

# **The Lectionary as Canon**

*The Use of Ecclesiastes as Reading  
in the Lectionary Cycle of the Church of Norway*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATION OF NORWEGIAN TERMS

### **Abbreviations:**

CoN – Church of Norway

KT77 – Kirkeårets tekster, 1977

TB12 – Tekstbok for Den norske kirke, 2012

SM – Scandinavian Model

RCL – Revised Common Lectionary

UU2 – Underutvalg 2, Ordets del

NFG – Nemnd for gudstjeneliv

LN – Lærenemnda

MF – Det teologiske menighetsfakultet

F08 – Forslag til ny tekstbok for Den norske kirke 2008

### **Translation of Norwegian Terms:**

Bispemøtet - The Collegium of Bishops of the CoN

Kirkemøtet - General Synod

Kirkerådet - Church Council

Underutvalg 2 - Second Subcommittee

Nemnd for gudstjenesteliv - Liturgical Committee

Liturgikommisjonen av 1965 - The Commission/the Liturgical Commission

Lærenemnda - The Council of Church Doctrine

Det teologiske menighetsfakultet – a private School of Theology, equivalent to the University of Oslo's Faculty of Theology

Forslag til ny tekstbok for Den norske kirke 2008 – Proposal for New Lectionary for the CoN from 2008

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

I have spent years reveling in the text of Ecclesiastes, laughing at its jokes, learning, and recognizing my own life, both meaning and meaninglessness, in its words. Because of my own appreciation for this text, I have often wondered why it isn't read more in my own church, The Church of Norway (abbr. CoN). I have a theory that Ecclesiastes in particular, and the Old Testament (OT) in general, are used in a very specific way to underscore certain interpretations. Often these are traditionally typological interpretations, or so-called proof texts, of the other two texts read every Sunday, which are an Epistle (non-Gospel NT) reading, and a Gospel reading. My postulation is that this traditional typology is a narrow reading, which severely limits the church's use of a canon which contains so much more. I think we miss out on interesting and potentially meaningful messages by operating with this particular canon within the canon. This observation is the touchstone for my thesis statement.

In chapter 2 I will attempt to show how a canonical perspective can help the CoN read the OT more diversely, and appreciate texts like Ecclesiastes which otherwise fall outside of a one-stringed or unifying view of Scripture. I will try to discern the CoN's view on Scripture and its uses so as to be able to judge whether or not the choice of texts for the lectionary follows the church's principles.

In chapter 3 I will compare the CoN's previous lectionary from 1977 (Kirkeårets tekster, abbr. KT77) with the current lectionary from 2012 (Tekstbok for Den norske kirke, abbr. TB12), attempting to find documentation of the rationale or principles behind the selection of texts, both theological and other. I will focus especially on the reasons given for any changes in the OT selection from one lectionary to the other to see whether there has been a development in the view on and use of the OT in the CoN these past decades.

In chapter 4 I use the texts from Ecclesiastes chosen in the two lectionaries as a case study of how the lectionary, and thus the CoN, views and uses one of many so-called difficult texts in practice.

In my final chapter, chapter 5, I will discuss the findings in light of my canonical perspective,

analyze the view of the OT and Ecclesiastes which manifests itself in the two lectionaries, and provide some suggestions as to how CoN can better include the complexity of canon, and human experience, into the readings of the church service based on this thesis' findings.

## 1.2 Thesis Statement

What can the limited use of Ecclesiastes in the lectionary cycle tell us about the position of the Old Testament in the Church of Norway?

- How and why have the texts been chosen?
- What does this selection say about the view on and use of canon in the Church of Norway?

## CHAPTER 2: A LECTIONARY AS CANON

### 2.1 A Definition of Terms

The material I have gathered and will present in chapters 3 and 4 raises many questions. One of these is what sort of use and understanding(s) of canon the processes and resulting two lectionaries presuppose. Is there a difference between KT77 and TB12 not only in the specific texts they have chosen, but the view of canon which lies behind the choices? Is it possible to say something about the place of the Old Testament and so called "difficult texts", represented here by Ecclesiastes, in these lectionaries, and as a consequence of this, in the Church of Norway?

To be able to discuss this, I must first make clear what I mean by canon in this particular context. I use the term to describe different things. According to James Barr, a "*canon, in the sense of the canon of scripture, is 1. a body of texts; 2. something public, declared authoritative for the whole community; 3. something understood to be permanent and not intended for revision.*"<sup>1</sup> The canon in this context is thus the Biblical canon adhered to by the CoN,<sup>2</sup> and which for the purposes of this thesis is the specific canon I mean when I use the words like *Scripture, the Bible* or *the whole canon*. I will also sometimes use the phrase *difficult texts*. The reason for this is that it is a phrase which I have often heard or seen used at

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<sup>1</sup>

James Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983, page 71

<sup>2</sup> Which uses the traditional Lutheran canon, see for example the index in Bibel 2011, Bibelselskapet, 2011

my faculty, and which I interpret to mean something close to "texts which are difficult to interpret, and/or which could be interpreted as having a theology not easily aligned with main stream Norwegian liberal Lutheranism." This at any rate is how I use the term in this context, and I use Ecclesiastes as my case study because it represents a difficult text, and a side stream of the OT which does not easily lend itself to Christocentric interpretations of the Bible as a whole.

In addition to this specific definition of canon, I make use of the insights of the discipline canonical criticism as it is concisely described in James A. Sanders' scholar's guide *Canon and Community*.<sup>3</sup> Since my thesis focuses upon the use of the Lutheran canon in two (KT77 and TB12, and mainly the last of those) lectionaries in the CoN, it is not the disciplinary methods of canonical criticism which I use; rather, it is the perspectives which this discipline has offered, which Sanders calls "*a stance from which to read the Bible*."<sup>4</sup> This means that I adopt a position when scrutinizing those specific lectionaries in their specific CoN context which presupposes the value of that canon as a whole. As Sanders puts it, canonical criticism "*might be viewed as a confession on the part of biblical criticism that it now recognizes that the true Sitz im Leben today of the Bible is in the believing communities*"<sup>5</sup>; my thesis attempts to take this seriously by looking at one of the uses of the Bible in the CoN today. The canonical perspective makes itself particularly useful when dealing with how the lectionaries deal with the OT, and in this case particularly the parts of the OT, exemplified by Ecclesiastes, which do not easily fall into the greater "salvation history" narrative, or have traditionally functioned as proof texts for the NT. A canonical perspective can give room to the ambiguity and multivalence of Scripture, and values the OT in its own right. Sanders writes that "[c]anonical criticism, for the Christian, sees the Bible in terms of Scripture, not primarily in terms of testaments. It seeks the lines of continuity as well as of discontinuity within Scripture."<sup>6</sup> He further states that "[e]arlier efforts, such as the biblical theology movement, to discern the so-called unity of the Bible are abandoned. Canonical criticism celebrates the pluralism of the Bible and stresses its self-critical dimension in the varied thrusts and statements it records."<sup>7</sup> It is my impression that these insights, which to the biblical scholar may seem self-evident, nevertheless find little room in the CoN's way of selecting Biblical

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<sup>3</sup> James A. Sanders, *Canon and Community: A guide to canonical criticism*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1984

<sup>4</sup> Sanders, page 18

<sup>5</sup> Sanders, page 19

<sup>6</sup> Sanders, page 69

<sup>7</sup> Sanders, pages 36-37



texts for the lectionary. I agree with Sanders that the entire canon "*can never be stuffed into one theological box, as classically recognized by the term biblical paradox: the canon always contains the seed of redemption of any abuse of it.*"<sup>8</sup> It is my hypothesis that many of the books and passages which contain difficult texts belong to those parts of the Bible which are underrepresented. If this is true, could this mean that the texts in question are viewed as less authoritative, or does this possible suppression come from fear of non-coherence, or lack of hope?

## **2.2 How is the Lectionary of the Church of Norway a Canon within the Canon?**

Since the committees who worked on the current TB12, and the General Synods which approved both the process and the finished lectionary, have had an explicit goal to include as many Biblical books as possible in the TB12 lectionary, I assume they view that canon as authoritative and relevant. But both the wish for what Bispemøtet called a "*mini canon*"<sup>9</sup> and the fact that there are some books which are heavily overrepresented compared with others point towards the use, either conscious or otherwise, of a kind of canon within the canon. This canon within the canon is not a "proper" canon in Barr's definition, since it in its nature as committee produced is not intended to be permanent. And it has not been the intention of the CoN that the lectionary is the only Scripture its members hear or read. But, this intention aside, much of the reason behind my thesis is that the readings heard in church do in fact constitute all or most of what most members of the CoN hear or read of the Bible. Thus the lectionary at least fulfils the first two of Barr's criteria.

### **2.2.1 The Place of the Old Testament in the Church of Norway**

The CoN does not have a comprehensively defined collective understanding of Scripture. It relies on the ancient confessions and the confessional writings from the Reformation, and of course on the Bible. The most recent exposition on how the CoN views the Bible is a document called "Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk med særlig henblikk på homofilisaken", roughly translated as "Understanding and use of Scripture, particularly regarding the question of homosexuality". The document was written by an independent entity within the CoN called

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<sup>8</sup> Sanders, page 37

<sup>9</sup> 07.1/10, page 1

Lærenemnda<sup>10</sup> (abbr. LN), which consisted of the sitting bishops, theological scholars appointed by the three faculties of Theology, and theological scholars and lay people appointed by the General Synod (abbr. KM), and was tasked with answering theological questions of paramount importance to the CoN. As they wrote in the opening statements, according to the Church Law, this body could discuss only "*cases which regard the Evangelical-Lutheran doctrine, and themes of a serious and far-reaching nature*"<sup>11</sup> The body could not raise questions on its own, but had to be asked to do so by KM, a bishop or the King.<sup>12</sup> Even though the LN document specifically regards gay rights in the CoN, it states that the work "*on understanding and use of Scripture has a wider aim than the question of gay relationships.*"<sup>13</sup> I interpret this to mean that LN intended this document to be useful in discussion of the understanding and use of Scripture in the CoN in general, and will use the chapters which discuss that topic accordingly.

LN reminds us that the CoN, as Evangelical-Lutheran church, "*has no doctrinal office which defines and decides the doctrine of the church in debated theological questions. Scripture is held as the highest judge in questions of doctrine. This demands that the church thoroughly toils with the biblical texts.*"<sup>14</sup> Further, "*the responsibility of doctrine is given to the church as a whole,*"<sup>15</sup> which was why the LN consisted of church officials, lay people and theological scholars. This demand for thorough "*toil with the biblical texts*" also serves to underscore the importance of collective reading from Scripture, the whole basis for my thesis, and I will return to further elucidate this point later.

The LN further clarifies that:

Scripture is the highest norm and guideline for our church's doctrine. Scripture has authority in itself. It is in it we find the testimony of God's revelation in History, with its centre in Christ and his life, death and resurrection.[...] The authority of Scripture is expressed where the word of God calls to salvation and new life.[...] The authority of Scripture is anchored in the revelation of God.[...] All preaching, teaching and praxis must be tested upon Scripture.<sup>16</sup>

LN point to the Confessio Augustana as an important source of interpretive keys for the CoN, with the disclaimer that it too must be tried against Scripture. They further describe two ways

<sup>10</sup> Which has since been disbanded.

<sup>11</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk med særlig henblikk på homofilisaken. Uttalelse fra Den norske kirkes lærenemnd i sak reist av Møre biskop. Offentliggjort januar 2006, page 1

<sup>12</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 2

<sup>13</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 14

<sup>14</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 15

<sup>15</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 15

<sup>16</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 28

in which God acts with the World – as Creator and Redeemer. These function as interpretive keys to Scripture by differentiating, but not separating, between acts which "*sustain and give life*", such as "*through human works for the good of the communion with each other*", and acts of "*new creation and restoration*".<sup>17</sup> LN also focus on the typically Lutheran distinction between Law and Gospel, in this case meaning things which are gainful for mankind on the one hand, but not necessary for salvation, and the Gospel which calls to faith and thereby to salvation.

Because Scripture is the highest authority and norm for the doctrine of the church, the church must ever seek to understand Scripture and its meaning for the life and faith of the church. It is through the continual reading of Scripture that the church penetrates deeper into the revelation of God. Thus work with Scripture and the meaning and importance of the texts is a necessary condition for winning deeper insight into God's will.<sup>18</sup>

An especially important point in the contexts of this thesis is "*[t]hat every Christian is in her right to interpret Scripture, but at the same time does this with the whole of the church, is made especially apparent when Scripture is read and heard in the congregation.*"<sup>19</sup> Under the heading "Centre and Periphery" the LN continues by writing that:

[a] Lutheran church interprets biblical texts in terms of the main tenet and centre of Scripture, namely the testimony about Jesus Christ[, so that] the other parts of the revelatory testimony [i.e. Scripture] [must] be understood as having their centre and attaining their fulfilment in Christ.<sup>20</sup>

On the relationship between the Old testament and the New, they write that

Jesus and the first Christians shared holy writ with the rest of the Jewish people. These writings spoke of God's revelation and how he led his chosen people and the whole of humanity. Jesus' call and ministry, and his death and resurrection, were interpreted in the light of the holy scriptures. [Since Jesus himself connected his ministry to the Old Testament prophecies, t]he Old Testament is seen [...] as prophecies and promises of the coming of Christ, meaning that they are read as an expectation pointing forward towards Christ and are fulfilled in him. [...] The coming of Christ repeals the sacrificial and purity prescriptions of the Old Testament. At the same time the New Testament's connection to the Old is ever present, also in that parts of the law are upheld as an expression of the creative will of God. [...] The continuity between the New and Old Testaments is also apparent in that the understanding of creation and fall is maintained and is a fundamental perspective in the New Testament.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, all quotes in this sentence from page 29

<sup>18</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, pages 35-36

<sup>19</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 37

<sup>20</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 37

<sup>21</sup> Skriftforståelse og skriftbruk 2006, page 38

The quotes I have included are representative for the understanding and use of Scripture professed by LN, which is formally also the view of the CoN. The main focus is overwhelmingly on the testimony about Jesus and the rest of the New Testament. The Old Testament seems to be useful mostly as typological or proof texts, and is described in terms of law and prophecy with little or no focus on narrative and wisdom traditions. The case might be that this pervasive concentration on Christ is a result of the topic which is discussed in the whole of the document. Gay rights are traditionally an ethical question, and the biblical ethics of Christian theology must needs be centred in Jesus and the Pauline Epistles. But seeing as how the LN explicitly tasks itself with delivering a useful exposition of the understanding and use of Scripture in the CoN, they seem to undervalue the Old Testament as part of canon in its own right.

### **2.3 Preliminary Conclusions**

In this chapter I have attempted to clarify the canonical perspective I will use when analyzing the lectionaries KT77 and TB12, and the place of the OT and Ecclesiastes within them. I have shown that a lectionary can be called a canon within the canon in the praxis of the church, since the texts read every Sunday are the only Scripture the CoN can be certain its members hear or read. This simple fact makes the care in choosing texts all the more vital. Together with the principles of selection chosen by the lectionary committees, this canonical perspective will be my main vantage point in judging whether or not the lectionaries present the diversity of our multivalent canon in their choice of readings.

## **CHAPTER 3: MAKING A LECTIONARY**

### **3.1 Which Lectionaries, and Why**

There has been a comprehensive development in the number of OT passages in CoN lectionary cycles during the past century. For the purpose of brevity, I have decided to concentrate on the two most recent liturgy reforms in the CoN, specifically on the choice of new texts and structures for the lectionary cycles in 1977 and 2012. These two processes were conducted on quite different principles. During the first, leading up to the final resolution and publication of the lectionary cycle *Kirkeårets tekster* in 1977 (abbr. KT77), the CoN was a

state church and decisions about its formal constitution was left to the government. Leading up to the formal separation of church and state in 2012, the CoN was gradually granted more authority over itself. As a consequence, the last liturgy reform, Bible translation and thus also the new lectionary cycle Tekstbok for Den norske kirke (2012)<sup>22</sup>(abbr. TB12) were all conducted by the church itself, through the democratic process of general synods called Kirkemøtet (KM). I will use the document *NOU 1976: 44 Nye tekstrekker i kirken*, the governmentally published description of the process and results of the work on the new lectionary of 1977, to describe the background, principles and results of the previous lectionary KT77. In addition to the final TB12 and the explanatory documents voted over in the 2011 general synod, some of the documents I will use were formed in the years leading up to the resolution in 2011. Looking at selected process documents from before the resolution in 2011 is necessary to discern the rationale behind the selection of texts, and, importantly, to detect whether there was any development in the principles which were set down in the beginning. Nevertheless, my main focus will be on the lectionary cycles in their final form from 1977 and 2011.

### 3.1.1 How Does the Church of Norway Act

As mentioned, in the time from KT77 was completed and up to the present day, the CoN has undergone a slow transition from being a state church to presently being formally separated from the Norwegian state, albeit still with a practically different relationship to said state than other religious communities. In the process leading up to KT77, this meant that the committee which developed that lectionary was formally appointed by the King, and delivered the results of their labours to the Department of Church and Education, from whence it was effected. In the latest case, it was the CoN itself which decided it needed a new lectionary. In 1999 the annual General Synod passed a motion calling for the revision of the existing Kirkeårets tekster (KT77) Lectionary, and it was decided that this work needed to be done parallel to the coming complete reform of the CoN liturgy which was subsequently started in 2003.<sup>23</sup> The liturgy reform was conducted by a committee appointed by the general synod (KM) called NFG, and the Lectionary was devised by a sub-committee named UU2.

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<sup>22</sup> TB12 was put to use for the opening of the church year on the first Sunday of Advent, 2011, but was physically published in 2012.

<sup>23</sup> KM 09.1/06 Saksortering: Valg av hovedprinsipp for nye tekstrekker, page 3

### 3.1.2 How the Lectionary is Used in the Church of Norway

The following subsection describes how the lectionary TB12 is used in church following the liturgy reform it was itself a part of. It is not within the scope of this thesis to include the use of KT77 here, as my main focus is on the current lectionary. Some of the differences in use and flexibility are presented in the subsequent analysis of the two lectionaries.

The Sunday Service in the CoN is ordered into five main parts, I. Ingathering, II. The Word, III. Intercession, IV. Communion and V. Dismissal<sup>24</sup>, the part of The Word being where the (as a rule) three Biblical texts are read, a Biblical Psalm or a hymn is sung, the sermon is held and the creed is said or sung preceding another hymn. In the Order for Main Service (in effect the Sunday service) in the Service Book of the CoN, under point II. The Word, the rubrics state that *"In other main services than the High Mass<sup>25</sup> there can be two readings, or one reading (the Gospel). In which case point 10 Biblical Psalm/Hymn can be dropped. The congregation stands during the reading of the Gospel and sits during the other readings."*<sup>26</sup> The rubric under point 9 First Reading read *"From the Old Testament,"*<sup>27</sup> point 11 Second Reading *"From the New Testament other than the Gospels,"*<sup>28</sup> and point 12 is called Gospel<sup>29</sup>, which needs no further explanation. Under point 13 Sermon the rubrics specify that *"[t]he preacher normally preaches on the Gospel text. When the First or Second Reading is designated as preaching text, this text can be read here [meaning before the sermon, after the Gospel Reading]."*<sup>30</sup> In the section General Regulations, which were decided by the General Synod April 10<sup>th</sup> 2011,<sup>31</sup>

[t]he texts which are read shall be from the approved Text Book of the Church of Norway [currently meaning TB12]. The Gospel text shall be read in every main service. [...] The sermon is normally held on the Gospel text or another text appointed by Kirkerådet. [...] In special cases the Liturge can use a freely chosen text from the Bible as preaching text.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The Service Book of the Church of Norway *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 5.6

<sup>25</sup> This distinction between regular service and so-called high mass exists since there has been a tradition of holding Sunday service without celebrating the Communion, thus not all Sunday services are high masses in the CoN.

<sup>26</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 2.9

<sup>27</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 2.9

<sup>28</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 2.10

<sup>29</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 2.10

<sup>30</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 2.10

<sup>31</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 5.3

<sup>32</sup> *GUDSTJENESTE FOR DEN NORSKE KIRKE*, page 5.6

### 3.1.3 A Brief Historical Overview of Lectionaries in the Church of Norway

The history of Lectionaries in the CoN is not abundant either with Ecclesiastes or the Old Testament in general. Both NOU 1976 and the orientation documents from the process leading up to TB12 contain descriptions of the history preceding the material selection for this thesis:

Until 1886 our church had only one reading cycle, the one which is now used as First Cycle. This largely dates back to the early Middle Ages and for centuries it has served as an ecumenical bond between the major Western confessions: the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran. In 1886 we appropriated most of the two new Swedish cycles (from 1860): the 2nd and 3rd cycles' texts. These are also found, slightly altered, in our present Lectionary of 1918.<sup>33</sup>

After WWII, many Northern European Lutheran Churches began a process of revising their existing lectionaries. In Norway there were two drafts published, which NOU 1976 mentions at any rate, one having been written by the prolific War Hero Bishop, Eivind Berggrav (*Tider og tekster*, 1947), the other by the Department of Church appointed «Smemo Committee» (committee formed in 1949, draft published 1962).<sup>34</sup> There was also widespread Lutheran cooperation through The Lutheran World Federation, which held a conference in Geneva in August of 1968 to consult on how churches in the Nordic countries, Germany and USA should continue their respective lectionary revisions. The delegates agreed on these guidelines for the choice of texts:

1) There shall be one basic cycle with three readings for each Sun- and Holiday in the Calendar: from the OT, the Epistles and the Gospels. 2) This first cycle shall be based on the old, previously ecumenical Epistles and Gospels, which nevertheless should undergo a cautious revision. 3) In addition to the basic cycle there should be 1-3 supplementary cycles, each with three readings (OT, Ep., Gosp.). The individual church communities will be free to use these cycles as they see fit in their particular circumstances. 4) The goal in working out readings is to try and attain the closest possible ecumenical order.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2 The Lectionary of 1977 – Kirkeårets tekster

In this subchapter I will describe the process leading up to the lectionary of 1977, Kirkeårets tekster, as documented by the body which produced it, the Liturgical Commission of 1965.

This presentation will in turn form the basis for my analysis in the following chapter of

<sup>33</sup> NORGES OFFENTLIGE UTREDNINGER NOU 1976: 44 Nye tekstrekker i kirken DELUTREDNING fra et utvalg oppnevnt ved kongelig resolusjon 5. november 1965. Utredningen avgitt til Kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet i september 1976., page 5

<sup>34</sup> NOU 1976, page 5

<sup>35</sup> NOU 1976, page 5

whether those principles were adhered to in the case of Ecclesiastes, and how it places and values the Old Testament within the canon.

### 3.2.1 Who Chose the Texts

The members of the royally appointed Liturgical Commission of 1965 (Liturgikommisjonen) were Rune Birkeland, Ingemann Ellingsen, Trond Kverno, Kaare Støylen, Arve Brunvoll, Helge Fæhn, Per Lønning, Sigrid Christie, Egil Hovland and Bjørn Sandvik<sup>36</sup>

### 3.2.2 Principles of Selection

The following five points were written under the heading *On the Selection of Pericopes and their Use* in chapter II.C of NOU 1976, and comprise the principles of selection which the Liturgical Commission constituted for their work:

- 1) The six "main texts" in the two cycles can be used both as reading texts, without subsequent sermon, and as preaching text. Verses in parentheses () can be dropped as reading text, but shall be included when it used as preaching text.
- 2) The additional texts represent partly a "surplus" of appropriate texts on individual Sundays, and are again partly included answering special wishes and traditions from one or more of the other Nordic churches. These texts are primarily meant as preaching texts, either for use in services other than the Sunday High Mass, or they can replace the equivalent text within the two main cycles – in that case following the decision of the church board.
- 3) The Old Gospel in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle imprints itself on the day. There is a certain consonance between the three texts within each of the two cycles. However, one has wished to avoid a one stringed theme.
- 4) Overall the texts have become reasonably long. This is true both for the individual text and the ones within the same service. Especially when the text is merely read, one has tried to avoid including too many and disparate elements. This is vital when there in future will be read from both OT, Epistle and Gospel in the same service. Both historically and practically-actually the Word segment of the service has more of a "missionary" goal than the others, something which calls for a certain pedagogic simplification.
- 5) The previous point is also one of the reasons why several texts skip one or more verses, thus becoming compilations of verses. This often makes the text clearer than if one had included everything.<sup>37</sup>

As we can see, the Commission decided to diverge from the ecumenical agreement to produce

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<sup>36</sup> NOU 1976, page 3

<sup>37</sup> NOU 1976, page 11



three year cycles, thereby consciously narrowing the CoN's use of texts for public reading.

3.2.3 The View on the Old Testament's Value as Scripture Manifested in this Lectionary Working on the basis of the principles set down by The Lutheran World Federation in 1968 (as mentioned in section 3.1.4), and of course mainly the principles directly above, the Liturgical Commission began their labours. One of the choices they made, as we have noted, was to form only one additional cycle, so they ended up with two in total. A major part of the work was the choice of Old Testament texts for the two cycles, since the previous cycle (the Lectionary of 1918) had only 25 OT texts in total (20 ordained, 5 recommended) and the two new ones were to include an OT reading for each Sunday.<sup>38</sup> The choice of having two cycles was agreed upon in collaboration between the Nordic countries with the following reasons, among others: "*1) With only two cycles the old Sunday Gospel will sound at least every other year. [...] 2) There was agreement that Norway and Sweden's current 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles were the weakest throughout, and in addition: It would be especially difficult to find good OT texts for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle.*"<sup>39</sup> The last part of this quote shows an open mistrust of the value of the Old Testament, which I will return to at the end of this section. They also collected surplus texts they found particularly good and didn't have anywhere else to put, and spread them out throughout the church year in a subsection of suggested texts, after a German model. In choosing specific OT texts to fill out the cycles, the Nordic countries had somewhat differing motives: "*In choosing OT texts the majority wanted them to a certain extent to "harmonize" with the Epistle and Gospel for the day, while the Danes wished to include texts more in keeping with «that which best characterizes the Old Testament message».*"<sup>40</sup> One of the innovations in the coming KT77 was the prescription of OT texts specifically as preaching texts. Albeit the Alter Book of 1920 allowed for "*preaching over*" one of the Epistles or Readings of the day, or a freely chosen Biblical text" (1966 edition, p. 7),<sup>41</sup> and there was a centuries long tradition for "*preaching over the OT in the exordium of the Mass,*"<sup>42</sup> the use of OT texts in sermons had not previously been regulated. This choice was also questioned by some when the committee sent their *Provisional Proposal for New Lectionary Cycles* out on a

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<sup>38</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

<sup>39</sup> NOU 1976, pages 7-8

<sup>40</sup> NOU 1976, page 7

<sup>41</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

<sup>42</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

public hearing in December of 1974, as evidenced in the NOU 1976:

Excepting a minority at Menighetsfakultetet (abbr. MF), the Faculties of Theology all consent to the principle that Old Testament texts can be used as preaching texts, whilst the Union of Church of Norway Ministers' board of liturgy raise strong exceptions to this and also suggest the reduction of OT reading texts in the cycles. The Comission feels the proposal of awarding the Old Testament segment of Biblical revelation wider space in our Church's services really does not need a longwinded argument, since it is self evident that this part of Scripture has been too overshadowed up till now.<sup>43</sup>

I have yet to find documentation of the rationale behind the MF minority and Union board of liturgy stance on the subject. The committe does however polemicize against *"the notion that the Old Testament today is only Gospel in terms of preparation and prophecy."*<sup>44</sup> In context this might suggest that they are arguing againts the hearing responses from the organizations mentioned, but it also might be a general, widely held notion. In light of the committe's fervent defense of the Old Testament's value for Christian use, not only as *"preparation and prophecy"* but in its own right, their discussion of constructing pericopes by dropping whole or parts of verses within the chosen text is interestingly ambiguous. They continue their discussion of hearing responses thusly: *"Regarding other remarks we will mention that some of the statements warn against making a not entirely consequitive selection of verses in the Old Testament texts, whilst a minority at the University's Faculty of Theology recommends this very principle[.]"*<sup>45</sup> building on the fact that *"Berggrav treats this question on pp. 24-25 and concludes that it must be «considered principally and historically admissible in special cases to craft a compilatory or broken text». The Smemo Draft (p. 141) has 14 broken texts from both OT and NT."*<sup>46</sup> The previously mentioned chapter II.C on the selection and use of pericopes sheds light on the thoughts behind the committe's choices, and especially relevant are the last three points:

3) The Old Gospel in the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle imprints itself on the day. There is a certain consonance between the three texts within each of the two cycles. However, one has wished to avoid a one stringed theme.

4) Overall the texts have become reasonably long. This is true both for the individual text and the ones within the same service. Especially when the text is merely read, one has tried to avoid including too many and disparate elements. This is vital when there in future will be read from both OT, Epistle and Gospel in the same service. Both historically and practically-actually the Word segment of the service has more of a "missionary" goal than the others, something which calls for a certain pedagogic

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<sup>43</sup> NOU 1976, pages 8-9

<sup>44</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

<sup>45</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

<sup>46</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

simplification.

5) The previous point is also one of the reasons why several texts skip one or more verses, thus becoming compilations of verses. This often makes the text clearer than if one had included everything.<sup>47</sup>

It is challenging to discern a comprehensive view on the Old Testament in the 1976 NOU. On the one hand, the Commission voice a clear wish to include the OT more than previously. This manifests itself in the choice to have a designated OT text for each Sunday. On the other hand, one of the main reasons this Commission gave for having only two cycles, as opposed to the three which had become a common goal for much of the Lutheran world, is, as we read, that «[i]t would be especially difficult to find good OT texts for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle."<sup>48</sup> In addition, against the better judgment of their Danish colleagues who as we read "wished to include texts more in keeping with «that which best characterizes the Old Testament message», "<sup>49</sup> the Commission even decided to copiously censor the pericopes they did select in order to make "the text clearer than if one had included everything."<sup>50</sup> When the Commission states as self-evident that the Old testament has a value over and above its usefulness as "preparation and prophecy,"<sup>51</sup> this is in contrast with some of the responses they were given in the public hearing, by the Theological Faculties, no less. Does this, then, mean that the Commission with its OT-positive attitude fought to include more of the breadth and depth of canon, but held themselves back in the face of powerful opposition? No matter what the historical situation might have been, there is a blatant tension in KT77 between the Commission's professed appreciation of the OT's value in and of itself, and the actual lectionary which it produced.

### 3.3 The Lectionary of 2012 – Tekstbok for Den norske kirke

#### 3.3.1 Who Chose the Texts

The Subcommittee UU2 of the NFG were the people who actually selected the pericopes which were then presented to the General Synod for ratification. Throughout the long process of making the TB12 lectionary, UU2 had various members, lay as well as church professionals.

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<sup>47</sup> NOU 1976, page 11

<sup>48</sup> NOU 1976, page 8

<sup>49</sup> NOU 1976, page 7

<sup>50</sup> NOU 1976, page 11

<sup>51</sup> NOU 1976, page 9

### 3.3.2 The Need for a New Lectionary

The decision to make a new lectionary was made on the basis of long standing criticism of KT77, especially regarding its overt limitation of texts to specific interpretations, its extensive use of compiled and broken texts and the lack of narrative material: "[o]ur current Lectionary is categorized more by topics than by stories"<sup>52</sup> In a process document from 2006 the aforementioned UU2 describe some of the main guiding principles they agreed to early on which formed the following labours. The most important of these was to expand the lectionary to three cycles. As we have already seen, KT77 decided on two cycles with additional texts in stead of the three which had become standard, the reason most relevant for this thesis being that, since they had decided to have OT reading every Sunday "[i]t would be especially difficult to find good OT texts for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle."<sup>53</sup> UU2, meanwhile, deemed that a three year cycle "would give a much broader range of texts in our services."<sup>54</sup> The second decision was whether the new Lectionary should be built upon the so-called "Scandinavian Model" (SM), or upon the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). The difference between RCL and SM is firstly their provenance. RCL grew out of Vatican II, and was later adopted by both the Anglican churches in the Porvoo Communion and the Lutheran churches in America, making it the "standard lectionary for reformatory church communities in the English speaking world."<sup>55</sup> SM is based on the revisions from Finland (2000) and Sweden (2002) and is thus a more local option. The second main difference is the degree of change which the alternatives entail. RCL was described by UU2 as "a radical reform – some have called it a revolution - [...] driven by the wish to give churchgoers a much broader access to biblical texts in the service[.]"<sup>56</sup> When it comes to OT texts, RCL takes the middle ground between the more scholarly view of the OT as valid and meaningful in its own right and the view that the OT texts should underscore and specifically aid the Gospel of the particular Sunday.<sup>57</sup> In practice this means that RCL's OT readings are chosen with two different motives in mind depending on the church calendar:

between advent and pentecost a meaningful connection between OT reading and Gospel is endeavoured [whilst] in the "ordinary" church year there are two options:

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<sup>52</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 3

<sup>53</sup> NOU 1976, page 8

<sup>54</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 4

<sup>55</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 5

<sup>56</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 5

<sup>57</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 7

either reading narrative sequences from the OT [...] based on a supposed basic motif in the current Evangelist [...] to let the great stories speak for themselves[, or to use] so-called "related" texts.<sup>58</sup>

The most "revolutionary" change in this model would be the former, in that it includes large sequential cycles of text spanning several Sundays instead of the small units in use in many cycles. This is also one of the reasons the majority in the UU2 decided against this option. They, and subsequently both NFG and the annual General Synod, agreed that since many congregations in Norway have only occasional Sunday services (e.g. every third Sunday), they felt this would not suit our needs. This is one of the subjects which come up in the discussion of the virtues of the SM: *"a clear life cycle structure [...] during the summer months [...] would be sufficiently open to not fragment when one cannot expect [a weekly service]."*<sup>59</sup> The context for this quote is the choice of Gospel texts, but it is held forth as a general principle. Other major factors in the choice of an SM were to *"conserve an ecumenical heritage, namely the old lectionary which from ca. year 800 was common to Christendom in our part of the world,"*<sup>60</sup> instead to supplement it with more cycles and texts, and

to remain within the part of the Lutheran family which has chosen reform instead of revolution of the churchly textual material and in faith that our closest sister churches have shown us that it is possible to compile a weighty three year cycle which conserves rather than leaves the tradition.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.3.3 Principles of Selection

In the further process UU2 set down 9 principles of which I will discuss those I deem relevant to our objective.

1. Broad range of texts[:] [T]he Swedish [lectionary process] was founded on a demand for as many Biblical books as possible [...] [so as to include] a diversity of Biblical images of God[.] A shift from two to three cycles will self-evidently be able to include a greater breadth of the Biblical canon[, but this must also be adjusted according to] knowledge of which Biblical writings are actually underrepresented in our current Norwegian textual tradition.<sup>62</sup>

My interpretation of this principle is that diversity is a main goal which can be superseded by

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<sup>58</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 7

<sup>59</sup> KM 09.1/06, pages 8-9

<sup>60</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 7

<sup>61</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 8

<sup>62</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 8

inclusion of more texts from underrepresented parts of the canon in an in-depth introduction of these.

2. Connection between texts on the same day[:] The connection between the three reading texts and the Biblical Psalm on one and the same day can be differing in character. Some times it is thematic, other times it has to do with common literary motifs, like metaphors; others again the texts are in dialogue with or even in contrast to one another, and finally there can be a classical typology, meaning there is established a salvation historical connection between [...] the Old and New Testaments, in that order. All these relationships [...] can be validated within an [SM], and it is vital that all models for establishing such connections between texts are used. Not least it is important that the texts where necessary are freed from potential thematic "captivity". Further, it is an important and valuable principle in the [SM] that the Gospel reading is reckoned as the main texts of the particular Sunday. An example of "motivic" and not thematic connection is "ocean – wind – waves" [...].<sup>63</sup>

In other words, there is a move towards diversity not only in number of books, but also in the interpretations of the relationship(s) between the OT and NT. There is noticeably still a strong emphasis on the Gospel as main focus every Sunday, in my view a kind of limitation of to which extent the OT is allowed to "speak for itself"; it can to a certain point, but no further.

Another of the points of principle which pertains to this thesis is point "4. *Too long/short texts[:]* *The length of texts varies, with greater tolerance for length in narrative sequences.*"<sup>64</sup>

This explanation is especially interesting to us since Ecclesiastes falls out of this prioritised category of narrative, and thus can more easily be shortened. The document does not explicate further the motives behind determining length, but the statement that it "varies" no doubt expresses the multitude of different concerns relevant to passages and books of such differing character as in our canon. Point "5. *Suitability for recitation*"<sup>65</sup> has no general guidelines, but one would think a book like Ecclesiastes would score highly in this category at least. Point "7. *Suitability for Family Services*"<sup>66</sup>[:] [The Swedes had a goal that there should be] *at least one text which can be used in preaching directed towards children. Whether a text is suitable for this task has been coupled with the criterion that it must be a narrative passage. The Swedes [...] [do not feel they have] attained this goal.*"<sup>67</sup> I include this point since it is evidence of a way of thinking about the "suitability" of texts, in this case for children. Here it is the genre,

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<sup>63</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 8

<sup>64</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 9

<sup>65</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 9

<sup>66</sup> Writer's note: Family Service is a specific type of Sunday service created to suit children and families. It differs slightly from the regular High Mass, and it is permitted to drop diverse parts to shorten down the duration.

<sup>67</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 9

not the content, which is pointed out. I infer that stories are seen as more evocative, but also that there is a reluctance to read and preach too closed, or theologically stringent, texts for children. This speaks to an adherence to the principle of diversity and letting the congregation judge more for themselves.

The NFG agreed with the guiding principles that UU2 had worked out, as did both Kirkerådet<sup>68</sup> and Bispemøtet<sup>69</sup>. Of the guidelines cited above, points 5 and 7 were especially mentioned in the concluding remarks as vital to a new lectionary. The decision to choose the SM stood with 7 votes, with 2 for RCL.<sup>70</sup>

### ***Interview With Harald Kaasa Hammer***

Since my thesis attempts to clarify the principles and theology behind the text selection in TB12, and the value it places on the OT and difficult texts like Ecclesiastes, I decided to interview someone who was present during the discussion within the NFG and UU2. I was recommended to contact Harald Kaasa Hammer, who was secretary to the UU2 committee during the whole process. He was gracious enough to grant me an interview, which I recorded with his permission.<sup>71</sup> The material I include in this section is in its nature anecdotal, and is therefore only meant as a supplement to the presentation of the TB12 process in this chapter. Mr. Hammer speaks only for himself in his account, and it is not to be read as an official statement from either the NFG or the UU2. I choose to include it nevertheless, because I view it as an interesting and important peek into a discussion which, aside from finished presentations, is closed to outsiders.

I asked Hammer why so many of the OT texts in TB12 seemed to be chosen for their typological value, even though there was a wish for a broader range of OT texts in the new lectionary:

Hammer: «In the first place, the feedback we received from high and low all during our work indicated: «Let us for God's and the congregation's sake, understand why the three texts are chosen and placed together as they are.» And we hold that we, on very many Sundays, have achieved a tighter, thematic connection between the texts than that which was the case before '77. Or, from the 77-book, so to speak.»

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<sup>68</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 11

<sup>69</sup> KM 09.1.1/06, page 1

<sup>70</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 10

<sup>71</sup> The full transcription of the conversation (in Norwegian) is published as an appendix to this thesis, and the recorded sound file is uploaded onto DUO together with the thesis.

Later in the conversation, Hammer did grant that typological interpretation had been one of their modes of choosing texts:

Hammer: «Moreover, we have to say that it is as you point out. We are entering [...] into a typological tradition, though this does not fully describe our selection of texts. We are substantially breaking these boundaries. But that we, theologically speaking, read The Old Testament in light of The New, [s]o [we don't include] that which has been clearly abolished, according to The New Covenant.»

He went on to say that the Subcommittee had studied some of Gail Ramshaw's work in their labors with the OT, and described how her views had influenced their take on the connection between texts:

Hammer: « But, what she is saying, then is: First, one looks at context and clarity and then, that several texts in the Gospel may not be understood in a comparable manner without knowing the Old Testament context. . . . We have not been that interested in this side of the question. So, when there has been an Old Testament verse in a Gospel passage, we have not automatically gone to that source and utilized it as the Old Testament reading. The other approach is a more metaphorical one, that one expands upon what one finds of metaphors which can enlighten or expand the perspective. A third approach, is, then, that one juxtaposes the Old Testament texts in such a way that the passages either complement each other, or perhaps, in part, stand in contrast to each other. So, the manner in which we have formulated this for ourselves is that the passages should elucidate each other, and at the highest, yes, at such a high level that they could speak to each other.»

This quote shows how influential Ramshaw's work was on the UU2's principles of selection, since it is nearly verbatim what we read from their 2006 document above.

One of Hammer's most pertinent remarks, which the OT-faculty at the Norwegian schools of theology would perhaps do well to take to heart, was that when the UU2 reached out to the Faculties of Theology about helping the Subcommittee in their endeavour to include the wealth of the OT, they were met by:

Hammer: «a dulling silence, there was no response at all. So, in contrast to the revolution which occurred in 1977, there was just nothing. And we also felt a strong need for an Old Testament hermeneutic, but experienced not even a wall, but rather only a hollow echo when our desire was for greater zeal. What we also tried to elicit was an evaluation: «What has happened to promulgation and perception of The Old Testament in congregations after the great changes that came in 1977?» And that evaluation has been utterly absent.»

On the topic of breadth of selection, and the principles which the UU2 started out with, Hammer confessed:



Hammer: «For a while, we actually wanted to have a representative selection of texts from The Old Testament. That principle grew to be too great for us. And considering the number of pages in The Old Testament compared to the number of pages in the four Gospels, as well as the number of pages in The New Testament, it was evident that we had to find another key. It has been an explicit goal that we should include passages from all the books in The Old Testament, and all the books in The New, for that matter, so by this principle alone, there has been a greater breadth.»

Thus it is apparent that lack of time and resources, and of course which elements of finishing the lectionary were prioritized, led to the principle of representation being largely abandoned. Finally, when speaking about the principle of the UU2 that all texts in TB12, including the ones from the OT, are meant to be potential preaching texts (meaning they should have what Hammer called «sermon value»), he remarked:

Hammer: «[...] it is quite remarkable that in Norwegian [Ecclesiastes] is called «The Preacher» when it is the only book in the Bible that has little gospel to preach, since the dimension of hope is so sorely lacking. Such is life, and so, too, conveyance of the dimension of emptiness, at least passively, if not to say, depressively, in great sections of Ecclesiastes. But we have selected three passages from Ecclesiastes. One is from Ecclesiastes 3, and is used in funeral rites, «To Every Thing There Is A Time». And, then, we include this, «Be Slow to Speak». We felt the need to say something about our words. [...] Yes, «Be Slow to Speak» . . . and in the midst of all emptiness, fear God. So we include this sense of void in Ecclesiastes, as well as, the Wisdom Tradition about fearing God. And that is also reflected in the third passage we include, Ecclesiastes 5: 9-17 about how riches can turn to misfortune, the brief time God allows man to live [...] And this is basically the theme running through all of Ecclesiastes, along with life's depressive culmination, so to speak.»

Hammer's expression «the dimension of hope» became the quality that for me most of all represented his views as I understood them in our conversation. And although it is his expression, and is not explicated in this way in any of the UU2 documents which I have found, it has come to represent to me also the elusive quality which the UU2 have looked for in the texts they have chosen.

3.3.4 The View on the Old Testament's Value as Scripture Manifested in this Lectionary  
An excerpt from the preliminary protocol of the Kirkemøte committee's comments on the general debate on the draft presented at Kirkemøtet 2010 acclaims the result of the work done so far, appreciating especially the goal of presenting a broader selection of Biblical texts. It does however underscore the view that *"the Gospel reading has a constituting function for*

*the choice of texts and is the gravitation point of the service*"<sup>72</sup> It documents discussion of whether three cycles would mean that non-regular churchgoers hear the central Gospel readings too seldom, but the committee holds fast to the principle of diversity.<sup>73</sup> Another thing this committee chooses to emphasize is that the days of the Church Calendar "*appear without special thematic headings, and that one has chosen texts from the OT and NT which open for a good collaboration between the texts.*"<sup>74</sup> Comments on particular Sundays interestingly include one where John 12:24-26 is suggested in stead of another Gospel text; it is interesting in this context, because the main argument for this change is that it "*will fit in well with the OT and Epistle texts for this day.*"<sup>75</sup> This indicates that, even if the Gospel is generally seen as the main text each Sunday, setting the tone for the choice of other texts, the OT and/or Epistle texts can also dictate the choice of Gospel reading.

In 2010, when the Proposal for New Lectionary of 2008 (abbr. F08) had been sent out on a public hearing, and had been tried out in certain congregations, there was a need to make some changes based on the responses given. The 2010 General Synod were therefore presented with a new document, based on the UU2's work, but written by the Kirkerådet. Many of the comments and hearing responses were about subjects which are not pertinent to this thesis, but there are some which can be interesting. When describing the process up til 2010 on the subject The OT in the Lectionary, the document for instance reads:

Many posited that [the decision to include many more OT texts in KT77] would vitalize the use of the Old Testament, others were worried that it would weaken the focus on the Gospel and the New Testament. This theme has not been mentioned by anyone in the hearing responses this time around.<sup>76</sup>

This seems to point to a development in how the CoN views the OT. In describing the process with which UU2 worked with the OT texts for the F08 proposal, these two principles were guiding: "*1. The texts from the Old Testament shall form a representative range of what are important OT texts, and 2. The Old Testament shall be used to clarify and supplement the New Testament texts.*"<sup>77</sup> It is important to note that while a "representative range" is a main goal, there is still apparently a need to focus mainly on "the important OT texts". Breadth is thus always secondary to whatever texts might be viewed by the UU2 as the core of the OT.

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<sup>72</sup> KM 07/10, page 1

<sup>73</sup> KM 07/10, pages 1-2

<sup>74</sup> KM 07/10, page 2

<sup>75</sup> KM 07/10, page 6

<sup>76</sup> KM 07.1/10, pages 6-7

<sup>77</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 7

The Kirkerådet also points out that the development in biblical scholarship the past decades has made the CoN aware that OT texts can validly be used in many ways. In addition to what they call

the traditional and familiar way to use the OT text [where the Gospel] cites the OT[, contains a clear allusion to the OT[, or] contains a story which directly points back to the OT[ texts can be juxtaposed] so that text speaks to text through a common field of linguistic imagery.<sup>78</sup>

The document emphasizes the importance of selecting “*whole pericopes, which are to be interpreted within their context*,”<sup>79</sup> but because some of the hearing responses expressed the opinion that some pericopes had become too long, “*these demarkations have been reconsidered*.”<sup>80</sup> Kirkerådet also comment that since the Gospel text is considered most important, the OT and non-Gospel NT texts “*should not have many motifs which make the focus unclear. For this reason also, texts from the OT and NT have been shortened*.”<sup>81</sup>

Additionally, they state that the lectionary contains some compiled texts, which I call broken texts, “*to make the momentum in the text clear and prevent that one loses the consistency of the text because of inappropriate details that come in. This occurs in some texts, but is used with restraint*.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, although the UU2 had generally abandoned the practice of compilation, there is still a strong tendency towards cleaning texts of so-called disturbances. This, to my mind, speaks against a genuine acceptance of the diversity of the canon.

In this presentation, it is mentioned that both Bispemøtet, and later Kirkerådet, had asked the UU2 to develop what the Bishops called a “*mini canon*”.<sup>83</sup> This was followed up when the 2011 General Synod ratified the new TB12. The delegates agreed on the following wording: “*8. Mini-Lectionary: The General Synod asks that there be developed a mini-canon of main texts for the church year*.”<sup>84</sup> The background for the perceived need of a mini-canon was the fact that many congregations in the CoN only celebrate church services a few times every year.<sup>85</sup> The fear was that these congregations might unluckily miss out on most of the central Biblical texts for this reason. However, when this question was presented to the NFG, they decided that a mini-canon would not accord with the principles which the TB12 lectionary

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<sup>78</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 7

<sup>79</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 9

<sup>80</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 9

<sup>81</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 9

<sup>82</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 9

<sup>83</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 1

<sup>84</sup> KM 06/11, page 6

<sup>85</sup> KR 52/11, page 3

was founded upon.<sup>86</sup> They resolved instead to write a guide to simplified use of TB12<sup>87</sup> for the use of congregations which have fewer services, which would later be included in the materials in the Service Book for the CoN.<sup>88</sup> To my mind the NFG resolved their disagreement with the Bishops' seemingly irreverent attitude towards the canon in a way which preserved the principles of diversity on which the TB12 was founded.

### *Some Statistics*

The following are some figures and facts about the relation between pericopes in TB12. I include a list of the OT books represented in the finished TB12, with the number of pericopes from each book:

Gen: 41 – Exod: 26 – Num: 1 – Lev: 3 – Deut: 11 – Josh: 2 – Judg: 1 – Ruth: 4 –  
1Sam: 10 – 2Sam: 3 – 1Kgs: 7 – 2Kgs: 1 – 1Chr: 1 – 2Chr: 1 – Neh: 1 – Esth: 1 –  
Job: 4 – Psa: 39 – Prov: 7 – Eccl: 3 – Song: 1 – Isa: 46 – Jer: 16 – Lam: 2 – Ezek: 4 –  
Dan: 3 – Hos: 2 – Joel: 2 – Amos: 3 – Jon: 3 – Mik: 4 – Seph: 1 – Hag: 1 – Zach: 3 –  
Mal: 3

Here we can see that 35 of the 39 OT books included in the CoN canon are present (Ezra, Obadiah, Nahum and Habakkuk are the ones which were not included, meaning that all book were in fact not included as was originally the intention of UU2). Out of the 35 books, 7 books have 10 or more pericopes, and only 9 books are present with 5 or more pericopes. 10 books only have one pericope included. Isaiah (46), Genesis (41) and Psalms (39) are the most heavily represented books, with Exodus (26) on a respectable fourth place.

My point in including this list is not to claim TB12 is a sub par lectionary, or that the texts which are included are not central. It is simply to visualize the hard fact that, even with the laudable principles of inclusion and diversity with which the UU2 started out, the actual lectionary is still overwhelmingly biased in terms of book representation.

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<sup>86</sup> KR 52/11, page 3

<sup>87</sup> KR 52/11, page 4

<sup>88</sup> KR 52/11, page 6

## CHAPTER 4: ECCLESIASTES IN THE LECTIONARY

### 4.1 The Book of Ecclesiastes

I will now look at the actual texts from Ecclesiastes which were chosen in the two lectionaries in question. I will focus on pericope selection, by which I mean the unit of verses chosen. I will look at some key elements of the units in question, and how they fit in their immediate context. And I will try and figure out whether each unit is in fact representative of the overarching message(s) of Ecclesiastes as suggested at the beginning of this chapter. In this endeavour I will first and foremost lean on scholarly commentaries, but will make personal observations when I see fit.

#### 4.1.1 A Brief Summary

There are many ways, all insufficient, to summarize the message of Ecclesiastes. In this section I will use commentaries to sketch an image which can serve as the background for my later thoughts on whether the texts chosen, especially in the TB12 lectionary, do in fact represent Ecclesiastes as a whole, which was the starting intention of the UU2.

Roland Murphy chooses to focus on certain key words in Ecclesiastes. These words and phrases together form the particular language and thought-world of Ecclesiastes, and many of them are exclusively, or nearly, used by Ecclesiastes. The first one is of course *hebel* “vanity”:

The word occurs thirty-eight times[...] formed the inclusion in the motto, “vanity of vanities” [1:2;12:8] [...] has a basic meaning of breath or vapor[ and can signify among other things] fleeting[...] vain and ineffectual, and even deceitful[ and has variously been interpreted as] “absurd” [...] “the manifestly irrational or meaningless”[ and] “incomprehensible”.<sup>89</sup>

The next is *yitron* “profit”, which “*designates what is left over, or surplus, and is only used by Qoheleth in the Hebrew Bible.*”<sup>90</sup> *Heleq* “portion”, *amal* “toil”, *simha* “joy” and *hokma* “wisdom” are also named by Murphy as main motifs in Ecclesiastes.<sup>91</sup> “Under the sun”, *tht hsms*, is a phrase which occurs 29 times and refers “*to the universality of human*

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<sup>89</sup> Murphy, Roland E., *Ecclesiastes*, Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 23A, Word Books, Dallas, 1992, pages lviii-lix

<sup>90</sup> Murphy, page lix

<sup>91</sup> Murphy, pages lx-lxi

experience”.<sup>92</sup> The last phrase I will mention is “a pursuit of wind”<sup>93</sup> where “ruah “wind” is [...] a metaphor for things that have no abiding value or are insubstantial.”<sup>94</sup> The word *ruah* elsewhere in Ecclesiastes and the OT can also mean the life-breath from Gen 2:7<sup>95</sup>, meaning that “wind” is connected both in symphony with *hebel*, as something fleeting which cannot be grasped, and with the breath of life.

An crucial element of Ecclesiastes, both within the book and as a part of canon, is the critique of the very wisdom tradition that Ecclesiastes was a part of. Proverbs represents this tradition over all other books in the Bible. The world-view of the sages was formed by a conviction that “*fear of God and adherence to the insights of previous generations guarantee long life, prosperity, progeny and honor. God secures well-being for the righteous and self-destruction for the wicked.*”<sup>96</sup> The book of Job problematizes this simplistic causal link in the form of “*an extreme instance of innocent suffering, but even Job himself assumes a causal connection between deed and consequence.*”<sup>97</sup> Ecclesiastes' radical message of *hebel* “*strikes at the foundation of the sages' universe.*”<sup>98</sup>

The over-arching message of Ecclesiastes can also be said to be expressed in the motto from the inclusio (1:2; 12:8), but I will let Crenshaw's rather pessimistic introductory words sum up this section:

Life is profitless; totally absurd. This oppressive message lies at the heart of the Bible's strangest book. Enjoy life if you can, advises the author, for old age will soon overtake you. And even as you enjoy, know that the world is meaningless. Virtue does not bring reward. The deity stands distant, abandoning humanity to chance and death.<sup>99</sup>

#### 4.1.2 My Interpretation

To further elucidate the reason for my coming arguments, I have chosen to include a short exegesis of one possible meaning of Ecclesiastes. The way I read Ecclesiastes it has a positive message. It might seem gloomy at first glance, and the emphasis on *hebel* has always made readers contemplate how life, the universe and everything can appear to have no meaning, no

<sup>92</sup> Seow, Choon-Leong, *Ecclesiastes. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday, New York, 1997, page 104

<sup>93</sup> Seow, page 121

<sup>94</sup> Seow, page 122

<sup>95</sup> Seow, page 367

<sup>96</sup> Crenshaw, James L., *Ecclesiastes. A Commentary*, Old Testament Library, SCM Press Ltd, London, 1988, page 23

<sup>97</sup> Crenshaw, page 23

<sup>98</sup> Crenshaw, page 23

<sup>99</sup> Crenshaw, page 23

order, no rest. I think this is a true description of one of the difficult parts of human existence, which is no doubt the reason why the wisdom of Ecclesiastes' insights on the human condition still garner recognition. But instead of only stating the fact that "all is *hebel*", Ecclesiastes portrays the journey a person can have through life, the attempts at grasping existence, trying to become wiser, amassing worldly goods, enjoying food and drink with the ones we love. All these things are inherently transient – they cannot be grasped completely, not unlike *hebel*. Neither is it possible, as far as any of us know, for humans to hold the knowledge of God in our small hands. This might seem like a grim understanding, but I interpret Ecclesiastes as telling us that once you accept these basic limitations you are also free within them. Just because you can't know *everything*, doesn't mean you can't know *anything*. Thus you are free to pursue happiness, fulfilment, contentment, whatever you might call it, and you can live as though the meaning you find through the thoughtful process of actually living life, is the meaning you need. In stead of herding the wind, you can get through the highs and lows of life resting on a sort of operational theory, which can be revised according to what you experience. It seems to me this is a message that, far from taking hope away from people, can be useful and meaningful to many who struggle with the ephemeral nature of life in a hasty, demanding world.

## 4.2 A Study of the Chosen Texts

In KT77 there are two texts from Ecclesiastes; one is the designated OT text for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, in the second cycle (12:1-7); the other is one of four optional readings for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (12:13-14).<sup>100</sup> This means only the first was guaranteed to be read, every other year, in the previous lectionary cycle.

In TB12 there are no so-called optional readings, making it a rule that the three Ecclesiastes texts chosen also in fact be read, provided that the Liturge of the given Sunday does not decide to skip the First Reading (as previously explained). The texts selected in TB12 are 3:1-2;4-7;11a (on New Year's Eve, Cycle I), 4:17-5:6 (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in the Time of the Trinity, Cycle I) and 5:9-14 (on the 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in the Time of the Trinity, Cycle III)<sup>101</sup>, meaning there will always be a year wherein the CoN does not read any texts from

<sup>100</sup> KM 07.1.1/10 SAMMENSTILLING AV NÅVÆRENDE TEKSTBOK OG FORSLAGENE 2008 OG FRAMLEGGET TIL KIRKEMØTET 2010, on pages 14 and 11 respectively.

<sup>101</sup> See for example *Tekstbok for Den norske kirke*, Verbum, 2012, page 598

Ecclesiastes.

In presenting the chosen texts, I will focus mostly on TB12 since that is the present lectionary, making it also the most relevant one for this thesis. I will not attempt to probe the passages fully, if that is indeed possible, but to show whether the texts from TB12 align with the principles espoused by the Subcommittee. In addition, although some key words will be relevant to present I will not generally focus on translation options for the texts in question. This is both necessary for reasons of brevity and because the lectionary is already based on a single translation, Bibel 2011.

#### 4.2.1 The Texts in Kirkeårets Tekster 1977

The following text is the one which was read in the cycle proper every other year:

**12:1** Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come, and the years draw near when you will say, “I have no pleasure in them”; **2** before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return with the rain; **3** in the day when the guards of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the women who grind cease working because they are few, and those who look through the windows see dimly; **4** when the doors on the street are shut, and the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low; **5** when one is afraid of heights, and terrors are in the road; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along and desire fails; because all must go to their eternal home, and the mourners will go about the streets; **6** before the silver cord is snapped, and the golden bowl is broken, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, **7** and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the breath returns to God who gave it.

(Eccl. 12:1-7, NRSV<sup>102</sup>)

#### ***Eccl. 12:1-7: On Pericope Selection***

Old Testament Library commentator James L. Crenshaw includes vv. 12:1-7 in the larger unit «*Youth and Old Age 11:7-12:7*»<sup>103</sup>. Roland Murphy, who has written on Ecclesiastes for Word Biblical Commentary, includes the inclusio of 12:8 in his unit, making it 11:7-12:8, which he names «*Instruction concerning Youth and Old Age*»<sup>104</sup>. In The Anchor Bible, Choon-Leong Seow divides likewise, simply calling the unit 11:7-12:8 «*Conclusion*»<sup>105</sup>. In his chapter on

<sup>102</sup> Quoted from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+12&version=NRSV> (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016)

<sup>103</sup> Crenshaw, page 181

<sup>104</sup> Murphy, page 111

<sup>105</sup> Seow, page 346



Ecclesiastes, Leo G. Perdue calls the section 11:9-12:7 «A Poem on Anthropology and Cosmology»<sup>106</sup> These four scholars agree that the passage by any name is divided into (at least) two parts, where the poem on old age in 12:1-7 (plus the inclusio of 12:8) is part of what Murphy calls «an instruction»<sup>107</sup>. Upon commenting on 12:1, Murphy admonishes us not to let «[t]he chapter division at this point [...] obscure the fact that Qoheleth is continuing the advice he began in 11:7.»<sup>108</sup> In addition to this pericope by general consensus being larger in all cases but the selection for KT77, this is a powerful argument against cutting Qoheleth's advice in half. It is therefore clear that the pericope defined by the Commission in this case is smaller than what most scholars would concur with, even if the poem can carry meaning in isolation. In other words, whilst the poem on old age is potent in and of itself, its immediate context provides depth, and is an integral part of the pericope.

### ***Eccl. 12:1-7: Key Elements***

As already mentioned, the unit is part of a thematization of youth and old age, and it is also the last part of Ecclesiastes precluding the inclusio and the epilogue (which I will discuss in the next section). It is a poetic treatment of the aging process, which inexorably ends in death. Murphy comments that «[t]he poem [...] sums up the tantalizing message of the author who has bound together the themes of joy and death throughout his work.»<sup>109</sup> The light and rejoicing in the preceding treatment of youth is contrasted with darkness and the admonition to remember in the passage included here.<sup>110</sup> The key word *hebel* is present in vv. 11:8;10 and 12:8, but is not present in the short pericope of KT77. Another of Ecclesiastes' key words is, however; *ruah*, the life-breath, appears in the last verse (12:7), where it "returns to God who gave it." Crenshaw argues that this verse's

allusion to Gen 2:7 and 3:19 does not contradict Qoheleth's earlier denial that the human spirit ascends to God and the animal life principle descends to the earth. There is nothing comforting about Qoheleth's acknowledgement that life comes from God, who breathed into the human nostrils and now sucks the breath back out.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Perdue, Leo G., Chapter 6 «Wisdom and Egyptian and Hellenistic Skepticism: The Book of Qoheleth» (pp. 161-216) in *Wisdom Literature: a theological history*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2007, page 207

<sup>107</sup> Murphy, page 114

<sup>108</sup> Murphy, page 117

<sup>109</sup> Murphy, page 114

<sup>110</sup> Crenshaw, page 182

<sup>111</sup> Crenshaw, pages 188-189

In his discussion of the overarching message of Ecclesiastes, Seow argues that the old age-poem, which «*the author has reused [...] and infused [...] with eschatological allusions[,]*»<sup>112</sup> not only depicts «*the end of the human life span [...], but the end of human life in general.*»<sup>113</sup> The opening «remember your creator...» also functions as a point of interpretation, since the Hebrew *bore'eka* (your creator(s)) holds within it the additional meanings «your pit», «your well», «your wife»; Perdue shows how these variously point to the engendering of life, and to death.<sup>114</sup> But in contrast with «*the traditional creation theology of wisdom and especially the psalms of lament, [...] the students are instructed to remember God, [but] should not expect God to remember them.*»<sup>115</sup>

This second text was one of four optional readings for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost:

**12:13** The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone. **14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.  
(Eccl. 12:13-14, NRSV<sup>116</sup>)

### ***Eccl. 12:13-14: On Pericope Selection***

Crenshaw has the section 12:9-14, which he names "*The Epilogue(s)*"<sup>117</sup>, and identifies vv. 12-14 as the second epilogue, written by a different author than the first. Perdue only has one narrator and divides "*The Epilogue: 12:9-14*"<sup>118</sup> into three parts written by the same redactor. A similar stance is taken by Murphy, who disagrees with, among others, Crenshaw in that this epilogue must needs be written by two epilogists with different views on Qoheleth's work.<sup>119</sup> He nevertheless follows most scholars in identifying two "*main units*, [...] vv. 9-11 and vv. 12-14."<sup>120</sup> Seow writes that although scholars agree that "*12:9-14 is an appendix of some sort[,..]*

<sup>112</sup> Seow, page 53

<sup>113</sup> Seow, page 53

<sup>114</sup> Perdue, pages 208-209

<sup>115</sup> Perdue, page 209

<sup>116</sup> Quoted from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+12&version=NRSV> (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016)

<sup>117</sup> Crenshaw, page 189

<sup>118</sup> Perdue, page 211

<sup>119</sup> Murphy, page 126

<sup>120</sup> Murphy, page 124

[t]here is no consensus [...]on the unity of the verses."<sup>121</sup> In practice this means that there are theories as to whether the epilogue consists of two or three parts, whether one, two or three separate authors are at play, and even whether the epilogue could have been written by the author of Ecclesiastes himself.<sup>122</sup> But "*the majority of scholars regard 12:9-14 as coming from some editor or editors – some person or persons other than the author of the book.*"<sup>123</sup> At any rate it is clear that the consensus does not include dividing vv. 13-14 in their own unit.

### ***Eccl. 12:13-14: Key Elements***

As previously states, vv. 13-14 are part of an addition, or appendix, to Ecclesiastes usually called the Epilogue. The reason why many scholars divide this epilogue into two different parts is the opening word *weyoter* in vv. 9 and 12, which for most scholars signal an addition or "*postscript/addendum*"<sup>124</sup>. According to Crenshaw the second epilogue (as he calls it) «*differs sharply from [Qohelet's] thought. [...]The point of view in the first epilogue [vv.9-11] is that of a devoted student who reflects on Qohelet's activity. The second epilogue [vv.12-14] seems to be the work of a detractor who thinks of Qohelet's teachings as inadequate and perhaps perverse.*»<sup>125</sup> He goes on to conclude that the words of the final epilogue are «*totally alien to Qohelet's thinking.*»<sup>126</sup> Seow thinks that "*vv 13b-14 are simply tacked on at the end*"<sup>127</sup>, making the preceding verses up to 13a a "*terse colophonic notation*"<sup>128</sup> in the style of Egyptian wisdom texts. Contra Crenshaw, Seow writes "*that the perspective in vv 13b-14 is not contradictory to the rest of the book.*"<sup>129</sup> Rather, "[t]he charge to keep God's commandments in the epilogue[...] is an additional dimension to the teachings of Qohelet."<sup>130</sup> Murphy, contra Crenshaw and Seow (and many others), calls vv 12-14 an «*important evaluative notice*»<sup>131</sup> which follows the vv 9-11 «*addendum [...] in harmony with the colophonic practice in Assyrian and Babylonian sources*»<sup>132</sup> which lists the professional

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<sup>121</sup> Seow, page 391

<sup>122</sup> Seow, page 391

<sup>123</sup> Seow, page 391

<sup>124</sup> Seow, page 383

<sup>125</sup> Crenshaw, page 190

<sup>126</sup> Crenshaw, page 192

<sup>127</sup> Seow, page 394

<sup>128</sup> Seow, page 394

<sup>129</sup> Seow, page 395

<sup>130</sup> Seow, page 394

<sup>131</sup> Murphy, page 127

<sup>132</sup> Murphy, page 127

actions of Qoheleth (he was a «sage *who* ordered, examined, *and* fixed (*edited?*)»<sup>133</sup>) the work which the reader has just read). The argument Murphy makes for the so-called second epilogue in fact being written by the same epilogist as the first, is that he sees no need for this in the content. He argues that it is only us modern readers who have the need to understand the reasoning behind why such an apparently alien text was included into canon. He sees v 12a as referring back to the «*pleasing [and] true words*»<sup>134</sup> in v 10. Thus, «*[i]nstead of being a criticism of Qoheleth, this verse is in fact praising his work; there is no need for more wisdom writings!*»<sup>135</sup> He also leans on the «*old philosophical principle:[...] «beings should not be multiplied»*»<sup>136</sup>, which is a tried and tested text critical maxim. He finishes his comments «*with the ironic but apt observation that it was somehow not fitting that the enigmatic book of Ecclesiastes should come to an end without the subtlety and open-ended character that the epilogue shows.*»<sup>137</sup>

#### 4.2.2 The Texts in Tekstbok for Den norske kirke 2012

In Tekstbok for Den norske kirke, Qoheleth appears three times.

The first one is on New Year's Eve, Cycle I (since this pericope is a broken text, I have written the verses not included in the lectionary in parentheses and cursive so the context is readily available):

**3:1** For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

**2** a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;  
*(3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;*  
*a time to break down, and a time to build up;)*  
**4** a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;  
**5** a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;  
**6** a time to seek, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;  
**7** a time to tear, and a time to sew;  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

<sup>133</sup> Murphy, page 127

<sup>134</sup> Murphy, page 123, from Murphy's translation of the Epilogue

<sup>135</sup> Murphy, page 126

<sup>136</sup> Murphy, pages 127-128

<sup>137</sup> Murphy, page 130

*(8 a time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

*9 What gain have the workers from their toil? 10 I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with.) 11 He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds(, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.)*

(Eccl. 3:1-2;4-7; 11a NRSV<sup>138</sup>)

### ***Eccl. 3:1-2;4-7; 11a: On Pericope Selection***

This pericope is the same selection as in the text which is an optional reading in the funeral service. Its use in the funeral setting is presumably the reason why v. 3 (and perhaps also v. 8) is not included there, and it may be that the rationale behind using this broken version on New Year's Eve is that it is recognizably the same text as in the funeral service. Nevertheless, in Crenshaw's commentary vv. 1-11 are part of the larger pericope 3:1-15, headed "*A Time for Everything*."<sup>139</sup>

Murphy has a much larger main unit, «*A Reflection upon Time and Toil (3:1-4:6)*»<sup>140</sup>, within which our verses fall into the content based subunit 3:1-15.<sup>141</sup> Seow calls his section «*Everything Is in the Hand of God (3:1-22)*»<sup>142</sup>, again with the subsection «*The Determination of Events (3:1-15)*»<sup>143</sup>. Perdue's is the smallest unit. He calls it «*The Meaning of Time: 3:1-13*»<sup>144</sup>, and is closest to the pericope chosen by the Subcommittee. Yet, on his scheme of the structure of Ecclesiastes Perdue divides the section into 3:1-15 «*Time (human toil and divine action)*»<sup>145</sup> Thus none of these scholars have, as we have seen, vv. 1-11 as its own section, and of course they include all the verses unlike TB12.

### ***Eccl. 3:1-2;4-7; 11a: Key Elements***

Crenshaw notes that the ancient sapiential tradition which forms part of Ecclesiastes' context believed that there was a right time and a wrong time for everything, and they

<sup>138</sup> Quoted from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes%203&version=NRSV> (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016)

<sup>139</sup> Crenshaw, page 91

<sup>140</sup> Murphy, page 28

<sup>141</sup> Murphy, page 31

<sup>142</sup> Seow, page 158

<sup>143</sup> Seow, page 170

<sup>144</sup> Perdue, page 196

<sup>145</sup> Perdue, page 190

devoted considerable energy to discerning proper times. Qohelet concurs in the view that everything has its own moment (3:1-9), but he insists that humans cannot know those times (3:10-15), for God withholds that information.<sup>146</sup>

Another important insight on the literary tools of the poem of times is that the «*use of opposites to express completeness or totality is frequent in the Hebrew Bible.*»<sup>147</sup> Even though the content of the unit can seem like generic wisdom, Murphy says the Hebrew words מִן (καίρως), which Murphy translates as «moment», and עַתָּה (χρόνος), which he translates as «time» in v. 1:

indicate a specific point in time, as opposed to duration. [Qoheleth] is not interested in affirming that everything is ephemeral, or that there is a rhythm to time as there is to movement (1:4-8). The events in vv 2-8 are presented as simply elements of human experience, some of them peak experiences (birth and death).<sup>148</sup>

Murphy also reflects that what he calls:

The poem on time [vv. 1-8] may very well be a separate poem with its own meaning[...and i]n context it can be summarized thus: the key activities of life serve as examples of how all times are *fixed* by God, and over them humans have no control. [...] Most serious of all, humans not only lack a free disposition of such events in the face of the determinism of vv 1-9, they also fail to comprehend what God is about (v 11).<sup>149</sup>

Murphy further refuses to interpret Ecclesiastes' thoughts in this poem in an inspirational religious tradition, stating plainly that:

We may readily grant ignorance and lack of control over our births and deaths, but the religious person lets this rest in the benificent Providence of God. Qoheleth will have none of this. He seizes upon this poem on time in order to underscore the sad human condition. These are *God's* times, not our times.<sup>150</sup>

Crenshaw agrees with this emphasis on the skepticism of Ecclesiastes when he interprets the preceding verses through v. 11 (in its entirety, of course): «*Qohelet observes that humans cannot really comprehend anything pertaining to divine activity.*»<sup>151</sup> Perdue observes on v. 11 that the 'olam God has placed into humans, which Perdue, in concordance with long-standing tradition, translates as «*eternity*»<sup>152</sup> does not mean that God has «*reveal[ed] how [timely*

<sup>146</sup> Crenshaw, page 92 (See also Perdue, page 196)

<sup>147</sup> Crenshaw, page 93

<sup>148</sup> Murphy, page 32

<sup>149</sup> Murphy, page 31

<sup>150</sup> Murphy, page 39

<sup>151</sup> Crenshaw, page 98

<sup>152</sup> Perdue, page 196

events] *fit together in the larger temporal structure. Consequently, the correlation of episodic, human action with divinely determined times is impossible within the larger temporal order of 'olam.*»<sup>153</sup> Perdue interestingly interprets this observation in context with memory, stating that the «*crisis for Qoheleth is the inevitable loss of collective (1:8-11) and individual (5:20) memory. With the loss of memory, experience does not achieve unity through time.*»<sup>154</sup> This interpretation is cut short by the breaking of the text, and is made blander and less dangerous.

The next pericope in TB12 is 4:17-5:6 (Eng 5:1-7), read on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in the Time of the Trinity, Cycle I:

**5:1** Guard your steps when you go to the house of God; to draw near to listen is better than the sacrifice offered by fools; for they do not know how to keep from doing evil.  
**2** Never be rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be quick to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few.  
**3** For dreams come with many cares, and a fool's voice with many words.  
**4** When you make a vow to God, do not delay fulfilling it; for he has no pleasure in fools. Fulfill what you vow. **5** It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not fulfill it. **6** Do not let your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake; why should God be angry at your words, and destroy the work of your hands?  
**7** With many dreams come vanities and a multitude of words; but fear God.

(Eccl. 5:1-7 NRSV<sup>155</sup>)

### ***Eccl. 4:17-5:6 (Eng 5:1-7): On Pericope Selection***

Crenshaw names the pericope 4:17-5:8/5:1-9E "Religious Obligations"<sup>156</sup>, whilst Murphy has the large section "*Varia* [...]" (4:17 [5:1]-6:9)"<sup>157</sup> with the subdivision "*words before God (Temple presence; 4:17-5:6 [5:1-7])*"<sup>158</sup>. Perdue has vv. 4:1-5:19 ("*Kingship and Temple*"<sup>159</sup>) as a main unit, but divides vv. 4:17-5:6 into their own section.<sup>160</sup> Seow call his unit "*Attitude*

<sup>153</sup> Perdue, pages 196-197

<sup>154</sup> Perdue, page 197

<sup>155</sup> Quoted from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes%205&version=NRSV> (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016)

<sup>156</sup> Crenshaw, page 114

<sup>157</sup> Murphy, page 44

<sup>158</sup> Murphy, page 55

<sup>159</sup> Perdue, page 198

<sup>160</sup> Perdue, page 199

*Before God (5:1-7 [Heb 4:17-5:6])*"<sup>161</sup>, meaning that all the commentators here agree on the same pericope as in TB12, with the exception of Crenshaw.

#### ***Eccl. 4:17-5:6 (Eng 5:1-7): Key Elements***

According to Seow, there is a shift in language from the verses directly preceding this pericope which "gives way to the language of instruction in 5:1-7 (Heb 4:17-5:6)."<sup>162</sup> The style is close to other Near Eastern wisdom texts, "and is best exemplified in the Bible in the book of Proverbs."<sup>163</sup> Murphy calls the subdivision 4:17-5:6 [5:1-7] "words before God (Temple presence[...])"<sup>164</sup>, in which Qoheleth «manifests [...] a cautious but reverent attitude to the cult that is not essentially different from the usual critique of cultic abuses.»<sup>165</sup> In Crenshaw's words it is

[b]ecause of the distance separating human beings from the deity, [that] Qohelet recommends a policy of restraint in speech. Moreover, the few words should be truthful, for calling attention to one's lack of integrity incurs risk. [...] One's primary obligation, to fear God, includes an acknowledgement that the deity has no special fondness for fools.<sup>166</sup>

This distance is amplified by the words "God is in heaven, and you upon earth" in v. 1 (Eng 2), which in Seow's words "emphasiz[es] God as Wholly Other"<sup>167</sup>, especially because God is described as being "in heaven and on earth" elsewhere in the OT.<sup>168</sup> Crenshaw states that Ecclesiastes' advice of «caution lest one's actions incur divine wrath [...] neither recommends nor discounts traditional piety, although Qohelet suspects the motives and conduct of some who approach the sacred place.»<sup>169</sup> The way he has delineated this unit (Kingship and Temple (4:1-5:19)<sup>170</sup>), allows Perdue to focus on the fact that «[k]ingship is a common topic in wisdom literature, in large measure due to the fact that rulers, at least prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE, were patrons of wisdom.»<sup>171</sup> He goes on to describe the Solomonic

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<sup>161</sup> Seow, page 193

<sup>162</sup> Seow, page 197

<sup>163</sup> Seow, page 197

<sup>164</sup> Murphy, page 55

<sup>165</sup> Murphy, page 50

<sup>166</sup> Crenshaw, page 115

<sup>167</sup> Seow, page 198

<sup>168</sup> Seow, page 198

<sup>169</sup> Crenshaw, page 116

<sup>170</sup> Perdue, page 198

<sup>171</sup> Perdue, page 198



tradition that Qoheleth latches onto when he, «*speaking as Solomon, observes «oppression»*»<sup>172</sup> in this unit. From this role, Perdue goes on to briefly describe Old Testament traditional thought on Temple and Temple piety, but states that Qoheleth is far removed from temple tradition and Zion theology.<sup>173</sup> He calls the verses from 4:17ff a «*teacher's instruction about priestly religion and cultic activity in the temple* [comprising] *five admonitions* [the first of which] *sets the mood for the entire instruction: «Be on your guard when you approach the house of God» (4:17)*»<sup>174</sup>

In contrast with Deut 4:39, God in Eccl. 5:1 does not live on earth, including in the temple. Thus, as Perdue puts it, «*God and humanity dwell in different spheres of reality.*»<sup>175</sup> The dreams Qoheleth speaks of in the same section are not the revelatory dreams of priests or prophets, «*but rather the result of burdensome labor.*»<sup>176</sup> Thus we see that, although our four commentators weight and word their findings differently, they agree that this passage constitutes something close to traditional wisdom instructions on piety, but with Ecclesiastes' own particular twist. The last verse is notoriously tricky to translate, but as Crenshaw writes: the final command leaves nothing to the imagination. This imperative, «Fear God», concludes Qoheleth's remarks about cultic obligations. Fear of God results in few words, faithfulness in paying vows if one ever resorts to them, and generally in conduct that does not invite punishment.<sup>177</sup>

Murphy likewise concludes that the «*fear God!* [concludes] *Qoheleth's observations about ritual practice* [and] *is at the heart of his religious attitude[.]*»<sup>178</sup> In his introduction, he explains that

Qoheleth's understanding of what it means to fear God seems to flow from the mystery and incomprehensibility of God. If one cannot understand what God is doing (3:11; 8:17; 11:6), and indeed if one does not perceive either divine love or hatred (9:1), reverential fear is in order (cf. 3:14; 5:6).<sup>179</sup>

With his focus on Ecclesiastes' Solomonic voice in this passage, Perdue winds up his interpretation of the passage thusly:

It is ironic that Qoheleth as Solomon, the one in tradition who constructed the temple and served as the high priest who dedicated it with a great festival fanfare, questions the value of cultic religion. In contrast to priestly tradition and traditional wisdom, Qoheleth teaches that cultic acts do not order the cosmos, do not procure divine blessing, and do not bring society into harmony with God and the world. Instead, they

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<sup>172</sup> Perdue, pages 198-199

<sup>173</sup> Perdue, pages 199-200

<sup>174</sup> Perdue, page 200

<sup>175</sup> Perdue, page 200

<sup>176</sup> Perdue, page 201

<sup>177</sup> Crenshaw, page 118

<sup>178</sup> Murphy, page 51

<sup>179</sup> Murphy, page lxvi

are primarily foolish acts that may bring destruction, if the worshiper is not careful. God is far removed from the world of human dwelling, and it is best not to draw divine attention to oneself by a misdeed or foolish act within the sacred precincts. True piety consists of fearing the mysterious God who has ultimate power over each and every life. The grand theological vision of priests and temple prophets, centred in the sacred temple and its efficacious ritual, is not present in the reflection of this sage.<sup>180</sup>

The last text from TB12 is 5:9-14 (Eng 5:10-15), to be read on the 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday in the Time of the Trinity, Cycle III:

**5:10** The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity.

**11** When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?

**12** Sweet is the sleep of laborers, whether they eat little or much; but the surfeit of the rich will not let them sleep.

**13** There is a grievous ill that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owners to their hurt, **14** and those riches were lost in a bad venture; though they are parents of children, they have nothing in their hands. **15** As they came from their mother's womb, so they shall go again, naked as they came; they shall take nothing for their toil, which they may carry away with their hands

(Eccl. 5:10-15, NRSV<sup>181</sup>)

### ***Eccl. 5:9-14 (Eng 5:10-15): On Pericope Selection***

Crenshaw has vv. 5:9-6:9/5:10-6:9E ("*The Disappointments of Wealth*"<sup>182</sup>). Murphy divides his large unit (4:17 [5:1]-6:9) into two subunits here, which consist of vv. 5:9-11 [10-12] and 5:12-16 [13-17] ("*considerations about wealth [and] a case of a rich person who loses possessions*"<sup>183</sup>). Perdue only mentions vv 5:9-15 in an aside remark about the consequences of "*love of money*"<sup>184</sup> at the end of his reflection over the larger unit 4:1-5:19.<sup>185</sup> Under the heading "*Enjoyment, Not Greed (5:8-6:9 [Heb 5:7-6:9])*"<sup>186</sup>, Seow further divides our selection

<sup>180</sup> Perdue, page 201

<sup>181</sup> Quoted from: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes%205&version=NRSV> (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2016)

<sup>182</sup> Crenshaw, page 119

<sup>183</sup> Murphy, page 55

<sup>184</sup> Perdue, page 202

<sup>185</sup> Perdue, page 198

<sup>186</sup> Seow, page 201

into the two units "*People Who Cannot Be Satisfied (5:8-11 [Heb vv 7-10])*"<sup>187</sup>, and "*People Who Cannot Enjoy (5:13-17 [Heb vv 12-16])*"<sup>188</sup>. Thus in the case of vv. 9-14 (Eng 10-15), none of these scholars agree with TB12's particular pericope selection.

### ***Eccl. 5:9-14 (Eng 5:10-15): Key Elements***

Murphy, as mentioned, includes this in a large section spanning vv 4:17 [5:1]-6:9. He divides this verse selection into two subsections: «*considerations about wealth (5:9-11 [10-12]), [and] a case of a rich person who loses possessions (5:12-16 [13-17])*,»<sup>189</sup> which shows that the pericope selection in TB12 has left out the last verse, a verse which compounds the pessimism of the pericope. Crenshaw notes that «[t]he topic of the insatiable appetite of humans appears for the third time. In 1:8 and 4:8 Qohelet observed that the eyes were never satisfied. Now he dispenses with the image of insatiable eyes, using the language of passion.»<sup>190</sup> According to Seow, "[w]ealth itself is not the problem here, but the insatiability of those who love money. There is always more that they want, always something else."<sup>191</sup> In v. 10E the writer again uses the Hebrew word *hebel*<sup>192</sup>, translated in NRSV as "vanity", this time about that striving towards wealth. One of Murphy's interesting interpretations of this passage in context is that riches, «[a]lthough they are a gift of God, they are inadequate compensation for human existence[.]»<sup>193</sup> Gifts from God are thus not wholly positive for Qoheleth, although he urges his readers to enjoy them while they can, for «God uses «joy» to distract humans from the awful realities of their short lives.»<sup>194</sup> I would also like to remind that the phrase "under the sun" in v. 13E is one of Ecclesiastes' main themes, "and is unique to him among the biblical writers."<sup>195</sup> Verse 15E echoes Job 1:21,<sup>196</sup> and, together with v 16E (which is not included in TB12's selection) it in Seow's words signifies that "[w]hat is gained in a lifetime matters only in the lifetime. So there is no advantage in trying to hold on to what one has, for the gain is as elusive and unpredictable as wind (5:16 [Heb v 16])."<sup>197</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Seow, page 218

<sup>188</sup> Seow, page 220

<sup>189</sup> Murphy, page 55

<sup>190</sup> Crenshaw, pages 120-121

<sup>191</sup> Seow, page 219

<sup>192</sup> Seow's notes on *hebel* are particularly useful, pages 101-102

<sup>193</sup> Murphy, page 49

<sup>194</sup> Murphy, page 56

<sup>195</sup> Seow, page 104; Here also, Seow's notes on the phrase are thorough (pages 104-106)

<sup>196</sup> Crenshaw, page 120

<sup>197</sup> Seow, page 221

### 4.3 Have the Principles of Selection Been Adhered To?

The time has come to judge whether the texts chosen actually fulfil the principles which UU2 agreed should form the basis for text selection. As I have previously mentioned, the texts from KT77 are included in order to show any possible development in the view on and use of the OT's difficult texts, as exemplified by Ecclesiastes. The principle of breadth as formulated in principle 1 from 2006<sup>198</sup> was reiterated with a shift in focus in 2010, when it was stated that “1. *The texts from the Old Testament shall form a representative range of what are important OT texts.*”<sup>199</sup> Taking into account the canonical perspective I presented in chapter 2, what I look for in the passages will be: whether they can be said properly to represent the book of Ecclesiastes as a whole, or key concepts therein. I will also discuss compilation within pericopes, and pericope selection, where pertinent.

I will first look at the two texts from KT77.

The first, 12:1-7, is as we saw the last part of Ecclesiastes proper. It is also the second section of a unit on youth and old age. As the finale of Ecclesiastes' teachings it is certainly central, and ends with the key concept *ruah* returning to God. Although the pericope might have been more meaningful had it included the preceding verses on youth, the tone is definitely “Ecclesiastian”.

The second passage, 12:13-14, contains the last words of Ecclesiastes as printed in the Bible, but we have read that these are most likely an addition by a later editor. Standing by themselves, these last two verses of the epilogue(s) give a pious and definitive impression which misses the style and thought of Ecclesiastes. This selection obscures what might be in the epilogue of admiration for Ecclesiastes the Sage, and is to my mind the least representative text selection of the five.

And now for the three texts chosen in TB12.

Eccl 3:1-2;4-7;11a is without a doubt a crucial passage from Ecclesiastes. The inherent critique of traditional wisdom is present in Ecclesiastes' interpretation of the list of appropriate times; in v. 11 he discounts humans' ability to discern these times, and to understand God. However, this central point is censored out of the text in TB12. Since the last part of v. 11 is cut out, the specifically skeptic nature of Ecclesiastes' teachings is

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<sup>198</sup> KM 09.1/06, page 8

<sup>199</sup> KM 07.1/10, page 7

circumvented. Thus the over- and undertones are quieted, and the message becomes bland. The fact that this passage in the lectionary is paired with 1Pet 1:22-25 and Luk 13:6-9<sup>200</sup> encourages a reading more in line with proverbial wisdom. At a cursory glance it seems like the "theme" which bind these texts together has to do with planting and uprooting. As mentioned, the selection of this pericope was presumably made because the same verses are included as and optional reading in the funeral service, and vv. 3 and 8-10 may have been cut there in a cautious respect of mourners. It is nevertheless disappointing, taking into account the UU2's outspoken reluctance to compile texts, that they chose to remove the Ecclesiastian punchline (v. 11b) from this pericope.

Ecc 4:17-5:6 (Eng 5:1-7) is perhaps the least representative of the passages chosen for TB12. Although the nature of the books composition is stringent enough that no parts of the book ultimately seem not to belong in its greater context, the pericope in this instance can give off an air of pompous piety when allowed to stand in isolation. As observed above, the ending "fear God" is in line with Ecclesiastes' thoughts about the fundamental distance he observes between the deity "in heaven" and the people "on earth". When read in concert with the other two texts of that Sunday, Jacob 3:7-12 and Matt 12:33-37<sup>201</sup>, the rationale behind the juxtaposition looks to be words, keeping silent instead of saying fruitless things. The guarding of one's tongue is a beloved theme in traditional wisdom, a tradition which we have seen Ecclesiastes fundamentally criticize. If the UU2's object was to use a wisdom saying about keeping silent, which seems to be the case, the more honest choice of text might in this case have been one from Proverbs.

Ecc 5:9-14 (Eng vv.10-15) is, aside from the less fortunate verse selection, a surprisingly well chosen text. Although the theme of wealth might not be at the heart of Ecclesiastes' message, the pericope as it stands includes many of the key concepts of the book. "Gain" (profit), "vanity" and "under the sun" are all present, as is the paraphrase of Job. The meaninglessness or absurdity of desire for worldly goods is a good representation of Ecclesiastes as a whole, even if including v. 16E might have made the picture more complete. To wit, the passage is read together with 1Tim 6:6-12 and Luke 12:13-21.<sup>202</sup> To my mind, this is the most crafty text cluster of the three. Both the Epistle and Gospel readings can be said to build upon Ecclesiastes' thoughts in this passage,<sup>203</sup> which leads me to infer that the OT

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<sup>200</sup> TB12, page 607

<sup>201</sup> TB12, page 614

<sup>202</sup> TB12, page 614

<sup>203</sup> See Seow, pages 219-221

reading has been allowed to govern the other readings for this Sunday.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Discussion

When searching for sources for this thesis, I came across an article based on a paper given by Edgar Krentz in 2009. In it Krentz discusses Scripture as source for Lutheran theology, and almost immediately touches upon the core of my thesis:

What the lectionary compilers have done, without intending to do so, is create a canon within the biblical canon. Though unintentionally, they have taught people to read individual stories from the Gospels, or smaller sections of Acts and the epistles as if that is the way one should read and hear biblical texts. Most people never read any biblical book from beginning to end, let alone in one sitting.<sup>204</sup>

The act of isolating pericopes, even if one resists the temptation to break or compile them, is in itself problematic, and an endeavour which must be undertaken only with the minutest care. For in attempting to harmonize texts into what I have simplistically called typological readings, or a salvation historical narrative, "[w]e lose the specific stress of a biblical text or book and run the risk of foreshortening the riches of the Bible."<sup>205</sup> Krentz continues the paper by presenting his particular take on Luther's view on canon, which he interprets as Christ-centred, but not as "*second-article-of-the-creed Christian*"<sup>206</sup>. In his concluding arguments, he writes that:

The immense variety within the Bible resists every attempt to impose a unifying reconstruction on its variety. Indeed its variety is a major resource for calling people to faith [and:] There is no one formulation of the gospel that captures the fullness of the biblical resources.<sup>207</sup>

Here Kretz points to something the CoN does well not to forget, namely that many people find the openness and diversity of Scripture the very thing which enables them to believe.

Since Harald Kaasa Hammer informed me that the UU2 had read Gail Ramshaw when working on the OT-text selection, I was compelled to do so also. In the article *The First Testament in Christian Lectionaries*, she deals with many issues which are pertinent to this

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<sup>204</sup> Krentz, Edgar, *Building on the One Foundation: Bible: Book of Faith*, (paper delivered at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago Seminex Reunion, June 24, 2009), *Currents in Theology and Mission* 38 2 (April 2011), page 104

<sup>205</sup> Krentz, page 104

<sup>206</sup> Krentz, page 113

<sup>207</sup> Krentz, page 115

thesis. Much of the basis for my thesis statement is confirmed in Ramshaw's assessment that “[t]he theoretical, theological question of how Christians value and derive meaning from the First Testament is manifest in the practical, liturgical issue of what first reading to select.”<sup>208</sup> It is easy to discern Ramshaw's thoughts in UU2's description of the connections between the three readings every Sunday, both in the desire for such a connection<sup>209</sup> and the nature of it.<sup>210</sup> She also provides a concise description of the history of typological interpretations of the OT, and the anti-Semitic replacement theology which developed around such interpretations,<sup>211</sup> pointing out how:

this prophecy/fulfillment ideology guides the church's choice of the First Testament readings[. With it] the pericopes tend to suffer both from a distortion of meaning and from the snippet knife, for to make a text from the First Testament say a specifically Christian thing, considerable twisting and turning, cutting and pasting are required.<sup>212</sup>

Ramshaw rightly observes that Christians, no matter how much we may revere the OT and let it speak for itself, will always have a different interpretation of it from the Jewish community, and other faiths who share the same stories.<sup>213</sup> Nevertheless, having presented the figures and scrutinized the Ecclesiastes passages included in the TB12, my impression is not that the CoN suffers from too much consideration of the inherent diversity and strangeness of the OT.

In an article in *Nytt Norsk Kirkeblad* from 2007, Marianne Bjelland Kartzow made an assessment of the process of making the new lectionary to that date. She based her judgments on the document «Forslag til nye tekstrekker 2010 – prinsipper og vurderinger. Forslag fra AU-UU2 til NFG levert 1. juli 2007» which the UU2 had presented the NFG with in July of that year, prior to the public hearing which would be conducted the following year.<sup>214</sup> In her article, Bjelland Kartzow focuses mainly on the gender perspective present in the proposal as it stood in 2007. This falls outside the scope of this thesis. But she also comments on a tendency she had discerned of the UU2's seeming judgment of certain texts as “not for public

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<sup>208</sup> Ramshaw, Gail, *The First Testament in Christian Lectionaries*, in *Worship*, 64 no 6, Nov 1990, (p 494-510), page 495

<sup>209</sup> Ramshaw, page 495: «I believe that all the propers of a given Sunday ideally are to be linked in some reasonable manner.»

<sup>210</sup> Ramshaw, page 496, where she suggests that Christians should choose OT readings «which complement the gospel reading either as its necessary context, metaphoric parallel, or parallel by contrast»

<sup>211</sup> Ramshaw, pages 500-502

<sup>212</sup> Ramshaw, page 501

<sup>213</sup> Ramshaw, page 502

<sup>214</sup> Marianne Bjelland Kartzow, *Folkets bibel? nye tekstrekker 2010*, *Nytt Norsk Kirkeblad* 7/2007, page 46. (Writer's note: I have searched for this document, so as to be able to judge its contents for myself, but since I have not found it I can only assume it has been removed from the new web pages of the CoN, or was not deemed important enough to be searchable after more recent documents were published.)

reading” in choosing texts specifically for use with children and youth.<sup>215</sup> Although this list of texts is not included in the three main cycles of TB12, and have thus not been included in this thesis, the view on Scripture which these choices reflect are pertinent to the discussion of how the CoN handles difficult texts in its lectionary. When commenting on the censoring of difficult texts, Bjelland Kartzow writes:

[T]he biblical texts are not the biggest problem. Maybe the Bible stories with all their richness, violence and intensity can help children frame their own experiences? How is it that children should be sheltered from violence, but at the same time it is acceptable to violate women’s basic human rights? If some texts should be marked, «Not For Public Reading», should not children (and others) be shielded from some royal texts which draw a very patriarchal image of «The Male God» or texts which say the husband shall be the head of the wife?<sup>216</sup>

In discussing the choice by the UU2 to have a three-year cycle with OT, Epistle and Gospel readings every Sunday, she intriguingly asks:

[...]I wonder why it is always the New Testament texts which are to be illuminated by the Old Testament texts. By not allowing some of the strong and meaningful Old Testament texts to stand on their own merit and possibly "communicate with" other OT-texts, we are missing out on a lot of deep insight and wisdom about life. [M]any of the Old Testament books, [treat] central aspects of life in a very nuanced and wise manner, and have enough gospel and biblical theology in them to carry a whole Sunday service.<sup>217</sup>

An article which deals directly with difficult texts, and converses with the Bjelland Kartzow article I have just referred to, is Åste Dokka's *Texts of terror – words of joy* from 2008. Dokka writes specifically about the story of Tamar and Amnon, which deals with the rape of Tamar in a way which is alien to many readers. Dokka asks what happens when “*the Book which we are taught should teach us that which is right and good, instead preaches that which to us is painful and unjust.*”<sup>218</sup> She postulates that while

[h]orrible, New Testament texts show up from time-to-time as sermon or lesson texts, [...] most Old Testament horror stories never reach the pulpit. Why? These texts namely present a difficult and three-headed challenge. First of all: To truly acknowledge that such texts are actually found in the Bible, forces us to reflect upon

<sup>215</sup> Bjelland Kartzow, page 50

<sup>216</sup>

Bjelland Kartzow, page 50

<sup>217</sup>

Bjelland Kartzow, page 48

<sup>218</sup>

Åste Dokka, FÆLE TEKSTER – FINE ORD Texts of terror – words of joy Hvordan lese vanskelige bibeltekster? Bør de leses?, Kirke og Kultur 1/2008, Universitetsforlaget, page 46



the normativity of the rest of the biblical texts. Secondly: How should we read such texts? Thirdly: How is it possible to communicate the Gospel based on such texts, that is, to preach from them?<sup>219</sup>

This kind appreciation of difficult texts, and the interesting challenges they face us with, is what I have tried to convey through the lens of canon. Because, as Dokka says, «[a]s long as one doesn't completely reject the Bible, one will read it, interpret it and relate to it. One is forced to make value judgements, which are about what one chooses to believe in and pass on.»<sup>220</sup> Dokka conveys a quote in her article from a participant of the Tamar Campaign in South Africa, which displays how important it can be to publicly sanction the reading of difficult texts; «If it is in the Bible, we have to talk about it.»<sup>221</sup> Dokka finally offers up some advice to those who were at that time working with the new lectionary:

Every set of texts also represent a choice as to which texts should not be read. A set of texts is necessarily a narrowing, an interpretation concerning what is important in biblical material. The selected texts become a kind of canon within canon, or a «People's Bible», as the Text Book Committee has called them. The challenge for the committee must be to not make this harmony too harmonious, to not shelter us or the people from the Bible as it truly is.<sup>222</sup>

## 5.2 Conclusion

I began this thesis by declaring my appreciation for the book of Ecclesiastes, and expressing regret that Ecclesiastes and other OT texts which follow a different pattern than those who fit well in with the Christian salvation history narrative seem to be underrepresented and undervalued in the lectionary in the CoN. I set out to answer my thesis statement by using Ecclesiastes as a case study of how the two most recent lectionaries treat such difficult texts. My vantage point in this endeavour has been what I have called a canonical perspective. I attempted to show how this perspective might open up the CoN's view on and use of Scripture, from a narrowly Christocentric focus which always looks for what Harald Kaasa Hammer called “the dimension of hope”, to a deeper appreciation of the diversity of canon. In

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<sup>219</sup>

Dokka, page 46

<sup>220</sup>

Dokka, page 47

<sup>221</sup>

Dokka, page 49

<sup>222</sup>

Dokka, page 50

analyzing the pericopes present in KT77 and TB12, and the principles which guided the people who chose them, I have discovered that there has been a fundamental shift these past decades in how the CoN perceives and makes use of even the difficult texts of the OT. Nevertheless, the figures also convey to what extent the distribution of pericopes is still skewed. The three pericopes from Ecclesiastes which are part of the current lectionary all have their qualities, both in themselves and at least one in context. But especially the practice of compilation, which UU2 had intended to leave behind altogether, has led to an obscuring of the specifically Ecclesiastian quality which could have fulfilled the principle of representativeness more successfully.

After comparing both the principles and results of KT77 and TB12, it is clear that there has indeed been a quiet revolution in the position of the OT in the CoN. What is equally clear is the need for this revolution to become more fully implemented in practice.

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KM 09.1/06	Saksorientering: Valg av hovedprinsipp for nye tekstrekker
KM 9.1.1/06	Sak BM 20/06: Liturgisaker
KM 07.1/10	Saksorientering: Gudstjenestereforma - Tekstbok
KM 07.1.1/10	SAMMENSTILLING AV NÅVÆRENDE TEKSTBOK OG FORSLAGENE 2008 OG FRAMLEGGET TIL KIRKEMØTET 2010
KM 06/11	Vedtak, Gudstjenestereforma – tekstbok
KR 52/11	Forenklet bruk av Tekstboken

Source of NRSV text of Ecclesiastes:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+1&version=NRSV>

## APPENDIX

### TRANSCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW WITH HARALD KAASA HAMMER (Friday February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016) (In Norwegian)

Writer's note: I have transcribed the recorded interview as precisely as possible, making the content just as messy and abrupt as it is on the sound file. The sound file will be uploaded to the digital DUO version of the thesis. I have anonymized my name and initials, so that Harald Kaasa Hammer's initials HKH stand before his words, and my words are preceded by a capital S for Student. The numbers which appear in brackets at uneven intervals were originally written for the purposes of finding my place again in the sound file. I chose to leave them in to ease the listening of anyone who might want to listen to the recording in future.

HKH: «Ja, hei, det er Harald Hammer her.»

S: «Ja, hei, det er Student som ringer, eh...»

HKH: «Ja, hei, hei.»

S «Beklager at jeg ringer litt sent, eh...»

HKH «Vi får bare bruke tida så godt vi kan»

S «Ja... Eh, ja, jeg vet ikke om... Det jeg må spørre deg først det er om det er i orden for deg at jeg bare tar opp, har på høyttaler også tar opp samtalen vår så jeg kan benytte, skrive ned...»

HKH «Jada, det er greit, det er greit»

S «Kjempeflott, det. Ehm, ja, altså, jeg eh, jeg har jo forklart på en måte litt av, ehm, litt av oppgave min for deg allerede, ehm...»

HKH «ja»

S « Ehm, nå har jeg altså... Jeg begynte med en...Jeg begynte med å skulle, i tillegg til dette her å se på, ehm, hvordan vi bruker Qoheleth i tekstrekkene i Den norske kirke også så hadde jeg tenkt egentlig å sammenligne det med jødisk, jødisk lesning til Sukkot, men det, eh...»

HKH «Ja»

S «det, [ler oppgitt], jeg har jo funnet ut at det kanskje blir litt mye, fordi det er ganske mye materiale, mer materiale jeg har funnet enn jeg hadde trodd, da, hvertfall i disse her saksdokumentene. Ehm, så nå, nå er på en måte hovedfokuset mitt på, på ehm 1977-tekstrekkene, og så da den prosessen inkludert Forslaget 2008, ehm og så Kirkemøtet 2010 og 2011, da. Det er de dokumentene jeg skal se på, og har begynt å se på, da. Eh, og da er det sånn, du har sittet, eller sitter fortsatt i Nemnd for gudstjenesteliv?»

HKH: «Nei. Jeg har, jeg har vært sekretær for en undergruppe, fra 2005, som heter Ordet...»

S «Ordet, ja, eh, den UU2, eller det underutvalget, ja»

HKH «Ja, og så, og så var jeg ansatt i en deltidsstilling en periode for å jobbe videre, da, direkte med teksten. Ordet hadde jo mere med, eh, plasseringen av, eller hvilken funksjon tekstlesning og forkynnelse skulle ha i liturgien, da med en liturgisk orientering. Og vi arbeidet der noe med valg av system vi skulle følge. Og så da i neste fase så var det Jan Schumaker og denne Cecilie Jørgensen Strømmen som satt sammen, og så gikk dette tilbake til NFG, eh, og så hadde jeg ansvar da for å koordinere høringssvarene og var også sekretær

da for en ny gruppe som ble etablert for en siste kvalitetssikring før det ble lagt fram for Kirkemøtet. Eh, har du fått, har du fått den La tekstene tale nå?»

S «Jeg har ikke fått den ennå, det er noen som har lånt den på biblioteket, så jeg sitter og venter...»

HKH «Javel, for der står det ganske sånn konkret hvordan den prosessen har vært. Men, men jeg kan ta ut de sidene som har med historikken å gjøre og sende til deg.»

S «Ja, dét hadde vært flott, virkelig.»

HKH «For der står hele prosessen ganske nøyaktig forklart, da.»

S «Ja, men det er veldig nyttig, det er det absolutt. Ehm, jeg har jo funnet i disse her, spesielt i saksorienteringene som jeg har f., altså jeg har jo funnet eh [ler], jeg har jo liksom hatt en læringskurve i forhold til hvordan jeg faktisk skulle finne den informasjonen her, da.»

HKH «[ler forståelsesfullt]»

S «Fordi, selv om den er offentlig på én måte, så er den jo... du må jo liksom skjønne systemet for å finne ut [ler]»

HKH «[ler] Jaa»

S «Men, eh, som sagt særlig i saksorienteringene så har jeg jo... så har jeg jo funnet... ehm, sakspapirer og, og altså Kirkemøtepapirene til det her og har jo funnet en del interessant der, men det er jo, det er jo noen valg, da, som jeg på en måte, eh, som jeg lurert litt, lurert litt på. Altså, hovedspørsmålet mitt handler jo om selve Forkynneren, da, hva som er bakgrunnen for at, hva skal jeg si, dén teksten er valgt og hvorfor man velger å kutte i tekster og, og såne ting, men også generelt om Det gamle testamente. Eh hva slags, det står på en måte litt om tanker, men... tanker bak [5:58 min] gammeltestamentlige tekster, men det er jo... altså spesielt det at det er, det er noen som har etterlyst at man skulle ha flere, eller en bredere tilfang av gammeltestamentlige tekster, og det har man jo fått også. Eh, men det virker jo som om det også er ganske mye tradisjonell sånn, ja, typologiske lesninger som blir lagt opp, spesielt siden selv om de tekstene er kanskje mer, de tre tekstene hver søndag er kanskje mer løselig tematisk knyttet sammen enn de kunne ha vært, da, så er det vel... altså, ja, altså jeg er litt interessert i den med å velge, velge tekster for at de skal bli lest på en veldig spesifikk måte, da.»

HKH «Eh, ja, jeg, kan jeg kommentere litt nå det du har sagt?»

S «Ja, absolutt.»

HKH «Ja, altså [7:02 min] for det første så, så var det jo en tilbakemelding som vi fikk fra høy og lav hele tiden under arbeidet: «la oss da for Guds og menighetens skyld skjønne hvorfor de tre tekstene er valgt og satt sammen.» Og vi mener at vi på veldig mange søndager har fått en tettere tematisk sammenheng mellom tekstene enn det som var i, før 77, da. Eller, fra, i den 77-boka, for å si det sånn. Så det, det har vi lagt vekt på. Eh, men under arbeidet så leste vi og var veldig opptatt av Gail Ramshaw, jeg vet ikke om det sier deg noe?»

S «Eh, bare hørt navnet, ikke...»

HKH «Nei, for hun har, hun har skrevet en bok som heter så meget, skal vi se nå har jeg en artikkel om det her... eh, The First Testament in Christian Lectionaries. Og det, det er... ja, og så har hun skrevet jo en som heter Treasures Old and New: Images in the Lectionary. Men det er, går jo mere på lignelsene og sånt. Men hun, hun var altså, satte opp tre, tre modeller for, for å lese Det gamle testamente i, å bruke det da i leksjonariene, i tekstbøkene. Og jeg har en liten artikkel, det er vel Stordalen som har skrevet en side om dette her. Og jeg kan sende deg en kopi av det?»

S «Ja?»

HKH «Eeeh, men det hun sier da altså er, det første er å se på kontekst og klarhet [9.14 min] og at flere tekster i evangeliet ikke lar seg forstå på en sakssvarende måte uten å kjenne den

gammeltestamentlige konteksten. Det blir mer en sånn opplysende funksjon, ikke sant? Vi har ikke vært så veldig opptatt av, av den siden. Sånn at når det har vært en GT-sitat i en evangelietekst så går vi ikke automatisk og henter den teksten inn som GT-lesning. Den andre måten er en mere sånn metafororientert tanke, at man da utvider det man mener å finne av metaforer i de nytestamentlige tekstene med gammeltestamentlige metaforer. Noen ser jo også dette her med metaforer som en sånn hovedtolkningsnøkkel til Skriften i det hele tatt, og innenfor den måten å tenke på så, så blir det mere som man bare henter en, man henter bare en metafor som kan belyse eller utvide perspektivet. En tredje måte er altså at man parallelliserer gammeltestamentlige tekster og, og som da gjør at tekstene enten utfyller hverandre, eller kanskje delvis står i motsetning til hverandre. Så, den måten vi formulerte det for oss selv på var at tekstene skulle belyse hverandre, og i høyeste, liksom det høyeste nivået, da, måtte være hvis tekstene kunne komme i samtale med hverandre. Og det er også et uttrykk som har vært brukt endel i senere faglitteraturen om dette her. [11:37 min] Nå kan du si, det utkastet som var ferdig da og som kom og ble lagt fram som høringsdokument i 2008, der var det nok en del av sammenstillingene som hadde et litterært fokus, eller en litterær tilnærmingstype. Jeg kan nevne som eksempel da på 3. søn i åpenbaringstiden i 2. rekke så er det jo fortellingen om kvinnen ved brønnen, Jesus som møter kvinnen ved brønnen i Samaria. Og da hadde vi satt opp 1 Mos 24 om Abrahams tjener som skal finne kone til Isak, og møtte da Rebekka ved brønnen. Og så var det brønnen som var liksom «connection», da. Dette ble vi kritisert for, og man mente at dette mere sånn intellektuell interesse, eller litt sånn aparte litterær interesse enn fokuset på forkynnelser. Og når alt kom til alt så forlot..., ble den teksten forlatt, da. Det var jo ikke samme komitéen som jobbet, dette var en ny komité som jobbet siste runde. Sånn at nå er det Jes 55 «Alle som tørster, kom til meg», ikke sant, som går mere direkte på Jesus-ordet enn akkurat det fenomenet at det var en samtale ved brønnen. Så du kan si det litterære, den litterære tilnærming som var veldig, det var vel nesten en sånn motesak akkurat i de årene vi holdt på, det er avstreift en del i den endelige tekstboken. Men, du kan si, som jeg antyder i den svaret på e-posten til deg, hurra for noen som vil jobbe med dette her, det er at vi etterlyste og etterlyste engasjement fra GT-seksjonene på dette. Og den, det var liksom ordene bare datt ned, det var ikke respons i det hele tatt. Så til forskjell fra den revolusjonen som skjedde i 1977, så var det liksom null. Og vi kjente veldig på også et behov for en gammeltestamentlig hermeneutikk, men opplevde bare å, vi møtte ikke veggen en gang, vi møtte bare luft når vi etterlyste engasjement på dette. Og det andre som vi etterlyste det var jo en evaluering: «Hva har skjedd med forkynnelsen og oppfatningen av Det gamle testamente i menighetene med den veldig endringen som kom i 1977?» Og den evalueringen er jo blitt helt uteblitt, det eneste vi kan si da det er at det motivet som ble angitt i 1977 for å ha bare to teksttrekker til forskjell fra tre teksttrekker som var før 1977, det var at man ønsket å ha gammeltestamentlig tekst ved hver gudstjeneste, men man trodde ikke det ville være tilstrekkelig med gammeltestamentlige tekster til å dekke tre teksttrekker. Vi himlet jo med øynene over dette, fordi at vi hadde jo et tilfang av gammeltestamentlige tekster så det var jo ikke måte på. Men det sier noe om hvilken revolusjon som virkelig inntrådte i 1977. For det har skjedd en holdningsendring til Det gamle testamente, og man leser Det gamle testamente med nye øyne, rett og slett. Så vi kjente på en del frustrasjon i dette, og det ga seg nok også utslag i måten vi valgte tekster på, at vi rett og slett følte oss litt på gyngende grunn. Men du kan si at vi tenkte jo en stund at vi skulle ha et representativt utvalg av Det gamle testamente. Det var et prinsipp som ble for stort for oss. Og vi, ikke sant, bare du ser antall sider i GT til forskjell da fra antall sider i de fire evangeliene og fra antall sider i resten av Det nye testamente, så sa det seg selv at her måtte vi finne en annen nøkkel. Men det har vært et tydelig mål at vi skal innom alle bøkene i Det gamle testamente, og alle bøkene i Det nye også

for den saks skyld, så bare gjennom dét prinsippet så har det blitt en større spredning. Og, sånn som Ruts bok, Esters bok, for eksempel... Det andre er jo, det er to hovedendringer, kan du si, i den nye tekstboka, foruten dét at det er blitt tre tekstrekker igjen og vi har fått mange tekster, så er det to hovedendringer: Det éne er at vi har ordnet treeninghetstidens dager innenfor temakretser. [ **18:01 min** ] Det har jeg redegjort for i den boka «La tekstene tale», og det sender jeg til deg, så det trenger jeg ikke gjenta her. Med det andre, den andre nyheten, kan du si, det er at det er satt opp fortellinger til hver dag i kirkeåret. Og de, i tillegg, da, til at de fortellingstekstene skal dekke tema, og korrespondere med tema på den enkelte kirkeårsdag, så skal de også være slik fordelt på bibelhistorien at samlet så skal disse fortellingstekstene en bibelhistorie for voksne og barn. Sånn at vi har da fra urhistorien, fedrehistorien, Egypt og så videre, framover, og også helt fram til Jesu gjenkomst og den nye himmel og den nye jord og kirkens tid. Sånn at, den går jo da inn og skal prøve og kompensere for at fortellingstekstene er så redusert i det norske skolesystemet. Det er nesten ingenting. Så, men forøvrig så må vi si at det er nok sånn som du påpeker, at vi går inn i en tradisjon med en typologisk, ja, i en typologisk tradisjon, selv om det på langt dekker, er dekkende for utvalget. Vi sprenger de grensene ganske betraktelig. Men at vi teologisk sett leser Det gamle testamente i lys av Det nye, og sånn at, du kan si hellighetslover som er avskaffet ifølge Hebreerbrevet, det har ikke vi satt opp som lesetekster. Sånn at, det som er tydelig avskaffet, kan du si, i den nye pakt, det ripper ikke vi opp i, for å si det sånn.» S «Nei, og det, for eksempel det eksempelet som du kommer med der, altså jeg har jo tenkt å blir prest og har jo skrevet noen prekner, og der er jo greit at det går an å ha meningsfulle prekner over de tekstene som er valgt også, så... man må jo...»

HKH «Ja, det er et viktig prinsipp at det skal, det skal ha en forkynnesmessig verdi, slik at vi kan sette opp som spesielle lesetekster, en hvilken som helst gammeltestamentlig tekst som vi leser skal kunne være pretekst. Sånn sett i forhold til Forkynnerens bok så er dét forsåvidt en utfordring fordi det har jo vært sagt, nå vet jo du sikkert mer om Forkynneren enn meg siden du har dette som tema, men sånn som, ja, det har jo vært sagt om Forkynnerens bok, da, at det er påtagelig, i det minste, at den heter Forkynnerens bok når den er den eneste boken i Bibelen som ikke har noe (**21:37**) særlig å forkynne. Fordi at håpsdimensjonen er jo så å si borte. Så livet er, tomhetsforkynnelsen er jo, den er jo i det minste passiv, om du ikke skal si depressiv i store deler av Forkynneren. Men det er jo, vi har jo plukket ut da tre tekster. Det éne er jo ut fra at Forkynneren 3 har vært brukt i begravelseritualet, «Alt har sin tid». Og så, at vi tar inn dette «Vær ikke snar med munnen» - vi hadde behov for å få inn noe om ordene våre, dét er ellers veldig redusert, og det er jo helt ute av salmeboka. Tidligere hadde vi jo salmer om ansvaret for ordene som vi bruker; «Et ord er en kniv som farer avsted med uendelig, ustanselig il.» Veldig jordnær salme for eksempel som ikke har vært med på lang tid. Men, «Vær ikke snar med munnen». Og, midt i all tomheten, ha ærefrykt for Gud. Da får vi med dette med tomhetsdimensjonen i Forkynnerens bok, og samtidig da denne visdomstradisjonen med å ha ærefrykt for Gud. Og det gjenspeiler også i det tredje utsnittet vi har, Forkynneren 5, 9-17, om rikdom som kan bli til ulykke, den korte tiden Gud lar mennesket leve [telefon ringer i bakgrunnen]. Og der er jo forsåvidt dette gjennomgangstemaet hos Forkynneren også fremme med det depressive ved livets utgang, for å si det sånn. Men det vi ikke har med, og som jo Sverige har med og vi hadde i 1977 det var jo den Forkynneren 12, «Tenk på din skaper i ungdommens dager» og med disse blomstrende beskrivelser av alderdommen. Det er dessverre blitt borte i prosessen, da.»

S: «Ja, for jeg har jo tenkt på den. Jeg vet ikke, eller, nå er det så, jeg har ikke sett nok på disse sammenstillingene ennå til å ha en fullstendig oversikt over hva som har vært med før og sånne ting, men jeg har hvertfall en veldig sånn fornemmelse av at nettopp den «Tenk på



din skaper i din ungdoms vår» har vært en tekst som, om ikke den har vært lest i Kirkeårets tekster, så har den iallefall vært veldig tilstede i mange sin, liksom i mange sitt bibelske språk, da, eller hvordan jeg skal si.»

HKH: «Jada, og du har det jo i en del sanger og sånn, så det er tydelig at Forkynneren 12 har hatt en verdi, sånn poetisk og forkynnelsesmessig, det er helt klart. Så jeg skulle ønske vi hadde bevart den tradisjonen, men den ble altså borte i kålen. Men jeg vil også si sånn rent generelt når det gjelder hver enkelt bok, både i det nye og det gamle testamente, så har vi ikke hatt overskudd til å liksom si «er dette et godt sammendrag av denne boka». Altså, vi forlot jo å liksom skulle ha et representativt utvalg av Det gamle testamente, men vi kunne jo ha tenkt at vi skulle hatt et, altså at det vi hadde fra Forkynneren var da representativt for Forkynneren i det minste. Men det tror jeg nok vi må si at vi ikke hadde kapasitet til å gå gjennom. Så når du titter oss i kortene på Forkynnerne, på Forkynneren, så kjenner jeg at jeg blir litt flakkende i blikket. For, altså, kjempeflott at du gjør det, men det er ikke sikkert at jeg kan gi så veldig kvalifiserte svar i og med at prosessen har vært sånn som den har vært.»

S: «Nei, og så det er jo, hva skal jeg si, det er jo helt forståelig, eller det er jo helt umulig for et utvalg å ha, hva skal vi si, absolutt alle interesser og alle kunnskaper representert, og det er liksom, sånn er det jo med alt, da, at hvis noen er interessert i noe spesielt så syns de liksom ingen andre kan noe om det. Jeg håper jo, altså, det som jeg tenker litt om bruken vår av Det gamle testamente, selv om den har utviklet seg, så virker det som om det er veldig mange ting som henger igjen. Og som ikke nødvendigvis, altså, én ting er jo hvordan liksom vårt syn på kanon og hvordan man bruker kanon, dét at vi opererer med en kanon i kanon både i praksis og på én eller annen måte i tankene våre som kirke, og det er klart det vil alltid være sånn, for det er jo helt umulig å tillegge absolutt alt lik verdi, og det er vel heller ikke ønskelig...»

HKH: «Nei, men vi har prøvd å røske litt i tradisjonene, altså, vi har prøvd å ta vare på tradisjonene, men vi har også prøvd å røske litt i dem. Og også for eksempel ikke bare ha med heltefortellinger fra Det gamle testamente. At vi har med om Rebekka som får Jakob til å lure faren sin, og også at vi får inn for eksempel Hagar, og det ekle forholdet mellom Sara og Hagar, og også hvordan Hagar er den første som gir Gud et navn. Sånn at vi har prøvd å røske litt i en sånn altfor firkanta, etablert bruk av Det gamle testamente, samtidig som vi jo må se i øynene at det er jo bare siden 1977 at vi har hatt det tilfanget som vi har hatt, så å begynne å snakke om tradisjoner er veldig vanskelig når vi tenker på det som jeg nevnte i e-posten til deg, at før 77 så var det jo bare 25 GT-tekster totalt i hele tekstboka. Ja. Sånn at det er jo et spørsmål også hvor sterk tradisjon kan vi snakke om her? Så da blir det mer snakk om å gå lenger tilbake å se hva slags forkynnertradisjoner fra reformasjonstiden, og hvor sikkert overgangen mellom forelesning og preken var mye kortere enn dét det er idag.» ( 30:08 )

S: «Altså, et annet element i tankene jeg ofte gjør meg i forbindelse med hvordan vi bruker tekster, og det gjelder jo i nytestamentet óg, altså, det er jo mye rart der óg, kan du si, hvis jeg skal være så uærbødig og si det på den måten, men det virker som om vi har en forestilling om at noen tekster er «vanskelige tekster» kan du si, da. Og jeg tror vel for eksempel når det gjelder de her, utvalget av, altså det har vel ikke noe med tekstrekkene å gjøre, men inngår i trosopplæringsreformen, hvilke tekster man bruker for barn, da, så tror jeg vel for eksempel at de har tatt bort fortellingen om Abraham og Isak.»

HKH: «De har gjort det nå, ja.»

S: «Ja, jeg lurte på det. Det var hvertfall snakk om at, Petter Stordalen [rettelse: jeg mente P. Skippervold] skrev om det.»

HKH: «Ja, for den var tatt ut i det første forslaget til denne teksboka, så var den tatt ut. Og det ble det ramaskrik på.»

S: «Ja, fordi det er jo noe med at vi, jeg tror veldig mye av det som ligger bak den, liksom,

tendensen til å prøve å lage et koherent hele av, ja, søndagens tekster og... at det ligger noe, vi er på en måte redde for at folk ikke skal, at folk skal bli redde, at barn for eksempel skal bli redde, da, og tro at Gud vil at foreldre skal drepe ungene sine...»

HKH: «Ja, det er jo relevant, dét.»

S: «Det er nok mange barn i historien som har blitt redde av den fortellingen, og... men da tenker jeg at det er jo et ansvar som hviler på predikanten og ikke nødvendigvis teksten i seg selv, da.»

HKH: «Ja, men når det har vært et prinsipp innenfor, ja på praktikum, da, at en preken ikke skal være mer enn ti minutter, kanskje opp til fjorten, så kan du si det ansvaret som ligger på predikanten det blir til slutt bare en vits. Sånn at han får ikke kommentert, han får ikke nevnt at den teksten der, og den teksten der, og sånn, det er ikke på dét nivået. Og så er det jo også en tradisjon med at det skal være så induktivt, at han skal ta utgangspunkt i generelle, en generell livsoppfatning og så da belyse den med Guds ord tilslutt. Og da har du ingen sjangs til å ha en bibelsk vei inn i prekenen, da blir det en ren sånn, ja, bibelen blir brukt som en kommentar, jeg hører jo det i morgenandakten, for eksempel. Man sier kanskje tilslutt at «Paulus sier noe også om dette». Og da ser du hva som har prioritet. Så du kan si, forkynnelsesmessig så er bibelstoffet ganske mye i skvis for tiden, altså.»

S: «Ja, og det er så mange ting som påvirker det også. Jeg tenker det har jo noe med den generelle, ja, pedagogiske tenkemåten i vår tid og at alle er så utrolig redde for pugging, eller det å høres kjedelig ut, eller alle sånne typen ting som... Jeg tenker vel dét at vi i Norge som bor i ett av verdens mest alfabete land, hvor folk leser utrolig mye forskjellig tekst hele tiden og selv barn kan analysere dikt, så tenker jeg at vi egentlig står i en utrolig privilegert posisjon i forhold til det å bruke et bredt tilfang av tekster på en spennende måte, fordi hvis vi klarer å, hva skal man si, fri oss... jeg tror det som stopper oss hele tiden er tanken om at hvert eneste ord i bibelen skal og må si noe supermeningsfylt til meg akkurat her og så, og hvis ikke det gjør det, så fins ikke Gud, på en måte, da. Det blir så utrolig dramatisk.»

HKH: «Ja, det er jeg enig med deg i. Det er ofte en ond sirkel; man undervurderer menigheten, og barna for den saks skyld, som lesende mennesker, og så forkynner man på en sånn måte at bibelen er unødvendig å lese. Så, ja, det der er en veldig vond sirkel syns jeg, altså.»

S: «Men, sånn på tamp...altså, jeg lurte litt på om dere har snakket noe om det her med kanon, og hvordan man forstår kanon, om dere har operert med liksom en kanon i kanon som arbeidsredskap eller om dere har...»

HKH: «Nei, det har vi ikke. Nå tror jeg nok, at hvis du hadde spurt hver enkelt av de som har sittet i disse utvalgene så ville vi kommet til å svare veldig forskjellig på dét. Sånn at, du kan si vi har satt opp som ett av hovedprinsippene at vi skal få et bredere tilfang av bibelstoff. Og dét er da helt uavhengig av eventuelle tanker om kanon i kanon. Og vi skjønnte veldig fort at vi kunne ikke starte arbeidet vårt med å bli enige om en teologisk plattform, for da ville alt falle fra hverandre. Men vi leste tekster sammen, og vi har jo stemt over hver tekst to ganger. Og da, det var min jobb som sekretær å sørge for at vi fikk levert dette i tide, og når det bygget opp til en teologisk debatt så sa jeg «dette har vi ikke tid til, vi må forutsette at to av oss er forstandige, og så tar vi en avstemning – skal vi ha med den teksten, eller skal vi ikke ha den med.» Og det samme prinsippet brukte vi i den siste runden også, i denne kvalitetssikringsrunden, at vi stemte over hver bidige tekst. Og jeg tror det var et godt prinsipp. Men hvis vi skulle ha innført en tanke om kanon i kanon så er jeg ganske sikker på at vi da ville operere med hver vår kanon. Så det var ikke en aktuell vei å gå. Men, det er klart at vi sto i en tradisjon, og den tradisjonen hadde nok en viss kanon, kan du si. Så indirekte, hvis man først ønsker å lete etter det, så tror jeg man kan finne noe. Men det var ikke et

hovedprinsipp for oss, for å si det sånn.»

S: «Nei, for dere har jo brukt den her «skandinaviske modellen» som utgangspunkt, ikke sant?»

HKH: «Ja»

S: «Så det bygger vel på, det er vel flere teksttrekker, da, som dere har sett på?»

HKH: «Ja, vi har gått grundig igjennom det som finnene gjorde i 2000, og som, ja nå husker jeg ikke helt...ja, finnene og svenskene hadde hver sin prosess i henholdsvis 2000 og 2002, nå står det akkurat stille for meg hvem som var når, men vi gjennomgikk deres, og vi hadde samarbeid, hadde seminar både med de svenske, og én representant for den finske revisjonen. Så vi lå tett opptil dem, og konkurrerte litt med svenskene om å flere tekster med kvinner og kvinneerfaringer enn de hadde. Og det klarte vi!»

S: «Jess!»

HKH: «Men, vi så jo på dette med Revised Common Lectionary, og fant ut at under norske forhold så ville det være fryktelig vanskelig, for den forutsetter at du har gudstjenester opptil flere ganger i uka, mens her kan det jo gå fire uker mellom hver gudstjeneste. Men skulle du spørre om noe i forbindelse med den skandinaviske modellen, eller?»

S: «Nei, jeg bare lurte på, altså det står jo selvfølgelig noe om det valget i saksorienteringene også, mellom den her RCL og den skandinaviske modellen, men jeg bare ville ha litt mer kjøtt på beina der.»

HKH: «Ja, det var jo særlig i den første komitéen, altså komité for Ordet, der var det nok én som det falt veldig tungt for brystet at vi ikke skulle følge RCL: Det var én som het Tormod Kapelrud. Han talte veldig sterkt for den i og med at den hadde såpass internasjonal utbredelse. Men dette ble jo også lagt fram på Kirkemøtet, og de uttrykte jo da tilslutning og takknemlighet for at vi fulgte den nordiske modellen med en sammenheng på hver søndag.»

S: «Jeg tenkte å bare spørre tilslutt litt igjen om Forkynneren. Fordi det er jo, nå skal ikke jeg skrive så mye om det, men i jødisk tradisjon så leser de jo hele, kan du si, og det gjør de jo med de fem bøkene. Og de har jo, generelt så leser jo jødene mye mer tekst av gangen, og klipper ikke så mye. Men jeg har funnet ut, det er litt interessant, at i Den ortodokse kirke så leser man i praksis ikke noe fra Forkynneren, og i Den serbisk-ortodokse kirke så har man forbud mot å lese det for man er redd for at folk skal drepe seg, da. Men det viser vel kanskje at man kanskje, for det her er jo også uttrykt i jødiske kommentarer (42:07) at man har en så ekstremt mye sterkere «kanonrespekt», kan man si, da, at man må ta det med uansett, liksom. Men at man har en forestilling, sånn som du snakket om at håpsdimensjonen er enten ikke tilstede eller hvertfall veldig godt skjult, da, så... At man kanskje er liksom, ja, redd for å, for eksempel når det gjelder prekenperspektivet, at man kan være redd for å preke, holde en preken som liksom ikke ender med en happy ending, da.»

HKH: «Ja, jeg skjønner. Men dét er det jo flere tekster som gjør, da, eller som ikke gjør, da, som ikke ender i en happy ending. Men det er klart, det lå jo og tikka under, og tikka ganske høyt opp i overflaten også, dette med happy ending, da, eller «stopp-i-tide-prinsippet, som noen kaller det. Altså at en må passe på at en ikke leser vers som slår ihjel det som har vært forkynt før. Men det har vært et viktig prinsipp for oss at teksten ikke skal si noe annet som avgrenset tekst enn det den sier i konteksten. Og her er det nok veldig mange som lager seg sin kanon i kanon ved å barbere og hoppe over vers og sånn i en preken, så det er nok ganske utbredt. Men du kan si at, ved at alle tekstene skal ha en tilknytning til evangeliet som leses den dagen, så gir det seg selv at det blir et utvalg. Men i og med at tekstboka utgjør bare 1/6 av bibelen, så er det klart at det er lett å finne skjevheter. Men til, jeg tror ikke vi har vurdert dét så veldig spesielt angående Forkynnertekstene, tekster fra Forkynneren. Men jeg må jo si, jeg får litt flau smak i munnen over oppdelingen av, altså hvilken vers som tas med fra

Forkynneren 3. For det er ikke så greit i en begravelse eller en annen sammenheng å si at «det er en tid for å drepe», og da kan du si, da har vi sensurert teksten i lys av Jesu ord i Bergprekenen, for eksempel, og sånn. Men vi har vært veldig opptatt av at folk ikke skal få helt sjokk hvis de leser sammenhengen. Og det er jo grunnen til at fortellingen fra Karmelfjellet er tatt ut. Fordi i 1977, altså før 1977-tekstboka, altså Kirkeårets tekster, så stoppet man da før det siste avgjørende verset hvor det står da at profeten Elia tok 450 Ba'alprofeter ned til elven Kishon og drepte dem der. Og så kan du si, da, er... ja det var jo endel, da som fikk sjokk når de gikk hjem og leste teksten, og er det da på grensen av det uredelige? Så vi droppa hele teksten, vi, da. ( 47:32 )»

S: «Ja, det er jo veldig... Jeg syns jo liksom det er veldig vanskelig å skulle ha en sånn forestilling om bibeltekstene som et koherent hele, kan du si. Selv om jeg selvfølgelig ikke har noe problem med å tro på dem i mer religiøs forstand også, så er det liksom... Jeg tror kanskje at dét gjør at vi får disse sjokkene, kan du si, da, også. Måten vi ser på teksten vår på.»

HKH: «Jeg ser den. Men det der er en skala som en må være seg bevisst. Altså, det er ikke sånn at på den éne side så skal alt være koherent, og på den annen side så skal du ha... svenskene, og også enkelte norske miljøer snakket om «horror texts»; at vi må ha inn dét også sånn at folk skjønner at bibelen inneholder dét også. Og hvorfor har vi ikke med teksten om voldtekten av Dina, for eksempel? Men du kan si at den andre enden i skalaen det er å få frem så mange stygge tekster at bibelen blir revet fullstendig i stykker. Så, det er viktig å si at det er fallgruber på begge sider av veien, men det er en vei som går an å gå – dét er veldig om å gjøre for meg i min forkynnelse hvertfall. Men at jeg ikke underslår at her er det mye gruff her og der, og for eksempel når Gud sier til de tre vennene til Job at «dere har ikke talt rett om meg, slik som Job har gjort». Ja, betyr det da at vi må kutte ut alle de kapitlene i Jobs bok som de tre vennene står for? Da blir det, det er en ganske stor, skal vi se, jeg tok og regna det ut her en dag...et lite øyeblikk så har jeg det her...joda: det er 9 av 42 kapitler som vi da må ta bort. Og innimellom der så er det jo mye klokt og vist som er sagt, men da må du liksom se bort fra at Gud satte et negativt stempel på det tilslutt.»

S: «Ja. Nei, altså, det er klart at sånne horror texts, da, de... det er jo veldig mange hensyn som egentlig fungerer best hvis man forutsetter at det er de samme folka som kommer hver søndag, og at alle på en måte skjønner hva bibelen er, da. Og det er jo ikke nødvendigvis noe vi kan forutsette heller, da.»

HKH: «Nei, men jeg har jo vært rundt i veldig mange prostier nå, et sted mellom 25 og 30 prostier og holdt kurs om den nye tekstboka, og da har det vært veldig om å gjøre for meg å si at dette er ikke Den norske kirkes Bibel. Det er Bibelen som er Den norske kirkes Bibel, men dette er de tekstene som vi har funnet ut egner seg til lesning ved en gudstjeneste. Og så er det prestenes ansvar å sørge for en helbibelsk formidling. ( 51:44 )

S: «Ja, men det er jo et kjempeviktig poeng.»

HKH: «Ja, men da må du gjøre med dette som du vil. Det er veldig ålreit om du sender meg en tekst, så leser jeg den fort igjennom og gir deg en tilbakemelding, og så skal jeg sende deg de sidene fra La tekstene tale som jeg tror har aktualitet for deg, pluss den oversikten til Stordalen over hun Gail Ramshaw. Jeg syns den var veldig nyttig den lesningen av Ramshaw som vi gjorde da vi jobbet med disse tekstene.»

S: «Ja, men det setter jeg veldig pris på, jeg setter generelt veldig stor pris på at du har tatt deg tid til å hjelpe meg og...»

HKH: «Ja, det er en stor del av livet mitt dette her, altså. For meg var det ( 52:50 ) [THE LAST MINUTES CONSIST ONLY OF SMALL TALK IRRELEVANT TO THE THESIS]