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From metanarrative to metadata: A postdigital hermeneutical critique of the algorithmic curation of the word and the call of prophetic homiletics

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Abstract: Postmodern theory announced the collapse of metanarratives, yet in the postdigital condition algorithmic curation now performs the work of legitimation, largely unseen. Sermons, Bible verses, and preachers reach congregations through platforms that rank content by engagement, so metadata increasingly shapes what believers hear. This article argues that preaching authority has migrated from the pulpit to the timeline, where metrics function as a performative regime of legitimation rather than a new metanarrative. Using library-based constructive theology, Osmer's four tasks, and a postdigital hermeneutic joining Romele's digital hermeneutics with the Pentecostal triad of Spirit, Scripture, and community, the study engages Lyotard, postdigital theory, and critical algorithm studies, and reads Amos 8:11–12, a divinely sent famine of hearing the word amid abundant worship, as a prophetic lens applied analogically. It proposes a postdigital prophetic homiletic expressed in whole-text preaching, naming the algorithm, communal discernment over metrics, embodied gathering, and justice-oriented proclamation.

Keywords: algorithmic curation, Amos 8:11–12, homiletics, postdigital hermeneutics, postmodernism, prophetic preaching

Introduction

In Indonesia, sermons are no longer heard only from the pews; they are also encountered on smartphone screens. A survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, APJII) recorded 229.43 million internet users in 2025, or 80.66 percent of the population, with access to social media cited as the leading reason for using the internet (24.8 percent).[1] These figures do not prove that sermons are curated by algorithms; they merely indicate the breadth of the ecosystem within which such curation operates. More direct evidence comes from congregational studies: worship services are livestreamed, sermon clips are uploaded, and among Indonesian Pentecostals digital

[1] Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII), *Survei Penetrasi Internet Indonesia 2025* [Indonesian internet penetration survey 2025] (Jakarta: APJII, 2025), https://survei.apjii.or.id/survei. The survey involved 8,700 respondents across 38 provinces.

media have become a principal ministry strategy rather than a temporary expedient.[2] Theological scholarship in Indonesia has generally welcomed these developments as an opportunity for contextualizing mission, albeit with warnings against abandoning physical fellowship.[3] A question raised far less often is this: who actually determines which sermons reach the congregation?

This question leads us back to the postmodern debate. Jean-François Lyotard defined the postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives," that is, toward the grand narratives that throughout modernity legitimated knowledge and authority.[4] In homiletics, this condition has often been read as a crisis of pulpit authority. Several decades later, the situation has changed. Petar Jandrić and his co-authors use the term postdigital to denote a condition in which digital technology no longer appears as something new but has become so integrated into social life that the boundary between the digital and the nondigital has blurred.[5] Under this condition, the collapse of metanarratives has not left a vacuum; the legitimating function they once performed has migrated to a site that is far more difficult to discern.

That site is the realm of metadata and curation algorithms. Digital platforms determine which verses, sermon clips, and preacher personalities appear on congregants' timelines based on engagement metrics: view counts, watch time, likes, comments, and shares. Research on Muslim digital preachers in Indonesia shows that algorithmic systems take part in distributing religious legitimacy.[6] If modernity legitimated authority through grand narratives of progress and rationality, the postdigital condition legitimates it through seemingly neutral numbers. Metadata is not a new metanarrative, for it tells no story at all; it legitimates by counting. This article therefore designates it a performative regime of legitimation, following Lyotard's diagnosis that performativity replaces metanarrative as the basis of legitimation.[7] Authority has not collapsed; it has migrated from the pulpit to the timeline. This is what the shift "from metanarrative to metadata" signifies. The problem is not merely a technical matter of communication but a hermeneutical and theological one: who or what determines how the Word is selected, interpreted, and heard by the people of God?

The relevant literature has grown, yet it leaves a gap. In homiletics, Sunggu A. Yang lays a theological foundation for online preaching and then offers ten styles of preaching in digital space; Rob O'Lynn proposes a framework for digital homiletics grounded in John McClure's account of theological invention; and Theo Pleizier tests his map of homiletics against preaching in the digital age.[8] The studies of digital religion collected by Heidi Campbell and

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[2] Frederich OL Lontoh and Daniel A. Wibowo, "Digital Pentecostalism in Indonesia: Transformation of Worship and Virtual Community," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 81, no. 1 (2025): 10592.

[3] Aan Ambarwaty P. I. P. Taturu, "Media Sosial sebagai Ruang Berteologi, Upaya Kontekstualisasi Misi Gereja di Era Digital" [Social media as a space for doing theology: Efforts to contextualize the church's mission in the digital era], *DA'AT: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 5, no. 1 (2024): 68–85.

[4] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

[5] Petar Jandrić et al., "Postdigital Science and Education," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 50, no. 10 (2018): 893–899, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1454000.

[6] Khairunnisa, "Algorithmic Religious Authority: Digital Preachers and the Transformation of Islamic Legitimacy in Indonesia," *Muharrik: Jurnal Dakwah dan Sosial* 8, no. 2 (2025): 436-451, https://doi.org/10.37680/muharrik.v8i2.9658.

[7] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 41–47.

[8] Sunggu A. Yang, *Digital Homiletics: The Theology and Practice of Online Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2024), 1–18; Rob O'Lynn, "The Digital Media Sermon: Definitions, Evaluations, Considerations," *Religions*

Ruth Tsuria demonstrate how religious traditions are renegotiated through media logics, while Alberto Romele's digital hermeneutics shows that digital machines themselves participate in interpreting and shaping meaning.[9] In Indonesia, studies published in reputable journals have examined digital Pentecostal worship, hybrid worship in a Protestant congregation, and the algorithmic authority of Muslim preachers.[10] Yet these homiletical studies focus on practice and effectiveness; studies of digital religion and digital hermeneutics analyze mediation without formulating a homiletical response; and the Indonesian studies focus on worship, community, or Islamic preaching (*dakwah*) rather than the algorithmic curation of the Word in Christian preaching. This article stands at the intersection of all three: it makes algorithmic curation the object of a hermeneutical-theological critique, reads it from a Pentecostal perspective, and situates it within the Indonesian church.

To that end, the article employs Amos 8:11–12 as a prophetic lens. The text announces a strange famine: not of bread or water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. The oracle addresses a people abounding in worship (Am. 4:4–5; 5:21–23) yet silencing the prophetic voice (Am. 2:12; 7:10–13). Walter Brueggemann contends that prophetic ministry cultivates and awakens an alternative consciousness against the dominant culture's consciousness.[11] From the standpoint of Pentecostal pneumatology, Kenneth Archer articulates a hermeneutic that places Spirit, Scripture, and community in a relationship of mutual interpretation.[12] On this basis, the article advances the thesis that algorithmic curation has become a hidden performative regime of legitimation that shapes congregational hermeneutics, such that a postdigital prophetic homiletic rooted in the triad of Spirit, Scripture, and community is needed to unmask, critique, and transcend this power.

This qualitative, library-based study employs a constructive-theological approach. Its procedure follows Richard R. Osmer's four tasks of practical theology: descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative, and pragmatic.[13] The descriptive task examines data and empirical studies on digital religious practice in Indonesia; the interpretive task engages Lyotard, postdigital theory, and critical algorithm studies; the normative task undertakes a historical-literary and lexical exegesis of Amos 8:11–12 within the context of the book of Amos, sharply distinguishing the meaning of the text from its analogical application; and the pragmatic task formulates a prophetic homiletic. Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations follow the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue). The framework employed here, termed a postdigital hermeneutic, is a formulation proposed in this article that integrates two sources. From Romele it draws a diagnostic tool: digital systems participate in selecting and

14, no. 6 (2023): 736, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060736; Theo Pleizier, "Mapping the Future of Homiletics: Resonance and Digitality in the Study of Preaching," *International Journal of Homiletics* 9, no. 1 (2026): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.21827/ijh.9.1.1-18.

[9] Heidi A. Campbell and Ruth Tsuria, eds., *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in Digital Media*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2022), 1–21; Alberto Romele, *Digital Hermeneutics: Philosophical Investigations in New Media and Technologies* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 53, 87.

[10] Lontoh and Wibowo, "Digital Pentecostalism"; Deni Miharja, M. Yusuf Wibisono, and Nisa Ainun Napisa, "Digital Religion and Hybrid Worship in a Protestant Minority Congregation," *Khazanah Theologia* 7, no. 2 (2025): 199-226, https://doi.org/10.15575/kt.v7i2.54273; Khairunnisa, "Algorithmic Religious Authority."

[11] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 3.

[12] Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009), 212-213.

[13] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 4–6.

framing a text before the interpreter encounters it.[14] From the Pentecostal hermeneutics of Archer and Yong it draws a normative criterion: the meaning of Scripture is discovered within a Spirit-led community.[15] This hermeneutic proceeds in three steps: unveiling the layer of curation, testing readings against the whole of Scripture within the community, and formulating a homiletical response.

The discussion is organized into four parts: the shift from metanarrative to metadata; the algorithmic curation of the Word; an exegesis of Amos 8:11–12; and a postdigital prophetic homiletic for the churches of Indonesia. The article's contribution is twofold: a hermeneutical-theological critique of algorithmic curation within homiletics, and a framework that enables the church to remain present in digital space without surrendering the authority of the Word to platform logic.

From metanarrative to metadata: The postmodern condition and the migration of authority to algorithms

Lyotard is often remembered solely for his formulation of incredulity toward metanarratives, yet another part of his analysis is more pertinent here: once grand narratives lose their legitimating power, knowledge comes to be legitimated through performativity, that is, through the optimization of the relationship between input and output.[16] Knowledge is assessed not by its truth but by its performance. This diagnosis sounds almost like a prophecy of platform logic: a sermon is deemed "successful" when many people watch it, watch it to the end, and generate abundant interaction. It should be noted that performativity in Lyotard's sense is not a new metanarrative but a substitute for metanarrative. Accordingly, metadata is understood in this article as the concrete form of a performative regime of legitimation, not as yet another grand narrative.

Postdigital theory deepens this analysis: according to Jandrić and his co-authors, the term does not mean "after the digital" but refers to digital technology that has become fully integrated into everyday reality.[17] Congregants who sit in the pews on Sunday have been formed throughout the week by sermon clips, quoted verses, and testimony videos selected for them by algorithms. The homiletical question thus shifts from "How does one preach online?" to "How do congregants formed by algorithmic curation hear sermons, whether on a screen or in a church building?"

Critical algorithm studies help to explain how such curation works. Tarleton Gillespie shows that public relevance algorithms, such as search engines and recommendation systems, are not merely technical devices but actors that shape what is considered important and worth seeing.[18] Algorithms present themselves as objective, as if they merely reflected users' interests, when in fact they embed human choices and institutional interests. When an algorithm determines which sermons are recommended to a Christian teenager in Tangerang

[14] Romele, *Digital Hermeneutics*, 49–53.

[15] Archer, *Pentecostal Hermeneutic*; Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 219–220.

[16] Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 11, 41–47.

[17] Jandrić et al., "Postdigital Science and Education."

[18] Tarleton Gillespie, "The Relevance of Algorithms," in *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, ed. Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten A. Foot (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 167–194.

or Manado, it performs a function once carried out by church tradition, the liturgical calendar, and pastoral wisdom: selecting the portions of the Word that need to be heard.

Taina Bucher adds that algorithmic power operates primarily through the regulation of visibility: algorithms determine what is seen and what sinks out of sight, and users, institutions included, learn to adjust their behavior in order to remain visible.[19] Khairunnisa demonstrates this mechanism in the Indonesian context: in the case of two Muslim preachers on YouTube, algorithmic visibility and audience interaction convert cultural capital into digital capital and, in turn, into religious authority.[20] This finding from the field of Islamic *dakwah* helps to illuminate similar phenomena in the church: clickbait titles, trimmed running times, dramatic openings, and trending themes. Such adjustments are not necessarily bad; good communication, after all, attends to its hearers. Yet when visibility becomes the primary consideration, the criteria for selecting texts shift subtly away from fidelity to the Word and pastoral need toward algorithmic appeal. This regime of legitimation operates not through prohibition but through incentive.

One frequently cited effect of algorithmic curation is personalization. Eli Pariser describes the "filter bubble," in which each user receives a version of the internet tailored to individual preferences and therefore encounters challenging viewpoints less and less often.[21] This claim must be read with caution. A Reuters Institute review of the empirical literature found no support for the filter bubble hypothesis in news consumption; on the contrary, algorithmic selection generally yields slightly more diverse news diets.[22] The concern pursued here is therefore more limited: engagement incentives tend to privilege spiritual content that confirms existing tastes, so that texts that rebuke or call for social repentance are not removed but are outcompeted in the attention economy. Because empirical evidence specific to Christian sermon content in Indonesia remains limited, this claim is treated as a tendency that requires testing.

Shoshana Zuboff explains the economic logic behind this curation: under surveillance capitalism, human experience is claimed as free raw material and processed into behavioral data in order to predict and influence action.[23] Even watching a sermon or sharing a devotional thus becomes data for refining predictions about the user. The Word, proclaimed to set human beings free, also functions as attention bait within platform circulation. The church need not abandon digital space, but it must be aware that it preaches within an economy whose ends differ from those of the gospel.

Byung-Chul Han extends this diagnosis. In infocracy, the very feeling of freedom secures the power of the information regime, while digital media fragment the public sphere and erode shared discourse.[24] For homiletics, this means that the sermon, once heard as a unified argument, is now frequently consumed as fragments stripped of context. Congregants thus

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[19] Taina Bucher, *If...Then: Algorithmic Power and Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 66–92.

[20] Khairunnisa, "Algorithmic Religious Authority."

[21] Eli Pariser, *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011), 8–12.

[22] Amy Ross Arguedas et al., *Echo Chambers, Filter Bubbles, and Polarisation: A Literature Review* (Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2022), under "Executive Summary," https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-etxj-7k60.

[23] Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019), 8.

[24] Byung-Chul Han, *Infocracy: Digitization and the Crisis of Democracy*, trans. Daniel Steuer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2022), 5, 17.

grow accustomed to hearing in bits and pieces, and their capacity to follow the Bible's narrative arc gradually weakens.

The shift from metanarrative to metadata thus exhibits three features: authority migrates from tradition and community to platform computation; legitimation shifts from truth to performativity; and the mode of hearing changes from continuity to fragmentation. All three operate subtly, because the algorithm never appears in the pulpit and never claims to speak in God's name. Therein lies the danger: a regime that goes unrecognized cannot be critiqued. The first task of a postdigital hermeneutic is to unmask this hidden power.

The algorithmic curation of the word: The pulpit on the timeline and mediated hermeneutics

Campbell and Tsuria show that digital religion does not simply transfer offline practices to the screen but constitutes a space in which tradition is renegotiated through the logics of new media.[25] This negotiation, however, does not take place between equal parties. Platforms possess the structures, incentives, and algorithms that set the rules of the game, whereas the church often merely adapts, unaware of the forces shaping the very space in which it preaches.

Long before the age of social media, Jacques Ellul warned of the humiliation of the word: in a culture dominated by technique and image, the word, which opens a space for truth, dialogue, and faith, is displaced by images that demand immediate attention.[26] In the era of short-form video, sermons are increasingly judged by their visual impact, gestures, and moments that can be cut into clips. The sentences that circulate most widely are not necessarily the most faithful to the text, but the most easily shared.

Digital hermeneutics helps to clarify the epistemological impact of this development. Romele rejects the assumption that digital data constitute a transparent copy of reality; every digital mirror is also a filter, and machines help arrange data traces into meaningful plots.[27] In classical hermeneutics, the interpreter faces the text and the world in front of the text. In postdigital hermeneutics, a third layer intervenes between the two: a curatorial system that selects, ranks, and frames the text before the interpreter encounters it. Church members who open a Bible app or social media encounter Scripture not directly, but as already selected based on particular calculations. Their hermeneutic has been mediated before they even begin to interpret.

In Indonesia, this mediation unfolds within a vast ecosystem, as the APJII data cited above indicate. Taturu notes the use of status updates, livestreams, and short-form videos as means of proclamation, alongside concerns that the convenience of online worship weakens physical attendance and fellowship.[28] The issue is not only physical presence but also who shapes the spiritual tastes of the congregation. When congregants grow accustomed to choosing sermons from the shop window of the timeline, the pastor who faithfully interprets the text for the congregation week after week may be eclipsed by a popular preacher who does not know that congregation at all. The pastoral relationship is gradually supplanted by a consumer's relationship to content.

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[25] Campbell and Tsuria, *Digital Religion*, 1–21.

[26] Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, trans. Joyce Main Hanks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 11–17.

[27] Romele, *Digital Hermeneutics*, 87, 104.

[28] Taturu, "Media Sosial sebagai Ruang Berteologi."

Algorithmic curation also reshapes the identity of the preacher. O'Lynn shows that the digital media sermon requires a new understanding of rhetoric because it takes place within a media ecology involving cameras, screens, and dispersed audiences, while Yang offers practical styles to help preachers communicate effectively in online spaces.[29] Both contributions are important, but they need to be complemented by critique. When the success of a sermon is measured by platform metrics, preachers are tempted to see themselves as content creators, and an identity shaped by follower counts and views is vulnerable to anxiety, comparison, and compromise. Any rethinking of the preacher's role in the digital age must therefore include a theological question: to whom is the preacher accountable—to the Word or to the algorithm?

Another effect that warrants testing is the fragmentation of the canon. This article hypothesizes that the logic of engagement tends to privilege verses that are short, easily quotable, and positive in tone, whereas long, difficult, or indicting portions of the Bible seldom circulate. This hypothesis has not yet been supported by a content analysis of sermon material in Indonesia, but it is consistent with Tim Hutchings's finding that Bible apps such as YouVersion are designed as persuasive technologies that train their users in particular ways of reading.[30] If the hypothesis holds, congregants can technically access the entire Bible but in practice encounter only the small portion of the canon that survives platform selection. This is a new form of the "canon within the canon," with one crucial difference: this canon is shaped not by theological choices open to debate but by invisible calculations.

This fragmentation also affects how congregations understand themselves. A sermon preached in its entirety situates its hearers within the story of God: creation, fall, redemption, and renewal. This story is not a metanarrative in the sense Lyotard criticized, namely, a totalizing narrative that subjugates difference, but a testimony to God's faithfulness toward creation. When congregations receive only fragments, what remains is a string of spiritual motivational sound bites that are easily consumed but do not form identity. The critique of algorithmic curation is therefore not nostalgia for the pulpit authority of the past but an effort to recover the story of God as the home within which the congregation interprets its life.

Algorithmic curation thus operates as a hidden regime of legitimation on three levels. At the level of the text, it determines which portions of the Word are visible. At the level of the preacher, it determines which figures are regarded as authoritative. At the level of the congregation, it shapes spiritual tastes, habits of hearing, and relationships with the local church. These three levels cannot be addressed by better communication strategies alone. What is required is a framework that assesses this situation from the standpoint of the Word itself, and Amos's prophecy of a famine of hearing the words of the LORD offers an incisive lens for this task.

A famine of hearing amid a flood of content: Amos 8:11–12 as a prophetic lens

Amos 8:11–12 reads: "The time is surely coming, says the Lord GOD, when I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

[29] O'Lynn, "Digital Media Sermon," secs. 2 and 4; Yang, *Digital Homiletics*, chaps. "The Podium Style" through "The Artist Style."

[30] Tim Hutchings, "Design and the Digital Bible: Persuasive Technology and Religious Reading," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 32, no. 2 (2017): 205–219, https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2017.1298903.

They shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it." This oracle inverts the conventional image of famine: what is scarce is *lishmoa'*, the "hearing" of the words of the LORD. The subject is none other than God: "I will send." In its textual sense, this famine is a judgment consisting in the withdrawal of the prophetic word. Verse 12 underscores the point: the people search in earnest (*lebaqqesh*) but do not find it (*welo' yimtsa'u*). Shalom Paul reads this irony in light of the nation's rejection of the prophets.[31] Those who commanded the prophets not to prophesy (Am. 2:12) and drove Amos out of Bethel (Am. 7:12–13) will one day seek a word that is no longer given.

The immediate context of this oracle is Amos's indictment of economic injustice. In Amos 8:4–6, merchants trample on the needy, grow impatient for the new moon and the Sabbath to pass so that they may resume trading, and practice deceit with false measures and balances. Jörg Jeremias shows that in the book of Amos the breakdown of social relationships and the breakdown of the relationship with God cannot be separated; exuberant worship proceeds alongside systematic oppression.[32] The famine of hearing the word emerges as the consequence of a society that turns everything, including sacred time, into an opportunity for transaction. This link between market logic and the loss of the word makes the text pertinent to the attention economy.

The wider context reveals the institutional dimension of this famine. In Amos 7:10–17, the priest Amaziah forbids Amos to prophesy at Bethel because it is "the king's sanctuary" and "a temple of the kingdom." It is precisely the official religious institution that silences the prophetic voice disturbing the interests of power. Both Shalom Paul and Jeremias emphasize that worship at Bethel was thronged and festive; Amos 4:4–5 and 5:21–23 depict an abundance of offerings, festivals, and songs.[33] The famine of hearing the word does not occur amid a dearth of religious activity but amid its abundance. The nation lacked neither ritual, nor song, nor festival; what it rejected was the indicting word.

The verbs in verse 12 deepen this picture. *Na'u* (from *nua'*) means to stagger or to move unsteadily, without certainty; the same verb in Amos 4:8 depicts the inhabitants of two or three towns staggering to one town to drink water, yet without being satisfied. *Yeshotetu* (the Polel of *shut*) means to rush to and fro, as in Jeremiah 5:1, where people are told to range through the streets of Jerusalem in search of a single person who acts justly.[34] Both verbs depict a search that is earnest yet restless and futile. It is at this point that a postdigital reading may be proposed, as an analogical application rather than the text's meaning. Congregants may scroll from one piece of content and one preacher to the next in a restless search. The analogy lies not in the cause of the famine, since in Amos it is God who withholds the word, but in its pattern of movement: a search that never arrives at an encounter.

The boundary between the text's meaning and its contemporary application must therefore be guarded. This article does not claim that algorithms are instruments of divine

[31] Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 265-267.

[32] Jörg Jeremias, *The Book of Amos: A Commentary*, trans. Douglas W. Stott, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 160.

[33] Jeremias, *Book of Amos*; Paul, *Amos*.

[34] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), s.v. *nua'* and *shut*.

judgment, nor does it equate an inability to hear with a word that has been withheld. What is borrowed from the text is its theological logic: a people that persistently silences the voices that indict it ultimately loses the word it needs. That logic can illuminate the present situation by analogy. When the faithful persistently choose voices that please them, they help to create an environment starved of the indicting word, and algorithmic curation can amplify those small choices.

Brueggemann helps to translate this insight into homiletics. Royal consciousness, that is, a consciousness shaped by dominant power, numbs the people's capacity to feel suffering and to imagine alternatives; the prophetic task is to criticize that consciousness by giving voice to grief and lament while also energizing hope through the promise of God.[35] In the postdigital condition, royal consciousness takes the form of platform consciousness: a consciousness conditioned to consume continually, stay constantly connected, and rest comfortably in what it already likes. Prophetic homiletics is called to pierce this consciousness, not by adding more content but by restoring the capacity to listen.

Amos himself exemplifies where prophetic authority originates. When forbidden to prophesy, he insisted that he was neither a prophet nor a member of a prophetic guild, but a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees whom the LORD took from following the flock and sent with the charge: "Go, prophesy to my people Israel" (Am. 7:14–15). Amos's authority came not from institution, office, or popularity but from God's call; indeed, he was expelled from the king's sanctuary. For the postdigital preacher, this example is liberating, since the authority of preaching does not depend on follower counts, and at the same time challenging, since the indicting word must still be proclaimed even when the algorithm does not reward it.

Three prophetic principles emerge from this reading. First, an abundance of spiritual content is not the same as the presence of the word; Amos shows that the word can become scarce precisely amid thriving worship. Second, curation that determines which voices are heard, whether exercised by the royal establishment at Bethel or, analogically, by today's platform algorithms, always harbors particular interests and must be critiqued from the standpoint of the word. Third, the authority of preaching derives from God's call and from faithfulness to God's word, not from visibility. Together, these principles furnish a biblical foundation for a homiletic that is not anti-digital but critical of power in digital space. The Pentecostal tradition provides a concrete framework for putting it into practice.

A postdigital prophetic homiletic: Implications for contemporary preaching

Pentecostal hermeneutics offers an alternative to the algorithmic regime of legitimation. Archer frames it as a *tridactic* negotiation for meaning among the biblical text, the Pentecostal community, and the Holy Spirit: meaning emerges when a Spirit-led community reads and tests Scripture together. Amos Yong earlier described the relationship among Spirit, Word, and community as a *trialectic*, a three-way relationship of mutual correction that cannot be reduced to any single element.[36] The algorithm, by contrast, replaces all three elements with one: computing individual preferences. Pentecostal hermeneutics restores the balance: it is the

[35] Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 21–80.

[36] Archer, *Pentecostal Hermeneutic*; Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community*, 219–220.

Spirit, not the algorithm, who guides us into truth; the whole of Scripture, not curated fragments, serves as the norm; and a community of mutual testing, not the isolated individual, constitutes the space of interpretation.

The Pentecostal lens has been chosen for two reasons. Contextually, Pentecostal congregations in Indonesia have made digital media a principal ministry strategy while wrestling with questions about the authenticity and intimacy of virtual worship.[37] Theologically, this tradition understands preaching not as the delivery of content but as an event in which the Spirit speaks through the Word to the gathered congregation. The essays edited by Lee Roy Martin articulate a Pentecostal theology of preaching rooted in the experience of the Spirit, Scripture, and the life of the community.[38] Steven Jack Land places the affections and a passion for the kingdom of God at the heart of Pentecostal spirituality, so that preaching aims to form the heart rather than merely to capture attention.[39] This tradition, though vulnerable to being swept up in viral logic, also has the resources to resist it, as the following five practices show.

The first practice is whole-text preaching. Against the canon's fragmentation, the preacher reads the pericope in full and situates it within the flow of the biblical book and the story of God. Continuous reading (*lectio continua*) or a lectionary can bring congregations into contact with portions of the Bible that seldom appear on the timeline, such as the prophetic books, laments, and complex narratives. For a Pentecostal tradition that emphasizes sensitivity to the Spirit and the Spirit's spontaneity, this discipline need not oppose the Spirit's leading. In Archer's triad, the Spirit speaks through Scripture read in community; a reading plan, in fact, opens space for the Spirit to speak through texts that neither personal taste nor the algorithm would select, while application, prayer, and the congregation's response remain open to the Spirit's guidance. When sermon clips are uploaded, the church can include the pericope reference and a link to the full sermon, so that the fragment becomes a doorway into the whole rather than a substitute for it.

The second practice is naming the algorithm. Preaching should, from time to time, name the powers that shape the congregation's spiritual life: algorithmic curation, the attention economy, and surveillance capitalism. Han shows that the information regime endures precisely because it presents itself as freedom.[40] Prophetic preaching helps congregants recognize that their choices have already been shaped and then invites them to hear what they dislike and to read the portions of the Bible that are not recommended to them. This practice is liable to slip into an anti-technological moralism that merely adds to feelings of guilt. Such disclosure must therefore be oriented toward prophetic literacy, that is, the ability to read the signs of the digital times in the light of the Word, for example by inviting young people to explore together why certain spiritual videos appear on their home feeds.

The third practice is communal discernment over metrics. James K. A. Smith maintains that the first element of a Pentecostal worldview is a radical openness to a God who can surprise, so that Pentecostal communities are accustomed to testing what is taken to be the

[37] Lontoh and Wibowo, "Digital Pentecostalism."

[38] Lee Roy Martin, ed., *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2015), 7–10.

[39] Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010; first published 1993 by Sheffield Academic Press), 212–219.

[40] Han, *Infocracy*, 5.

work of the Spirit.[41] In this light, a sermon's success is measured not by views but by its fruit in the life of the congregation. John McClure proposes collaborative preaching, in which the preacher prepares the sermon with members of the congregation around a "roundtable," so the congregation's voices help shape the interpretation.[42] In many Indonesian churches, cell groups or prayer fellowships that discuss the text of the Sunday sermon can serve as that roundtable: interpretation is determined by the conversation of a community whose members know one another, not by aggregate preferences computed by a machine.

The fourth practice is embodied gathering. The postdigital condition blurs the boundary between online and offline, but it does not negate the value of physical assembly. For the Pentecostal tradition, the gathering is the space in which the Spirit works through a diversity of gifts, where believers pray for one another, lay on hands, and testify. A study of the GKP (Pasundan Christian Church) congregation in Cirebon shows that online worship expands access for members limited by mobility, time, health, or distance, yet in-person worship remains the center of embodied fellowship.[43] Digital broadcasts can serve as a bridge, but the church must continue to invite congregants back to the gathering, not because screens are evil, but because hearing the word in its fullness requires a present community.

The fifth practice is justice-oriented proclamation. Amos's oracle of famine is rooted in an indictment of economic injustice. A postdigital prophetic homiletic must not stop at a critique of digital culture; it must also speak out for justice on behalf of those harmed by the digital economy: precarious platform workers, victims of online gambling and illegal online lending, groups targeted by disinformation, and those left behind by the digital divide. Brueggemann reminds us that the prophetic imagination unites grief over injustice with hope for the new order that God has promised.[44] Preaching faithfully to Amos asks not only how spiritual content circulates but also who suffers in an economy that turns human attention into a commodity.

None of these five practices requires substantial digital resources. For small congregations in villages or small towns without a media team, most of the practices are matters of ecclesial discipline: reading the pericope in its entirety and sharing a sermon summary, along with its pericope reference, through the congregation's chat groups rather than circulating clips. Urban churches that broadcast their services can avoid clickbait titles, include the pericope in every upload, and evaluate their digital ministry by its fruit rather than by its views. This homiletic thus complements the best practices mapped by O'Lynn and the range of styles offered by Yang with a hermeneutical-theological critique that they have not yet undertaken.[45] It does not reject technology, but it refuses to surrender the authority of the Word to platform logic. In this way, the pulpit can remain a place where the Word is heard, even when the timeline is filled with voices.

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[41] James K. A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 17–20.

[42] John S. McClure, *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 59–70.

[43] Miharja, Wibisono, and Napisa, "Digital Religion and Hybrid Worship."

[44] Brueggemann, *Prophetic Imagination*, 39–80.

[45] O'Lynn, "Digital Media Sermon," sec. 4; Yang, *Digital Homiletics*, chaps. "The Podium Style" through "The Artist Style."

Conclusion

This article has asked who determines which sermons reach congregations in the postdigital era. The analysis has demonstrated that the collapse of metanarratives did not abolish authority but relocated its legitimating function to metadata and curation algorithms, which operate as a performative regime of legitimation at the levels of the text, the preacher, and the congregation. The exegesis of Amos 8:11–12 has shown that, in its textual sense, the famine of hearing the word is God's judgment on a nation that silenced its prophets amid abundant worship. From that theological logic, applied analogically, the contemporary church is reminded that an abundance of spiritual content does not guarantee the presence of the word, and that the authority of preaching derives from God's call, not from visibility. Within the framework of a postdigital hermeneutic, five practices have been formulated: whole-text preaching, naming the algorithm, communal discernment over metrics, embodied gathering, and justice-oriented proclamation. The novelty of this article lies in positioning algorithmic curation as an object of hermeneutical-theological critique within Indonesian Christian homiletics. Its limitation lies in its conceptual nature; the hypotheses concerning the fragmentation of the canon and the influence of metrics need to be tested through content analysis of the most widely circulated sermon clips on Indonesian church channels and through interviews with preachers.

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The authors affirm that all three contributed to developing and completing the manuscript. Ginting contributed to the initial conceptualization and formulation of the main ideas, while Munthe provided critical insights and expanded the discussion. Marbun collaborated in revising and refining the manuscript to ensure its coherence and academic quality for final submission.

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