The Art of Preaching according to William Perkins and Petrus Van Mastricht

Thiago Machado Silva

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to examine and compare two preaching manuals, the *Prophetica* by William Perkins and the *Methodus Concionandi* by Petrus van Mastricht. The question that leads this article is: Did Mastricht advance the method of preaching as compared to Perkins? After a brief summary of both works, I will provide six reasons that make Mastricht's method of preaching unique as compared to Perkins.

KEYWORDS

William Perkins; Petrus van Mastricht; Preaching; Homiletics.

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies have shown that the post-Reformation period (second half of the 16th and the 17th centuries) is seen as a period of distortions. It has been claimed that the period of "Reformed Scholasticism" distorted Calvin's pastoral doctrine, returning to medieval Aristotelianism and its theoretical and arid theology. Such interpretations have led scholars to put Calvin against the Calvinists and Richard Muller has provided a bibliography from the 19th century to the present day that argues for the idea of a deviation between Calvin and his successors.[1]

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* Bacharel em Teologia pelo Seminário Presbiteriano do Sul e pela Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie; mestre em Teologia Sistemática (Th.M.) pelo Calvin Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids); doutorando em Teologia Sistemática no Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids); professor de Teologia Sistemática no Seminário Presbiteriano do Sul.

1 MILLER, Richard. "Calvin and the 'Calvinists': Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities Between the Reformation and Orthodoxy." *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995), 345-375. Muller argues

Not only has their theology been criticized, but also their preaching has been charged as academically dry, rationalistic, and theoretical.[2] However, Muller suggests that "it is a distortion of the historical materials to claim that the Reformation sought a dynamic preaching while the later Protestant orthodox forged a rigid system."[3] He goes on to say that

> we need to overcome the stereotype of the orthodox sermon, generated in large part by pietist polemics of the late seventeenth century – that of a dry, dogmatic declaration inattentive to the spiritual needs of a congregation. There are dry, dogmatic sermons preached in every age of the church, some of them by pietists, but the presence of a few ought not to color our judgment of the many. The basic definition of theology as both theoretical and practical led to a balance of doctrine and "use" or application in seventeenth-century sermons. Indeed, scholastic attention to form almost invariably assured the presence of exegetical study, exposition, doctrinal statement, and application in the Reformed orthodox sermon.[4]

This perspective can be evaluated by considering two historical figures: the Puritan William Perkins (1558–1602) and the German-Dutch Reformed Scholastic Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706).[5] Both Perkins and Mastricht

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in his *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* that, "to very little purpose, several recent studies have set 'Calvin against the Calvinists' – as if Calvin were the only source of post-Reformation Reformed theology and as if the theology of the mid-seventeenth century ought for some reason to be measured against and judged by the theology of the mid-sixteenth century. Because the orthodox systems do not mirror Calvin's 1559 *Institutes*, they are labeled "distortions" of the Reformation." MULLER, Richard. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (hereafter cited as *PRRD)*, v.1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 45-46. For the bibliography documented by Richard Muller, see "Calvin and the 'Calvinists', 345-346. See also: KENDALL, R. T. *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649: Studies in Christian History and Thought* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1997); VANCE, Laurence M. *The Other Side of Calvinism* (Pensacola: Vance Publications, 1999); ROLSTON III, Holmes. *John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession* (Richmond: John Knox, 1972); DOWNEY JR., Edward A. *A Commentary on the Confession of 1967 and Introduction to "The Book of Confessions"* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968).

2   See BURNETT, Amy Nelson. "How to Preach a Protestant Sermon: A Comparison of Lutheran and Reformed Homiletics." *Theologische Zeitschrift* 2/63 (2007), 109-119; SELDERHUIS, Herman J. (Ed.), *A Companion to Reformed Orthodoxy* (Leiden: Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, v. 40, 2013); TORRANCE, Thomas F. *Scottish Theology: From John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996); DENLINGER, Aaron Clay (Ed.). *Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland* (Bloomsbury: T&T Clark, 2015).

3   MULLER, *PRRD*, v. 1, 40.

4   Ibid., v. 1, 218.

5   For William Perkins' biography, see BEEKE, Joel R. and YUILLE, Stephen, *William Perkins – Bitesize Biographies* (Durham: Evangelical Press, 2015); see also JINKINS, Michael, "Perkins, William (1558-1602), theologian and Church of England clergyman," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2007), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/ odnb-9780198 614128-e-21973 (accessed 16 Feb. 2019). For Petrus van Mastricht's biography, see NEELE, Adriaan, *Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706): Reformed Method and Piety* (Boston: Brill, 2009); idem, *Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706): Text, Context, and Interpretation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck &

wrote manuals for preaching, and their preaching methods are all but dry, theoretical, and speculative.[6] In fact, the recent attention in scholarship and the publication of Mastricht's *Theoretico-practica theologia* (1699) in English suggest a re-examination of Mastricht's work on preaching in the service of theology, not only in theory but also in practice.[7] The question is, did Mastricht advance the method of preaching as compared to Perkins? We will provide six reasons in order to demonstrate that Mastricht's method of preaching is unique as he advanced the method of preaching compared to Perkins.

1. WILLIAM PERKINS AND PETRUS VAN MASTRICHT ON PREACHING

Scholars have dealt with Perkins and Matricht separately, but no detailed comparison has been made between their methods of preaching, particularly between *Prophetica* and *Methodus Concionandi*.[8] While Mastricht recognizes the importance of Perkins, a summary on the structure and content of both preaching manuals will be provided. Then, a descriptive-analytical section will follow, comparing and contrasting both works, observing issues of continuities and discontinuities, and highlighting the differences and agreements between them.

1.1 A brief summary of Perkins' Prophetica

During his ministry, Perkins and other ministers established a new strategy for Puritanism. They sought to win the multitudes for the Christian faith by returning to the New Testament strategy: preaching, leadership training,

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Ruprecht, 2019); idem, "Life and Work of Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706)," in *Petrus van Mastricht, Theoretical-Practical Theology*, v.1 (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018).

[6] This research used PERKINS, William, *Prophetica, sive de sacra et unica ratione concionandi tractatus* (Cambridge: Johannis Legatt, 1592); Ibid., The Arte of Prophecying, *In: The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, M. William Perkins*, v. 2 (London: Iohn Legatt, 1631); VAN MASTRICHT, Petrus, *De optima concionandi methodo paraleipomena* (Utrecht: Meinardi a Dreunen, 1681); idem, *The Best Method of Preaching*, trans. Todd M. Rester (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013).

[7] See NEELE, Adriaan C., *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 69-105, "Sources of Christian Homiletics."

[8] See: ALAIN, J. C., "William Perkins: Plain Preaching," *Preaching* 11 (1996), 42-45; MCKIM, Donald K., "The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins' Theology," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16, 1 (1985), 503-517; LONG, Jonathan, "William Perkins: Apostle of Practical Divinity," *Churchman* 103, 1 (1989), 53-59; TOULOUSE, Teresa, "The Art of Prophesying: John Cotton and the Rhetoric of Election," *Early American Literature* 19, 3 (1984) 279-299; PATTERSON, W. B., "William Perkins' The Arte of Prophecying: A Literary Manifesto," *in: The Church and Literature* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2012) 170-184; GANE, Erwin W., "The Exegetical Methods of Some Sixteenth-century Puritan Preachers: Hooper, Cartwright, and Perkins," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 19, 1 (1981), 21-36. Only Adriaan Neele dedicated some pages to a brief comparison between Perkins and Mastricht in *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 71-102.

and persuasion. For this reason, Perkins wrote several books to promote this reformation. First and foremost, Perkins worked for a theological renewal by teaching Calvinist theology in treatises on predestination, the order of salvation, assurance of faith, the Apostles' Creed, and the errors of Roman Catholicism.[9] He also worked for ministerial renewal, training a new generation in the art of expository preaching and pastoral counseling. He wrote a manual of preaching titled *The Art of Prophesying*, using the term "prophesying" in the sense of preaching and public prayer. His purpose was to give English preachers a book of homiletics to use in the preparation of their sermons. Finally, he defended the necessity of a moral renewal through manuals of Christian life, writing about the Lord's prayer, Christian worship, Christian vocation, and so forth.[10] The focus of this paper will be on *The Art of Prophesying*.[11]

Perkins devoted the first chapters of his manual on the exposition of Scripture to Scripture itself, including its attributes such as excellence, perfection, purity, eternity, sufficiency, truth, and its power to discern the heart and overcome the conscience. According to the preacher of St. Andrew's church, the Word of God is glorious in its basic message, which is simple to the one who reads it. In Scripture, the Christ prophesied in the Old Testament is the Messiah who comes in the New Testament. Because Scripture is the Word of God, the one who studies it knows that it is the power of God to convert sinners. Perkins asserted the centrality of preaching because he understood that the exposition of Scripture is the ordinary means of salvation. For Perkins, the preaching of the Word has a twofold use: first, "to collect the Church and to accomplish the number of Elect" and second, to drive away "the wolves from the folds of the Lord."[12]

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9   PERKINS, "An Exposition of the Symbol, or the Creed of the Apostles," *in: The Works of William Perkins*, v. 5 (Grand Rapids: RHB, 2017); "Manner and Order of Predestination," and "Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will," *in: The Works of William Perkins*, v. 6 (Grand Rapids, RHB, 2018).

10   PERKINS, "The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Six Principles," and "Exposition of the Lord's Prayer," *in: The Works of William Perkins*, v. 5 (Grand Rapids: RHB, 2017); "A Godly and Learned Exposition Upon the Whole Epistle of Jude," and "A Godly and Learned Exposition Upon the Three First Chapters of the Revelation," *in: The Works of William Perkins*, v. 4 (Grand Rapids: RHB, 2017).

11   Joseph Pipa suggests three reasons why Perkins wrote *The Art of Prophesying*. First, there were just a few qualified preachers in Elizabethan England. Second, there was a lack of theological training in the universities, and there were deficiencies especially in the area of preaching. Third, Perkins wanted to promote a Puritanesque and simple style of preaching against the ornate style of the Anglican Church that did not communicate to the common hearers. The purpose of Perkins' style of sermon was to be simple and plain for the sake of communicating the gospel. See: PIPA, Joseph, "William Perkins and the Development of Puritan Preaching," PhD dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary (1985), 86-88.

12   PERKINS, *Prophetica*, 4, "Dignitati quoq; duplex respondet usus: unus quòd Ecclesiam colligate & numerum elector côpleat; alter, quod lupos arceat à caulis Domini." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 645.

After establishing his view on Holy Scripture, Perkins offers the following steps that are necessary to interpret the Bible correctly. First, one needs to have a general knowledge of all biblical doctrine. If anyone has a clear knowledge of the truth, he will be able to be a faithful interpreter of the Word of God. Second, one needs to read Scripture in sequence, using grammatical, rhetorical, and logical analysis to understand the text. Like Calvin and other reformers, Perkins believed that the text has only one meaning.[13] Third, one needs to make use of commentaries written by orthodox exegetes. Perkins encouraged the reading of the texts of the Church Fathers for the preparation of a sermon. Fourth, one needs to keep a record of what he is reading in "tables or commonplace books" to record the passages read, the main points, and a sketch of what was preached, in order to always have old and new material at hand. Fifth, one cannot forget that all biblical interpretation must be done in prayer because the Holy Spirit is the interpreter of the Word of God, and only the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Word, can open the meaning of the Scriptures to the blind and save sinners, as it is written, "Open mine eyes, that I may see the wonderful things of thy Law" (Psalm 119:18).[14] Perkins has a high view of Holy Scripture and he affirms that "every article and doctrine concerning faith and manners, which is necessary unto salvation, is very plainly delivered in the Scriptures."[15]

After discussing the preparation of the sermon (chapters 1 to 5), Perkins deals with the proclamation of the sermon (chapters 6 to 10). The proclamation of a sermon has two parts: resolution (*Dialysis*) and application (*Applicatio*). Resolution, according to Perkins, "is the unfolding of the passage into its various doctrines, like the untwisting and loosening of a weaver's web."[16] Application "is that, whereby the doctrine rightly collected" from Scripture is applied according to the place, time, and person in the church.[17] Perkins goes

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13   Ibid., 35, "Unicus omnino sensos,idemq; literalis est." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 651.

14   Ibid., 31-33, "I. Corpus Theologie definitionibus, divisionibus, & proprietatum explicationibus descriptum, & mente & memoria diligentèr imprimito. II. Posteà accede ad legédas Scripturas hoc Ordine, adhibita Gramatica, & Rhetorica, & Lógica Analylisi, & reliquarum artium subsidio. III. Pretereà è scriptis orthodoxis non folum novae, sed etiam antiquioris ecclesiae auxilium accersendu est. IV. Inter studendum necessaria quae occurrunt, & observatione digniora sunt adversariis nue locis comunib. recondcnda, ut in promptu femper habeas & vetera & nova. V. Ante haec omnia ardeter oradus est Deus, ut his mediis benedicar, & nobis coecutientib.sensum scripturarum aperiat." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 650-651.

15   Ibid., 48, "Sciendum autem est, omne dogma fidei & morum ad salutem necessariú in Scripturis clarissimè tradi." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 654.

16   Ibid., 89, "Dialysis est, qua locus datus in varias doctrinas, velut tela quedam textoris, resoluitur." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 662.

17   Ibid., 97, "Applicatio est, qua doctrina rectè collecta pro ratione loci, teporis, persona, variè accomodatur." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 664.

on to say that "the foundation of application is, to know whether the place propounded be a sentence of the Law, or of the Gospel. For when the word is preached, there is one operation of the Law, and another of the Gospel."[18] The Law has the power to expose the disease of sin but provides no remedy for it. The Gospel teaches what is to be done but it also has the efficacy of the Holy Ghost joined with it, "by whom being regenerated, we have strength both to believe the Gospel, and to perform those things which it commandeth."[19] Only the Gospel provides the remedy for the disease of sin. Beyond that, Perkins affirms that there are two kinds of application: mental or practical. Mental has to do with the mind and it is either doctrine or reproof, and practical has to do with lifestyle or behavior and involves instruction or correction.[20]

With respect to preaching itself, Perkins affirms that two things are required: "the hiding of human wisdom and the demonstration (or showing) of the Spirit,"[21] as it is found in 1Cor. 2.1-2,5. Perkins closes his manual of preaching writing about prayer, which is also part of the art of prophesying. He deals with the form in which the minister should lead the public prayer in the congregation, and the elements in praying.[22]

Thus, the order and summa of a sermon according to Perkins are: First, "read the Text distinctly out of the Canonical Scriptures."[23] In other words, read carefully the biblical text in a language common to the people. Second, "give the sense and understanding of what is being read, by the Scripture itself,"[24] and take from the text its natural meaning, according to the context. Following this method, the preacher clearly shows to his congregation that the sermon he is preaching comes directly from an exegesis of Scripture. Third, "collect a few and profitable points of doctrine out of the natural sense." [25] After all, doctrine derives from the Bible and it is the summary of the truths found in the

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[18]   Ibid., 97, "Fundamentum applicationis est, fcire an locus datus sit vel Legalis sententia,vel Evangelica. Nam in predicando alia est operado legis, alia Evageli." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 664.

[19]   Ibid., 98, "Evangelium auté sicut docet quid faciendum; ita etiam adjunctam habet efficaciam Spiritus sancti, quo regenerati, uires habemus & credenda Evangelio, & quae jubet praestandi." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 664.

[20]   Cf. ibid., 116-122.

[21]   Ibid., 124, "In Promulgatione duo requirutur: Occultatio humane sapientie, & Demonstratio spiritus." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 670.

[22]   Cf. ibid., 135-136; PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 672-673.

[23]   Ibid., 7, "I. Contextum è Canonicis Scripturis explanate legere." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 673.

[24]   Ibid., 7, "II. Perfect sensum & intelligentiam dare per Scripturam ipsum." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 673.

[25]   Ibid., 7, "III. E germano sensu locos doctrina paucos & utiles colligere." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 673.

biblical text. Forth, "apply (if he have the gift) the doctrines rightly collected, to the life and manners of men, in a simple and plain speech."[26]

Perkins himself offers his own summary at the end of his preaching manual, "preach one Christ by Christ to the praise of Christ... To the triune God be the glory (*Trin uni Deo gloria*)."[27] With these glorious words Perkins completed his work showing explicitly who must be the center of every sermon, Jesus Christ, and to whom must be the glory in every sermon, the triune God.

1.2 A brief summary of Mastricht's Methodus Concionandi

Petrus van Mastricht offered a balance of doctrine and piety, or theology and life. One can see this in his work *De optima concionandi methodo,* published in 1681 with the purpose of instructing students of theology in their preaching task and also of helping them in how to use his *Theoretico-practica theologia.* As Adriaan Neele writes, "Mastricht connects, here, preaching with the study of theology."[28]

One of the main things in Mastricht's work is that he clearly makes use of the canons of classical rhetoric and combines them with the parts of a sermon. Gerald M. Phillips explains:

> The classical Canons of Rhetoric specify the components of the communication act: inventing and arranging ideas, choosing and delivering clusters of words, and maintaining in memory a storehouse of ideas and repertoire of behaviors... This breakdown is not as facile as it looks. The Canons have stood the test of time. They represent a legitimate taxonomy of processes. Instructors [in our own time] can situate their pedagogical strategies in each of the Canons.[29]

Rhetoric was traditionally divided into five canons: invention (*inventio*), arrangement (*dispositio*), style (*elocutio*), memory (*memoria*), and delivery (*pronuntiatio; actio*). Mastricht builds his preaching manual based on these rhetoric canons, and he does that in four chapters: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elaboratio*, and *elocutio*.[30]

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26   Ibid., 7, "IIII. Doctrinas rite collectas, si donu adsit, applicare ad vitam & mores hominu, sermon simplis & aperto." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 673.

27   Ibid., 7, "Unum Christum per Christum ad Christi laudem praedicato." Cf. PERKINS, *The Arte of Prophecying*, 673.

28   NEELE, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology*, 88.

29   PHILLIPS, Gerald M. et al., *Communication Incompetencies: A Theory of Training Oral Performance Behavior* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 70. Cf.: CICERO, *De inventione*, trans. H.M. Hubbell (Loeb Classical Library, 1949); idem, *De oratore*, 2 vols., trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library, 1942).

30   MASTRICHT, *Methodus Concionandi*, 1. Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 29.

Mastricht explains that "invention is either relating the argument to the people or a text suitable for the argument."[31] It provides an argument related to the church's context and circumstances. The arrangement (*dispositio*) "is that by which the things invented or being invented are reduced to something pleasing first to the intellect and then to the memory in an order analogous to the subject matter."[32] It provides organization, connections, and transitions for the hearers to follow without confusion. The elaboration (*elaboratio*) "concerns the individual parts of the sermon and individually separates the ingredients of the parts."[33] This is the longest part of the manual. For Mastricht, the parts of a sermon that belong to the *elaboratio* are: introduction, content of the text, exposition of the text, doctrine, and application.[34]

The introduction (*exordium*) must proceed "from the coherence of the text."[35] And Mastricht concludes that after a short introduction, it is better to make a brief analysis and a summary of the whole chapter (*contentum textus*) that touches the affections of the people in order for them to follow the idea and the coherence of the text more easily.[36] After this, Mastricht suggests an exposition of the text (*expositio*) clearly explained in order to avoid any controversy. This is the exegetical part of the sermon, where the text will be studied and analyzed in order to untangle "obvious obscurities, textual controversies, and hidden actions."[37]

The doctrinal argument (*doctrina*) flows from the *expositio* of the text, in other words, for Mastricht, the theological doctrines to be taught must be gathered from a careful exegesis and analyzes of the biblical text that is being preached.[38] The purpose of the whole doctrine, says Mastricht, "since it does not exist except as a conviction of the mind, is also a knowledge of the truth,

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[31] Ibid., III: "Inventio uel est argumenti ad populum dicendi; uel textus argumento commode." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 29.

[32] Ibid., IV: "Dispositio est, qua inventa aut invenienda, in gratiam, tum intellectus, tum memoriae, in ordinem rei analogum rediguntur." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 30.

[33] Ibid., V: "Elaboratio circa singulares concionis partes, partium que ingredientia sigillatim distinetur." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 33.

[34] Ibid., V: exordium; VI: contentum textus; VII: textus expositio; VIII: argumentum concionis doctrinale; IX: applicatio.

[35] Ibid., V: "Exordium varie à variis instrui consuevit, mihi multis rationibus maximè satisfacit, quod petitur à textos cohaerentia." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 33.

[36] Ibid., V: "pro exordium brevem instruere & nervosam totius Capitis analysin, à quo textus est resecatus, quod had ratione auditorium, non tantum cohaerentiam textus facilius assequatur; sed etiam summam hauriat integri alicujus capitis." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 35.

[37] Ibid., VII: "Exegesis partibus admixtam, quae obvias obscuritates, controversias textuales, latentes exegesis producat, & expediat quantum satis est." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 38.

[38] Ibid., VIII, It is part of the doctrinal argument: A. *investigatio* and *propositio*; B. *probatio*; C. *confirmatio*; D. *vindicatio*; E. *explicatio*. Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 43-45.

that is, according to piety; no other affections can be roused here, except those that derive their origin from here, that is, a love of truth and a despising of falsehood, for the rest are revealed in the application."[39] For Mastricht, feelings and emotions are not the result of pure beautiful words of emotionalism from the preacher, but they must arise from the teachings of the biblical text. One's affections are bound to the text of Scripture.

Finally, Mastricht deals with the application (*applicatio*) that is twofold: doctrinal or dogmatic application, and practical application; the dogmatic application "concerns the truth of the argument," and the practical application "concerns its goodness."[40] The purpose of the dogmatic application is to lead the congregation to conviction of the truth and to refute falsehood by using the elenchtic method of asking and answering questions in order to construct a critical thinking.[41] The practical application consists in words of comfort, admonition, self-examination, and exhortation, depending on the biblical text and the circumstances of the congregation.[42]

Lastly, Mastricht ends his work discussing the delivery (*elocutio*) of the sermon, which includes style (*stylum*), expression (*vocem*), and gestures (*gestus*). With respect to style, the preacher must avoid "exotic expressions and terms from the arts, so that everything can be understood by everyone"; the language must be "clear and perspicuous."[43] The preacher's expression – or voice – should be clear, "sufficient to satisfy every hearer, and neither exces-

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[39] Ibid., VIII: "Scopus universae doctrina, cum non sit nisi convictio mentis, & cognition veritatis quae secundum pietatem est; non alii affectus hîc noveri possunt, nisi qui hinc originem ducunt, pura amor veritatis, & detestatio fasitatis, reliqui enim in application produntur." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 46.

[40] Ibid., IX: "applicatio argumenti enarrati duplex, dogmática quae veritatem argumenti respicit; & practica quae bonitatem ejusdem." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 50.

[41] Cf.: Ibid., X; Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 51-52.

[42] Cf.: Ibid., XI: "applicatio *practica*, quae vel *malum* respicit; cum *triste*, cui obnititur usus... *consolatorius*; tum *turpe*, cui medetur usus... *reprehensorius*, seu (qui coincidit) *admonitorius*: vel *bonum*, seu *explorandum*, quo facit usus... *exploratorius*; vel *excitandum*, quo vergit... *adhortatorius*." Cf. Mastricht, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 55. Adriaan Neele summarized the practical application with these words: "The preacher should encourage, in the consolation, those who are afflicted and, in the admonition, warn those who are backsliding. In the self-examination, the affections of the hearers must be moved so that the assurance of faith is promoted... Finally, when the congregation is exhorted, they need to be stirred up to virtues and good works." See: NEELE, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology*, 96. Cf.: MASTRICHT, *Methodus Concionandi*, XI-XIV; *The Best Method of Preaching*, 55-76.

[43] Ibid., XVII, 1: "A: Purus quantum fieri potest, ab omnibus vocibus exoticis, ac terminis artium, ut ab omnibus omnia percipi possint. Neque enim Deus, cuius personam Ecclesiastes sustinct, quicquam frustra dictum vult. B: Non sit tumidus, aulicus, sesquipedalis; aut etiam nimiùm vulgaris & abiectus, ut sordeat; sed masculus ac spiritualis. C: Clarus & perspicuus, rebus, secundum suum momentum exprimendis, commodus." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 79.

sively slow nor excessively fast... not monotone."[44] Finally, the preacher's gestures must avoid too much affection and also too much apathy, rather they should move the hearers to pious and spiritual affections.[45] Mastricht provides a reasonable balance in the preacher's *stylum*, *vocem*, and *gestus*; neither too much nor too little, but the sufficient, according to the biblical text, in order to captivate the congregation's attention.

Mastricht closes his manual of preaching explaining why he thinks his manual is not only good but the best. First, because of the preacher (*ratione Ecclesiastis*) that is able to prepare the sermon with more objectivity. Second, because of the hearers (*ratione Auditorum*) that can follow the sermon more easily. Third, because of the things being said (*ratione dicendorum*) that can be easily understood and committed to memory. Forth, because of the practices of this method (*ratione praxeos*) that lead people to the practice of piety.[46]

2. A COMPARISON OF PERKINS AND MASTRICHT

Mastricht mentions Perkins in his work. In the *Methodus Concionandi*, Mastricht says that his preaching method was not his own but it was revealed a little while ago by "William Perkins, William Ames in his *Medulla*, Oliver Bowles, Guilelmus Saldenus in his brilliant *Ecclesiaste*, and especially the celebrated Johannes Hoornbeeck in six or seven disputations 'On the Method of Preaching' (*De Ratione Concionandi*), as well as several others."[47] Although Mastricht claims that this is not his own preaching method, he calls it the best for one reason: "it especially seemed to serve the edification of the church."[48] While Perkins had the specific purpose of training preachers in their task of

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[44]   Ibid., XVII, 2: "A: Sonora, distincta, toti auditório satisfaciendo suffiiciens; nec etiam nimium tarda, aut nimium velox... non monotonos." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 79-80.

[45]   Ibid., XVII, 3: "1. Nec nimium affectuosos, nec nimium placidos. 2. Nec histrienicos, risum potius, quam pios affectus movere idoneos. 3. Spirituales, rebus quae pronuncianeur, & affectibus qui moveri interduntur, adaptatos." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 80.

[46]   Ibid., XVIII: "1. Ratione *Ecclesiastis*, qui eius ope, quaevis sibi, tam inter meditandum, quam legendum obvia, utcunque confusa, in suum locum referre, pariter & memoriae committere poterit. 2. Ratione *Auditorium*, qui dicta ac dicenda commodiùs prosequi, memoriae committere, rememorare, & secum, aut cum suis repetere, à quo omnis ferè concionis efficacia suspenditur. 3. Ratione *dicendorum*, quae cuncta qualiacunque sint, aut apud quosvis occurrant, ad eius topica nullo negotio revocari possunt. 4. Imprimis ratione *praxeos*, quae huius ope, ex ipsis fundamentis, secundum omnes sui partes, aptissimè instrui & adornari potest, comprobantibus rem, tot, Anglorum partier & Belgarum scripts πρακτικώτατόις," Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 81-82.

[47]   Ibid.: [Prefation] "Non quod mihi imaginater, à me, quod mediocriter bonum esset, & multo minus *Optimun*, proficisci posse: neque enim mea methodus est; sed quam, non modo viri magni: Perkinsus, Amesius in Medulla, Oliv. Boules, Gulielmus Saldenus in nitidissimo suo *Ecclesiaste*, & imprimis Celeb. Hoornbekius in sex aut septem disputationibus, de *Ratione Concionandi*." Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 23-24.

[48]   Cf. MASTRICHT, *The Best Method of Preaching*, 24.

interpreting the biblical text and delivering a biblical sermon, Mastricht wanted to bring all theology to serve the preaching, and consequently, the edification of the church through the *praxis pietatis*. Comparing both works, we find six contrasts between Perkins' and Mastricht's preaching manuals.

First of all, the aim of Perkins' *Art of Prophecying* – that is to qualify English preachers against the ornate style of the Anglicans, giving them a book of homiletics to help them in their sermon preparation – differs from Mastricht's purpose of the *Best Method of Preaching* – that is to see all of theology in the service of preaching. That is the first contrast between the two works. Perkins writes for Anglican preachers and Mastricht writes for ministry students who were preparing themselves for the preaching ministry. In fact, Mastricht wants all of his theology, including his *Theoretico-practica theologia* (*TPT*),[49] to serve the preaching task of the minister. The sermon is where all of one's theological labor and studies must culminate. That is what it means, for Mastricht, to have all of theology in the service of preaching.

Second, it seems that Perkins thinks more from the preacher's perspective and Mastricht from the hearers' perspective; in other words, Perkins is more concerned with the preacher's correct interpretation of Scripture (content), and Mastricht, although he is also concerned with this, is more interested in how the audience can follow the sermon and commit it to memory (form). This may account for the differences in structure and topics dealt with in both works:

Perkins – *The Art of Prophesying*	Mastricht – *The Best Method of Preaching*
The art or facultie of prophesying [*De Prophetica*]	Basics of sermon arrangement
Of the preaching of the Word [*De Predicatione verbi*]	Preaching sermon introductions
Of the Word of God [*De verbi Dei*]	Exegeting and explaining the text
Of the interpretation of the Scriptures [*De interpretatione Scripturarum*]	Preaching doctrinally
Of the ways of expounding [*De modis interpretandi*]	Preaching to comfort believers
Of the right dividing of the Word [*De orthonomia*]	Preaching against sin

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49   MASTRICHT, *Theoretico-practica theologia* (1699). See: *Theoretical-practical theology*, v. I, Prolegomena (RHB, 2018).

Perkins – *The Art of Prophesying*	Mastricht – *The Best Method of Preaching*
Of the ways how to use and apply doctrines [*De applicationis modis*]	Preaching for self-examination
Of the kinds of application [*De speciebus applicationis*]	Exhorting unto good works
Of memorie in preaching [*De reminiscentia in concionando*]	Cautions, handling lengthy texts, and delivery
Of the promulgation or uttering of it [*De promulgatione concionis*]	Why this is the best method of preaching
Of conceiving prayer [*De conceptione precum*]	

A third contrast is found in their homiletics. Although both of them were seeking and teaching the art of practical preaching, the structure of a sermon proposed by Mastricht follows Cicero's canons of rhetoric (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *pronunciatio*), while Perkins seems to neglect these classical canons and basically follows the classical threefold Puritan structure: text, doctrine, application. Adriaan Neele agrees that

> [...] the work of the former (Mastricht) not only resonates with the great neo-Latin Protestant rhetoric, but also resulted in an appropriation of classical rhetoric *and* the English tradition of homiletics. On the other hand, Perkins's consultation of the works of classical rhetoric resulted in an impoverished presentation of the art of preaching, that is, a notable absence of the classical terminology and canons of rhetoric.[50]

Mastricht does not abandon this threefold structure (exegesis, doctrine, application), but instead he combines it with the classical canons of rhetoric. Cicero's canons are the framework for Mastricht's method of preaching. This combination is what makes Mastricht's homiletic unique compared to Perkins.

Furthermore, the fourth contrast is found in the introduction of the sermon. Perkins' proposed *exordium* of the sermon is contrasted by Mastricht as follows. Perkins limits the *exordium* to reading and explaining the biblical text. He follows the Puritan pattern of preaching by beginning the sermon with an exegetical work and explanation of the text. Mastricht also begins with the text, but in his method he considers the circumstances and context of the church as well as the explanation of the text. He wants, first of all, to engage his audience

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50   NEELE, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology*, 102.

by touching their hearts in some way with the biblical text and context. Perkins' introduction is primarily reading and exegetical analysis of the biblical text in order to bring the only literal meaning of the text for the congregation; his *exordium* is mainly logical and analytical.[51] For Mastricht, the *exordium* is a smaller part of the sermon, it consists of *expositio* and *explicatio*, and it must prepare the hearers to stay focused and alert, and although it must bring the content and the context of the biblical text, it should also evoke the feelings and affections of the audience.[52]

For Mastricht, in the *exordium* the preacher must have two concerns: first, the condition, time, place and context of the church, and second, it must be coherent with the biblical text. The preacher must analyze and explain the biblical text in its context and conclude with a brief summary, preparing the audience for the next part of the sermon (doctrinal). Interestingly, for both Perkins and Mastricht, the *exordium* must reflect the content of the sermon, that is, it is not merely telling a funny or emotional story to entertain and relax the audience, but it must reflect the biblical text or the doctrine to be taught during the sermon. The difference is that, for Mastricht, even in the introduction the sermon can touch the heart and evoke the right feelings and emotions. It is not just a dry explanation, but it must take into account the context and circumstances of the audience. Mastricht was attentive to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Fifth, with regard to the doctrinal part of the sermon, both Perkins and Mastricht affirm that from the exegetical work done in the *exordium*, the preacher must gather the most important theological doctrines (*doctrina*) that come out of that biblical text (*explicatio*). Both Perkins and Mastricht say that the doctrine can be supported with other passages and parallel verses of Scripture. The difference is that for Perkins only testimonies of Scripture should be used for supporting the doctrine, while for Mastricht it is also useful to use arguments from reason (nature and affections) to prove and convince of a certain biblical doctrine. As in the *exordium*, Perkins' doctrinal part is restricted to the biblical text; Mastricht, however, does not see any problem in bringing support and evidences from human reason and nature, as long as they are consistent with Holy Scripture. It seems that, unlike Perkins, Mastricht believes general revelation in nature and reason can be valid arguments to support a given text or doctrine.

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[51]   Cf.: PERKINS, *Prophetica*, 7, "I. Contextum è Canonicis Scripturis explanate legere… II. Perfect sensum & intelligentiam dare per Scripturam ipsum."

[52]   MASTRICHT, *Methodus Concionandi*, VII: "Exordium variè a variis instrui consuevit, mihi multis rationibus maximè satisfacit, quod petitur à textos cohaerentiâ. Vel cum rebus, in syntagmata theologico... Vel à verbis in contextu, seu praecedentibus, seu subsequentibus... Illi ergo affectus in exordio sunt admittendi."

The last contrast is found in the last part of the sermon, the application. Both of them were committed to the application of the word of God to everyday life. For Perkins, the application depends on the biblical passage, if it is a statement of the law or of the gospel. The law exposes the disease of sin, and the gospel provides the medicine to cure the disease. For Mastricht, the application is both doctrinal and practical; that is, it must teach the audience and it must be put into practice in the audience's life. According to Mastricht, the practical application comforts, admonishes, leads the people to examine themselves, and exhorts. The *usus* is determined by the biblical text and is directed to the needs and circumstances of the congregation. The application must touch the affections and move the audience to a life of virtue and good works.

Although Mastricht practical dimension of preaching resonates strongly with Perkins, the main difference between Perkins and Mastricht regarding the application is that, for Perkins, it seems that the application of the sermon is conditioned by the skills of the preacher, because he writes that if the preacher is suitably gifted, he must apply the doctrine explained to the heart and life of the people in the congregation. Perkins leaves the impression that the preacher should only apply the sermon if he has the ability to do so. For Mastricht, there is no preaching without application, and every preacher is obligated to apply his teaching to the life and heart of his audience. A sermon only accomplishes its purpose if applied in a practical way to the heart and life of the congregation. Therefore, the preacher must work hard in order to apply the text and the doctrines taught and explained. People must leave the church knowing what to do practically with the teaching they received through the sermon, and that is the biggest challenge of the preacher while he is preaching.

Finally, Perkins and Mastricht focus on a plain and simple sermon with respect to style. Their goal is a sermon without exotic words and terms, but clear and comprehensible to everyone in the congregation. A sermon must be easy to follow and commit to memory. However, Mastricht, in contrast to Perkins, notes the relative importance of gestures while delivering a homily. For Perkins, the body must remain erect and still, while the other parts like the arm, face, and eyes express the spiritual affection of the heart, while for Mastricht, gestures must find a balance suitable to the hearers. They must not be excessively slow neither excessively fast, not too extravagant neither too depressed. The preacher must be attentive to his congregation and his gestures must follow what he is teaching. In Mastrichts' words, gestures that are fitting are: (1) neither excessively affectionate nor placid; (2) not histrionic, suitable to move to laughter rather than to pious affections; (3) and spiritual, adapted to

the things that are declared and to the affections that are intended to be moved.[53] Despite these contrasts and differences between Perkins and Mastricht, the heart of the sermon is the same for both of them, that is, the glory of God in Christ and the edification of the church. Thus, through a careful reading of both works, this research has demonstrated that, despite these contrasts, their preaching methods are all but dry, theoretical, and speculative.

CONCLUSION

It is argued in this article that, although Perkins and Mastricht had the same purpose in preaching, Perkins followed the Puritan trajectory using the three parts of the sermon (text, doctrine, and application), but Mastricht goes beyond it. He did not abandon the Puritan three parts of the sermon, but advanced the method of preaching in comparison to Perkins, as it was described above.

It is extremely important to retrieve Mastricht's method of preaching in today's pulpit for at least two reasons. First, on the one hand, we see many sermons that serve only the mind, with great exegetical and doctrinal explanations of the text but defective in the application. People leave the church knowing what the text means in its biblical context but not knowing how that text can be applied to their own life today. From Mastricht, a sermon needs to be practically applied. On the other hand, there are many sermons with flawed and vague applications based on poor exegetical and doctrinal explanation. These two extremes can be avoided by paying attention to Mastricht's method of preaching. Mastricht provides a preaching method grounded in Scripture, profoundly exegetical and doctrinal, and at the same time, easy to remember and that leads the audience to the practice of piety.

Second, it is important to retrieve Mastricht's work because of his purpose to bring all theology to serve preaching. This is especially urgent as there are many future pastors being academically trained without knowing how to use their theology in the service of preaching, as if there was a separation between theology and the sermon, theory and practice, academy and pastoral ministry. Mastricht is clear that all theology must serve the preaching task and every theological training must have the glorious purpose of edifying the church through the preaching ministry. Mastricht reminds us that the sermon is where all our theological labor must culminate.

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53   MASTRICHT, *Methodus Concionandi*, XVII: "Gestus quas esse decet: 1. Nec nimium affectuosos, nec nimium placidos. 2. Nec histriônicos, risum potius, quam pios affectus movere idoneos. 3. Spirituales, rebus qua procunciantur, & affectibus qui moveri intenduntur, adaptatos."

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é examinar e comparar dois manuais de pregação, *Prophetica*, de William Perkins, e *Methodus Concionandi*, de Petrus van Mastricht. A pergunta que guia este artigo é: Mastricht avançou o método de pregação em comparação com Perkins? Após um breve resumo das duas obras, o autor apresenta seis razões que tornam o método de pregação de Mastricht único em comparação com Perkins.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

William Perkins; Petrus van Mastricht; Pregação; Homilética.