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# AN OPEN CODING ANALYTICAL MODEL OF SERMONS ON POVERTY WITH MATTHEW 25:31- 46 AS SERMON TEXT<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

This article reports on the first cycle (out of three) of a grounded theory analysis of sermons on poverty with Matthew 25:31-46 as sermon text. The problem addressed in this research project has to do with the poverty situation in South Africa. The leading research question is: how do preachers deal with sermons on poverty with this text as sermon text. The goal of the first phase in this project is to develop an open coding analytical model from the sermons. Six sermons by Uniting Reformed Church preachers and six sermons by Dutch Reformed Church preachers have been analyzed. Significant sermon segments in the light of the research question were then coded in the analysis. Initial categories could then be formed as they emerged from the data, based on the open coded codes. From the categories an open coding analytical model with hypotheses has been constructed.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this article I want to report on the first cycle of the research project on preaching and poverty with the theme: "A grounded theory analysis of sermons by preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church (D.R.C.) and the Uniting Reformed Church (U.R.C.) with Matthew 25:31-46 as sermon text." The grounded theory approach, developed in sociology (cf. for instance Glaser 1978; Glaser 1998; Charmaz 2006), has been applied in empirical homiletics by F.G. Immink's research group in Utrecht, the Netherlands, of which the first result is now published (cf. Pleizier 2010). The process of grounded theory analysis of sermons develops in a bottom-up approach in three cycles: (1) open coding as an inductive exercise, initial identifying of categories and the development of an open coding analytical model; (2) selective coding that is a deductive exercise in which sermons are selectively chosen for analysis on the basis of the hypotheses that are developed in the open coding analytical model; (3) theoretical coding and the construction of a theory of preaching on the theme of the analysis (cf. Pieterse 2010:119-120). The first cycle of this research process (open coding) has now been completed. Open coding is an inductive analysis of what the preacher says, teaches, admonishes, appeals, etc. in the segments and is coded in short sentences. The idea is to move from the code as a linguistic designator to concepts in the sense that the codes are treated as indicators for larger conceptual categories (Pleizier 2010:113).

After a discussion with prof. A.G. Van Aarde (New Testament, University of Pretoria) on the kingdom parables of Jesus as suitable sermon texts for preaching in a context of poverty, I decided to analyze sermons on Matthew 25:31-46. Most exegetes say that this text is not a typical parable, but can be considered as one in the context of the two foregoing parables. My study of the kingdom parables of Jesus (cf. Pieterse 2009) convinced me that preaching these parables, and specifically Matthew 25:31-46, can be relevant for preaching on poverty in South Africa. The *problem* addressed in this research has to do with the poverty situation in South Africa. My presupposition is that the mainline Christian congregations can contribute with their outreaching projects among the poor in their immediate vicinities in order to help with the solution of this problem (cf. Pieterse 2004:93-121). The leading *research question* is: how do preachers deal with sermons on poverty with Matthew 25:31-46 as sermon text? The *goal* of the research project is to develop an emerging theory for preaching kingdom parables of Jesus on poverty from the collected sermons working with a grounded theory approach of qualitative analysis of sermons on Matthew 25:31-46 as an example. The *goal of this article* is to develop an open coding analytical model from the analyzed codes of 12 sermons on the abovementioned sermon text. As part of the methodology of the research approach that I am following memos must be written throughout the research process stating every decision, step and

contents of the study material in the process. The material in this article is basically drawn from these memos.

In this article I am going to state my theological approach to the field of research (2); data collection, data analysis and the forming of initial categories (3); the development of an open coding analytical model built on the categories (4); and a conclusion (5).

## 2. THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

The meta-theoretical perspective (cf. Osmer 2008) that I am working with is that a Reformed theologian views the Christian faith praxis as a reality where our triune God is actively working. I am also working with a pneumatological hermeneutical approach where the *researcher's interpretation* of the actions of preachers preaching a Biblical text in a congregation of the church, is *guided by the work of the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is not only working in the preaching action of the preacher and the listening action of the congregation in the worship service (De Klerk 2010:456-463), but also in the research action of the believing observer. Without this theological perspective on the reality of this specific field of research, namely analyzing sermons preached in the congregation, the researcher will not have a theological understanding of what is going on in this practice.

I am following Immink's approach that in our practical theological research we have to do with *faith as it is lived* in the inter-relationship between God and humans, and humans with each other (cf. Immink 2005). Therefore we work with a theological as well as with an anthropological approach in the real world situation. With this approach I work with the positive aspects of J.A. van der Ven's empirical approach and Immink's theological emphasis as well as his empirical approach as manifested in empirical homiletics (Brouwer 2009:494-495; cf. Immink, Boonstra, Pleizier & Verweij 2009; Van der Ven 1998). The scientific-theoretical view behind this perspective is for a Reformed theologian, sensible social constructionism, and critical realism (Brouwer 2009: 487-496).

The *substantive area of my research* is a grounded theory analysis in homiletics on sermons with Matthew 25:31-46 as sermon text on poverty in the South African context, preached in congregations of the U.R.C. and the D.R.C. In my approach to preaching I am following the idea that homiletics should focus on the actual *event* of preaching (cf. Long 2005:22). In Long's view the event of preaching consists of the related parts of involvement in this event: the congregation; the preacher; the sermon in action – what the preacher is saying in the event of speaking and hearing; and the presence of

Christ. My research focuses on the preacher – what the preacher is saying and doing in the event of preaching. The content of the sermon interests me. Therefore I am analyzing the texts of the sermons as written texts produced by the participating preachers. Of the homiletic categories in the preaching event, namely the purpose, the language, the form, and the content of preaching (cf. Lowry 1997:21), I am focusing on the content to try to ascertain what the preacher is saying and doing in the sermon. These categories are, however, interrelated and are taken into consideration when one focuses on the content of the sermon. I also see communication in the preaching event as basically a conversation between the preacher, the congregation and the word of God in the text, accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The idea of the *homiletic situation* (cf. Van der Laan 1989:184), of poverty in this case, plays an important role in understanding the field of study in this research. Regarding the sermon text in Matthew the sermon analysis is based upon Pleizier's distinction in preaching of Divine-human dynamics, namely kerugmatic dynamics (past), interpretative dynamics (actuality in the present), and eschatological dynamics (future), and these distinctions will play an interrelated role in the sermons on this text (cf. Pleizier 2010). The interpretation of Jesus' kingdom parables is also important for this research (cf. Pieterse 2009). *Sensitizing concepts*, derived from the above theoretical description of the substantive area of research (grounded theory terminology for a field of study), forms an initial theoretical framework in this kind of research in order to open up the data in the inductive open coding cycle. The following sensitizing concepts have made me sensitive for what to look for in the data:

Sensitizing concepts based on the kingdom parable in Matthew 25:31-46:

- Solidarity (of Jesus with the poor and the destitute)
- Alleviation (healing in the broadest sense: relief of poverty, sickness, pain and distress)
- Promise (part of the Kingdom of God through faith in the message and person of Jesus)
- Hope (mercy and care in the faith community).

Sensitizing concepts based on my homiletic perspective:

- Sermon as an event
- Homiletic situation: the existential situation of people in South African congregations that influences the understanding of the text for the sermon.

### 3. DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND CATEGORIES

#### 3.1 Data collection and analysis

I have asked my ex-doctoral students in different provinces of South Africa to identify preachers of the D.R.C. and the U.R.C. by means of a theoretical sample, and to ask them to preach a sermon in their congregations on Matthew 25:31-46, and then submit it in a written or print-out text. I visited the provinces, collected the sermons and had conversations with the preachers on the contexts of their congregations.

Table 1: Background data of participating preachers (U.R.C. and D.R.C.)

Name	Gender	Age group	Education	Province
Preacher A	m	elderly	high	Mpumalanga
Preacher B	m	middle	middle	Gauteng
Preacher C	f	middle	middle	Limpopo
Preacher D	m	elderly	high	Eastern Cape
Preacher E	m	elderly	middle	Eastern Cape
Preacher F	m	young	middle	Eastern Cape

I started the first cycle (open coding) with the first 6 sermons by dividing the sermons in segments into relevant and meaningful parts (in the light of my research question) following in a natural way in the course of the sermon. I also started with open coding guided by my research question and homiletic concern. The coding is done from the perspective of the preacher. Again, open coding is an inductive analysis of what the preacher says, teaches, admonishes, appeals, etc. in the segments and is coded in short sentences. The idea is to move from the code as a linguistic designator to concepts in the sense that the codes are treated as indicators for larger conceptual categories (Pleizier 2010:113). My approach to the act of preaching is that it is an event, therefore the codes are formulated with verbs of action. After I had analyzed the first six sermons I collected six more sermons and started with further open coding of these sermons.

Table 2: Background data of participating preachers (D.R.C. and U.R.C.)

Name	Gender	Age group	Education	Province
Preacher G	m	middle	middle	North West
Preacher H	m	young	middle	Gauteng
Preacher I	m	young	middle	Gauteng
Preacher J	m	middle	high	Limpopo
Preacher K	F	young	middle	Mpumalanga
Preacher L	F	young	middle	Gauteng

I have arranged all the sermon segments and their codes on printed out sheets on the dining table. I started the movement from description to a more conceptual understanding of the data by constantly comparing segments and codes, by watching, reflecting, rearranging and looking for general ideas that integrate the different segments and codes. The open coding produced 218 codes. Working constantly on comparison of sermon segments and codes, with reflection on it, I came to the following insights that emerged from the data: after trying different central concepts on the data that will relate most of the segments in a conceptual whole, I found a suitable one. This concept should represent what the preachers are saying and doing in the sermons on this text and it must come to the fore from the data itself. I finally found the concept *appealing*. First, I will present a couple of core sermon segments from the twelve sermons with their codes to illustrate the categories emerging from the codes in the data. Then I will put some initial categories with their codes on the table which I have found that they repeatedly emerge from the data.

Illustration of *core sermon segments* with their codes in the twelve sermons:

Preacher G, sermon segment C (D.R.C.):

If you think that you have any merit with God, this text turns your theology upside down. We as humans cannot do the things that God expects from us out of our own hearts. We are not even able to do the small things of everyday practice to the poor. The message of the text goes in the direction that the sheep and the goats were already separated before judgment day. Jesus knows who identify with Him. This condition has as its basis: by faith alone. Faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, who came and lived this life of identification with those in need, this perfect life that we cannot live out of our selves. When we believe in him, He makes us part of him so that we live in him and He in us. You are part of Jesus' herd. You are saved by the grace of God. Salvation is a gift of God. We

do not earn it by doing things, but by faith alone. But we cannot ignore the fact that Jesus is talking in this text about our deeds that we have done, or not done. These deeds of mercy are proof of our faith in Him. These deeds towards the poor and humble are important and precious for Him. That is our calling. That is the fruit of the Spirit. Will you not participate in the work that our congregation is doing at Wilgers Hospital, the old age home and in several jails?

1. Preacher teaches that we have no merit through good deeds with God, because we cannot do the things He expects from us out of our own hearts.
2. Preacher says that we cannot even do the small things to the poor in our everyday life.
3. Preacher says that the sheep and goats are already separated, because Jesus knows who identifies with Him.
4. Preacher says that we become part of Jesus through faith alone.
5. Preacher says that Jesus identifies with those in need.
6. Preacher says that we live in Him and He lives in us.
7. Preacher says that Jesus talks about the things we have done, or not done.
8. Preacher says that the deeds of mercy to the poor are proof of our faith.
9. Preacher teaches that the care for the poor and humble is precious for Jesus.
10. Preacher says that care for the poor is our calling and the fruit of the Spirit.
11. Preacher calls on listeners to participate in the work of the congregation in hospital, old age home and jails.

Initial categories emerging from the segment – here put in a more conceptual formulation:

1. Faith participation with Jesus:
 

“...any merit with God...not even able to do small things ...to the poor... by faith alone”...Faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, who came and lived this life of identification with those in need...He makes us part of him so that we live in him and He in us.”
2. Identifying of followers of Jesus with the poor:

“...Jesus is talking in this text about deeds we have done, or not done... deeds towards the poor and humble are important... for Him”.

3. Caring for the poor and humble by present-day congregations:

“...our calling...the fruit of the Spirit...participate in the work that our congregation is doing at Wilgers Hospital, the old age home and in several jails.”

Preacher J, sermon segment C (U.R.C.):

Surely one motive of helping others has to do with our association with Jesus Christ. As we see here, to minister to the needy is to minister to Christ himself. To give food, to give water, lodging, clothes, visit the sick are things we all can do. Today our young people are going to visit the sick and take thanksgiving bags to them. We cannot pass off this responsibility to the government, or to pastors and deacons. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for the needs of others. What did you do last week to meet someone else's needs? Ah, this a good test to determine whether you are a true Christian.

1. Preacher states that one motive of helping others has to do with our association with Jesus.
2. Preacher says that to minister to the needy is to minister to Christ himself.
3. Preacher says to give food, water, lodging, clothes, visit the sick are things all of us can do.
4. Preacher informs that the young people are today visiting the sick taking thanksgiving bags to them.
5. Preacher says Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for the needs of others.
6. Preacher asks what the listeners did last week to meet someone else's needs.
7. Preacher says meeting someone else's needs is a good test of our faith.

Initial categories emerging from the segment:

1. Faith participation with Jesus:

“Surely one motive of helping others has to do with our association with Jesus Christ.”

2. Identifying of followers of Jesus with the poor:



“As we see here, to minister to the needy is to minister to Christ himself. To give food, to give water, lodging, clothes, visit the sick are things we all can do.”

3. Caring for the poor and humble by present day congregations:

“We cannot pass off this responsibility to the government, or to pastors and deacons. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for the needs of others. What did you do last week to meet someone else’s needs? Ah, this is a good test to determine whether you are a true Christian.”

Preacher C, sermon segment E (U.R.C.):

Jesus freed us from sin without payment from our side. Therefore He expects of his followers that they serve each other in love without asking something back. To care for people in need is an assignment of Christ that we cannot ignore. Let us as his followers and his church take our position with him with love, empathy and help to the needy in order to fulfill His law, because if you have done this to one of the humblest you have done it to Him. Jesus says that to us today.

1. Preacher says that Jesus freed us from our sins.
2. Preacher says that is the reason that we must care for others.
3. Preacher says to care for the needy is an assignment from Christ.
4. Preacher admonishes that we must be in solidarity with Jesus with regard to the poor and the humble.
5. Preacher stresses that by doing this we are doing it to Him.

Initial categories emerging from the segment:

1. Faith participation with Jesus:

“Jesus freed us from sin...as his followers and his church take our position with him.”

2. Identifying of followers of Jesus with the poor:

“...take our position with him and help the needy in order to fulfill His law. ...He expects of his followers that they serve each other in love.”

3. Caring for the poor and humble by present-day congregations:

“...care for people in need is an assignment of Christ ...if you have done this to one of the humblest you have done it to Him. Jesus says that to us today.”

Preacher E, sermon segment D (D.R.C.):

The Lord teaches us that our attitude and conduct towards the poor, the suffering, the lonesome, the oppressed – even if he/she is the humblest of all – is just a reflection of our relationship with Him. When we do it to the humblest, Jesus says: ‘you have done it to me’. When we do *not* do it to the humblest, He then says: ‘you have not done it to me’. It all has to do with God’s love. That is what He expects of us. The lesson is that our deeds are just a test for our faith! It is a test whether our lives bear fruit, or not.

1. Preacher states that our attitude and conduct to the poor is a reflection of our relationship with Him.
2. Preacher repeats that Jesus teaches that what we do to the humble we have done it to Him.
3. Preacher repeats that Jesus teaches that what we are not doing to the humble, we have not done to Him.
4. Preacher says it all has to do with God’s love.
5. Preacher says our deeds towards the poor and humble are a test of our faith.

Initial categories emerging from the segment:

1. Faith participation with Jesus:
 

“The Lord teaches us that our attitude and conduct towards the poor...is just a reflection of our relationship with Him.”
2. Identifying of followers of Jesus with the poor:
 

“When you do it to the humblest, Jesus says: ‘you have done it to me’. When we do not do it to the humblest, He then says: ‘you have not done it to me’. It all has to do with God’s love. That is what he expects of us.”
3. Caring for the poor by present day congregations:
 

“The lesson is that our deeds are just a test for our faith! It is a test whether our lives bear fruit, or not.”

### 3.2 Initial main categories with their sub-categories emerging from all the codes (total of 218 codes)

From the analyzed sermons it is clear that the contexts addressed in the sermons do not differ much between U.R.C. and D.R.C. preachers. I visited

several provinces of South Africa to collect the sermons and had conversations with the preachers on their contexts. It seems that poverty is spread all over the country and the poor are on every one's doorstep. A further interesting fact according to the preachers is that people in townships that come to church usually have an income. Therefore, I have decided to put all the codes (D.R.C. and U.R.C.) under the initial categories.

The initial main categories with their sub-categories are therefore the following:

#### Category 1. Faith participation with Jesus

- a. Motivation for our faith participation with Jesus (9 codes).
- b. Faith participation with the attitude of Jesus (20 codes).
- c. Faith reaction to what Jesus asks from us (29 codes).
- d. Test for our faith in the faith participation with Jesus (11 codes).
- e. Warning to accept Jesus' attitude towards the needy in our faith participation with him (22 codes).
- f. Identifying of Jesus with the poor and humble (11 codes).
- g. The attitude of Jesus towards poor and humble people (11 codes).
- h. Example of the identifying of Jesus with the needy in his practice (5 codes).

#### Category 2. Identifying of the followers of Jesus with the poor

- a. Implications of identifying with the poor by the followers of Jesus as he did (13 codes).
- b. Identifying with the poor by the followers of Jesus is part of our being (14 codes).

#### Category 3. Caring for the poor and humble by present-day congregations

- a. South African situation of poverty (24 codes).
- b. Preachers' own life experiences with beggars (11 codes).
- c. Encouraging to care for the needy (14 codes).
- d. Practical ways of caring for the needy (24 codes).

The sub-categories of a specific initial category in the list are all related to, and pertain to, the specific category. All three initial categories are related to the central idea of appealing by the preachers to the listeners on the basis of the sermon text that I will illustrate later in an analytical model. The open

coding analysis of the 12 sermons produced 46 sermon segments pertaining to the research question. Only two of the sermon segments do not fit under the umbrella of the preachers' action of appealing to the listeners in communicating the message of the sermon text (Matthew 25:31-46). I have dropped the two segments and went on comparing the 44 sermon segments. There are 12 sermon segments in which all of the three themes of the initial main categories are phrased by the preachers. The idea of *appealing* is present in all of the 44 sermon segments.

In homiletic literature the word "appeal" that usually describes a notion in the conclusion of a sermon (Afrikaans *appèl*) is a normal practice in preaching. Preachers are making a call on the listeners of the sermon to accept the word of God in the text and live according to its message (cf. for instance Vos 1996:269).

On the question: what are the preachers *doing* in these sermons, the following pattern emerged:

Preachers are *appealing* to the hearers of the sermon by employing their faith participation with Jesus (1), in order to appeal to them to choose for identifying with the poor and humble (2), and appealing to them for caring for the poor and humble in the present context of the congregations in South Africa (3). This pattern is clear from the categories described above.

### 3.3 Theoretical codes of consequence and time in the central idea of appealing in the inner world of the sermons

To be able to construct an open coding analytical model from the contents of the sermons researched, I have to progress from analysis to conceptualization. Therefore, the next exercise is to find the relationships between the main concepts derived from the main categories and put them in a model. On the level of theoretical thinking I am using theoretical codes on the material. The theoretical code of consequence fits on the relationship between the concepts that emerged from the analysis of the sermons. I therefore show that there is a theoretical code of *consequence* regarding the initial central idea of appealing by the preachers in this inner world of the 12 sermons in the data (3.3.1); as well as a dimension of time in the identifying and actions of Jesus in the data (3.3.2); well aware that in open coding the researcher must stay open for alterations, because everything is still very tentative (cf. Pleizier 2010:113-131).

### 3.3.1 Consequence of preachers' way of appealing to the listeners

All three initial categories are linked and connected by the idea of how the preachers go about in *appealing* to the listeners that can be conceptualized as a *consequence*. The following segments and codes from the sermons, formulated in more abstract form, serve as examples:

Category 1. Faith participation with Jesus:

Preacher, F segment C:

This condition has as its basis: by faith alone. Faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, who came and lived this life of identification with those in need... When we believe in Him, he makes us part of him so that we live in him and He in us.

"...by faith alone...When we believe in Him, he makes us part of him so that we live in Him and He in us."

Preacher, B segment B:

Jesus gave examples of how we must put our faith in practice. He cared for children, a poor widow, a rejected publican. His life testified how perfect love is to practice what you preach.

"Jesus gave examples of how we must put our faith in practice."

Category 2. Identifying of the followers of Jesus with the poor:

Preacher, C segment E:

Jesus freed us from sin without payment from our side. Therefore He expects of his followers that they serve each other in love without asking something back. To care for people in need is an assignment of Christ that we cannot ignore. Let us as his followers and his church take our position with him with love, empathy and help to the needy in order to fulfill His law, because if you have done this to one of the humblest you have done it to Him. Jesus says that to us today.

"Jesus freed us from our sin...To care for people in need is an assignment of Christ...you have done it to Him."

Category 3. Caring for the poor and humble by present-day congregations:

Preacher J, segment C:

Surely one motive of helping others has to do with our association with Jesus Christ. As we see here, to minister to the needy is to minister to Christ himself.

To give food, to give water, lodging, clothes, to visit the sick are things we all can do. Today our young people are going to visit the sick and take thanksgiving bags to them. We cannot pass off this responsibility to the government, or to pastors and deacons. Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for the needs of others. What did you do last week to meet someone else's needs? Ah, this a good test to determine whether you are a true Christian.

"...to give food, water, lodging, clothes, visit the sick are things all of us can do... Jesus demands our personal involvement in caring for the needs of others"

Conclusion: The link of consequence is that preachers are appealing to the listeners on the basis of their faith participation with Jesus, in order to appeal to them to identify with the poor and humble, and then to appeal to them as a result to care for the poor and humble in our South African context today as followers of Jesus.

### 3.3.2 Dimension of time

The theoretical code of consequence as a link between the initial categories becomes clearer when one detects in the sermon segments and codes also the theoretical code of *dimension of time* (past, present, future) in the identification and actions of Jesus with the poor and humble.

Past:

Preacher B, segment A:

When we hear the name of Jesus, what do you think of Him? Do you see Him in the company of the Caesar, kings and the high priest? Or do you see Him as somebody who mixes with common, poor people? Jesus cared from the beginning for the poor who needed help.

"Jesus cared from the beginning for the poor who needed help."

Present:

Preacher L, segment B:

So ask yourself today, if you would know that those street kids you see on the streets every morning were Jesus, would you have just walked by? If you had known that those who came knocking on your door asking for food were Jesus, would you have chased them away on an empty stomach? Ask yourself today whose life have you touched or changed and when you have answered that ask yourself how many times has Jesus touched and changed your life. If you are not touching anybody's hand ask yourself why not, and ask

yourself why Jesus is still touching yours. Take today as the beginning of a new relationship with Jesus, with the poor and less advantaged than you.

“So ask yourself today, if you would know that the street kids you see on the streets every morning were Jesus, would you just walked by?”

Future:

Preacher C, segment B:

In this text we have a pronouncement by Jesus (the Son of God) about the day of judgment. His verdict will be based on how we have dealt with the destitute. Did we deal with them with love? This text spells out what Jesus expects of us as his followers in his church. Did we deal with them in the way Jesus expects from us, namely to love your neighbour? And that has to do with what He did regarding need and suffering – to feed the hungry.

“...the day of judgment...His verdict will be based on how we dealt with the destitute.”

The idea of appealing by the preachers on the faith participation with Jesus by the listeners, in order to preach the message from the text and appeal to the listeners to choose for taking up the great task of the congregation in caring for the poor and humble, forms a *consequence of appealing* as a link between the initial categories. It is also clear that in the *dimension of time* the preachers connect with Jesus' practice during his ministry in the past, actualize it for today, and also warn to follow Jesus in his identification and care for the poor and humble with a view on judgment day (eschatological perspective, for now and in the future).

#### 4. OPEN CODING ANALYTICAL MODEL

Core concept: appealing to the listeners

Congregation's faith participation with Jesus are appealed on

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Hypothesis 1

Then discovering that Jesus identifies with poor and humble (present – past – future)

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Hypothesis 2

Appealing on congregation to identify with poor and humble

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Hypothesis 3

Appealing on congregation to care for poor and humble

Hypothesis 1

When the preachers are appealing on the listeners about their faith participation with Jesus, His identification with the poor and humble is discovered.

Hypothesis 2

When listeners discover Jesus' identification with the poor and humble, they are appealed on to identify with the poor and humble in their context.

Hypothesis 3

If listeners identify with the poor and humble in their own context, they are appealed on to care for the poor and humble.

The idea of appealing by the preachers to the listeners as a link between the categories is a snapshot of the research so far, but the idea of appealing, however, indicates a very initial pattern in the inner world of these twelve sermons that emerges from the sermon segments and codes (cf. Pleizier 2010:130).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the twelve sermons on Matthew 25:31-46 has given insight on how preachers are dealing with these sermons on poverty. From the codes three categories with their sub-categories emerged, namely faith participation with Jesus; identifying of the followers of Jesus with the poor; and caring for the poor and humble by present day congregations. Based on the categories and by means of the central concept of appealing, with the theoretical codes of consequence and the dimension of time, an open analytical model with hypotheses could be constructed.

On the question what the preachers are doing and saying in these sermons the following emerged: preachers are *appealing* to the hearers of the sermon by employing their faith participation with Jesus, in order to appeal to them to choose for identifying with the poor and humble, and appealing to them for caring for the poor and humble in the present context of the congregations in South Africa.

With the construction of the open coding analytical model the first cycle of open coding has been completed (Pleizier 2010:131). The next cycle of



grounded theory research in this project is selective coding when the concepts produced by open coding should be enriched with properties. This exercise will enable the researcher to move on to the third cycle of theoretical coding.

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