

Ordained Pastors and Lay Preachers in Madagascar. Listeners' Experiences of Differences in Preaching

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses differences in preaching, seen from the perspective of listeners at healing services, between pastors at Sunday services and lay preachers at healing services in the revival movement called *Fifohazana* in Madagascar. The author discusses, above all, the findings in relation to earlier research made on preaching during Sunday services. Directness in communication and emotional appeals are two outstanding features of lay preaching. The author challenges some elements of the preaching in the *Fifohazana* setting but, in spite of issues that need further reflection, this lay preaching contributes to the study of homiletics in Madagascar.

Introduction

There are two strong lines of preaching in the Malagasy Lutheran Church (MLC). One is the type of sermon given at a Sunday service. Sunday services are conducted almost exclusively by ordained pastors and, since the MLC does not ordain women to the ministry, these have been until the present only men. The other takes place during what I call “healing services” in the so-called *Fifohazana*,¹ a revival movement where lay preaching by both women and men flourishes.²

During my fieldwork in Madagascar in November/December 2009 I attended both Sunday services and healing services and, afterwards, interviewed listeners to the preaching in both settings. Several different opinions regarding the preaching in the two settings were voiced, and this stirred my interest further to investigate the subject.

1 *Fifohazana* may be translated as “awakening” or “revival”.

2 The term “lay preachers” here refers to people who have neither been trained at a theological seminary nor ordained as pastors. More information of healing services is given below.