

Kent State University

From the Selected Works of Daniel Roland

2014

The Sermon Content Review, Volume 3, Number 1

Daniel Roland, *Kent State University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/daniel_roland/12/

Sermon Content Review

January/February 2014

Volume 3, Number 1

ISSN 2327-7890

Daniel Roland, PhD
Center for the Study of Information and Religion
School of Library and Information Science
Kent State University
droland1@kent.edu
Twitter: CSIR1Research

The ***Sermon Content Review (SCR)*** is a bi-monthly publication of the **Center for the Study of Information and Religion (CSIR)** at **Kent State University**. The focus of SCR is on the social construction of religious knowledge and the role of sermons in that process. The purpose of SCR is to identify the most influential sources, current issues, and events that clergy members reference in their weekly sermons.

The sources, issues, and events are measured on four levels of significance:

1. The source, issue, or event is referenced in 5% or more of all sermons in the data sample,
2. The source, issue, or event is referenced in at least one sermon by 5% or more of all the clergy members in the data sample,
3. The source, issue, or event is referenced in at least one sermon by 5% or more of either female or male clergy members,
4. The source, issue, or event is referenced in 5% or more of all sermons in the data sample for a particular Sunday.

The sermon texts used for the SCR are gathered from the clergy blogs and congregational websites listed on the ***Sermon Texts Posting Sites Index (STPSI)***. For more information about STPSI go to <http://bit.ly/STPSI> or at this link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AhZGuWv1JoamdE4xLXInSnVpOTVhUWFURFNxX3VVR1E&usp=drive_web#gid=0

To learn more about CSIR, including our annual **International Conference on Information and Religion**, the call for papers for the next conference, published proceedings from previous conferences, and our annual publication of **Advances in the Study of Information and Religion**, go to the Digital Commons of the Kent State University Libraries at <http://digitalcommons.kent.edu/csir/>

To receive announcements when future issues of SCR are published, "LIKE" the Center for the Study of Information and Religion on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Center-for-the-Study-of-Information-and-Religion/111870302196612>

Add CSIR to your circles in Google + at:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/118422826425758784540/118422826425758784540/posts>

Follow CSIR on Twitter @CSIR1Research,

or copy and paste the SCR RSS feed into your news reader:

<http://fusion.google.com/add?feedurl=http://csir-scr.blogspot.com//feeds/posts/default>

Please send comments and suggestions for improving *The Sermon Content Review* to better suit your research needs to csir@kent.edu.

Demographics:

The number of clergy members whose sermons were collected for this issue of SCR: 163 (37 female clergy)

The number of sermon texts collected for this issue of SCR: 789 (160 by female clergy)

Sermon count by denominational affiliation:

[Disciples of Christ \(DoC\)](#) – 53

[Evangelical Lutheran Church of American \(ELCA\)](#) – 226

[Episcopal/Anglican](#) – 105

[Lutheran Church Missouri Synod \(LCMS\)](#) - 62

[Mennonite USA](#) – 40

[Non-denominational/Independent](#) - 12

[Presbyterian Church USA \(PCUSA\)](#) – 79

[Southern Baptist Convention/Cooperative Baptist Fellowship \(SBC/CBF\)](#) - 13

[United Church of Christ \(UCC\)](#) – 68

[United Church of Canada](#) - 7

[United Methodist Church \(UMC\)](#) – 109

[Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod \(WELS\)](#) - 10

Sermon count by geographical location:

Alabama – 16

Alaska – 3

Arizona - 8

Arkansas - 18

Australia - 7

California – 50

Canada - 12

Colorado – 16

Connecticut – 25

District of Columbia – 12

Florida – 18

Georgia - 2

Illinois – 46

Indiana – 24

Iowa – 35

Kansas – 15

Louisiana – 4

Maine – 7

Maryland - 26

Massachusetts – 15

Michigan – 30

Minnesota - 44

Missouri – 18

Montana – 6

New Mexico – 7

New Zealand - 2

New York – 22

North Carolina – 35

North Dakota – 6

Ohio – 72

Oklahoma - 7

Oregon – 14

Pennsylvania – 19

South Carolina - 7

Tennessee – 16

Texas – 10

Utah - 8

Virginia – 40

Washington – 26

Wisconsin - 29

Sources, Issues, and Events Referenced in Sermons:

1. Referenced in 5% or more of all sermons in the data sample:

Homelessness: Referenced in 58 sermons – 7.4% of the total data sample

- In 21 of 97 sermons, 21.6%, delivered on February 9 and speaking from the texts Isaiah 58:3-9 and/or Matthew 5:13-20
 - [“Repairers of the Breach: A Biblical Case for Social Justice”](#) Rev. James Harnish, UMC pastor
 - [“What God Desires to Call Us”](#) Rev. Jim Singleton, Disciples of Christ pastor
 - [“Salt of the Earth Lutheran Church”](#) Rev. Dan Wilfrid, ELCA pastor
 - [“Your Kingdom Come”](#) Rev. Timothy Ensworth, UCC pastor
- By 47 different clergy members, 28.8%
- By 10 different female clergy members, 27%
- By 37 different male clergy members, 29.4%
- In 16 of 160 sermons, 10%, by female clergy members
- In 42 of 629 sermons, 6.7%, by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Cooperative Baptist Fellowship clergy members
- In 4 of 53 sermons, 7.5%, by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 20 of 226 sermons, 8.8%, by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 6 of 105 sermons, 5.7%, by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members
- In 2 of 40 sermons, 5%, by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Non-denominational/Independent clergy members
- In 4 of 79 sermons, 5%, by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Southern Baptist Convention clergy members
- In 10 of 68 sermons, 14.7%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 6 of 109 sermons, 5.5%, by United Methodist Church clergy members

Martin Luther: Referenced in 56 sermons – 7% of the total data sample

- In 13 of 103 sermons, 12.6%, delivered on January 12 and speaking on the subject of Baptism
- By 42 different clergy members, 25.8%
- By 3 different female clergy members, 8.1%
- By 39 different male clergy members, 40%
- In 4 sermons by female clergy members
- In 52 of 629 sermons, 8.3%, by male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 27 of 226 sermons, 11.9%, by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermons Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 15 of 62 sermons, 24.2%, by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 6 of 109 sermons, 5.5%, by United Methodist Church clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy members

Martin Luther King, Jr.: Referenced in 42 sermons – 5.3% of the total data sample

- In 17 of 100 sermons, 17%, delivered on January 19 in recognition of Martin Luther King Day
- By 39 different clergy members, 23.9%
- By 12 different female clergy members, 32.4%

- By 27 different male clergy members, 21.4%
- In 12 of 160 sermons, 7.5%, by female clergy members
- In 30 of 629 sermons, 4.8%, by male clergy members
- In 5 of 97 sermons, 5.2%, delivered on February 23 and speaking on the text from Matthew 5:38-48:
 - ["Kidding Aside – Love Your Enemies"](#) Rev. Sidney Fowler, UCC pastor
 - ["Love Your Enemies? Crazy Talk"](#) Rev. Karl Hanf, ELCA pastor
 - ["Be Perfect – That's a Promise!"](#) Rev. Lois Harder, Mennonite USA pastor
- In 4 of 53 sermons, 7.5%, by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 13 of 226 sermons, 5.8%, by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 7 of 105 sermons, 6.7%, by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 3 of 40 sermons, 7.5%, by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church of New Zealand clergy members
- In 8 of 68 sermons, 11.8%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 4 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

2. Referenced in at least one sermon by 5% or more of all clergy members in the data sample:

Poverty: Referenced in 30 sermons by 28 of 163 (17.2%) clergy members

- By 9 different female clergy members, 24.3%
- By 19 different male clergy members, 15.1%
- In 9 of 160 sermons, 5.6%, by female clergy members
- In 21 of 629 sermons, 3.3%, by male clergy members
- In 5 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 4 of 40 sermons, 10%, by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 6 of 79 sermons, 7.6%, by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church of New Zealand clergy members
- In 8 of 68 sermons, 11.8%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
 - ["Sticks and Stones"](#) Rev. Timothy Ensworth
 - ["The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later"](#) Rev. Randy Hammer
 - ["Rising From the Waters"](#) Rev. Mary Anne Biggs
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Martin Luther King Day: Referenced in 25 sermons by 25 of 163 (15.3%) clergy members

- In 10 sermons by female clergy members, 6.25% of all sermons by female clergy members
 - [Untitled](#) Rev. Abbott Bailey, Episcopal pastor
 - ["Show and Tell"](#) Rev. Allison Patton, UCC pastor
 - ["The Suffering Servant"](#) Rev. Cynthia Lapp, Mennonite USA pastor
 - ["Come and See"](#) Rev. Amy Perkins, PCUSA pastor
 - ["What Do You Want?"](#) Rev. Nancy Bishoff, UMC pastor
- In 15 sermons by male clergy members
- In 3 of 53 sermons, 5.7%, by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 6 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 6 of 105 sermons, 5.7%, by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 2 of 40 sermons, 5%, by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 4 of 68 sermons, 5.9%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Eugene Peterson: Referenced in 21 sermons by 18 of 163 (11%) clergy members

- By 8 different female clergy members, 22%
- By 10 different male clergy members, 7.9%
- In 9 of 160 sermons, 5.6%, by female clergy members
- In 12 sermons by male clergy members
- In 4 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 4 of 79 sermons, 5.1%, by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 4 of 68 sermons, 5.9%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 5 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Gun Control/Violence: Referenced in 15 sermons by 15 of 163 (9.2%) clergy members

- By 5 of 37, 13.5%, of female clergy members
- By 10 of 126 male clergy members
- In 5 sermons by female clergy members
- In 10 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 6 of 79 sermons, 7.6%, by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermons by Southern Baptist clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

C.S. Lewis: Referenced in 14 sermons by 11 of 163 (6.7%) clergy members

- In 1 sermon by female clergy members
- In 13 sermons by 10 different male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Non-denominational/Independent clergy members
- In 6 of 79 sermons, 7.6%, by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Southern Baptist clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Frederich Buechner: Referenced in 12 sermons by 11 of 163 (6.7%) clergy members

- By 3 of 37 (8.1%) female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by 3 different female clergy members
- In 8 sermons by 8 different male clergy members
- In 5 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Gandhi: Referenced in 11 sermons by 11 of 163 (6.7%) clergy members

- By 4 of 37 (10.8%) female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by female clergy members
- In 7 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church of New Zealand clergy members
- In 4 of 68 sermons, 5.9%, by United Church of Christ clergy members

Pope Francis: Referenced in 17 sermons by 10 of 163 (6.1%) clergy members

- By 3 of 37 (8.1%) female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by 3 different female clergy members
- In 13 sermons by 7 different male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 4 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 7 of 68 sermons, 10.3%, by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

John Wesley: Referenced in 14 sermons by 9 of 163 (5.5%) clergy members

- In 2 sermons by 2 different female clergy members
- In 12 sermons by 7 different male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 12 of 109 sermons, 11%, by United Methodist Church clergy members
 - A sermon series by Rev. Brian Vinson
 - [“Why United Methodist: Who Are These People Called Methodist?”](#)
 - [“The Methodist Way of Salvation – The First Step”](#)
 - [“The Methodist Way of Salvation – Part II”](#)
 - [“Living the Christian Life”](#)

David Lose: Referenced in 12 sermons – 9 of 163 (5.5%) clergy members

- By 3 of 37 (8.1%) female clergy members
- In 5 sermons by 3 of 37 different female clergy members,
- In 7 sermons by 6 different male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 8 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 2 of 40 sermons (5%) by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Church of Christ clergy members

Human Trafficking: Referenced in 11 sermons by 11 of 163 (6.7%) clergy members

- By 3 of 37 (8.1%) female clergy members
- In 3 sermons by 3 different female clergy members
- In 8 sermons by 8 different male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Methodist Church clergy members

Mother Teresa: Referenced in 10 sermons by 10 of 163 (6.1%) clergy members

- By 2 of 37 (5.4%) female clergy members
- By 8 male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 8 sermons by male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members

Abortion: Referenced in 10 sermons by 10 of 163 (6.1%) clergy members

- In 1 sermon by female clergy members

- In 9 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod clergy members

Marriage Equality: Referenced in 9 sermons by 9 of 163 (5.5%) clergy members

- In 1 sermon by female clergy members
- In 8 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Nelson Mandela: Referenced in 9 sermons by 9 of 163 (5.5%) clergy members

- In 3 sermons by 3 different female clergy members
- In 6 sermons by 6 different male clergy members
- In 4 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church of New Zealand clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members

3. Referenced in at least one sermon by 5% or more of either female or male clergy members in the data sample:

William Willimon: Referenced by 4 of 37 (10.8%) female clergy members

- In 5 sermons by 4 different female clergy members
- In 7 sermons by 4 different male clergy members
- In 5 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 4 of 68 sermons (5.9%) by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Desmond Tutu: Referenced by 4 of 37 (10.8%) of female clergy members

- By 4 different male clergy members
- In 4 sermons by female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church of New Zealand clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members

Anne Lamott: Referenced by 3 of 37 (8.1%) clergy members

- By 2 male clergy members
- In 3 sermons by female clergy members
- In 2 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Southern Baptist clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Methodist Church clergy members

Philip Yancey: Referenced by 7 of 126 (5.6%) male clergy members

- In 7 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Southern Baptist clergy members
- In 1 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Referenced by 2 of 37 (5.4%) female clergy members

- By 4 male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 3 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermons by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members

Henri Nouwen: Referenced by 2 of 37 (5.4%) female clergy members

- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 3 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Church of Christ clergy members

Flannery O'Connor: Referenced by 2 of 37 (5.4%) female clergy members

- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 2 sermons by male clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 1 sermon by United Methodist Church clergy members

Steve Garnass-Holmes: Referenced by 2 of 37 (5.4%) female clergy members

- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members

4. Referenced in 5% or more of all sermons for a single Sunday in the data sample:

NFL Super Bowl: Referenced in 16 of 101 sermons, 15.8%, on February 2

- In 5 sermons by female clergy members
- In 11 sermons by male clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Disciples of Christ clergy members
- In 5 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Mennonite USA/Canada clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Non-denominational/Independent clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Presbyterian Church USA clergy members
- In 3 sermons by United Methodist Church clergy members

Winter Olympics: Referenced in 7 of 97 sermons, 7.2%, on February 9

- In 1 sermon by female clergy members
- In 6 sermons by male clergy members
- In 4 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Non-denominational/Independent clergy members
- In 2 sermons by United Church of Christ clergy members

Movie: Groundhog Day: Referenced in 6 of 97 sermons, 6.2%, on February 2

- In 2 sermons by female clergy members
- In 4 sermons by male clergy members
- In 3 sermons by Evangelical Lutheran Church in America clergy members
- In 2 sermons by Episcopal/Anglican clergy members
- In 1 sermon by Lutheran Church Missouri Synod clergy members