
c Synopsis of the answer	2:16	24	10	37	252
2 Reprise of introduction	3:47	24	10	37	252
3 Answer 1: Christian faith explains things	4:25				
a Coherent way of thinking	4:25	24	10	14	230
b Church sometimes has sold us short over true value of what life is about	5:16	24	10	14	233
c Christian understanding of history	5:51	24	6	38	233
d Communism has failed	6:27	32	9	34	
e Christianity observes limits of explanation	7:04	24	10	14	233
4 Other limitations too observed by Christianity	7:52				
a Something badly wrong with the world	7:52	31	6	32	
b Hyperactivity a besetting sin of modern Church	9:01	24	1	20	260
c Christian faith is the power in the world	10:14	24	6	31	266
d Marxists, Muslims, Sikhs, humanists have much inspiration	10:26	20	11	31	290
e Something seriously missing in our world	11:16	24	1	21	233
f 2nd world war fought to bring peace to the world	12:01	31	6	35	
g Human beings wrong to believe they can bring about a perfect world	12:33	24	6	32	233
5 Reprise of answer 1: Only power of God through Jesus brings coherent view of life	12:52	24	1	25	230
6 Resume of main question	13:33	24	10	37	252
7 Answer 2: Christian faith challenges us	13:53				
a To enlist on a cause	13:53	24	1	21	266
b Lesson from humanist Bertrand Russell	14:06	28	9	17	
c Jesus' challenge a crusade that spans all history	14:46	24	1	21	266
d Many today have abandoned concern for future	15:34	33	5	31	
e Jesus' challenge to transform the world	16:26	24	6	32	266
8 Depressing events of last few weeks	17:13				
a Reactions to the Hutton enquiry	17:13	33	5	34	
b Iraq War & its aftermath	17:47	32	6	32	
c N. Ireland peace process	18:10	33	5	35	
d Overview: looks like impossible besetting problems	18:25	31	6	32	
e Terrible poverty abroad	18:44	64	3	44	
f Deprivation in Bradford	18:54	64	3	44	
g Heart of Christian Gospel: In the end good will prevail	19:24	24	1	26	234
9 Conclusion	20:19				
a Resume of the question	20:19	24	10	37	252
b Christian faith assures us that what we do really countsthis?	20:30	24	1	20	233
c Gospel of the kingdom offers a vision & the power to achieve it	21:57	24	10	31	234
d Reprise: Christians have wonderful cause & reassuring explanation	22:49	24	10	14	262
e Offer of accommodation to burnt-out school	23:22	24	4	37	241

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
f	Finale: never abuse wonderful privilege of call to Christian faith	24:07	24	1	26	234
	End of sermon	25:10				

Skeleton of sermon no. 16 *Title:* **Interpreting nature: science and faith**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	A geologist's wonder at human birth	0:00	53	8	57	
2	A Psalmist's worship	0:41	22	10	78	223
3	Iguacu Falls	1:02	57	8	55	
4	Merely another natural phenomenon	1:37	50	9	50	
5	The nagging question of Psalm 8	1:58	22	10	78	223
6	Complexity of universe: various statistics	2:17	51	8	52	
7	A cosmologist's ponderings	3:07	11	9	11	
8	An earth scientist finds evolution miraculous	3:36	57	8	55	
9	Universe suggests a purpose	4:07	51	8	52	
10	Evil & suffering, yes, but find meaning in Christian belief	4:32	24	10	14	232
11	Example of an 8-year-old's cleverness	5:47	42	1	37	
12	Cosmology raises questions of where & why	6:46	12	9	12	215
13	Christianity offers promise that Creator values each one of us	7:28	24	10	14	234
14	Grandparents marvel at ultrasound images of embryos in the womb	8:06	53	8	57	
15	Creator of universe cares about each human life in the same way	8:35	24	10	14	233
	End of sermon	9:03				

Skeleton of sermon no. 17 *Title:* **Dedication of a Shrine of Peace & Justice**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Explanation of the ceremony	0:00				
a	Silent procession: an active sermon	0:00	24	10	33	265
b	Gospel reading I	4:03	24	10	33	226
c	Procession to place where many prayers will be offered about the present darkness	4:49	24	6	32	265
d	Gospel reading II	6:20	24	10	33	226
2	Reflections by 3 participants	7:13				
a	Introduction	7:13	24	10	33	252
b	1st speaker	7:37				
(i)	2 candles	7:37				
(1)	For friends serving in the Gulf	7:37	24	6	35	264
(2)	For statesmen	7:49	24	6	32	264
(ii)	Light, life, & darkness in Jewish tradition	8:58	22	11	14	296
(iii)	Light & life seen in the Word in the Gospel reading	9:14	24	10	14	226
(iv)	Light & life in the present darkness	10:06	24	10	14	231
c	2nd speaker	10:51				
(i)	Prayer for families & friends	10:51	24	4	86	264
(ii)	Prayer for peace	11:59	24	6	32	264
d	3rd speaker	12:45	24	10	36	253
3	The silent procession	15:55	24	10	33	265

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
4 The act of dedication	17:52				
a Prayer for statesmen	17:52	24	6	32	264
b Prayer for the Kingdom of God	18:31	24	10	31	264
c Prayer for God's blessing on the shrine	19:08	24	10	38	264
End of active sermon	20:16				

Skeleton of sermon no. 18 *Title:* **Transfiguring**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 The Lectionary readings: images of light	0:00				
a Old Testament reading	0:00	22	10	78	222
b Epistle	0:35	24	10	78	227
c Gospel	0:48	24	10	78	226
2 What is this transfiguring all about?	1:01				
a Transfigured, not transformed	1:01	24	10	14	226
b Peter's babblings	1:56	24	1	27	226
c Moses & Elijah	2:33				
(i) Introduction	2:33	24	10	78	226
(ii) Moses, Israel, & baptism	2:50	22	10	38	222
(iii) Christ becomes the greater Moses	3:54	24	10	33	234
(iv) Elijah	5:23	22	11	14	224
(v) Elijah & the Passover meal	5:43	22	11	33	296
(vi) Christ comes instead of Elijah	6:05	24	10	14	232
d Summary: cloud of misunderstanding lifts and only Christ is there	6:30	24	10	14	226
3 How does transfiguring take place for us and for the	8:05				
a Iraq situation	8:05				
(i) Greatest example of world's need for transfiguring	8:05	31	6	35	
(ii) Israeli-Palestinian dispute critical to the peace of the world	8:51	32	6	35	
(iii) 'War is not the answer' (Archbishops of Canterbury & Westminster)	9:55	31	6	35	
b What can we do to play our part?	11:21				
(i) Proposed amendment to yesterday's Diocesan Synod resolution	11:21	24	6	35	241
(ii) Ash Wednesday as day of prayer & fasting	12:15				
(1) Fasting	12:15	24	1	28	242
(2) Prayer	13:19	24	6	35	242
(iii) Ensure peace in our daily relationships	13:39	24	4	25	241
4 Conclusion	13:59				
a Our own transfiguring this Lent	13:59	24	1	21	234
b As international community	14:27	31	6	35	
End of sermon	14:42				

Skeleton of sermon no. 19 *Title:* **Where is God?**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introductory	0:00				
a What's the link between monkeys & coffee?	0:00				
(i) The riddle posed	0:00	24	10	37	252

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
(ii) Marco Gabbiano, founder of Capuchin order	0:38	24	1	26	255
(iii) Capucchino coffee: the story questioned	1:27	53	8	63	
(iv) Capuchin monkeys: discovery in S. America	1:59	32	6	38	
b Capuchin monkeys: new research	2:32	54	8	58	
c Human sense of fair play	4:09	46	1	25	
2 Gospel reading	5:11				
a Disciples squabble over status	5:11	24	1	25	226
b Disciples misunderstanding of kingdom of God	7:52	24	10	31	234
c Context of discussions	8:47	24	10	38	226
d Reasons for disciples' confusion, but clues ignored	9:30	24	10	31	226
e God's attitude to status within his kingdom	10:46	24	1	23	226
3 Children as object lessons in Jesus' teaching	11:13				
a Introductory: 4 passages, 2 stories, 2 lessons intertwined	11:13	24	10	78	252
b The difference between the lessons	12:09	24	9	16	252
c What Jesus might mean	12:36				
(i) Introductory	12:36	24	10	37	252
(ii) Jesus welcoming children	13:03	24	7	76	232
(iii) Association of childhood with innocence questioned	14:44	24	4	31	226
(iv) Become like children	15:50				
(1) Review of interpretations	15:50	24	10	78	226
(2) 2 more appropriate interpretations	16:48				
(a) 'You must be born again' (Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3)	16:48	24	1	23	225
(b) Children as representing, above all, powerlessness	18:01	24	4	31	226
(v) Welcome children, welcome 'me & the one who sent me'	19:05	24	4	36	226
4 Summary: Jesus lowered himself, Messiah with a difference	20:12	24	1	21	232
End of sermon	22:05				

Skeleton of sermon no. 20 *Title:* **Parents, children, and the religious heritage**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Presentation in temple: two aspects	0:00				
a Fulfilling obligation of law of Moses	0:00	24	10	33	226
b Performing family religious duty with wider significance	1:27	24	11	14	226
2 Commentary on the presentation	2:21				
a Nurture in communal beliefs is the best of all parental gifts	2:21	22	2	86	202
b Jesus destined to replace the temple	3:29	24	10	14	226
c Parents' task meanwhile	3:50	22	2	83	204
3 Parental duty generally	4:26				
a Nurture in religious heritage	4:26	20	2	87	204
b Children must own faith for themselves	5:18	20	1	23	204
c Can't be spiritually neutral in bringing up kids	5:40	82	2	87	
d A lesson from the Holy Family	5:58	24	10	21	226
End of sermon	6:47				

Skeleton of sermon no. 21   *Title:*   **The sovereignty of God**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	0:00				
a Introductory prayer	0:00	24	1	23	234
b In Rob Parson's family experience	0:23				
(i) Answer to interviewer	0:23	24	2	86	233
(ii) Clear statement of faith in the sovereignty of God	1:27	24	10	14	231
c Theme running throughout Bible	2:41	24	10	14	231
d Difference from worldly rulers	3:23	32	6	33	
e God's soverignty unchallenged	4:03	24	10	14	231
f Strategy: an overview of the subject	4:50	24	10	14	252
g Divine sovereighnty & human responsibility	6:05				
(i) Complementary views	6:05	24	10	14	233
(ii) Analogy from architecture: St. Paul's Cathedral	6:28	75	7	75	
2 4 aspects of God's sovereignty	7:16				
a Creation	7:16				
(i) A sovereign act	7:16	4	9	15	
(ii) Relation to evolution	7:38	12	9	12	215
(iii) Genesis 1	8:05				
(1) Sovereign from beginning (v.1)	8:05	22	10	14	222
(2) The undermining of the doctrine of creation is serious	9:14	12	9	12	215
(3) God totally in control (v.3, 6)	9:37	22	10	14	222
(4) Our experience of creating is different	10:18	50	8	60	
(5) God's creation (v.31)	11:32	22	10	14	222
(iv) God still sustaining the world	12:00	24	10	14	231
(v) Thank God if you're here & breathing	12:22	24	10	14	242
b Revelation	12:34				
(i) Another sovereign word	12:34	4	9	15	
(ii) The 'reveal' in TV make-over shows	12:52	7	9	7	
(iii) Revelation)(human discovery	13:34	50	8	50	
(iv) Personal self-revelation	14:12	46	4	25	
(v) God as person & master-revealer	14:45				
(1) Information everywhere	14:45	24	10	14	231
(2) Objectively 'out there'	15:05				
(a) Psalm 19: in creation	15:05	24	10	14	223
(b) Hebrews 1.1: full & final revelation of himself in Jesus	15:56	24	10	14	232
(c) Scriptures	17:01	24	10	78	220
(d) Summary	17:07	24	10	14	252
(3) Subjectively 'in here'	17:18				
(a) By Holy Spirit	17:18	24	10	14	234
(b) 2 Corinthians 4.6	17:35	24	10	14	227
(vi) Thank God if you know him	18:18	24	10	14	242
c Redemption	18:31				
(i) Another sovereign word	18:31	4	9	15	
(ii) Isaiah 45.1: example of Cyrus	18:42	22	5	38	224
(iii) Acts 2.23: death of Jesus	20:30	24	10	14	226

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
(iv) No human analogy	21:56	12	9	12	
(v) Mark of God's greatness	22:21	24	10	14	231
(vi) Redemption as God's initiative throughout the Bible	22:30				
(1) Garden of Eden onwards	22:30	22	10	14	222
(2) Lamb slain before the creon of the world	22:47	24	10	14	232
(3) Whole history of Israel	23:22	22	5	38	222
(4) Assurance of future redemption	23:44	24	10	14	234
(5) Jude	24:06	24	10	14	227
(vii) Thank God if you're redeemed	25:08	24	10	14	242
d Judgment	25:19				
(i) Again a sovereign word	25:19	4	9	15	
(ii) Acts 17: God has set a day	25:31	24	10	14	226
(iii) Jesus will be revealed in glory - with his people	26:45	24	10	14	236
(iv) Thank God if you're confident for the future	27:08	24	10	14	242
3 Where does this leave us?	27:26				
a Like Rob Parsons	27:26	24	1	23	242
b 3 implications	27:40				
(i) We can live without fear	27:40	24	10	14	234
(ii) We can pray with confidence	28:02	24	10	14	231
(iii) Faith is possible	28:33	24	10	14	234
4 Concluding prayer	29:06				
a Worship	29:06	24	10	14	231
b Thanksgiving	29:51	24	10	14	234
c Petition	30:03	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	30:29				

Skeleton of sermon no. 22   *Title:*   **Loving one another**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introductory: the ambiguity of 'love'	0:00				
a 2 TV adverts	0:00	7	9	7	
b Love as personal pursuits & preferences	1:15	70	1	70	
c Love in family relationships	1:29	24	2	81	
d Basic questions about interpersonal love	1:42	24	4	17	241
2 Varieties of interpersonal love	2:31				
a Overview: most of us have been fortunate to know love	2:31	46	4	25	
b Protective love initially	2:55	86	2	86	
c Romantic love later on	3:50	44	1	24	
d Mature love	4:45	37	4	81	
3 God's love for human beings	5:18				
a In Old Testament times	5:18	22	10	14	221
b In today's Gospel reading	5:47	24	10	14	226
4 Characteristics of adult / Christian love	6:23				
a Open & above board: e.g. friendships, mature marriage	6:23	37	4	81	
b Jesus' teaching: don't hide ourselves from other people	7:17	24	4	86	241
c No limits in love, but has its boundaries	8:11	37	4	81	
d Summary of section	9:41	24	4	81	241
5 Love within the church fellowship: no easy love	10:00	24	10	31	261
6 How it can be accomplished: 'abide in my love'	11:06	24	1	23	242

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
7 The result: Holy Spirit can underlie all our life	11:54	24	10	14	234
End of sermon	12:40				

Skeleton of sermon no. 23 *Title:* **God's generosity**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 To the Israelites: the Promised Land	0:00	22	10	38	222
2 To the Christians at Corinth: give generously in return	0:59				
a Appeal for Jerusalem Christians	0:59	24	10	36	227
b Analogy of agriculture	1:40	54	8	63	
c Rewards of giving I: Prosperity Gospel	2:25	24	3	42	234
d Rewards of giving II: financial or other	2:47	24	1	25	233
3 Assets of the Worcestershire countryside	3:40	57	4	38	
End of sermon	4:41				

Skeleton of sermon no. 24 *Title:* **Christian Service in Imitation of Christ**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 1st Reading: the suffering servant	0:00				
a 'The Lord has been pleased to crush his servant with suffering' (Isaiah 53.10)	0:00	22	10	14	224
b Applicable to Church today, Catholics in particular	0:33	24	10	38	282
c A bad week for the diocese	1:25				
(i) 'Sex and the holy city'	1:25	7	9	7	
(ii) Another priest's defection	2:07	24	10	34	253
(iii) Attack on the diocese	2:29	7	9	7	
2 Gospel reading	3:00				
a James' & John's request	3:00	24	10	78	226
b What it might involve	3:11				
(i) The two thieves	3:11	24	1	23	226
(ii) John & Mary	4:21	24	1	25	226
3 So what do we do in our present affliction?	5:43				
a Look at Pope John Paul II: servus servorum Dei	5:43	24	1	23	253
b Identify with our Lord in his suffering	7:00	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	7:52				

Skeleton of sermon no. 25 *Title:* **The work of the Holy Spirit**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Significance of Pentecost	0:00				
a Final feast of the Easter season	0:00	24	10	33	263
b 1st reading: coming of Holy Spirit	0:29	24	10	37	226
c Our baptismal commission	1:26	24	10	31	260
2 Gifts of the Spirit	2:26				
a 2nd reading: in Paul's thought	2:26	24	1	20	226
b In church and community today	3:32	24	4	36	260
c Identifying our gift	5:02	24	1	20	248
3 Easter readings in Acts: growth of the Church against odds	5:42	24	10	38	226
4 The Holy Spirit in the Church today	8:18	24	10	14	234
End of sermon	9:21				

Skeleton of sermon no. 26   *Title:*   **Baptism**

Section	Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	1st contribution	1	0:00				
a	Gospel reading: Jesus preparing his friends for his departure	1	0:00	24	10	14	226
b	In church to learn a bit more	1	0:41	24	1	37	264
c	Baptism today starts process of learning	1	1:16	24	10	33	265
d	The Holy Spirit	1	1:57	24	10	14	231
e	Illustration from computers	1	2:31				
(i)	The illustration introduced	1	2:31	55	8	65	
(ii)	The illustration applied to baptism	1	3:30	24	1	21	265
(iii)	The illustration applied to God	1	4:37	24	10	14	231
f	Finding out about the God stuff	1	4:52				
(i)	Helping each other in the search	1	4:52	24	10	37	230
(ii)	Introducing the children to the church	1	5:23	24	2	87	265
(iii)	When older, can decide for oneself	1	6:01	24	1	23	242
g	Involving the children in the baptism	1	6:40	24	10	33	265
End of contribution		1	6:59				
2	2nd contribution	2	0:00				
a	Meaning of 'repent'	2	0:00	24	1	21	242
b	Baptism as start of process	2	1:06	24	10	33	265
c	Repentance, mistakes, & learning as we go	2	2:19	24	1	21	242
d	God's promise of eternal forgiveness & support	2	2:58	24	10	14	234
End of contribution		2	3:30				
3	3rd contribution	3	0:00	24	10	33	265
End of contribution		3	0:27				
4	4th contribution	4	0:00				
a	Ordinary tap water	4	0:00	24	10	33	265
b	Prayer of consecration explained	4	0:31	22	10	38	222
c	Digression on meaning of 'font'	4	0:51	4	9	15	
d	Where baptismal gowns come from	4	1:07	24	10	33	265
End of contribution		4	2:16				
5	5th contribution	5	0:00				
a	The symbol introduced	5	0:00	24	10	33	265
b	The symbol explained	5	0:27	51	8	53	
c	The symbol appled	5	0:45				
(i)	Light in the deepest, dark places of our lives	5	0:45	24	1	38	234
(ii)	If ever we're lost, Jesus will show us the way out	5	1:44	24	1	26	234
d	Ways of finding out: a personal testimony	5	2:17	24	1	26	248
e	Reassurance, faith, encouragement: baptism as a spark of hope	5	3:16	24	10	33	265
f	The ultimate spark of hope	5	3:57	24	10	14	234
End of contribution		5	4:20				

Skeleton of sermon no. 27   *Title:*   **Resurrection hope in a world of turmoil**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Introductory	0:00				

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a Christian-Muslim seminar in Qatar at height of Iraq war	0:00	20	11	14	206
b Peace has to be worked for	0:44	33	6	35	
c The peace of God filled with resurrection hope	0:53	24	10	14	231
2 Biblical examples	1:46				
a Zephaniah's prophecy	1:46	22	5	35	224
b Story of Joseph	2:00	22	1	38	222
c Resurrection hope anticipated in Abraham	2:53	22	6	38	222
3 Archaeological visit to Golan Heights	3:32				
a Warnings about mines	3:32	24	5	35	281
b Beauties of nature	4:15	57	8	55	
4 Qatar seminar: the book of nature in the 2 faiths	4:46	20	11	14	213
5 Absoslute trust in the Creator	5:14				
a Glory of the spring flowers	5:14	24	8	55	213
b A world in turmoil	5:22				
(i) The world of Jesus' day	5:22	32	6	35	
(ii) Jesus caught up in it	6:00	24	5	34	232
(iii) The world today: innocent people caught in the turmoil	6:22	32	6	35	
(iv) Great Britian	6:35	33	5	25	
(v) No end to tragedy of human race	6:45	31	6	35	
c Potentially creative labour pains	7:04	24	10	14	234
6 Conclusion	7:36				
a Sowing the seeds of peace	7:36	24	6	17	241
b Nurturing signs of respect for diversity	7:47	24	4	17	241
c Resurrection hope	8:08	24	10	14	234
End of sermon	8:21				

Skeleton of sermon no. 28   *Title:*   **God beyond all names**

Section Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Naming God	1	0:00				
a Choosing a baby's name	1	0:00	86	2	82	
b God beyond all names	1	0:26	24	10	14	231
c Mother Julian names God	1	1:39	24	10	14	231
End of comment	1	1:58				
2 Struggling with God	2	0:00				
a Jacob at river Jabok (Genesis 32)	2	0:00	22	10	14	222
b Introduction to Nicola Slee's poetry	2	0:26	22	10	78	223
End of comment	2	0:36				
3 God as Father & Mother	3	0:00				
a Effects of paternal abuse	3	0:00	24	2	81	231
b Jesus' teaching of God as Father	3	0:25	24	2	81	226
c Mother Julian's view of God as Mother	3	0:39	24	10	14	231
End of comment	3	1:00				
4 Syrian Odes of Solomon	4	0:00				
a Introduction to Odes	4	0:00				
(i) Uncomfortably androgynous images of God	4	0:00	24	10	33	231
(ii) Incarnation & the Virigin Mary	4	0:58	24	10	14	232
End of comment	4	1:24				

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
5 Gospel reading	5 0:00				
a Law of impurity overturned	5 0:00	24	10	34	226
b Rules of exclusion today	5 2:08	33	5	36	
c God's love known only through renaming in creation	5 2:48	24	10	14	226
End of comment	5 3:12				

Skeleton of sermon no. 29   *Title:*   **Decisive moments**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	0:00				
a The text (2 versions)	0:00	24	10	78	226
b Christmas & Epiphany over	0:31	24	10	33	263
c Party's over & tidied away	0:56	86	2	82	
d Decisive moment	1:33	47	1	22	
2 The Lectionary Gospel: Mark 1.4-11	2:17				
a John's clarion call to repentance & baptism	2:17	24	1	22	226
b Moment of decision for Jesus	3:11				
(i) 30 quiet years in Nazareth	3:11	24	2	80	232
(ii) Suddenly the decisive moment comes	4:03	24	1	22	226
c Meaning of baptism to sinless Jesus	5:24				
(i) Identification with sinners	5:24	24	10	14	232
(ii) Empowering Spirit & authenticating voice	6:44	24	10	14	226
(iii) Comparison of Matthew & Mark's accounts	7:22	24	10	78	226
d Moment of decision for Jesus: reprise	8:15	24	10	37	252
3 Decisive moments for all: the meaning of baptism	9:16				
a Same empowering Spirit	9:16	24	10	14	265
b Identification with children of God	10:04	24	10	31	265
c Gift of God signifying acceptance into worldwide family	11:03	24	10	31	265
d Quotation on baptism from Methodist Worship Book	12:01	24	10	33	287
e Baptism & identification: reprise	13:19	24	10	37	252
4 Identifications in life	13:44				
a Football	13:44	92	4	92	
b School	14:24	34	4	37	
c Regiment	14:47	33	5	35	
d Nation	15:02	33	5	31	
5 Babies	15:47				
a Disruptive of household routine	15:47	86	2	86	
b But thrill when babies are baptised	16:21	24	10	33	265
6 Time comes for our response, as it did for Christ	17:22	24	1	23	242
7 Prayer of commitment	19:06	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	19:44				

Skeleton of sermon no. 30   *Title:*   **Harvest thanksgiving**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 A new beginning	1 0:00				
a Rainbow: responsive introduction	1 0:00	24	10	33	264
b In the beginning God	1 0:22	22	10	78	222
End of contribution	1 1:50				
2 Sowing	2 0:00				

Theme		Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a Harvest thanksgiving	2	0:00	24	8	63	263
b All are in the sowing business	2	0:26	46	4	25	
c Sowing the Gospel: Jesus teaches in parables	2	1:06	24	10	37	226
End of contribution	2	2:20				
3 Growing	3	0:00				
a Age of results	3	0:00	65	3	45	
b Farmers know better	3	0:32	54	3	63	
c Jesus' parable	3	1:37	24	10	14	231
End of contribution	3	2:14				
4 Ruth I. a refugee at harvest	4	0:00	22	1	38	222
End of contribution	4	0:33				
5 Ruth II. The harvest this world needs	5	0:00	24	6	31	241
End of contribution	5	1:10				
6 Whole of life as thanksgiving	6	0:00	24	10	33	263
End of contribution	6	1:21				

Skeleton of sermon no. 31   *Title:*   **A day that shook the world**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Festival with 2 names	0:00				
a Introduction	0:00	24	10	33	263
b 'Pentecost'	0:41	22	11	33	296
c 'Whit Sunday'	3:23	24	10	33	265
d Resume	3:44	24	10	33	263
2 The first Christian Pentecost	3:59				
a Introductory	3:59	24	10	38	226
b Story of 2 encounters before meetings	4:15	24	10	38	267
c Strange phenomena: hard to understand	7:17	24	10	78	226
d Dramatic experience of God's power	10:29				
(i) 3 effects on the disciples	10:29	24	10	38	226
(ii) Wider awareness of mission	11:31	24	10	37	266
(iii) New spirit of comradeship	13:08	24	10	36	261
(iv) Heightened awareness of power	14:38	24	1	26	234
e An ecumenical service for Pentecost in Reading	17:03	24	10	38	247
f Summary of section	18:35	24	10	31	242
End of sermon	19:05				

Skeleton of sermon no. 32   *Title:*   **Jesus welcomes the humble and the burdened**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Invitation to the overburdened	0:00	24	10	14	226
2 Varieties of burden	1:38				
a Introductory	1:38	44	1	24	
b Sinful human nature	2:06	24	10	14	233
c Work pressures	2:45	61	3	41	
d Everyday life	3:47	44	1	24	
e Death & bereavement	4:22	53	2	57	
f Tragedies and problems the world over	4:32	31	6	38	
g Guilt	5:29	44	1	24	
3 The Gospel offer	6:08				

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a	2nd reading: Spirit of God living in us	6:08	24	10	14	227
b	The yoke of Christ is the cross	6:57	24	10	14	232
c	Spirit constantly at work in us	8:53	24	10	14	234
4	How we come to Jesus	9:50	24	1	23	242
5	The promise of relief	11:53	24	1	20	234
End of sermon		13:30				

Skeleton of sermon no. 33   *Title:*   **A bishop's job, God's law, judgment, & forgiveness**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Introduction	0:00				
a	The setting: St. Joseph's Church	0:00	24	10	38	282
b	The sermon: two topics	0:28	24	10	37	252
2	The job of a bishop	0:54				
a	Introduction to diocese	0:54	24	10	38	282
b	To encourage: my first task	1:41	24	10	36	253
c	To teach: symbolism of the bishop's mitre	2:32	24	10	78	220
d	To shepherd: the bishop's crozier	5:07	24	10	36	253
e	Summary of section	6:43	24	10	37	252
3	The Lectionary readings	7:07				
a	Introductory	7:07	24	10	78	220
b	Exodus 20.1-17	7:28				
(i)	Primary education	7:28				
(1)	Rules at school	7:28	36	4	34	
(2)	Rules at home	7:51	86	2	82	
(ii)	Commandments 1-4	8:32	22	1	23	222
(iii)	Commandments 5-10	10:20	22	4	34	222
c	John 2.13-25	11:22				
(i)	Jesus angry with the temple traders	11:22	24	10	25	226
(ii)	A tough faith	12:22	24	10	17	241
4	Forgiveness: the real secret of our faith	14:07	24	4	25	248
5	Summary	16:19	24	10	37	252
End of sermon		16:41				

Skeleton of sermon no. 34   *Title:*   **Mission from a small village church**

Section	Theme		Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Part 1:	1	0:00				
a	Introduction	1	0:00				
(i)	To preacher	1	0:00	24	10	34	286
(ii)	To theme	1	0:39	24	10	37	252
b	Worship and the community	1	2:07				
(i)	Gift to God on behalf of the community	1	2:07	24	10	33	264
(ii)	Sacramental church	1	2:52	24	10	38	263
(iii)	Claiming region for God	1	3:55	24	10	14	261
(iv)	An offering back to the community	1	4:21	24	10	33	264
End of section		1	4:32				
2	Part 2: What kind of a community is Stock Green?	2	0:00				
a	Introductory	2	0:00				

Section Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
(i) Lystra (v.21-23): Paul & Barnabas return	4	13:13	24	10	35	226
(ii) Comment I: need for association with other	4	13:35	24	10	35	266
(iii) Stock Green: present and past associating	4	13:56	24	10	35	286
(iv) Comment II: best answers to the mission question	4	14:45	24	10	35	266
h Remaining true to the faith	4	15:01				
(i) Lystra (v.22): a difficult statement	4	15:01	24	1	38	226
(ii) Comment: faithfulness takes precedence over	4	15:27	24	1	21	242
(iii) Stock Green: closure and reopening	4	15:56	24	10	38	263
i Villages breed good leaders	4	16:23				
(i) Lystra (Acts 16.1-3): Timothy came from Lystra	4	16:23	24	10	32	226
(ii) Comment: more opportunities to take place in community life	4	17:10	35	4	37	
(iii) Stock Green & Atch Lench: notable leaders in history of the chapels	4	17:25	24	10	32	254
End of contribution	4	17:54				
5 What kind of a church?	5	0:00				
a Introductory: a commitment from the wider church	5	0:00	24	10	36	286
b Contemporary & relevant: being real about what real world is like now	5	0:48	24	4	31	264
c Community-focussed: church takes up space - also social space	5	2:29	24	4	31	261
d Example of Swanwick Baptist Church & the local press	5	2:52	24	9	7	286
e Caring & inclusive: response to hidden needs, loneliness, exclusion	5	3:28	24	4	36	266
f Creative: doing things it never thought of before	5	3:59	24	10	37	266
g Clusters important	5	4:25	24	10	36	286
h All the time carry a big vision: all things caught up in Christ	5	4:31	24	10	14	236
End of contribution	5	5:10				

Skeleton of sermon no. 35   *Title:*   **The pearl of great price**

Section Theme	*Position*	*Faith-aware*	*Survey*	*Neutral*	*Dewey*
1 Introductory	0:00				
a A belated welcome	0:00	24	10	33	264
b Fantastic summer of sport	0:13				
(i) World Cup & Wimbledon	0:13	92	6	92	
(ii) Commonwealth Games in Manchester	0:46	91	6	91	
c Lessons about the Kingdom	1:49	24	1	21	242
2 1st reading: Solomon's choice	2:30	22	1	21	222
3 Today's Gospel	3:38				
a Overview: heaven is priceless	3:38				
(i) The greatest treasure of them all	3:38	24	10	14	226
(ii) From the beginning some have shed own blood to attain Kingdom	4:20	24	1	21	242
b Hidden treasure: found by accident	4:39	24	4	35	226
c The pearl of great price: a search rewarded	5:22	24	1	21	226
d The cost: selling all that they had	5:54	24	10	78	226
4 Pearls & the Gospel	7:00				
a Where are pearls generally found?	7:00	65	3	45	

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
b Their origin in nature	7:26	54	8	58	
c The Gospel in earthen vessels	8:10	24	1	21	234
5 The pearl Christ gave everything for	9:17	24	10	14	232
6 Conclusion	9:47	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	9:58				

Skeleton of sermon no. 36   *Title:* **Faith I: Faith in Jesus**

Section Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction to Bible reading	1	0:00				
a Romans 3.21-31	1	0:00	24	10	78	227
b Many lives transformed by the Epistle to the Romans	1	0:32	24	1	26	270
c Paul's purpose in writing the letter to the Romans	1	1:28	24	10	78	227
End of comment	1	2:00				
2 Introduction to series	2	0:00	24	1	27	252
3 I. Faith in Jesus	2	1:22				
a Faith dangerous in the wrong object	2	1:22	42	1	27	
b Children an example of faith	2	2:56	24	10	14	234
c F.A.I.T.H. the acronym	2	4:40	24	1	23	242
d Romans 3.21-31	2	5:46				
(i) Faith misdirected	2	5:46	24	11	31	227
(ii) Jesus a universal solution to a universal problem	2	8:19	24	10	17	233
(iii) Good news	2	10:05	24	10	14	234
(iv) Grounds for righteousness: no other name but Jesus	2	14:10	24	10	14	232
e Illustration of saving faith: walking on the water (Matthew 14)	2	15:37	24	1	38	226
f Christian faith: that's the kind we need	2	20:16	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	2	20:47				

Skeleton of sermon no. 37   *Title:* **Holy Week Observances**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Holy Week	0:00				
a Palm Sunday to Easter Day	0:00	24	1	23	232
b Services to make an effort to attend	1:20	24	10	33	265
2 Pray today for the state of the world, especially those suffering in Iraq	2:43	24	6	35	242
End of sermon	3:00				

Skeleton of sermon no. 38   *Title:* **The meaning of Pentecost**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introductory - wait & realisation of promise	0:00	24	10	14	226
2 Pentecost & the gift of hearing	1:03				
a Dramatic presentation in Acts	1:03	24	10	78	226
b What we hear	1:24	46	4	25	
3 New life - sudden, unmerited, irresistible	1:42	24	10	78	226
4 Pentecost - moment when gestation ceases and new birth occurs	2:17	24	10	38	270
5 The book & the glove	3:09				
a The illustration introduced	3:09	53	8	57	

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
b The illustration applied I	3:38	24	1	21	233
c The illustration continued	4:18	53	8	57	
d The illustration applied II	4:52	24	1	23	231
6 No one excluded from the Pentecost invitation	5:04	24	10	14	226
7 The woodpecker & the oak	6:00	54	8	58	
8 Pentecost is God's Spirit unleashed	6:20	24	10	14	231
9 The expression of love	7:00				
a The illustration introduced	7:00	38	1	83	
b The illustration applied	7:12	24	1	23	234
10 Summary	7:43				
a Aim of Holy Spirit's visitation	7:43	24	1	23	234
b Open our hearts to God's Spirit	8:00	24	1	21	231
End of sermon	8:20				

Skeleton of sermon no. 39   *Title:*   **People first**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Police constable training	0:00	33	5	34	
2 Jesus the 'pedlar'	1:44	24	10	26	232
3 Old Testament reading: God	2:34	22	10	38	222
4 Epistle	3:58	24	10	14	227
5 Gospel reading: 2 'character sketches'	4:42				
a Crowds pursue Jesus round lake	4:42	24	10	31	226
b Sick brought to Jesus for healing	5:48	24	10	31	226
6 True life in God	7:07	24	1	21	240
End of sermon	8:42				

Skeleton of sermon no. 40 reconciliation   *Title:*   **Taking risks in the search for**

Section Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Jewish, Christian, Muslim responses to 11.9.2001	1	0:00				
a A year ago	1	0:00	24	11	35	264
b Today	1	0:30	31	6	35	
2 Pray for what we want I	1	1:08	22	10	78	223
End of contribution	1	1:34				
3 Pray for what we want II	2	0:00	45	1	21	
4 An eye for an eye I	2	0:21				
a Questioning & interpretaton	2	0:21	22	10	17	222
b Jesus' reinterpretation	2	1:01	24	10	17	226
End of contribution	2	1:18				
5 An eye for an eye II	3	0:00				
a Exegesis of Matthew 5.38-41	3	0:00	24	10	31	226
b The myth of redemptive violence	3	2:28	17	9	17	
c Jesus taught a 3rd way	3	2:45	24	10	17	241
End of contribution	3	3:02				
6 Conclusion	4	0:00				
a Commitment to be together against violence	4	0:00	20	11	35	200
b Challenge of living with diversity	4	0:14	20	11	35	200
c Blake's sense of universal God	4	0:27	20	9	11	211
End of contribution	4	0:48				

Skeleton of sermon no. 41 *Title:* **Demonstrating what we believe**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Actions as the tests of sincerity	0:00				
a	1st reading: a terrible choice	0:00	22	1	23	229
b	Showing the depth of our connections with people	0:35				
(i)	Introductory	0:35	38	4	85	
(ii)	Good times	0:51	38	4	85	
(iii)	Bad times	1:22	38	4	85	
(iv)	Failing the test	2:20	38	4	85	
2	November: a month to remember the dead	2:48				
a	Consider the depth of our connections	2:48	24	2	81	234
b	A sad month for some	3:24	24	4	25	242
c	13th century Muslim prayer: life as a prison	4:11	25	11	14	218
d	The God who wants to take us home	4:54	24	10	14	234
3	Our true home: a prayer	5:16	24	1	23	242
	End of sermon	5:39				

Skeleton of sermon no. 42 *Title:* **Racial Justice**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Personal identity & social divisions	0:00				
a	Self-description without superiority	0:00	47	1	20	
b	Christian view of equality & difference	2:17	24	10	14	233
c	Factors for division	3:07	31	6	35	
d	Religion as 'obscene' form of separation	3:40				
(i)	Introduction	3:40	20	11	33	201
(ii)	Jewish example	4:52	22	11	33	296
(iii)	Christian example	5:03	24	10	33	289
e	'Habiru': biblical term for the 'outsider'	5:43	22	9	15	221
2	Love the stranger	6:30				
a	Emphasis in Hebrew Bible	6:30	22	4	17	221
b	Jonathan Sacks' views on Palestinian conflict	7:44	33	5	35	
c	Comment on 1st reading (Deuteronomy): cf. Ezekiel	8:29	22	4	17	222
d	Comment on 2nd reading (Good Samaritan)	9:51	24	4	17	226
e	A hard lesson to learn	10:55				
(i)	Illustration from work in Kenya	10:55	37	4	36	
(ii)	The real learning difficulties - our leaders and us	11:47	31	6	35	
(iii)	A dog's reaction to a strange character	13:47	54	8	58	
(iv)	Called to welcome the stranger	16:05	24	4	17	241
f	A sermon from the internet on 11.9.2002	16:47	17	4	17	
g	A sermon from Tarrant on TV advertisements	18:49	7	4	17	
	End of sermon	21:10				

Skeleton of sermon no. 43 *Title:* **The last will be first and the first will be last**

Section	Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1	Introductory	0:00	24	10	33	264
2	Parable of the vineyard workers	0:30				

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a Rugby club incident	0:30	46	4	25	
b Urgency of the harvest setting	1:56	24	3	41	226
c Source criticism	2:58	24	10	78	226
d 3 contexts of meaning	4:56				
(i) Jesus' circle of followers	4:56				
(1) Don't make it difficult for later adherents	4:56	24	10	37	226
(2) Parallel from a previous church	5:53	24	1	25	264
(ii) Matthew's Jewish readers	6:31	24	10	21	226
(iii) Today's congregation	7:37	24	1	22	226
End of sermon	10:52				

Skeleton of sermon no. 44 *Title:* **Standing Firm when the Foundations Crumble**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Introduction	1 0:00	24	10	37	252
2 Where is Britain going?	1 0:39				
a Britain today: differing views	1 0:39	33	5	31	
b Biblical view (Jeremiah 30, Revelation 13.7): at end of time all nations subject to Antichrist	1 3:30	20	10	14	220
c Britain's past Christian achievements	1 4:15	24	6	31	274
d Present reality	1 4:46				
(i) 'New humanist' takeover I	1 4:46	20	5	31	220
(ii) Characteristics of 'new humanism'	1 5:25	28	9	10	
(iii) 'New humanist' takeover II	1 7:27	33	5	31	
(iv) Institutions of resistance in disarray	1 9:20				
(1) Monarchy	1 9:20	33	5	32	
(2) The Christian church	1 10:22	24	10	31	250
3 Resistance to 'new humanism' in U.S.A.	1 12:15	24	5	32	264
4 Islam (False start)	1 14:17	24	10	37	252
5 What can I do?	1 14:33				
a Introductory	1 14:33	24	10	37	252
b Visit www.christian.org.uk	1 15:01	33	5	32	
c Example protest on Bill on homosexuality	1 16:31	33	5	31	
d Society for Protection of Unborn Child	1 17:27	33	5	31	
6 Digression on Islam	1 18:16	25	5	31	297
7 'New humanism' in the E.U.	1 18:43				
a Regionalisation: disintegration of nation state	1 18:43	32	5	32	
b Civic symbolism of E.U.	1 20:25	32	7	75	
c Restrictions on civic liberties	1 22:54	33	5	34	
d Religious dimensions: restrictions on absolutist claims	1 23:31				
(i) Jesus as the only way to God	1 23:31	24	5	32	234
(ii) Marriage as only sexual relation allowed by God	1 24:29	24	5	32	241
(iii) Possibility of restrictions on use of Bible	1 24:54	20	5	32	220
e Centralisation of power in President	1 25:42	32	5	32	
End of main sermon	1 26:30				
8 Summary: expostion of reading	2 0:00				
a The Christian promise	2 0:00	24	10	14	234
b Share the faith now	2 0:35	24	10	37	266
c Stand firm in hope	2 1:21	24	1	23	242

End of supplementary sermon   2   2:45

Skeleton of sermon no. 45   *Title:*   **Endurance in Christian commitment**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Lesson in endurance I	0:00				
a Olympic example	0:00	91	1	91	
b Application	3:02	24	1	21	242
2 Comment on 3rd reading	3:28				
a Letters to the churches	3:28	24	10	78	228
b Philadelphia	5:48	35	4	38	
c Message to Philadelphia church	6:28	24	10	31	242
d Application	7:23	24	1	21	242
3 Lesson in endurance II	8:44				
a Olympic example	8:44	91	1	91	
b Application	9:57	24	1	21	242
4 Lesson in endurance III	10:36				
a Olympic example	10:36	91	1	91	
b Application	12:45	24	1	21	242
5 Lesson in endurance IV	13:35				
a Olympic example	13:35	91	5	91	
b Application	13:50	24	1	21	242
6 Comment on 2nd reading	14:14	24	10	14	226
7 Lesson in prayer	16:10				
a Korean War example	16:10	67	3	47	
b Application	17:30	24	10	14	234
8 Lesson in bearing fruit	18:04	72	4	37	
9 Summary of sermon	22:00	24	1	21	242
End of sermon	22:30				

Skeleton of sermon no. 46   *Title:*   **Right priorities**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 2nd reading: Paul's spirituality	0:00	24	1	23	227
2 Gospel: parable of the wedding feast	0:51	24	4	22	226
3 Too busy for Christian fellowship	2:04	24	1	22	248
4 Priorities in everyday lives	3:30	47	1	22	
5 Pray for Paul's spirituality	3:59	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	4:20				

Skeleton of sermon no. 47   *Title:*   **The risen Christ**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 The Green Mile	0:00	72	5	34	
2 The events of Passion Week	5:20	24	10	38	232
3 The events of Easter morning (John 20.1-18)	7:22	24	10	38	226
4 Resurrection faith & resurrection appearances (I Corinthians 15.1-11)	12:38	24	10	14	227
5 What we celebrate at Easter	14:21	24	10	33	263
6 Christ's risen presence in our lives	14:37				

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a Finding him in busy-ness of life once Easter is over can be hard	14:37	24	1	23	248
b Stones distributed as symbols of our doubts: need to push them away	15:41	24	1	24	248
c Get rid of stones during next hymn or at later time	16:59	24	1	23	242
d 'Dn not cling to me': I am not to be found in the past	17:42	24	10	26	232
End of sermon	18:36				

Skeleton of sermon no. 48 *Title:* **Abraham to Moses: the last episode**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 What the story has denied us	0:00				
a No heroes	0:00	22	1	21	222
b No pattern for living	2:16	22	4	17	222
c No happy ending	3:24	22	10	78	222
2 What we're given instead	3:44				
a Saints, not heroes	3:44	22	1	23	222
b 'Navigation', not a code	5:37	17	9	17	
c Unbearable pathos of ending	7:07	22	1	26	222
3 2 reasons for the dissatisfying ending	7:40				
a Introduction	7:40	22	10	78	222
b Lesson about holiness & faith	8:06				
(i) Illustration from Isaac Newton	8:06	51	8	53	
(ii) Challenge re our parents	8:59	88	2	88	
(iii) Can't assess ourselves	10:38	47	1	26	
(iv) Moses a giant in retrospect	10:53	22	1	26	222
(v) True piety	11:17	24	1	23	242
c To generate a feeling of responsibility	12:08				
(i) Deliberately leaves us in the air	12:08	22	1	21	222
(ii) No pure and perfect faith	13:13	22	5	25	222
(iii) Protection against self-righteousness	13:38	24	1	21	241
(iv) Shameful episodes of church history	14:06	24	10	38	270
4 Summary: the pastoral motivation of the story	14:26				
a Entertainment with a purpose	14:26	22	1	21	222
b Shows us an absurdly patient God	15:16	22	10	14	222
c Leaves us hanging in the air	16:02	22	1	21	222
End of sermon	16:42				

Skeleton of sermon no. 49 *Title:* **Requiem for All Souls**

Section Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Fear of death in animals	0:00	54	8	58	
2 God's invitation to a better place	2:04	24	10	14	234
3 Gospel reading: Parable of the banquet	3:26				
a Wedding banquet no mere tea-party	3:26	24	10	14	226
b Home truth about good manners to convey serious message to Pharisees	3:56	24	1	22	226
c Theological point: all from God's generosity	4:59	24	10	14	234
4 Death a friend, not a foe	5:32	24	2	81	236
5 The Requiem liturgy for All Souls	6:28				

Theme	Position	Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
a Enriched with music and incense	6:28	24	10	33	265
b Challenge to daily dying	7:28	24	1	23	242
c. To share and to remember	8:15	88	2	88	
d. To recall Christ's death and resurrection	8:30	24	10	14	232
End of sermon	8:55				

Skeleton of sermon no. 50   *Title:* **Two biblical dances & their aftermaths**

Section Theme	Position		Faith-aware	Survey	Neutral	Dewey
1 Comment I: Background to Old Testament reading	1	0:00	22	10	38	222
End of section	1	4:14				
2 Comment II: Background to New Testament reading	2	0:00				
a Death of John the Baptist	2	0:00	70	7	70	
b Reign of Herod Antipas	2	1:17	24	10	38	226
End of section	2	2:43				
3 Sermon proper	3	0:00				
a Introduction	3	0:00	24	7	74	220
b Old Testament reading	3	0:51				
(i) Honouring God: celebration & dissent	3	0:51	22	10	33	222
(ii) Michal as warning I	3	3:36	24	10	33	264
(iii) Michal as warning II	3	4:28	44	1	24	
c New Testament reading	3	4:53				
(i) Herod's rash promise	3	4:53	24	10	32	226
(ii) Incidental comment	3	5:51	35	4	33	
(iii) Herod's regrets & guilt	3	6:54	24	10	32	226
(iv) God's approaches to us	3	8:46	24	1	23	242
End of sermon	3	9:52				

(ii) Sample full structural analysis: sermon 16

Analysis of sermon no. 16 — **Interpreting nature: science and faith**

Service type **Informal** Sermon type **Text anchor**

Section	Theme	Position	Theme analysed as	Survey	Faith-aware	Neutral	Dewey	Function	Rule
1	A geologist's wonder at human birth	0:00	Human birth					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: Plans would fill a house: 'I could almost believe'			8 Survey Science	53 Faith-aware Human sciences	57 Neutral Human sciences			
2	A Psalmist's worship	0:41	Psalms					Evaluative	BIBL
	Summary of section: 'O Lord, how majestic is your name!'			10 Survey Christianity	22 Faith-aware Judaism	78 Neutral Literature	223 Dewey Tanakh Poetry		
3	Iguacu Falls	1:02	Geography: S. America					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: 5 km across: absolutely magnificent			8 Survey Science	57 Faith-aware Environmental sciences	55 Neutral Environmental sciences			
4	Merely another natural phenomenon	1:37	Philosophy of science					Descriptive	ASIS
	Summary of section: Surely science can account for everything in the world			9 Survey Ideas & media	50 Faith-aware Science & technology	50 Neutral Science			
5	The nagging question of Psalm 8	1:58	Psalms					Desc./Eval.	BIBL
	Summary of section: 'What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them?'			10 Survey Christianity	22 Faith-aware Judaism	78 Neutral Literature	223 Dewey Tanakh Poetry		
6	Complexity of universe: various statistics	2:17	Cosmology					Descriptive	ASIS
	Summary of section: Some say size & age necessary for humans to develop			8 Survey Science	51 Faith-aware Physics & cosmology	52 Neutral Astronomy & cosmology			
7	A cosmologist's ponderings	3:07	Human existence					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: 'What is man . . . ? We are truly meant to be here'			9 Survey Ideas & media	11 Faith-aware Metaphysics	11 Neutral Metaphysics			
8	An earth scientist finds evolution miraculous	3:36	Geology					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: E.g. crucial impact of meteorite that killed off the dinosaurs			8 Survey Science	57 Faith-aware Environmental sciences	55 Neutral Environmental sciences			
9	Universe suggests a purpose	4:07	Cosmology					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: Pace Dawkins, increasingly difficult to believe in mere chance			8 Survey Science	51 Faith-aware Physics & cosmology	52 Neutral Astronomy & cosmology			
10	Evil & suffering, yes, but find meaning in Christian belief	4:32	Jesus Christ					Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section: In Jesus God has shared our suffering and offers love & friendship			10 Survey Christianity	24 Faith-aware Christianity	14 Neutral Schools & systems	232 Dewey Jesus Christ		

Section	Theme	Position	Theme analysed as				Function	Rule
11	**Example of an 8-year-old's cleverness**	5:47	**Education**				Illustrative	ASIS
	Summary of section Where is the universe? In God's back garden?		**1** *Survey* Personal	**42** *Faith-aware* Mental	**37** *Neutral* Education & training			
12	**Cosmology raises questions of where & why**	6:46	**Science & religion**				Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section But leaves belief in a designer as a matter of personal taste		**9** *Survey* Ideas & media	**12** *Faith-aware* Epistemology & causation	**12** *Neutral* Epistemology & causation	**215** *Dewey* Science & religion		
13	**Christianity offers promise that Creator values each one of us**	7:28	**Christian salvation & grace**				Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section Shown in life, death, & resurrection of God's Son: but requires faith		**10** *Survey* Christianity	**24** *Faith-aware* Christianity	**14** *Neutral* Schools & systems	**234** *Dewey* Christianity: salvation & grace		
14	**Grandparents marvel at ultrasound images of embryos in the womb**	8:06	**Human birth**				Illustrative	ASIS
	Summary of section Wonder of new life: its detail & potential		**8** *Survey* Science	**53** *Faith-aware* Human sciences	**57** *Neutral* Human sciences			
15	**Creator of universe cares about each human life in the same way**	8:35	**Value of individual**				Desc./Eval.	ASIS
	Summary of section Age of universe less frightening: each new birth more significant		**10** *Survey* Christianity	**24** *Faith-aware* Christianity	**14** *Neutral* Schools & systems	**233** *Dewey* Christianity: humankind		
	End of sermon	9:03						

(iii) Traditional language inventories

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency	Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
Sermon no. 1							
1 God	LI		RES	24 Holy catholic church	LI	1	
7 Saviour	LI	1		27 New birth and life	LI		OCC
12 Providence & intervention	LI		FOC	30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(6), INS, OCC(2)
14 Individual	LI		FOC(3), INS	31 Eternal life	LI	1	
Sermon no. 2							
1 God	LI	1		19 Word of God	CQ		CON(2), FOC(3), INS, REQ
6 Christology	LI		EVI	30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC
Sermon no. 3							
1 God	LI		REQ	24 Holy catholic church	LI		REQ
6 Christology	LI		FOC, REQ	27 New birth and life	LI	1	
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC, REQ	29 Christ beside us	LI		CON, EVI, REQ
13 Historical	LI		INS	30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC, INS, REQ
14 Individual	LI	1		31 Eternal life	LI		CON
21 Love of God	LI	1		45 Resurrection	LI		
Sermon no. 4							
1 God	LI		FOC(3)	25 Salvation	LI		FOC
7 Saviour	LI		FOC(2)	26 Forgiveness of God	LI	1	
14 Individual	LI		EFF, FOC(2), REQ(2)	27 New birth and life	LI		FOC(2)
21 Love of God	LI		EFF, FOC, RES	38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 5							
1 God	CC		CON, FOC, INS, REQ(2)	24 Holy catholic church	LI		ICO
7 Saviour	LI		ATT(3), FOC, REQ	25 Salvation	LI		FOC
13 Historical	LI		FOC	28 Christ within us	LI		EVI(2)
14 Individual	LI		FOC(2)	29 Christ beside us	CC	1	CON, INS
21 Love of God	CC		CON(2), EVI, FOC(3), OCC, REQ	30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC
Sermon no. 6							
1 God	LI	1		9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC
3 Father	LI		FOC	18 Final judgment	LI		FOC
4 Son	LE		FOC, ICO	23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		REQ
5 Eternal Word	LI	1		42 Birth narratives	SP		
7 Saviour	LI	1		48 Other New Testament narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 7							
2 Trinity	LI		FOC	24 Holy catholic church	LI		INS, OCC
3 Father	LI		FOC	25 Salvation	LI		OCC, REQ

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
4 Son	LI		FOC		27 New birth and life	LI		FOC(2), OCC
7 Saviour	LI		FOC(2), OCC		28 Christ within us	LI		OCC
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC		29 Christ beside us	LI		FOC, REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF(3), FOC(3), RES		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(2), OCC
14 Individual	LI		FOC, INS		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
20 Kingdom of God	LI		RES		45 Resurrection	LI		
21 Love of God	LI		ICO					
Sermon no. 8								
3 Father	LI		FOC		16 Sin & the fall	LI		CON, EFF(3), FOC(2), ICO, REQ
4 Son	LI		FOC		17 Reward & punishment by God	LI	1	
5 Eternal Word	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI		REQ
7 Saviour	LI		CON, FOC(7), ICO(2), REQ		21 Love of God	LI		CON(2), EVI, FOC(2), ICO, REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC(3), REQ		25 Salvation	LI		FOC(4), OCC(2), REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		27 New birth and life	LI		ICO(2)
11 Creation	LI		FOC, INS, REQ		42 Birth narratives	LI		
12 Providence & intervention	LI		FOC		45 Resurrection	LI		
14 Individual	RJ		CON					
Sermon no. 9								
4 Son	LI	1			25 Salvation	LI		FOC(2), REQ
6 Christology	LI		FOC(2), REQ		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		CON, REQ
11 Creation	LI		CON, FOC		32 Angels good & evil	LI		RES(2)
17 Reward & punishment by God	LI		FOC		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
21 Love of God	LI		INS, REQ		41 Annunciation	LI		
23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		OCC		48 Other New Testament narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 10								
10 Power & authority of God	LI		FOC		25 Salvation	LI		FOC
13 Historical	LI		INS, REQ		31 Eternal life	LI		FOC
14 Individual	LI		INS, REQ(2)		43 Signs & wonders	LI		
21 Love of God	LI		CON, INS, REQ					
Sermon no. 11								
7 Saviour	LI		FOC, ICO		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC, REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC		42 Birth narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 12								
1 God	LI		CON, FOC, REQ		21 Love of God	LI		FOC
7 Saviour	LI		ATT(3), FOC(2), ICO(2)		24 Holy catholic church	LI		REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		RES		25 Salvation	LI		ICO
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF, FOC		27 New birth and life	LE		FOC(3), INS, REQ
14 Individual	LI		FOC(3), INS(2), REQ		42 Birth narratives	LI		

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
Sermon no. 13								
4 Son	LI		CON		20 Kingdom of God	LI		CON(2), FOC(2), REQ(2), RES
7 Saviour	LI	1			21 Love of God	LI		EFF
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		CON, EVI, FOC(2)		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
Sermon no. 14								
6 Christology	LI		DEF, FOC		24 Holy catholic church	LI		REQ
7 Saviour	LI		CON, FOC		25 Salvation	LI	1	
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC(3)		26 Forgiveness of God	LI	1	FOC
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF		27 New birth and life	LI		FOC(3)
10 Power & authority of God	LI		FOC		28 Christ within us	LI		FOC
12 Providence & intervention	LI		FOC		29 Christ beside us	LI		CON, FOC, REQ
14 Individual	LI		FOC(2), INS(2)		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		CON(2), FOC(7)
15 Law of God	LI		INS		31 Eternal life	LI		CON
18 Final judgment	LI		FOC(2)		37 Noah's flood	LI		
19 Word of God	LI		CON, FOC, INS		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
20 Kingdom of God	LI	1	FOC		45 Resurrection	LI		
21 Love of God	LI		EVI, FOC(2), INS, REQ(2)		48 Other New Testament narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 15								
1 God	LI		CON		20 Kingdom of God	LI		FOC(3), ICO, INS, REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	LI		FOC
10 Power & authority of God	LI		FOC, REQ		24 Holy catholic church	LI		EFF, REQ
13 Historical	LI		CON, FOC		25 Salvation	LI		CON, FOC(2)
16 Sin & the fall	LI		CON, FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC, REQ
Sermon no. 16								
1 God	LI		EVI(2)		12 Providence & intervention	LI	1	
4 Son	LI	1			21 Love of God	LI		EVI, FOC(3), ICO, REQ
5 Eternal Word	LI		EFF		27 New birth and life	LI	1	
6 Christology	LI		FOC		45 Resurrection	LI		
11 Creation	LI		RES					
Sermon no. 17								
1 God	LI		CON		20 Kingdom of God	LI		FOC
4 Son	LI		FOC(2)		21 Love of God	LI		FOC
5 Eternal Word	LI		FOC(2)		25 Salvation	LI		CON
6 Christology	LI		FOC		26 Forgiveness of God	LI		FOC(2)
7 Saviour	LI		FOC(5)		27 New birth and life	LI		REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC(3)		29 Christ beside us	LI		ICO, OCC
11 Creation	LI	1	FOC(2)		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(2)
13 Historical	LI		INS		45 Resurrection	LI		
14 Individual	LI		FOC(10), REQ					

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
Sermon no. 18								
3 Father	LI		FOC		15 Law of God	LI		INS
4 Son	LI		FOC		25 Salvation	LI		OCC
5 Eternal Word	LI		CON, FOC		27 New birth and life	LI		OCC(2)
6 Christology	LI	1	CON, ICO		32 Angels good & evil	LI		CON
7 Saviour	LI		OCC		36 Israel out of Egypt	LI		
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		39 Other Tanakh (O.T.) narratives	LE		
13 Historical	LI		INS		44 Transfiguration	LI		
Sermon no. 19								
3 Father	LI	1			27 New birth and life	LI		REQ
7 Saviour	LI		FOC		29 Christ beside us	LI		INS
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		CON		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		44 Transfiguration	LI		
20 Kingdom of God	LI		CON, REQ		45 Resurrection	LI		
Sermon no. 20								
1 God	LI		FOC, ICO(2)		13 Historical	LI		FOC(2)
6 Christology	LI	1			23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		ICO
7 Saviour	LI	1			36 Israel out of Egypt	LI		
Sermon no. 21								
1 God	LI		CON(2), EFF, EVI, FOC, ICO		19 Word of God	LI		FOC, INS(2)
3 Father	LI	1			21 Love of God	LI		REQ
4 Son	LI		EFF, FOC		22 God's chosen people	LI		FOC(2)
7 Saviour	LI	2			23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		FOC
8 Lordship of Christ	LI	1	INS		25 Salvation	LI	2	RES
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF		26 Forgiveness of God	LI	1	
10 Power & authority of God	LI	1	CON(3), EFF(2), EVI(3), FOC, ICO, INS(3), REQ, RES		27 New birth and life	LI	1	
11 Creation	LI		CON(2), EVI		31 Eternal life	LI	2	
12 Providence & intervention	LI	1	CON, FOC		32 Angels good & evil	LI		CON
13 Historical	LI	1	FOC, INS(2)		35 Garden of Eden	LI		
14 Individual	LI		FOC(2), INS(2)		45 Resurrection	LI		
18 Final judgment	LI		FOC					
Sermon no. 22								
1 God	LI		CON(2)		21 Love of God	LI		EVI(2), ICO, REQ
3 Father	LI		FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC
4 Son	LI		FOC		31 Eternal life	SP		SYM
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC(3)					
Sermon no. 23								
13 Historical	LI		INS		21 Love of God	LE		INS, REQ
17 Reward & punishment by God	CQ		FOC, INS(3)		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	REQ

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
Sermon no. 24								
1 God	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI	1	
6 Christology	LI		CON		24 Holy catholic church	LI		INS
7 Saviour	LI		CON		25 Salvation	LI		FOC(2)
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC		41 Annunciation	LI		
14 Individual	LI		FOC(4)					
Sermon no. 25								
1 God	LI		REQ		11 Creation	LI		INS
3 Father	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI	1	
4 Son	LE		FOC		21 Love of God	LI		FOC
7 Saviour	LI	1			47 Pentecost	LI		
9 Holy Spirit	LI	1	EFF(5), FOC					
Sermon no. 26								
1 God	DE	1	ICO		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	
3 Father	LI		FOC		24 Holy catholic church	LI		FOC
4 Son	LI		FOC		26 Forgiveness of God	LI	1	
6 Christology	LI	1			27 New birth and life	LI		ICO
7 Saviour	LI		ICO		29 Christ beside us	LI		ICO
9 Holy Spirit	DE		EFF(2), FOC, OCC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC, ICO
14 Individual	LI		FOC		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
21 Love of God	LI		ICO		36 Israel out of Egypt	LI		
Sermon no. 27								
1 God	LI		FOC		13 Historical	LI		CON(3), FOC(3)
4 Son	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI	1	
11 Creation	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	LI		EVI(3), FOC
12 Providence & intervention	LI		FOC(2)		45 Resurrection	LI		
Sermon no. 28								
1 God	LI		CON(2), ICO		21 Love of God	LI		FOC, ICO, INS
2 Trinity	LI		DEF(2), ICO		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
6 Christology	LI		EFF		41 Annunciation	LI		
11 Creation	LI		FOC		43 Signs & wonders	LI		
Sermon no. 29								
1 God	LI	1			21 Love of God	LI		EVI(2), FOC
2 Trinity	LI		FOC		24 Holy catholic church	LI		EVI
3 Father	LI	1			25 Salvation	LI	1	EVI
4 Son	LI	1			27 New birth and life	LI		ICO, REQ
7 Saviour	LI		EVI		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		CON(3), REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC(3)		31 Eternal life	LE		FOC
9 Holy Spirit	LI		CON, EFF(2), FOC, REQ		42 Birth narratives	CQ		
14 Individual	LI		FOC		43 Signs & wonders	LI		
16 Sin & the fall	LI		INS		45 Resurrection	LI		
Sermon no. 30								
1 God	LI		CON, ICO		21 Love of God	LI		FOC(3), INS(2),

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
								REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		REQ		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	
10 Power & authority of God	LI		FOC		25 Salvation	LI		ICO, REQ
11 Creation	LI	1	REQ		26 Forgiveness of God	LI		EVI
12 Providence & intervention	LI		FOC, RES		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		REQ
19 Word of God	LI		FOC, REQ		35 Garden of Eden	LI		
20 Kingdom of God	LI	1			37 Noah's flood	LI		
Sermon no. 31								
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF(3), ICO		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(2)
10 Power & authority of God	LI		EFF		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
14 Individual	LI		EFF, FOC		45 Resurrection	LI		
15 Law of God	LI		INS		47 Pentecost	DE		
25 Salvation	LI	1						
Sermon no. 32								
4 Son	LI		CON, FOC		21 Love of God	LI	1	FOC(2)
5 Eternal Word	LI		FOC		27 New birth and life	LI	1	
7 Saviour	LI		FOC(2), REQ		29 Christ beside us	LI		CON
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC(3)		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF(3), FOC(2), OCC, REQ		35 Garden of Eden	LI		
16 Sin & the fall	LI		EFF(2)					
Sermon no. 33								
1 God	LI	1	CON, REQ(3)		25 Salvation	LI		FOC, REQ
6 Christology	LI	1			26 Forgiveness of God	LI		CON, REQ
15 Law of God	LI		INS, REQ(2)		36 Israel out of Egypt	LI		
19 Word of God	LI		FOC, INS(2)					
Sermon no. 34								
1 God	LI		EVI, FOC(2), RES(2)		14 Individual	LI		FOC(3)
5 Eternal Word	LI		EFF		20 Kingdom of God	LI		CON, REQ
6 Christology	LI		FOC		22 God's chosen people	LI		FOC, INS
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		FOC, REQ		24 Holy catholic church	LI		FOC(2)
9 Holy Spirit	LI		CON		25 Salvation	LI		REQ
10 Power & authority of God	LI		FOC		32 Angels good & evil	TP		FOC, SYM
11 Creation	LI		INS		45 Resurrection	LI		
13 Historical	LI		INS		48 Other New Testament narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 35								
7 Saviour	LI	1			20 Kingdom of God	LI		FOC, REQ
14 Individual	LI		FOC(2)		31 Eternal life	LI		CON
19 Word of God	LI		FOC(2)		39 Other Tanakh (O.T.) narratives	LI		
Sermon no. 36								

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
1 God	LI		REQ		20 Kingdom of God	LI		ICO, REQ
4 Son	LI	1	EVI(2)		21 Love of God	LI		EVI
7 Saviour	LI		REQ		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		REQ
11 Creation	LI		FOC		25 Salvation	LI	1	EVI, ICO, REQ, RES
15 Law of God	LI		INS		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		OCC
16 Sin & the fall	LI	1			43 Signs & wonders	LI		
17 Reward & punishment by God	LI		EVI		45 Resurrection	LI		
Sermon no. 37								
7 Saviour	LI	1			31 Eternal life	LI		OCC
13 Historical	LI		INS		45 Resurrection	LI		
27 New birth and life	LI		ICO					
Sermon no. 38								
3 Father	LI		FOC(2), REQ		11 Creation	LI		INS
4 Son	LI		FOC(2)		12 Providence & intervention	LI		ICO
7 Saviour	LI		RES		21 Love of God	LI	1	FOC, REQ
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		REQ		25 Salvation	LI		FOC
9 Holy Spirit	LI		CON, EFF(7), FOC(5), ICO(2)		27 New birth and life	LI		FOC, ICO
10 Power & authority of God	LI	1			47 Pentecost	DE		
Sermon no. 39								
1 God	LI		CON, FOC		21 Love of God	LI		FOC(2)
6 Christology	LI	1			23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	
7 Saviour	LI		REQ		25 Salvation	LI		CON, REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		REQ		26 Forgiveness of God	LI		FOC
12 Providence & intervention	LI		INS(3)		27 New birth and life	LI		FOC, INS
15 Law of God	LI		REQ		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
19 Word of God	LI	1			43 Signs & wonders	LI		
20 Kingdom of God	LI		FOC					
Sermon no. 40								
1 God	LI		CON, FOC		21 Love of God	LI	1	
13 Historical	CQ		FOC(2)		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	
Sermon no. 41								
1 God	LI		FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(4)
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF, FOC(2)		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
14 Individual	LI		INS(5)					
Sermon no. 42								
11 Creation	LI		CON, FOC		21 Love of God	LI		FOC
13 Historical	LI		FOC		22 God's chosen people	LI	1	
15 Law of God	LI		FOC(3)		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
Sermon no. 43								
1 God	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI		INS
3 Father	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	LI		FOC, REQ(2)
4 Son	LI		FOC		23 Israel & the Promised Land	AP		CON
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		24 Holy catholic church	LI	1	
15 Law of God	AP		CON, INS					
Sermon no. 44								
1 God	LI		FOC		23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI		FOC, REQ
7 Saviour	LI		CON		24 Holy catholic church	LI	1	
8 Lordship of Christ	LI		CON		25 Salvation	LI		FOC
13 Historical	LI		INS(2)		26 Forgiveness of God	LI		FOC(2)
14 Individual	LI		FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC
15 Law of God	LI		INS		31 Eternal life	LI		REQ
20 Kingdom of God	LI		FOC		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
21 Love of God	LI		FOC					
Sermon no. 45								
4 Son	LI		EFF		19 Word of God	LI		FOC, INS
9 Holy Spirit	LI		EFF		27 New birth and life	LI		ICO
14 Individual	LI		INS		28 Christ within us	LI	1	
17 Reward & punishment by God	LI		FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(3)
Sermon no. 46								
1 God	LI		REQ		21 Love of God	LI		ICO
14 Individual	LI		FOC		22 God's chosen people	LI		INS
Sermon no. 47								
7 Saviour	LI	1			32 Angels good & evil	LI	1	
21 Love of God	LI		EFF		43 Signs & wonders	LI		
29 Christ beside us	CC	1	CON(3), FOC(2), REQ		45 Resurrection	CC		
Sermon no. 48								
1 God	LI	1	CON, EVI		15 Law of God	LI		INS
3 Father	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	LI	1	
4 Son	LI		FOC		22 God's chosen people	LI	1	
9 Holy Spirit	LI	1			23 Israel & the Promised Land	LI	1	
12 Providence & intervention	LI		EVI		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		FOC(3), OCC, REQ
13 Historical	LI		INS		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	AP		
Sermon no. 49								
1 God	LI		EVI(2)		20 Kingdom of God	LI		REQ
3 Father	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	CC		CON, REQ
4 Son	LI		FOC		27 New birth and life	LI	1	
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		30 Vocation & guidance	LI		ICO

Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency		Theme	Hermeneutic strategy	NUL linkages	Link modes & frequency
10 Power & authority of God	LI		ICO		31 Eternal life	LI	1	
14 Individual	LI		FOC		45 Resurrection	LE		
16 Sin & the fall	LI	1						
Sermon no. 50								
1 God	LI		FOC, REQ, RES		19 Word of God	LI		CON, INS(2)
3 Father	LI		FOC		20 Kingdom of God	LI		REQ
4 Son	LI		FOC		21 Love of God	LI		INS(3), REQ
9 Holy Spirit	LI		FOC		38 Other Pentateuch narratives	LI		
13 Historical	LI		FOC, RES					

Appendix Table 1. Traditional language inventories

(iv) Sample full traditional theme analysis (sermon 38)

Traditional themes and links in sermon no. 38   **The meaning of Pentecost**

Theme   *Hermeneutic strategy*

God the Father   **LI**   'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **0:5**   *Gist* May I speak . . . to the glory of God the Father

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
FOC Focus	**Christian sermon**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training

Position **3:40**   *Gist* God the Father has told us what to do - cf. 3:58 to be his carers for
creation in wisdom & justice

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
FOC Focus	**Environment**	**57** Environmental sciences	**55** Environmental sciences
REQ Requirement	**Justice**	**32** Supranational	**35** Social conflict & cooperation

God the Son   **LI**   'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **0:2**   *Gist* May I speak in the name of the Son . . .

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
FOC Focus	**Christian sermon**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training

Position **3:44**   *Gist* God the Son has given us a perfect example (wisdom & justice) - cf. 4:5

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
FOC Focus	**Christian values**	**46** Interpersonal relations	**21** Character & values

Jesus the Saviour   **LI**   'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **2:55**   *Gist* Commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord & Saviour

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
RES Response	**Christian devotion**	**43** Spiritual	**23** Spiritual

Lordship of Christ   **LI**   'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **4:58**   *Gist* Yielding fully to the Lordship of Christ

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
REQ Requirement	**Christian devotion**	**43** Spiritual	**23** Spiritual

God the Holy Spirit   **LI**   'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **0:3**   *Gist* May I speak . . . in the power of the Holy Spirit . . .

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
FOC Focus	**Christian sermon**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training

Position **0:35**   *Gist* Jesus' promise of an empowering advocate, another like himself, the
Spirit who would guide them into all truth

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
EFF Effect	**Personal action**	**47** Individual in society	**26** Personal action & achievements
EFF Effect	**Understanding**	**42** Mental	**27** Mind

Position **0:53**   *Gist* New life for Church & individuals within the Church, through the
Spirit of God – cf. 2:25, 4:55, 7:18

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
EFF Effect	**Christian life**	**43** Spiritual	**21** Character & values
FOC Focus	**Christian church**	**24** Christianity	**30** Social themes

Position **1:15**   *Gist* Holy Spirit enables common language but also new speech through
which Good News may be heard

Link mode	Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category	Neutral category
EFF Effect	**Language**	**4** Language	**15** Language
FOC Focus	**Christian mission**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training

Theme		Hermeneutic strategy		
Position **3:3**	*Gist*	Only by power of Holy Spirit are we able to live as God's agents of change - cf. 4:13 Without the Spirit the Church is irrelevant		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
EFF	Effect	**Christian mission**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training
FOC	Focus	**Social change**	**32** Supranational	**31** Social: culture & values
FOC	Focus	**Christian church**	**24** Christianity	**30** Social themes

Position **6:48**	*Gist*	As fire the Holy Spirit generates energy & spreads if unhindered by our confusion, lack of commitment, complacency, unconfessed sin, fear, or unbelief		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
CON	Contrast	**Personal failings**	**40** Personal themes	**20** Personal themes
ICO	Illustration	**Fire**	**51** Physics & cosmology	**53** Physics

Position **7:17**	*Gist*	God's Spirit is his kiss		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
ICO	Illustration	**Kiss**	**38** Friends	**83** Family rites & celebrations

Position **8:7-20**	*Gist*	Open hearts to God's Spirit who will fill us with God's love & set our hearts on fire for him		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
EFF	Effect	**Christian commitment**	**46** Interpersonal relations	**21** Character & values
EFF	Effect	**Christian devotion**	**43** Spiritual	**23** Spiritual

Power & authority of God LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **5:43**	*Gist*	Heard disciples speaking about God's deeds of power	**No link**

Creation LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **2:30**	*Gist*	Jesus' followers given God's kiss of life, very much as at creation		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
INS	Instance	**Humankind**	**53** Human sciences	**57** Human sciences

Providence & intervention LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **6:25**	*Gist*	Tongues as of fire as symbols that God's life has invaded human life in ways that shatter all expectations		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
ICO	Illustration	**Fire**	**51** Physics & cosmology	**53** Physics

Love of God LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **1:15**	*Gist*	God's love affair with humanity - cf. 6:36, 7:14	**No link**

Position **7:38**	*Gist*	God longs to fill my heart with his love every day, a love to be shared with others - cf. 8:7		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
FOC	Focus	**Christian devotion**	**43** Spiritual	**23** Spiritual
REQ	Requirement	**Christian mission**	**24** Christianity	**37** Education & training

Christian salvation LI 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **7:58**	*Gist*	Every one who calls on the name of the Lord shall be made whole		

Link mode		*Target of link analysed as*	*Faith-aware category*	*Neutral category*
FOC	Focus	**Humankind**	**53** Human sciences	**57** Human sciences

Theme			Hermeneutic strategy		

New birth and life **LI** 'Literalist' interpretation implied

Position **1:44** *Gist* New life - sudden, unmerited, irresistible: that's the reality: all the stops of the literary organ employed, wind, fire, own tongue, ears unstopped - cf. 4:58, 5:7 no one excluded, 7:46

Link mode		Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category		Neutral category	
FOC	Focus	**Humankind**	**53**	Human sciences	**57**	Human sciences
ICO	Illustration	**Physical phenomena**	**51**	Physics & cosmology	**53**	Physics

Pentecost **DE** La différance emphasised

Position **1:44-2:17** *Gist* Pentecost events beyond human language - cf. 0:47, 1:4, 2:30-2:55, 5:17-5:50 (outpouring of God's energy, not inner mystical experience), 6:25

Link mode		Target of link analysed as	Faith-aware category		Neutral category	
CON	Contrast	**Language**	**4**	Language	**15**	Language
CON	Contrast	**Mystical experience**	**43**	Spiritual	**23**	Spiritual

(v) Instructions for using CD-Rom C Thesis workbench

(1) **Contents of CD-Rom C Thesis workbench:**
   a. **Thesis.doc - A machine-navigable and searchable version of this thesis in Microsoft Office Word 2003 format. A Rich Text Format version of the thesis, Thesis.rtf, is an alternative for use if Thesis.doc is not accessible.**
   b. **Thesis workbench.mdb – A Microsoft ACCESS 2002-2003 database holding the 'secondary data' for the project and a handful of routines for studying them.**
   c. **CD-Rom memo.doc – A copy in Microsoft Office Word 2003 format of the instructions contained in this subsection (Appendix E(v)).**

(2) **Loading the CD-Rom. CD-Rom C Thesis workbench requires a WINDOWS-compatible computer with CD-Rom drive.**

(3) **Items (a) and (c) can be opened for reading, printing, and studying *via* Microsoft Office WORD 2003.**

(4) **Item (b) Thesis workbench.mdb requires to be run under Microsoft ACCESS 2002-2003 or a later version. To open it from Windows Explorer or similar file managing program double-click on the Microsoft ACCESS filename. The database is also called Thesis workbench.**

(5) **Contents of Microsoft ACCESS 2003 database named Thesis workbench:**
   a. **Tables. Tables containing the 'secondary data' for the project, and also the data about churches, visits,**
   b. **Reports. Two reporting routines, Sermon skeleton (selected) and Trad ref links (Selected sermon), which allow full structural analyses (see sample in Appendix E(ii) above) and full traditional theme analyses (see sample in Appendix E(iv) above) to be produced for any of the 50 sermons.**
   c. **Queries. Three supporting routines for the above Report facilities, but which can be run independently, if required.**

(6) **Detailed instructions for running the Reports:**
   a. **Select Reports from the left hand menu. Reports available:**
   b. **Double-click on Sermon skeleton (selected) and choose a sermon (numbers between 1 and 50) for a full analysis (which can be viewed on screen or printed on a suitable printer).**
   c. **Double-click on Trad ref links (Selected sermon) and choose a sermon (between 1 and 50) for a full inventory of traditional language references and links (which can be viewed on screen or printed on a suitable printer).**

(7) **Select Tables from the left hand menu. Double-click on a Table name to view the data it contains (*n.b.* Data may not always be presented in the same format as in the body of the thesis).**

(8) **Select Queries from the left hand menu. Double-click on a name to run the Query (*n.b.* Data may not always be presented in the same format as in the body of the thesis).**

F. Selected findings

(i) Listing of major non-Christian subjects (with Neutral code and section summaries)

Subject for analysis	Theme of section	Summary of section	Sermon	Function	Length
3 Encyclopedic					
General knowledge	An easy quiz	History, geography, zoology, monarchy, technology	14	Introductory	1:12
7 Media, publishing					
TV	2 TV adverts	Rolos & Terry's	22	Introductory	1:15
10 Philosophy					
New humanism	Characteristics of 'new humanism'	Relativism & liberalism in religion & values: Britain's past history derided for hypocrisy &	44	Core	2:02
17 Ethics					
Ethical systems	'Navigation', not a code	A code quickly becomes oppressive, exclusive	48	Core	1:30
Ethics	A sermon from the internet on 11.9.2002	'Do something good to someone you know - or even for a complete stranger'	42	Core	2:02
'Tarrant on TV' / Ethics	A sermon from Tarrant on TV advertisements	Two boys who started talking across the divide of conflict: a parable for our world	42	Core	2:21
20 Personal themes					
Social identity	Self-description without superiority	White, English, male, Liberal Protestant Christian, Essex man	42	Core	2:17
25 Personal conflict & cooperation					
Interpersonal relations	Human sense of fair play	Baffles scientists & economists: fairness at different stages of life	19	Introductory	1:02
Social interaction	Rugby club incident	The last in this case will remain last!	43	Introductory	1:26
26 Action & achievements					
Life history	The tramp, the battleship, and the ceremonial	From Gibraltar to homelessness: there but for the grace of God . . .	14	Illustrative	1:25
27 Mind					
Faith	Faith dangerous in the wrong object	'People who don't believe in God . . . believe in anything'	36	Core	1:34
30 Social themes					
The local community	Congregational contributions	No real centre, isolated, wealth & poverty, commuters, friendly community	34	Core	1:58
The local community	Facts & figures from the census, etc.	Local government, population, religion, occupations, households, health, crime, etc.	34	Core	2:46
31 Social: culture & values					
British culture	'New humanist' takeover	Entrenchment in education, media, law & order, social services	44	Core	1:53
British culture	Britain today: differing views	Christian revival (Wale Babatunde) or Islamisation (David Pawson)? Committed Muslims)(lukewarm Christians	44	Core	2:51
Lystra Culture & institutions	Social geography of Lystra: 'city', but small, agricultural community	Tradtional religion & superstition, but touched with new spiritual movements	34	Core	1:07
32 Politics & decision-making					
Monarchy	Monarchy	In disarray, need of prayer - cf. Prince Charles as 'defender of faith'	44	Core	1:02
Political action	Visit www.christian.org.uk	Materials available for letter-writing campaings	44	Core	1:30
Political organisation	Regionalisation: disintegration of nation state	Power down to regions, but also up to Brussels	44	Core	1:42
Political process	Something badly wrong with the world	As shown by politicians & BBC having public row while Iraq suffers: makes a stronger case for Christianity than many Christians realise	15	Core	1:09

Subject for analysis	Theme of section	Summary of section	Sermon	Function	Length
33 Ceremonies & practices					
Charity auctions	Incidental comment	Modern charity auctions	50	Core	1:03
Culture & institutions	Who directs community spirit?	E.g. Harvington's family event for the Baptist Association 'Walk & talk' involved whole village	34	Core	1:01
Political ceremonial	State visit of President Bush	Trappings of royalty in evidence	13	Core	1:17
34 Law & administration					
Cinema / Penal system	The Green Mile	Summary of the film	47	Illustrative	5:20
Public administration	Police constable training	Definitions to be learned by heart, e.g. pedlar	39	Illustrative	1:44
35 Social conflict & cooperation					
Community relations	The real learning difficulties - our leaders and us	Backlash (global) after 11.9.2001 shows our difficulty in learning to live with those who are	42	Core	2:00
Middle East conflicts	Israeli-Palestinian dispute critical to the peace of the world	'The road to Baghdad has to go through Jerusalem' (Bishop of Jerusalem)	18	Core	1:04
Middle East conflicts	'War is not the answer' (Archbishops of Canterbury & Westminster)	Let's pull our troops back & try a different way: could transfigure the international community	18	Core	1:26
36 Welfare & support					
Culture & institutions	Ambiguous relationship - identity & awkwardness: how to turn it to use?	E.g. minister asked to say grace at weddings	34	Core	1:00
37 Education & training					
Cinema / Education	Lesson in bearing fruit	Mr Holland's Opus	45	Illustrative	3:56
38 Physical environment & events					
Local needs	Needs of the community	Hidden poverty, loneliness, stress (locals & incomers), shortage of youth facilities	34	Core	1:52
Street children	Meeting with street kids in Brazil	UNO, gang rape, crime, prostitution	14	Core	1:24
Worcestershire	Assets of the Worcestershire	A reason to feel 'blessed'	23	Core	1:01
World affairs	International scene	11.9.2001, Iraq, N. Ireland, Middle East	15	Introductory	1:08
41 Work					
Working conditions	Work pressures	Over 90% affected	32	Core	1:02
44 Standard of living					
Standard of living	How can we . . . , when they . . . ? The hardness of our hearts	Poverty not primarily about the poor: our style of life founded on sand	14	Core	1:26
World poverty	Global statistics: the real news in heaven	Child dies of malnutrition every 2 seconds: are we more precious to God than each of them?	14	Core	1:02
47 Transport					
Emergency transport in Korea	Korean War example	Transport for orphans	45	Core	1:20
Seafaring	One candle power	Story from Ginn Inn, Blackpool	12	Illustrative	1:27
58 Other life sciences					
Dogs & strangers	A dog's reaction to a strange character	Incident in Cannon Hill Park - the ambivalence of suspicion of strangers	42	Illustrative	2:18

Subject for analysis	Theme of section	Summary of section	Sermon	Function	Length
Monkeys	Capuchin monkeys: new research	Report into their sense of fair play	19	Illustrative	1:37
Wasps	Fear of death in animals	An illustration from wasps	49	Illustrative	2:04
60 Technology					
Cookery to D.I.Y.	Our experience of creating is different	Human creators most critical of own work: examples from cookery and D.I.Y.	21	Illustrative	1:14
63 Agriculture					
Plant growth	Farmers know better	Sometimes we have to wait - cf. geranium cuttings in autumn	30	Core	1:05
70 The arts					
John the Baptist in art	Death of John the Baptist	Story captured imagination of artists, authors, producers - and composers	50	Core	1:17
72 Drama					
Drama	Parable of the theatre from St. John of the Cross	Wealth & poverty are only masks: night comes, mask & costumes are laid aside, all appear as they truly are	14	Illustrative	1:05
75 Architecture & design					
Civic art	Civic symbolism of E.U.	E.g. E.U. flag & Mary Queen of Heaven, Council of Europe statue in Rome & Revelation, Strasbourg Parliament & Brueghel's Tower of Babel	44	Core	2:29
81 Friends & family: relationships & values					
Personal relationships	No limits in love, but has its boundaries	Not indulging whims or dogooders encouraging dependence, but supporting towards self-sufficiency (within our human interdependence)	22	Core	1:30
88 Friends & family: environment & events					
Relations with parents	Challenge re our parents	Need to appreciate their worth in time	48	Core	1:39
91 Athletics					
Athletics	Commonwealth Games in Manchester	Will Paula Radcliffe win her first gold? Makes all the pain & hard work worth while	35	Illustrative	1:03
Athletics	Olympic example	One man's 1968 marathon	45	Illustrative	3:02
Athletics	Olympic example	1992 marathon qualifier	45	Illustrative	1:13
Athletics	Olympic example	Winning gold in 1996 gymnastics	45	Illustrative	2:09

(ii) Listing of 'non-implicit' strategies by theme and sermon

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
Theme				
1 God				
	5	CC	**2 0:0-40**	**'Be ye sure that the Lord he is God': but sometimes doubts in world where wealth & image are important & where there's violence & anxiety about war - cf. 3:0:50 As we take plunge of commitment, we discover buoyancy of God's presence, 7 1:16**
			6 2:57	Mark of true discipleship to follow Christ not only when God feels close, but when he seems remote
			6 1:25	Sometimes encounter God when least expect it, e.g. Christian kindness met while backpacking in America
	26	DE	**1 0:25**	**Will never understand everything there is to know about God stuff - cf. 1 0:45, 5:0, 50, 6:26**
			1 4:42	God works too just like a computer
4 Son				
	6	LE	**3:18-58**	**Gospels writers use stories to proclaim that Jesus is indeed the Son of God - cf. 0:0 In the name of . . . the Son, 0:20, 2:10,58, 7:57**
	25	LE	**9:17**	**In the name of . . . the Son, . . .**
9 Holy Spirit				
	26	DE	**1 1:54**	**Somewhere in process of baptism & growth (keep your eyes open to see when) God will send his Holy Spirit - hard to explain**
			1 4:5	Baptising them in the name of . . . the Holy Spirit
			1 2:2	Holy Spirit works inside us to help us to understand God stuff, & when we're kind to each other - cf. 1 2:30
13 Historical				
	40	CQ	1 0:14	In aftermath of 11.9.2001, we came together to pray for peace: this year world situation even more difficult
			1 1:28	**Most difficult verse in Bible: Psalm asks for God's blessing on slaughter of Babylonian children**
14 Individual				
	8	RJ	**5:10**	**God in control of actions & thoughts of humans - rejected)(free will**
15 Law of God				
	43	AP	**7:34**	**Law of Moses replaced by law of God's love**
17 Reward & punishment by God				
	23	CQ	3:3	Giving brings great spiritual blessings, many friends, etc.
			2:24	If give generously, will be blessed by God
			2:46	**Doubts whether Prosperity Gospel shows how God works**
19 Word of God				
	2	CQ	**4:5**	**All Scripture is dependent on interpretation - cf. 1:45 Jesus saying approach to Scripture can be too orthodox, too hidebound to see truth it contains, 4:45 its tensions, ambiguities, even contradictions**
			2:45-3:45	Biblical standards of behaviour which tower above change, e.g. love thy neighbour)(changing attitudes to slavery & usury
			1:54	The truth & revelation which the Scriptures contain

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
			2:5	All Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness

21 Love of God

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	5	CC	3 3:30	Confirmed in summer & feel have gained an inner friend - God, unlike human friends, who won't reject me but respect my decision not to engage in drugs & sex - cf. 6 1:7 Familiar experience to millions of Christians down ages
			1 1:3	God does not give up on us, however much we may doubt him
			4 1:47	**Any tragic event (e.g. Princess Di's death or starving African children) challenges faith: where is God in it all? - cf. 6 0:12, 1:16**
	23	LE	4:20	Give thanks to God for countryside around
			3:35	**Give generously to God because God gives generously to us - cf. 0:0, 1:9**
	49	CC	**6:10**	**View of God as love threatened by tragic deaths in family**
			2:40	God's generous invitation - cf. 3:42, 5:20

23 Israel & the Promised Land

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	43	AP	**7:5**	**No such thing any more as chosen race: old physical Israel has become new spiritual Israel**

27 New birth and life

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	12	LE	4 1:35-2:44	**Free gifts of loving Lord: love, peace, faith, grace, prayer, what to say, power divine - to let my little light shine: nothing soppy if taken seriously, our leaders could do to hear them**
			4 2:52	Gift of power - weak until we let God get hold of us, when our weakness & sinfulness become means of strength - cf.4 5:15
			4 3:51	Allow Jesus to build us into people who understand his lovingkindness, mercy, compassion & live those gifts

29 Christ beside us

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	5	CC	6 0:0	**Have just sung 'Christ is here', but Stephen Oake's murder only 4 days ago**
			6 1:25	Encounter Christ unexpectedly in acts of Christian kindness
			6 2:5	Cringed when helpful Christian couple started talking about Jesus as though he was their friend
	47	CC	14:50	**Sometimes hard to see the risen Christ present with us in busy-ness and rush of our lives - cf. 15:50-16:30 Doubts, greed, pride, state of lives, state of world**
			18:8-30	Jesus to be found in the present & the future: I can always surprise you with my living presence
			16:33	**Need to persevere in faith in order to look for Christ in our lives & in the world - cf. 17:38**

31 Eternal life

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	22	SP	12:20	**Ultimately our joy can be complete, whatever difficulties on the way - what Jesus meant by 'eternal life'**
	29	LE	10:34	**Church knows no bounds, not even death**

32 Angels good & evil

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	34	TP	4 12:15	**We have an enemy - angel of light or roaring lion - seeking to destroy purposes of God's kingdom - some may not use that language but prefer 'Life's like that'**

38 Other Pentateuch narratives

	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
	48	AP	2:0	God's call to Moses - cf. 10:59
			11:43	Moses on Sinai talking to God - cf. 3:15, 11:43
			1:14	**Abraham thought God was telling him to sacrifice Isaac**

	Theme			
	Sermon	Strategy	Position	Reference summary
39 Other Tanakh (O.T.) narratives				
	18	LE	**0:20-35**	Rapture of Elijah
42 Birth narratives				
	6	SP	**7:31-57**	**See through Christmas stories to the theological truth that Jesus Christ is Son of God - cf. 1:14-35, 3:18-58**
	29	CQ	**2:38**	**Rather sentimental scenes not found in Mark)(real world where men & women aruge, quarrel, steal, kill, lie, the world where sin is rife**
45 Resurrection				
	47	CC	7:45-8:2	Death was not the end - cf. 11:18-12:40, 13:18-14:3, 15:0-30
			16:2-55	**Need to persevere in faith & push 'stones' away that try to prove Jesus is not risen**
			14:12-46	Risen Lord Jesus - what we celebrate at Easter
	49	LE	8:35	Resurrection the fact on which our faith is built
47 Pentecost				
	31	DE	**8:51**	**Luke struggles to describe, uses similes (noise like a wind, what looked like tongues of fire) - cf. 3:14 strange phenomena, 7:25 confusion re event, 9:35 phenomena that are really indescribable**
			0:22 & passim	**Pentecost a day that shook the world - cf. esp. 8:28 repercussions still being felt today, 10:20 not important to visualise events but changed direction of disciples' lives**
	38	DE	**1:44-2:17**	**Pentecost events beyond human language - cf. 0:47, 1:4, 2:30-2:55, 5:17-50 (outpouring of God's energy, not inner mystical experience), 6:25**

Appendix Table 2. Non-implicit strategies with summaries of references

(N.b. Reference details crucial to the strategy classification are shown in bold type.)

(iii) Sample exegeses of contextual indicators

1) Sermon 5 Pt.3 3:30 Love of God

One of several contributors to the multi-part sermon 5 gave us this glimpse into a teenager's life:

> If you go to a party and a small group of your closest friends are doing drugs, and they ask you to join them, what are you going to do? Are you going to say 'No' and walk away from your closest friends, or are going to succumb to the pressure? This is a huge decision for a young teenager, who maybe isn't really sure of the dangers and the possible consequences of drugs, and therefore is likely to give in. The same goes for casual sex. If your decision is to walk away and your friends reject you for it, then maybe they shouldn't be your friends anyway.
>
>   I was confirmed in the summer & now I feel I've gained an inner friend within myself – a friend who wouldn't reject me for walking away, but who would respect my decision, a friend who wouldn't consider me as being boring or a loser, a friend who considers me to have a good reputation. This friend is God.

Subsequently the main speaker referred back to this passage at Pt.6 1:7.

> And for many people God is to be recognised in the friend that one of our students, Michael, spoke of earlier. It's a familiar experience for millions of Christians down the ages.

The initial, perfunctory hermeneutic filter (see subsection 1.C(vii) p.29) readily equated the references to divine friendship in these passages to the theme Love of God on the select list of traditional teminology. But what does the love or friendship of God mean in this context? That is more problematic and open to individual interpretation. But the four indicators set out in Appendix Table 3 below were identified from the context as crucial to an answer.

Link mode	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Faith-aware code
CON	Human friends	81	38
OCC	Christian sacraments	33	24
FOC	Sex and drugs	28	41
EVI	Christian experience	23	43

Appendix Table 3. Example (1): Contextual indicators identified.

These indicators relate respectively to peer pressure, a religious 'rite of passage', questionable trends in leisure activities, and a commonly attested spiritual experience that provides a satisfactory resolution to the problem.

So far, hopefully, 'literalist' and 'radical' understandings of the passages will agree. I hpe too that they will agree on a number of inferences that may be drawn from the passages. The FOC Focal link connects divine friendship in this context explicitly, though not necessarily exclusively of course, to a morality of abstinence and individualism: it is here in some sense conditional on adherence to this code. The OCC Occasion link also ties the idea to church ceremonies. The CON Contrast link, setting God as a friend but an 'inner friend' over against human friends, suggests an implicit DE *La différance* emphasised hermeneutic strategy: friends in the normal sense are external 'others'. The EVI Evidence link gives the concept of divine friendship a basis in Christian experience present and past: but for all the weight of witnesses appealed to, such testimony is subjective and falls well short of proof of the ontological reality it claims.

'The friend is God', however, rings with what Derrida would call an 'ontological vehemence', which presumably 'literalists' will welcome. There is certainly a rhetorical vehemence about it, and in the powerful evocation presented here of a teenager's struggle to assert an individual identity in a complex social situation there is perhaps a psychological vehemence also. In fact there seems to be a close paraller with the 'overdetermination' attributed by Dodds to certain Homeric episodes {Dodds, 1951 #77, p.7, 16, 30*f.*- see p.72 above}. The language certainly functions as an expression of a new and assured self-confidence achieved by the speaker. To that extent hermeneutic strategy FP Functional interpretation propounded could be

appropriate, but in the context of sermon 5 CC Credibility as challenge to faith is unavoidable. 'Literalism', however, has its price: the stronger the claim, the greater the gap between evidence and proof.

2) Sermon 12 Pt.4 3:47 Jesus the Saviour

In the course of another mulit-part sermon the Candlemas message is given expression in these words:

> Now, no wonder he urged us to set ourselves close to Jesus, because Jesus is the living stone, the living light.

Four passages in all from this sermon may usefully be grouped together round the theme Jesus the Saviour. Jesus is described as 'the light of the world' at Pt.1 1:47 and as the 'Lord and Messiah' whom Simeon and Anna recognise at Pt.2 0:58. At Pt.4 5:51 comes this sequence redolent of biblical terminology:

> It's good news. It's not something, it's someone. It's Jesus, our light, our life, our way, our truth.

Five contextual indicators to the meaning of Jesus the Saviour may be distilled from this clutch of extracts, as shown in Appendix Table 4 below.

Link mode	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Faith-aware code
ATT	Life	57	53
ICO	Building	62	56
ICO	Light	53	51
ATT	Ethics	17	17
ATT	Truth	11	11

Appendix Table 4. Example (2): Contextual indicators identified.

These five links all have a similar linguistic basis as metaphors predicated of Jesus. The familiar biblical triad of terms, 'way', 'truth', and, life' I have kept together and treated as ATT Attribute Y is of the essence of X. The other two links are more clearly labelled as Imagery (ICO Illustration) by the repeated qualifier 'living'. The distinction, however, is less important than their common function as illuminating the sense in context of the concept of the Saviourhood of Jesus.

In this respect they combine to portray a well-rounded salvation that has moral ('way'), intellectual ('truth'), and corporate (taking 'stone' as an architectural metaphor) aspects as well as bringing spiritual 'light' and 'life' (whether understood of this world or eternity) to humanity. But within these broad terms they are more rhetorical than informative. They rest simply on implied contrasts with dysfunctional features of life from which we may well wish to be rescued – insecurity, confusion, disorientation, ignorance, aimlessness. Many other of life's troubles, it may be noted, are absent from this list.

The choice is no doubt heavily influenced by the Candlemas liturgy in which sermon 12 was set. We are confronted with an interlocking network of terms, images, and actions suggestive of the Wittgensteinian concept of a self-contained religious 'language game' (see p.72). But in the liturgical framework a strict Christian filter is at work, omitting and altering many of the implications in the historical Jewish context of Luke's narrative of the presentation in the temple. Simeon's words have a bite to them which is missing from the flickering glow of the real or artificial candles used in the service today.

There seems little here for 'literalists' and 'liberals' to argue over, although 'liberals' may point out that a symbolic interpretation would avoid the category confusion strictly involved in predicating abstract and inanimate concepts of a human individual. Certainly no attempt is made to explain the link between the babe-in-arms in the temple and the salvation on offer, but there is no evading the role attributed to him in the process. Jewish and Muslim reference groups will note that no claim is made at this point to divinity for Jesus, although Jews will no doubt regret the reinterpretation of the concept of Messiahhood and its attribution to Jesus.

3) Sermon 29 17:46 Vocation and guidance

A post-Christmas sermon sets the New Year challenge in these terms:

> The time comes when - doesn't it? - when we too realise that we have to respond to
> God's call. The time comes when we must put away the trivia of life, as we put away
> the Christmas cards and the tinsel. The time comes when we must put away the
> worldly objectives by which we have set so much store, like money-making and status-
> seeking. The time comes when, as heirs to the promises of God in Christ that are
> proclaimed at our baptism.

A little later (18:20) it explained that

> we are being called to be co-heirs with Christ in his kingdom,

adding as reassurance

> If the Church of God is the body of Christ, and its task is to continue his mission, then
> Jesus' initial empowering and encouraging experience in his baptism has implications
> for us all, as we too seek to fulfil our calling in him.

The function of the language of 'call' is illuminated here by 3 CON links and one REQ (see
Appendix Table 5 below). The will of God demands a practical response of Christian
devotion. That and the threefold contrast which the preacher draws with 'worldly objectives'
throw a clearer light on the contextual meaning of the terminology of vocation and guidance.
It does not here refer to a Christian's individual calling in life, but rather sanctions the general
obligation on all Christians to personal commitment and to devotion to serious living and the
purposes and mission of Church and Kingdom.

Link mode	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Faith-aware code
REQ	Christian devotion	23	43
CON	Trivia of family Christmas	83	83
CON	Money	42	62
CON	Social status	31	47

Appendix Table 5. Example (3): Contextual indicators identified.

The preliminary hermeneutic operated, as stated on p.29, at a very basic and largely verbal level. So the theme Vocation & guidance in the passages in this example means something quite different from passages where an individual's call or vocation is under discussion. This example is not alone in the sample. Of the 22 references treated under the theme Vocation & guidance and their associated 60 contextual indicators, 14 references and 24 indicators represent this general 'call' of the Christian gospel.

If the analogy of Jesus' baptism invoked at 19:02 is pressed, the preacher may have in mind a conception of the call of God that comes to the individual at conversion or initial commitment. But that is not stated explicitly. And in any case, the content of such a call is no more than general Christian evangelistic preaching. To add the reference to God's call here is to raise the rhetorical level and increase the moral authority of the lesson being taught. At the same time it tends to harden divisions between Christians and others, whether religiously or secularly inclined. Again, we may conclude that that is a function of the terminology in context, even if its meaning is not thereby exhausted.

4) Sermon 40 Pt.4 12:15 Angels good & evil
The reference in sermon 34 to the theme Angels good & evil, from which I quoted in subsection 4.D(i) above (p.120), reads in fuller context:

It's always been the case. There are those who don't what the kingdom of God is about. We have an enemy who walks around, sometimes dressed as an angel of light,

sometimes like a roaring lion, whose object is to destroy the purposes of God's kingdom.

You might not use that kind of language: it might just be that you know that life is like that. Just when the sun is shining and all seems clear, a bird poohs on you!

Two contextual indicators seem relevant here (see Appendix Table 6 below), one a rare SYM link.

Link mode	Link analysed as	Neutral code	Faith-aware code
FOC	Christian mission	37	24
SYM	Circumstances of life	38	35

Appendix Table 6. Example (4): Contextual indicators identified.

The first, the FOC Focal link, sets the reference to the devil firmly in the arena of Christian mission, the work of the Kingdom. The second link is classified SYM in keeping with the strategy class TP Translation proposed assigned to the reference In offering two quite different but apparently equally acceptable ways of expressing the situation the preacher cannot be credited with a 'literalist' interpretation of the terminology. In fact this passage is a revealing example of the hermeneutic problem. It spells out with unusual boldness the relativity of meaning to context, and it accurately observes the different linguistic preferences which different individuals or groups of individuals within the Christian church often have.

This is a 'liberal's' hermeneutic. But before 'literalist', 'secularist', and interfaith communities reject it out of hand, let me stress that, from what the preacher's words clearly suggest, both formulations are acceptable in his eyes. This is implicit in my identification of the hermeneutic strategy as TP. The claim is that, although the words and grammar are English in both cases, in fact two subsets of the language are in play here, subsets interchangeable by translation. Perhaps they should be called 'religious dialects'.

It is a very bold claim, nonetheless. Speakers of both dialects may rebel against its implications. The Wittgensteinian approach classically denies the commensurability of

'language games' (see p.72 above). To accept the equivalence of 'dialects' like these is to be forced radically to revise one's understanding of both. Failure to accept translatability, on the other hand, cuts one's words fatally off from any real life situation (otherwise why not translate?), and leaves one indeed, to borrow another Wittgensteinian phrase, with 'language gone on holiday' (*cf.* p.25). To recall it to its workaday function is a hermeneutic challenge of considerable significance.

G. Dewey Decimal analysis (200s only)

As indicated in subsection 1.B(i) (see p.6), the Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme retains a foothold in the analysis, but only in a supporting role. Dewey's long-standing Christian bias has, it is true, been recognised and modified in recent editions, but only to the extent that other faith communities now have the option of claiming the position of privilege for themselves. A fully balanced scheme is awaited.

Here, though, the bias is exploited to enable a more detailed analysis to be undertaken, from an internal Christian perspective, of the aspects of the faith represented in these 50 sermons. As applied here, Dewey is irrelevant to either the first or the second working hypothesis underlying this research. But the results are included as a useful appendix to this study of mainstream Christian preaching in contemporary Britain.

(i) Hermeneutic presuppositions

Sermon sections were given a Dewey classification if they fall within the religious range (Dewey 200s: only the 'integer' categories are used – see Appendix Table 7 below): if not, no Dewey coding was given. Comprehensiveness was therefore abandoned, and equally no attempt is made here to complete the suspect hermeneutic of subsection 1.C(vii).

Dewey category		Dewey category		Dewey category	
200	**Religion**	**240**	**Christian observance**	**280**	**Christian denominations & sects**
201	Mythology & social theology	241	Christian ethics	281	Early Christian church

Dewey category		Dewey category		Dewey category	
202	Religious doctrines	242	Christian devotion	282	Roman Catholic Church
203	Worship, rites, etc	243	Personal evangelism	283	Anglican churches
204	Religious life & practice	244	Not assigned	284	Protestants: continental Europe
205	Religious ethics	245	Not assigned	285	Presbyterians Congregationalists, etc.
206	Religious leaders & organisations	246	Art in Christianity	286	Baptist, Adventists, etc.
207	Missions & religious education	247	Church furnishings & articles	287	Methodist & related churches
208	Religious sources	248	Christian life & practice	288	Not assigned
209	Sects & movements	249	Family Christianity	289	Other Christian denominations & sects
210	**Philosophy of religion**	**250**	**Christianity: pastoral & orders**	**290**	**Non-Christian religions**
211	Concepts of God	251	Christian preaching	291	Not assigned
212	God: existence & attributes	252	Christian sermons	292	Greek & Roman religion
213	Religion: creation	253	Pastoral work	293	Germanic religion
214	Theodicy	254	Parish administration	294	Religions of Indic origin
215	Science & religion	255	Christian orders	295	Zoroastrianism
216	Not assigned	256	Not assigned	296	Judaism
217	Not assigned	257	Not assigned	297	Islam
218	Religion: humankind	258	Not assigned	298	Not assigned
219	Not assigned	259	Special pastoral care	299	Other religions
220	**Bible**	**260**	**Christian work & worship**		
221	Tanakh (OT)	261	Christian social theology		
222	Tanakh: History	262	Christian church		
223	Tanakh: Poetry	263	Times & places		
224	Tanakh: Prophecy	264	Christian public worship		
225	New Testament	265	Rites & sacraments		
226	NT: Gospels & Acts	266	Christian missions		
227	NT: Epistles	267	Christian associations		
228	NT: Revelation	268	Religious education		
229	Apocrypha, etc	269	Spiritual renewal		
230	**Christian theology**	**270**	**History of Christianity**		
231	God	271	Religious orders		
232	Jesus Christ	272	Persecutions		
233	Humankind	273	Doctrinal controversies		
234	Salvation & grace	274	Christianity in Europe		
235	Spiritual beings	275	Christianity in Asia		
236	Eschatology	276	Christianity in Africa		
237	Not assigned	277	Christianity in N. America		
238	Christian creeds, etc	278	Christianity in S. America		
239	Christian apologetics	279	Christian history: other areas		

Appendix Table 7. Dewey schema: integer level categories in range 200s Religion

(ii) Dewey results

Appendix Table 8 below presents the overall Dewey results, and (subject to increasingly severe limitations of sample size) six Tables, Appendix Table 9 to Appendix Table 14, supplement these with figures showing differences between preachers on various parameters.

As Appendix Table 8 below shows, the Dewey analysis covers 75.4% of the total sample. The slight difference between this and the 75.6% given for the 20s Religion under the Faith-aware schema is due to two sections on Humanism (Faith-aware category 28 but outside Dewey's religious classes) and three on science & religion (classified 215 under Dewey but 12 Epistemology & causation under Faith-aware).

Range	Range total	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
200-209 Religion	**1.0%**	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%		0.4%		0.1%			
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**1.3%**		0.1%		0.1%	0.7%	0.3%			0.1%	
220-229 Bible	**37.9%**	1.7%	0.6%	7.4%	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	23.2%	2.9%	0.6%	0.1%
230-239 Christian theology	**18.3%**	0.4%	3.0%	4.5%	2.2%	7.4%		0.8%			
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**13.1%**	0.6%	2.7%	7.7%					0.3%	1.9%	
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**5.9%**	0.4%		3.6%	1.5%	0.3%	0.2%				
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**18.8%**	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%	2.2%	3.3%	7.3%	2.4%	0.7%	0.4%	
270-279 History of Christianity	**0.5%**	0.4%				0.1%					
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**1.9%**		0.2%	0.4%	0.1%			0.6%	0.3%		0.4%
290-299 Non-Christian religions	**1.2%**	0.2%						0.8%	0.1%		0.2%
Total length of Dewey sections	8:35:43	**Total length of sermons**			11:24:10		**Dewey sections as percentage of total**			75.4%	

Appendix Table 8. Distribution of time between Dewey categories (200s only)

As the Table above shows, four Dewey ranges dominate. The 220s Bible tops the list at 37.9%. Category 226 *Gospels* and *Acts* accounts for most of this, 222 Tanakh (O.T.) History

(chiefly the Pentateuch) for approximately 1/5, and 227 Epistles less than 1/12. The other biblical categories are all represented, but minimally.

Next most frequent range is the 260s (Christian church). Here Dewey 265 Christian sacraments and 264 Christian public worship generally share almost 3/5 of the range.

The 230s Christian theology comes a very close third. Category 234 Salvation & grace claims 2/5 of this material, and categories 232 Jesus Christ and 231 God a similar amount between them.

These three ranges plus the 240s Christian practice together command 87.9% of the Dewey material. Of the 240s nearly 3/5 is coded 242 Christian devotion. 241 Christian ethics and 248 Christian life & practice claim around 1/5 each.

One further range, the 250s Christianity: pastoral & orders, attracts some attention. Its 5.9% represents 30 minutes 39 seconds over the 50 sermons. The majority of this, however, (category 252) consists of references to the sermons themselves.

The Tables that follow to close this section may be left largely to speak for themselves. Apparent differences may merit further investigation, but until that has taken place, the findings cannot be taken as significant. A few of the most interesting are mentioned below.

Biblical strategy appears from Appendix Table 9 to have some influence on subjects covered. The Lectionary sermons (but not the Expository sermons) spent more time than average on direct Bible discussions, and the Free topic and Text anchor sermons much less. Not surprisingly, the positions are reversed on the other major subject ranges. Expository sermons score well in the 230s and 240s. The two sermons classed as Mixed show the lowest score for theology (230s) and the highest scores for the 250s and 280s, and (along with the Free topic sermons) the 290s.

Range	Range total	Expository	Free topic	Lectionary	Mixed	Text Anchor
200-209 Religion	**1.0%**	3.6%	0.8%			2.4%
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**1.3%**	1.4%	0.6%	1.2%		3.6%
220-229 Bible	**37.9%**	36.7%	10.6%	49.3%	31.2%	19.0%
230-239 Christian theology	**18.3%**	27.2%	19.0%	15.6%	1.3%	26.5%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**13.1%**	18.9%	13.2%	10.7%	13.6%	16.0%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**5.9%**	3.2%	12.3%	4.8%	18.6%	0.8%
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**18.8%**	7.4%	40.5%	14.8%	23.3%	3-
270-279 History of Christianity	**0.5%**	0.9%	0.9%	0.5%		
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**1.9%**	0.7%		1.7%	9.9%	1.3%
290-299 Non-Christian religions	**1.2%**		2.2%	1.4%	2.1%	0.4%
Total length of Dewey sections	**8:35:43**	**2-**	**11.1%**	**51.4%**	**7.9%**	**9.7%**

Appendix Table 9. Dewey ranges by biblical basis

Even less difference is demonstrated in the classification of service types presented in Appendix Table 10. Informal sermons discuss the Bible less and Church matters more than average. Otherwise only the relatively high score for treatments of 290s Non-Christian religions in Formal services and the correspondingly low figure in Eucharistic services seem noteworthy.

Range	Range total	Eucharistic	Formal	Informal
200-209 Religion	**1.0%**	1.1%	1.3%	0.4%
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**1.3%**	1.5%	0.4%	2.0%
220-229 Bible	**37.9%**	42.6%	38.8%	25.7%
230-239 Christian theology	**18.3%**	17.7%	20.7%	16.4%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**13.1%**	12.0%	13.0%	16.0%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**5.9%**	6.1%	6.3%	5.1%
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**18.8%**	16.5%	13.9%	30.4%
270-279 History of Christianity	**0.5%**	0.5%	1.0%	
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**1.9%**	1.7%	1.8%	2.7%

290-299 Non-Christian religions	**1.2%**	0.2%	2.8%	1.3%
Total length of Dewey sections	**8:35:43**	**50.1%**	**28.5%**	**21.4%**

Appendix Table 10. Dewey ranges by service type.

The denominational analysis presented in Appendix Table 11 shows Methodists noticeably light on material classified here in range 220s Bible but lavish with theological discussion: their scores in the 260s and the 280s, taken together, show an average concern with Church matters, but with a rather higher denominational awareness than any of the rest except, perhaps, the Baptists. Otherwise I note only the Baptist interest in the 250s (but most of this falls under category 252 Christian sermons) and the time devoted to the 290s Non-Christian religions in the U.R.C. sermons.

Range	Range total	Anglican	Baptist	Methodist	Roman Catholic	U.R.C.
200-209 Religion	1.0%	0.2%		1.2%	2.7%	2.2%
210-219 Philosophy of religion	1.3%	1.9%	0.9%	2.1%	0.6%	
220-229 Bible	37.9%	43.3%	32.7%	23.5%	36.4%	43.5%
230-239 Christian theology	18.3%	16.3%	22.3%	27.4%	16.2%	14.0%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	13.1%	13.2%	4.8%	16.7%	15.8%	15.7%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	5.9%	3.6%	14.1%	7.7%	6.4%	
260-269 Christian church, etc.	18.8%	20.3%	17.9%	13.7%	19.5%	18.1%
270-279 History of Christianity	0.5%	0.6%	1.8%			
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	1.9%	0.3%	3.7%	6.2%	1.9%	1.2%
290-299 Non-Christian religions	1.2%	0.3%	1.8%	1.4%	0.4%	5.3%
Total length of Dewey sections	8:35:43	40.6%	15.7%	11.5%	21.6%	10.6%

Appendix Table 11. Dewey ranges by denomination.

The 47 sermons for which Preachers' questionnaire data is available form the basis for the three Tables which conclude this section.   There does not seem to be any pattern to the striking variations shown in Appendix Table 12: for instance, secular training and secular jobs seem to be in opposition in at least five of the Dewey ranges. Preachers who have had no secular training or job at all devote much more attention than average to the 250s and 260s, but equally much less to the 220s, 230s, and 240s.

Range	Range total	No secular T or J	Secular job	Secular T & J	Secular training
200-209 Religion	**1.1%**			0.4%	5.2%
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**1.4%**			2.0%	0.9%
220-229 Bible	**39.3%**	26.1%	26.3%	38.5%	60.2%
230-239 Christian theology	**16.8%**	11.0%	23.6%	19.9%	5.9%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**13.7%**	3.5%	16.0%	15.4%	14.0%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**5.4%**	11.5%	2.8%	4.8%	4.5%
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**18.6%**	41.0%	23.7%	16.5%	6.4%
270-279 History of Christianity	**0.5%**		1.9%	0.5%	0.4%
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**2.1%**	4.8%		1.7%	2.4%
290-299 Non-Christian religions	**1.0%**	2.1%	5.6%	0.3%	0.2%
Total length of Dewey sections	**8:05:32**	**12.6%**	**1-**	**60.8%**	**16.6%**

Appendix Table 12. Dewey ranges by Jobs and training
(N.b. 'T' and 'J' in the headings above refer to Training and Jobs respectively)

Differences between male and female preachers are shown in Appendix Table 13 and
Appendix Table 14. As a group the women preachers – but they were very underrepresented
in the sample (see Table 4. 6 above) - scored higher than the men in the 220s and 230s and

Range	Overall totals	Gender	Gender totals	Years preaching					
				0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
200-209 Religion	**1.1%**	**F**	**2.0%**				11.5%		
		M	**1.0%**			3.1%	1.8%		
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**1.4%**	**F**	**1.6%**				9.4%		
		M	**1.4%**	7.4%	1.3%	1.6%		0.9%	
220-229 Bible	**39.3%**	**F**	**51.6%**	56.3%		59.7%	27.8%		
		M	**38.3%**	39.2%	39.4%	48.8%	35.3%	25.2%	33.2%
230-239 Christian theology	**16.8%**	**F**	**27.5%**	26.7%		26.7%	31.5%		
		M	**15.9%**	26.4%	24.8%	5.7%	12.3%	14.1%	12.9%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**13.7%**	**F**	**11.9%**	12.9%		10.2%	8.4%		
		M	**13.9%**	9.3%	15.6%	17.0%	13.1%	8.2%	13.3%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**5.4%**	**F**							
		M	**5.8%**		4.7%	2.1%	10.6%	9.0%	12.0%

Range	Total	Gender	Totals						
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**18.6%**	**F**	**3.3%**	4.1%		3.4%			
		M	**19.9%**	17.7%	12.7%	20.9%	17.8%	34.0%	23.4%
270-279 History of Christianity	**0.5%**	**F**							
		M	**0.6%**		0.8%			1.8%	
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**2.1%**	**F**	**2.0%**				11.3%		
		M	**2.1%**		0.4%	0.8%	7.3%	2.2%	5.2%
290-299 Non-Christian religions	**1.0%**	**F**							
		M	**1.1%**		0.2%		1.8%	4.5%	
Total length of Dewey sections	**8:05:32**	**F**	**0:36:27**	**74.5%**	**-**	**8.0%**	**17.4%**	**-**	**-**
		M	**7:29:05**	**5.0%**	**33.3%**	**24.2%**	**15.0%**	**16.9%**	**5.6%**
Overall percentages		**F**	**7.5%**	**10.3%**	**30.8%**	**23.0%**	**15.2%**	**15.6%**	**5.2%**
		M	**92.5%**						

Appendix Table 13. Dewey ranges by gender and preaching experience

Range	Gender	Totals	Lay preacher	Years ordained					
				0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
200-209 Religion	**F**	**2.0%**				11.5%			
	M	**1.0%**				3.3%	1.4%		
210-219 Philosophy of religion	**F**	**1.6%**				9.4%			
	M	**1.4%**	2.3%		2.4%	1.7%	0.8%		
220-229 Bible	**F**	**51.6%**		56.3%		27.8%	59.7%		
	M	**38.3%**	37.8%	55.7%	35.4%	40.2%	36.3%	17.8%	43.3%
230-239 Christian theology	**F**	**27.5%**		26.7%		31.5%	26.7%		
	M	**15.9%**	12.8%	27.1%	25.5%	9.5%	13.7%	8.0%	11.1%
240-249 Christian practice, etc	**F**	**11.9%**		12.9%		8.4%	10.2%		
	M	**13.9%**	23.7%	6.5%	16.1%	13.6%	13.2%	5.2%	10.4%
250-259 Christianity: pastoral & orders	**F**								
	M	**5.8%**	2.7%	8.1%	2.2%	5.3%	8.5%	9.1%	16.9%
260-269 Christian church, etc.	**F**	**3.3%**		4.1%			3.4%		
	M	**19.9%**	18.8%		17.6%	23.8%	16.9%	52.4%	18.3%
270-279 History of Christianity	**F**								
	M	**0.6%**		1.6%	0.4%	1.3%			
280-289 Christian denominations & sects	**F**	**2.0%**				11.3%			
	M	**2.1%**	1.8%	1.0%		0.8%	7.8%		
290-299 Non-Christian religions	**F**								
	M	**1.1%**			0.4%	0.4%	1.4%	7.5%	
Total length of Dewey sections	**F**	**0:36:27**	**-**	**74.5%**	**-**	**17.4%**	**8.0%**	**-**	**-**
	M	**7:29:05**	**16.0%**	**12.8%**	**18.4%**	**23.1%**	**18.8%**	**8.8%**	**2.1%**
Overall percentages	**F**	**7.5%**	**14.8%**	**17.5%**	**17.0%**	**22.6%**	**18.0%**	**8.1%**	**1.9%**
	M	**92.5%**							

Appendix Table 14. Dewey ranges by gender and ordination

lower in the 260s (with zero coverage in the 250s). The men showed a declining interest in theology, balanced perhaps by greater attention paid to Church affairs (ranges 250s and 260s), after 20 years' experience of preaching and ordination. Too much should not, I suspect, be read into the apparent 'mid-life' surge of interest in denominational affairs by both men and women: in total it represents only 10 minutes of sermon time.

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