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HERMENEUTICS

A Matter of Interpretation

*Hermeneutics: A Matter of
Interpretation*

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Hermeneutics: A Matter of Interpretation

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Foreword

Serving as amanuenses, the capture of scientific diction, in order to document a heretofore undocumented Hermeneutic found these servants humbled by the favor. While serving in his Hermeneutics Class, we noticed that Dr. John E. Penn spoke intentionally, deliberately, in order that a record might emerge...speaking in a diction that indicated his intention- An intention to provide an unprecedented opportunity for those common enough to properly appraise the occasion: An opportunity to organize, arrange, document, and present in scripted format, a heartfelt Hermeneutic.

The Hermeneutic of Dr. John E. Penn, like its author, was formed through an excruciating process of trial and error, self-denial, submission, and faith. By laboring in the process of Interpretation, a Bible Interpreter came to be: First, the Bible Interpreter and then the Bible Interpretation.

Therefore, then, the Science of this Hermeneutic is more than the Science of Interpretation, more rather, it is the Science of the making of an Interpreter: The Science of the Making of an Interpreter according to the unsurpassed process of laboring in the word and doctrine.

To the glory of God, this Hermeneutic is dedicated, as well as its author.

T. E. Carter & A. E. Johnson,

Amanuenses

Introduction

(Pink, 1972) stated: “Man is notoriously a creature of extremes, and nowhere is that fact more evident than in the attitude taken by different ones to this subject. Whereas some have affirmed the Bible is written in such simple language that it calls for no explaining, a far greater number have suffered the papists to persuade them that its contents are so far above the grasp of the natural intellect, its subjects so profound and exalted, its language so abstruse and ambiguous that the common man is quite incapable of understanding it by his own efforts, and therefore that it is the part of wisdom for him to submit his judgement to ‘holy mother church,’ who brazenly claims to be the only Divinely authorized and qualified interpreter of God’s oracles.”

Since the common man must work among the extremes, and against his own notoriety for such within himself, then this Hermeneutic is intended to afford him a repeatable process of achieving for himself a sound knowledge of the Scriptures that will find him well-equipped “to determine the correct use of the Bible in theology and in personal life” (Ramm, 1970).

History of this Hermeneutic

Acknowledging that throughout the ages, common Baptist people used a literal method of Bible interpretation; especially, since they themselves were the authors inspired to write the now extant autographs. As such authors, they understood the epistolary, apocalyptic, and prophetic nature of the poems and prose which they penned.

However, as persecutions and prosperities would have it, religionists confiscated these scripts and superimposed their traditions onto them, exchanging the traditions of men for the commandments of God. This Hermeneutic emerged through the toils and labors of the Missionary Baptist Seminary's Professor of Hermeneutics Dr. John Penn. Through continuous review and revision, Dr. Penn engaged his students in a "collaborative" manner, fielding their questions, while developing his own hermeneutical skills through the humiliation of his own trials and errors.

Dr. John E. Penn, BA, Th.B., Th.M., and Th.D. is Pastor Emeritus of North Bryant Baptist Church, Bryant, Arkansas, and Retired Professor of Church History at the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock where he served for 34 years, where he also taught Bible

Interpretation, Comparative Religions, Ministerial Practicalities and other courses.

Prior to coming to North Bryant, he was pastor of the following Baptist churches in Arkansas: Union at Jesup, Jerusalem at Strawberry, Landmark at Forrest City, First Baptist at Cave City, and Southwest Missionary Baptist in Little Rock, which relocated and became North Bryant Baptist Church.

He has also conducted revivals and taught Church History seminars in many states across the U.S., and has been instrumental in organizing several churches in Arkansas. His travels have taken him on 4 trips to South India to preach and establish churches, to attend “The First World Congress on Religious Liberty” in Amsterdam, and to conduct Church History tours in the U.S., studying our American heritage; France to study the Albigeneses, and Italy to study the Waldenses in the Valleys of the Piedmont.

Dr. Penn believes in a verse by verse, New Testament approach to teaching God’s Word. Like the churches he pastored for more than 58 years, his goal with his website www.baptistlamp.org and this introduction to Hermeneutics is to bring God’s Word to the world,

while giving every student a foundation upon which to build a life for Christ. Thusly, this Hermeneutic is an expression of a lifetime of co-laboring in the word with numerous students in whose lives he willingly divested himself, while investing in them.

The Science of this Hermeneutic

Since Dr. John Penn encouraged the admiration of science; especially, since he often referenced such famous scientists like Francis Bacon who developed the “Scientific Method;” Pascal the French Mathematician and scientist; Descarte the Mathematician, Philosopher, and scientist, along with many others, then it is no marvel that he worked to develop a Science of Hermeneutics, a Science Process that could be repeated, and utilized for generations to come.

Thusly, the science of this Hermeneutic will be demonstrated by its products; namely, its apologetics. That is, the answers given for the certainty of those like Dr. John Penn and those desiring to know what can be known from the Bible; so then, one can expect that the “proof of the process-its science” to be found in the answers it produces. Recalling that “the student is not above his teacher: but every one that

is complete will be like his teacher,” students of this Hermeneutic are honored to be called “able practitioners” of it.

This Hermeneutic throughout the Ages

As Baptist people are known throughout the ages by various names and slanders; perhaps no greater source of both their admiration and disdain was due to their love of the truth. Maligned by foes, and admired by friends, Baptist people have, indeed, left a Trail of Blood in their wake; yet, for it all, serving God with their minds has been and remains the Landmark of their virtue.

Their Soteriology, Bibliology, and Ecclesiology, and the unsearchable riches of their faith are worthy to be sustained through the process of the arduous task of mind-service to God; for, as those freed to serve God with their minds, their lineage is more accurately traced through the faithful study of the Scripts for which both their lives and limbs were sacrificed for His glory and their posterity.

An oft quoted Baptist, C. H. Spurgeon on Baptist perpetuity stated:

"We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect, yet there has never existed a Government holding Baptist principles which persecuted others; nor I believe anybody of Baptists ever held it to be right to put the consciences of others under the control of man. We have ever been ready to suffer, as our martyrologies will prove, but we are not ready to accept any help from the State, to prostitute the purity of the Bride of Christ to any alliance with the government, and we will never make the Church, although the Queen, the despot over the consciences of men". (From The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.VII, Page 225).

"History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called Anabaptists were brought up for condemnation. From the days of Henry II to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism. Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.' No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scriptures, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the

wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sabbath to Sabbath.

As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder - what a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought! Our history forbids discouragement." **(From the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1881, Vol. 27, page 249.)**

The heart of this Hermeneutic, therefore is expressed in the willingness to develop and document a process which, like the history of its truth-bearers, will assure the highest level of integrity in passing along “a way of excellence” to future generations.

In the “keeping” of His commandments, then their safeguard is more likely achieved according to the process under which practitioners of Hermeneutics engage than the whimsical, ever-vacillating and irresolute minds of unregenerate men; for, if today’s contemporary interpreter is to obey the admonition expressed accordingly,

“ὀρθοτομέω orthotoméō, or-thot-om-eh'-o; from a compound of G3717 and the base of G5114, to make a straight cut, i.e. (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly (the divine message):—rightly divide” (BlueletterBible.org), then through what better process than that afforded through the only process forged in accord with the History, Martyrologies, Testimonies of Baptist people, and the Sacred Texts of which they are both the ancient authors and faithful guardians, or could a more sure path be embarked than that one on which the blood of the Baptists was shed?

Thusly, the saga of the ancient Scripts, the Bible, like the History of this Hermeneutic, bears testimony to the veracity of a former grand practitioner of this Hermeneutic who said: “*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*”

Elements of this Hermeneutic

Dr. John Penn taught his students that his historic, holistic hermeneutical approach was like “Stoichiometry [which] refers to the measure of ‘any first thing, from which the others belonging to some series or composite whole take their rise, an element, [a] first principal” (The Basics of Philosophy). His hermeneutic, therefore, enumerating these ‘first things,’ provides the student an overview of the interdependence according to which his holistic Hermeneutic takes shape, becomes a cohesive unit of interdependent elements, demonstrating its holism to be greater than the sum of its parts.

Further, by conveying that “the idea of holism, which is that systems (e.g. physical, biological, chemical, social, etc.) cannot be understood only by the understanding the smaller parts that make them up” (The Basics), Dr. John Penn applied this logic to his science of Hermeneutics, teaching that the smaller parts that make up his Hermeneutic were valuable insofar as they were incorporated into the whole.

That is, Bible Languages, for example are more advantageous when synthesized within the entirety of a Hermeneutical System, a

system which incorporates Bible Languages, Syntax, Grammar, Literary Genres, along with all key, Lexical-Syntactical elements. His mantra resounded, asserting that all these linguistic elements are but devices, best utilized when deployed within his holistic Hermeneutical Approach.

Further, noteworthy was (and is) Dr. John Penn's willingness to encourage education, encouraging his students to be "noticing [things like] **Semantic Holism** [which is] is a doctrine in the **Philosophy of Language** to the effect that a **certain part** of language (e.g. a term or a complete sentence) can only be **understood** through its **relations** to a (previously understood) **larger segment** of language, possibly the entire language" (The Basics of Philosophy-Holism). Dr. John Penn ignored-at the risk of his own interests-the trend that is summed in the following observation, developing his own Context Principle within the framework of his own "holistic" hermeneutical process. The trend in sum: "Up until the end of the 19th Century, it was always assumed that a word gets its meaning **in isolation**, independently from all the **rest** of the words in a language. In 1884, **Gottlob Frege** formulated his influential **Context Principle**, according to which it is only within the **context** of a proposition or sentence that a word acquires its

meaning (The Basics of Philosophy-Holism)” Retrieved from http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_holism.html

Dr. John Penn advocated his own “Context Principle” within his historical-hermeneutical as the defining ancient, historical practice according to which historic Baptists in all ages faithfully communicated the original meanings contained within the Biblical texts. He labored and toiled to compile and succinctly communicate this practice into a repeatable hermeneutical process by demonstrating it “in practice,” proving its power and usefulness for students in the Missionary Baptist Seminary, noting that apart from it, usage and meaning would be forever elusive to the Bible student.

The Theology of this Hermeneutic

Focusing his students onto the infallible fact that “All Scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17), Dr. John Penn iterated frequently that one’s interpretation can be so skewed by theology that a proper Theology of Hermeneutics was a necessary element within his holistic, historical hermeneutical

approach. For future interpreters, he observed that the gap between contemporary believers and the ancient texts was becoming more unlikely to close apart from a sound hermeneutic, a hermeneutic which adhered to a theology that held the Scriptures to be an incomparable source of truth; for, to approach the Scriptures according to any theological suppositions that do not adhere to the historical realities of inspiration and preservation of God's word throughout the ages, will find the interpreter accommodating uninspired sources, rather than rejecting them.

Dr. John Penn graciously warned his students, future interpreters, to always heed Paul's warning to: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Colossians 2:8)." Unbiblical notions, like leaven, will permeate the interpreter's craft, nullifying the repeatable nature of the interpretive process by fragmenting its holistic nature into independent elements incapable of generating a sound Biblical interpretation.

Further, when the theology of an interpreter reinforces the inspiration of the Scriptures, and recognizes their authority in all matters of historical-doctrinal interpretation, then the Bible interpreter

will be well-grounded as he develops his craft through iterative, deliberate and purposeful practice.

Warning his students, Dr. John Penn stated that as theology weakens, then so also will the recognition of the propositional force of God's word; especially, the ability to know God's word and His will. The strength of one's revisionary will can be expected to grow as one rejects the Bible as the only certain, infallible rule of one's faith and practice. His ultimate forecast was a warning concerning the prevalent trend that he noticed; namely, that interest was ever increasing in a subjective focus on individual experience and relevant application of Scripture, rather than on Biblical Interpretation of the texts, in order that one might gain a correct understanding of the Bible.

The Language of this Hermeneutic

Since God chose particular languages according to which He would document His Word(s), then of utmost importance for this Hermeneutic is a willingness to acquire the skills necessary to "use" these languages; particularly, Biblical Hebrew, and KOINE Greek. Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, therefore, are those to which infallible inspiration is attributed, that is, with reference to those texts

alone is the argument, the doctrine of inspiration, first and foremost established. Hebrew and Greek Grammars, wherefore, along with their ancillary lexicons, will afford an aspiring practitioner of this hermeneutical process the essential tools for ascertaining what the original authors penned, and how the original receptors received their writings.

Dr. Penn noted that the “usage” of the Bible’s Languages could not be overemphasized; for, apart from the grammar and lexicons of these languages, a Bible Interpreter has no means of producing an interpretation upon which others can rely; much more, an interpretation that achieves the intended end of the Author, the Holy Spirit. Adherence to the Bible’s languages structures the interpreter and aligns him with the text, rather than the text with the interpreter.

Grammatical functions, lexical meanings, and syntactical relationships provide a framework for the practitioner of this Hermeneutic; for, the genuine desire to know the Scriptures presents regard for the Bible as it was originally written as its chief symptom. The Bible’s languages are essential tools, elements within the holistic framework of this hermeneutical process that assures the repeatable outcome; namely, improved knowledge of the Bible.

The “inflective” reality, unique to each Bible language, guides the interpreter-the interpreter so inclined-toward the apparent nature of the text. That is, the languages, their grammar and contextualized lexical meanings indicate for the interpreter the distinctions and emphases of the original author. If the author is using a finite verb in the Bible Languages, then in a “finite verb form” will that verb appears. Likewise, if the author is emphasizing an action which “participates” with the kind of action achieved in a finite verb, then the Bible’s languages has a term for that. A Bible Interpreter desiring to engage this literal, historical hermeneutical process, then he will not find the “usage” of the Bible’s languages to be anything less than advantageous.

Iterative, deliberate and purposeful engagement in this process of Bible Interpretation will literally find the practitioner “schooled” in the Bible’s languages. Language traits, like the “affix and prefix” states of the Hebrew language, or the seven various stems according to which those “perfect and imperfect” states are communicated soon become the vernacular of the faithful interpreter: He becomes “scripted” by the Scriptures, rather than the Scriptures being “scripted” (rewritten) by the illegitimate interpreter.

KOINE Greek, for example, is so highly inflected that an interpreter would, more often than not, find it difficult to “mis-understand” the author’s meaning. Further, the embarrassing difficulty among many of today’s infamous, fallible religious constructs, and their constructors, are simply dispelled when cast into the light of the Bible’s original languages. A KOINE Greek **Language Note:**

Time & "Kind of Action" in Greek Verbs: In English, and in most other languages, the tense of the verb mainly refers to the 'time' of the action of the verb (present, past, or future time). In Greek, however, although time does bear upon the meaning of tense, the primary consideration of the tense of the verb is not time, but rather the 'kind of action' that the verb portrays. The most important element in Greek tense is kind of action; time is regarded as a secondary element. For this reason, many grammarians have adopted the German word 'aktionsart' (kind of action) to be able to more easily refer to this phenomenon of Greek verbs.

The Literature of this Hermeneutic

Along with the advantages offered an interpreter through the “use” of the Bible’s original languages, so also will the interpreter find it most advantageous to acquire a genuine appreciation for the various literary styles according to which the Bible communicates. From poetry to prose; proverbs to psalms, along with an array of contextualized historical narratives, the interpreter need only to immerse himself into the epistolary, apocalyptic, and prophetic types of literary genres, applying to each one the consistent hermeneutical approach to all literary styles; namely, the lexical-syntactical steps essential to knowing the Bible definitions of the words used, their syntactical relationship, all within the purview of the Context Principle.

For, no literary style can be better understood than when it is first understood according to its fundamental elements, then, and only then can its genre be fully appreciated. That is, for example, before the aspiring interpreter begins to construct a preemptive, and contemporaneous need for the “construction of a third Temple,” within the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, he need first define his terms, acknowledge the inflection and emphases of the Bible’s languages,

then research the historical realities of the first and second temples...complete all specialized work action-steps prior to “jumping” headlong into eschatological conjecture; especially, conjecture incited by pop-eschatological, and sometimes, sensationalized speculations.

Aspiring interpreters often can find their interpretations shipwrecked upon the shorelines of “Harried Hermeneutics;” for, no interpreter practices his craft within a cultural vacuum, nor does he present his findings before an “un-primed,” pre-conditioned audience. Consequently, then, an aspiring interpreter’s knowledge of the epistolary, apocalyptic, and prophetic types of literature assures the necessary cognizance essential to grasping any type of text’s meaning.

Figurative language-all language is figurative, as no term is that thing in actuality, to which it makes reference, rather only, a referent to it. That is, a “noun” is not a person, place or thing, rather a term that refers to a person, place or thing. Figurative language, therefore, like lexical definitions, can be classified as “metaphor, simile, or allegory.” The interpreter need only regard the value of knowing such figures of speech, and the contribution such figures are making in the text being interpreted.

The Culture of this Hermeneutic

Careful to research history, Dr. John Penn habitually emphasized the historical-cultural realities of each age in which a text was written—he called the students’ attention to the historicity of culture: For example, if facts exclusively associated with second-temple Judaism were to interplay with one’s interpretative process, then those unique facts must be applied only to matters acquainted with the second Temple, and Judaism as it was practiced during that “Second Temple Culture.”

Thus, the key to reading John’s Revelation would include learning about the politico-religious culture of both second Temple Judaism, and the Roman Empire as they existed during the time of John’ distinct genres it employs. Our understanding of Biblical texts is improved insofar as the customs, culture, and historical context of the time of their writings are considered; especially, as culture is an element within this holistic, historical hermeneutical approach.

Finally, Dr. Penn noted that the most original meaning of a text is not always obvious to us living in a distant time and culture, a time and culture completely alien to the original receptors, as alien to them as theirs is to us. Consequently, he emphasized the fact that

information about the cultural background can be decisive in assisting one in completing an the interpretive process of this historic hermeneutic.

Essentials of this Hermeneutic

Because, Mickelsen (1963) stated: “the purpose of exegesis and exposition is to communicate the meaning of an earlier statement to those living at the same time as the interpreter,” then a structural framework is advantageous for the Bible Interpreter. Constantly encouraging his students to re-search the Scriptures, Dr. John Penn demonstrated essential, and practical methods within the Science of Biblical Interpretation; namely, the practice of Key-steps to a successful interpretation of a Bible Text.

Some “Unique and General” Interpretive Principles of Dr. John Penn include,

- 1.) **Know the Author:** First, and Foremost, the student of the Scriptures must know the Author; for, apart from this foundation, no Bible Interpretation is possible as it would not reflect the True nature of the Author of the Bible: To

contradict the character and reputation of the Author of the Bible is the most egregious of hermeneutical errors.

- 2.) **Context Principle:** Usage is not to be confused with meaning, as the Author's meaning is only assured through the contextualized narrative in which it is contained, and according to which it is communicated.
- 3.) **Avoid Center References:** within popular Study Bibles.
 - (A.) Center References guide a student according to pre-understood (and possibly misunderstood) assumptions.
 - (B.) Center References also contribute to the "process of accruing pre-understanding," that is, to the process called "priming."
 - (C.) Center References "assume" an unfounded correlation between texts, and often are void of any contextual consideration for the texts to which they direct the Bible student.
- 4.) **Seek first the "Bible definition:"** of the term in question.
 - (A.) Terms, when understood according to unbiblical definitions will skew the understanding of the text in

which it appears; for, the student will unknowingly “import,” that is, interpose an alien meaning into the Biblical text.

- (B.) Terms, however, when defined according to Biblical definitions will align the Bible student/Interpreter with the actual meaning in the Biblical text, itself, diminishing the futile effects that “pre-understanding” has on one’s efforts “to determine the correct use of the Bible in theology and in personal life.”

5.) Realize that the “usage” of Bible Languages: is a tool for the Interpreter to achieve a more excellent interpretation, rather than increasing one’s knowledge of the Bible Languages themselves: Languages are elements within the holistic system of Hermeneutics.

- (A.) Usage of Bible Languages affords the Bible Interpreter essential “definitions,” and “inflections” communicated within the Scriptures.
- (B.) Usage of Bible Languages is essential to achieving the most accurate interpretation.

6.) The Bible is the Only Infallible, and certain Rule of Faith and Practice.

(A.) All Confessions, creeds, and traditions of men, are therefore, to be evaluated in such a manner as to identify the fallible elements within each.

(B.) The ability to distinguish the fallible and the infallible is only possible when the Bible student/Interpreter is as aware of the Scriptures as to notice the difference(s).

7.) Context: is only achieved when the text under consideration is understood according to Lexical-Syntactical Analysis:

Note: The genre of the text (poetry, prose, illustrative or descriptive, epistolary, apocalyptic or prophetic etc.) does not alter the Hermeneutical approach to that text, that is,

Lexical-syntactical analysis, although arduous, yields exacting and meaningful results from any type of literary format.

To fully appreciate, that is, to know the text, then “to know poetry,” “to know prose,” or “to know any other type of linguistic style: epistolary, apocalyptic, or prophetic” is to

approach each genre according to key functional steps that can be universally applied to any type of Biblical text:

1. **Lexicography and Lexicons:** Identify the meanings of individual words.
2. **Context:** Identify the usage of individual terms according to the context in which they appear.
3. **Syntactical Textbooks:** Evaluate the relationship of the individual terms to one another according to their grammatical forms and format.
4. **Grammars:** Evaluate grammatical forms according to the inflection of the Bible Language in which they appear. That is, if it is the Koine Greek, then “kind of action” will be emphasized. If Biblical Hebrew, then action is inflected according to seven-stems, and two states: A Complete, Perfect, or Affix state, and an Incomplete, Imperfect, or Prefix state.
5. **Realize that “determinants” are within the Texts** and be willing to “re-search the Scriptures” for them.
6. **Value the differences** between “Illustrative and Descriptive” narratives.

7. **Avoid “deconstructing” the texts**, and acknowledge that it is perfectly synthesized as presented within the Bible.
8. **Avoid “errors of omission”** by assuming one to be wrong when approaching any Biblical Texts, otherwise exegesis (leading-out from the text) is impossible.
9. **Finally, recognize the universal desire within all interpreters to resort to emendation**; especially, when a “rewrite of a Text” would better serve the interest(s) of the Bible Interpreter than those of the Author of the Texts.

The Exegesis of Scripture

Exegesis is not Hermeneutics, rather an element according to which the system, the interpretive process, according to which a Bible Interpretation is produced. Exegesis, (to lead-out) therefore, is a specialized work action-step within the essential steps of this historical hermeneutic.

Apart from leading outwardly, literally “outwardly from the Bible text,” a Bible interpretation becomes impossible. Although *exegesis* is only a specialized work action-step, it is a step so essential as to shutdown the interpretive process entirely; for, failing to lead-outwardly from the text is almost always the direct or indirect result of *eisegesis*. **Eisegesis**, as the term means, is a “leading inwardly” into and onto the text. That is, the interpreter practicing eisegesis is actually importing into the text his pre-understood ideas, traditions and meanings, while also interposing onto the Biblical Text alien definitions, traditional suppositions, and assumptions: Elements, which when contributed, commandeer the historical, interpretive process, producing something “other than” a hermeneutical product.

The Exposition of Scripture

Exposition, according to this historical hermeneutical process, is a specialized work action-step that functions to expose that which has been excavated through exegesis by the practitioner of this interpretive process. The correlate between exegesis and exposition is so direct as to find exposition impossible apart from exegesis. Exposition, then, is presupposed by exegesis. Positing-outwardly, expositing a text, is only

achieved after, and in conjunction with, the often arduous labor and toil of exegesis.

The Landmarks of Scripture

The phrase, “Landmarks of Scripture” refers to those things deliberately positioned so as to assure integral boundaries. The proverbial admonition: “Remove not the ancient landmark” serves well for any interpreter willing to acknowledge that such boundaries, “Landmarks,” appear within the Scriptures. The Landmarks of the Scriptures are those literary realities unique to the Scriptures alone; namely, their languages (Biblical Hebrew and KOINE Greek), the grammar of those languages, the contexts, along with the didactically formatted narratives, the genres of literature, and the unique meanings of the Scripture’s terms. An interpreter presuming to “move an ancient Landmark” is one doing so at the peril of those reliant upon his interpretations for their ability to have a correct understanding of the Bible, and God’s will for their lives.

Synthesis of this Hermeneutic

Dr. John Penn could not have been more exacting in his insistence that the Scriptures were an unsurpassed synthesis, instructing his students to evaluate the Scriptures as they were originally formatted. Consequently, by recognizing the Scriptures to be a superlatively expressed according to their original synthesis, the interpreter could focus on the text as it was written, realizing no need for emendation.

The Originalism of this Hermeneutic

As a self-described originalist, Dr. John Penn emphasized that the meanings of the Bible were immune to change, that is, he correlated the “dead languages” in which they were written to the texts themselves, noting that what made lexicography a precise science was in the fact that a Lexicon, by definition, was a “dictionary of a dead language.” By dead, he meant unchanging, static. Thus, as a self-described originalist, he assumed the great task of developing an “original hermeneutic,” that is, a hermeneutical approach, that, like the

Bible's languages would be unchanging, holistic, and capable of being utilized according to a repeatable and reliable process.

Further, he insisted that the proper meanings of Bible words should always be acknowledged according to their correct usage and grammar insofar as such meanings adhere to his "Biblical Context Principle." Finally, since the Bible contains no contradictions, then any interpretive process that sustains a contradicting hermeneutical product should be considered an unreliable process, and its self-contradicting interpretation acknowledged as "incomplete, imperfect."

The Textualism of this Hermeneutic

Functioning as a companion to Dr. Penn's Biblical Originalism was his Biblical Textualism. According to his Biblical textualism, therefore, the time, culture, and genres of any Bible text undergoing his historic, holistic hermeneutical process are all to be incorporated as relevant elements. By the incorporation of these elements, a contextualized culture would emerge, allowing the interpreter an insight into the receptors' understanding: The way a text would have been understood by its original readers.

Apologetics from this Hermeneutic

Craig (2009) asked and answered the question: “What is apologetics? Apologetics (from the Greek *apologia*: a defense) is that branch of Christian theology which seeks to provide a rational justification for the truth claims of the Christian faith” (Kindle Location 144). Apologetics is the result of this Hermeneutical process, a process that is focused solely upon that which is actually written and remains on record in the Bible.

This Hermeneutical process can facilitate any believer’s desire to come out and be separated from erroneous assertions and traditions of men. In a culture dominated by *conversational ecumenism*-whose mantra is “Talk trumps Text.” It’s a virtual language of Ashdod- this hermeneutical process equips God’s out-called people to remain peculiar, uniquely His, in both words and practice: This Hermeneutic demonstrates the value of the New Testament in the original KOINE language, and the value of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew; empowers others to meet their responsibility to do their own word studies, in order that they also might know exactly what God intended

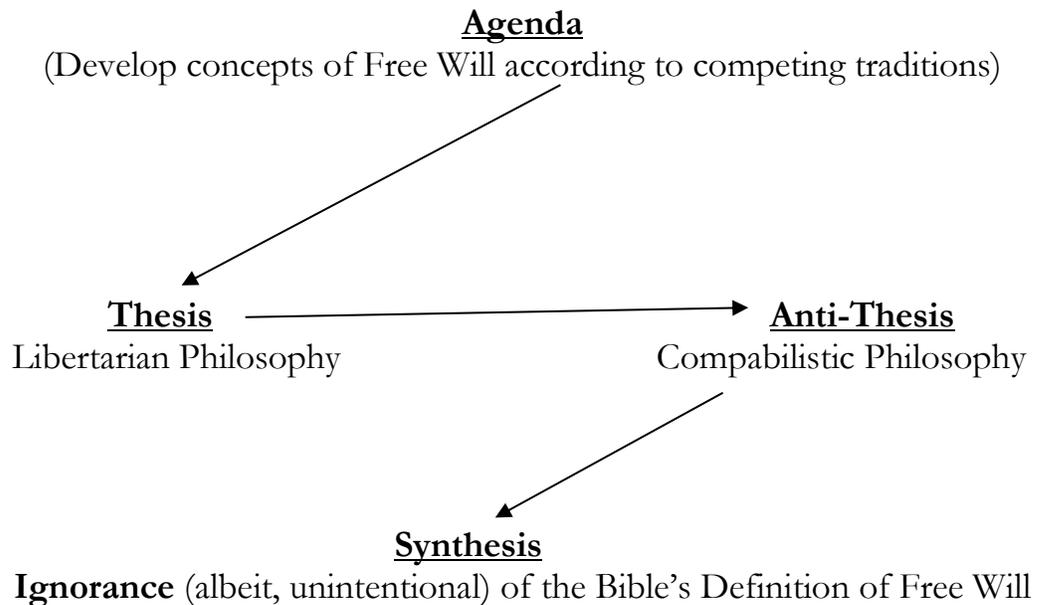
to communicate to us and others; and finally, demonstrate to us that the True and Living God did not leave anyone as an orphan, dependent upon theological traditions, customs, creeds, and confessions of unnatural parentage.

The Historic Dissonance without this Hermeneutic

“Dialectic” can present itself as a tension existing between two conflicting or opposing ideas. Of interest to the Bible Interpreter are those dialectics that have persisted throughout the history of Christianity; namely, those dialectics which generate dissonance on seemingly a global scale.

Recognizing the difficulties within human being-ness to perceive from any point of view from which historic dissonance dissipates, the practitioner of this hermeneutic can approach any dialectic in the same manner according to which he approaches a Biblical text.

The dialectic concerning “Free Will” can be approached accordingly,



This dialectic concerning Free Will could be easily avoided, that is, a viewpoint from which the contradiction (the result of the dialectic) dissipates; specifically, through observing the specialized work action-

step number 4:

Seek first the “Bible definition:” of the term in question.

- (C.) Terms, when understood according to unbiblical definitions will skew the understanding of the text in which it appears; for, the student will unknowingly

“import,” that is, interpose an alien meaning into the Biblical text.

- (D.) Terms, however, when defined according to Biblical definitions will align the Bible student/Interpreter with the actual meaning in the Biblical text, itself, diminishing the futile effects that “pre-understanding” has on one’s efforts “to determine the correct use of the Bible in theology and in personal life.”

Noteworthy is the power of Step number 4; specifically, in its valuation of the Bible, the Text over the Talk. The interpretive process within this historical hermeneutical approach encourages the practitioner to consult the Bible’s languages, use them to ascertain Bible definitions of terms, concepts and phrases.

As with the abstract “Thesis and Anti-Thesis” presented in the Free Will dialectic, the practitioner of this hermeneutic would immediately consult the text, his lexicons, and grammars, learning that an entire “stem, called: Hiphil” exists within the Hebrew language that describes the relationship of a subject and the action being performed. Avoiding much grief, the interpretive practitioner would discover the oldest definition of Free Will to actually be “causal agency;” and

this hermeneutical approach notices that within the Scriptures is a text that specifically identifies the purpose of the Gospel to have been written and to remain on record to be: “in order that you might deliberately cause yourselves to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in order that as ones deliberately causing yourselves to believe that Jesus is the Christ you may be having life through His name.”

Through the use of this holistic, historical hermeneutical process, the practitioner notices that the antecedent action of the verb “gennaō” precedes the participle “pisteuōn,” and in absolutely no text does birth precede a finite verb form.

That is, an adherent to this holistic, historical hermeneutical process interpretation, the process enumerated within in its specialized work action-steps will notice that an “error of omission” has been committed (unintentionally) by advocates of traditional, abstract assertions like “regeneration precedes faith;” specifically, an omissive error caused by ignoring the Bible languages and the inflective realities unique to them.

The Bible, therefore, actually teaches that an un-regenerated sinner “deliberately causes himself to believe” (Aorist Subjunctive

Active 2nd Person plural as in John 20:31); and that “birth out from God” antedates the person who is deliberately causing him or herself to always be supporting/believing that Jesus is the Christ (as in 1 John 5:1).

Distressful is the extent to which this dialectic has spread-it’s a global phenomenon-especially, since it depends solely upon an unwillingness to engage an authentic, proven hermeneutical process like that one developed by Dr. John Penn. For, noticing the difference between a finite verb and a participle would be expected of the practitioner of this historical, hermeneutical process: It assures, when followed, that the most challenging dialectics are overcome in a definitive, and final manner.

The Unprecedented Consonance through this Hermeneutic

Recalling the heart of this hermeneutic, a practitioner can realize the achievement of compassionate consonance, that is, agreement upon the basis of actual Bible knowledge, according to the Bible’s meanings and usage of Bible language. For example, in the dialectic concerning creation, it displays accordingly,

the Hebrew term H1961 HAYAH by using the term G1086 GINOMAI as the divinely inspired translation of H1961.

The grief that this holistic, historical hermeneutical process alleviates is incalculable; for, it communicates in such a manner of excellence as to afford believers confidence in interpretations. Interpretations produced according to Dr. John Penn's holistic, historical hermeneutical process are testable, and capable of withstanding any level of scrutiny: In fact, evaluation is welcomed.

David, Heath & Suls (2004) stated: "Recent work shows that people tend to have little insight into their errors of omission (Caputo & Dunning, in press); however, they give these errors a good deal of weight (indeed, equal to what they give to the solutions they generate themselves) once they find out about them" (p. 74). The lack of insight literally prevents the proper attribution, that is, the weight to errors of omission: Ironically, among textbooks concerning "exegetical fallacies," the risk of such errors is categorically omitted: Ironic, indeed.

David, Heath & Suls (2004) further stated: "For example, in one study (Caputo & Dunning, in press, Study 4), graduate students were

given brief descriptions of research studies and asked to list all the methodological difficulties they could find: Students' initial evaluations of their knowledge of research methodology were not correlated with their objective performance on this task" (p. 74). That is, the students' performance did NOT reflect the methodology which they "touted." Flawed performance always produces a "flawed" product when the methodology is not fully understood; specifically, when it omits structural elements designed to assure a repeatable outcome.

David, Heath & Suls (2004) also stated that: "Students provided more pessimistic and accurate, assessments of their knowledge about research methodology once their errors of omission were made known to them" (p. 74). Subsequently, when application of such methodological flaws toward proper exegesis, students can more accurately assess their knowledge of the science of Biblical Interpretation in the same manner: Accordingly, then Barrick (2008) stated: "Exegetical problems most often arise from human ignorance rather than any fault in the text itself: It has become customary among evangelical scholars to resort to textual emendation in order to explain some difficult texts" (p. 18).

Consequently, William Barrick labeled this error, the “Superior Knowledge Fallacy.” He further stated: “Scholars too often pursue many such textual emendations merely because the interpreter has insufficient knowledge to make sense of the text as it stands.

Ignorance, wherefore, should never be an excuse to emend the text to make it understandable to the modern Western mind. Above all, the evangelical exegete/expositor must accept the biblical text as the inerrant and authoritative Word of God. Adhering consistently to this declaration of faith will require an equal admission of one’s own ignorance and inability to resolve every problem. Ignorance, however, should never become the excuse for compromising the integrity of the Scriptures: Our first assumption should be that we are in error instead of applying the hermeneutics of doubt to the text” (p. 18).

Finally, David, Heath & Suls (2004) illustrated accordingly, stating: “For example, suppose we asked you to list as many English words as you could from the letters in the word spontaneous (e.g., tan, neon, pants), and you found 50. Whether this performance is good or bad depends, in part, on how many words are possible, and it is difficult to expect that you—or anyone else—would have an accurate

intuition of what that figure is; in fact, more than 1,300 English words can be created from the letters in spontaneous” (p. 74).

Starting with William Barrick’s assumption; namely, that “our first assumption should be that *“we are in error,”* instead of applying the hermeneutics of doubt to the text” one need only “trust and consult” the text. Fortunately, then, once Bible students achieve an awareness of their own incognizance, by recognizing the reality of their potential “errors of omission,” students of the Scriptures will assign to themselves a “more pessimistic and accurate, assessment of their [own] knowledge about research methodology once the[se types of] errors of omission (i.e., the study flaws they had failed to identify) [are] made known to them.”

As the Master Teacher, Jesus the Christ Himself often stated: “Ye have heard that it was said...;” however, that same “verbally constructed” context persists unto this day. All students must avoid the pursuit of “textual emendations” merely because they have insufficient knowledge to make sense of the text as it stands.

Unfortunately, the “error of omission” has generated many of the largest controversies in recent Christian history: Succinctly

speaking, then, an omissive error can (and does) lead a Bible student to “assume” that the text “as it stands” is insufficient; for, the assumption that any text is insufficient “as it stands” negates the very core involved in this “Hermeneutic” approach; namely, integrity.

Further, the Bible Interpreter is reminded of the words of the Master Teacher: “Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?” (KJV): In so recalling, the Interpreter is reminded that our faults are not found within our “blind-spots,” neither in our ignorance, but rather, in our unwillingness to “assume that we are wrong,” and are plagued with the consequences of omissive errors.

Evaluation within this Hermeneutic

The Full Scope Evaluation of this Hermeneutic

As students of Hermeneutics, full-scope evaluation and its importance within the field of Biblical Interpretation could not be more appreciated: The phrase itself: Full-scope indicates the essential scope of structure and design requisite to achieving an actual interpretation that reflects the text itself, and not the opinion of the Interpreter. (Pershing, 2006) declares: “What makes full-scope evaluation work is that it is both iterative and integrated; the flow between types of evaluation is seamless, and, in most cases, it is [always] better not to be “outside of the process box” (p. 323).

The “process box,” in this context, applies to the key functional steps of Biblical Interpretation; and, thusly, provides a sustainable interpretative context in which interpretive initiatives might remain “focused,” that is, contained within the purview of fundamental hermeneutical principles and; most importantly, remain connected to the original meanings, intentions and historical realities communicated within extant texts.

Furthermore, according to (Pershing, 2006) “Full-scope evaluation helps [Hermeneutical] practitioners [to] conduct a major reality check on three important performance-improvement success factors: keeping the performance-improvement intervention aligned with organizational needs, adapting to change, and accomplishing the intended performance-improvement goals and objectives” (p. 327).

“Organizational needs,” for the Bible Interpreter, are those needs within the organization upon which the responsibility to teach the Bible is required; namely, A New Testament Church, an evangelistic engagement, a proclamation of Biblical Truth, or even a Seminary. “Adapting to change,” for the Bible Interpreter, is that ever present reality that as all things change, eternal truths remain the same, and are essential to dynamic cultural, and social realities among pluralistic societies. “Performance-improvement goals,” for the Bible Interpreter, then, include the honing of one’s craft, the development of scientific skills as a practitioner of Hermeneutics.

Wherefore, then, the full-scope evaluative approach according to (Pershing, 2006), actually “establishes and verifies the continuing merit and worth of a performance intervention- [Additional Training, or Continued Education like that acquired in through a Seminary]-

provides a foundation for long-term planning, proving, improving, and making decisions; supports the need for accountability for performance improvement, [and] models and supports continuous improvement” (p. 328).

Apart from a full-scope evaluative approach, then, the magnitude of evaluation during a Hermeneutical project’s implementation and the meta-evaluation that ensues would be limited in its full evaluation of the improvement process; specifically, the improvement of the scientific process of interpreting the Bible. That is, as each type of evaluation is engaged, full-scope does just as it is described, covers the full scope and magnitude of the evaluative types and procedures.

Each interpreter might, indeed, engage in any one or two types of evaluation, and yet experience under-evaluation due to an oversight, or rather a myopic view of its progress. Harried Hermeneutics, then, becomes the end of any ability “to determine the correct use of the Bible in theology and in personal life” (Ramm, 1970).

Failing to contextualize all types of evaluation, interconnecting them into a “seamless” full-scope evaluative process denies the interpreter his potential knowledge of the Biblical Texts generated by

the Hermeneutical project; limits his ability to align his thinking according to the Texts, and potentially misdirects interpretive efforts and assets.

Thoughts on what makes full-scope evaluation different from a simple evaluation, include that which (Pershing, 2006) distinguished; namely, that unlike other models “the Dessinger-Moseley Full-Scope Evaluation Model illustrates the benefits of integrating two processes, performance improvement and evaluation, in one iterative flow” (p. 317). Therefore, then, improvement of the interpreter’s performance within the “box” of the interpretive process is only improved as evaluation is applied to his practice of “scientifically” interpreting the Bible.

This integration assures that the performance improvement and evaluation function “interdependently” of each other, realizing the greatest utility in their mutual implementation. Further, (Pershing, 2006) says that “the [full-scope] model blends formative, summative, confirmative, and meta evaluation into a seamless, iterative flow for making judgments about the continuing merit and worth of any performance improvement intervention” (p. 317); especially, for the

ultimate process required for interpreting the only certain and infallible rule of faith and practice, the Bible.

For the Bible school or Congregation that is willing to respond in a timely manner to an improvement initiative—a resetting of core goals or principles—foregoing unnecessary errors, and assuring that appropriate review and revision of the process currently engaged assures that it is “more likely” than mere chance that the organization will remain aligned with strategic objectives (correct Bible interpretations) and prevent the oversight of accrued errors throughout the improvement intervention: The Great Commissioner will be more faithfully obeyed, and His Commission more greatly achieved!

Functionally speaking, the full-scope’s utilization of all four types of evaluation achieves meta-data upon which interpretive decisions might be made according to which a specific determination might be obtained concerning the future of any improvement intervention, avoiding prolonged and futile continuance of fallible constructs.

Since any interpretive science is viewed by the Hermeneutics practitioner as a system, that is, as a whole whose components are all

related to one other, then as (Pershing, 2006) says: “A system is a concept, a mental construct for understanding how things operate. When we view something as a system we look for the following generic components: ‘inputs, a processing system, processing system feedback, outputs, a receiving system, and receiving system feedback’ (Brethower, 1982, p. 355)” (p 94). Consequently, then, one should always include the “mental” dimension into the learning arena within this Hermeneutical system of inputs and outputs.

Also, (Dreyfus, 1980) asserts that “The Dreyfus Five-Stage Model of Adult Skills Acquisition is grounded in the argument that ‘skill in its minimal form is produced by following abstract formal rules, but that only experiences with concrete cases can account for high levels of performance’”(p 2).

Pragmatic, therefore, is this Hermeneutics’ effort to incorporate skill acquisition into this paper as contrast to knowledge creation; for, apart from a utilitarian principle of usefulness, an interpreter would find improving his performance as a Bible Interpreter difficult among mere abstractions in theory and practice. Thus, skill acquisition is the governing principle within this “practical, experience-based” Hermeneutical approach: It’s designed for those who actually labor in

word and doctrine, the workers seeking to rightly divide the word of truth.

How to be about managing, or rather stewarding entrusted knowledge and its sources is noteworthy; for, as (Pershing, 2006) noted: “Knowledge management (KM) encompasses different aspects of an organization: people, culture, process, structure, leadership, technology, and measurement” (p 619). And, as thus far affirmed by this Hermeneutic, it includes mental constructs, practices, and decisions: Causative agents with causative agency!

Of knowledge, therefore, (Pershing, 2006) says: “Knowledge is what you know and what you know how to do: your cognition and skills. This type of knowledge is stored in your head, and is often considered tacit because people cannot always articulate exactly what they know” (p 620).

The “cognition and skills” of an individual, an organization, a collaborative group, or its individual members possess knowledge: They know something, and strive to articulate it, in order that once articulated, it becomes explicit, capable of being codified, reproduced and distributed; and subsequently built-upon, generating greater tacit

knowledge for future explicit knowledge generation: Improved Bible knowledge, and interpretive skills.

Although, as (Pershing, 2006) observes: “Knowledge currently is believed to add more value to a company than land, labor, or capital, which are the traditional bases of wealth acquisition” (p 620), its translation or conversion from tacit to explicit knowledge can only increase the value of that knowledge; especially, when that knowledge is of the Bible. That is, Hermeneutical practitioners consider the art of the alchemist to be an actuality, rather than a myth when speaking with reference to tacit knowledge’s translation into explicit knowledge: What can be known from the Bible can become explicitly known.

Extending toward a demonstration of the products of “generated knowledge” are the skills acquired or capable of being acquired. Since knowledge is superlative in value adding, then the acquisition of skills is a realistic expectation that students of this Hermeneutic can expect. And, these acquisitions can be partitioned according to five stages as (Dreyfus, 1980) states “the five stages of expertise were named novice, competent, proficient, expert and master” (p 2).

Hermeneutical Practitioners can enjoy skill-development based upon self-evaluations of each stage, assuring that no effort is expended independently of or apart from their inherent “stage of expertise.” Fortunately, (Pershing, 2006) “Knowledge management is maturing into a generally, but not universally, accepted organizational-improvement intervention” (p 637). Nevertheless, improvements in skill acquisition will so compel Bible Interpreters toward a universally accepted “Hermeneutical process improvement intervention.”

(Pershing, 2006) iterated accordingly, “In 1997, in fact, *Fortune* magazine’s article ‘The Power of Reflection’ stated that ‘successful organizations fail in many different ways, but they share one underlying cause: a failure to reflect’ (Hammer and Stanton, 1997, p. 292)” (p 1123), this student finds reflection to be indispensable to a successful process of learning. Reflection is more than merely the evidence of thoughtful engagement, just as inhaling and exhaling are more than the mutual sides of the breathing process, they are interdependent realities; likewise, a concept of thinking apart from reflection-thinking and reflecting are the interdependent realities of any genuine thought process-then will no actual thinking, learning;

especially, will no translation of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge ever occur.

(Pershing, 2006) appraised reflection accordingly: “The value of the Rapid Reflection Model is that it takes advantage of the benefits of reflection but integrates reflection into the overall...process, therefore making efficient use of the important commodity, time” (1123, 1124). Finally, as (Pershing, 2006) observes “Reflection-in-action can occur *in the moment* or it can occur during brief getaways or respites from the interactions in the [Hermeneutical Process]” (p 1127).

Therefore, practitioners of this Biblical Hermeneutic will find themselves encouraged to embrace reflection; inevitably, to develop reflection in compassionate, thoughtful learning organizations, like Churches and Seminaries, into a sustained process that itself will continuously improve the learning of both the individual Bible Interpreter and the congregation or field in which he teaches.

Furthermore, (Dreyfus, 1980) categorized skill acquisition accordingly: “The model focused on four mental functions: recollection, recognition, decision and awareness and how they varied at each level of expertise: Each time a mental function matures, [then] the individual’s level of expertise rises” (p 3). Accordingly, then,

Practitioners of this Hermeneutic intend to introduce an embedded structure according to both the stages and mental functions of Bible students, encouraging them to engage in collaborative learning in a collective manner, preventing fragmentation, and diminishing interpretive errors within an otherwise disarrayed, incognizant, indecisive, and unaware learning environment.

Additionally, (Pershing, 2006) states that “*Chaos* is ‘an ancient word originally denoting a complete lack of form or systematic arrangement, but now often used to imply the absence of some kind of order that ought to be present’ (Lorenz, 1993, p. 3)” (p 1251). Consequently, congregations, Bible Schools, and even Seminaries are often perplexed by the chaos by which they are often confronted, however, the practitioner of this Hermeneutic acknowledges that such a condition can be indicative of a thriving learning environment, thusly, (Pershing, 2006) observes: “*Chaos* generally refers to confusion, disorder, and lack of organization: It is a state of disorder and restlessness, which is actually evolutionary” (p 1254).

As a developmental process, a positive, constructive, developmental process, chaos can and does provide a necessary dynamic for learning. Thus, as learning increases, so also will the

“negative stigma” toward the term chaos itself decrease: Or as (Pershing, 2006) iterated: “Chaos, which until then had had a negative connotation, became accepted as a part of life and part of reality” (p 1255). Students of this Hermeneutic, therefore, need not be stymied by the ever present reality of chaotic environments; especially, when the environment is a learning environment: The process of Hermeneutics will prevail any and all chaotic elements.

Also, among the components of a learning organization (Pershing, 2006) included: “Phase space, sometimes referred to as the state space, places variables in an active changing system (p 1257).” This space describes and subjects elements according to an environment designed to condition variables according to progressive changes, that is, continuous changes.

No longer will a learning organization anticipate a static pause in change agency or causation, rather only a productive reflective process that itself includes dynamic, ever changing variables: Gone will be static, dead constructs, whose nature is found to be rigid, unchanging. Such static constructs will be viewed as maladaptive to the dynamic learning process.

When applied to “Fallible Religious Constructs,” then, the student of this Hermeneutic will be encouraged to evaluate every type of creed, confession, doctrinal statement, or tradition according to the scientific process of this Hermeneutic, realizing for himself any and all variances between those things which are spoken and those things which are written and remain on record. This Hermeneutical process encourages evaluation, by developing evaluative skills as one engages the practice of Bible Interpretation.

Wherefore, (Pershing, 2006) states: “As changes happen throughout the system, the system bifurcates into two, then four, then multiple numbers of paths. When a system reaches maximum instability, self-organizations are given opportunities for creative reordering (Wheatley, 1994)” (p 1257). This “reordering” affords the learning organization and its collaborative learners the opportunity to improve interpretative integrity through continuous improvement.

It is here that Bible Interpreters are encouraged to conduct “formative” evaluation, which occurs at each “milestone” throughout the enormous task of sustaining a faithful Hermeneutical Process; for, as with any system, bifurcations are inevitable; thus, remaining on the “paths” that assure the highest integrity in a Bible Interpreter’s

interpretations are possible insofar as the practitioner exercises the discipline to adhere to the principles of this common Hermeneutic.

Practitioners of Biblical Interpretation can, through collaborative, consultative joint-sessions with “Communities of Practice,” generate essential feedback from such collaborative sessions, realizing the advantages of “reordering” the organization’s environment as a natural inertia toward improvement in its interpretive skills: A priority that would otherwise would be overlooked without formative evaluation!

Noteworthy, then, for practitioners of this Hermeneutical Process is the observation by (Dreyfus, 1980); specifically, expressed “The Dreyfus brothers hypothesized that to obtain the level of master one first must progress through the lower levels of expertise” (p 3). Progression is that which a learning organization- a Church or Seminary- will initiate, facilitate, and assure throughout the entire transition to a “continuous-learning” organization in light of the measures of both inputs and outputs within an intentionally chaotic environment.

Also, (Pershing, 2006) states that “Attractors are variables around which systems come together. Lorenz (1993) suggested a new

kind of attractor called a *strange attractor*” (p 1258). These “attractors” can be prescribed by the Specialized Workers-practitioners of the science of this Hermeneutic- as they engage in deliberate, and intentional deployments to influence the direction of the organization; specifically, its direction toward a learning opportunity such as that realized through an educated view of chaos, a positive view of any and all reordering opportunities; specifically, a professional perspective on bifurcation.

Furthermore, (Pershing, 2006) said: “Fractals refer to similarities at various levels: From a micro-perspective to a macro-perspective, there are layers within a system” (p 1258). Consequently, then, the systemic view includes the reality of layered components, not only diverse elements aligned in linear fashion, nor constrained by physical definitions, but rather, also extending into layered mental, and physical realities.

Somewhat complex and dynamic, some might be wary of such a 360 degree, 3-D perspective of a living, dynamic, learning organization; however, (Pershing, 2006) speaks to this, saying: “Although all systems are complex and adaptive, complex adaptive

systems (CAS) are learning systems that adapt to their environment: They are self-organizing and free to evolve and develop” (p 1259).

Wherefore, then, the Congregation or Seminary which deliberately approaches improved knowledge within the field of authentic Hermeneutics through the repeatable process prescribed in this introductory textbook, self-organizing and self-evaluation will generate a most admirable outcome; namely, the best possible Bible Interpretation. Fortunately, (Pershing, 2006) introduces an anticipated expression of the CAS like a WBS, a ND, and the WPs, a “Network theory has also evolved in recent years, with *network* defined as the architecture or skeleton of complexity (Barabasi, 2003)” (p 1260).

Thusly, much desired (Pershing, 2006) “Structure [emerges in the form of] networks [that] are mesh-like interfaces in which the individual components of the network are linked in a distributed way” (p 1260). Subsequently, then, (Pershing, 2006) further informs the [Hermeneutical] practitioner that “Nodes and Clusters [emerge by definition to be an]...individual dot or component in the network [that] is referred to as a *node*: Nodes that are connected to one another form a group known as a *cluster* (see Figure 54.3)” (p 1260).

And, finally, (Pershing, 2006) introduces “Hubs: Clusters that have many connections are powerful and are called *hubs*. Once formed, hubs tend to become more powerful over time” (p 1260): These mechanized construct elements provide a necessary context for encouraging full engagement, and “embrace” of the lively reality of a continuous- learning organization.

According to (Bratianu) “Ikujiro Nonaka and his co-workers created a consistent body of theory concerning knowledge creation in organizations based on four main ideas: a) knowledge creation at individual level is a direct result of the continuous dialogue between tacit and explicit knowledge; b) there are four basic knowledge conversion processes: socialization, externalization, combination and internalization; c) knowledge creation at the organizational level is based on these four conversion processes and a spiral driving force; d) there is a shared space for knowledge creation” (p 193).

Accordingly then, Nonaka conveys a common expression of complex ideas; namely, the expression of individual learning to be “a dialogue” between tacit and explicit knowledge (a personification of knowledge); including both the tacit and explicit resources of knowledge, inviting and encouraging equal discussion. Also, according

to the terms: “socialization, externalization, combination and internalization,” he characterizes the process of dialog as a socialization process, the ambient reality of it to be externalization; the interface of those that dialog as combination (of both tacit and explicit knowledge) and the consequential assimilation of both to be internalization: However pragmatic, the descriptors disclose the functions of these organizational elements.

As a reminder of the core interests for practitioners of this Hermeneutical Process, one need only refer to the (Dreyfus, 1980) assertion that “the model is based on learning a skill not a profession” (p 3), assuring that as knowledge generation escalates, then tangible, quantifiable measures through demonstrations of newly acquired skills will be tracked (accounted) throughout the transition phase unto the full implementation of a complete, total organizational (all fields of Theology, History, Bible Languages, etc.) approach.

For further assurance within this Science of Bible Interpretation, one should reference that which (Bratianu) observed; namely, that “*Any organization that deals with a changing environment ought not only to process information efficiently, but also create information and knowledge*” (Nonaka, 1994, p.14). Creating information, for this

Hermeneutic, concerns its generation by the practitioner of this Hermeneutic. Generation of knowledge, therefore, involves the elicitation of tacit knowledge through multivariate mental engagements, engagements that facilitate, encourage, and advance knowledge exchange and interface.

Fostering this type of organizational dynamic requires, and supports a positive view of chaos, an equal valuation of tacit and explicit knowledge, and a sustained dialog that generates new knowledge, or as (Bratianu) states of Nonaka: “In his view, “Tacit knowledge is highly personal and hard to formalize, making it difficult to communicate or to share with others. Subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches fall into this category of knowledge. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is deeply rooted in an individual’s action and experience, as well as in the ideals, values, or emotions he or she embraces’ (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p.8)” (p 194). Against the influence of “tacit” knowledge the practitioner of this Hermeneutic must stand; for, it’s the basis of source bias and source avoidance. Biases are expressions of both the wills of the mind and the flesh.

This demarcation through categorization of knowledge according to the terms, tacit and explicit serves the learner (future

practitioner of this Hermeneutic) well as functional constructs, allowing him to differentiate explicit knowledge, elicit it, harvest, and incorporate it. The categories actually become constructs, elements, and components for the Bible Interpreter, subject to both his qualifying and quantifying actions. Knowledge “generation,” wherefore, is taking existing information or knowledge-in this Hermeneutic, it includes Bible Language, Church History, Systematic Theology, etc.-combining it with other internal knowledge or information to produce a new tacit or explicit knowledge-based construct that the Bible Interpreter will discover to be most useful.

The qualifying and quantifying actions, therefore, upon these categories of knowledge prove to be formative actions, influencing the interactive process of knowledge generation: Both tacit and explicit. (Bratianu) stated: “Knowledge creation centers on the building of both tacit and explicit knowledge and, more importantly, on the interchange between these two aspects of knowledge through internalization and externalization” (Nonaka, 1994, p. 20) (p 195).

As an extension of the Context Principle, is a knowledge-trait worthy of an Interpreter’s attention; specifically, what (Bratianu) described: “as a context in which knowledge is shared, created, and

utilized, in recognition of the fact that knowledge needs a context in order to exist” (Nonaka, Toyama & Byosiere, 2001, p.499).

[Accordingly then] this knowledge-trait can be tangible, intangible or any combination of tangible and intangible elements” (p 195).

However, although tacit-knowledge is considered a “culturally” specific concept, it actually conveys elements found within every culture, even organizational cultures: Each culture has unique norms, mores and values associated with it. Tacit knowledge, therefore, antedates explicit knowledge and can be a barrier to obtaining explicit knowledge.

Also, because (Bratianu) notes that “Explicit knowledge has only one dimension, which is the extensive dimension, [then] knowledge obtained, for instance, in mathematics like $2+2=4$ cannot have intensity. It has only the extensive dimension, which is a quantitative one. However, tacit knowledge contains emotions. Any emotion is characterized by *extensive* and *intensive* dimensions: The level of intensity is similar to temperature in characterizing the heat” (p 196). The practitioner of this Science of Interpretation will find the Proverb 11 30b: “...indeed, he that seizes [takes control] of emotions is a wise one.”

Observing knowledge according to Nonaka's model of knowledge learning, creation, and interfacing extends to both the cognitive and affective sides of human being-ness. That is, it encompasses the realities of all components of the system known as human, viewing the human as a system whose components are all related. But as (Bratianu) states: "...Emotionality does not contain rationality: Rational thought involves conscious, deliberate, evaluative assessments" (p 197). Consequently, then, the practitioner of this Process of Biblical Interpretation will be well served by deliberate, purposeful iterative practice in this scientific process of interpreting the Bible. Otherwise, the realities of human being-ness involving the lack of control over the emotive, forever returns an under developed rational dimension. Controlling one's emotions, wherefore, becomes realizable through a sustainable, repeatable process of Bible Interpretation: A most commendable use of the mind in service to God.

Having determined to forego the extensive expressions of one's emotions, and taking control of them, a practitioner can proceed to engage the unbiased process of Biblical Interpretation by realizing that which (Pershing, 2006) states; namely, that "quantitative research

designs begin with identifying a problem to be investigated, outlining research objectives and questions, constructing hypotheses to be tested, and outlining assumptions and limitations. Quantitative methodologies use *deductive reasoning*, which involves the testing of hypotheses derived from theories and subsequent verification of those theories: Data analysis involves the testing of hypotheses by *induction*, that is, the use of statistical methods to form probabilistic generalizations” (p. 746).

(Pershing, 2006) furthermore, observes that “In contrast, qualitative methodologies are based on *constructivism*, which posits that reality and meanings are socially constructed by humans as they interact with the world in which they live...*Inductive reasoning*, in turn, involves making observations, ascertaining patterns, identifying general principles, and generating theories.” (p. 746). Interaction with the world is precisely that against which the Interpreter must be prepared both spiritually, and mentally; for, the battle to correctly interpret the Bible is a battle against worldliness itself and its corresponding spiritual realities.

Fortunately, for the Bible Interpreter can be encouraged by that which (Pershing, 2006) stated; namely, that “discussions of

quantitative research findings tend to be unbiased, impartial, and express a scientific attitude with a writing style that is precise and clear” (p. 747). Accordingly then, for the practitioner of this Hermeneutic, a qualitative perspective of human nature would find him able to recognize it as dynamic, situational, social and personal, while the quantitative would be to consider it possible (with emotions controlled) to be consistent. The purposes of a quantitative process, like this Hermeneutic, involves the testing of a hypothesis, followed by an evaluation of cause and effect for the further purpose of eliminating errors in both the process and its products.

(Pershing, 2006) observes that since “behavioral psychology’s departure from mentalistic theories that attempt to explain such mental constructs as thoughts, personality, attitudes, perception, needs, and motives” (p. 160) an objective, observable approach has been actively engaged according to which “scientific scrutiny” can be applied to all behavioral aspects among organizations. Behaviorism, then, builds upon this engagement, recognizing a strong connection between objective outcomes and their ability to be measured.

Repeatability is very significant; and, within this Hermeneutical Process, no repeatability equals “no process.” Without a process,

accurate interpretations, and their accompanying determinants would remain elusive: Impossible to obtain. Interpreting, then, is viewed accordingly: As a Science. Expected outcomes, then, should be “expected,” because the interpretive process is repeatable, the learner can be expected to successfully demonstrate acquired skills by actually practicing the essential steps, and correct engagement of each throughout this Hermeneutical process, determining its outcome by merely gauging the interpretation according to its inherent critical character traits; namely, those essential for achieving the expected performance of an honest practitioner of Biblical Hermeneutics.

(Pershing, 2006) noted that “Skinner also demonstrated that events occurring both before a behavior, which he called ‘antecedents,’ and after, which he called ‘consequences,’ when combined are called ‘behavioral contingencies’” (p. 161). Thus, as an eloquent expression of a Hermeneutical process, processes involved in laboring in word and doctrine can easily be realized according to these “behavioral contingencies.” Subsequently, perception of these contingencies as mere abstractions, elude the desired outcome for the practitioner of this Biblical Interpretive Process; namely, to assure that these learning elements are translated into objectively quantified work action steps.

Thus, assuring that the desired behavior can result from prescribed actions by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in their respected fields of expertise, Bible Languages, Hermeneutics, and Theology.

Likewise, Cognitivism produces learning modules, and promotes learning-organizational models that nurture the interpretative process and values all of its process-elements according to a macro-view of the “Holistic-nature” of this unique, historical Hermeneutical process, realizing that such models map the learning process, provide structure; and consequently, increases the probability that a learner will move more efficiently from “disequilibrium toward equilibrium.” Cognitivism, therefore, achieves balance out from imbalance, while causing deliberate “shake ups” in Bible Interpreters’ mental schemas, avoiding the most costly of errors; namely, the errors of emendation. However, in emotionally controlled, laboratorial, learning labs (classrooms), under the tutelage of Subject Matter Exerts, aspiring practitioners can be challenged to rethink, review, and revise their previously held “schemas.”

As (Ertmer & Newby, 2013) recognizes that “cognitive theories stress the acquisition of knowledge and internal mental structures and, as such, are closer to the rationalist end of the epistemology

continuum (Bower & Hilgard, 1981)” (p.51). Therefore, within the often tedious and sometimes very technical Hermeneutical process, learning according to memory is reinforced, measured, and continuously recalled by repetition of a particular Hermeneutical task-step: Any Linguistic Step-Etymological, syntactical, or contextual.

Further, (Ertmer & Newby, 2013) noted that “psychologists and educators began to de-emphasize a concern with overt, observable behavior and stressed instead more complex cognitive processes such as thinking, problem solving, language, concept formation and information processing” (p. 50). Aptly so, therefore, does the continuous “mental” improvement of the Interpreter’s mind occur throughout both the engagement and the practice of this Bible Interpretative process; and, consequently, obsoletes the simplex, memory-based routines of proof-texting, chronically reinforced by use and reuse of very limited knowledge units, acquired through years of non-improvements in the process and performance technologies otherwise afforded in this Science of Biblical Hermeneutics.

Constructivism, for example, is itself not necessarily a new theory in that it is not unique as much as it is an extension of both behaviorism and cognitivism. Through constructivism, the mind is

literally considered to be engaged in a knowledge building process.

Further, because meanings are derived from the learners' perceptions, observations, and ability to construct corresponding realities of such knowledge, perceptions, and observations, then recognition of such skewed elements like those found in all religious cultures, norms, mores, traditions and values will diminish the undue influence of such things upon the Bible Interpreter. The repeatable process inherent within Hermeneutic, therefore, affords developmental constraints. And, since the aim in Biblical Interpretation is to utilize a genuine process which repeats-accurately repeats-reliable outcomes, that is correct interpretations, then constructivism assures that both behaviorism and cognitivism are applied throughout all interpretative process steps.

Since (Ertmer & Newby, 2013) states "the following definition by Shuell (as interpreted by Schunk, 1991) incorporates these main ideas: 'Learning is an enduring change in behavior, or in the capacity to behave in a given fashion, which results from practice or other forms of experience' (p. 2)" (p. 45), then, cognitivism assures practical, demonstrable learning outcomes, that are measurable, and thought provoking, by its inherent antecedent construction process: A process

that, through mental engagement, produces a measurable product, an ideal outcome for Biblical Interpreters that achieves materially that which constructivism performs mentally.

Thus, as (Ertmer & Newby, 2013) declares such a mental engagement to be “a more constructivist approach to learning and understanding: [such] knowledge ‘is a function of how the individual creates meaning from his or her own experiences’ (p. 10)” (p. 55).

Meaningful “complex mental, along with simplex applied” engagements, wherefore, in learning organizations, like Churches will find constructivism to be a natural fit, suitable for all Biblical sectors of the organization. Through applying behavioral, cognitive, and constructivist theories; and especially, through their synergistic convergence, realizable within applied constructivism, a Hermeneutical practitioner can produce reliable, accurate interpretations.

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