Rethinking The Value Of Metaphors In Listener-Sensitive Homiletics

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Introduction

Discourse in a religious setting like Christianity incorporates figurative as well as literal language. Figurative language includes tropes, one of which is metaphor. The research in metaphor has been extensive and vast in disciplines like communication, psychology, philosophy, linguistics, education, and theology. Because metaphor is a critical component in religious discourse and since the sermon is a vital component in the discourse about the relationship between God and the people in the pew, metaphor can be a beneficial study for preaching theorists.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of metaphors in listener-sensitive homiletics. A survey of metaphor theory research from the various social science perspectives and a description of the role of the trope in religious language will provide the context for a consideration of pertinent developments and an appraisal of recent research in the homiletical use of metaphor.

Research in Metaphor Theory

Originally perceived as rhetorical ornaments, metaphors have come to be viewed by social science researchers as integral components in the process of cognition. In other words, metaphors are being viewed as figures of thought, not figures of speech. The formal study of metaphor dates back to Aristotle, who situated it in what came to be referred to as the rhetorical canon of style. Aristotle described metaphor as a borrowed term, a word substituted for another word, or a form of analogy that could be used to intensify the persuasive effect of an argument.[1]

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[1]Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. R. Roberts, vol. 4, *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert M. Hutchins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1952).

Aristotle's theory predominated until the early twentieth century when I. A. Richards introduced the notion that metaphor is not simply a stylistic device, but a critical component in generating meaning in human interaction. According to Richards, metaphor includes primary and secondary terms that interact in a coherent cognitive framework involving tension and resolution. Richards referred to the primary idea as the tenor and the secondary idea as the vehicle. For example, in the expression "life is a game," *life* is the tenor and *game* is the vehicle. Tension is the product of the interaction between tenor and vehicle. The greater the remoteness of the realities framed into tenor and vehicle, the greater the tension.[2]

Max Black reflected Richards's influence in his theory that metaphors involve two different realities that coalesce to form a new meaning. The metaphor is the frame that connects a variety of associated meanings to a focus, which is the principal term. Because of the somewhat dynamic interaction between frame and focus, some metaphors used by the speaker cannot be comprehended fully and completely by the listener.[3]

John Searle went further with his association of metaphor with the speech act theory, postulating that the meaning of a metaphor is always the utterance meaning of the speaker. Relating the literal sentence meaning to the metaphorical utterance meaning is challenging since meaning is conveyed by another semantic context. The listener, therefore, has to make cognitive semantic adjustment.[4]

Similarly, C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Ytyeca dealt with the challenge meaning transferral with their appraisal of metaphoric proportionality. They suggested that the most important metaphors do not arise necessarily from expressions of analogy. Rather, they are presented intentionally to fuse superior terms with inferior terms through a kind of frame and focus relationship. The result is an expression reality that is complete in itself.[5] On the other hand, speakers who lose sight of frame and focus in metaphoric formulations can make the realities they share with the listener sound more like fantasies or even fairy tale.[6]

Opinions about the value of metaphor continued to change with George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theory of metaphor, in which one kind of reality is not just understood, but

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[2]I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), 89-112.

[3]Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1962), 25-47.

[4]John Searle, *Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 111.

[5]C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Ytyeca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 400-1.

[6]Ibid., 404.

is actually experienced in terms of another.[7] Their theory maintains that the fundamental concepts of a group of people can be organized around conceptual metaphors that relate to one another according to a system of coherence. Within this system, metaphors operate through a process involving tenor and vehicle to highlight certain features of a reality that, in turn, have the potential for creating new social realities that guide the actions of the members of the group. As a result, people live by the conceptual metaphors that operate in the interactions within their relationships.

Of course, Lakoff and Johnson proposed an experimental perspective on truth that embraces the potential of metaphor to unite reason and imagination into an imaginative form of rationality that can account for knowing partially what cannot be comprehended completely. This experimental perspective appreciates interaction as a means of understanding, even though it assumes constant negotiation. Within the context of aesthetic experiences, conceptual metaphors generate new realities by involving all the available dimensions of experience, not just by incorporating only conventional ways of cognition.[8]

Social science researchers continue to extend and refine Lakoff and Johnson's theory. In most of the leading theories, a common assumption seems to be evident. Andrew Ortony explained that contemporary metaphor theories assume that cognition is the result of mental construction, not the product of logical positivism. Knowledge of reality, therefore, stems from the interaction with information shared within a particular context by people who have a specific frame of reference.[9] In such an environment, metaphors are considered to be much more than simple figures of speech. Rather, they are dynamic figures of thought that have performative potential for the people involved in the interaction in which they are used. Rhetorically speaking, metaphors belong in the canon of invention instead of the canon of style.

Metaphor in Religious Language

Theory-based research has registered a significant shift in the appraisal of the value of metaphor in communication. Metaphor studies in faith-based settings have reflected a transition as well. These studies seem to share a common awareness that worshiping, thinking about, and talking about God require the use of human language. In order to mediate the distance between God's thoughts and the limitations of human language to convey them, speakers incorporate metaphors in the discourse. How metaphors are incorporated in religious language has been the focus of extensive analysis.

In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas dealt with the mediating role of metaphor in his instruction about proportionality. For him, using metaphoric expressions to describe

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[7]George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

[8]Ibid., 230-6.

[9]Andrew Ortony, "Metaphor, Language, and Thought," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 2d ed., ed. Andrew Ortony (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

the realities pertaining to God is beneficial, even though the descriptions are partial at best. Metaphors must be allowed, he contended, in order for uneducated parishioners to begin to understand the thought of God. A more complete understanding about God would come as they become more capable of grasping more abstract spiritual realities.[10]

In the nineteenth century, metaphors in religious language were still thought to play a mediating role. By the twentieth century, however, the perception began to change. For example, Virgil Aldrich argued that metaphoric language invokes a particular kind of activity that can be perceived as quite literal for the people engaged in worship. Metaphoric language serves as the basis for higher-order religious formulations that identify people with the concepts, perceptions, or realities associated with God. The metaphoric utterances do not simply generate grammatically ordered formulations. They become liturgically patterned acts of the congregation. Some of them may be acted out through singing and speaking, but they may be expressed in other ways as well.[11]

F. W. Dillistone also attempted to relate the effect of metaphoric tension and energy in religious discourse. Borrowing from philosophies of language, he argued that metaphors "shatter in order to widen" the experiences people have with God, disturbing the intellectual equilibrium with words in order to create a new sense of reality.[12] What begins with a metaphor transcends and transforms symbolic activity so a person can worship God in an environment in which distance and togetherness as well as tension and communion can coexist.[13]

Claiming that religious language suffered from literalism and irrelevance, Sallie McFague stressed the value of metaphor in the use of models as organizing principles. A metaphor consists of two active thoughts that exist in permanent tension with each other. The tensive nature of the two thoughts changes them once they come in contact with each other in the metaphoric expression. As a result, the metaphor produces a matrix of thought that allows reality to be extended beyond the immediate connection, re-describing it in an open-ended but structured way.[14] Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell referred to the cognitive

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[10]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. T. Gilby, vol. 1, *Christian Theology* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 4.

[11]Virgil Aldrich, "The Sense of Dogmatic Religious Expression," in "Symposium: Are Cognitive Religious Dogmas Cognitive and Meaningful," *The Journal of Philosophy* 61, no. 5 (March 4, 1954): 147-8.

[12]F. W. Dillistone, *Christianity and Symbolism* (Philadelphia: Princeton University Press, 1955), 28.

[13]Ibid., 29-33.

[14]Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 39-42.

production as an ontological flash, which is a sense of tension before and after new meaning is created by the metaphor.[15]

Aware that the formulation of meaning resides in the relational space between words and that metaphors prompt a change in the field of meaning, researchers have explored metaphors in various types of religious discourse. For example, Carmen Russell examined the rhetorical constructs of Jn. 4:1-42 and noted that the persuasive effect of the narrative resides largely in the use of food and water as metaphors that give shape to a social reality within the minds of the people who hear the story.[16]

The influence of a war metaphor to prompt action was also the focus of Michael Hostetler's research in Christian discourse. Opponents of a war metaphor based their argument of the problem of reconciling its use with other biblical metaphors like peace and love that are equally important. Proponents of the metaphor maintain that the war metaphor permeates biblical literature and reveals truths about God and his relationships with people that transcend time and culture to convey ideas of victory for Christians.[17]

Drawing largely from Black's metaphor theory, Hostetler asserted that a number of subordinated metaphors will be associated with a metaphoric expression. These metaphors give the primary metaphor depth and texture and allow it to be interpreted in a variety of ways. A war metaphor, then, can carry a number of connotations, one of which is to love the enemies of Christianity. In the literal world, war ideally ends in the death of the enemy. In the world of Christians discourse, however, the people who die in war are not the enemies but Christians themselves.[18]

In his analysis of interpersonal praxis in Christian relationships, Ronald Arnett connected narrative and historicality by way of metaphor. Defining praxis as action informed by theory instead of meaningless, repetitive action, he challenged Christians to know their biases as they engage in religious conversation. In his opinion, interpersonal dialogue is the exchange of biases. A particular Christian's narrative of his or her faith is

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[15]Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell, *Metaphoric Process: The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1984), 119-20.

[16]Carmen Russell, "Symbolic Form and the Rhetoric of Belief: An Epistemological Account of John 4:1-42," *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 18, no. 1 (March 1995): 17-8.

[17]Michael Hostetler, "Rethinking the War Metaphor in Religious Rhetoric: Burke, Blake, and Berrigan's 'Glimmer of Light,'" *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 20, no.1 (March 1999): 49-57.

[18]Ibid.

biased by the particular historical moment in which he or she lives. Metaphors link faith and historical moment.[19]

The linking role of metaphor can be diminished when it becomes time-bound. Once outdated, such metaphors cease to function as links and begin to serve only as tools for religious legalism. By necessity, therefore, metaphors must be changed to associate the constant faith narratives with the ever-changing historical moment.[20]

Metaphor in Homiletical Literature

Generally speaking, homileticians have not kept pace with social science researchers in the study of metaphor. This lack of attention is evident in homiletical works concerning sermon illustration, which would seem to be logical sources for instruction regarding metaphors. James D. Robertson identified three books by Dawson Bryan, W. E. Sangster, and Ian Macpherson as key works on illustration.[21] A reading of these books, however, gives little insight on metaphor. Although Bryan recognized that metaphors are powerful, he cautioned preachers not to overuse them.[22] Sangster claimed that figures of speech, including metaphors, are minor forms of illustration.[23] Like Bryan, Macpherson believed the metaphor to be dynamic, more forceful than simile. He referred to both tropes as "condensed parables" and cautioned against using mixed metaphors.[24]

Although the premise for *Design for Preaching* is a metaphor depicting the sermon as a tree, H. Grady Davis wrote little about metaphor. Concerning the power of metaphor, Davis claimed "the best words are metaphors, that is they contain sensory images–though we are so callous to life that we commonly ignore them."[25] Although Davis referred to metaphors as "words," he seemed to possess a homiletical appreciation for the contemporary theory that metaphor is a matter of thought and not language. Davis wrote

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[19]Ronald Arnett, "Interpersonal Praxis: The Interplay of Religious Narrative, Historicality, and Metaphor," *The Journal of Communication Religion* 21, no. 2 (September 1998): 161.

[20]Ibid.

[21]James D. Robertson, "Sermon Illustrations and Use of Resources," *Baker's Dictionary of Practical Theology*, ed. Ralph G. Turnbull (Grand Rapids: Baker Book, 1967), 48.

[22]Dawson Bryan, *The Art of Illustrating Sermons* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1938), 175.

[23]W. E. Sangster, *The Craft of Sermon Illustration* (Brand Rapids: Baker Book, 1973), 26.

[24]Ian Macpherson, *The Art of Illustrating Sermons* (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 48.

[25]H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 272.

that good metaphors "are not images added, extrinsic; they are the fabric of the thought itself."[26]

David Buttrick adopted Lakoff's theory of metaphor. Emphasizing the importance of metaphor in preaching, Buttrick explained that people live their lives in metaphor systems, which he termed as "models made from congruent metaphors."[27] Buttrick's metaphor systems correspond to Lakoff's conceptual metaphors. Buttrick concluded: "The rather frightening fact is that social metaphor systems are not mere rhetorical ornamentation[;] they disclose the models that shape our minds, and set our behavioral patterns with terrifying power. . . . Preachers who wish to transform human lives will have to grasp the sheer power of metaphorical language. With metaphors, we can rename the world for faith."[28] Much of Buttrick's discussions of sermonic metaphors, however, concern types and models rather than metaphors.

In *Imaginative Shock* (1990), Eduard Riegert attempted to show that preaching is a metaphoric process. His work reflected the modern linguistic and interpretational theories that metaphor is a process involving not only words but also sentences and discourse. He believed that metaphor "redescribes reality, and in doing so discloses a world of new possibilities. Its effect is imaginative shock."[29] Rather than encouraging the use of metaphor as literary device in preaching, Riegert emphasized that preachers should become seers and understand the root metaphors of Christianity in order to reclaim the imaginative potential of those metaphors. The preacher is to lay the Scripture text alongside the world of the congregation. Riegert explained: "Our preaching must concentrate on interpreting life theologically, rather than, as our traditional practice has been, drawing on life to illustrate theology."[30]

Warren Wiersbe, instead of encouraging preachers to develop their own metaphors, was more concerned with understanding and communicating the metaphors of the Bible. Wiersbe advised that preachers should use their imagination in discerning what the biblical metaphors meant to the original audience and what they mean to congregations today. He claimed that metaphors build bridges between the listener and the Bible, the listener's past and present, and the listener's mind and heart.[31]

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[26]Ibid., 254-5.

[27]David Buttrick, *Homiletic: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 122.

[28]Ibid., 123.

[29]Eduard Riegert, *Imaginative Shock: Preaching and Metaphor* (Burlington, ON: Trinity, 1990), 10.

[30]Ibid., 128.

[31]Warren Wiersbe, *Preaching & Teaching with Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry* (Wheaton: Victor, 1994), 77-80.

Paul Scott Wilson also emphasized the importance of biblical metaphors, encouraging preachers to use biblical models of metaphor to create their own metaphors to communicate biblical themes. Wilson pointed out four main functions of metaphor in preaching: (1) a point of contact between the biblical world and listener's world, (2) the dominant image of the central idea, (3) stories as extended metaphor, and (4) theological categories of experience.[32] He discussed metaphor within the context of linear and polar thought. Linear thought reflects progression and focuses upon a proposition. In contrast, polar thought reflects digression through comparison, contradiction, or metaphor, with metaphor being the principal form of digression. Wilson advocated a blend of polar and linear thought.[33]

Claiming that metaphor is more than illustration, Richard Lischer encouraged homileticians to interact with contemporary metaphor theory. He believed that many metaphors in sermons today are dead metaphors, metaphors that have become so familiar that they no longer are considered metaphors. Lischer described a master's metaphor as being substitutionary and illustrative. A pupil's metaphor, however, is the only way to express certain theological themes such as forgiveness. Lischer emphasized the need to create new metaphors to communicate biblical truth, writing that "images drawn from the center of human life . . . not only illustrate the divine story but are capable of receiving light from the text."[34]

Research in the Use of Metaphors in Preaching

The review of the study of metaphor in homiletical literature indicates that recent scholars have encouraged homileticians to interact with contemporary metaphor theory. One way to interact would be to investigate the use of metaphors in sermons in light of these contemporary theories. For instance, a recent analysis of selected sermons by Robert G. Lee extends contemporary metaphor theory to homiletics.[35] The focus of the analyses was Lee's intentional use of metaphors in representative judgment and encouragement sermons. Based upon linguist Gerard Steen's suggestions regarding the study of metaphors, the investigation of this nature should consist of a grammatical, conceptual, and

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[32]Paul Scott Wilson, *The Practice of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 246-52.

[33]Ibid., 220, 239-43.

[34]Richard Lischer, "'What Language Shall I Borrow?' The Role of Metaphor in Proclamation," *Dialog* 26 (fall 1987): 287.

[35]Lee was a notable Southern Baptist preacher renowned for his use of figurative language, especially metaphor. He served as the pastor of Belleview Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, for thirty-two years, beginning in 1927. He also served three terms as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. David Larsen claimed that "no one exemplifies the old-time Southern Baptist preacher better than Robert G. Lee." See David L. Larsen, *The Company of the Preachers: A History of Biblical Preaching from the Old Testament to the Modern Era* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 742-3.

communicative analysis of each metaphor.[36] These three types of analyses of each intentional metaphor in this study contributed to a better understanding of metaphor's function in preaching.

Based upon traditional grammatical terminology, the grammatical analysis revealed tendencies regarding the parts of speech and grammatical structures of Lee's metaphorical expressions. According to Lakoff and Johnson, each expression has a target domain and a source domain. For instance, in expressions of the conceptual metaphor *love as a journey, love* is the target domain and *journey* is the source domain. Each source domain has a set of properties that correspond to properties in the target domain. The target domain *love* consists of ideas people have about love, such as the lovers, their relationship, and their goals. The source domain *journey* includes concepts about the journey, such as travelers, the vehicle, and their destination.[37] An example of a metaphorical expression of the *love as a journey* is "Our relationship has hit a dead-end street."[38]

First, the study showed that Lee used nouns as metaphors more than any other part of speech. He tended to use inanimate nouns as sources and abstract nouns as targets, a usage which contributed to the communicative function of energizing thought. Lee also used inanimate noun sources for people targets, resulting in metaphors called anti-personifications. When he used animate sources, the targets were usually people.

Second, the grammatical analysis showed that Lee frequently used verb forms metaphorically. Most of these verbs were in the active voice. They either prolonged noun metaphors or personified abstract targets. For instance, Lee proclaimed, "The wolves and hyenas of hell outside the house were howling against the heavenly visitors inside the house."[39] *Were howling* prolongs the metaphorical expression *wolves and hyenas of hell*, which depicts the mob outside Lot's home.

Third, the grammatical analysis revealed the prevalent structures of Lee's metaphors. Instead of relying upon the simple *A is B* formula, Lee wove various parts of speech into complex patterns of metaphorical expressions. The basic pattern was the *B + qualifier* metaphor, which contributed to the formation of numerous other patterns. The prevalent qualifier was a prepositional phrase whose object named the target. For example, Lee stated, "No Gutenberg, no printing press to widen the blind alley of ignorance into endless

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[36]Gerard Steen, "Metaphor and Discourse: Towards a Linguistic Checklist for Metaphor Analysis," in *Researching and Applying Metaphor*, ed. Lynne Cameron and Graham Low (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 81-104.

[37]George Lakoff, "The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought,* 2d ed., ed. Andrew Ortony (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 203.

[38]Ibid., 206-7.

[39]Robert G. Lee, "Fire Consuming Sodom and Gomorrah," 35.

highways of wisdom."[40] *Ignorance,* the object in a prepositional phrase, is the target of the word the phrase describes: *alley.* Likewise, *wisdom* is the target of *endless highways.* Less frequently, he used other qualifiers to name the target domain or to prolong a noun metaphor. The qualifiers in these metaphorical structures aided in the identification of target domains in the conceptual analysis.

The conceptual analysis of Lee's metaphors was based upon a prominent linguistic theory of metaphor. Lakoff believed that a metaphor is the mapping of correspondences from one domain of thought onto another domain. Examples of these metaphors include *life is a container, love is war, understanding is seeing,* and *ideas are people.* He claimed that conventional conceptual metaphors, the basis for everyday language and thought, provide the structure for novel metaphorical expressions.[41] Lakoff and Turner asserted that novel expressions also could derive from unconventional conceptual metaphors, metaphors whose domains are not paired in everyday language. For instance, they wrote: "We could probably all find some way or other to make sense of 'Death is a banana,' that is, to understand the concept of death in terms of what we know about bananas."[42] Death and bananas do not belong to domains whose correspondences have been conventionalized.

Lee developed novel metaphors from both unconventional and conventional conceptual metaphors. Although he used unconventional metaphors, he seemed to favor conventional ones. His more prevalent conceptual metaphors were *people are plants, people are animals, people are machines, events are transactions, adversity is weather,* and *life is a journey.*

The communicative analysis of the use of metaphors in Lee's judgment and encouragement sermons revealed three main functions of metaphor in his preaching. First, Lee used metaphors to embellish, giving credence to the claim that homileticians traditionally have treated metaphor as mere ornament. Lee drew the ornamental metaphors from unconventional metaphors identified in the conceptual analysis, as in the following:

> Wonderful are the realities of transformation made vivid before us by these words. But these word[s] are just a few trees from the forests of God's truth; just a few gorgeous blossoms from the garden of his promises; just a few drops from the inexhaustible fountain of his wisdom; just a few melodies from his harp of a thousand strings vibrant with the consolations of his grace; just a few cups filled from the ocean of his prophecies; just a few gleams from the starry sky of his mercy; just a few cargoes from the ships anchored in the harbor his love.[43]

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[40]Robert G. Lee, "Christ's Constant Companionship," in *Seven Splendors and Other Messages* (Orlando: Christ for the World, 1974), 101.

[41]Lakoff, "Contemporary Theory," 210.

[42]George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 50.

[43]Robert G. Lee, "Worms and Threshing Instruments," in *Pulpit Pleadings* (Nashville: Broadman, 1948), 115.

In this passage, Lee created seven ornate metaphorical expressions. Viewing words as trees or describing truth as forests does not give a better understanding of words or truth. The combination of these two metaphors communicates one idea: a small quantity. The other six metaphorical expressions have the same effect.

Second, Lee used metaphors to contribute to the aesthetics of the sermon. He achieved this function in a variety of ways. For instance, he used metaphors as motifs and leitmotifs in communicating themes. Lee drew these metaphors from conventional conceptual metaphors, a mapping of correspondences present in everyday language and thought. Unfortunately, his motifs and leitmotifs did not shed light upon theological concepts. Other methods of achieving aesthetics included restatement of ideas through series of metaphors. Lee also used various grammatical structures to contribute to clarity, an aesthetic quality.

Third, Lee energized thought with metaphors. He enlivened the new meaning with vivid metaphorical expressions consisting of concrete sources and active verbs. His concrete sources, especially animals, contributed to energy by prompting the audience to evaluate the target. For example, Lee painted an evaluative picture of Jezebel: "Most of which is bad in all evil women found expression through this painted viper of Israel. . . . She was the beautiful adder coiled upon the throne of the nation."[44] He also described her as "the polluted reservoir from which the streams of his [Ahab's] own iniquity found mighty increase."[45] Lee pictured Abah as "the foul human toad who squatted befoulingly on the throne of the nation."[46] In these metaphorical expressions, the numerous correspondences between two domains of thought involved in conceptual metaphors led to a richness of new meaning. Finally, Lee's metaphors brought the audience's emotions, their experiences, and the biblical text to bear upon their contemporary situation and thoughts.

The aforementioned summary of the analyses accounted for Lee's tendencies in his use of metaphors. Taken together, the analyses extended the theory of metaphor in preaching. First, the analysis showed that a study of metaphors in sermons can contribute to linguistic metaphor theory. For instance, the conceptual analysis led to the recognition of a conceptual metaphor conventionalized by the Christian community: *events are transactions.* Lakoff's theory held that some metaphors can be conventionalized in some sub-communities and not in the larger community. Lakoff, however, did not include *events are transactions* among his examples.

Although Lee formed intentional metaphors from this conceptual metaphor in only one of the sermons studied, he drew from it the controlling metaphor of his most famous sermon, *Pay-Day—Someday.* Throughout this sermon, Lee used the title as a transition device between the movements of the sermon. The metaphor called to mind numerous

[44]Lee, *Pay–Day–Someday*, 3.

[45]Ibid., 10.

[46]Ibid., 4.

correspondences: God as controller of the funds, people as the recipients of the funds, death as wages, eternal life as a reward, and people's lives as financial books.

The study also extended metaphor theory with the analysis of a different genre of metaphors than linguists usually analyze. Everyday language and novel expressions in poetry usually are the focus of linguistic studies. In contrast, the loci of Lee's metaphors are sermons. They are rhetoric artifacts unlike transcripts of dialogue or selections from literature. Sermons reflect an interchange between a preacher and a particular congregation. The preacher initiates the interchange for persuasive effect. In persuading his audience to make life-changing decisions, Lee included in his sermons a variety of novel mappings his listeners would understand. For instance, the path of the *life as a journey* metaphor would correspond to a lifestyle of sin or righteousness, and the destination would be heaven or hell. The Christian community also can understand the mapping of the mind as Satan's incubator in the following expression perhaps using mappings from *people are machines* and *ideas are children*: "But we know enough to say that some of the foulest plots that have been hatched out of Satan's incubator were hatched out of eggs placed therein by women's hands."[47]

Second, the analysis showed that the application of Lakoff's linguistic theory of metaphor to the analysis of sermons can place the traditional homiletical perspectives of metaphor in a different light. For instance, the analysis yielded a better understanding of the ornamental use of metaphor in relation to conceptual metaphors. Lee's ornamental metaphors tended to be based upon unconventional conceptual metaphors. When Lee used these unconventional metaphors that incorporate correspondences uncharacteristic in everyday language, the apparent result was poetic effect rather than persuasive effect. Lee, however, often used these unconventional metaphors in clusters or series, thereby contributing to persuasion through repetition.

The analysis also showed that Lee used conventional conceptual metaphors for communicative functions more significant than embellishment. The study, therefore, extended homiletics in the consideration of metaphor as more than ornament. Homileticians already had identified aspects of these communicative functions. The analysis, however, revealed the manner in which the conceptual nature of metaphors achieved these functions.

For example, homileticians spoke of ways in which metaphor can energize thought. The analysis of Lee's conventional metaphors not only confirmed this function but also demonstrated how the conceptual structuring of metaphors energizes thought. For instance, the mapping of correspondences inherent in conceptual metaphor prompts the audience to map the appropriate correspondences, in effect prompting or stirring the imagination. The analysis also demonstrated how the conceptual nature of metaphor contributes to the creation of new meaning. Conventional conceptual metaphors inspire the audience to interpret a term or situation of one domain by mapping onto it the appropriate correspondences of another domain of experience.

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[47]Ibid., 12.

In addition to extending metaphor theory in homiletics, the analysis revealed the need for future studies in metaphor and its relation to preaching. The methodology needs to be refined at the point of identifying dead and/or conceptual metaphors. The procedure for identifying dead metaphors should allow a metaphor's context in a sermon to be considered in determining the metaphor's status. For instance, the use of a dead metaphor with other metaphoric language enlivens an otherwise dead metaphor. Likewise, further investigation should lead to a clear method of identifying the domains of metaphor targets and sources in order to name the conceptual metaphor.

Finally, the content analysis revealed the need for future study regarding audience analysis and metaphor. Homiletics has been concerned with the effect of linguistic metaphor in rhetoric, not with the interaction of the person and metaphor as in contemporary metaphor theory. One objective of future research, therefore, would be to develop a method of identifying the conceptual metaphors of an audience, those metaphors by which they think and live. With knowledge of these conceptual metaphors, the preacher can work to give listeners new pictures of the great truths of Scripture.