TEACHING HERMENEUTICS TO NON-WESTERN LEARNERS:

Using a Culturally-Informed Methodology

_____

A Thesis-Project

Presented to

The Faculty of Corban School of Ministry

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

_____

by

Nathaniel S. Waldock

May, 2019

ABSTRACT

TEACHING HERMENEUTICS TO NON-WESTERN LEARNERS:

Using a Culturally-Informed Methodology

Nathaniel S. Waldock

It has long been recognized that different cultures think and process information differently, causing difficulty in cross-cultural communication that goes beyond language. This difficulty in cross-cultural communication is compounded when trying to teach cross-culturally. One cannot simply take the material developed in a western context and teach it effectively in a non-western context. Since understanding, teaching, and applying God's word lies at the core of pastoral ministry, it is absolutely imperative those who teach in majority world contexts understand how best to teach hermeneutics to pastoral students.

The purpose of this project is to show that non-western students are better served by being taught hermeneutics using culturally-informed methodologies, rather than typical western approaches. The research question addressed in the project is, "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" The theological research demonstrates that God adapted His method of communication to the cultures of the people He spoke to. It also examines the role of meditation as a learning tool as prescribed in Scripture. The literature research points to numerous cultural thinking patterns and learning methodologies that are common to majority world learners.

The thesis project itself was carried out by teaching hermeneutics to two separate classes. The control class was taught hermeneutics following a westernized approach, while the test class

was taught using an approached that was informed by cultural thinking patterns and learning styles. Each class turned in a final exegetical paper on the same passage. The papers were graded, the results correlated, and the data placed in tables examining the students' abilities in Exegesis, Bridging Contexts, and Application.

The results of the project showed that the students from the test course demonstrated better exegetical *capability*, better *consistency* across all aspects examined, and more *confidence* in their ability to do exegesis. Thus the hypothesis, which stated, "Students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles" was confirmed. Conclusions have been drawn, and observations and recommendations for further application and research have been given.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter I will introduce the primary features of this thesis-project. First, the rational for the project is presented as I introduce the problem and explain why it is being addressed. Then I will state the research question, and give a general description of the treatment applied to the problem.

Second, I will set out four parameters to help readers. The first parameter will be a brief statement on pertinent theological issues, and a statement that explains the school of hermeneutics to which I ascribe, which will be used in this project. The second parameter will be definitions of key words used in this project to make sure readers understand my meaning. The third parameter will describe assumptions I have made in carrying out this project in order to assist readers in understanding my premises. The fourth parameter will describe delimitations in order to assist readers in understanding exactly what I am trying to accomplish, and what is beyond the scope of this project.

Third, I will present an overview of chapters one through six so that readers may understand how this thesis is organized.

Rationale for the Project

In this section of chapter one, I explain the nature of the problem of ministry in focus, and why it interests me. I then give a general description of the treatment that will be applied to the problem.

The Problem Addressed in the Project

Teaching Cross-Culturally

It has long been recognized that different cultures think and process information differently. Alexander Luria, a Russian cognitive psychologist did a study comparing thinking and reasoning patterns between oral and literate Uzbek and Kirghi people groups in 1931-32. His findings, published by Harvard in English in 1976, emphatically demonstrated a great difference in thinking and reasoning patterns between the oral and literate groups.[1] His findings have been verified and built upon by numerous anthropologists and missiologists. Another cognitive psychologist, named Richard Nisbett has explored how Asian and Western cultures differ greatly in their thinking and learning styles.[2] He noted many of the same differences as Luria, but attributed it to cultural thinking patterns rather than orality versus literacy. Likewise, Paul G. Hiebert, an anthropologist, along with his daughter, Eloise Hiebert Meneses, also made note of differences in thinking patterns between different groups, but tended to attribute the

---

[1] A. R. Luriia, Cognitive Development, *Cognitive Development, Its Cultural and Social Foundations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[2] Richard E. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought : How Asians and Westerners Think Differently ... And Why* (New York: The Free Press, 2003).

differences to whether the people were tribal, peasant, or urban.[3] Sufficient to say, that whether

the issue is oral versus literate, tribal versus urban, or Asian versus western, these differences in

thinking and learning patterns exist, and cause difficulty when communicating cross-culturally.

This difficulty in cross-cultural communication is compounded when trying to teach

cross culturally. The need for cross-cultural teachers to understand some of the issues is so great,

that Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter wrote a book focusing on this very issue, entitled *Teaching

Cross-Culturally,* in which they explain some of the issues and give practical principles and tips

for those engaged in teaching in cross-cultural situations.[4] Nisbett also chronicles in his

research how Asian students are taught history differently than western students,[5] and how

brilliant Asian graduate students struggle writing up their research in a typical western fashion.[6]

Built on the foundational work in orality by Luria and others, a movement called the orality

movement has grown up in missiological circles. In 2010, a group called the Orality Network

was formed, and in 2014, they published a journal advocating and exploring the use of oral

training methods in seminaries and Bible colleges in non-western countries, arguing that

---

[3] Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry : Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995).

[4] Judith Lingenfelter and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally : An Incarnation Model for Learning and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

[5] Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought*, 127-128

[6] Ibid., 74-75

standard western pastoral training methods are not suitable for training non-western pastors and lay leaders.[7]

These writings and others make it clear that one cannot simply take the material developed in a western context and teach it effectively in a non-western context. The students have difficulty learning the material, and even greater difficulty putting it into practice. When it comes to theological education, the ramifications are great. If pastoral students are being inadequately trained for ministry because of the methods used in teaching them, then their ministry will suffer, and we (those who teach) unnecessarily place stumbling blocks before them.

Teaching in Asia

My own teaching experience reflects the issues raised by the literature. I was a professor at a Baptist[8] seminary in South Asia[9] for nine years. The seminary offers a Master of Ministry degree, a Master of Divinity degree, and Master of Theology degree. As is the case with seminaries in the United States, students are required to hold at least a Bachelor's degree to enroll in the courses.

One of the courses I was privileged to teach was Hermeneutics. The Hermeneutics course is required of all students in their first year. It is usually offered in the third (spring)

---

[7] Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education* (Hong Kong: International Orality Network, in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014).

[8] The denomination is mentioned here for the purpose of providing a basic theological, hermeneutical, and philosophical backdrop.

[9] For security reasons, the seminary and its precise location shall not be mentioned in this paper.

quarter so that first-year students had two quarters to adjust to seminary class-load, expectations, and culture before taking the course. The first year I taught the course, I pulled out the text books[10] I had been taught from in my seminary training, and began to teach the students the same way I had been taught. I quickly found out that I was teaching well above their comprehension level, so I tried making it simpler.[11] I looked for adequate resources which would communicate the subject matter in simpler terms. Virkler, Stein, Ryken, Ramm[12], and others were consulted, and slowly checked off the list of possible resources. Along the way, I came across the book *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall and Hays[13] which was written as a resource for college students.

Grasping God's Word took a different approach, what Duvall and Hays called a more "pedagogical" approach toward teaching hermeneutics[14]. Rather than start with the reasons for hermeneutics, the history of hermeneutics, and the theory of hermeneutics, as most other text books do, they started by teaching the practical skill of hermeneutics, getting the students into the Word and studying it. As the students grow in their skill of studying the Word, the authors

---

[10] Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003); William W. Klein, Craig Blomberg, Kermit Allen Ecklebarger, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 2004).

[11] At the time, I thought the problem would be solved by simplifying the material.

[12] Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981). Robert H. Stein, *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI Baker Books, 1994). Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1984). Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992). Bernard L. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970).

[13] J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word : A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible (Kindle Version)*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

[14] Ibid., 17.

then introduce the theory that undergirds and supports the method of hermeneutics they have taught. I found that this method connected well with the students at the seminary where I was teaching, for the vast majority of them had never been taught basic Bible study methods. I restructured the Hermeneutics course around the methodology found in *Grasping God's Word*, using it as my primary textbook for the class.

As I taught the course by emphasizing the skill of Bible study at the beginning, I soon realized that building a skill takes time, and building a skill in that culture takes longer than we would normally give it in the West. In the West we usually explain how to do a task or a skill and expect the student to be able to carry it out. We might even prepare a manual which instructs students on the details of how to carry out the task. Only if necessary will we demonstrate the skill, or give time for practice of the skill, assuming that once the student has the theory, they will be able to carry out the practical on their own[15]. This is not how skills are taught in the majority of the world. Lingenfelter emphasizes the need for the actual doing of a task/skill, and repetition of information when teaching in non-western cultures.[16] As I gave time for practice and repetition in order to build the skill, I found that the Bible Study method aspect of the class stretched to seven out of the ten weeks allotted for the course. This left very little time for the theory aspect of hermeneutics, and I found that I had to create other hermeneutics courses based on genre, which would cover the remaining theory necessary.

---

[15] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 46-48.

[16] Ibid.

As a result of these changes in the course content, my objective in the Hermeneutics course changed. Rather than require the students to be able to regurgitate the theory aspect of hermeneutics, I focused on the students' ability to 1) analyze a passage using the observation methodology taught in the textbook, 2) synthesize it by finding the main point of the passage and state the main point both in "then and there" language, and as an eternal principle, and 3) apply the main point by restating the eternal principle in contemporary language along with some basic application of that principle. For the final paper of the course I would assign the students a passage which they were to analyze, synthesize, and apply, using the method I had taught them.

As I analyzed their final papers, I kept noticing that the students were able to carry out "the letter of the law, but not the spirit." In other words, they could go through the motions of observation, word studies, literary and historical contexts, etc., but it was clear from their analysis that they did not grasp why they were doing what they were doing. It was simply an exercise the professor had assigned, and so they had to carry it out. Some of the brighter students seemed to make the connection, but most did not. Their analysis was very mundane, lacking insight into the passage. Their lack of understanding became even clearer when they started synthesizing the passage. Many of them were able to intuitively grasp some or most of the main idea of the passage, but it clearly did not flow out of their analysis. This became even clearer when they reached the application stage. Their application often had nothing to do with the main point of the passage. Again, some of the brighter students showed glimmers of understanding, but even they struggled to connect their applications to the main point of the passage.

The disconnect they were demonstrating was a continual puzzlement to me. Over the course of several years I tried various tweaks to help them grasp how all this fit together. Some grasped it better than others, but it was clear that there was a huge disconnect between their analysis, their synthesis, and their application. As I continued to ponder it, an idea occurred to me that the problem might be cultural. Their struggle to do insightful analysis according to the methodology I had taught them was because it was a foreign method of analysis, taught in a foreign way, using foreign categories of analysis.

Eastern vs Western Styles of Thinking

It has long been known that different cultures have different values and different ways of thinking as a result of those values. More recently, anthropologists have been delving into just how different those values are, and how those values result in different ways of approaching problems, business, relationships and communication. With the increase in multi-national and international businesses has come greater emphasis on understanding how different cultures behave and think in order to build effective cross-cultural business relationships. Geert Hofstede, a pioneer in the field of anthropology and corporation culture, identified five key dimensions to culture that differ around the world.[17] Based on his initial work, many others have explored

---

[17] Geert H. Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001).

cultural dimensions, with one enormous study exploring nine different cultural dimensions across sixty-two different societies.[18]

Such research demonstrates all too clearly that there is a difference in how people from different cultures view the world, and that this difference even extends to thinking patterns. Hiebert writes:

> All human societies depend on human reason, but different cultures use different types of logic to order their thought. For example, the educated elite in the west value highly abstract thought based on formal analysis. They believe that the principles of logic they discover are universal or true for all people everywhere. Most tribal people use concrete-functional reasoning to deal with the problems they face in everyday life.[19]

One difference in thinking patterns that is crucial for this project is how different cultures categorize information. Hiebert writes: "People in oral societies generally think in functional terms rather than in universal, abstract categories."[20] He gives an example where an anthropologist[21] showed a tribal group a set of pictures of a hammer, saw, hatchet, and log. He asked them to exclude the item which did not belong. In the west, we are taught to exclude the log, since the other objects belong to the abstract category of tools. However the tribal group refused to eliminate any, since the tools would be useless without wood. Other such tests continued to show a bias toward functional categories.[22] Hiebert then goes on to say that when people from oral societies are taught to think in abstract categories, they are capable of learning

---

[18] Robert J. House and Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program, *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The Globe Study of 62 Societies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004).

[19] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 132.

[20] Ibid., 133.

[21] Luriia, *Cognitive Development*.

[22] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 134.

it. "In everyday life, however, they learn to think of things in their concrete contexts, not in terms of abstract categories."[23]

Hermeneutics Taught in Western Categories

This difference in thinking patterns and category creation has profound implications when teaching in a cross-cultural situation, or when trying to communicate information developed in one culture into the context of another culture. This is why I believe the students at the seminary struggled with the method of hermeneutics they were taught. Despite my efforts in using some traditional methods of teaching such as repetition and modeling, they still struggled to connect the analysis with the synthesis and the application because the basic approach to hermeneutics was still western, and foreign to them. Even though they had obtained a bachelor's degree, because their everyday life still teaches them to think in relational-functional categories, they struggled to make use of the abstract western categories taught by western hermeneutics texts.

In another situation, I was interviewing a man in the same Asian country where I taught, who is a leader in a national church-planting organization. He spoke of how they are trying to train their pastors in the basics of theology, hermeneutics and homiletics. Since hermeneutics is one of my fields, I asked what resources he had for hermeneutics. He showed me a hermeneutics book written by a man in the United States. It had been translated into the local language, and they were using it for teaching their pastors how to do hermeneutics. I looked at the book, and saw that its originally intended audience had been American, and that it presented the material in

---

[23] Ibid., 135.

a distinctly western fashion. So I asked him if the book was useful. His response was "It has a lot of good information." Upon pressing him further, he admitted that his pastors have a hard time understanding the book, even though it is in their language. The reason was because the book was too western in its approach.

Even the book *Grasping God's Word*, as useful as I found it, still presented the analysis method in a western style, using western categories. For example, to assist the student in observing the text, the authors present different categories of information the student should look for. They ask the students to look for repetition, contrasts, comparisons, lists, figures of speech, conjunctions, verbs, etc. They explain each category and give examples. However, these categories are more suited for a western student because they are abstract concepts. There is no relationship involved. Each category is isolated unto itself, which comes across as if the entire text is nothing more than a series of repetitions, contrasts, comparisons, etc. without any meaning or relationship between them.

I believe that the inability of the students to synthesize their analysis, and make appropriate application stems from their inability to understand the analysis they are asked to do. They can find repetitions (I have to stress to them that I do not want a count of how many times the words "the", "and", and "a" are used), contrasts, comparisons, etc. but since these are abstract categories, seemingly unrelated to the meaning of the text, they are unable to understand how these observations assist in understanding the meaning. Thus their observations are mundane, lacking any real insight.

The Project

My purpose in this project is to offer methodologies of teaching hermeneutics to non-western students that will help them learn hermeneutics better than if they are taught using a conventional methodology. To accomplish this, I developed a researchable question, and devised a method for carrying out the project.

The Researchable Question

My reading in cognitive learning theory has shown that the greatest single factor for gaining comprehension lies in background knowledge. I believe that if the students are taught hermeneutics using teaching methods shaped by their cultural learning styles, they will be able to do insightful analysis of the passage, correctly synthesize it, and appropriately apply it to their culture. Thus my researchable question is "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" My hypothesis is, "Students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles."

The Treatment Methodology

For this project, I shall write a hermeneutics course designed for non-western students using my research to inform my approach to teaching hermeneutics. I shall use some traditional teaching methods, and shall organize the course content into categories and thinking styles familiar to non-western students. I shall then teach the course in a two week module to a selected group of students, called the Test Group. The students shall write a final paper that requires them

to examine an assigned passage of Scripture, and demonstrate their analysis, synthesis and application of the passage in their paper.

A second group of students, known as the Control Group, shall be taught hermeneutics over a two week period using a more conventional western format and methodology. This class shall also complete a final paper at the end of the course on the same passage assigned to the Test Group. The final papers of both classes shall be examined and evaluated for insightful analysis, synthesis which flows from the analysis, and relevant application which flows from analysis and synthesis.

Parameters for the Project

I developed several parameters for this project. They include a brief statement on pertinent theological issues, and about the school of hermeneutics to which I ascribe, which will be used in this project, definitions of key words used in this project, assumptions I make in carrying out this project, and delimitations of the project.

Theological and Hermeneutical Statements

A statement of my hermeneutical, and theological positions as they relate to this project is necessary at this time. I believe that there is only one God, who has revealed Himself to all of mankind through both general and special revelation. His primary means of special revelation is through the Scriptures, which we call the Bible. The whole Bible[24] bears the quality of inspiration, and is to be the final authority for faith and practice for all who name Christ as their

---

[24] I use the term "Bible" as opposed to "Scripture" for clarity sake, since the country where I teach has other holy writings which are also called scripture.

Savior. This requires that it be studied carefully so that it may be properly interpreted and applied.

I reject reader-response, allegorical, and spiritualizing styles of hermeneutics. I believe a proper hermeneutic seeks to find the original human author's meaning, through understanding his use of vocabulary, grammar, figures of speech, cultural references, historical references, and literary genre.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this paper, the following terms shall be used in accordance with the following definitions:

Hermeneutics - The term "hermeneutics" shall be used in a broad sense, covering exegesis (both the practice and method), and the theory which undergirds the method of exegesis.

Scripture – Although the country where this project takes place has many religious writings called "scripture," in this paper, the term "Scripture" shall refer to the Bible, comprised of the recognized Canon of sixty-six books, forming both the Old and New Testaments.

Culture – Although there is no consensus among anthropologists for a good definition of culture, for the purposes of this paper, Hiebert's definition seems to capture the idea well: "The more or less integrated systems of beliefs, feelings, values and worldview shared by a group of people and communicated by means of their systems of symbols."[25]

---

[25] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 37.

Oral society/culture – An oral society is one which "has not developed literacy,"[26]

Oral Learner – A person who may be able to read, yet prefers, and is most adept at learning through oral methods.

Risidual Orality – The term "residual orality" shall refer to a society that, while having varying amounts of literacy, still feels great influence from its oral traditions in the areas of beliefs, feelings, values, and worldview.

Tribal / Tribal society – I shall use the definition given by Hiebert: "a monoethnic society occupying a given territory and having one language and culture."[27]

Peasant/peasant society – According to Hiebert, a peasant society is made up of multiple classes, often multiple religions, and sometimes multiple ethnicities, organized into "relatively autonomous agricultural communities," having "clear geographical boundaries."[28]

Western – shall refer to the cultures of Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and North America, which were influenced greatly by the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods which had profound impact on the current cultures, worldviews, and thinking styles.

Eastern – Although it usually broadly refers to cultures that are not included in the "Western" category, for the purposes of this paper it shall refer to the broad category of Asian cultures, including Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and Arabic cultures, subcultures, and the cultures influenced by these four major cultures.

---

[26] "Oral Society" Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged, accessed September 23, 2015, http://www.thefreedictionary.com/oral+society

[27] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 31.

[28] Ibid.

Assumptions

In the creating and evaluating of this project, I make numerous assumptions, which cannot be explored or fully defended in this project, though there is warrant for each. The following are the assumptions pertinent to this project:

I assume that God exists, that He has communicated to humankind, that the Bible is both the record of His communication, and is His primary form of communication to humankind today. I assume that the Bible, while given in a particular time, in a particular place, in particular languages, to a particular people, is God's message to every ethnic, culture, language, and people group from the day of Pentecost until Christ returns. I assume the inspiration and authority of the Bible over all of life for all people. I assume that a literal, historical, grammatical, contextual, literary sensitive hermeneutic is the best way to interpret the Bible.

I assume that God created all humankind, including their languages, but because of sin, all humankind is separated from God, and our very nature is sinful. As a result, sin has affected every area of life, including culture and worldview. While every culture and worldview has been affected by sin, not all parts of a culture and worldview are sinful – much is neutral, or redeemable. Thus no culture is intrinsically "better" or "worse" than another. Each has undesirable/ungodly elements, and each reflects God's creative, multifaceted wisdom. As a result, I assume that no culture should attempt to "civilize" or "modernize" another by making it a carbon copy of itself (an ethnocentric, Colonialist attitude), nor do I believe that influence from

another culture should be rejected out of hand (another ethnocentric, post-Colonialist attitude).[29]

Specific to this project, while I believe that the hermeneutic I use is the best method of

interpreting the Bible, I do believe that the hermeneutic is based on a western worldview and

culture and may be improved through careful thought and interaction with various cultures and

worldviews. I further believe that my culture blinds me to biblical insights that other cultures

may see clearly, and vice versa.[30] I further believe that while truth remains the same, methods of

communicating it may vary within a culture, and from culture to culture, thus I have no problem

exploring alternate methods of communicating the principles of hermeneutics in a different

culture.

<div align="center">Delimitations</div>

Out of necessity, this project is not able to cover all aspects that could possibly impact

students' learning of hermeneutics. Thus I list here delimitations, or areas which this project does

not cover. First, this project focuses only on changing the method of communicating

hermeneutical principles to the students of the seminary where I teach in an Asian country. This

project makes no attempt to create a new hermeneutic. Second, even though most of the students

are studying in their 2nd or 3rd language, this project makes no attempt to evaluate how much of

their difficulty is based on language, for that is a factor beyond the control of the seminary.

Third, this project does not consider or evaluate the ultimate effect of all the hermeneutics and

---

[29] Hiebert writes about how both attitudes have and continue to impact the spread of the gospel. He writes "Some accuse us of being colonial if we share our views with others. However, we are equally colonial if we withhold knowledge from them that might improve and save their lives." Ibid., 18.

[30] For example, see: E. Randolph Richards and Brandon J. O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes: Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

homiletics related classes the students are required to take. It also does not assess what might be required in further classes. Fourth, this project makes no attempt to evaluate how well the students will be able to preach, or what sort of pastoral capabilities they will have as a result of this project. Fifth, this project makes no attempt to evaluate the critical thinking skills of the students, or their ability to handle abstract thought. Although Asia has a rich history of philosophy and abstract thinking from its philosophers and gurus, such type of thinking is not the norm for most people. As a result, this project makes no attempt to adapt hermeneutics to an Asian/Eastern abstract thinking style. Sixth, this project also makes no attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the professor.

Overview of the Paper

This paper shall have six chapters. Chapter 1, the Introduction, gives necessary background to the project, including the reason for the project, purpose of the project, the treatment of the project, parameters of the project, and a brief overview of how the project shall be conducted.

Chapter 2 shall explore theology related to the project. In this chapter I shall demonstrate that all through Scripture God adapts His instructional methodology to the people He is instructing, with special focus on how God adapts His message to use their cultural learning styles. I shall also examine instructions on how to "study" God's word in scripture, along with learning practices found in the various time periods of the Bible.

Chapter 3 shall look at literature relevant to the project. I shall show how cognitive learning research has pointed to background knowledge as a major factor in the ability to learn.

As a part of engaging background knowledge, I shall present an overview of cultural differences, starting with a broad overview before narrowing down to factors specific to tribal and peasant societies. I shall also examine how oral societies and societies with residual orality possess different thinking and processing styles compared to western styles of thinking and processing. I shall look at literature that examines the difficulties of teaching cross culturally and explore recommendations on how to engage student's background knowledge when teaching cross culturally. Finally I shall examine specific cultural aspects and thinking styles that I believe will be key areas of background knowledge which must be engaged in order to better teach hermeneutics to the seminary students.

Chapter 4 shall present the project in detail, describing the setting, students, an overview of both the Test and Control courses, and explain the method of teaching for both groups. It shall show how the research in the theology and literature chapters informed and shaped the project. It shall also present the method of analysis by which the project is evaluated.

Chapter 5 shall present the results of the project. It shall give a report of how the project was carried out, and present the evaluation results of the project, declaring whether or not the hypothesis was confirmed.

Chapter 6 shall give a summarizing overview of the project. It shall show how the project either proved or disproved the hypothesis. It shall also present reasonable implications of the project, and areas for further research.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the project. The problem was explained, including my experience in trying to previously solve the problem. I then gave my researchable question and my hypothesis, which I will be attempting to validate through this project. I then briefly explained the project, showing how the .project attempts to change the method in which hermeneutics is taught to non-western students, presenting it in forms and teaching styles more familiar to them, in order to evaluate if the students are better able to do hermeneutics when taught in this manner. I then gave the parameters of the project, and finally an overview of the six chapters of the project.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter examines biblical and theological insights which undergird and shape the project. My purpose is 1) to show that Scripture is admirably suited for oral cultures, and 2) to show that the methods of learning advocated in Scripture are well suited for people from an oral background. I begin by examining the various cultures[31] found in the Old and New Testament, showing that much of the Old Testament culture was tribal and peasant, while the New Testament culture was peasant and urban. I show that the various cultures found in both the Old and New Testament were primarily oral, but I also point out the relevant differences between them. I show how God communicated with people in methods and genres which corresponded to their culture and abilities, shaping the message for optimal understanding. I show how biblical education was undertaken in both the Old Testament and New Testament periods, and examine direct commands regarding how people were to learn the Scriptures. I show that the methods of Scripture learning given in Scripture are well suited for people from an oral background.

---

[31] In my opinion, a reader will be better served by reading chapter 3 which deals with characteristics of tribal and peasant cultures as well as oral culture and thought before reading this chapter.

Old Testament

Tribal and Peasant Old Testament Culture

It doesn't take a reader of the Old Testament (OT) very long to realize that the Hebrew people were organized by tribes. A modern western reader might be forgiven for thinking that the tribes were simply a means of organization and identity, which allowed people to know which land they could inherit. However a deeper study of the OT will reveal that the tribes of Israel demonstrated typical tribal culture, which is very different from western urban culture. Especially during the time of the judges, the idea of national Israel was secondary to the primacy of the tribe. Tribal relations were stronger and thicker than national identity. Thus we have situations like in Judges 20, where the tribe of Benjamin would not give up rapist-murderers from their own tribe to be judged, with the result that the remaining tribes went to war with Benjamin and almost wiped them out. We see this mentality showing up even through the time of Saul and David, where David's tribe of Judah is the first to welcome him as king, and only later do the other tribes accept him.[32] After many years of security and triumph under David, tribal rivalry breaks out again in a time of conflict.[33] Even after being a unified kingdom with a glorious national reputation under Solomon, when the kingdom was divided under Rehoboam, it divided along tribal lines.[34]

On the other hand, though tribal lines were deeply ingrained into Hebrew society, the culture slowly changed from the time of Joshua to the time of the kings. As the people began to

---

[32] 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:1-5

[33] 2 Sam. 19:41-43

[34] 2 Kings 12:16-19

intermingle among the tribes, and settle down to farming life, they became more and more of a peasant society. One distinguishing characteristic between tribal and peasant societies is the hierarchical structure found within them. Simple hierarchy is found in tribal cultures, where a tribe may have a chief, but most men within the tribe operate as equals within their age bracket. Older men garner more respect because of their age and wisdom, but there isn't complex hierarchy such as is found in peasant cultures. This characterized Israel as they came out of Egypt. Each tribe had a recognized elder, but they all came to Moses for judgment.[35] Complex hierarchy is more characteristic of peasant cultures. Jethro's advice to Moses to select judges among the people was a small step toward a more complex hierarchical society. We see evidence of complex hierarchy in the time of the judges, for Boaz is a wealthy land owner who has servants working for him. By the time of Samuel, we see wealthy land owners like Kish who has servants, and the people asked for a King to rule over them as other nations, showing a move toward a more peasant society.[36] Under the kings, the transformation to a peasant society with a complex hierarchical structure was complete, though it did not completely erase the tribal loyalties as described above.

With the tribal and peasant societies seen in the OT, come certain cultural characteristics, better described in chapter 3 of this paper. However I shall explore evidence of those characteristics found in the OT. One characteristic of tribal and peasant societies is the priority of relationship. This is seen in abundance in the OT. Boaz's question about Ruth's identity was

---

[35] Exod. 18:13-27

[36] R. Daniel Shaw, *Transculturation: The Cultural Factor in Translation and Other Communication Tasks* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1988). 121

not "who is she?" which would be a modern, western, urban question, focusing on the individual.

Instead he asked "to whom does she belong?"[37] This line of inquiry seeks information about her

family background, which is of far more importance in a tribal or peasant society. The answer he

received also shows relational orientation, for Ruth is not named, but is called "the young

Moabite woman who returned with Naomi . . ."[38] Her identity was in her ethnicity and her

relationship to Naomi. Boaz's kindness to her was not out of physical attraction as many

western writers have thought, but because of her devotion to Naomi who was his relative by

marriage, again showing the pre-eminence of relationship.[39] Naomi later hatches a plot for Boaz

to take Ruth as his concubine,[40] for he would surely not wish to risk his reputation in the public

eye by marrying an outsider – a very real issue, as shown by the refusal of the nearer kinsman to

take Ruth.[41] Boaz, though, is a man of virtue (Heb: חיל)[42] and instead of simply keeping Ruth as

a concubine, he recognizes that she also is a woman of virtue (Heb: חיל)[43] because of her care

for and loyalty to Naomi, and declares he will marry her, thus giving her full legal and relational

status in the community.

---

[37] Ruth 2:5

[38] Ruth 2:6 NASB

[39] Ruth 2:11

[40] Ruth 3:1-5. As a concubine, Boaz would have cared for Ruth's needs for food, shelter, clothing, and provided her with a child to take care of her in her old age. It would have been a safe, culturally acceptable arrangement, with very little risk to Boaz's reputation or heirs (if he had any).

[41] Ruth 4:6

[42] Ruth 2:1

[43] Ruth 3:11

We see further evidence of the priority of relationships by noting appointments of people to positions of honor and trust. When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, he told him to go to his relatives to find a wife.[44] Moses was the leader of Israel, but Aaron was the high priest, and Miriam was a prophetess of prominence. Admittedly God appointed both Moses and Aaron to their positions, but it seems that he was working within the relationship values of the culture. Saul appointed his uncle Abner as commander of his army.[45] At one point, Saul's son Jonathan was in charge of a contingent of one thousand men, and with Saul, was the only person who had an iron sword.[46] David appointed his cousin Joab to be head of his army, and his own sons as chief ministers.[47] When David plotted murder, the one he trusted to carry it out was Joab his cousin.[48] Even Samuel the prophet appointed his sons as judges even though they were not men of godly character.[49] In modern western society, we cringe at such appointments, claiming nepotism or favoritism, but it is a very common practice in tribal or peasant cultures.

Shame and honor is a result of relationship orientation, and is a big part of tribal and peasant cultures. Because relationships are so important, what the society around thinks of you is very important. If society highly esteems your character, wealth, etc. you are considered a

---

[44] Gen. 24:4

[45] 1 Sam. 14:50

[46] 1 Sam. 13:2, 19-22

[47] 2 Sam. 8:15-18

[48] 2 Sam. 11:14

[49] 1 Sam. 8:1-3

person of honor, and it opens doors in the community. If society despises you are considers your

character of little value, you are shamed, and doors in the community are shut to you.

We see a high emphasis upon shame and honor in the OT as well. Nakedness is

associated with shame, which is why the statement that Adam and Eve were naked and not

ashamed in the garden is worthy of mention.[50] Shame is shown to be a result of sin, which is why

Adam and Eve felt shame at their nakedness when they sinned.[51] David prayed that the Lord

would not let him be shamed by his enemies triumphing over him.[52] On the other hand, David

trusts in God to honor him (lifting up his head) in difficult times.[53]

Shame and honor take place in the court of public opinion, and so public opinion is very

important. Boaz tells Ruth "all my people in the city know that you are a woman of

excellence."[54] Boaz is sensitive to the public opinion of Ruth, and it is important to him and to

her that she is known as an honorable woman. Part of the reason for Abraham's amicable parting

from Lot was because what they did was being witnessed by the Canaanites and Perrizites, and

fighting was a shameful thing.[55] Many of the psalms cry out to the Lord against the slander of

---

[50] Gen. 2:25

[51] Gen. 3:7

[52] Ps. 25:2-3

[53] Ps. 3:3

[54] Ruth 3:11 NASB

[55] Gen. 13:7-8

the wicked,[56] for slander is deadly in the court of public opinion. The proverbs declare that a

good name, i.e. reputation, is better than great wealth.[57]

Given the tribal and peasant mindset of the people, it is significant to note that when God

revealed himself to the people of Israel, he did it using relational terminology and cultural values

which they understood. He entered into covenants with Abraham and the people of Israel.

Covenants are relationship-oriented agreements, made for the purpose of creating relationship,

rather than legal-oriented contracts, which are made to provide services. Certain punishments

for violating the law involved the person being "cut off" from his people.[58] This would have

been second only to death, for to be ostracized was a terrible situation, something our western,

urban, individualistic culture does not fully understand. God demonstrated his desire for

relationship with the Israelites by placing His tabernacle in their midst. He visited Abraham as a

man, and spoke to him as a man worthy of respect.[59] He spoke to Moses face-to-face.[60] He

declared that David was a man after His own heart.[61] He identified Himself to Moses as "the God

of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,"[62] choosing to

identify Himself relationally rather than by title.

---

[56] Pss. 4:2; 12; 15:3; 50:16-21; 52

[57] Prov. 22:1

[58] Lev. 17:10

[59] Gen. 18:16-33

[60] Num. 12:6-8

[61] 1 Sam. 13:14

[62] Exod. 3:6 NASB

In the Law, God declares Himself to be a jealous God[63], communicating His desire for covenant loyalty in relational terms. In the prophets he uses the picture of marriage and adultery to describe Israel's waywardness from Him.[64] He expresses His indignation at their meager worship by comparing their worship to giving offerings to an official, and their lack of honor toward him to a father-son relationship.[65]

God shows that He is concerned that His name be honored and not shamed in the public opinion of the world. He brought the plagues against Egypt so that the Egyptians would know Him.[66] When God threatened to destroy the Israelites for their disobedience, He is moved by Moses' argument that His name would be dishonored before the Egyptians.[67] Many years later, He revealed to the prophet Ezekiel that He withheld judgment from Israel on numerous occasions so that His name would not be profaned in the court of public opinion among the nations.[68]

Instead of using technical language, and urban terminology, God communicated with Israel in relational terms which drew from their background and culture. In doing so, God condescended to express Himself and His truth in ways they could understand.

---

[63] Exod. 20:5

[64] Ezek. 23; Hosea 1-3

[65] Mal. 1:6-8

[66] Exod. 7:1-5

[67] Num. 14:11-16

[68] Ezek. 20

Orality and Old Testament Culture

OT culture has been described as a verbomotor culture. This term originally referred to "ancient Hebrew and Aramaic cultures and surrounding cultures, which knew some writing but remained basically oral and word-oriented in lifestyle rather than object oriented."[69] It doesn't take much insight to realize that ancient Hebrew culture had and made use of writing. The very fact that the OT exists today is because it was written.

Because the written scriptures are our primary source for knowing and understanding ancient Hebrew culture, it is easy to assume that writing was common, and that the average person could read and write. However this assumption is incorrect. Moses was the first known author who contributed to the OT,[70] and he was educated in the court of Pharaoh in Egypt, learning literacy from Egyptians.[71] However the rest of the Hebrews had been slaves in Egypt, and it is likely very few, if any, learned to read and write from their Egyptian masters. When God gave the law to Moses, it was written down so that it would not be changed, however it was communicated orally to the people,[72] and they in turn were to teach it to their children by talking about it.[73]

---

[69] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2003). 67

[70] While the events of the book of Job probably took place during the time of the patriarchs, it is unknown who wrote the book, or when it was written.

[71] Acts 7:22

[72] The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' speech to the Israelites prior to entering the land of Canaan. In this speech he re-iterates the law.

[73] Deut. 6:6-8

Literacy seems to have been limited to a select few. The scribes were those who copied God's Law, and recorded items of importance, such as the annals of the kings,[74] various laws,[75] and prophecies.[76] Kings were expected to write their own copy of the law,[77] which indicates that they were to be literate. Government officials were required to be literate in the Babylonian Empire.[78] The priests were to be teachers of God's Law, which required that they be able to read it since it was preserved in written form.[79] In Deuteronomy, Moses commands that people are to write the "words" (i.e. the Ten Commandments[80]) on the door frames of their houses. It is not clear if it was expected that each person should be able to read and write, or whether a craftsman or scribe was to be hired for the job. Apart from these "elite" people, it seems that most would have very little ability to read and write.

Even though writing was common in the society, the writing was of an oral nature, meaning that it was written as an oral person might speak, and not as a literate person might write. This is because the writing reflected the culture, and thus is an indication of the state of literacy and orality in ancient Hebrew culture. Examples of oral thought reflected in the literature abound, and I shall only give examples of a few.

---

[74] 2 Kings 20:20, etc.

[75] Esther 8:8-14

[76] Jer. 36:1-4

[77] Deut. 17:18

[78] Dan. 1:3-4

[79] Mal. 2:7; Ezra 7:1-5, 10

[80] In Hebrew, the 10 commandments are not called commandments (mitzvot), but "words" (d'varim).

Oral cultures are very visually oriented, and think in concrete terms, not abstract ideas. Thus we have phrases such as "up to Jerusalem", "down to Egypt", and "down to Joppa." A literate person, familiar with cartography would consider Jerusalem "down" compared to Samaria since it is south of Samaria, would have no problems associating Egypt as "down" from Israel, since it is south, but would consider "over to Joppa" to be a better phrase to use since Jonah was probably in Samaria, and Joppa is more west than south. Yet the Hebrew phrases are not oriented to abstract positions such as the cardinal points of the compass. Rather, they are visually oriented according to altitude. Jerusalem was up in the mountains, while both Joppa and Egypt were down by the sea.

Some of the Hebrew terms for direction are another example. The term for south (נגב) was actually a region to the south of Israel.[81] The term for west (ימה) literally meant "toward the sea."[82] Hebrew culture was east-oriented, looking toward the rising sun as opposed to magnetic or polar north. Because of that eastern orientation, another common term for south in the OT is "right" or "toward the right" (ימן).[83] Likewise, one term used for north was "left" or "toward the left" (שמאל).[84] All these terms are concrete-visual oriented, rather than abstract.

---

[81] L. J. Coppes, "1288a Negev," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999). 549

[82] P. R Gilchrest, "871 Yamim," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999). 381

[83] P. R Gilchrest, "872 Yamin," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999). 383

[84] G. G. Cohen, "2267 Simel," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999).

Another way the concrete-visual orientation shows up is in descriptions of God. The OT speaks of the "finger of God"[85], the "arm of God"[86], the "right hand of the LORD"[87], and the "face of God." [88] These are visual anthropomorphisms, which speak of His deeds, His power, and His presence or favor, respectively. Compare this to Paul's writings in the NT, where he readily speaks of God's power, presence, and grace without using anthropomorphisms.

Concrete visual-orientation of oral cultures also shows itself in their preference for learning through narrative, and for embedding didactic teaching in narrative. This is commonly seen in the Torah, where the laws are interspersed with narrative, yet the whole is called the Law. It is also seen in how the genealogies are presented. Rather than a list of names, they are presented somewhat as a story, using the formula "so-and-so begat so-and-so." The begetting, being a verb, creates action and thus more of a narrative flow.[89]

Concrete, visually oriented cultures tend to be very attached to physical places and objects. In the Hebrew scriptures we see places named after a significant occurrence took place at that location. Examples include Abraham naming the place of Isaac's sacrifice "YHWH yireh";[90] Jacob re-naming the town of Luz, "Bethel" after seeing his vision;[91] Samuel setting up a

---

[85] Exod. 31:18

[86] Deut. 5:15

[87] Ps. 118:15-16

[88] Ps. 80:7, 19

[89] Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* 42-43.

[90] Gen. 22:14

[91] Gen. 28:19

rock at a place of victory and calling it "Ebenezer."[92] Places are also significant in developing

stories. For example, Saul was anointed at Gilgal, later disobeys Samuel at Gilgal, and is later

condemned there for his disobedience after defeating the Amalekites.[93] Gilgal itself was a

significant place because it was the first stop of the Israelites when they crossed into the

promised land, and there they renewed the covenant with the LORD through circumcision.[94]

However the prominence given to it in the narrative of Saul shows that the place had significance

in people's minds at the time of Saul.

Oral thought uses certain techniques to aid listeners grasp the ideas. One technique is

repetition, where a word, a phrase, or even a sentence is repeated. This is found throughout the

OT, to the extent that students of the OT are told to look for repeated words and phrases as a

means to grasping the author's intended meaning. Hebrew narrative tends to make use of

repeated words and phrases, while Hebrew wisdom literature tends to use parallelism – a

repetition of thought rather than phrase – and prophetic literature uses both styles.

Oral cultures tend to make use of riddles and proverbs. Jay Moon says "If a picture is

worth a thousand words in literate cultures, then a proverb is worth a thousand words in oral

cultures."[95] Walter Ong points out that syllogisms are literate based, while riddles are common

to all oral cultures.[96] In the book of Judges, Samson delivers a riddle as a bet.[97] Parables are a

---

[92] 1 Sam. 7:12

[93] 1 Sam. 11:14-15; 13:8-14; 15:12-33

[94] Josh. 5:1-9

[95] W. Jay Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners," *Teaching Theology & Religion* 15, no. 1 (2012): 8.

[96] Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* 53.

type of riddle, and we see Jotham giving a parable to the men of Shechem.[98] The Hebrew scriptures include an entire book of proverbs which are given to increase wisdom among the naïve.[99]

Oral cultures tend to be additive rather than subordinate in their thought processes, adding ideas to ideas, rather than creating a hierarchy of concepts and sub-points. This is reflected in the Hebrew use of the conjunction "waw", often translated "and." An older translation such as the KJV usually translates the numerous occurrences of "waw", while more modern translations, in their attempt to have good writing style, tend to leave out many occurrences of "waw" to make for smoother (literate) reading.

Along with the additive nature of oral thought, oral sentence structure tends to be shorter, for listeners find it difficult to follow long sentences with numerous subordinate clauses such as this one. Short, oral sentence structure typifies the sentence structure seen in the Hebrew scriptures. Not until the Pauline epistles in the NT do we find long, complex sentences.

As we consider the oral nature of the cultures of the OT, we see that God used oral communication methods to communicate to the people of Israel, so that the message would be understood. He made use of concrete-visual learning techniques through the tabernacle and sacrificial system. The tabernacle was set up in the center of the people of Israel, wherever they camped, demonstrating God's presence with them. The wall around, the inner and inner-most sanctuaries demonstrated the holiness of God far better than discussing it as a concept. The

---

[97] Judg. 14:1-20

[98] Judg. 9:7-15

[99] Prov. 1

sacrificial system demonstrated the awfulness of sin and the righteousness of God. It also demonstrated that all things, even our very lives are owed to God.

God used visual-concrete communication methods when speaking through the prophets as well. Jeremiah was to wear a yoke to show how Israel would be enslaved.[100] Ezekiel was to make mud figures and play war games. He also was not allowed to mourn when his wife died.[101] Hosea was to marry a prostitute and name his children "not mine" and "not loved."[102]

God used parables,[103] proverbs,[104] and songs,[105] to communicate to his people in genres they understood. He took abstract concepts like holiness, sin, power, grace, and placed them in concrete imagery which oral people could understand. Rather than define the terms, which is what we desire in a literate, western culture, He described or demonstrated them in concrete-relational terms. God took care that His message to His people be understood, taking the responsibility upon Himself to relay it in culturally understood ways.

---

[100] Jer. 27:2,8

[101] Ezek.4; 24:15-18

[102] Hosea 1

[103] Ezek. 23

[104] Ezek. 12:21-25

[105] Deut. 32; Isa. 5:1-7

New Testament Culture

Jesus and Jews

The New Testament (NT) does not exactly pick up where the OT left off. There are about 400 years between the last OT writing, and the first NT writing. A lot of things change in 400 years, even back in ancient times where change was more gradual. One major change that we find is the absence of a tribal mentality, and a solid a peasant mentality. This was in part due to the captivity which took place near the end of the OT era. When the people returned to the land, they still knew their tribal ancestry, but were more focused on being a nation rather than individual tribes. This is shown by the lists in Ezra where people were listed primarily by ancestral city rather than ancestral tribe, with the exception of the Levites.[106] At the time of the census under Caesar Augustus, when Jesus was born, people were scattered all over the country, and even around the world, not living in their tribal territory. The culture was primarily peasant rather than tribal.

Literacy seems to have been much more common in the NT than in the OT. We certainly see that the Pharisees and Scribes could read. Jesus asks them "have you not read . . .?"[107] For both the Scribes and the Pharisees, literacy was necessary for them to be teachers of the Law. Jesus was most certainly literate, for he could not be recognized as a Rabbi and have credible discussions on the Law with other teachers of the Law without literacy. Among other evidences, we see Jesus reading in the synagogue in Nazareth.[108] Craig Evans suggests that when the

---

[106] Ezra 2; 8:1-14

[107] Luke 6:3; Matt. 22:31

[108] Luke 4:16-20

Scribes and Pharisees called Jesus and the disciples "uneducated",[109] it meant that they had not studied under a Scribe or Pharisee in matters of the Law. It did not mean that they were illiterate. He further suggests that many Jews had rudimentary abilities to read, for the very nature of the Torah made basic literacy a strongly desired ideal for Jewish people.[110]

On the other hand, it seems that many people did not study the scriptures themselves, relying rather on hearing the law being read in the Synagogue, and listening to the teachers teach it. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus uses the phrase "you have heard that it was said" and then proceeds to quote from the Law.[111] This is an indication that people were relying on readers to read the scriptures to them and that their primary method of learning the scriptures was through hearing.

As we look at how Jesus communicated to the people, we see him using very concrete-relational imagery rather than abstract philosophy. His parables of the kingdom,[112] His sermon on the mount,[113] His object-lesson miracles,[114] all communicated in a very concrete-visual way to people who were still primarily oral learners. Even when his disciples asked him to teach them

---

[109] John 7:15; Acts 4:13

[110] Craig A. Evans, "Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus," accessed June 2, 2016, http://www.craigaevans.com

[111] Matt. 5

[112] Matt. 13; 22:1-14; etc.

[113] Matt. 5-7

[114] Matt. 21:18-22; Mark 2:1-13; 8:14-21; John 6; 11; etc.

to pray, He did not give them a lecture, a philosophical discussion, or even a how-to manual.

Rather he gave a pattern or template for prayer, something readily understood in an oral culture.

On the other hand, he was also able to split nuancial hairs with the literate Pharisees and

Scribes, drawing out meaning and answers from verb tense,[115] synthesizing the Law into the two

greatest commands[116], and showing how details in the scriptures pointed to Himself.[117] These

deadly riddle games were essentially literate in nature, for they relied on technical matters of the

Law, demonstrating deep analysis of minutia which is foreign to oral learners. Thus Jesus

communicated to both oral and literate groups in methods to which they could best relate.

The Apostles and the Gentiles

The NT writers, with the exception of Paul, tended to also communicate in a more oral

style in their writings. John is well known for using simple Greek with a simple sentence

structure. He communicates deep concepts in his gospel, but does so through narrative and

dialogue – methods of communication natural to oral cultures. His epistles are very relational,

calling his readers "little children," and "beloved" numerous times.[118] He weaves theology and

practical living in and out throughout his epistles, as opposed Pauline epistles like Romans,

Ephesians, and Colossians, which spend considerable time dwelling on deep theology before

making practical application toward the end. Peter, James, and Jude likewise are very "down-to-

---

[115] Matt. 22:31-33

[116] Matt. 22:34-40

[117] Matt. 22:41-46

[118] 1 John 2:1, 7, 12, 18, 28, etc.

earth," touching on theology briefly here and there while focusing on practical matters of Christian living.

When we turn to the epistles of Paul, we find a very different literature than most of the rest of scripture. Paul was a highly educated, highly trained Pharisee, a Roman by birth, and a native of Tarsus in modern day Turkey. His highly literate training in the Law is reflected in his highly literate writing style. In contrast to the short sentences of John, and the OT, Pauline sentences at times seem to be endless! Scholars even today debate over which clauses and ideas are subordinate to others in his writing.[119] His theological discussions are highly abstract, writing about sin, salvation, predestination, propitiation, sanctification, justification, etc. Even the apostle Peter declared that there are some things difficult to understand in Paul's writings![120]

Paul's distinct writing style raises the question "to what sort of people was he writing?" Were they the erudite elite from Greek and Roman society, or were people outside of Israel far better educated? William Harris is one of the most cited authorities on literacy of that era. He estimates that less than 10% of all Roman society was literate at the time.[121] This means that more than 90% were oral learners, yet Paul's writing was anything but oral-styled literature!

A clue about the literacy or orality of Paul's intended audience may be gleaned by comparing various factors. 1) Paul referred several times to the grace given to him to reach the

---

[119] One has only to try to read a commentary such as Douglas Moo's commentary on Romans (Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996]) to realize that Paul's writing is not simple.

[120] 2 Pet. 3:16

[121] William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 158.

gentiles.[122] In other words, there was some ability/background/style that he had which resonated with the Greek speaking gentile world better than Peter. 2) Paul deliberately targeted the larger urban centers in his ministry. It seems that his plan was to establish churches in major centers of trade, from which the gospel could be taken to more rural areas. 3) Urban centers tend to have a different culture and way of thinking than rural areas. Luke tells us in Acts 17:21 that there existed a philosophical culture in Athens, where people loved to hear new ideas. This is not typical for an oral culture, for oral cultures prize tradition and the established ways, and shun new ideas.[123] 4) Athens was a primary cultural center for Greek philosophy and thought, spreading ideas throughout the Mediterranean, and if literate-based thinking was prevalent there, it would have had a trickle-down effect throughout the Greek-speaking world, but would be felt most strongly in the urban centers of the Mediterranean. Piecing these puzzle pieces together, it appears that in the urban centers of the upper Mediterranean, there was enough literacy and literate-based thinking that Paul, with his highly educated background was providentially equipped to spread the gospel in language and thinking patterns that could be grasped by those with a more literate background.

Once again we see that God worked hard to communicate his truth to people in ways that they could grasp. For the oral thinkers, he had apostles who thought and taught in oral thought patterns. For the literate thinkers of the urban areas, he selected and graced a man with those abilities to spread the gospel among them.

---

[122] Gal. 2:7-9; Eph. 3:1-10

[123] Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word,* 41.

How People Learned the Scriptures

Old Testament

In our modern, western practice, we expect everyone to have a copy of God's word, and to read it. Such was not the case in OT times. Usually only the priests, the king, and perhaps a few very wealthy people who had the means to pay someone to make a copy for them, had direct access to the written scriptures. Yet God expected His people to know His Law and to keep it. How were they to learn it? The OT provides us with some clues as to how people were expected to learn the Scriptures.

The learning of God's word started with the priests. We don't have detailed instructions in Scripture of how the priests were to learn God's word, aside from the various references to meditation found in Scripture, which will be discussed later. However they were expected to be literate, since they were responsible for knowing God's word. There were dire consequences if they did not obey God's Law explicitly.[124] We do get a little bit of a clue regarding the ideal practice of the priest from a verse describing Ezra. "For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel."[125] The word "study" in this verse is more commonly translated as "seek" or "inquire". The idea was not that Ezra had memorized God's word, or that he was already an expert with no further room for learning, but that he regularly searched God's word to find out what it said.

---

[124] Lev. 10:1-3; Mal. 2:6-9

[125] Ezra 7:10 NASB

God gave the priests the special task of teaching God's law to the people. They were the

Law experts whom people were to consult to find out what God had said.[126] The men of Israel

were to gather at least three times a year for three specific feasts – the Passover, the feast of

Weeks, and the feast of Booths.[127] The first and third feasts were week-long feasts, during which

God's word could have been read. Jewish tradition indicates that the Decalogue would be read

at the feast of Weeks.[128] Deuteronomy 31:10-13 states that the priests were to read the entire

Law to the whole nation, including women, children, and foreigners at the feast of Booths every

7th year. Apart from this, there is no description of manner or frequency by which the priests

instructed the people in the Law. However we may have some clues from various passages. The

Levite in Judges 17 and 18 was recognized as a special person, first by Micah and then by the

Danites. In both situations he was asked to live with them and minister to them. If such was a

common practice, it would indicate that the priests were scattered throughout the cities and

towns of Israel, and taught the law to the people to whom they ministered. We also see that

Samuel rode a type of circuit, as part of his role as priest and judge. It is possible that there were

other priests who did similarly, judging and teaching the law.

The non-priestly leaders of the people were expected to be literate and know the Law.

Deuteronomy 17 requires that the King make a copy of the Law for himself, writing it with his

---

[126] Mal. 2:6-8

[127] Deut. 16:16

[128] Daniel I. Block, "'That They May Hear': Biblical Foundations for the Oral Reading of Scripture in Worship," *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 5, no. 1 (2012): 10.

own hand, and keep it with him for reference and frequent reading.[129] Joshua was told to

meditate on the law day and night.[130]

In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Moses commands Israel to teach their children the Law.[131] They

were to "teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and

when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."[132] The Law was to be

primarily taught through discussion as they went throughout their daily life. At all times, and in

all situations, they were to be teaching, talking of, and discussing the Law with their children.

Children would grow up hearing the law taught and explained to them by their parents.[133] This

method of parent-to-child instruction is not limited to this Deuteronomy passage. The numerous

injunctions of "hear my son" in the book of Proverbs show this father-to-son/child instruction in

the society. I believe Psalm 127 is a psalm addressed specifically to fathers, showing them that

of all the responsibilities and duties they have, their most important duty and privilege is raising

their children.

---

[129] Deut. 17:18-20

[130] Josh. 1:8

[131] In Deuteronomy 4, 5 and 6, the Decalogue is called "*HaDebarim*" (Eng: "The Words"), not "the commandments", as we typically call them in English (cf. 4:13). In 6:1, Moses says "this is the commandment (singular) . . . "   Some commentators believe that the Commandment referenced is not the Decalogue, but the command to Love YHWH. If this is true, then a case could be made that "these words" in 6:6, which the parents were to teach to their children, only referred to the Decalogue, and not to the entire Law. While I believe that is probably correct, my concern in this paper is more for the method of teaching, rather than the content. While the content often does impact the method, I do believe that in this case, the method given would not have changed if the content had changed.

[132] Deut. 6:7 NASB, see also Deut. 11:18-21

[133] The passage also talks of binding the law on their hands and forehead, and writing it on their doorposts. Most interpreters understand this to be a symbolic practice, showing that the Law was to govern their life and their homes, rather than a teaching/learning practice.

The Deuteronomy passage also speaks of the Law being "on their heart." This idea is found elsewhere in scripture, with one of the best known passages being Psalm 119:11 "Your word[134] I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You."[135] This passage is regularly used to call people to memorize scripture, and it certainly can be used for that. However the idea goes further. It goes to the idea of meditation.

The word commonly translated meditate in the Old Testament is the word hgh which has as its basic meaning "to growl", or "to mutter." It is used of people hatching plots, of whisperings of the enemy over the fall of Jerusalem, of crying out to the Lord for help, and of meditating on God's word.[136] Pertinent to the purpose of this project is that in most cases, the word hgh clearly indicates a vocal action. When God instructed Joshua to meditate on the Law, He said "This book of the Law shall not depart *from your mouth*, but you shall meditate on it day and night. . ."[137] Meditating on God's word was vocal, or oral. This does not exclude someone reading the law, or meditating with a copy of the law in his hands, but even with a copy of the law in his hands, his meditation would be vocal or oral. The ears needed to hear the words.

Meditation was also to be done "day and night." The phrase "day and night" (also occurring in Ps 1), is a merism, showing that the meditation was to be constant and continual. This idea is also reflected in Deuteronomy 6:7, as quoted above. The Law was to be ever on

---

[134] The word "word" in Ps. 119:11 is the Hebrew word "*amar"*, not "*dabar"*, so the Decalogue is not in view in this verse.

[135] Ps. 119:11 NASB

[136] H. Wolf, "467 Hagah," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 205.

[137] Josh. 1:8 NASB (emphasis mine)

their minds. This is a key aspect of Biblical meditation. Rather than dissect and analyze the

Law, they were to memorize and repeat the Law over and over. In the process of memorizing

and repeating the Law, meaning, clarity, nuances, and application would be discerned, and

deeply imbibed.

Meditation is a key idea for teaching oral learners to "study" God's word. As the OT

idea indicates, it should be vocal, for oral learners need to hear what the words are saying. It

should also be continual or constant. By repeating a passage over and over, ruminating on it as a

cow its cud, oral learners are "studying," gaining insights, and applications.

<div align="center">New Testament</div>

During the inter-testamental period, a new practice came into being. The people

returning from exile did not know the Law, and began a practice of reading a portion from the

Law every week. Jewish tradition states that the practice started with Ezra the scribe.[138]

However Michael Graves is careful to point out that the first record of weekly synagogue

readings occur in Philo's (25 B.C.- 50 A.D.) writings.[139]   This practice became prevalent, and is

the practice in view in Luke 4 where Jesus is invited to read from the scroll of Isaiah in the

Synagogue.[140]

---

[138] "Torah Reading," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, accessed Septmber 19, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Torah_reading&oldid=736654574.

[139] Michael P. Graves, "The Public Reading of Scripture in Early Judaism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50, no. 3 (2007): 469-470

[140] Luke 4:16-20. See also Acts 13:15-16; 15:21 for further evidence of this practice in the NT.

Scripture reading seems to have been incorporated into early church practice. Paul

commands Timothy "Until I come, give attention to the *public* reading *of Scripture*, to

exhortation, and teaching."[141] Since even literate people did not always have access to copies of

God's word, the public reading of Scripture at the assembling of the church was not merely

ceremonial, but highly practical. This might be the only time and format for people to hear

God's word. Paul expected his letters to be read in the churches as well,[142] and Daniel Block

insightfully argues that Paul's frequent allusions to the Old Testament in his letters to Gentile

churches, demonstrate that frequent reading of the Old Testament was probably common

practice in these Gentile churches.[143] Furthermore, the book of Revelation holds a blessing for

those who read and hear the book, indicating that John expected it to be read aloud.[144]

The practice of scripture reading holds great promise for discipleship among oral

learners, who will be able to hear God's word and grasp it far better than if they were to

laboriously work to cipher it themselves. While pastors and teachers will be expected to be able

to read in an oral culture, it may be a laborious task for them. However if hearing the word read,

either by a good reader, or by audio recordings is incorporated into their "study" of God's word,

it will greatly enhance their comprehension.

---

[141] 1 Tim. 4:13 NASB

[142] Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27

[143] Block, 16.

[144] Rev. 1:3

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the Bible is written in a very oral manner, for a people who were primarily oral learners. God made use of their oral mindset to present His word to them in ways they could grasp. Furthermore, while Scripture was indeed written down, very few people could actually read it, and study it. As a result, God gave instructions for how people should learn and "study" His word. This included hearing Scripture being read, and meditation.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE EXAMINED FOR THE STUDY

Introduction

In Chapter 1 I described my experience teaching hermeneutics to students from tribal and peasant cultures in Asia, and the difficulty they had grasping hermeneutics taught in a typical western fashion. In order to create a hermeneutics course that is better tailored to their cultural ways of thinking, this chapter examines literature related to the idea of how people in different cultures learn. Due to the nature of the task, my research is necessarily broad, examining culture and worldview, societal types, cultural thinking patterns, how knowledge in oral cultures is managed, how learning takes place in oral societies, cross-cultural educational methods, and assessment of oral preference learners. With such a broad amount of inter-related material needed for this project, I do not follow a typical linear western approach, examining instead numerous facets pertaining to the subject of training non-western oral learners. This approach is more holistic than a typical linear approach, and allows me to consider a wider range of significant material. The various facets may be grouped into three main groups: 1) The need for understanding cultural thinking patterns as part of students' background knowledge; 2) Cultural thinking patterns of Asian, tribal, peasant, and oral cultures; 3) Education and learning in non-Western contexts.

I begin by looking at research that examines how people learn, showing the importance of background knowledge in the learning process. I also examine literature that demonstrates that

specific styles of thinking and learning are culturally obtained. I then examine literature that

speaks of the broad differences between cultures, and how these differences require a person

engaged in cross-cultural interaction to be cognizant of the differences, and accommodate his/her

approach accordingly. I then examine tribal and peasant cultures in more detail. I then look at

how orality and literacy affect thinking patterns, and how residually oral societies borrow from

both types of thinking patterns. I then examine literature that speaks directly to teaching cross-

culturally. Finally, I examine some cultural aspects that I believe will be key building blocks for

developing a new method of teaching hermeneutics among oral learners.

The Importance of Background Knowledge for Learning and Comprehension

Although there are numerous philosophies and strategies for education, there are basic

components to learning that have been so thoroughly demonstrated by research, that they are

indisputable. One of the most basic is the idea that knowledge is best gained when it is built upon

prior knowledge. In other words, people learn best when the subject they are learning is

connected to and built upon knowledge they already have. Linda Campbell writes "All learning

ultimately begins with the known and proceeds to the unknown. Background knowledge is the

raw material that conditions learning."[145] Bransford concurs, saying:

> Humans are viewed as goal-directed agents who actively seek information. They
> come to formal education with a range of prior knowledge, skills, beliefs, and
> concepts that significantly influence what they notice about the environment and

---

[145] Linda Campbell, *Mindful Learning: 101 Proven Strategies for Student and Teacher Success* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003), 8.

how they organize and interpret it. This, in turn, affects their abilities to remember, reason, solve problems, and acquire new knowledge.[146]

Bransford's use of the term "prior knowledge" refers specifically to academic knowledge, since he sets it apart from "skills, beliefs, and concepts." Yet all of these, as he states, affect learning, and thus could all be referred to as "background knowledge." It is this broader use of the term "background knowledge" that I shall be using in this study.

Background knowledge plays a part in reading comprehension, a necessary component of exegesis. Kintsch demonstrated that when readers have little background knowledge of a subject, their comprehension of a text on that subject is low. On the other hand, when a reader has substantial knowledge of a subject, his/her comprehension of a text on that subject is high.[147] Tests with second language learners, as the students at the seminary were, also showed the impact of background knowledge. Leeser found out that even when reading a text in their second language, students with background knowledge of the subject matter had better comprehension of the text than those who had no background knowledge of the subject, even though they had the same ability in the language.[148]

Background knowledge also plays an important role in learning concepts, categories, and recalling subject matter. Alexander demonstrated that when students have knowledge of a

---

[146] John Bransford et al., *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000), 10.

[147] Walter Kintsch, "Text Comprehension, Memory, and Learning," *American Psychologist* 49, no. 4 (1994): 299-300.

[148] Michael J. Leeser, "Learner-Based Factors in L2 Reading Comprehension and Processing Grammatical Form: Topic Familiarity and Working Memory," *Language Learning* 57, no. 2 (2007): 252-253.

subject, they find a text on the subject more interesting, and have better recall of it.[149] Murphy

demonstrated the importance of background knowledge on students' ability to learn new

categories. He writes, "people find it considerably easier to learn a new category that is

consistent with their prior knowledge than to learn categories that are inconsistent or that simply

do not make contact with such knowledge."[150] Clapper, in another paper states:

> categories that are consistent with prior knowledge are learned more quickly in
> supervised classification tasks than categories that are inconsistent with such
> knowledge, and specific features of categories that are consistent with prior
> knowledge are learned more quickly than features that are neutral or inconsistent
> with such knowledge[151]

Murphy and Allopenna found in another study that background knowledge "can have substantial

effects on both concept learning and use of the concept in categorization."[152]

Such findings demonstrate the importance of background knowledge in learning,

showing that it plays a key role in almost every type of learning. Thus, teachers who desire to be

effective will actively seek to tap into and build off of students' background knowledge.[153]

---

[149] Patricia A. Alexander, Jonna M. Kulikowich, and K. Schulze Sharon, "How Subject-Matter Knowledge Affects Recall and Interest," *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 2 (1994): 335.

[150] Gregory L. Murphy and Audrey S. Kaplan, "Feature Distribution and Background Knowledge in Category Learning," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology: Section A* 53, no. 4 (2000): 962.

[151] John P. Clapper, "The Effects of Prior Knowledge on Incidental Category Learning," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 38, no. 6 (2012): 1558.

[152] Gregory L. Murphy and Paul D. Allopenna, "The Locus of Knowledge Effects in Concept Learning," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 20, no. 4 (1994): 917.

[153] Bransford et al., *How People Learn*, 10.

Culture is Background Knowledge

Most of the literature on background knowledge focuses on prior knowledge of specific subject material. Some give credence to the idea that people form ideas on their own about the world (worldview), and this also acts as background knowledge.[154] Campbell writes, "Students, of any age, bring beliefs and life and academic experiences to the classroom that influence what and how they learn."[155] There are some who have even stretched beyond their own culture and background to study the effect of culture on learning. Their conclusions are that culture greatly affects education style, learning style and ability in various areas. For example, Livermore points out that the majority of the world uses rote memorization as a primary emphasis in their educational systems, and rely less on analysis. However in the west, education relies on analysis, and does little with rote memorization. As a result, people educated in the west can be frustrated with a non-westerner's lack of skill in analysis, and people educated in the east can be frustrated with a non-easterner's lack of ability to memorize things.[156]

While it is insightful, Livermore's statement is limited to educational systems, and thus merely scratches the surface of how culture affects the way we learn. Lingenfelter looks deeper, pointing out that "students will always bring their culture to the classroom."[157] Culture has far greater impact on our thought processes than we realize. Hiebert states "Because our culture

---

[154]Ibid. 10.

[155] Campbell, *Mindful Learning*, 7.

[156] David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success* (New York: Amacom, 2015), loc. 1324.

[157] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 18.

provides us with the fundamental ingredients of our thoughts, we find it almost impossible to break away from its grasp. Even our language reflects and reinforces our cultural way of thinking. Moreover, much of this influence is implicit; we are not even aware of it."[158] Hiebert's statement looks down below the surface, into the worldview of culture, and states that a cultural worldview impacts everything about a person, including how people think and process information. This is the culture that students bring into the classroom. It is a part of who they are, and must be considered as part of their background knowledge that will impact their learning in the classroom.

As a result of globalization, the international business community has realized that people in various parts of the world think, interact and process information differently, and that this difference affects business relations. A growing area of research in international business is cultural intelligence[159]. Cultural Intelligence research explores the background knowledge and values of different cultures, so that multi-national and international businesses will be able to function and negotiate smoothly across cultures. This research is valuable to consider, for it shows how different cultures really are and gives a broad overview of culture around the world. Geert Hofstede, a pioneer in this particular field of research, identified five key dimensions to culture that differ around the world. His dimensions were "Power Distance", which evaluated the social distance between people of authority to those beneath them, "Uncertainty Avoidance," which evaluated how willing people in a society were to live with unknowns in their future,

---

[158] Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 31.

[159] Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence*, loc. 237.

"Individualism vs Collectivism," which evaluated how much a society values the individual or the group, "Masculinity vs Femininity," which evaluated how assertive or nurturing a society is, and "Long-term vs Short-term orientation," which evaluates whether people in the society live for the present or the future. [160]

Based on Hofstede's initial work, many others have explored cultural dimensions, with one extensive study, called the GLOBE study, exploring nine different cultural dimensions across sixty-two different societies. This study attempted to measure both practices and values of various cultures[161] In addition to Hofstede's five dimensions, the GLOBE study identified three other dimensions, and split Hofstede's dimension of "Individualism vs Collectivism" into two dimensions. Their additional dimensions are "Humane Orientation," which evaluates how much a group rewards individuals for being decent human beings, "Gender egalitarianism," which evaluates how much a group minimizes gender inequality, and "Performance orientation," which evaluates how much a group rewards individuals for improvement and excellence.[162]

These studies, and others like them, demonstrate that there is a big difference in the worldviews, values, thinking process, and actions of people from different cultures. These differences must not be ignored or minimized if one is to make use of a learners' background knowledge when teaching cross-culturally.

---

[160] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*.

[161] House and Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program, *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations*, 29.

[162] Ibid.

Western vs Asian Thought Processes

For years anthropologists have described how people in different cultures behave differently, have different values, and even seem to see the world differently. Richard Nisbett, a cognitive psychologist, decided to test the theory that different cultures actually have different thinking processes. He says:

> If the scholars in the humanities and other social sciences were right, then the cognitive scientists were wrong: Human cognition is not everywhere the same. Without putting it in so many words, the humanities and social science scholars were making extremely important claims about the nature of thought. First, that members of different cultures differ in their "metaphysics," or fundamental beliefs about the nature of the world. Second, that the characteristic thought processes of different groups differ greatly. Third, that the thought processes are of a piece with beliefs about the nature of the world: People use the cognitive tools that seem to make sense – given the sense they make of the world.[163]

Nisbett traces the origins of Western and Asian thought back to the philosophers of ancient China and Greece, namely Confucius and Aristotle, and the different methods of analysis done by each. He pointed out that many ancient cultures "made systematic observations in all scientific domains, (but) only the Greeks attempted to explain their observations in terms of underlying principles."[164] They would examine one part of a whole in great detail, removing it from its context and identify it by its properties alone. They would then look for universal principles that undergirded their observations, thus readily moving toward abstract thought in the

---

[163] Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought*, xvi-xvii.

[164] Ibid., 4.

process of observation. Furthermore, their search for knowledge was not necessarily driven by practical considerations, but rather simply for knowledge's sake.[165]

On the other hand the Chinese exploration and analysis focused on a subject in its context, and its relationship to its context.[166] Rather than looking for underlying abstract principles, the Chinese tended to look for interacting relationships. Their research was also very tied to practical considerations, "as philosopher Hajime Nakamura notes, the Chinese advances [in technology and science] reflected a genius for practicality, not a penchant for scientific theory and investigation", and "philosopher and sinologist Donald Monro has written, 'In Confucianism there was no thought of *knowing* that did not entail some consequence for action.'"[167]

Nisbett and his colleagues conducted numerous studies, showing many fascinating differences between Eastern and Western methods of thinking. Important to this study is his finding that even today Asians and Westerners have different methods of seeing the world. He writes:

> Thus, to the Asian, the world is a complex place, composed of continuous substances, understandable in terms of the whole rather than in terms of the parts, and subject more to collective than to personal control. To the Westerner, the world is a relatively simple place, composed of discrete objects that can be understood without undue attention to context, and highly subject to personal control.[168]

While Western thinking is principle based and makes use of categorization, "Easterners today have relatively little interest in categories, find it hard to learn new categories by applying

---

[165] Ibid., 9-10.

[166] Ibid., 17.

[167] Ibid., 8.

[168] Ibid., 100.

rules about properties, and make little spontaneous use of them for purposes of induction."[169]

Nisbett summarizes the significance in this way:

> If the world is a place where relations among objects and events are crucial in determining outcomes, then it will seem important to be able to observe all the important elements in the field, to see relations among objects and to see the relation between the parts and the whole. . . .If, on the other hand, the world is a place where the behavior of objects is governed by rules and categories, then it should seem crucial to be able to isolate the object from its context, to infer what categories the object is a member of, and to infer how rules apply to those categories.[170]

Modern hermeneutics was developed in the West, following the western method of analysis, where the parts were dissected into smaller and smaller parts, often isolated from context, and studied on their own. Probably the epitome of this type of hermeneutic is the western world's love of word studies, and developing whole sermons off of a single word isolated from its context. Another way it shows up in hermeneutics is the desire to classify every part of a passage - figures of speech must not only be identified, but classified, nouns must be declined, verbs must be parsed, sentences must be diagrammed – until one has amassed a huge amount of data on each and every part, and placed every part in its correct category. While this method has allowed western hermeneutics to go to great depths (the old tongue in cheek saying goes: "No one can go down deeper, stay down longer, and come up dryer than a _____ seminary graduate."), it has often overlooked the importance of context and relationship of sentences, verses, paragraphs, and thoughts to the whole of the book. Thankfully this focus has been changing in recent years, and the more recent focus on looking at books as a whole, tracing

---

[169] Ibid., 148.

[170] Ibid., 37.

the author's flow of thought, while considering cultural and background context, fits an Asian

manner of analysis better than the previous emphasis.

Peasant and Tribal Cultures

The students at the seminary where I taught, and the people among whom I presently

minister predominantly come from tribal and peasant societies. These societies have their own

type of culture, which impacts their values, world-view, and thinking processes. Hiebert

discusses both cultures in great detail. However I shall only examine factors which I feel are

relevant to the shaping of this project.

One of the primary factors to consider is that both Peasant and Tribal cultures are

extremely relationship oriented. Hiebert and Menses bring this point out numerous times, saying

"Social relations are the heart of tribal life,"[171] and "Kinship ties remain the center of life and are

used to perform the major functions of social life,"[172] and again "Tribal worldviews, for the most

part, are human centered."[173] While those statements are written directly about tribal societies,

the same emphasis on relationships, kinship and human centeredness is true of peasant societies,

with added complexities.[174]

This relationship orientation shows up in various ways. In tribal society, "people are not

encouraged to assert their individuality. They are taught to fit into the group and to obey its

---

[171] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 41.

[172] Ibid..

[173] Ibid., 127.

[174] Ibid., 187ff.

wishes, because it is the group, not the individual, that is the basis of tribal social realities."[175] "In a relational world, a high value is placed on sharing and taking responsibility for those in one's group."[176] Wrong-doing is more closely tied to shame than to guilt. People in a relational world feel shame at having let down their group. They do not think of sin in terms of breaking a universal law, but in terms of bringing dishonor to their group.[177] As a result, each action is weighed, not on the basis of absolute truth or universal principles, but on the basis of how it will affect their group and their own personal standing in the group.

Just like in tribal societies, relationships are the basis of life in peasant societies, albeit with more complexity. There are usually numerous groups living together in a peasant society. Each group will have its own place in the peasant society, keeping within traditional social boundaries, in order to keep the peace. So in addition to the group orientation of tribal societies, individuals in peasant societies also have to take into account both the social class, and, if present, the caste of their particular group. [178] An individual living in a peasant society must constantly be aware of his own status, the status of the person he is interacting with, and the implications of his action (or lack thereof) on the broader groups of each. This type of thinking becomes so ingrained into life that it is done unconsciously in most interactions, and only brought to the forefront of thought and discussion when there is a serious crisis of relationship.

---

[175] Ibid., 94.

[176] Ibid., 126.

[177] Ibid., 129.

[178] Ibid., 187ff.

Relationship societies, such as these I have been describing, place great emphasis upon face-to-face interaction. This is especially true in tribal societies, but is also true in peasant societies. This has great implication for ministry, for, as Hiebert and Menses say, "trust in the message is based on trust in the messenger."[179] In another book, Hiebert says, "For oral people communication is always tied to a person. They hear a preacher in a particular setting and judge the message by his or her life."[180] The message is not evaluated on its own merit. Western standards of evaluation such as correspondence to reality, logical consistency, credible research, etc. are not the primary concern. The primary concern is the credibility of the messenger.[181] If the messenger is known and deemed credible, then the message is accepted. Thus ministers of the gospel must first show themselves credible in the eyes of the people before their message is accepted.[182] This also gives reason for placing greater emphasis upon the author of a passage of Scripture, if known, than would typically be done in western hermeneutics.

Another very important characteristic of tribal and peasant societies, is that they tend to be oral rather than literate societies.[183] In many peasant and tribal societies today, there can be a mixture of both literacy and orality. However since literacy is recent, the primary thinking patterns of the culture would still be oral. Walter Ong refers to societies which have recently

---

[179] Ibid., 143.

[180] Hiebert, 135.

[181] While reading this paper, Dr. Jack Willsey pointed out that the emphasis upon face-to-face interaction and judging the message by the messenger must also "be taken into account when considering distance learning and online courses."

[182] Thus professors must build and maintain a relationship of respect between themselves and the students. This will be discussed further when examining Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter's work.

[183] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 151, 207, 242.

acquired literacy or have a mixture of literacy and orality as residually oral societies. He says:

"Today primary oral culture in the strict sense hardly exists since every culture knows of writing

and has some experience of its effects. Still, to varying degrees many cultures and subcultures,

even in a high-technology ambiance, preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality."[184] This

difference in mind-set or thinking between oral and literate societies is so important, that it must

be examined in detail.

The Orality Movement

The last two decades have seen an explosion in interest in oral cultures and the way they

learn. Tom Steffen credits the interest in Chronological Bible Storying beginning with Trevor

McIllwain and a talk he gave at the New Tribes Mission agency conference in the early 80s.[185]

The International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention soon showed

interest, and developed a method of teaching the Bible chronologically, which came to be known

as Chronological Bible Storying (CBS).[186] A paper submitted at the Lausanne conference in

Pattaya, Thailand, held in 2004, entitled *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* declared, "we

acknowledge the reality that much of the world is made up of oral learners who understand best

when information comes to them by means of stories. A large proportion of the world's

---

[184] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 11.

[185] Tom A. Steffen, "Tracking the Orality Movement: Some Implications for 21st Century Missions," *Lausanne Global Analysis* 3, no. 2 (March 2014), para. 22, https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-03/tracking-the-orality-movement-some-implications-for-21st-century-missions.

[186] Ibid.

populations are either *unable* to or *unwilling* to absorb information through written communications."[187] (emphasis mine.) Grant Lovejoy, one of the main writers of the paper, estimates that more than 80% of the world's population is predominantly oral.[188] Contributors to the paper, along with members of the Oral Bible Forum merged together in 2005 to create the International Orality Network[189] (ION).[190] While some people had been working on reaching oral cultures prior to the 2004 Lausanne conference, the conference seemed to have brought the need for a change in approach when dealing with oral cultures to the forefront of mission thinking. As a result, mission organizations have focused much energy on discussing the issue of orality[191] and developing material designed specifically for oral learners.[192]

Most of the current literature on orality focuses on evangelization and the formation of lay leaders in churches.[193] Very little is being written on how to train oral learners at a seminary or graduate school level. Yet there are a few that are starting to take up this challenge and explore how to take oral learners to the next level of theological and biblical competence in order

---

[187] Grant Lovejoy and D. Claydon, "Making Disciples of Oral Learners: Lausanne Occasional Paper 54," in *2004 Lausanne Forum Occasional Papers* (2005), 4.

[188] Grant Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update," *Orality Journal: The Word became Fresh* 1, no. (2012): 15.

[189] Steffen, "Tracking the Orality Movement," para. 23.

[190] The International Orality Network has a journal and numerous resources on its website: (www.orality.net) Accessed March 23, 2016.

[191] Randall Prior, "Orality: The Not-So-Silent Issue in Mission Theology," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 3 (2011).

[192] Daniel Raul Sanchez, J. O. Terry, and LaNette W. Thompson, *Bible Storying for Church Planting* (Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2008).

[193] Lovejoy and Claydon; Sanchez, Terry, and Thompson; John B., "The Story-Teller, the Dhow and the Fishers of Men: Orality in Relation to Muslim Communities Coming to Faith," *Mission Frontiers*, May/June, 2014. http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-story-teller-the-dhow-and-the-fishers-of-men.

for them to be equipped for leading churches in our increasingly globalized world.[194] Mark

Snowden raised the question of whether we are mis-training pastors in oral cultures by giving

them theological training in a literate mold. In his article, he argues that since pastors are to

communicate God's world to oral learners, the pastors themselves must be taught how to use oral

techniques such as storying.[195] A missionary, Billy Coppedge responded to Mark Snowden's

article, by telling of how in his experience in teaching storying, many oral culture learners grew

frustrated with the stories because in their minds, this was not training or education. Their culture

prized literacy, and stories were what grandparents told. Coppedge then argued for a blend of

literacy and orality in training national leaders.[196] The Lausanne 2010 CapeTown Congress

mentioned the need for encouraging "seminaries to provide curricula that will train pastors and

missionaries in oral methodologies"[197] in their Cape Town commitment. Steffen calls for those

within the movement to "investigate how to restructure Bible curricula in our theological

institutions so that it flows from whole to parts, and make sure teachers tie their parts back to the

whole."[198] The change Steffen recommends caters to an oral mindset that is holistic, and "big-

picture" oriented. The parts do not make sense apart from the whole.

---

[194] Oral training seminars are offered by Living Water International (https://www.water.cc/orality).
Accessed March 23, 2016.

[195] Mark Snowden, "Are We Training Our Pastors Wrong? Or How Can We Train Our Pastors More
Effectively?," *Lausanne Global Conversation* (2012), para. 6,
http://conversation.lausanne.org/resources/detail/12316/.

[196] Billy Coppedge, "A Missionary Responds to Mark Snowden," *Lausanne Global Conversation Archive,*
2012, para. 3, http://conversation.lausanne.org/resources/detail/12313/.

[197] "The Cape Town Commitment," https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#p2-4-2.

[198] Steffen, "Tracking the Orality Movement," para. 39.

In response to the Cape Town Congress of 2010, ION held a conference at Wheaton in 2012, to discuss theological education and orality. Out of that conference came the book *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts.*[199] The majority of the articles in the book focus on teaching storying and other oral communication techniques to theological students. They emphasize that our western theological training methods do not match the learning styles of oral societies.[200] Thus students trained in western-styled theological institutions find themselves unable to communicate well with the common people of their society once they enter ministry.

However, only one of the writers in the book mentioned the fact that storying by itself is not sufficient to teach people "the whole council of God." David Sills wrote "Although Chronological Bible Storying is an incredibly effective modal of evangelism in oral cultures, theological education and pastoral preparation have proven far more difficult with this model in the absence of a static text." [201] Later on he insightfully says:

> Given the complexities of oral worldviews and the tendency toward syncretism, it is essential to train up leaders in the full counsel of the word of God. The nature of much of the biblical text that is most applicable to matters of ecclesiology, such as is found in the Epistles, is difficult to story.[202] (*sic*)

Stills raises an excellent point. While storying is useful for evangelism and some discipleship, eventually people need to be able to read/hear God's word for themselves in

---

[199] Chiang and Lovejoy, *Beyond Literate Western Practices*.

[200] Ibid., 146.

[201] David Stills, "Responding to the Articles in Perspective IV," in *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts, Beyond Literate,* eds. Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014), 181.

[202] Ibid.

its entirety, and not rely solely on someone doing the storying for them. If this does not

happen, then we, the literates, will have full access to the Word of God, and the oral

societies will be relying on us to tell them what God says – a situation reminiscent of the

middle ages where the scholars alone could read God's word because it was only written

in Latin.

A follow-up conference, held in Hong Kong in 2013, resulted in a follow-up book

entitled *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and

Theological Education.*[203] This book shows deeper thought and maturity of thinking on the issue

of orality and theological education. It was evident that the authors had had time to ruminate on

many of the issues involved in orality and theological education. William Coppedge wrote of

issues he faced in Uganda with trying to use only oral teaching methods in a society which,

though oral in nature, prized literate training. He found that a mixture of oral and literate training

methods worked best.[204] He also noted that oral teaching strategies took more time, saying,

> Our experience has led us to believe that we may need to focus less on an all-
> encompassing curriculum, and instead look for an all-empowering curriculum. If
> time will not allow us to teach all of the answers regarding scripture, theology, or
> pastoral care, let us teach how to engage the world of God so that those significant
> questions can be addressed as they arise personally, communally, and even
> nationally.[205]

---

[203] Chiang and Lovejoy, *Beyond Literate Western Practices*.

[204] William Coppedge, "Training in the Ugandan Context," in *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, eds. Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014), 35.

[205] Ibid., 36.

In another chapter, Alex Abraham wrote, "Can oral learners learn deep theology? If not, what was Paul's strategy when he was trying to establish the church of his time, which consisted of 90% oral learners?"[206] He goes on to answer in the affirmative, that oral learners can learn deeper theology beyond stories, and advocates a return to scriptural practices such as memorization, songs, and discussion.[207]

In what I consider to be the best article in the book, Calvin Chong adds his voice to the need to move beyond storying in training oral learners. He says:

> . . . (O)ral story sets, like sermon series and Sunday school curricula, function as "canons within the Canon" as they are often treated as authoritative, complete, and sufficient. Yet, they must be recognized as abbreviations and partial representations of the whole. Otherwise, they effectively function to limit the community from receiving the full counsel of God contained in the pages of scripture.[208]

If oral learners need to know the full counsel of God, (they do), and if training methods need to go beyond storying, (they do), and if seminaries or theological institutes are unable to give them all the knowledge they need to know, (they are not), then it is vital that oral learners learn how to exegete the whole of scripture, and be able to apply it to their culture wisely. In order to go beyond storying, and be able to teach at a deeper level, it is necessary first to understand how oral learners think.

---

[206] Alex Abraham, "Contextualized Thological Education for Equipping the Unreached Unengaged People Groups in North India," in *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, eds. Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014), 38.

[207] Ibid., 39.

[208] Calvin Chong, "Giving Voice to Orality in Theological Education: Responses and Recommendations," in *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, eds. Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy (Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014), 135.

Understanding Oral Thinking Patterns

It is often assumed that oral culture is simple and simple-minded, while literate culture is sophisticated and wise. In reality, oral cultures can be quite complex in their thought and expressions. For years scholars assumed that the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were originally written poems because of their complexity. However further study has shown that they are an excellent example of sophisticated oral thought.[209] Oral thinkers are able to do some fantastic feats of story weaving and memory. It is claimed that the best oral poets are actually illiterate, as literacy hampers them.[210] In an interesting twist, some oral societies had reservations about writing, thinking it would destroy thinking and memory, weakening the mind.[211] Plato, one of the fathers of Greek philosophy, had doubts about writing. He ". . .expressed serious reservations in the *Phaedrus* and his *Seventh Letter* about writing, as a mechanical, inhuman way of processing knowledge, unresponsive to questions and destructive of memory . . ."[212]

Walter Ong claims that it is extremely hard for literate cultures to conceive of cultures without literacy. "We . . . are so literate that it is very difficult for us to conceive of an oral universe of communication or thought except as a variant of a literate universe." [213] Even when we speak, we speak as literate people do, not as oral people. "Persons who have interiorized

---

[209] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 57.

[210] Ibid., 59.

[211] Ibid., 79.

[212] Ibid., 24.

[213] Ibid., 2.

writing not only write but also speak literately, which is to say that they organize, to varying

degrees, even their oral expression in thought patterns and verbal patterns that they would not

know of unless they could write."[214]

Ong warns that we must not consider oral people as less intelligent or illogical simply

because they do not think the way our literate based culture has taught us to think. He says:

> Nor must we imagine that orally based thought is 'prelogical' or 'illogical' in any simplistic sense – such as, for example, in the sense that oral folk do not understand causal relationships. They know very well that if you push hard on a mobile object, the push causes it to move. What is true is that they cannot organize elaborate concatenations of causes in the analytic kind of linear sequences which can only be set up with the help of texts.[215]

 He says elsewhere:

> All thought, including that in primary oral cultures, is to some degree analytic: it breaks its materials into various components. But abstractly sequential, classificatory, explanatory examination of phenomena or of stated truths is impossible without writing and reading. Human beings in primary oral cultures, those untouched by writing in any form, learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they do not 'study'.
> They learn by apprenticeship – hunting with experienced hunters for example – by discipleship, which is a kind of apprenticeship, by listening, by repeating what they hear, by mastering proverbs and ways of combining and recombining them, by assimilating other formulary materials, by participation in a kind of corporate retrospection – not study in the strict sense.[216]

The difference between orality and literacy is so great, that according to Ong, the

difference between "western thought" and "non-western thought" can be reduced to a contrast

---

[214] Ibid., 56-57.

[215] Ibid., 57.

[216] Ibid., 9.

between "interiorized literacy" and "residually oral states of consciousness."[217] Ong's research, and that of Eric Havelock[218], have led them to believe that it was literacy in Greek culture that allowed Plato to develop his Philosophical thought; that such analysis and abstract thinking is impossible without literacy.[219]

This demonstrates that by no means should oral learners and thinkers be considered less intelligent than their literate counterparts. There are benefits and skills for both oral and literate thinking and communication. The examination of the differences between them in this paper is not to promote one over the other, but to understand how to better communicate and teach literate concepts in a residually oral society. In order to do that, I look first at a seminal work by Alexander Luria.

In 1931-32, Alexander Luria (also spelled Luriia), a Russian Cognitive Psychologist, conducted a series of tests on people living in the Uzbeki and Kirghiz regions of then USSR. His goal was to study the development of cognition. His findings were finally published in 1974, and then translated and published in English in 1976 under the title of *Cognitive Development, its Cultural and Social Foundations*. I mention his study in great detail because of its unique and

---

[217] Ibid., 29.

[218] Eric Alfred Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

[219] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982)., 27-28.

foundational nature. His research is referenced and cited with great respect and authority by those writing in the fields of anthropology, cognitive development, and orality.[220]

Luria's tests were conducted with people who had diverse educational backgrounds. His subjects varied from non-literate peasants, to semi-literate students and farm workers, to well-educated teachers. His research unearthed a great difference in thinking patterns between the non-literate peasants and the rest who had some sort of educational background.

His first tests demonstrated that categories are culturally determined, and that literate and oral people have differing abilities to categorize. In one test he presented people with cloths in a wide variety of colors and asked them to name them. Once they had named them to the best of their ability, he asked them to categorize them by likeness. Those who had some sort of education, used color names that were familiar (red, yellow, blue), and refined them with adjectives (light yellow, dark red, etc). When asked to categorize them, they had little problem in categorizing them according to likeness. However, the uneducated peasant women had very different names for colors, usually tied to a specific object, such as "spoiled cotton", or "pigs dung", or "lake", or "pistachio." When asked to categorize the colors according to likeness, they almost all said "It can't be done." The colors were so closely tied to the objects, that they could not differentiate between the color and the object in their minds. Thus, while we might look at

---

[220] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 133-135; Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 49-56; Rick Brown, "Communicating God's Message in Oral Cultures," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 3 (2004): 127.

two colors and say they are different shades of the abstract color "blue", they identified them by an object, and no two objects were alike.[221]

The second test of the ability to categorize, used geometric shapes (triangle, square, circle, etc). Some were drawn with lines, some were shaded, some were incomplete, and some were formed with dots or x's. Those who had some education, readily identified the objects by their abstract geometric names. The uneducated peasants again identified them with concrete objects, such as plate, stirrup (for a triangle), glass (cup), ruler, window, door, moon (for an unfinished circle). When asked to categorize them according to similarity, they had great difficulty. Two rectangles, deemed to be a ruler and a window, could not be classified together because they were different. A square made of dots was identified as a watch, and could not be categorized with a blank square identified as a door. A triangle and a square were put together, because they were both made of dots.[222]

These two tests demonstrated that abstract categorization is learned. Those who had some formal education had been taught the basic, abstract, color and shape categories, and were able to use those to complete the tests. The peasants from oral societies, did not have a formal education background, and so they were not able to make categorizations as could those with some formal education. The tests further demonstrated how concrete their thinking was, and how difficult it was for them to think in abstract terms.[223] This point is significant, because hermeneutics,

---

[221] Luriia, *Cognitive Development*, 24-30.

[222] Ibid., 32-39.

[223] While I might have thought their behavior was particular to that group of people, anthropologists have readily accepted that these people's responses typify oral societies, and so I have done the same.

coming from a western abstract way of thinking, is typically taught in concepts and categories. These categories are abstract, and not of the same sort as people from oral cultures would use.

The second group of tests Luria conducted examined their abilities in generalization and abstraction. This is of interest because generalization and abstraction are skills deemed necessary in the practice of hermeneutics for identifying principles and making application. In the first test, a subject was presented with a group of objects, and asked which one does not belong in the group. For example, some were presented with *hammer-saw-log-hatchet*, and were asked which did not belong. The expected response would be that "log" does not belong, for the others all belong to the abstract category of "tools." Yet the uneducated peasants did not see things that way. In their eyes, all of them belonged, for they were all necessary. It was impossible to hammer, saw, or split wood without wood. Thus the log needed to stay. In another version, three adults and a child were shown to them. They refused to select the child as the odd one out, stating that a child cannot survive on its own. Instead, they came up with a scenario in which all the people were related.

This pattern was repeated many times. Rather than reject an object, relationship or scenarios were called upon to show all were necessary. When shown how an abstract category could fit most of the objects, they paid no attention. "When we referred to a generic term they could use to designate a distinct group of objects, they generally disregarded the information or considered it immaterial. Instead, they adhered to the idea that objects should be grouped in practical arrangements."[224]

---

[224] Luriia, *Cognitive Development*, 59.

In another set of tests, subjects were given a set of three objects, and then shown a collection of three more. They were supposed to discard the object from their set which did not belong, and replace it with one of the three objects they were shown. The uneducated subjects again connected the objects on the basis of relationship rather than abstract category. Luria writes "they regarded such abstract principles of classification as inconsequential and quickly reverted to the tendency to reconstruct situations in which the objects could function as a group."[225]

These findings are significant in that they showed that subjects without formal education tended to think in terms of how objects related to one another, rather than looking for abstract categories by which they could be connected. In fact, abstract categories were "inconsequential," for they had no immediate value, and association by relationship or scenario were deemed far better. Again Luria writes: "Clearly, different psychological processes determined their manner of grouping which hinged on concrete, situational thinking rather than abstract operations which entail the generalizing function of language."[226]

These tests show significant differences in thinking patterns which have a huge impact on how hermeneutics can be taught. When teaching how to observe a passage, a typical western approach is to present abstract categories, such as repetition, contrast, figures of speech, lists, etc., as a way of probing the text. However these categories are abstract, non-relational, and thus students from oral backgrounds do not see how they relate to one another or to the text. It is then

---

[225] Ibid., 68.

[226] Ibid., 77.

treated simply as a math problem which has no meaning outside of achieving the answer. Even if they were to learn the western categories, the significance of items in those categories (i.e. effectively using the categories) is hard for them to grasp. For example, when asking my students to observe repetition in a passage, the students would list the number of times "and", "the", "you", "he", etc. were found in the passage unless I told them not to. This showed they did not understand the significance of repeated words in a passage, and were merely carrying out their assignment without understanding.

Luria's tests also showed that oral thinkers prefer to group things in practical arrangements. This is significant as well, and very helpful for teaching hermeneutics. Categories can be used, but they should be categories that group items in "practical arrangements" rather than according to abstract qualities. Relationship and interaction between items in a group is more important than all items in the group possessing the same abstract quality. Thus, rather than asking students to identify "repetition" (an abstract category), I should ask them to identify ideas the author is emphasizing, which is a relational category, with practical use. The author may very well be emphasizing an idea through repetition, or contrast, or some other means, and the students can observe that. However the important issue is not for them to observe these abstract qualities of the text, but to observe the author's emphasis.

Luria also noted a group of semi-educated subjects tended toward situational thinking, as the uneducated subjects did, but were able to shift toward logical, categorical thinking. However, "as they proceeded to work out a problem independently, they quickly lapsed into visual

thinking, which in their minds, provided an alternative to abstract classification and frequently took precedence over the latter."[227]

This finding is significant as well. In western inductive Bible study methods, we teach that students must identify the central or "Big Idea" of a passage, abstract it to a theological principle, and then homiletize it in personal, applicable language. This process is totally foreign to oral thinkers. When teaching hermeneutics to oral learners, a better way would be to compare situations, using analogous thinking. This method would have the additional benefit of being relational, since it would require the hermeneut to identify with the recipients/characters in the passage. Naturally, part of good hermeneutical training would be to also teach them what would constitute valid and invalid identification and analogies.

Having learned much about how they categorized, or didn't categorize, as the case may be, Luria then attempted to understand how they handled concepts. He asked subjects to define or describe "mundane" concepts such as "sun", "tree," or "car" to people who had never encountered them. He also asked them to define and describe "academic" concepts such as "a cooperative," and "freedom." The oral subjects refused to define or describe the mundane concepts, since everyone should be able to know what they are. They said that if someone didn't know what an object was, the only way to know was to experience it. When Luria pressed them for a description, "they usually responded with tautologies: 'A car is a car.'"[228]

---

[227] Ibid., 77.

[228] Ibid., 86.

Subjects with a bit of educational background were able to use comparisons to explain mundane concepts (a car is like a cart that goes fast), but still struggled with academic concepts such as "cooperative" and "freedom." Subjects with even more educational background were able to use abstract ideas in their comparisons as they described academic concepts. [229]

These tests again reinforced the pattern that Luria and his team detected; abstract thinking was an academically learned skill, and concrete-relational thinking was the primary method of thinking used by uneducated people.

I see two key points arising from this series of tests. The first is regarding experience. Rather than being able to describe a concept or idea, the oral thinkers said the only way to know an object or situation was to experience it. This is one reason why narratives resonate so well with them. Narratives allow us to "experience" a situation virtually. If done well, a person who experiences something through narrative will feel as though he has actually experienced the situation or idea. When teaching hermeneutics, an oral learner will be able to do better exegesis if they observe the professor/teacher doing it several times first. That way they will experience the process of good hermeneutics, and be able to emulate it.

The second key point arising from this test relates to the use of concepts. While primary oral thinkers were not able to describe concepts, those with some educational background were able to make use of abstract ideas when describing concepts. This shows that while the use of concepts and abstract thinking is not natural to oral thinkers, they can learn to think in concepts and make use of abstract ideas with training. Thus it is not necessary to limit their education to

---

[229] Ibid., 88-91.

only oral thought forms.[230] Western hermeneutics is typically taught in concepts, using abstract

thought. While it will be beneficial to oral learners if it can be taught in more relational, concrete

terms, this test shows that they can handle abstract thought and concepts with training and given

time. If, in the course of teaching hermeneutics, it becomes necessary to teach an abstract

concept, it should be handled slowly, with many concrete examples.

The final test we will examine, involved Luria testing the ability to make logical

deductions and inferences. He taught subjects a logical syllogism such as "Precious metals do

not rust. Gold is a precious metal. Does it rust or not?" and asked them to recite it back to him.

Of the illiterate subjects, Luria observed:

> These subjects did not, as a rule, immediately perceive the logical relation
> between the parts of the syllogism. For them, each of the three separate phrases
> constituted an isolated judgment. Therefore, these subjects repeated separate
> sentences, reproducing them as if they were unrelated, separate judgments,
> frequently simplifying them and modifying their form.[231]

Once the subjects were able to state the syllogism correctly, Luria then asked them

questions to see what they were able to deduce or infer from the syllogism. For example, using

the syllogism "Cotton grows well where it is hot and dry. England is cold and damp. Can cotton

grow there or not?" Once the subject had memorized the syllogism, Luria would ask them if

cotton could grow in England. Their response was typically experiential. They had never been to

England, so they did not know. When pressed to draw a conclusion from his words, they were

---

[230] This speaks to the current push in the orality movement toward only using narrative for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. While there is much narrative in Scripture, there are also concepts and abstract ideas, especially in the epistles. Disciple makers need to make sure they are giving "the whole counsel of God", and not just the narrative part. To be sure, much of Paul's theology is "difficult to understand", as Peter claims, but oral learners can learn to follow abstract thought and concepts in time. Such training should not be withheld from them.

[231] Luriia, *Cognitive Development*, 103-104.

finally able to do so. However when presented with a syllogism completely outside of their

experience (they understood cotton, so a second syllogism was used), they refused to make a

judgment based on the syllogism, stating that they had no experience with the conditions of the

syllogism, and so could not make a definitive statement.[232]

Walter Ong, in commenting on the syllogism tests conducted by Luria, noted that the

subjects were treating the syllogisms as riddles. Riddles, he claims, are found in all societies, but

the syllogism is unique to literate society. He says

> . . . a syllogism is self-contained: its conclusions are derived from its premises only. . .
> persons not academically educated are not acquainted with this special ground rule but
> tend rather in their interpretation of the given statements, in a syllogism as elsewhere, to
> go beyond the statements themselves , as one does normally in real-life situations or in
> riddles. [233]

Ong's statement further highlights how much education and literacy impacts understanding and

thinking styles.[234]

Although Luria conducted several other experiments, demonstrating a marked difference

between oral and literate styles of thinking, we will not delve into the others in this study. These

have been presented in detail because of their pertinence to the theme of this project, namely,

---

[232] Ibid., 107-116.

[233] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 53.

[234] This explains the difficulty students have with sticking with only what the text says. This is not uncommon, even in the west. Poythress argues that scholars must give godly lay-teachers a break, for though a sermon may not expound the exact point of the text, it usually is biblical, drawing from the lay-teacher's lifetime of experience with the scriptures (Vern S. Poythress, "Divine meaning of Scripture," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48, no. 2 [Fall 1986]: 279). However Poythress' point, while valid, also emphasizes the IMPORTANCE of preachers being careful in their exegesis, for much of "common" scriptural or biblical knowledge is shaped by the sermons people hear.

that background knowledge includes thinking styles, and thinking styles are extremely impacted by culture and learning preference.

Luria's tests also show how thinking styles vary with education. Oral societies are very concrete-relational in their thinking. Abstract ideas (such as color or tools) are not useful in and of themselves, and only take on meaning when tied to a function, relationship, or object (a color was the same as pig's dung). Categories are made on the basis of relationship between the objects, rather than on the basis of abstract qualities. Concepts cannot be explained, only experienced, and deductions based on reason alone are suspect if they are not coupled with experience. Yet with a little education, students are able to start thinking in abstract terms, and are able to handle concepts. However, as Luria showed, they easily revert back to concrete-relational thinking when trying to solve problems, as it is more natural to them.

No study of orality is complete without examining the writing of Walter Ong, a pioneer in the study of orality. His book *Orality and Literacy* is referenced extensively by present day writers on the subject.[235] Ong gives a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of oral thought and culture. The following selected characteristics of oral thought and expression are from him.[236]

Oral thought is *additive rather than subordinate*, meaning that in grammatical construction, it uses simple sentences, joined by a conjunction (usually "and"), refusing to use

---

[235] Brown, 123-124, 127-128; W. Jay Moon, "Discipling through the Eyes of Oral Learners," *Missiology* 38, no. 2 (2010): 128-129, 139; Lovejoy and Claydon, 18.

[236] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 36-57.

lengthy sentences with subordinate clauses[237]. This is tied to another characteristic of being *aggregative rather than analytic.* This means they accumulate knowledge and information, but do very little in breaking down thought into various components and categories. "Without a writing system, breaking up thought – that is, analysis – is a high-risk procedure"[238] Jay Moon points out that this leads them to be holistic. He says " . . . oral learners prefer to view matters in the totality of their context, including everyone involved (holistically.) For example, oral learners often prefer to learn from the "whole to the part."[239]

This trait of oral thought is good reason for not emphasizing intense analysis in a beginning hermeneutics course. Older western hermeneutics placed heavy emphasis upon word-studies, minutia of grammatical intricacies, sentence diagramming, etc. These are useful for plumbing the depths of Pauline epistles, but find less use in other genres found in scripture. More recent hermeneutics has emphasized reading, genre, and understanding the book as a whole before examining the parts. I see this as a very healthy change for students of non-western backgrounds who are attempting to learn hermeneutics, and should form the foundation for a beginning hermeneutics course.

Oral thought is *redundant or copious*. In writing, we tend to be sparse with our expression, having learned in grade school that redundancy is anathema to good writing. Redundancy is not necessary in writing, because if a reader loses track of what is said, he can

---

[237] Ibid., 37.

[238] Ibid., 39.

[239] Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners," 34.

simply look back a paragraph or two and re-enter the flow of thought. Such an option is not possible in oral communication, so oral societies tend to repeat an idea more than once, saying it multiple ways so that people can follow. This was once true of western culture, but due to the interiorization of literacy, it is no more. Ong writes: "Early written texts, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, are often bloated with 'amplification', annoyingly redundant by modern standards. Concern with *copia* remains intense in western culture so long as the culture sustains massive oral residue – which is roughly until the age of Romanticism or even beyond."[240]

This trait of oral thought is reason for teaching in a repetitive pattern. Oral learners will need to encounter the same material several times, from different angles. This is also reason for letting scripture as a whole speak for itself. Scripture is extremely repetitive because most of it is intended for an oral society. Oral learners will readily grasp the emphasis and important points in a text simply because their style of repetitive communication finds a companion in the repetition of scripture.

Oral culture is *conservative or traditionalist.* Knowledge is precious in all societies, but it is treated differently. In literate cultures, it is recorded in writing, and readily accessible to all who would learn it afterward, if they only take the time to read it. This frees up the memory and the mind to compare, contrast, and analyze the knowledge that has come before with new knowledge that is being sought. Thus highly literate societies prize innovation and exploration, emphasizing the brightness of youth and creativity. On the other hand, oral societies only

---

[240] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 41.

transmit knowledge orally. Keepers or guardians of knowledge are those who have given much time to learning and remembering it. They are usually old, and are the prized people in society.[241] The culture does not prize innovation as much as tradition. Learning from elders and keeping in line with tradition is more important being creative, exploratory, or innovative.[242] Innovation can lead to change, disharmony, and trouble. Tradition is time-tested and works.[243]

Oral culture is *close to the human life-world*. Rather than dealing in abstract concepts, ideas and knowledge are tied to life and living. Ong says, "oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, (*sic*) assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction with human beings."[244] This even extends to the way they learn. Rather than instruction manuals, such as we use in highly literate cultures, they use apprenticeship, making use of observation and practice with little verbal instruction.[245] Children are taught the skills of life from observing adults and

---

[241] This raises the question of whether pioneer mission works should focus on teaching the older people how to study the bible, since they should be the teachers of the congregation.

[242] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 41.

[243] Many non-western students prefer to quote from older, respected commentaries, rather than make their own observations because of this oral culture value. They feel that they have nothing to say, and older, wiser commentators are the respected elders to whom they should listen. This trait of oral culture also gives intrinsic value to the "old" scriptures. Oral-culture students can be warned that adding their own ideas to the text is arrogant and disrespectful to it.

[244] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 42.

[245] Ibid., 43. This is reason for the teacher to demonstrate the process of exegesis over and over.

working with them. Usually there is little verbal instruction, simply repetitive practice following observation.[246]

Oral culture is *agonistically toned.* The stories and every-day expressions seem to be overly dramatic to highly literate people. Ong writes, "Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known. By keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld (*sic*), orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle." A case study of the Sensuron people of Malaysia brings this out:

> A skill of "speaking beautifully" is much admired and imitated. The style used involves narration, with exhortation, and is emphasized through voice tone and many hand and body gestures and postures. Political debates, court hearings, and personal arguments often become episodes of dramatic representation for onlookers, with a speaker's phrase listened to for its emotional expressive content and undertones of ridicule, tragedy, comedy, and farce at the expense of others involved.[247]

This trait of oral culture also is admirably fit for exegeting scripture. Since they are culturally tuned for emotional indicators, it is not hard for them to pick it up from the text. When teaching hermeneutics to oral learners, rather than asking them to identify emotional terms, which is an abstract category, they can be asked to identify how the author/main character is feeling.

---

[246] George Spindler, *Education and Cultural Process: Anthropological Approaches* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1987), 323.

[247] Ibid., 319.

Oral culture is *empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced.* Learning takes place through participation, or, in the case of learning from a story, through empathy.[248] Ong writes: "For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known. . . Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for 'objectivity', in the same sense of personal disengagement or distancing."[249]

Western hermeneutics follows a scientific model in trying to achieve objectivity. Thus the terms "author", "recipients", "text", and other abstract, objectifying terms are used to provide distance between the subject (the text) and the observer (the hermeneut). Objectivity is prized because it is supposed to help one lay aside prejudices, and pre-understanding, and thus truly analyze the text. While this does result in high analysis and depth, it often is lacking in solid personal application. One danger many students of God's word face is disengagement of self from the impact of the text.

This type of distancing is very hard for oral learners, and in my opinion, should only be lightly used. Rather, they should be encouraged to identify with the author/main character/recipients, drawing valid connections between the author/main character/recipients and their own situations. Likewise, when teaching hermeneutics, the author and recipients' names should be used rather than the distancing terms, "author" and "recipient." Rather than speaking of "the text", emphasis should be given to speaking of "the message."

---

[248] This is why narratives resonate with oral learners.

[249] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 46.

Oral culture is *homeostatic*. This means that they live in the present, and tend to discard information that is not relevant in the present. One area that this affects is word meanings. Some words change meaning over time (for example, "gay" used to mean "happy" seventy-five years ago). In literate culture, we have dictionaries to define words and give their many meanings, some of which are no longer relevant in society today. In oral culture, there are no dictionaries.

> The oral mind is uninterested in definitions . . . Words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habitat, which is not, as in a dictionary, simply other words, but includes also gestures, vocal inflections, facial expression, and the entire human, existential setting in which the real, spoken word always occurs. Word meanings come continuously out of the present, though past meanings of course have shaped the present meaning in many and varied ways, no longer recognized.[250]

In light of this oral culture trait, it is wise for oral learners to read passages of Scripture aloud with expression. Reading it aloud, and hearing it read, will help provide meaning to the words in context. While lexicon and dictionary usage should become a skill eventually, the meaning of most words can be determined from their context. Word studies should be done only as they help understand the larger passage as a whole, not as an end in and of themselves.

Oral culture is *situational rather than abstract.* Ong states, "Oral cultures tend to use concepts in situational, operational frames of reference that are minimally abstract in the sense that they remain close to the human lifeworld (*sic*)."[251] As an example, he says "Oral folk assess intelligence not as extrapolated from contrived textbook quizzes but as situated in operational

---

[250] Ibid., 47. Because the Bible is a book from a residually oral culture, this also gives reason for making sure that the meaning understood of any given word, is supported by the immediate context.

[251] Ibid., 49.

contexts."[252] In other words, in oral culture, intelligence is shown through how you behave and decisions you make, rather than from marks on a test.[253] When oral cultures do preserve knowledge of data, they do it through narrative, rather than abstract lists.[254]

Ong's work is frequently cited in current studies and works on orality. The current orality movement in missions looks back to Ong as an authority whose theory helps to undergird the movement. Yet Ong is not without his critics. One critic, Brian Street, concluded that Ong's book has "little value in the investigation of the relationship between orality and literacy."[255] However it appears to me that Street built up a straw-man of Ong's work, which was then easy to tear down. He claims that Ong uses dated methodology "whereby the observer puts himself or herself into the position of the imagined subject"[256] This implies that Ong merely attempted to understand oral culture by thinking about it. It ignores the numerous references Ong gives to research done by Havelock, Luria, and others. In other words, Ong is not simply coming up with these ideas off the top of his head. Another critique he aims at Ong is that he attempts to use

---

[252] Ibid., 55.

[253] This corresponds very well with the biblical understanding of "wisdom". Application of a passage is not simply stating what to do, or knowing the passage, but rather living correctly.

[254] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982), 140-141.

This is also reason for presenting exegesis in a relational, situational way, rather than in abstract, idealistic, cognitive terms. The ideal would probably be closer to a pastoral mentorship, rather than formal seminary training, whereby a pastoral apprentice learns how to preach and do exegesis at the same time.

[255] Brian V. Street, *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education* (London; New York: Longman, 1995), 158.

[256] Ibid., 155.

"present-day 'oral' cultures . . . as evidence for the nature of *past* (sic) societies."[257] However

that misunderstands Ong's use of Havelock's work on Greek orality. Ong shows how Havelock's

work on Greek orality corresponds to findings in present day oral societies, thus the

characteristics he is presenting are not simply a non-western phenomenon, but universal to all

oral societies. In short, I find Street's critique of Ong, and those with similar accusations, to fall

short of detracting from his work.

This section on Asian thinking patterns, peasant and tribal cultures, and the thinking

styles of oral societies has raised some interesting material. Different authors attribute different

reasons for why these people groups think as they do. For instance, Nisbett claims that Asians

think in terms of relationship rather than principles because it flows out of ancient philosophies.

He points out that the culture of the time of the philosophers was conducive to accepting their

philosophies. Heibert looks at the same characteristics, and attributes them living in a peasant or

tribal society. Luriia and Ong attribute the same characteristics to orality. Which one is right? In

this paper I shall take a very Eastern approach, and say the question of why they think as they do

is unimportant – what is important is that they do think differently, and thus must be taught

differently. So, having looked at Asian, peasant, and tribal cultures, and the character traits and

thinking styles of oral societies, I turn now to examine wise methods of education in non-western

contexts.

Education in Non-western Culture

---

[257] Ibid., 155.

Traditional Learning Methods

As has been demonstrated, there is not simply one way of thinking, nor is there a universal thinking style. Most formal schooling around the world is based on a western method of thinking and analysis. It emphasizes information for information's sake, abstract concepts, reading and writing, and analysis. These emphases are useful, but do not necessarily connect deeply with the people in a non-western, residually oral culture. On the other hand, non-western cultures have been passing on information from one generation to the next for centuries in non-school environments and methods. These methods are still often both consciously and unconsciously carried out in residually oral cultures today, and continue to shape the thinking and learning patterns of the people within that culture. A wise educator in an oral or residually oral culture will learn something of the traditional learning methods employed within that culture, and seek to utilize them whenever possible.

The following are some characteristics of traditional learning methods found almost universally among oral and residually oral cultures:

1. They learn by observation rather than by verbalization. Daily life is lived out in the presence of the younger generation, who learn to mimic and do what elders do.[258] Sometimes there is a significant period of time between when a learner observes a skill or procedure, and when they feel comfortable in carrying it out themselves.[259] They often require seeing the skill or procedure demonstrated numerous times. Lingenfelter writes:

---

[258] Stephen Harris and Joy Kinslow Harris, *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land* (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1984), 21.

[259] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 36.

In another context in the Philippines, I listened to a Filipina literacy specialist explain that when teaching literacy training courses, she always assumes that her students will have to take the course at least four times before they are ready to teach. . . The trainer's insight into the importance of repetition for her students' mastery of content and for skill for teaching has profound implications for western teachers in non-western contexts[260]

When teaching a skill such as hermeneutics, as has already been mentioned, the professor should model exegesis of a passage several times from start to finish before asking the students to try it. A case can also be made for numerous hermeneutics courses during seminary training, each building off the former, but also repeating much of what was learned in previous classes[261].

2. They learn by doing rather than by listening. Harris writes, "In many societies, a child models a miniature of adult life."[262] Rather than receiving verbal instruction, they simply imitate and do what they see being done. It is very hands-on and concrete, rather than articulated and abstract. Harris points out the resulting cognitive difference between this and the western verbal form of instruction:

> In informal learning a child will learn a particular concept, say "fishing," by observing others fish and by fishing himself a number of times. Later, he will understand the verbal term for fishing, having learned the concept by a process that moved from concrete experience to verbal representation. In school the opposite happens. Here the child will probably hear many descriptions and discussions about fishing until he forms a generalized rule or definition about

---

[260] Ibid., 46.

[261] I personally think an ideal hermeneutics seminary training program would incorporate a 5 course plan, each building on the foundation of the former. They would be organized by genre, from simple to complex for oral learners. A suggested course plan would be 1) Narrative, 2) Psalms, Wisdom 3) Gospels, Acts, 4) non-Pauline epistles, 5) Pauline epistles.

[262] Harris and Kinslow Harris, *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land*, 22.

> what fishing is. Then eventually he will have the experience of fishing, having learned the concept by a process that moved from verbal representation to concrete experience.[263]

Sometimes the learning by imitation can take the form of role play.[264]

When teaching hermeneutics, rather than spend a long time explaining a concept (which would be mostly a waste of time), the professor should model the action needed several times. He should then have the students attempt it. Once the skill has been learned, it is then time to explain the concept.

3. Traditional learning takes place in an "immediately meaningful context. Learning is situation specific: that is, the reason or meaning is intrinsic to the situation."[265] This is both helpful and unhelpful. It is helpful in that the motivation for learning is immediately apparent. You learn how to avoid the claws of a crab or get pinched. On the other hand such situation specific learning does not aid the learners in developing cross-situational concepts. Harris calls this an "isolating conceptual style."[266] Lingenfelter tells of a friend teaching basketball in Africa who could not get his students to run drills, because they simply could not understand the correlation between drills and the actual game.[267] Harris points out that this places the burden on the teacher to make each learning situation

---

[263] Ibid., 22.

[264] Ibid., 79-80.

[265] Ibid., 22.

[266] Ibid., 23.

[267] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 38.

immediately interesting, for students will not be motivated by saying "this will be useful later."[268]

One way to make hermeneutics "immediately meaningful" is to work from exegesis to bible lesson, and require the students to teach the lesson to a church or Bible study group, as a requirement for the course. This would join hermeneutics and homiletics, but would be "Big Picture" oriented, and students would have an "immediately meaningful context."

4. "Questioning or verbally curious attitudes are not encouraged and some forms of 'why?' questions are rarely asked. . . . Problems are solved one at a time, rather than an interest being fostered in the hypothetical problem solving technique, such as 'What would happen if such and such happened?'"[269] In some cases, there may be a prohibition or taboo against asking questions.[270]

5. "Information imparted to a learner will often be valued on the basis of how the giver is valued not on the value of the information for its own sake."[271] As mentioned in the section on Tribal and Peasant Cultures, the relationship to the imparter of information is

---

[268] Harris and Kinslow Harris, *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land*, 95. This gets at the heart of the issue with western seminary training in non-western contexts. So much of what is done in seminary is divorced from real life settings. Attempts to overcome this through a year of internship still divorce the theory from the practical. More work needs to be done in training pastors in a mentoring type situation where the things they learn are derived from the work they are doing.

[269] Ibid., 22.

[270] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 36. One of the best ways of probing a text is asking questions. This could be tricky in such a culture.

[271] Harris and Kinslow Harris, *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land*, 22.

more important than the information itself. In some oral societies, children will only

accept instruction from a parent or a relative. However in many residually oral societies,

the position of teacher is a respected position, and thus anything the teacher says is

considered absolutely true. However if the teacher does something to ruin the student-

teacher relationship, or does something dishonorable, he/she will lose all ability to teach.

Lingenfelter writes:

> Some western teachers embrace the idea of building relationships but mistakenly
> conclude that the appropriate way of relating is as a peer or a friend. Traditional
> learning often follows the hierarchy of older to younger, master to apprentice.
> Western educators have often ignored this principle with disastrous results.
> Teachers who have tried to be friends have lost respect and the right to teach.[272]

6. Traditional learning is conservative. Innovation is not prized, nor is discovery of

   something "new." Learning to think for one's self is not encouraged, rather learning to

   think an authority's thoughts after him/her is expected. Careful attention is given to

   learning exactly what is passed down from elders, teachers, or experts. "Wisdom is

   defined by knowledge of traditional lore, history, and values."[273]

7. Stemming from the above point, traditional learning can also involve rote memorization.

   Stories are told orally, memorized, and repeated. Western education tends to emphasize

   reasoning skills and grasping of concepts, and disdains the "parroting" of rote

---

[272] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 42. Modern missionary methods emphasize doing evangelism by focusing on the primary respected imparters of information within a society. Once these people come to the Lord, the rest of the society often quickly follows. This raises the question of who should actually be receiving the hermeneutical training: young, often unmarried men, or respected elders in the society? The answer is "both". The young men are the leaders of tomorrow, but the elders are the leaders of today. If the elders are to be trained, what is the best way to train them? Seminary? Mentorship?

[273] Harris and Kinslow Harris, *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land*, 22.

memorization. However Lingenfelter points out that rote memorization can be a useful

tool for building a body of knowledge that can later be reflected upon. It can also be

useful in situations where students are studying in a second or third language.[274]

This is good reason for requiring hermeneutics students to memorize much scripture, and

even teach them to memorize the passage they are exegeting (unless it is a long narrative

or Ps 119.). Memorization is the foundation for the biblical method of meditation – a

practice rarely used today, but extremely useful for oral cultures. Memorization and

meditation could be the primary way an oral learner could "study" a passage.

Universal Principles for Teaching in non-Western contexts.

The previous section looked at some characteristics of traditional learning. This section

looks at some principles that can enhance learning in a cross-cultural situation.

Teachers in an oral or residually oral cross-cultural situation may be tempted to either

teach the way they themselves were taught, or to only adopt traditional teaching methods, since

that is what their students are used to. Both extremes have problems. Teaching the way they

themselves were taught, will put the students at a severe disadvantage, and the teacher will find

they do not learn as well as they should.

On the other hand, if a teacher only uses traditional learning methods, he/she would

quickly find that they run into problems. There is more to teaching cross-culturally than simply

adopting the host culture's learning methods. Sometimes traditional learning methods are not

---

[274] Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 40-41.

adequate for teaching information needed in today's world. These methods take a lot of time to

convey information. They do not teach abstract thinking, analysis, or the learning of multi-

situational concepts. Sometimes the students themselves do not consider such methods to be

proper schooling methods.[275] However, as Lingenfelter states, the use of traditional learning

techniques, cannot be overlooked:

> We propose that good teaching in any culture will include the traditional learning techniques and that a teacher who wants to be a Christlike servant in a cross-cultural setting will try to make learning as context specific and real to life as possible. To achieve this we must include learning by observation and imitation, learning by trial and error, learning through real-life activities, and learning in context-specific settings.[276]

The best approach is to use as much of the learning methods they are familiar with as possible,

but also to carefully utilize other methods that will help them in areas where these traditional

methods are deficient. Lingenfelter writes, "The goal of the Incarnational teacher is to create a

learning context that is familiar to students yet stretches them beyond their previous

experiences." [277]

In addition to using these traditional learning techniques, cross-cultural teachers must be

aware of the "hidden curriculum." Lingenfelter again writes, " Every teacher has been nurtured

in a specific culture and has a specific cultural bias about teaching and learning. This cultural

---

[275] Ibid., 47-48.

[276] Ibid., 40.

[277] Ibid., 52.

bias is useful and effective in the setting that nurtured it, but as "hidden curriculum" it creates

blindness, error, and conflict when used in a different culture."[278]

Teachers may not be fully aware of their own hidden curriculum and educational

expectations for their students. To help overcome the clash of expectations from different

cultures, Lingenfelter writes:

> Teachers cannot possibly teach to all the potential differences, but they can become more culturally sensitive to the diversity of their students. One of the most important things they can do is explain the context of what they are doing and make their teaching techniques explicit. Nothing, however substitutes for spending time with students in social situations in which they may feel freer to volunteer information that will inform teachers' planning.[279]

Lingenfelter raises two key points in this statement. The first is to make teaching techniques

explicit, along with the expectations. This will take more work on the part of the teacher, but will

help the students immensely. In teaching at a post-graduate level, I have found that a carefully

thought-through syllabus, listing the goals and expectations of the course, handed out and gone

over at the beginning of each course helps the students. Frequent reference to the syllabus during

the course also helps the students grasp the objectives of the course.

The second key point Lingenfelter raises is that of spending time with students in non-

academic settings. A teacher who truly wishes to teach well, will learn to understand his/her

students. From that time spent together will come a relationship which will enhance their

learning experience, and the teacher's knowledge of the student.

Evaluating Oral-preference learners

---

[278] Ibid., 32.

[279] Ibid., 57.

Traditional western methods of evaluation are tied to literacy. Students are required to take written tests, and/or write papers. In higher levels of education, they are expected to do research, analysis, and synthesis. Accumulation of knowledge is not prized as highly as is depth of analysis and insight. This then raises the question of how to evaluate oral learners, who are not as literarily capable as they are orally articulate.

Jay Moon writes of a student who mistakenly thought he had to submit both a written report and an oral presentation in his class. His written report only earned him a "C", but his oral report earned him an "A". The oral report demonstrated that he knew the material and had good insight into it, but the written report failed to demonstrate this.[280] He was an oral communicator, and needed to be evaluated using oral methods rather than literate methods.

Writers within the orality movement have begun grappling with this issue, realizing that accreditation agencies will want some form of objectivity in evaluation if they are to allow oral teaching methods and curricula in higher education institutions. Calvin Chong insightfully points out that the objectives for classes in oral cultures must necessarily change. In the west, institutions are content with teaching principles and concepts, trusting that the students will be able to apply them on their own. Thus evaluation focuses on comprehension of knowledge. However oral cultures, being more concrete, require not principles and concepts, but skills. Chong writes:

> Any such endeavor within seminaries requires radical rethinking about how best to help students acquire these graduate outcomes as well as assess successful achievement. By analogy, furnishing a student with knowledge of how to ride a bicycle is quite different from helping a student ride a bicycle. Achieving

---

[280] Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners," 29.

the goals of the latter will require different processes, teaching competencies, and time commitments from the former. In the same way, developing graduate outcomes for effective ministry in oral cultures will require the seminary community to break the mold of tradition and align goals with appropriate development processes and assessment criteria.[281]

Chong points to how students are evaluated in performance arts degrees. He lists both rubrics and portfolios as evaluation techniques with great potential. Of portfolios he says "Portfolios are well recognized as authentic assessments, and when well organized, provide concrete evidence of accumulated personal and professional experiences. The value and usefulness of portfolios extend beyond the learning institution and have wide currency in ministry and professional settings as well."[282] Other evaluation techniques could include oral exams and presentations,[283] visual art presentations, such as collages,[284] and evaluation of participation in class discussions.

Summary of Key Concepts

In this chapter I have explored numerous critical concepts regarding non-western learners. The following bullet points summarize the key concepts that have been explored:

- Background knowledge is essential for learning.
    - Culture, worldview and thinking patterns are part of students' background knowledge

---

[281] Chong, "Giving Voice to Orality in Theological Education," 145.

[282] Ibid., 146.

[283] Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy, eds., *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts, Beyond Literate* (Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises, Ltd., 2013), 195..

[284] Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners," 33.

- Understanding Asian, Peasant, Tribal, and Oral cultures
  - Asian
    - See objects in context
    - Look for relationships between objects
    - Do not make use of categories
  - Peasant and Tribal Cultures
    - Relationship oriented
    - Oral rather than Literate
  - Oral learners
    - 80 % of the world population is estimated to be oral preference learners
    - Think in concrete terms rather than abstract categories
    - Have difficulty categorizing according to abstract concepts
    - Abstract ideas are not useful in and of themselves and only take on meaning when tied to a function, an object, or a relationship.
    - Make connections and categories on the basis of relationship, not abstract qualities.
    - Conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge in close relation to the humanlife world.
    - Concepts are expressed situationally rather than in abstract terms
    - Are experientially oriented. Something must be experienced to be known.
    - Accumulate ideas rather than subordinate or analyze them
    - Use repetition and are redundant
    - Are conservative and traditionalist
    - Memorization and replication are encouraged
    - Are homeostatic – primarily concerned about the present concrete realities they see around them.
    - Learn by observation rather than verbalization
    - Move from situations to principle rather than from principle to examples
    - Learn by doing rather than listening
    - Need "an immediately meaningful context" for learning
    - Questioning is often discouraged
    - Information is valued on the basis of relationship with the giver of the information
- Education in non-Western contexts[285]

---

[285] While it goes beyond the scope of this study to write about theological education in general in non-western societies, the following points were touched on incidentally in this chapter:

- o Teaching cross-culturally
  - ▪ Teachers are respected, but need to be worthy of honor
  - ▪ Relationships with the students are important
  - ▪ Teachers must create a learning environment that is familiar, but stretching.
  - ▪ Oral learning techniques can be helpful but have limitations
- o Evaluating Oral Learning
  - ▪ Focus on skill and competency rather than concepts and abstract principles
  - ▪ Use alternative methods for evaluation, borrowing ideas from performing arts degrees.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored the idea that learning builds on previously held understanding, and that culture is a large part of that background knowledge. I have given a brief overview of some different cultural traits, and looked more specifically at cultural traits of Tribal and Peasant societies. I have then considered how literacy and orality affect thinking patterns in cultures. I have then examined oral culture learning techniques and characteristics. Finally, I have given principles for teaching cross-culturally, and have examined ways of evaluating oral learners in institutional settings. In the next chapter, I will show how this research impacted the formation of my hermeneutics curriculum, and how the project will be carried out.

- • Theological institutes must recognize that western literate methods and models often do a disservice to the cultures which they are trying to help.
- • Training people to think exclusively literately, can cripple them for ministry in an oral context.
- • Theological institutions need to learn how to train people for ministry in oral contexts.
- • Theological institutions which are trying to train people for oral culture ministry need to move beyond storying so that oral learners can have the full counsel of God.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

This chapter explains the methods – the kind of research, how that research was conducted, and how the data was analyzed – used in carrying out this study.

The Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to discover a method of teaching hermeneutics to non-western students that integrates into their cultural learning styles better than a typical western method of teaching hermeneutics. This will be accomplished through teaching two classes, one being taught following an excellent text book used in many Bible colleges and seminaries in America, and the other being taught following a curriculum designed for use in non-western cultures. The research question was "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" This project was designed to show that students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles. A better grasp of hermeneutics will not be evaluated on the basis of a test in which they write down principles they have memorized, but on the basis of an exegetical paper in which they demonstrate whether or not they have grasped the main point of a passage of Scripture, and are able to make relevant application.

The Research Perspective of the Project

The research will emphasize quantitative data, gained from analyzing student papers. The students from both classes were assigned the same passage of Scripture for their final paper project. Assessment will be made by comparing the final papers from both classes. Insight will also be supported from class assignments that were done during the course of the class.

The Setting of the Project

In the introduction to this project, I stated that I taught hermeneutics at a seminary in Asia for nine years and intended to complete this project at that same seminary. However, in God's sovereignty, my family and I were not allowed back into that country to continue ministering there. Thus, a search took place for a new, comparable setting in which to conduct the research project. A new setting was found in a neighboring country, also located in Asia. Many of the students I had taught in the original seminary were from this neighboring country, so differences in background and cultural issues between the two settings were negligible.

The project was conducted in a Bible college in a South Asian country. As opposed to the seminary where I had been teaching, the students at this Bible college were at a bachelor level rather than a master's level. However, the classes of the project were taught to fourth year students, who would be graduating at the end of the academic year. This made them academically comparable to the first year seminary students who normally took the hermeneutics class in the seminary.

The students ranged in age from 20-40 years old, with the vast majority being in the 20-23-year-old range. The two classes comprised both men and women, with a ratio of about two men for every woman in the class. As I have often seen in Asia, the women turned out to be some of the better students in the classes.

For all of the students, English was a second or third language. However the Bible college only teaches classes in the local language to first year students. The second and third year students receive instruction in a blend of English and the local language, while fourth year students are only taught in English, so my classes were taught entirely in English.

Although the Bible college is located in the capital city, most of the students were from more rural areas, having come to the city to go to Bible college. Four of the students were from the country in which I had originally worked.

Since the students were 4th year students, they already had received some training in hermeneutics. This was taken into account, as will be explained in the section entitled "Implementation of the Project."

The course was taught over a period of two weeks. Each class was given four hours of instruction each day, Monday through Friday, during those two weeks. In order to offset any effects from afternoon sleepiness, the timings of the classes were switched for the second week. Thus, both classes had a week of studying in the morning and a week of studying in the afternoon.

The Implementation of the Project

The project was implemented in three stages. First, a research strategy was developed.

Second, the project was carried out. Third the data was compiled in preparation for analysis.

Developing a Research Strategy

The research strategy involved two steps: 1) create a new hermeneutics course that could

be tested against a typical hermeneutics course in a seminary or Bible college setting; 2) create a

method of evaluation, which would accurately assess the hermeneutical ability of students taught

by both the conventional and the new methodology.

Creating a New Hermeneutics Course

Creating a hermeneutics course for non-western learners went through a process of three

logical (though not always sequential) steps: 1) narrow down the scope of hermeneutics to its

core goal and practice; 2) choose learning practices that would be effective in communicating the

core goal and practice of hermeneutics to non-western learners, based on the research of chapters

two and three; and 3) create a course that would fit into a typical Bible college or seminary

curriculum and academic year.

1) Narrowing hermeneutics down to its core goal and practice. hermeneutics, as it pertains to

the Bible, deals with the principles and practices of interpretation of the Bible. In other words,

the focus and goal of biblical hermeneutics is a correct interpretation of the Bible. Keeping that

idea in mind helps one wade through all the principles, tips, techniques, debates, and

methodologies presented in various books on hermeneutics, and focus in on the main goal –

correctly interpreting and applying the Word of God. If correct interpretation and application of

God's Word is the goal, then it follows that the best way to assess if one has learned how to do

hermeneutics is not by having them turn in a test in which they have listed all the principles of

hermeneutics, but rather by assessing if they are able to take a passage of Scripture, interpret it

correctly, and apply it. When *practice* becomes the goal, as opposed to knowledge, or principles

learned, then the focus of the course must necessarily focus on practice, and teach principles

along the way. This was what I appreciated so much about the book *Grasping God's Word* by

Duvall and Hays, when I encountered it early on in my search for a hermeneutics text book that

would help my students learn how to do hermeneutics. In the preface to the First Edition of their

book, they write:

> *Grasping God's Word* is organized pedagogically rather than logically. A logical
> organization would begin with theory before moving on to practice. But that is
> boring to students and they lose interest before they ever get to the "good stuff."
> We have organized the book in a manner that motivates students to learn.
> Therefore, generally speaking, we begin with practice, move to theory, and then
> go back to practice. We have discovered in our teaching that after students have
> spent some time digging into the process of reading the Scriptures closely, they
> begin to ask some of the more theoretical questions.[286]

As I pondered how to boil down the hermeneutics process to its core elements, I decided

that since correct interpretation and application is the goal, then the focus should be on correctly

identifying the central ideal of a passage, and accurately applying it to one's own cultural

---

[286] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 17-18

context. Based on excellent work by homileticians like Haddon Robinson, Bryan Chapell,

Timothy Warren, and others, I selected the process of identifying the Exegetical Central Idea of a

passage, and then moving from the Exegetical Central Idea, to the Theological Central Idea, and

then to the Sermonic Central Idea[287] as the key area to both analyze and teach toward. I reasoned

that if one can accurately state the Central Idea of the passage, then one has understood the

passage in its context. If one is able to correctly identify the Theological Central Idea, then one

shows a deeper grasp of the passage, as well as having begun the process toward correct

application. Finally, if one is able to state a Sermonic Central Idea that is rooted in both the

Exegetical Central Idea and the Theological Central Idea, and connects with their target

audience, then one has taken the first step toward accurate application.

The idea of making this three step process central to the hermeneutical task was not a

new one for me. I had been supplementing the teaching from *Grasping God's Word* with this

process, which I learned as a student in college in my hermeneutics courses for several years, so

it made sense to use this as a key point of testing, which will be explained later.

---

[287] These three steps are not original with me, but I have given them these specific names, using the term
"central" because so much of Asian culture revolves around the idea of the center being the focus or main part of
something.

I am not sure where I picked up these three steps, so what follows is my best attempt at giving credit where
it is due. I believe I learned them in Inductive Bible Study Method's class in Cedarville College back in 1995-96. If
so, then I believe credit for the creation of the course goes to Dr. Daniel Estes. However, I have also seen this three
step process presented in different places. While taking a doctoral course from Dr. Timothy Warren of DTS, we
read an article by him entitled *The Expositional Process* in which he explained this three step process as well. The
footnotes to the article stated it was published as "A Paradigm for Preaching," in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (October-
December 1991):463-486. Dr. Warren claimed that the idea of step two, identifying the Theological Idea of the
passage was something he came up with during a meeting of the DTS homiletic faculty. If so, then it is possible that
his article in *Bibliotheca Sacra* informed Dr. Estes' thinking as he created the IBS program at Cedarville, and was
subsequently passed on to me through that course.

Homileticians have also pointed out the need for identifying the Human Nature problem in a passage, (also called Depravity Factor and Fallen Condition Focus by Robinson[288] and Chapell[289] respectively), the character or person of God on display in a passage (also called the Vision of God by Robinson), and the author's Purpose in writing the passage. These key factors both assist in narrowing down the Central Idea of the passage, and in applying the passage to a contemporary congregation.

All other skills, techniques and tools, such as sentence diagramming, attention to genre, outlining, word studies, identification of figures of speech, etc, play a part in and have as their objective this same principle – understanding the central idea of the passage. So rather than overload the students with numerous techniques and principles, it made sense to me to keep the main objective in view – identifying the central idea of the passage, and teaching students basic skills toward achieving that goal. Having boiled the hermeneutical task down to its crucial key elements, I then needed to learn about non-western learning styles and practices.

2) Choose Effective Non-Western Learning Methods that can be used to teach hermeneutics.
While a fuller explanation of what was learned during this research part of the process is described in chapters two and three of this thesis, I will briefly reiterate here some of the key findings that shaped and informed my thinking as I created my course. I will also explain how I thought the findings related to hermeneutics.

---

[288] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching : The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2001).

[289] Bryan Chapell, *Christ Centered Preaching : Redeeming the Expository Sermon: A Practical and Theological Guide for Bible Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996).

My research showed me that much of the world learns skills through a master-apprentice style of learning rather than the lecture/instruction manual style of learning commonly used in the west. The idea is that an expert will model and then guide the learner through the process repeatedly until the learner demonstrates they are able to do the skill on their own. The focus is on ability to do the skill, not merely acquisition of knowledge. In the west, however much skill learning is done through explanation of principles, along with illustrations, with the assumption that once the learner has learned the principles, he/she will be able to apply them on their own in their own time. The emphasis in the west is on passing on the most amount of knowledge possible in the least amount of time. This is clearly seen in the principle-theory emphasis in western hermeneutics classes. In the realm of hermeneutics, most hermeneutics courses and text books emphasize information rather than skill.

The emphasis on passing along the most amount of information in the least amount of time also explains why learning in the west is principle-driven rather than practice-driven. These principles are usually abstract, universal concepts that will apply to a variety of situations. The idea is that if one understands the principles, one can apply it to numerous situations. On the other hand, non-western cultures tend to emphasize pattern over principle. Students are given a pattern and are expected to follow it rather than "think for themselves." Only after the pattern has been mastered and the principles undergirding it absorbed can the student branch out in exploring other ways of carrying out the principles. Thus, rather than teach hermeneutics by principle to non-western learners, a better way would be to teach a pattern of exegesis for them to follow.

In the west, much learning is done through analysis and breaking a subject down into smaller and smaller components, with each to be analyzed individually before trying to put them all together into a unified whole. However, much of the world tends to look at the "big picture" first, and only understand things as they relate to one another. A classic example of this is the story of how a westerner and a Japanese person described what they were seeing when standing in front of an aquarium. The westerner immediately focused on the types of fish in the tank; the Japanese began by describing the tank. This is seen in typical western approaches to teaching hermeneutics, where emphasis upon word studies, grammar, and shades of meaning are emphasized over the message of an entire book as a whole. However, recently there has been a shift toward a more holistic method of hermeneutics, championed by Fee and Stuart's book *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*,[290] which emphasizes reading and understanding books as a whole. This shift is immensely helpful to non-western learners.

Another way that the big-picture vs detail focus shows up is in how hermeneutics courses are taught. Typical hermeneutics courses tend to teach each portion, process, or principle individually, but only occasionally mention how it fits into the entire process of exegesis. This is very confusing to non-westerners. Not too many years previously I had an experience of talking with one of my students after he had taken one of my hermeneutics courses. I had taught the course by focusing on each step individually in sequence and in great detail. Each step was explained and modeled, but the process as a whole was only explained, and not modeled. The student, who happened to be brilliant, now doing a PhD at Oxford, explained to me that he could

---

[290] Gordon D. Fee and Douglas K. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, Fourth Edition (Kindle e-publication) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014).

not understand how the pieces fit together until he worked through them step by step in the final paper. He exclaimed that he had never been taught that way before, and thought it a brilliant approach! I, for my part, wondered how many of the less bright students never understood how the parts connected together to form a whole. Rather than focus on each step individually, a hermeneutics course for non-westerners should cover the process as a whole, and only spend time on the details after the process as a whole has been understood.

Non-westerners tend to look at the "big picture" first because relationship is very important to them. They need to see how everything is connected to everything else before they focus on one aspect. This focus on relationship extends to objects in an environment as well as people. This emphasis upon relationship is important when teaching hermeneutics. Non-westerners, more than westerners, need to engage with the author and the original readers, and see their connection to them. They are less motivated by theological principles, and more motivated by joining in with those who have gone before. In typical hermeneutical instruction consideration of one's own personal context is done only after thorough exegesis of the text and having understood the principle of the passage. However, because non-westerners think in relationships, having them consider how their context might mirror the situation of the author or the original readers early in the process will help them build that connection to them faster, and should also help them make good application.

The emphasis on relationship is also important as they are taught to observe a passage. The western method of giving them categories to observe (such as repetition, contrast, comparison, actions/roles of God/man, figures of speech, etc) distances them from the message

of the passage, and in their minds, treats the passage as nothing more than a series of abstract

categories. Rather, they need to be taught to look for how things fit together into a unified

whole. Repeated words only take on significance as they are related to the message, and seen as

a method of emphasis, rather than simply an abstract category. Conjunctions are crucial, not

simply as an abstract category, but as a way of showing how ideas are connected to each other.

Non-western cultures also tend to emphasize memorization as a key component of

learning, while the west emphasizes analysis and originality. One crucial insight gleaned from

chapter two of this thesis is that in the Old Testament, the method most spoken of for absorbing

God's word is meditation. Meditation begins with memorization but goes much further by

continuing to dwell on the idea long after it has been memorized. Through meditation, an oral

preference learner is able to "study" a passage. This method is preferable to mere scientific

analysis, for it goes beyond accumulation of information, to absorbing the principle and meaning

into their very life.

These are some of the key points unearthed in my research in chapters two and three that

informed and help shape my new course.

3) Creating a Hermeneutics Course. The task before me seemed simple enough: create a

hermeneutics course that focused on teaching the students how to achieve the main objective of

correctly identifying the central idea of a given passage, and accurately apply it to a local

congregation, by using teaching methods that mirrored patterns of thought and learning with

which they were familiar. The problem was that for the purposes of this thesis, it needed to be

testable, which meant that it needed to be directly compared to a standard hermeneutics course. This meant that the duration of the course should be no longer than a typical hermeneutics course. This in itself was a problem because as mentioned above, a typical hermeneutics course focuses on principles, attempting to impart the most amount of knowledge in the shortest amount of time, whereas my course was to focus on skill, which necessarily takes a long time to teach.

Another problem I faced was that typical hermeneutics courses usually spend most of their time looking at the epistles because they are seen as an easier genre for students to begin with, since one does not have to deal with issues of covenant as one would when dealing with Old Testament genres. However, from my research, I was convinced that non-western students would actually do much better starting with narrative, since story is so much a part of their culture, and because narrative is far more concrete than epistles. Try as I might, I could think of no way around these problems other than to create a skills-based, epistles-focused course requiring the same duration as a typical hermeneutics course.

In creating the course, I decided I did not want to write yet another hermeneutics text book, so I needed to select one that would suit my needs. I selected *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall and Hays[291] since I was already familiar with the text and knew it to be an excellent one. I also knew I needed to start with the big picture of what we were attempting to accomplish. Duvall and Hays have an excellent explanation and illustration of the exegetical task in their book,[292] which I decided to incorporate into my course.

---

[291] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*.

[292] Ibid., chapter 2.

The next step was to create a basic, step-by-step process from opening the Bible to completed product that would serve as a template or pattern for the students to follow. I created a 14-step process that takes the student from opening the Bible to completed sermon[293]. The first 10 steps deal with exegesis and identifying the central idea of both the text and the sermon. The last four steps, then dealt with how to take the exegetical information and turn it into a sermon. The last four steps were not intended to be emphasized in the class, but were presented so that the students could see the whole process from start to finish, and thereby understand the reason for some of the things required in steps 1-10. These steps then became a pattern that would be taught and repeated throughout the course. Below is a brief explanation of the steps and my reasoning for each.

The first step is prayer. Even though the course is academic in nature, we must never forget that the study of God's Word is a spiritual exercise, and must be done in relationship, and because of our relationship with God. Starting with prayer is intended to focus the attention upon God, realizing that in studying His Word, we are to be listening to Him, and that we are responsible to Him for doing our very best.

The second step is reading the book. Because non-western students tend to look at the big picture before the details, reading the book[294] helps give them a grasp of the larger context of

---

[293] See Appendix A

[294] I ask students to read in their own languages if possible, since a broad comprehension of the book is the focus. I also allow them to listen to the book if they have audio bibles available, since most non-western learners are primarily oral learners.

In the case of longer books like Corinthians, Isaiah, Matthew, etc., I only require the students to read 5 chapters on either side of a given passage of Scripture. This is because reading is often very difficult for them.

the passage they will be studying. There are a series of questions that they are to attempt to answer about the book based on their reading, which are intended to help them think about the book as a whole. These questions deal with authorship, intended readership, and the situation found in or surrounding the book. The questions are also intended to help them identify with the intended readers. This relational aspect is important to them.

The third step is to think through the book. The objective is for students to view the book as a whole, not simply as a collection of verses or thoughts. I ask them to think "first the writer spoke about (____), and then he spoke about (_____)" all the way through the book. I also ask them to consider how the different topics the write spoke about are connected to one another. I emphasize the author's use of conjunctions at this point, to help them see how the various topics are linked together. Thinking through the book like this has an added benefit, which I am careful to point out to the students – that of identifying passages (pericopes) for future sermons.

The fourth step is simply to select a passage to study. In the course, I have pre-selected passages to study, but I emphasize to the students that those pre-selected passages come from thinking through the book.

The fifth step is to memorize the passage. As stated above, non-western students are used to memorization, and it is a powerful tool for meditating and studying God's Word. So I do require the students to memorize the passage before they study it, and they are graded on their memorization of the passage. While it is difficult for students for whom English is a second or third language, they are still capable of doing it.

The sixth step is simply to study the passage. This is where I intend students to spend a good portion of their time. The two main questions I want students to answer in this section are: 1) what is the writer's main subject/theme; and 2) what does he say about his subject/theme? During the duration of the hermeneutics course, students will go through these exegetical steps numerous times, covering six passages of Scripture. As they study different passages, I take the opportunity to point out how repetition, conjunctions, verbs, reason/purpose statements, etc. all help them understand what the author is trying to say. Rather than focus on each of these abstract categories as an entity in and of itself, I always approach it from the view of "what is the author trying to say?" Thus, rather than saying "Look for repetitions, etc", I ask them "Has the author repeated any words or phrases that might be important?" I also encourage the students to work through the passage, perhaps by writing it out clause by clause, or at least writing out the key thoughts, showing the relationship between the main and subordinate ideas in some sort of structural outline. All this is done to help them identify the author's theme and supporting points.

Step 7 requires the students to answer four focusing questions: 1) what does this passage show us about Human Nature (HN)?; 2) what does this passage show us about God (G)?; 3) what was the writer's Purpose (P) in writing this passage?; and 4) What Results (R) did the writer hope to see?[295] Homileticians have identified these questions as important for beginning to bridge the gap between the original context and our lives today, and I have also found them to

---

[295] Questions three and four are very similar, and some students have difficulty seeing a difference between them. For this reason I have considered dropping step four, but I have also seen papers where the answer to step three completely missed the mark, but the answer to four was spot on, which makes me want to keep both questions as a way of giving students two chances to get it right!

be very helpful. The first two are based on the idea that even though context, culture, language, geography, etc. may be different, human nature has not changed from Adam until now, and God has never changed. The second two questions are helpful for identifying the tone of the passage. In step 10 the students are going to be asked to think of a purpose and result for their sermon that is similar to the biblical author's purpose and desired result.

Step 8 requires the students to identify the Exegetical Central Idea (ECI) of the passage. This is to be a single sentence, covering the main points in the passage. The purpose of this step is to nail down the main idea, and to keep the main idea the main idea. This step is difficult for students even in the West to do, and it is even harder for non-western students. However if they have answered the two questions from step six well, this step is not too difficult.

Step 9 then requires the students to take their ECI and to turn it into first a Theological Central Idea (TCI) and then to a Sermonic Central Idea (SCI). The purpose of this step is to ensure that the main idea of the passage becomes the main idea of the sermon. When the students convert the ECI to the TCI, they are making the main point into a theologically valid principle. The test is whether that principle can hold true for all of God's people across all cultures and times. If it can, then they have a valid theological principle. They then convert that into applicable language centered on their local congregation for the SCI.

Step 10 then requires the students to connect the HN, G, P and R to their specific congregation. This helps them make the connection between the original audience and their situation and their local congregation and a similar situation that they face.

The final five steps then focus on developing a lesson from their exegesis. Once again I give a template of how to prepare a sermon. In step 11 the students are required to write an introduction to their sermon in which the HN is brought out and shown to the congregation. They are to then transition to the passage of Scripture. Most homiletics texts say that one should save writing the introduction and conclusion till the end, but I have found that if the HN is introduced in the introduction, the rest of the sermon flows in response to the HN, and people are more ready to listen to the message if they are able to identify with the HN right from the beginning.

In step 12 they are to explain the passage. My main purpose here is to show them that the points they noted in step six now become the talking points for their sermon.

In step 13 they are to present the SCI. In this inductive homiletical model I am teaching them, the SCI is held in reserve until the passage is explained. The SCI is then shown arising from the passage.[296]

Finally, in step 14, they are to conclude. During the course, I do not emphasize these homiletic steps except for writing the introduction. The reason I emphasize writing the introduction is because it helps me assess whether they have really understood the HN of the passage.

The class is taught using a master-apprentice model of learning.[297] The professor is the master, teaching the students how to do exegesis by doing it in front of them, then taking them

---

[296] I believe an inductive model of preaching works well in non-western countries, because it allows the proposition to flow out of a situation involving people. In a deductive homiletical model, the proposition drives the sermon rather than the situation, and they are then required to simply follow the (normally) abstract points and sub points of the argument or lesson, something which they can do, but it takes more concentration and effort.

through it as a class, then helping them go through it in groups, and finally letting them do it on their own in groups. This teaching methodology contrasts greatly with a typical approach which tends to focus on each step or part of the process individually in great detail, but only covers it once during the course.

In a two-week module, the professor models all 10 exegetical steps on the first day, in one hour, working through a passage from Philippians. The purpose is to model the 10 steps quickly as an overview of the process.

After going through Philippians, they then go through five more passages during the course. The next two passages are worked through together as a class, slowly requiring more participation from the students, and slowly introducing more skills and techniques. The students then work on the final three passages in groups. The professor interacts with each group, helping them along, giving them advice on how to dig into the passage, but requiring them to do the work. For each consecutive passage, more work is required from the students and less input is given by the professor. All the group work is collected and graded. To be fair, the groups are mixed up each time.

The purpose of going through multiple passages in this way is to get students familiar with the pattern, and to help them understand how each part of the pattern contributes to the whole. Working together as a class requires them to be involved in the process but does not allow them to get bogged down at any one point. It also takes all pressure of individual grades off, so students are free to think and interact without that pressure.

---

[297] See the "Daily Plan for the Hermeneutics Course" in Appendix A

The reason for working in groups is that non-western cultures prize and emphasize collaboration and group efforts. There is good peer pressure, and students learn from one another and from the discussion involved as they do exegesis together. It also helps students who are slower learners to benefit from those who have grasped the concepts and process faster.

Creating a Method of Evaluation

I decided that the new hermeneutics course, hereafter called the "Test Course", should be tested directly against a conventional hermeneutics course, hereafter called the "Control Course." Both courses should be taught to groups of students with similar language, culture, and educational background. I further decided that the precise point of evaluation should be the final exegetical papers done in both courses. These three aspects, the Control Course, the two groups of students, and the final exegetical papers are discussed below.

The Control Hermeneutics Course.[298] The control hermeneutics course was the same course I had taught for many years in the seminary in Asia. As stated previously, when I was first asked to teach hermeneutics at that seminary, I began by teaching hermeneutics the way I had been taught, using a standard hermeneutics text book intended for seminary level hermeneutics courses.[299] Within the first week of teaching, I realized the students were not understanding the concepts being taught in class or in the text. My search for a text better suited to the needs of the

---

[298] See Appendix A for the syllabus

[299] Klein et al.

students eventually led me to *Grasping God's Word,*[300] which helped immensely. However,

over the years I had added some details to the text that I thought were helpful to the students. It

was this course, based on *Grasping God's Word* with a few of my own adaptations, that I chose

to be the control course.[301] The students were taught to begin by reading a book of the Bible and

answering 12 questions about the book before embarking on a study of a passage of Scripture.[302]

They then covered the material in the text book, which taught them how to study a selected

passage of Scripture,[303] up through part three of the book.[304] In addition to the material covered

by the book, the students were also taught a process to help bridge the gap between the biblical

world and our world. This process is the same process taught to the test group, of identifying the

Human Nature (HN) problem of the passage, the character of God (G) seen in the passage, the

writer's purpose (P), identifying the Exegetical Central Idea (ECI), the Theological Central Idea

(TCI), and the Sermonic Central Idea (SCI). The difference between how this process was

taught between the groups is that it was taught in principle form with illustrations to the control

group, while it was taught as part of a repeated pattern to the test group.

The Two Groups of Students. As stated under the heading "The Setting for the Project," found

above, the setting selected for the project was a Bible college in a country neighboring the

---

[300] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*.

[301] Rather than teach a strictly western course to the control group, I had pity on them as a professor, not just a researcher, wanting them to benefit from the course, even though they were to be the control group.

[302] See "Questions to answer about a Book" in Appendix A

[303] The chapters on Bible translations and Word studies were omitted.

[304] Parts 4 and 5, dealing with genre, were not covered, primarily due to lack of time.

county in which I originally taught. The students selected for the project were all senior

Bachelor of Theology students. They had received some instruction in hermeneutics previously,

which was accounted for in the test, as will be explained later. There were 43 students in the

class, which were divided into two groups. The Control Group comprised of 22 students,

comprising of eight female and 14 male students. The Test Group comprised of 21 students,

comprising of seven female and 14 male students. Since all the students except one[305] had

studied together in the Bible college for all three of the previous years of their degree, it was

assumed that they had a similar educational background.

The students came from a range of tribal and linguistic backgrounds, but all spoke

English, having been taught in English during their studies at the Bible college. Their ability in

English varied, but there was a very good blend of strong and weak English speakers in both

groups. Furthermore, even though they came from different tribes, the tribal cultures were very

similar since they were neighboring or even related tribes.

The Final Exegetical Paper. It was decided that both groups should write a final exegetical paper

on the same passage of Scripture to have as direct of a comparison as possible. The passage of

Scripture selected was 1 Peter 5:1-4. Both groups were given handouts detailing the precise

requirements for the exegetical paper along with sample final papers, and additional example

papers handed out during the course.[306]

---

[305] The one student joined the college as a sophomore.

[306] The Final Paper expectations and the Sample Final Papers for both groups can be found in Appendix A

Due to the different method of teaching carried out in each course, and due to the somewhat different material covered, the final paper requirements for both groups were superficially different, but fundamentally the same. Since the Control Course emphasized exegesis following principles, the final paper required them to organize their exegesis according to exegetical principle. On the other hand, since the Test Course emphasized exegesis following a pattern, the final paper required them to organize their exegesis according to the pattern.

The final paper for both groups required them to identify the key points of HN, G, P, ECI, TCI, and SCI for the passage. This requirement was in accord with the explanation given above on the core elements of hermeneutics and identified by the researcher as essential to both courses. Everything required for both final papers was covered during the courses.

Carrying out the Project

The project was conducted in a Bible college in an Asian country over the course of two weeks. Each group was taught for four hours a day, taking a ten-minute break every hour. During the first week, the Control group was taught in the morning and the Test group in the afternoon. During the second week the timings were reversed to offset any skewing of results due to after-lunch sleepiness.

The courses deliberately covered different passages of Scripture from each other in order to discourage cross-contamination of learning through students from the two groups working together. The students were informed that both classes were different and being taught

differently and were encouraged not to waste effort trying to understand what the other class was doing.

To evaluate the students' ability and understanding of hermeneutics prior to the course, each group was asked to prepare an exegetical paper/sermon on Philippians 4:10-13 prior to the first day of class. These were collected, evaluated for the purposes of this project, and returned without being graded for the course. These papers showed the students had little to no idea of how to prepare an exegetical paper/sermon, even though they had been taught hermeneutics previously. One should not make too much of this observation, for there could be several reasons for this lack, not least of which could be simply forgetting what they had been taught in an earlier course. The point is raised here only to point out the base of hermeneutical knowledge and ability possessed by the students at the beginning of the course.

Since one course had reading assignments from a text book while the other was given memorization assignments with no text book reading assignments, I was curious as to the students' perception of the training they received. A couple of weeks after the courses were taught, I asked a faculty member of the college to ask the students which group thought they received better training. The response was that each group thought they received the better training.

Both courses were introduced to the problem and overall process of hermeneutics in conceptual form on the first day, using the illustration in the book *Grasping God's Word.* Thereafter the courses differed greatly in approach and content while still retaining the essential principles of hermeneutics. The progression of each course is explained below.

The Control Course[307]

After explaining the process of hermeneutics, the students were introduced to the idea of reading comprehension. They were then introduced to 12 questions[308] intended to help them think through a book of the Bible and showed them how to answer those questions from the book of Philippians. The students were then required to work individually to answer the questions based on their reading of the book of James.

The next several classes followed the book *Grasping God's Word* as the students learned how to analyze a passage of Scripture. The students learned how to make observations according to categories such as repetition, contrast, comparisons, lists, etc., for a total of 19 observational categories.[309] Each category was explained and illustrated from various passages of Scripture. The students were then required to observe James 3:1-12 for as many instances of each observation category as they could find. The students were also required to read the descriptions and look at the examples given in *Grasping God's Word.* A significant amount of time was spent explaining and illustrating these observational categories – more time than would be given if one was strictly following *Grasping God's Word* or any other text-book I have seen. This point will be significant in chapter 5 when the results of the study are given.

After covering the observational categories, following *Grasping God's Word,* the students were taught the importance of observing a passage relative to its immediate context.

---

[307] See Appendix A for the syllabus and related handouts

[308] See Appendix A

[309] See Appendix A

This was illustrated, using several passages of Scripture, and then the students were required to explain how James 3:1-12 fit into the context of the entire book of James.

This completed the classes for the first week. It was clear that the students were becoming very weary of making observations on James 3:1-12. It was also clear from their papers that many of them were struggling with understanding some of the concepts behind the categories.

During the course, all their papers were graded and returned within one or two days so that they would have immediate feedback. An answer sheet for each assignment was created and returned along with the graded assignments to the students so that the students would have a clear idea of where their assignments were lacking. These answer sheets also served as additional samples for them to refer to as they worked on their final paper.

The second week was far more lecture and principle oriented, following the template of the text-book. Students were given lectures on Pre-understanding, Literary context, Cultural context, the importance of seeking Authorial Intent, and the Role of the Holy Spirit. The class lightened up and really seemed to enjoy these lectures and topics, asking some excellent questions along the way. However, most of the questions came from only three people in the class. While this is common in non-western countries, where there is often a de-facto speaker for a group of students who voices the questions and concerns of the students, it is hard to know how many of the questions were actually of interest to all the students and followed by all the students.

On days eight and nine, the process of finding the HN, G, P, ECI, TCI, and SCI was explained to the class, along with multiple examples from various Scripture passages. The students were then required to identify each of these from James 3:1-12. The students were also taught to make relevant application using the method of matching similar scenarios taught in *Grasping God's Word.* On the final day, the students were given all four class hours to work on their final paper so that they might submit it on time.

Throughout the course, the students were required to read select portions from *Grasping God's Word* based on the material covered in class. They also took four quizzes based on their reading during the course. The final paper was collected by 4pm on the final day.

The Test Course[310]

Following the explanation of the process of hermeneutics in concept form, the students were then taken on a rapid run-through of the 10-step pattern for exegesis.[311] Using the book of Philippians, specifically Philippians 4:10-14, as a model, the professor went through all 10 steps in one class hour, explaining that he was doing everything at lightning speed, similar to playing a video in ff.

Then the students were taken through steps 1-3 of the process, using the book of 1 Thessalonians. The book was read aloud in class, demonstrating that it only takes about 10-15 minutes to read, and then the students were walked through answering basic questions about the

---

[310] See Appendix A for the Test course syllabus and related handouts

[311] See Appendix A

author, the original readers, their respective situations, and the author's purpose in writing the book. The students were then walked through the book, section by section, showing how the different sections fit together. For the next day of class, the students were required to memorize 1Thessalonians 4:13-18.

The following day, four students were called up in pairs at the beginning of every class hour to recite the required passage of Scripture. During the course, the students were required to memorize five different passages of Scripture, and were evaluated using the same process. They were called to the front of the class in pairs, four students every hour, to recite the required passage. They were given grades for their memorization work.

Following the recitation of the passage, the students were then walked through steps 6-14, using 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 as the passage under consideration.[312] This was done quickly, taking only two class hours.

The class was then walked through steps 6-10 once again, this time using 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 as the passage under consideration. Once again, this was done in only two class hours. However more input was required from the students this run-through and answers were not so quickly supplied as before. The students were shown how a structural outline of the passage helped with identifying the main and supporting points. For homework the students were required to read the book of Titus two times and memorize Titus 1:5-9.

Following the recitation of Titus 1:5-9, the students were led through steps 1-3 of the exegetical process, using the book of Titus. The students were pushed to do their own thinking

---

[312] The course requires the professor to cover 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 before 13-18, but I got confused and reversed the order.

and digging in the book of Titus to answer questions about the author, the original reader, their respective situations, and the author's purpose in writing the book. They were also pushed to think through the book, section by section, doing most of the work themselves as a class. They were also pushed to think of how the different sections of the book were related to each other. This was done over two class hours.

The class was once again led through steps 6-14, this time using Titus 1:5-9 as the passage to be studied. Once again, the class was pushed to do most of the work, using questions to lead them along when they became stuck. The class came up with a basic outline of the passage on their own, showing they understood the main message and supporting points of the passage. The class went through steps 6-14 during two class hours. The students were then required to memorize Titus 2:1-5 for the following day.

Following the Scripture recitation, the class was broken into groups of three and each group worked through steps 6-11, using Titus 2:1-10. The professor mingled among the groups, asking questions to help them dig deeper, and occasionally giving suggestions as to an approach to follow.

 After they had worked for a while, the professor drew their attention to the importance of conjunctions in the passage and asked them to consider the author's message in light of the conjunction clauses found in the passage. The professor also asked them to pay special attention to verse one and consider how it was related to verses 2-10. When they reached steps 8 and 9, the professor gave more detailed instructions on how to articulate the ECI and how to develop the TCI and SCI from it.

When the groups had each created their ECI, the professor wrote each group's ECI on the board and the class worked together to critique them, evaluating how faithful they were to the passage. Once the ECI's were approved, the same process was repeated for the TCI and SCI.

The groups took two days, or eight class hours to work through steps 6-11 while studying Titus 2:1-10. The professor gave suggestions and asked questions but required the students to do the work themselves. At the end of the two days, the professor collected their group work and graded it. The students were required to memorize Titus 2:11-14 for the next class day.

The next class day started the second week of classes. The class had been meeting in the afternoons, and now met in the mornings. Following the Scripture recitation, the professor broke the class into new groups of three, making sure they were all working with different people than their previous group. They were then assigned to work on steps 1-11 for Titus 2:11-14. Although steps 1-3 had been done for the book of Titus together in class, the professor wanted the students to write up the steps with the appropriate information for two reasons: 1) to remind them that the process actually begins with reading the book; and 2) to give them practice writing up steps 1-11 in preparation for their final paper. Once again, the professor mingled among the groups, asking questions to help them probe the passage and giving suggestions. However, he did much less of it this time than previously, allowing the students to struggle more as they worked toward answers. His main role was in confirming or denying whether they were correct in their exegesis or not.

This time the class took eight class hours to do the work. The professor then divided the class into new groups of three. The students were required to read the book of Ephesians twice and complete step 2 in their groups for homework.

On the eighth day, the students were required to work through step 3 in their groups, working on the book of Ephesians. The professor again monitored the groups' progress, and gave a few suggestions where needed, but mostly let the students do the work themselves. This took two class hours. In the last two class hours of the day, the professor gave lectures on pre-understanding and the importance of seeking authorial intent. The students were required to memorize Ephesians 4:11-16 for homework.

On the ninth day, after the Scripture recitation, the students continued to proceed through steps 6-11 in their groups, studying Ephesians 4:11-16. Once again, the professor monitored, but other than confirming or denying the thoroughness of their work, he gave very few suggestions. At the end of the day the professor collected each group's work and graded it.

On the final day of classes, the professor gave a lecture on the role of the Holy Spirit in the exegetical process, and, based on the student's questions, explained how to adapt the exegetical pattern for studying narrative. He then had the students write down 1 Peter 5:1-4 from memory as part of their evaluation for their final paper. The students were given the final class hour off to finish their final paper and have it submitted on time.

Compiling the Data

Once the courses were taught, the final papers were collected and graded, and the information compiled for evaluation. This section details the compilation procedure and areas selected for analysis.

Areas Selected for Analysis

During the process of grading the papers it was discovered that many of the students had made use of background commentaries to answer the questions relating to the book of 1 Peter as a whole. While this did not affect their grades,[313] it did make analyzing this section of the papers somewhat worthless. However, this section of the papers was not considered essential for evaluating the students' exegetical skill, thus ignoring this section was not a loss.

The first area to be evaluated was the students' ability to do exegesis of the passage. The Control group was taught to do exegesis through categories of observation, while the Test group was required to memorize the passage and identify the subject and complement of the passage. These two respective sections were selected for evaluation.

The second area to be evaluated was the students' ability to accurately bring the message of the text into a contemporary setting. Both groups were taught how to follow the process of identifying the HN, G, P, ECI, TCI, and SCI as the method of bridging the gap between the biblical world and our world. As a result, these specific sections were selected as essential components for evaluation.

---

[313] Since the students did not have access to the library, and did not have many personal resources, and because no commentaries were used in class when demonstrating how to study the book, the researcher did not specify that the students could not use commentaries or study bibles. Thus he did not reduce their grades for making use of such resources.

The final area to be evaluated was the students' ability to make relevant application to a contemporary audience. In the Control group, the students were required to state who their target audience was, and list three specific applications. In the Test group, the students were required to write an introduction to a lesson or sermon that demonstrated the HN of the passage and brought the listeners to the point of turning to the passage. These two sections were selected for evaluation.

The Compilation Procedure

Each section selected for evaluation, along with relevant sub-sections, was entered into an excel spreadsheet. Each paper was then gone through and evaluated from 1-5 on how well that student handled each subsection or sub-section. A 1 meant the answer was wrong, or simply not answered, a 2 meant they had met the bare minimum for getting any credit for the section, a 3 meant the answer was ok, a 4 meant the answer was almost perfect or complete, and a 5 meant the section or sub-section was answered perfectly. These numbers were then color coded to make identification easier – a red for a 1, a yellow for a 3, and a green for a 5. The colors for numbers 2 and 4 were a blend of their neighboring values.

It was also noted while the papers were being graded, that 17 / 22 students in the Control group, and 7 / 21 in the Test group had either worked together in some significant portion of the paper or had copied from other students.[314] These were noted, and categorized as to whether they had simply copied, or had worked together.

---

[314] The students were penalized in their papers for both copying and working together.

The two excel spreadsheets, one for the Control group, and one for the Test group are attached in Appendix B of this paper. The result of the evaluation is the subject of chapter five of this thesis project.

The Summary of the Methods of the Project

This chapter has described the design of the project, that is, the methodology used to carry out this project and answer the research question. The researchable question was stated along with the purpose of the project. The setting of the project was outlined followed by a description of how it would be implemented. The strategy, consisting of teaching a control and test course, used by the researcher was described in detail. A description of how the courses were taught was given. Finally, the method of collating and evaluating the data was explained in detail.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The results of the research project will be reported and analyzed in this chapter, including a description of the researcher's goals, strategy, and means of measurement. A summary of results and a discussion of their import to this study will also be included.

General Description

The impetus behind this project was my experience with teaching hermeneutics to students in Asia. I found that students in Asia did not grasp many of the principles of hermeneutics when they were taught in a typical fashion, nor were they able to apply them in their practice, even though they could state them clearly in an exam. The researchable question was "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" This project was designed to show that students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural learning styles.

Strategy

The strategy used, as described more fully in chapter 4, was teaching two classes simultaneously. One was a control class, which was taught hermeneutics following a typical methodology, and the other was a test class, which was taught hermeneutics following a curriculum which I designed. The classes were taught at a Bible College in an Asian country over the course of two weeks in August of 2018. The purpose of the project was to compare the hermeneutical ability of the students from the test class against the students of the control class in order to evaluate which method of teaching helped the students learn how to do hermeneutics better.

Means of Measurement

The means of measurement was a final exegetical paper written by both classes on 1 Peter 5:1-4. I looked at three main sections from those papers: 1) Exegesis of the passage (entitled "Exegesis), 2) Accurately connecting the passage to today's world (entitled "Bridge"), and 3) Accurate, valid application (entitled "Application"). I looked at each component comprising each section on each student's paper, and scored each component between 1 and 5, with 5 signifying the best possible answer, and 1 signifying an incorrect or non-answer. Below is detailed explanation of each of the three measured sections.

Exegesis

The exegetical section of the two groups had different requirements because of the method of teaching, and because of the content covered by the courses.

The Exegetical Section for the Control course covered nineteen learned observation categories,[315] four of which were eliminated from evaluation due to the fact that they had no bearing on the passage. These categories were learned in class, and follow the order found in the class text book *Grasping God's Word*.[316] The observation categories are: repetition, contrast, comparison, cause and effect, figures of speech, conjunctions, verbs, pronouns, means, purpose/result clauses, general to specific or specific to general statements, actions/roles of God, actions/roles of man, emotional terms, tone of the passage. Evaluation was made of each category from each student's paper and given a rating of 1-5 as described above.

The Exegetical Section for the Test Course had four components; memorization of the passage, identifying the subject of the passage, articulating the complement to the subject, and a structural outline of the passage. The purpose for each of these components is articulated in chapter 4 under the heading Creating a Hermeneutics Course. Each component on each student's paper was evaluated and given a rating of 1-5 as described above.

---

[315] Duvall and Hays also cover word studies and contextual background studies. These were not required on the final paper due to the students' lack of access to resources necessary for such study.

[316] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*, 103.

Bridge

Both the Control and the Test Course had the same requirements for this section. This section comprised of a process of six components. They are: the Human Nature problem (HN), the character of God (G), the purpose of the author (P)[317], the Exegetical Central Idea (ECI), the Theological Central Idea (TCI), and the Sermonic Central Idea (SCI).[318] These components were evaluated on each student's paper, and given a rating from 1-5 as described above. The TCI and SCI were evaluated for both accuracy and how closely they followed the ECI and TCI respectively. However, rather than assigning a score for how closely they followed their predecessor in the process, they were either assigned an "OK" or an "X".

Application

The Control Class and the Test Class had different requirements for the Application section of the final paper, based on how they were taught in class.

The Control Class was taught to create/find a scenario similar to the scenario of the passage, as taught in *Grasping God's Word*. This went through a multi-step process, but for evaluation purposes, their application was taken as a whole and given a single rating of 1-5 as explained above.

The Test Class was required to write an introduction to a sermon that brought out the HN of the passage and related it to their contemporary congregation. This introduction was

---

[317] The Test Group also had a Result (R) component, which asked the question "what result did the author hope to see?"

[318] The HN, and G were taught to the control group using the terms "Depravity Factor" and "Vision of God" respectively. These are terms borrowed from Haddon Robinson.

evaluated according to how well it fulfilled the requirement of introducing the HN and relating it to the contemporary congregation and given a rating from 1-5 as explained above.

Summary of Results

In this section I will outline the findings from evaluating the final papers from the two classes. The charts showing the results for both groups can be found in Appendix B. I color-coded the results, with a 5 being Green, a 3 being Yellow, and a 1 being Red. 4 and 2 are blends of the colors nearest them. Below the scores for each component is an average score in light green. This score is helpful in finding out in which components the students overall did the best and worst.

Two other sets of colors show up on the charts as well. One set of colors that show up on the left side of the chart indicate whether the students worked together or copied significant portions from another student. Those that worked together are indicated with a gold bar on the left, while those that copied or were copied are indicated by a brown bar on the left.

The other color on the left side indicates the ten best papers from each group. I selected what I considered to be the ten best papers from each group and placed them at the top of each list in no specific order. I did try to eliminate duplicates (copies or significant collaboration) from the top ten selection of papers. These ten papers have a blue column next to them on the left-hand side.

The results will be discussed under the following subheadings: Exegesis, Connection, Application and Other Observations.

Exegesis

Control Group[319]

In the exegesis section, there were 6 categories in which the average score of all the students was greater than 3, and 9 categories in which the average score was less than 3, demonstrating that in general, the students did not handle this section well. As was stated previously, all categories were explained in class with numerous illustrations from Scripture, and the students were required to read the explanation for each category with its accompanying illustrations in the text book. They were also required to turn in papers during the course of the class in which they had made use of these categorizations while interacting with another passage of scripture. I then graded their papers and gave them my own work on the same passage, so they had examples from my work to follow as well. Despite this they still struggled to grasp and utilize most of the categories.

The categories in which the students did the best were Repetition, Tone of the Passage, and Contrasts. Only one student scored a 3 for Repetition, while all the rest scored higher. Two students completely missed the tone/did not state the tone of the passage, earning them each a 1. All the rest scored above a 3. Six students scored below a 3 in the Contrasts category, while the rest scored a 3 or higher. While these are good scores, it is to be expected that they should be, for there is really nothing complex about identifying Repetition or Contrasts. It is interesting that the students were so able to identify correctly the Tone of the passage, considering that the category of Emotional terms scored very low. However, I attribute the high score in Tone to the

---

[319] The Data Chart can be found in Appendix B

fact that the word "exhort" was used in the passage, and the students selected "exhorting" as the correct tone of the passage, thus they did not have to think abstractly in order to come up with a term on their own.

The lowest scores were in categories Comparison, Means, and General to Specific / Specific to General. Only 4 students handled comparisons well. A possible reason for this is that the passage did not use the typical clue words of "like" and "as" to indicate the comparisons. In contrast, I was surprised to see that 9 students handled the figures of speech well, which included noticing some of the key comparisons, but failed to realize that they were comparisons. This seems to uphold the observation that non-western students have difficulty dealing with abstract categories. The students were able to identify the referent and meaning of the figures of speech correctly, but were unable to abstractly categorize them as comparisons.

The category of Means is likewise an abstract concept. I believe that if the students were asked specific "how" questions, the students would have been able to answer correctly. Yet to take those answers and to place them in the abstract category of "Means" was obviously difficult for them. Only 4 students handled this category well, making it tied with the category Comparison for the two worst categories.

The category General to Specific / Specific to General again requires students to take a step back from the text and think about it using an abstract concept. Only 5 students handled this category well. Of the 3 worst categories, only 1 student out of 22 handled all 3 categories well. 2 other students did well in two of the 3 worst categories, but not in the same two.

It can be seen that the students in general did well in categories where there was a specific key/clue word which they could use to help them identify a category. Thus, they did well in the category Contrast, which often uses the key/clue word "but." However, they did not do as well in the category Purpose, which often uses the key/clue word "for." I am not clear on why they struggled with this category. In categories that often have key/clue words, but which were missing the common key/clue word, the students needed to think conceptually rather than simply look for markers. In those cases, the students did not do well. For example, they did not do well in the category Comparisons, which often carries the key/clue words "like/as," but in this passage did not.

The students also did well if they could simply count or list words. Thus, they did well in the category Repetition, because they simply had to list the repeated words. They also did fairly well in the category Conjunction for the same reason. However, in the categories Verbs and Pronouns they did not do well because I required them not only to list the words, but to identify the type of verb, and the referent for the pronouns. This requirement proved difficult. They were all able to list most of the verbs and pronouns, but struggled with identifying the type and referent. One might think that the category Emotional Terms might be included with these types of categories, since they merely need to identify words which carry emotion. However, thinking about specific words carrying emotion is an abstract concept, and thus the category Emotional Terms was handled poorly, as explained in the following paragraph.

On the other hand, the students tended to do poorly if they needed to think abstractly about the passage. As has been noted, they struggled with the category Comparison because the

key/clue words were missing, requiring them to think conceptually rather than concretely. They also struggled in conceptual categories like Means, General to Specific, and Emotional Terms.

There were some categories in which the results were surprising. Those categories are detailed below, along with the reason why they surprised me, and possible reasons for the surprising results.

The students did well in the category Cause and Effect. This was surprising, for it was deemed to be a category requiring more conceptual thinking. Upon further reflection, a possible reason for why the students did so well may be because the cause and effect seen in the passage were relational/transactional in nature. An elder who shepherds the flock well (cause) will receive reward when Christ returns (effect). Non-western students (and indeed western students as well) are very used to thinking of transactions or cause and effect in relationships, thus it would be natural for them to identify this in the passage.

The students also did well in the category Figures of Speech. This was also surprising, for this category is also typically more abstract and conceptual. As has been stated above, the students were unable to identify comparisons without the key/clue words, yet they were able to identify numerous Figures of Speech, many of which were comparisons. Two possible reasons, working in conjunction with each other, may account for their ability to do well with this category: 1) the students were only required to identify a word which was a figure of speech and explain what it meant. They were not required to identify (categorize) the type of figure of speech. 2) The students, being literal thinkers, were readily able to note word pictures that were

not concrete realities. (For example, they correctly noted that people are not sheep, thus the word "flock" is a figure of speech, and the referent is the people.)

As has been noted above, the students did very well in correctly identifying the Tone of the passage. This was initially surprising for two reasons: 1) the category of Tone is very abstract, usually requiring sensitive reading of the passage, and careful abstract thinking to categorize the emotional tone on display, and 2) the students did very poorly in identifying the emotional terms in the passage, which are usually aids to identifying the tone. However, as has been stated above, the word "exhort" was used in the passage, and so the students were easily able to identify (guess?) the tone of the passage to be exhorting. As one considers this further, one realizes that the student's ability to identify the Tone, but not the Emotional terms of the passage, is further confirmation of the observation that they were able to handle categories in which specific words in the passage were guiding them to the answer, but struggled with concepts that required abstract or conceptual thought.

The students also did poorly on two parallel categories, namely Actions/Roles of People and Actions/Roles of God. This was surprising because one would assume that being relational oriented, the students would be able to identify actions and roles of people and God in the passage. The only possible reason I could come up with was that the students felt the answer was so obvious, that it simply was too easy, and therefore deemed it incorrect. However, that is only a guess.

Test Group[320]

A quick observation of the exegetical section of the Test Group shows a lot more green 5s than the exegetical section for the Control Group. Every component had an average score above 3, with Memorization being the highest at 4.35, and finding the Complement to the Subject to be the lowest at 3.2. In other words, not one component had an average score lower than 3. In contrast, 9 out of 15 or 3/5 of the categories in the control group scored below 3. In the highest component, Memorization, only 2 students scored lower than a 3. In the lowest component, Complement, only 8 students scored lower than 3, with 11 scoring higher than 3. Contrast this with the 2 lowest categories of the Control group, which had no more than 4 scoring above a 3.

The students did well in the Memorization component, as was expected, since memorization is a large part of their educational background. What needs to be remembered, though, is that all of them were memorizing in their second or third language, which is not an easy task. Even with that barrier, they were still able to memorize the passage well.

The students did better than expected in putting the passage into an outline. I knew that outlining is not a part of their educational background, but thought it would help them see how the passage fit together. Overall the students did very well, showing they understood how the various clauses and phrases of the passage fit together as a whole.

The students did well in identifying the Subject or Theme of the passage. Accomplishing this required some abstract thought and understanding of the passage. The students showed that

---

[320] The Data Chart can be found in Appendix B

they understood the main Subject or Theme of the passage by scoring a respectable 3.7 on average. Only 3 students scored below a 3 for this component.

The weakest component, which was not surprising, was the Complement to the Subject. This required the students to elaborate on the sub-points which support the main Subject or Theme of the passage. It required both that they correctly identify the Subject, and then correctly identify the supporting or elaborating points, while ignoring phrases and thoughts that did not directly undergird the subject. In other words, it required analysis, and the students showed they were able to handle this well by scoring 3.2 overall. As was stated above, 8 of the students struggled to handle this well, scoring below a 3, but 11 students did very well, scoring above a 3. In my opinion, the fact that the class was able to handle this section well demonstrates both that they understood the passage, and that they were able to handle the process of exegesis they had been taught.

Reflection

When the results from the Exegesis section from both classes are compared, it is clear that the Test group did better than their Control group peers. The Control group struggled to make sense of and make use of the various categories they had been taught for observing a passage. What cannot be shown through the statistics, but what was observed in the class, was that the students did not understand how working through these categories would help them arrive at the meaning of the passage. For many of them, working through the categories seemed to be simply busy work, with no benefit toward understanding the passage.

On the other hand, the while the Test group had fewer components, those components were readily grasped and utilized by the students. My observation is that most, if not all, of the students understood the purpose of each component, and saw how it helped them understand the passage. It was surprising to see how readily they took to outlining the passage, but their quick learning can be attributed to the emphasis on seeing how each part of the passage is related/connected to the whole.

The results of this section do not make clear how much the different teaching methodology aided the students, and how much the different approach to exegesis was the significant factor. Since the requirements were not exactly the same, it could be construed that the Test group simply had an easier process to follow. However, in the Bridge section, which comes next, both groups had the same process to follow.

Bridge

Control Group

There are 6 components to the Bridge section. The first 3 components are exegetical observations of the passage as a whole that are intended to help the student complete the final 3 components. Often students who do poorly in one of the first 3 components will do poorly in all three of the last 3 components if they are consistent. Anomalies occur (i.e. doing well in the last 3 components without doing well in the first 3 components) when students are not consistent.

In the Bridge section, the Control group did not score above a 3 average in any component. The best score was 2.86 for stating the author's Purpose, and the worst score was a

1.59 for stating the Sermonic Central Idea (also known as the Homiletic Propositional Statement). The students were somewhat able to identify the Human Nature problem correctly, scoring a 2.77 for this component. However, they struggled to identify the major role/character quality of God in the passage, scoring only a 2.04 in this component. The main bridge part, being the final 3 components, received among the worst scores. Students also did not show consistency in moving from the Exegetical Central Idea to the Theological Central Idea, and then on to the Sermonic Central Idea. Only 13 students were consistent moving from the ECI to the TCI, and only 10 were consistent moving from the TCI to the SCI.

The results are better when we look only at the 10 best papers in the class. The averages jump to 3.6 for both the HN and P, but the SCI only saw a small bump to 1.7. Of the 6 components, 3 received a score above 3, while 3 received a score below three, when only considering the 10 best students.

It is quite clear that as a group they either did not understand the passage, or did not understand the process, or both. However, the process was explained and demonstrated in class, and they had two sample papers to guide them through this process, so their struggle was not for lack of typical western instruction.

Test Group

The Test Group faired quite a bit better than the Control group. Of the 6 components, 5 received an average score above 3, with the SCI component again receiving the lowest score, coming in with an average of 2.9. While this is low, it is far better than the Control group score

of 1.5 for the same component. The highest score, a 3.6, was in the G component, with students correctly identifying the role/nature of God in the passage. The ECI was also pleasingly high, with an average of 3.45, showing that the students did indeed understand the point of the passage, consistent with the results from the Exegesis section.

These students also struggled with consistency, doing only marginally better than their Control group peers. 14 students were consistent between the ECI and TCI (the control group had 13), and 11 students were consistent between the TCI and SCI (the control group had 10).

When only the 10 best papers in the class are considered, the average scores increase quite a bit, with G receiving a 4.2, ECI receiving a 3.8, and SCI crossing the 3.0 mark with a score of 3.3. When compared with the top 10 of the Control Group, these scores are significantly better. When comparing the consistency between the top 10 in both groups, 9 of the Test group were consistent between the ECI and TCI, as opposed to 7 for the Control group. The top 10 of the Test group had 8 consistent between the TCI and SCI, while the Control group had only 5.

Reflection

The Bridge process requires a significant amount of analytical, abstract thinking. This is typically difficult to do for non-western students who have been educated using non-western methodology. One must also consider that the students were articulating thoughts in their second or third language, which definitely hindered some of them.

It must also be said that students were marked down severely if they either missed that the passage was focused on elders instead of all believers, or if they changed part way through

the process, taking what they originally acknowledged was for elders, and trying to apply it to all believers. This change in focus from elder to believer accounts for many of the inconsistencies in both groups.

Since both groups had the same requirements, this section is helpful in demonstrating the results of the different teaching methodologies. The Control group had the components explained and demonstrated in class. They were required to do one example and were given two sample papers with these components included. The Test group also had the components explained and demonstrated in class and were also given two sample papers which included these components. However, the Test group also had to work through several passages from start to finish in groups, utilizing these components in the process. While working through these passages, the various groups articulated their results to the components, and those results were evaluated for completeness and accuracy by the whole class. Thus, the Test group had more in-class practice, worked in groups, and had peer feedback while learning how to handle these components.

In addition to assigning each student a score for their answer for each component, the researcher also compiled the answers from the 10 best students of each group and put them in a document entitled *Bridge Section Compared*, which can be found in Appendix B. This document shows that the students from the Test group had fuller, more complete answers for each component than their Control group counterparts. It is logical to assume their fuller answers are a result of greater confidence in their answers and the process.

Application

Control Group

Doing application of a passage in an exegetical paper for a class is always difficult, and often given only cursory acknowledgement in seminary. The application section of this project is evaluated as part of understanding how well the students grasped the point of the passage and were able to connect it to their situation.

The Control group showed random results. The section scored a 2.63, but it is more interesting to look at who managed to do good application. 7 students managed to score above a 3, but 5 of those were not in the top 10! In other words, only 2 of the top 10 scored above a 3 in the application section. Several students had good application after performing very poorly throughout the rest of their paper. Students 11, 14, and 16 all had good application, but did miserably in the rest of the paper. Even among the top 10, student 1 did very poorly in the Bridge section, but had an excellent application. On the flip side, students 2, 5, and 8 had good papers, but very poor application.

These results indicate that some of the class understood the passage well enough to accurately apply it *in spite of* the exegetical and bridge methodology presented to them. There were also students who were able to excel in the methodology who had poor application, once again showing a strong disconnect between the exegetical methodology and the students' ability. Granted, some students sometimes just mess up on occasion. For example, student 5 showed excellent grasp of both the methodology and the passage but ended up doing poorly in the application.

Test Group

The Test group did not score much better than the Control group overall, with an average score of 2.75 as opposed to 2.63 for the Control group. 9 students in the class scored above a 3, and all of them were in the top 10. This is in contrast to the Control group, which had 7 students score above 3, but only 2 were in the top 10! Overall, the Test group showed far more consistency than the Control group, with the exceptions being students 15, 18, and 19 who collaborated, or copied from someone else, but not accurately or consistently.

Reflection

It is hard to draw very strong conclusions from the application section, since both groups scored below 3 in it. However, it is significant to see that in the Control group, ability to do accurate application had little or no bearing on their performance in the rest of the paper, signifying that they were doing good application *in spite of* the exegetical method they had been taught. On the other hand, the Test group was more consistent, with those who excelled in the application also excelling in the rest of the paper. This shows that the pattern and methodology had connected with them better than with the Control group.

Further Observations/Reflections on the Whole

Collaboration/Copying

Both groups had students that copied or collaborated to a significant degree while doing the final paper. They had been given instructions that they were all supposed to do their own

work and not help each other, yet they still did so. Helping each other is part of their culture, for it shows that one is a good friend, even while it is also acknowledged that it will be penalized.

It is significant that 12 of the Control group students collaborated or copied from each other, while only 8 in the Test group did so. Of the 12 in the Control group, 8 directly copied, or were copied from (one student, whom I consider to be the brightest from both groups, was copied by at least 4 other students.) On the other hand, only 3 students in the Test group showed evidence of copying or being copied.

In situations like these, collaboration and/or copying is a clear indication of lack of confidence in one's ability to perform the task assigned. The amount of collaborating and copying by the Control group students shows that more than half of them did not have confidence enough in their ability to do the work on their own. On the other hand, more than half of the Test group had enough confidence to work on their own, and even among those that did not, only 3 showed enough lack of confidence to copy.

Courses

The Control course was not a strictly western hermeneutics course. It was a modified course that I had developed over several years of teaching in Asia. As was stated in chapter 4, when I first started teaching hermeneutics in Asia, I began by teaching it the way I had been taught, and very quickly realized that the students were not grasping anything. Thus, this Control course was a result of significant modification over several years of teaching hermeneutics. It can reasonably be assumed that the differences would have been even greater if

the students had been taught hermeneutics in a strictly western style. However, I, as both researcher and professor, had mercy on the students, wanting them to gain something from the class, not wanting them to suffer too much simply on account of my research.

On the other hand, the Test course was truly a test course. It had not been tested, refined, and tweaked. As I taught the course, I made notes and made some subsequent revisions which I found to be helpful in teaching later classes. Thus, the comparison was between a polished, modified, semi-western hermeneutics course and an untested, raw, hermeneutics course that was designed for non-western students. Even with these drawbacks, the results are clear.

Drawbacks

There were several drawbacks that hindered the students from doing even better. One drawback is that they were studying in their second or third language. This affected both groups equally and helps to account for some of the low scores overall. I believe that if the students were taught in their own languages, they would do even better.

The classes were taught in a module setting. The brevity of the module setting makes it difficult for the students to grasp the information and skill they are learning. I believe that if the classes were taught over a semester, the students in both groups would do even better.

Both groups worked on epistles. This is primarily because typical western hermeneutics courses emphasize the epistles, with good reason. However it is my opinion that if non-western students were taught hermeneutics by studying narrative first, following an approach similar to

that suggested by Stephen Mathewson in his book *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative,*[321] they would learn the skill of exegesis even better.

In order to provide a way of analysis, both groups had to submit an exegetical paper. However, based on my research, I believe an oral exam, more along the lines of a sermon or presentation, would bear even better results.

Discussion

The researchable question was, "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" To test this question, one hypothesis was developed: "Students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles." This hypothesis was falsifiable under the following condition: Students from non-western cultures who were taught hermeneutics using methods shaped by their cultural learning styles did not do better than their non-western peers who were taught using a typical western hermeneutics course.

I offer three observations that demonstrate that the hypothesis has been substantiated. First, as has been discussed in the previous section, and as can been seen in the charts in the appendix, the students in the Test group performed better than their Control group peers in each section evaluated, with an overall average of 3.41 as opposed to 2.76 for the Control group.

---

[321] Stephen D. Mathewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002).

Second, as has been discussed above, and as can be seen in the charts in the appendix, the Test group showed more consistency across all sections, as opposed to the Control group, which at times showed students getting correct answers *in spite of* the methodology.

Third, as has been discussed in the section above, and as can been seen in the charts in the appendix, the Test group showed more confidence in their ability to do their own work compared to the Control group. 8 of the Control group students directly copied from or were copied by other students, as opposed to 3 in the Test group.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of the project's methodology used to determine whether non-western students would be better served by learning hermeneutics using a methodology that had been shaped by their cultural learning patterns.

The findings of the project indicate that non-western students who are taught hermeneutics using a methodology shaped by their cultural learning patterns do better than their non-western peers who are taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology of teaching hermeneutics. These findings were a result of teaching hermeneutics to two groups of students, using a typical western approach for one group, and an approach shaped by non-western learning methods for the other group. The two classes submitted final papers on the same passage of scripture, which were then compared and contrasted with each other. The Test group performed better than their Control group peers, and thus I offer these results as proof that the hypothesis has been substantiated, and the purpose of the project has been fulfilled.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the project by bringing together its various elements. First, I will review the problem of ministry that inspired this project and briefly describe the methodology used to find a solution. Second, I will summarize the five previous chapters in this project. Third, I will offer my conclusions about the project and make recommendations for further research and use of the information learned through this project.

Review of the Problem and Applied Treatment

This project was a result of my experience teaching hermeneutics for several years in a seminary in an Asian country. I noted that though the students were intelligent, they struggled to apply hermeneutical principles they had been taught.

Review of the Problem

Anthropologists, cognitive psychologists, and other researchers exploring the affects of culture on thinking patterns have noted that not all people groups think and reason alike. Richard Nisbett, a cognitive psychologist draws distinction between Asian and Western types of reasoning and thought.[322] Alexander Luria, Jay Moon, and those in the orality movement

---

[322] Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought*.

recognize differences in thinking patterns between oral learners and literate learners.[323] Other

cultural anthropologists point to differences between thinking and reasoning patterns in cultures

as well.[324] These differences affect the way people learn in different cultures; it affects what

information they consider important, how they analyze, synthesize, and draw conclusions. Thus

a one teaching style fits all approach is not the best way to effectively teach learners around the

world.

As a professor of hermeneutics in an Asian country, I was motivated to find a better way

of teaching hermeneutics to non-western students, whom I noted were intelligent and capable,

but still struggled to learn hermeneutics taught using a typical western methodology. I saw that

while they were able to articulate the principles of hermeneutics which they had memorized, they

struggled to understand them, and to know when and how to apply them.   When tasked with

exegeting a passage of Scripture, they struggled to make insightful analysis, solid synthesis, and

accurate application of that passage to their particular setting. Often, if their application was

valid, it did not flow from their exegesis.

Over the years I continually modified my approach to teaching hermeneutics, finding

much help from *Grasping God's Word* by Duvall and Hays.[325] The student's grasp of

hermeneutics improved, but they still struggled. Based on further research, I concluded that part

of the problem was that the method of teaching hermeneutics was very western in its approach,

---

[323] Luriia, *Cognitive Development*; Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners"; Chiang and Lovejoy, *Beyond Literate Western Practices*.

[324] Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry;* Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*.

[325] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word*.

and thus students were having not only to learn hermeneutics, but they were trying to learn it through learning methods with which they had very little skill or experience.

The Treatment of the Problem

I began to realize that non-western students needed to be taught hermeneutics using teaching methodology that was informed by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles. As a result I developed a Researchable Question: "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?", along with an accompanying Hypothesis: "Students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles.""

To test my hypothesis, I wrote a hermeneutics course designed to teach non-western students hermeneutics using teaching methodologies that were shaped by their cultural learning styles. This course was taught over a two-week period to a group of select non-western students, called the Test Group. At the end of the course the students wrote an exegetical paper on 1 Peter 5:1-4.

A second group of select students, called the Control Group, were taught hermeneutics following a (mostly) western methodology over the same two-week period. They also were required to write an exegetical paper on 1 Peter 5:1-4 at the end of the course.

The final exegetical papers of both classes were examined, and three main sections were evaluated separately. The first section was Exegesis, the second was Bridge, which was intended

to help the students connect the passage to their cultural setting, and the third section was Application. Each section had numerous components, which were individually scored, and the results placed in a spreadsheet, one spreadsheet for each class.

When analysis of the data was completed it was clear that the students in the Test group did better than the students in the Control group in three important areas. First, they did better in each section evaluated than their Control group peers. Second, they showed more consistency throughout, with their application flowing out of their exegesis and bridge sections. Third, they showed more confidence in performing the hermeneutical task than their Control group peers. As a result, I conclude that my hypothesis has been substantiated, and I offer this project as evidence for that conclusion.

Summary of Thesis Chapters

This paper has been divided into six chapters. Chapter one provided an introduction to the project, including an explanation of the problem, a proposal of how the problem would be treated, parameters for the study, and an overview of all six chapters.

Chapter two explored theology related to the project. This chapter demonstrated that all through Scripture God adapted His instructional methodology to the people He was instructing, with special focus on how God adapted His message to use their cultural learning styles. It also examined instructions on how to "study" God's word in Scripture, along with Scripture learning practices found in the various time periods of the Bible.

Chapter three looked at literature relevant to the project. It showed how cognitive learning research has pointed to background knowledge as a major factor in the ability to learn.

As a part of engaging background knowledge, the chapter presented an overview of cultural differences, starting with a broad overview before it narrowed down to factors specific to Asian vs Western ways of thinking, and specific attributes of tribal and peasant societies.   It also examined how oral societies and societies with residual orality possess different thinking and processing styles compared to western styles of thinking and processing. The chapter looked at literature that examines the difficulties of teaching cross culturally, and explored recommendations on how to engage student's background knowledge when teaching cross culturally. The final part of the chapter examined specific cultural aspects and thinking styles that I believed were key areas of background knowledge which must be engaged in order to better teach hermeneutics to the non-western students.

Chapter four presented the project in detail, describing the setting, and the students. It gave an overview of both the Test and Control courses, and explained the method of teaching for both groups. It showed how the research in the theology and literature chapters informed and shaped the project. It also presented the method of analysis by which the project was evaluated.

Chapter five presented the results of the project. It gave a report of how the project was carried out, and presented the evaluation results of the project. In this chapter I declared that I believed my hypothesis was confirmed that students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles.

Chapter six, which is this chapter, gives a summarizing overview of the project. It also presents my conclusions based on the project, reasonable implications stemming from the project, and areas for further research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Having successfully completed the project, I am now able to draw the following conclusions and make the following recommendations:

Conclusions

I have concluded that my researchable question and the underlying hypothesis have been sustained from the findings of the project. My desire was to design a better way of teaching hermeneutics to non-western students, so that they would be able to handle God's Word better. My researchable question was: "Will non-western students learn hermeneutics better through being taught hermeneutics using a typical western methodology, or a methodology that is shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles?" My test project validated my hypothesis which was: "Students from non-western cultures will be better served by being taught hermeneutics using methods that are shaped by their cultural thinking patterns and learning styles." I offer, then, the following conclusions to aid those teaching non-western students.

Conclusion #1: Western methods of teaching hermeneutics are not the best method for teaching non-western students.

Every year there are numerous pastors, professors, and lay church leaders from the western world who travel overseas to "train national leaders." The vast majority of these well-intentioned people teach according to how they themselves were taught – in a western style, using a principle-based western methodology, and using notes and books and other teaching materials that were developed for western learners. By doing so, they require the non-western students to bridge the cultural gap of not only the biblical text, but also the learning methodology. By using a principle based approach, they encourage students to memorize the principles, but those students have little clue how to apply the principles they have memorized, and thus they are left with only head-knowledge, and little, if any, practical ability to do hermeneutics. Thirty or forty years ago, there was very little research available on how different cultures think, and so those who taught overseas at that time, without thought for how to adapt the material toward the learning styles of the people can be forgiven, but such is no longer the case. There are now numerous books and articles written on the subject of teaching across cultures.[326]

My plea is to all those who teach overseas. I do not write as an expert or as one who has never been there. I once taught in this way, and am in the process of learning better. Please learn how to serve our brothers and sisters overseas by learning how to teach them in ways they can readily understand! This will require mastery of your subject matter, so that it can be re-formatted, and taught in new ways. This will also require learning about cultural learning styles and reasoning patterns. However if you as the teacher do the hard work of bridging the cultural

---

[326] A great starting point is the book entitled "Teaching Cross-Culturally" by Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter.

gap between your culture and theirs, it will free them to work on overcoming other issues like language, and to focus on the material itself.

This principle also applies to non-western seminaries and Bible training institutes. Many of these seminaries and Bible training institutes have been set up following a western model of training and equipping men and women for serving the Lord. Much work has been done in recent years to create classes that are more relevant to the culture in which they serve. Accreditation agencies have also worked to make their requirements appropriate to the cultures which the seminaries and Bible institutes serve. However the method of instruction is still often very western in its approach and format. This study shows specifically that in the area of hermeneutics, a change in teaching methodology from a western to traditional oral, master-apprentice format will better serve the purposes of the seminary or Bible institute in training its students to adequately handle the word of God.

Conclusion #2: Contrary to the practices espoused by some in orality circles, oral preference learners are able to effectively do hermeneutics beyond story telling.

As mentioned in my chapter 3, the orality network, and others working in the realm of orality have given us much insight into how to communicate and teach effectively in oral-based cultures. However I was disappointed to read in their journals from 2013[327] and 2014,[328] that

---

[327] Chiang and Lovejoy, *Beyond Literate Western Models*.

[328] Chiang and Lovejoy, *Beyond Literate Western Practices*.

almost their entire emphasis was upon stories. They not only advocated teaching all subjects through the medium of story, but they also advocated teaching the memorizing of Bible stories to the learners who would then be considered teachers themselves, who would only be able to teach Bible stories, and this is in the context of theological education. To be sure, stories and narrative are powerful, shaping thought, culture, and world-view, but they are not the sum-total of the word of God!

I also mentioned in my chapter 3, that I appreciated Dr. Calvin Chong's article[329] in the 2014 journal, where he (along with a couple of others) pointed to this lapse, and advocated teaching the full council of God.

I believe this study demonstrates adequately that oral preference learners can be taught to study God's word for themselves, without relying on a western teacher to spoon-feed them stories. While the students in this test were not primary oral learners (Walter Ong suggests there are almost no primary oral learners left), they were still oral preference learners. The methodologies used to teach them can be used to teach other oral preference learners how to be students of God's word for themselves.

Conclusion #3: Memorization, Meditation, and Discussion are important learning tools for non-western students, and useful for teaching the skill of hermeneutics.

As stated in chapter 3, it is estimated that over 80% of the world's population are oral preference learners.[330] Effective teaching techniques use methods of learning already present in

---

[329] Chong, "Giving Voice to Orality in Theological Education."

oral cultures. For example, oral learners are great memorizers. However, rather than learning to memorize from a book, they learn to memorize what they hear. In this study, the students in the test course were required to memorize the passage of Scripture which they would be studying as part of their learning process. This memorization process helped familiarize them with the text, and enabled them to meditate on it.

Meditation is a key part of oral learning. There are numerous commands and admonitions in Scripture to meditate on God's word. Meditation is how oral learners "study." Having memorized a passage or a story or a psalm or a proverb, oral learners are then able to reflect on it over and over. This constant reflection gives insight and understanding. I conclude, based on my study, that memorization and meditation are effective learning tools for students of hermeneutics.

Related to meditation is discussion. One way that oral learners meditate is through peer-to-peer discussion. Unlike western students who are taught to challenge a teacher or question a point, non-western students are typically taught to receive instruction silently from the teacher. However in a group of their peers, they can sit for hours talking over a subject. This is their way of thinking through it, by listening to people, gaining opinions, interacting with the opinions, until they reach a conclusion as a group. The students in the test course were required to work in groups, which required discussion among the group. I found this to be an effective teaching tool, and conclude that small group discussion is an effective teaching tool for hermeneutics.

---

[330] Lovejoy and Claydon, "Making Disciples of Oral Learners," 4.

Conclusion #4: A master-apprentice format works extremely well when teaching non-western learners how to do hermeneutics.

Western education is built on lecture and principles. Teachers and professors lecture to students who ask questions, challenge arguments, question viewpoints, and learn abstract principles which are to be applied on their own. However non-western students tend to learn by pattern rather than principle. An amusing story from India undergirds this point. In one small school in rural India a teacher had a terrible time with a cat, which would constantly come around the school and distract the students. The teacher started tying up the cat out in front of the school before the students came. Every day was the same pattern – catch the cat, tie it up out front, teach the kids, dismiss school, untie the cat. Over the years some of his students became teachers themselves. One could always identify a school where a former student of his was teaching – there was always a cat tied up outside the door.

In non-western styles of education, the teacher is the master who shows what and how to do. The student is the apprentice who must learn to do exactly as the teacher has done. Thus an effective teacher will model the process several times before requiring the students to perform the process under his watchful eye. The question of "why" is often not discussed, since pattern is important, not principle. If it is discussed, it is only briefly, and at a later point. The questions of "what" and "how" dominate the discussion. In the test course, the students were shown a pattern of exegesis several times before they were required to attempt it in their groups. This was seen to be an effective way of teaching them exegesis. The students learned the pattern, and gained confidence in doing the work through having seen it and practiced it. Thus I conclude

that a master-apprentice format is a valuable format for teaching hermeneutics to non-western students.

Conclusion #5: Hermeneutics courses should be taught to non-western learners by moving from the whole to the parts, rather than the parts to the whole.

When following a master-apprentice format, a wise teacher will present the whole of the process at once rather than piece by piece. This gives the students a chance to see the end from the beginning without being lost in the details. Once the students have a rudimentary grasp of the process, it can be fleshed out with more details and more requirements. Students who excel, can be pushed to do more detailed work. The students in the test course in this study saw the complete pattern of exegesis right from the beginning. The entire process of exegesis was demonstrated to them in one hour. The details were expanded upon over the duration of the course, but the students had a clear, complete pattern from the beginning. This demonstration of a clear pattern from the beginning was seen to be effective in helping the students understand both what they were supposed to do, and why. Therefore I conclude that teaching from the whole to the parts, rather than piece by piece, is a better way of teaching hermeneutics to non-western students.

Conclusion #6: Non-western students learn hermeneutics better, and gain confidence through repetition.

When teaching patterns rather than principles, repetition becomes important. Students must hear and see the same pattern over and over again until it is remembered. Thus a wise teacher of non-western students will focus more on setting a pattern rather than lecturing on principles, model the pattern, require the students to perform the pattern, give more details once the overall pattern has been learned, and repeat often.[331] In the test course, the students saw the pattern numerous times before they were required to attempt it themselves in groups. They then attempted it in groups several times before being required to attempt it on their own. This repetition of a pattern was seen to be very effective, and the students demonstrated increased confidence in their ability to do the work. Thus I conclude that when teaching hermeneutics to non western learners, effective teachers will make repetitious use of repeated repetition, repeatedly.

Conclusion # 7: Non-western students learn hermeneutics better when taught using methods which consider context rather than categories.

As has been pointed out in chapter 3, western education emphasizes in-depth analysis of isolated entities, discovering undergirding principles, and placing them in abstract categories. On the other hand, non-western, especially Asian, societies tend to focus on the context or environment, and the relationship of the subject to its environment and vice versa. Rather than looking for undergirding principles, they look for patterns of behavior. Rather than grouping

---

[331] Principles and the question of "why" should be used sparingly, but should be used none-the-less, for it sharpens the thinking process.

items in abstract categories based on similar properties, they group items based on relationship. Thus, when given three objects (panda, monkey, banana), and asked to group them, western students tend to put panda and monkey together in the abstract category of "animal" or "mammal", while non-western students tend to put monkey and banana together because a monkey eats a banana.[332]

Effective teaching methods of non-western students begin a subject by examining the context or environment before turning to the subject, and then emphasize the relationship of the subject to the environment.[333] Categorization and classification are put aside as much as possible in favor of noting the big picture, and the relationships of the parts to the whole.

The test course made use of this principle in several ways. First, the students were required to read the whole book of the Bible numerous times from which they were to study. Secondly they were to consider the flow of the book, and how the different parts fit together to form the whole. Third, they were to consider the author and his relationship with the recipients, and vice-versa, in order to understand the environment in which the book was written. Fourth, when studying the chosen passage, they were required to look for how the phrases and clauses connected to one another. Conjunctions were emphasized, and word studies were minimized. Categorizations based on abstract ideas, such as identifying figures of speech, repetition, contrasts, were avoided. Instead, the students were taught to look for the author's emphasis through repeated word/ideas, contrasting words/ideas, etc. Thus the relationship and message of

---

[332] Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought*, 140-141

[333] See Nisbett's example of how Japanese and American teachers teach history differently (ibid., 127-128).

the author were emphasized rather than categories. This was seen to be effective, and so I conclude that effective hermeneutics courses for non-western students will emphasize environment and relationship rather than categories and individual parts in isolation.

Recommendations

Based on my experience with this project, I have some recommendations both for those interested in pursuing further research in this area, and for those who are interested in being excellent cross-cultural teachers.

Corrective Studies

I recommend that corrective studies be done to support, refine, or refute the findings in this paper. This study only examined students in one Bible college in one non-western country over a two-week period. Although my experience in teaching in yet another non-western country tells me that this study is in keeping with my experience, such experience is not acceptable as evidence to either confirm or deny the findings presented here. Duplicate studies in other non-western countries, done both in English as I have done, and in vernacular languages, should strengthen and refine (or correct) the findings of this study. Further corrective studies could also be made a semester or quarter in length rather than a two-week module as I have done. I also recommend that this study be duplicated using oral evaluation rather than literate evaluation to see if the students are able to give a better presentation of their grasp of the subject.

Expansion

The following are two ideas for expanding upon the principles of this study, especially as it pertains to the teaching of Hermeneutics and Homiletics in non-western contexts.

Combining Hermeneutics and Homiletics. Given the finding that non-western students do better when presented with a complete pattern, I recommend that studies be undertaken in which hermeneutics and homiletics are combined into one course, (or preferably, a series of courses as suggested below), and the students given a pattern/template to follow which takes them from exegesis clear through to exposition.

Genre Based Courses. I recommend that in addition to combining hermeneutics with homiletics into a single course, that multiple hermeneutics-homiletics courses be taught, each focusing on a specific genre. Since oral learners are very familiar with narrative, poetry, and proverbs, a series of courses based on Genre could be created which starts with these genres that are familiar to them, and work it's way toward the more difficult genres. A suggested order would be as follows: 1) Narrative, 2) Poetry and Wisdom, 3) Gospels and Acts,[334] 4) Non-Pauline Epistles, 5) Pauline Epistles.

Using non-literate Evaluation Techniques. Studies have already shown that oral learners tend to demonstrate their competence in a subject better when evaluated using oral evaluation methods rather than literate methods.[335] In the case of hermeneutics students, if one were to combine the hermeneutics and homiletics courses as described above, the evaluation could simply be a

---

[334] While the Gospels and Acts are often rightly placed in the narrative category, I believe there is enough additional material in them to warrant giving them their own course.

[335] Moon, "Understanding Oral Learners," 29.

sermon rather than a paper. This could then be evaluated to see if a single sermon, or a paper plus a sermon gives a better understanding of the student's grasp of the passage and the pattern.

Methodological Studies

This study has pointed to several methodologies for teaching non-western students. Each of these may be individually tested, and/or expanded upon for further research. The following are some suggestions for further studies into teaching methodology for non-western students:

Expanding upon the Master-Apprentice teaching methodology. I advocate that this method of teaching be revived and expanded upon, especially in the area of pastoral training. New ways of using this teaching method should be explored, such as in the area of teaching theology, where the professor takes an area of immediate contextual interest (such as demonism/spirit worship, which is a major issue in non-western countries) and demonstrates how to think theologically about it. He then oversees the students in their study as they learn to think theologically about a topic of their choice.

Researching the use of other Cultural Learning Strategies. There are other cultural learning strategies that have not been examined in this paper which can and should be adapted and tested. For example, Nisbett points out that non-western students, although very smart, often struggle to show the results of their research in typical western format papers. Research should be made into how such findings would be presented in a non-western context, and then see if that manner of presentation would be useful in other situations. Another example would be to give more thought to the use of immediately meaningful contexts for teaching, such as requiring

hermeneutics students to teach their lessons in a real setting. (See "Using non-literate evaluation techniques" section above)

Conclusion

This chapter was the concluding chapter of this dissertation project. In this chapter I reviewed the problem of ministry, I summarized the previous five chapters, and I gave conclusions and recommendation for further use of and research on the information learned in this project.

APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM AND SAMPLE PAPERS

CONTROL COURSE

Hermeneutics and Exegesis Syllabus

Questions to Answer about a Book

Observation List

Final Paper Requirements

Sample Final Paper on Philemon

TEST COURSE

Hermeneutics and Exegesis Syllabus

Daily Plan of the Hermeneutics Course

Steps to Exegesis

Sample Final Paper on Philemon

Hermeneutics and Exegesis Syllabus

Description

This course focuses on training the student in the basic skills needed for exegesis of their vernacular Bible. Emphasis is placed upon developing skills in reading comprehension, observation, tracing the flow of thought, synthesizing a passage, and making exegetically based application. Lectures and reading also include theory and practices related to the task of exegesis in order to supply the student with a methodology for sound exegesis.

Objectives for the Course

When this course is successfully completed, the student will:

1. Be able to comprehend the message of a book or passage that they read

2. Be able to make significant observations about a passage without the help of commentaries.

3. Be able to trace the author's flow of thought through a book

4. Be able to trace the author's flow of thought through individual passages in the book

5. Be able to synthesize their observations into an all-encompassing thesis statement for the passage

6. Be able to make exegetically sound application from the passage.

7. Recognize the influence of pre-understanding upon the exegetical-hermeneutical task, and be aware of methods to help overcome it.

8. Be able to use various tools to help discover the meaning of a text of Scripture

9. Have developed a passion to find the intended meaning of biblical texts and apply them specifically and accurately to present day situations.

<u>Expectations</u>

1. Attend Classes. Students shall be allowed 4 hours of unexplained absences. Additional absences shall result in reduction of the final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade per absence.

2. Complete the required reading by the scheduled class time

3. Take 4 quizzes covering the reading and class lecture. The quizzes are listed in the class schedule.

4. Complete given assignments by class time of the day it is due.

5. There are no exams. Your final paper is in lieu of exams. **Your final paper shall be on 1 Peter 5:1-4.** Please see the handout on the final paper for instructions on how to do it.

6. Grading shall be as follows:

Quizzes	10%
Assignments	60%
Final Paper	30%

<u>Grading System</u>

98-100	A+	Excellent	4.3
93-97	A	………..	4.3
90-92	A-	………..	3.7
87-89	B+	Good	3.3
83-86	B	………	3.0
80-82	B-	………	2.7
77-79	C+	Satisfactory	2.3
73-76	C	………..	2.0
70-72	C-	……….	1.7
67-69	D+	Poor	1.3
63-66	D	……….	1.0
60-62	D-	Very poor	1.7
00-59	F	Failing	0.0

CONTROL COURSE: Syllabus

Texts

1. Duvall, J. Scott and J. Daniel Hays. <u>Grasping God's Word</u>. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001
2. English Bible (preferably NIV or NASB)
3. Your vernacular Bible

Day	Class Lecture	Class Work	Homework
1.	a. Introduction, Syllabus, Overview of the Exegetical task		
	b. Reading Comprehension		
	c. (cont)	Read James Answer the reading questions (1-12)	
	d. (cont)	(cont)	Read GGW chapter 2
2.	a. How to read Sentences	**Quiz!!**	
	b. (cont)	Refer to your Observation list handout. Find many examples of observations 1-3 in James 3:1-12 (include references)	
	c. (cont)		
	d. (cont)	Find as many examples of observations 4-6 as you can in James 3:1-12. (include references)	Circle the observations you have made which are important to understanding the

			passage. Read GGW pg 54-63
3.	a. How to read Sentences (cont)		
	b. (cont)	Find as many examples of observations 7-9 as you can in James 3:1-12 (include references)	
	c. How to read Paragraphs		
	d. (cont)	Find as many examples of observations 10-12 as you can in James 3:1-12 (include references)	Circle the observations you have made which are important to understanding the passage. Read GGW pg 71-78
4.	a. How to read Paragraphs (cont)		
	b. (cont)	Find as many examples of observations 13-16 as you can in James 3:1-12 (include references)	
	c. How to read Paragraphs (cont)		
	d. (cont)	Find as many examples of	Circle the

	Applicational and Hypothetical	observations 17-19 as you can in James 3:1-12 (include references)	observations you have made which are important to understanding the passage. Read GGW pg 93-103
5.	a. How to read Discourses		
	b. (cont)	Write a one paragraph answer for each of the following questions. 1. How does James 3:1-12 connect to the rest of chapter? 2. How does it connect to chapter 2? 3. How does it connect to chapter 4?	
	c. How to read Discourses		
	d. (cont)	Write a one paragraph answer for each of the following questions. 1. How does James 3:1-12 connect to chapter 1? 2. How does it connect to chapter 5?	Read the book of James 3x Write a ½ - 1 page paper answering the following question: How does the theme of James 3:1-12 connect to the whole book of James?
6.	a. The danger of		

	Pre-understanding		
	b. The importance of Cultural context		
	c. (cont)		
	d. The importance of Literary context		Read GGW Pg118-126
7.	a. Meaning	**Quiz!!**	
	b. (cont)		
	c. (cont)		
	d. The Role of the Holy Spirit		Ch 12
8.	a. Clues to the Central Idea	**Quiz!!**	
	b. (cont)	Identify the Vision of God, Depravity Factor, and Purpose of James 3:1-12	
	c. Identifying the Central Idea		
	d. (cont)	Identify the Exegetical Central Idea of James 3:1-12	
9.	a. Developing the Theological Idea		
	b. (cont)	Create 5 possible Theological Central	

		Idea statements built off of your Exegetical Central Idea	
	c. Developing the Preaching Central Idea		
	d. (cont)	Create 3 possible Sermon Central Idea statements. Make sure they use (1) first person pronouns (2) active verbs. Make sure they are short sentences.	Read GGW ch 13
10.	a. Application	**Quiz!!**	
	b. (cont)	Imagine some people you want to teach about James 3:1-12. 1. List the ways they are different from James's readers. 2. List the ways they are similar to James readers 3. What situations might they be facing that is similar to James' readers?	
	c. Application		
	d. (cont)	With your congregation in mind, answer the following questions: 1. What DF do they face that is the same as James' readers? 2. How does the VOG apply to their similar situation?	

		3. How does the CI apply to their situation? 4. What purpose do you have for teaching this passage? (It should be similar to James' purpose.)	

<u>Questions to answer about a book</u>

1. Who wrote the book?

2. What was his situation at the time of writing?

3. Who did he write to?

4. What was their ethnic and religious background?

5. What was their situation at the time of writing?

6. What caused the writer to write the book? (i.e. what was he responding to?)

7. What is the author's emotional tone throughout the book?

8. What are the main sections/topics of the book?

9. Why do you think he organized the sections/topics in this way? (i.e. how are they connected?)

10. What sub-themes do you see repeated in the book? (i.e. ideas that are not directly addressed, but show up while addressing other issues)

11. What is the author's overall theme?

12. What did the author hope to accomplish by writing the book?

Observation list[336]

1. **Repetition of words** – Look for words and phrases that repeat
2. **Contrasts** – Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are contrasted with each other. Look for differences.
3. **Comparisons** – Look for ideas, individuals and/or items that are compared with each other. Look also for similarities
4. **Lists** – Anytime the text mentions more than two items, identify them as a list.
5. **Cause and effect** – look for cause-and-effect relationships
6. **Figures of speech** – Identify expressions that convey an image, using words in a sense other than the normal literal sense. (i.e. "*He speaks from both sides of his mouth*" means "*He says different things to different people*") **Explain your figures of speech**.
7. **Conjunctions** – Notice terms that join units, like "and," "but," "for". Take note of what they are connecting.
8. **Verbs** – Note whether a verb is past, present, or future; active or passive; and the like.
9. **Pronouns** – Identify the antecedent for each pronoun (i.e. who/what does it refer to?)
10. **Questions and Answers** – Note if the text is built on a question-and-answer format.
11. **Dialogue** – Note if the text includes dialogue. Identify who is speaking and to whom. What character traits come out through the dialogue?
12. **Means** – Note if a sentence indicates that something was done *by means of* someone/something (answers the question "how?"). Usually you can insert the phrase "by means of" into the sentence.
13. **Purpose/result statements** – These are a more specific type of "means," often telling why. Purpose and result are similar and sometimes indistinguishable. In a purpose statement, you usually can insert the phrase "in order that." In a result clause, you usually can insert the phrase "so that."
14. **General to specific and specific to general** – Find the general statements that are followed by specific examples or applications of the general. Also find specific statements that are summarized by a general one.
15. **Conditional clauses** – A clause can present the condition by which some action or consequence will result. Often such statements use an "if . . . then" framework (although in English the "then" is often left out).
16. **Actions/roles of God** – Identify actions or roles that the text ascribes to God.
17. **Actions/roles of people** – Identify actions or roles that the text ascribes to people or encourages people to do/be
18. **Emotional terms** – Does the passage use terms that have emotional energy, like kinship words (father, son) or words like "pleading"?
19. **Tone of the passage** – What is the overall tone of the passage: happy, sad, encouraging, and so on?

---

[336]   Taken and adapted from "Grasping God's Word" by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays © 2001

Sample Final Paper
Philemon 1-25

I.   **Survey the Book**

    a. **Answer the 12 questions for book surveys. Pay special attention to the last 5 questions.**

1. Who wrote the book?
   The Apostle Paul wrote the book

2. What was his situation at the time of writing?
   He was a prisoner (vs 1, 9, 10, 13, 23)

3. Who did he write to?
   Philemon, Aphia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's house

4. What was their ethnic and religious background?
   They were believers. Since Philemon, Aphia andArchippus are Greek or Roman names, they were probably Greek or Roman

5. What was their situation at the time of writing?
   Philemon was a wealthy man (he had slaves – vs16). He was a generous man, helping other believers (vs 7). The church met in his house (vs 2). He was praying for Paul (vs 22). He had a slave who had run away from him (vs 12, 15, 16) and who may have stolen from him as well (vs 18)

6. What caused the writer to write the book? (i.e. what was he responding to?)
   Paul had led Onesimus to the Lord (vs 10). Now the Onesimus was a believer, he needed to go back and be reconciled to his master (vs 12). Paul wants Philemon to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ (vs 16), and forgive him (vs 17), and send him back to serve Paul (vs 13-14)

7. What is the author's emotional tone throughout the book?
   Praising (vs 4-7, 21), Appealing (vs 8-20),

8. What are the main sections/topics of the book?
   Greetings -1-3
   Praise for Philemon's faith and good works toward the saints 4-7
   Appeal for Onesimus 8-20
   Praise in anticipation of Philemon's obedience 21-22
   Final greetings and conclusion 23-25

9. Why do you think he organized the sections/topics in this way? (i.e. how are they connected?)
   Paul begins by greeting Philemon as a beloved friend (vs 1) and Apphia, Archippus, and the church(vs 3). By greeting all of them, Paul makes sure that this is not a private letter, but the whole church should know about the situation. This puts pressure on Philemon to do what Paul asks, as well as shows the church how they should accept Onesimus. Paul praises Philemon for

his faith and the way he encourages the saints (4-7). This allows Paul to place a new, great request before Philemon. He asks that Philemon be gracious to Onesimus (vs 8-20), and asks that Philemon encourage Paul as well (vs 20) through how he treats Onesimus. He again praises Philemon by showing confidence in Philemon's obedience to his request (vs21-22). He then gives final greetings, listing others who are with him, who would also know of Onesimus and Philemon's situation. (vs 23-25) This would place more pressure on Philemon to do what Paul is asking.

10. What sub-themes do you see repeated in the book? (i.e. ideas that are not directly addressed, but show up while addressing other issues)
    Encouraging(refreshing) the saints is good (vs 7, 20)
    Appealing to believers to do what is right (vs 8-9, 10, 14)
    The importance of repaying theft/debt (vs 18-19)
    Change of character as a result of trusting in Christ (vs 11)

11. What is the author's overall theme?
    Forgiveness between believers

12. What did the author hope to accomplish by writing the book?
    He hoped Philemon and the other believers would forgive Onesimus

II.   Study the Passage
a.   Make many observations based on the observation list. List only the observations that are <u>important</u> for studying the passage. (To help you decide what observations are important, keep in mind two questions: What is there? Why is it there?)

1. <u>Repetition of words</u>
   Prisoner (vs1, 9, 23) – Paul is a prisoner
   Fellow laborer/soldier/prisoner (vs 1, 2, 23, 24) – Paul considers these people partners in the work of the gospel
   Brother (vs 1, 7, 16, 20) – Paul has a close relationship with Timothy, Philemon, and Onesiumus.
   Appeal (vs 9, 10) - Paul is appealing for Onesimus
   Refresh (vs, 7, 20) - Paul praises Philemon for refreshing the saints, and then asks him to refresh Paul's heart as well.
   Receive him (vs 12, 15, 17) – Paul wants Philemon to receive Onesimus back.
   Lord/Jesus/Christ (vs 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 16, 20, 23, 25) – Everything spoken of is done because of Christ, for Christ, and in Christ.

2. <u>Contrasts</u>
   Paul could have commanded Philemon, but instead he appealed (vs 8-9)
   Onesimus was once unprofitable, but now is profitable (vs 11)
   Paul wanted to keep Onesimus, but instead he is sending him back (vs 13-14)
   Paul wants Philemon's good deed to be voluntary instead of under compulsion (vs 14)
   Philemon is to receive Onesimus not as a slave, but as a brother (vs 16)

CONTROL COURSE: Sample Final Paper

3. <u>Comparisons</u>
   none

4. <u>Lists</u>
   Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke (vs 23) – Witnesses of Paul's request

5. <u>Cause and effect</u>
   Paul thanks God (effect) because of Philemon's love for the saints and faith in Christ (cause)(vs 4-5)
   Paul has joy in Philemon's love (effect) because of how he refreshes the hearts of the saints (cause) (vs 7)
   Love's sake (cause) causes Paul to appeal to, rather than command Philemon (effect) (vs 8-9)

6. <u>Figures of speech</u>
   Brother (vs 1, 7, 16, 20) – They are not blood brothers, but Paul has a close relationship with them, like brothers.
   Begotten, son (vs 10) - Paul led Onesimus to the Lord. He is not Paul's blood son!
   Refresh heart (vs 7, 20) – Encouraging, or helping lift up the emotions

7. <u>Conjunctions</u>
   Therefore (vs 8) – As a result of seeing Philemon's love for the saints, Paul is confident to appeal to him for Onesimus.

8. <u>Verbs</u>
   Receive (vs 12, 15, 17) – This is the key verb. Paul wants Philemon to not just forgive Onesimus, but to accept him back.

9. <u>Pronouns</u>
   No significant pronouns observed

10. <u>Questions and Answers</u>
    None

11. <u>Dialogue</u>
    None

12. <u>Means</u>
    Paul believes that by means of Philemon's prayers, Paul will be released from prison (vs 22)

13. <u>Purpose/result statements</u>
    "he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever"(vs 15)

14. <u>General to specific and specific to general</u>
    "making mention of you always in my prayers (General)….that the sharing of your faith may become effective" (Specific) (vs 4-6)
    "I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, (General) whom I have begotten while in my chains, (Specific) who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.(Specific) (vs 10-11)

15. Conditional clauses
If then (vs 17) – If Philemon sees Paul as a partner, then Paul wants him to receive Onesimus as if he were Paul.

16. Actions/roles of God
Grace and Peace from God (vs 3)

17. Actions/roles of people
Paul wants Philemon to forgive Onesimus (vs 8-20)
Paul praises Philemon for how he encourages the saints (vs 7)

18. Emotional terms
Fellow laborer/soldier/prisoner (vs 1, 2, 23, 24) – Paul considers these people partners in the work of the gospel
Brother (vs 1, 7, 16, 20) – Paul has a close relationship with Timothy, Philemon, and Onesiumus.
Son (vs 10) - Paul feels like Onesimus is his spiritual son.
Beloved (vs 1, 2, 16) – A term of close relationship.

19. Tone of the passage
The tone of the passage is pleading/appealing.

b. Explain how the Historical-Cultural context helps you understand your particular passage. *(You may use commentaries for this step only, but REMEMBER TO LIST THE BOOKS YOU USE)*[337]
Run away slaves were at the bottom of society. They were not protected by law, and could be abused. They were often beaten and given very difficult work. (Expositors Bible Commentary, Vol 11, pg 460)

c. Show how the passage connects to the chapters surrounding it.
No surrounding chapters

d. Identify the Exegetical Central Idea
  i. Look for the Vision of God
  God is a God who changes people

  ii. Look for the Depravity Factor
  People want revenge on those who have mis-treated them, even if they have been forgiven by God.

---

[337] Although this is included in the sample final paper, upon assessing the situation at the college, I realized this step would be difficult for the students to complete, so did not require it of them.

   iii.Look for the Authors Purpose
    Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus

 The Exegetical Central Idea is:
 "Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus because Onesimus had been forgiven and
 changed by God."

 e. Create a Theological Central Idea.
  Believers must forgive and accept fellow believers, who have been forgiven and changed by God.

III. Connect the Passage
 a. List the similarities between your intended congregation and the original readers
  My intended congregation: Church in Cambodia
  - *Khmer people have been mistreated by others*
   o *They were killed by the Khmer Rouge*
   o *Many people cheat each other*

 b. Describe a Depravity Factor (need) for your intended congregation that is similar to the Depravity Factor of the original readers.
  Khmer people want revenge on those who have done evil to them
  Khmer people do not want to forgive

 c. Create a Homiletic Purpose that is similar to the Author's purpose
  I want the Khmer people to forgive and accept their brothers and sisters in Christ.

IV. Apply the Passage
 a. Create a Homiletic Big Idea
   i.It should be a short sentence
   ii.It should be memorable
   iii.It should use active verbs
   iv.It should use 1st person pronouns
  Forgive and accept your brothers and sisters in Christ!

 b. List 3 specific ways in which the passage can apply to your congregation.
  1. The wife whose husband has cheated on her, but has now repented and trusted Christ, should forgive and accept him.
  2. The people who were abused by the Khmer Rouge should forgive and accept those who turn to Christ.
  3. The people who lied and cheated others should be forgiven and accepted when they repent and trust Christ.

Hermeneutics and Exegesis Class Syllabus

Description

This course provides an introduction to a valid methodology in determining the original meaning of biblical texts and applying their modem significance. Special attention is given to authorial intent and probable recipient understanding. Building upon the foundation of sound hermeneutical and exegetical principles, the student will gain skill in doing exegesis through observation of good exegetical models and through practice with selected texts.

Objectives

This course is designed to teach the student the methods of biblical interpretation and to provide opportunity for them to begin learning this skill. When this course is successfully completed, the student will:

1. Have gained basic proficiency in exegeting a selected passage of scripture

2. Have gained a basic proficiency in preparing a lesson from a passage of scripture

3. Have developed a desire to seek out authorial intent when exegeting a passage

4. Have a healthy respect for the work involved in good exegesis

5. Have developed basic exegetical habits

Expectations

1. Attend Classes. Students shall be allowed 4 unexplained absences. Additional absences shall result in reduction of the final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade per absence.

2. Complete the required reading by the scheduled class time

3. Complete given assignments by class time of the day it is due. Late assignments will result in loss of 1/3 of a letter grade per day overdue.

4. There are no exams. Your final assigned paper is in lieu of a final exam

5. Grading shall be as follows:
Class participation	10%
Assignments	30%
Memorization	20%
Final Paper	40%

6. **Your final paper shall be an exegetical paper on 1 Peter 5:1-4**

Course Outline

Day	Lesson	Homework
1a	**Introduction**	Prepare a lesson/sermon on Phil 4:10-13 prior to the first class
1b	**Demonstrating the exegetical task.**	
1c	**Modeling the exegetical task.**	
1d	**Modeling the exegetical task.**	Read 1 Thess. [338] Memorize 1 Thess 4:13-18, and be prepared to recite it in class tomorrow. Imagine that the Apostle Paul is coming to be a guest speaker in your church, and you must introduce him. Create a proper introduction for him.
2a	**Modeling the exegetical task.**	
2b	**Modeling the exegetical task.**	
2c	**Experiencing Exegesis.**	
2d	**Experiencing Exegesis**	Read/ Listen to the book of Titus 2x Memorize Titus 1:5-9
3a	**Practicing Exegesis as a class**	
3b	**Practicing Exegesis as a class**	
3c	**Digging Deeper**.	
3d	**Practicing Exegesis as a class**	Read GGW 54-63 Memorize Titus 2:1-5
4a	**Practicing Exegesis as a class**	
4b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
4c	**Digging Deeper.**	
4d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	Each group must complete steps 9-10, and write 3 possible options for SCI for Titus 2. Your group's work on Titus 2:1-5 will be collected tomorrow.
5a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
5b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
5c	**Modeling Lesson Preparation**	
5d	**Modeling Lesson Preparation**	Memorize Titus 2:11-14

---

[338] Students should listen/read the book in their own language whenever possible. Many times I have heard objections from students like "It is difficult to move from one language to another", or "the translation in our language is not good." However for the purpose of understanding the flow and main points of the book, they will be better served by reading/listening in their own language. If one is not able to orally answer questions in the teaching language, after reading in one's own language, then one has not understood the book well enough.

6a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
6b	**Digging Deeper.**	
6c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
6d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	Each group must complete steps 9-10, and write 3 possible options for SCI for Titus 2:11-14
7a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
7b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
7c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
7d	**The Role of the Holy Spirit**	Read/Listen to Ephesians 2x. Answer the book questions for the book of Ephesians in your NEW groups
8a	**Working with the Professor again.**	
8b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
8c	**Working with the Professor again.**	
8d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	Memorize Ephesians 4:11-16.
9a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
9b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
9c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	
9d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**	Work individually on your final paper. You will be evaluated on your memorization of 1 Pt 5:1-4 tomorrow in class.
10a	**Important Principles**	
10b	**Important Principles**	
10c	**Test**	
10d	**Test**	

Your final paper shall be an exegetical paper on 1 Peter 5:1-4
You shall follow the Exegetical steps demonstrated in class.

Daily Plan of the Hermeneutics course

Day	Lesson	Objective/Comments	Resource	Assignment[339]
1a	Introduce yourself, and go over the Syllabus. Explain the hermeneutical task.	Help students understand the basic task of biblical hermeneutics. The bridge illustration presented by GGW, is very helpful.	GGW Ch 2[340]	Prepare a lesson/sermon on Phil 4:10-13 prior to the first class
1b	**Demonstrating the exegetical task.** Model exegesis to lesson from start to finish in one class hour using Phil 4:10-13. Pay special attention to context and showing how the Philippians would have understood the passage.	Help the students SEE the process of preparing a sermon/lesson. By having the students prepare a lesson in advance, they should clearly see the difference between their process and lesson, and the one demonstrated.		
1c	**Modeling the exegetical task.** Read through 1 Thess, and then briefly work through the book questions on the book of 1 Thessalonians out loud, showing your answers from the epistle	Help the students understand the main characters and make some personal connection with the recipients. (i.e. how are they like the recipients?)		
1d	**Modeling the exegetical task.** Finish working through the book questions. Read Acts 17:1-15 and consider how it helps us understand 1 Thess 2-3 better. Pass out the "Steps to Exegesis" handout.	Help the students see how their church and the Thessalonians are similar. This is a <u>very</u> important step, especially for non-western students who think in relationships. They will struggle to apply the passage properly if they do not		Read 1 Thess. Memorize 1 Thess 4:13-18, and be prepared to recite it in class tomorrow. Imagine that the Apostle Paul is coming to be a guest speaker in your church, and you must

---

[339] This is the students' homework, not the professor's

[340] Duvall and Hays, *Grasping God's Word : A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible (Kindle Version)*. NOTE: the chapter numbers have changed in the 3rd edition from the previous two editions. I shall follow the chapter numbering from the 3rd edition.

		identify closely with the original readers.		introduce him. Create a proper introduction for him.
2a	**Modeling the exegetical task.** Have 2-3 students present introductions of Paul. "Think through the book" orally, showing how the different sections fit together.	Help the students think of the book as a whole rather than a collection of verses and chapters. Also help the students see the connection between thinking through the book, and selecting a passage. (i.e. a selected passage should be one unit of thought)		
2b	**Modeling the exegetical task.** Exegete 1 Thess 4:1-8, following steps 6-10 of "Steps to Exegesis". Only make use of the first sub-point level (a,b,c,etc). Do not go into detail on how to do each step. Simply model the process.	Help the students see the process of passage exegesis in greater detail than before by pointing out each step as it is covered.		
2c	**Experiencing Exegesis.** Select one or two students at random to recite 1 Thess 4:13-18. [341] Help the class work through the exegetical steps 6-10 for the passage. If they become stuck at step 6, select one of the level 2 subpoints (i, ii, iii, etc) to emphasize in order to help them out. (hint, verbs are important in this text, as are contrasts)	Help the students practice following the basic steps of exegesis. The goal is for them to put into practice what they have seen so far.		
2d	**Experiencing Exegesis** Select two students at random to recite the passage. Continue helping			Read/ Listen to the book of Titus 2x Memorize Titus 1:5-9

[341] Make sure to keep track of their memorization as part of their grade.

	the class work through 1 Thess 4:13-18.			
3a	**Practicing Exegesis as a class** Lead the class through steps 1-2 of the exegetical task, working through the book of Titus.	Push the students to find the answers, rather than supplying them. They must begin the work in earnest now.		
3b	**Practicing Exegesis as a class** Continue leading the class through steps 2-3 of the exegetical process.	Push the students to think through the book by the end of class.		
3c	**Digging Deeper**. Select two students at random and have them recite the passage. Start the class working on exegetical step 6.	Help the students understand that the author's emphasis is often highlighted by repetition and contrast. Remember to present it as "these are clues to help us understand Paul's emphasis."	GGW ch 3	
3d	**Practicing Exegesis as a class** Select two students at random to recite the passage. Finish leading the class through exegetical step 6, and move on to step 7 for Titus 1:5-9.	The class should be doing the hard work with only a little input from the professor. Be patient. Remember they are learning a skill.		Read GGW 54-63 Memorize Titus 2:1-5
4a	**Practicing Exegesis as a class** Select two students at random to recite Titus 1:5-9. Finish leading the class through exegetical steps 8-10.	Help the class learn the importance of stating the ECI in one short sentence, and the process of converting it to the SCI. Do not let the explanation of this process drag. Make sure adequate time is given to each part of the process within this hour.		
4b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:1-5. Break the class into groups of 3 and have them work through Exegetical	The students are learning to do exegesis without the professor.		

	Step 6 for Titus 2:1-10. Monitor their progress, but only step in to assist if needed.			
4c	**Digging Deeper.** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:1-5. Teach the class the importance of repeating words/phrases/thoughts and contrasts. Have them look for *important* uses of repetition and contrast in Titus 2:1-10 while working in their groups.	Help the students understand that the author's emphasis is often highlighted by repetition and contrast. Remember to present it as "these are clues to help us understand Paul's emphasis."	GGW pg 53-55	Each group must complete step 7 and write 3 possible options for an ECI for Titus 2.
4d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:1-5. Have each group present their best ECI, and write them on the board. As a class, work through each, noting its strengths and weaknesses (if any). If there is extra time, check their work on step 7.			Each group must complete steps 9-10, and write 3 possible options for SCI for Titus 2. Your group's work on Titus 2:1-5 will be collected tomorrow.
5a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:1-5. Have each group present their best SCI and write them on the board. They must show their progress from ECI to SCI. Teach the class the importance of (1) Active verbs and (2) 1st person personal pronouns when writing the SCI. Work through the various SCI's to make them good. Collect each group's entire work on Titus 2:1-10 and evaluate them (i.e. grade	The students will learn the value of a carefully worded SCI around which to shape their sermon.		

	them, and give feedback.)			
5b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** (cont)			
5c	**Modeling Lesson Prep** Go through steps 11-14 using the information they have exegeted from Titus 2:1-10.	The purpose is to show them how the information they have been gathering will fit into a lesson/sermon.		
5d	**Modeling Lesson Prep** (cont)	If there is time, you can teach a short lesson on this text.		Memorize Titus 2:11-14
6a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Break the class into **NEW** groups of 3 and have them work through Exegetical Step 6. Monitor their progress, but only step in to assist if needed.			
6b	**Digging Deeper.** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Teach the class the significance of verb tense, conjunctions, and purpose statements. Have them search for these in Titus 2 while working in their groups.		.	
6c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Have each group complete step 7 and write 3 possible options for an ECI			
6d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Have each group present their best ECI, and write them on the board. As a class, work through each,			Each group must complete steps 9-10, and write 3 possible options for SCI for Titus 2:11-14

	noting its strengths and weaknesses (if any). If there is extra time, check their work on step 7.			
7a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Have each group present their best SCI and write them on the board. They must show their progress from ECI to SCI. Have the groups do step 11			
7b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select two students at random to recite Titus 2:11-14. Have each group move on to steps 12-14	Explanation – Understanding the writer and readers		
7c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Have each group give a 5 minute lesson from Titus 2:11-14.	Explanation – Looking for the writer's meaning		
7d	**Explanation -** the role of the Holy Spirit in Exegesis Create NEW groups			Read/Listen to Ephesians 2x. Answer the book questions for the book of Ephesians in your NEW groups
8a	**Working with the Professor again.** Work through the book questions with the class. Push them to really think through the book. After they have exhausted their insights, provide some more from your own study. At the end of class, collect their answers and evaluate them. Your evaluation here will help them know what you	The objective is not to show how brilliant the professor is, or how dumb the students are, but rather to show them that there is still more to observe, and that they must learn to push themselves to observe.		

	expect to see in their final paper.			
8b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Have the students complete Exegetical step 3 for Ephesians. Warn them that this will be collected			
8c	**Working with the Professor again.** Think through the book together in class. Push them to see the connections between sections and the entire flow of the book. Collect their homework and evaluate it. Your evaluation here will help them know what you expect to see in their final paper.	This is your best opportunity to help them see that the book is not a random collection of sayings, but that there is clear purpose and order to it. Take time to carefully trace the flow-of-thought in the book.		
8d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Break the class in to **NEW** groups of 3, and have them work through step 6 for Ephesians 4:11-16.			Memorize Ephesians 4:11-16.
9a	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select 2 students to recite Eph 4:11-16. Have them work on steps 7-10			
9b	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select 2 students to recite Eph 4:11-16. Have them continue work on steps 7-10			
9c	**Practicing Exegesis in groups** Select 2 students to recite Eph 4:11-16. Have them continue working up to step 14			
9d	**Practicing Exegesis in groups**			Work individually on your final paper. You

	Select 2 students to recite Eph 4:11-16. Have them continue working up to step 14			will be evaluated on your memorization of 1 Pt 5:1-4 tomorrow in class.
10a	**Explanation** – pre understanding, the importance of understanding the author and readers, looking for the author's meaning.			
10b	**Explanation** (cont)			
10c	**Testing memorization** of 1 Pt 5:1-4			
10d	(cont)			

The final paper shall be an exegetical paper on 1 Peter 5:1-4
The students shall follow the Exegetical steps demonstrated in class, including reading the whole book of 1 Peter multiple times, and memorizing the passage. Assess them on their memorization as well.

<u>Steps to Exegesis</u>[342]

1. **Pray**
2. **Read the book at least 5x. (If it is a large book, read at least 5 chapters before and after.) Then look for the answers to as many of the following questions as possible:**
   a. Who wrote the book?
      i. What was his situation?
      ii. What was his status?
         - In Christian circles
         - In Jewish society
         - In Roman/Babylonian/Egyptian/Persian society
      iii. What sort of person was he?
         - What was his nationality?
         - What was his religion?
         - What was he like? (character)
         - What might have been some areas of weakness?
         - What might have been some areas of strength?
         - What was he passionate about? (Be specific. Answers like, "Jesus"/"the gospel" are too general)
         - If you were to introduce the author to your church as a special speaker, what would you say to give a <u>proper</u> introduction?
   b. Who did he write to?
      i. Where were they?
      ii. What was their situation?
      iii. What was their status
         - In their town?
         - In Jewish/Christian circles?
      iv. How did they know the writer?
      v. Talk about their relationship with the writer
         - What did the writer think about them?
         - What did they think about the writer?
      vi. Talk about their relationship with God
         - What areas of spiritual strength did they have?
         - What areas of spiritual weakness did they have?
         - What did they need to learn?
   c. How are we like them?

---

[342] When using these steps, only answer the first two levels (1,2, 3,etc and a,b,c,etc.) The third level questions and tips (i, ii, iii, etc) are only intended to be clues or helps for answering the questions listed under level two (a, b, c, etc.) **There is no need to specifically answer questions on the third level (i, ii, iii, etc).**

      i.   What problems do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

      ii.   What sins do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

      iii.   What strengths do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

      iv.   How is your relationship with God similar to these people?

      v.   How is your relationship with God different from these people?

   d.   Why did the writer write to these people?

      i.   What was he responding to?

      ii.   What does the writer talk about in his book?

- What does he have to say about those things?
- What reasons did he have for writing about those things?

      iii.   What was the writer's purpose for writing the book?

- What did he hope to accomplish?
- What results did he hope to see?
- What response did he want from these people?

3. Think through the book

   a.   First the writer talks about . . . . Then he talks about . . . .

   b.   Try to understand the connections between the sections

4. Select a section to study

   a.   It should be one section/thought that the writer talks about.

5. Memorize the passage (if it is shorter than 15 verses)

6. Observe the passage closely

   a.   How is the situation/issue facing the readers seen in our lives?

   b.   What is the central idea of the writer? (topic/theme/subject)

   c.   What does he say about his central idea? Look for clues such as:

      i.   How do the verbs connect to each other?

- Find the main verbs and the supporting verbs.
  - The main verbs will be related to his central idea, and the supporting verbs will often be related to his supporting ideas.

      ii.   Are there important words/phrases/concepts, that are repeated?

  - The repeated words or concepts will often show his central idea or supporting ideas

      iii.   Are there important contrasts being emphasized?

  - Contrasts help to bring out the central idea

      iv.   Does the writer give reasons or results or purposes?

  - Reasons, results, or purpose are supporting points that point back to the central idea

      v.   How does this passage connect with the passages before and after it?

  - Understanding the connection between the passages can help clarify the central idea

7. Answer the focusing questions.

   a.   What does the passage show us about human nature? (HN)

      i.   How is this aspect of HN seen in our lives today?

    b.   What does the passage show us about God? (G)
        i.   How does this aspect of G show up today?
    c.   What was the writer's purpose for writing this passage? (P)
    d.   What results did the writer hope to see? (R)

8. Identify the Exegetical Central Idea (ECI)
    a.   State it in one sentence.
    b.   It should be about the writer/readers/characters
    c.   All the other points in the passage should support the central idea

9. Convert the ECI to a Theological Central Idea (TCI) and then to the Sermon Central Idea (SCI)
    a.   ECI should be true for all believers everywhere
        i.   Notice whether your passage is OT or NT.
        ii.   What is the timeless principle that is being taught?
    b.   The SCI should use:
        i.   Active verb
        ii.   1st person pronouns

10. Connect the HN, G, P, and R to your congregation
    a.   How is the Human Nature (HN) of the passage seen in your congregation?
    b.   How does the unchanging nature of God (G) that is seen in the passage help your congregation with the HN of the passage?
    c.   As you think about the Purpose (P) of the passage, what will be the purpose of your sermon?
    d.   As you think of the Result (R), which the writer wanted to see, what will be the result you will wish to see from your sermon?

You are Ready to Prepare your sermon/lesson

11. Introduction – Present the HN to your congregation
    a.   Use your INTRODUCTION to show your congregation their Human Nature (HN) problem or need
        i.   Use a story, or a song, or an explanation, etc. (be creative)
        ii.   Make sure they understand and FEEL the HN problem/need in their own lives.
    b.   Explain that people in the Bible experienced this same HN problem/need as well
    c.   Ask them turn to the Bible passage

12. Explain the passage
    a.   Begin by explaining who was writing, and who he was writing to.
    b.   Explain what HN problem/need the people faced.
    c.   Explain what the writer said.
        i.   What did he say about their HN problem/need?
        ii.   What did he say or show about the nature of God (G)?
        iii.   What solution did he give? (ECI)
    d.   Explain the purpose of the writer (P).

13. Present the SCI
    a.   Show how the ECI for those people becomes the SCI for us

        i. The solution for their HN problem/need is the same because:
       ii. The nature of God (G) is the same.
- b. Explain the SCI clearly so that people understand it.
  - i. You may need to say it more than one way
- c. Give a TRUE story of someone had the same HN problem/need, and who followed the SCI.
  - i. What was their problem?
  - ii. What did they do? (SCI)
  - iii. What was the result?

14. Conclusion – Remind the congregation of the SCI

- a. Remind people of the HN problem/need
- b. Remind people of the nature of God (G)
- c. Remind them of the solution (SCI)

Sample Final Paper
Philemon 8-20

1. **Pray**

   Father in Heaven, I thank you for this opportunity to study your Word. Please help me to understand and apply it carefully, first to my own life, and then to others. I pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

2. **Read the book at least 5x. (If it is a large book, read at least 5 chapters before and after.)**
   Then look for the answers to as many of the following questions as possible:

   a. Who wrote the book?

   The Apostle Paul (vs 1, 19)

      i. What was his situation?[343]

      He was a prisoner, probably under house arrest (vs 1, 9, 23)

      ii. What was his status?

      He was an apostle of Jesus. He was highly respected by believers.

      iii. What sort of person was he?

      He was a very zealous man, eager to serve God. This caused him to persecute Christians before he became a believer. After becoming a believer, he travelled all over the Roman empire preaching the gospel. He did not give up even when persecuted. He was eventually killed by the Romans for his faith in Christ.

   b. Who did he write to?

   Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the church in Philemon's home (vs 1,2)

      i. Where were they?

      The book of Philemon does not say.

      ii. What was their situation?

      Philemon was a wealthy man, because he had slaves (vs 16). The church also met at his house, which probably meant he had a larger house than most people in the church (vs 2). He was praying for Paul (vs 22). He had a slave who had run away from him (vs 12, 15, 16) and who may have stolen from him as well (vs 18)

      iii. What was their status

      Philemon was wealthy (see ii), and respected for his love for the saints (vs 5, 7)

      iv. How did they know the writer?

      The book does not say, but it is clear they have met before.

      v. Talk about their relationship with the writer

      Paul and Philemon had a very close relationship. Paul calls him "beloved" (vs 1), "partner" (vs 17), and "brother" (vs 20).

      vi. Talk about their relationship with God

---

[343] Although this sample paper includes answers for 3rd level questions (i, ii, iii, etc), the students were instructed to use these only as suggested questions. They were not required to give specific answers to 3rd level questions.

> *Philemon had a strong faith in God (vs 4) and a great love for the saints (vs 4). His love for God is demonstrated through his encouraging the saints (vs 7)*

   c.   How are we like them?

       i.   What problems do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

> *We have people who have done bad things against us, just like Philemon*

      ii.   What sins do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

> *We may have difficulty forgiving believers who have done wrong against us, just like Philemon*

     iii.   What strengths do you/your congregation have that are similar to these people?

> *We are generous like Philemon*

     iv.   How is your relationship with God similar to these people?

> *We have faith in the Lord like Philemon, and a desire to please God.*

      v.   How is your relationship with God different from these people?

> *We may not love God's people as much as Philemon.*

   d.   Why did the writer write to these people?

       i.   What was he responding to?

> *Onesimus had been Philemon's slave, but he had run away (vs15-16). Paul led Onesimus to the Lord (vs 10), and was sending Onesimus back to Philemon (vs 12)*

      ii.   What does the writer talk about in his book?

> *Paul writes about Philemon accepting Onesimus back as a brother in Christ*

     iii.   What was the writer's purpose for writing the book?

> *Paul wanted Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him back as though he were accepting Paul himself.*

3. Think through the book

   a.   First the writer talks about . . . . Then he talks about . . . .

> *First Paul greets Philemon and some other people and the church. (vs 1-3) Then he praises Philemon for his faith in God and love for the saints. (vs 4-7) Then he appeals to Philemon to receive Onesimus back. (vs 8-20) Then he again praises Philemon and informs him of his plan to visit (vs 21-22). Finally he give greetings from others and concludes. (vs 23-25)*

   b.   Try to understand the connections between the sections

> *Paul begins by greeting Philemon as a beloved friend (vs 1) and Apphia, Archippus, and the church(vs 3). By greeting all of them, Paul makes sure that this is not a private letter, but the whole church should know about the situation. This puts pressure on Philemon to do what Paul asks, as well as shows the church how they should accept Onesimus. Paul praises Philemon for his faith and the way he encourages the saints (4-7). This allows Paul to place a new, great request before Philemon. He asks that Philemon be gracious to Onesimus (vs 8-20), and asks that Philemon encourage Paul as well (vs 20) through how he treats Onesimus. He again praises Philemon by showing confidence in Philemon's obedience to his request (vs21-22). He then gives final greetings, listing others who are with him, who would also know of Onesimus and Philemon's situation. (vs 23-25) This would place more pressure on Philemon to do what Paul is asking.*

4. Select a section to study
    a. It should be one section/thought that the writer talks about.
       Philemon 8-20

5. Memorize the passage (if it is shorter than 15 verses)

6. Observe the passage closely
    a. How is the situation/issue facing the readers seen in our lives?
       When people who have hurt or offended us come to know the Lord, we may have difficulty accepting them as fellow believers. We have a hard time believing they have changed, and may have a hard time trusting them again.

    b. What is the central idea of the writer? (topic/theme/subject)
       Forgiveness

    c. What does he say about his central idea? Look for clues such as:
       i. How do the verbs connect to each other?
          No important connection between verbs observed

       ii. Are there important words/phrases/concepts, that are repeated?
          "Receive" (vs 12, 15, 17) – This verb is important because this is the action Paul wants Philemon to take. He wants Philemon to receive Onesimus, not as a slave, but as a brother. He wants Philemon to receive Onesimus as if he were receiving Paul himself.

       iii. Are there important contrasts being emphasized?
          Paul could have commanded Philemon, but instead he appealed (vs 8-9)
          Onesimus was once unprofitable, but now is profitable (vs 11)
          Paul wanted to keep Onesimus, but instead he is sending him back (vs 13-14)
          Paul wants Philemon's good deed to be voluntary instead of under compulsion (vs 14)
          Philemon is to receive Onesimus not as a slave, but as a brother (vs 16)

       iv. Does the writer give reasons or results or purposes?
          Paul says that in the plan of God, the Purpose Onesimus left was so that he could come to know Christ (vs 15-16)
          The reason Paul sends Onesimus back is so that he can be reconciled to Philemon, and so that Philemon can send him to serve Paul voluntarily. (vs 14, 16)
          The reason Paul appeals rather than commands Philemon is because of his relationship with Philemon (vs 8-9)

       v. How does this passage connect with the passages before and after it?
          Paul praises Philemon in vs 4-7, mentioning his love for the saints. This reminder of his love for the saints is the foundation upon which Paul builds his request that Philemon receive Onesimus, a new saint, back . In vs 21-22, Paul applies further pressure to Philemon through praising his obedience, and by stating that he plans to visit Philemon.

7. Answer the focusing questions.
    a. What does the passage show us about human nature? (HN)
       Lack of forgiveness toward those who have done wrong to us.
       i. How is this aspect of HN seen in our lives today?
          We desire to hold grudges or take revenge rather than forgive.

      b.   What does the passage show us about God? (G)

God is a God who changes people.

          i.   How does this aspect of G show up today?

We can trust God to change people who repent of their sin and turn to Him

      c.   What was the writer's purpose for writing this passage? (P)

Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and accept Onesimus

      d.   What results did the writer hope to see? (R)

Paul hoped to see Onesimus accepted into Philemon's house and into the church as well.

8. Identify the Exegetical Central Idea (ECI)

Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus because Onesimus had been forgiven and changed by God.

9. Convert the ECI to a Theological Central Idea (TCI) and then to the Sermon Central Idea (SCI)

      a.   TCI

Believers should forgive and accept fellow believers who have been forgiven and changed by God.

      b.   SCI

Forgive and accept your brothers and sisters in Christ!

10. Connect the HN, G, P, and R to your congregation

      a.   How is the Human Nature (HN) of the passage seen in your congregation?

The Khmer people hold grudges against one another. Even though they smile and act friendly to each other, they are really angry and don't truly forgive.

The Khmer people have a hard time accepting those who have truly been changed into the body of Christ.

      b.   How does the unchanging nature of God (G) that is seen in the passage help your congregation with the HN of the passage?

God changes people who trust Christ as Savior. If we truly believe that, then we will forgive and accept those who have been changed by God, even if they have done wrong against us in the past.

      c.   As you think about the Purpose (P) of the passage, what will be the purpose of your sermon?

I want to challenge people to forgive and accept their brothers and sisters in Christ, even if they have done something terrible in the past.

      d.   As you think of the Result (R), which the writer wanted to see, what will be the result you will wish to see from your sermon?

I want to see believers in Cambodia forgiving and accepting fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

You are Ready to Prepare your sermon/lesson

11. Introduction – Present the HN to your congregation

      a.   Use your INTRODUCTION to show your congregation their Human Nature (HN) problem or need

During the rule of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge did horrible things to the people of Cambodia. They killed over a million people, and many other people died from starvation. The people of Cambodia lived in constant fear of being imprisoned or killed by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge had several prisons, the most famous of which is called Toul

Sleng, had a commander named Duch. Many, many thousands of people went into Toul Sleng prison, but only 14 ever came out alive. Most were tortured, beaten, starved, and then killed. After the Khmer Rouge government fell, Duch changed his name and went into hiding. Many years later, he heard the gospel, and trusted Christ as his Savior, but he didn't dare tell anyone who he was. Some years later, someone recognized him as the former commander of Toul Sleng prison. Duch was arrested and put on trial. During the trial he confessed to his crimes and asked the nation for forgiveness. What do you think? Should people forgive him for his crimes? Should believers in Cambodia forgive him and accept him as a changed man?

   b. Explain that people in the Bible experienced this same HN problem/need as well
     There was a man in scripture who faced a similar situation

   c. Ask them turn to the Bible passage
     Please turn to the book of Philemon

12. Explain the passage

   a. Begin by explaining who was writing, and who he was writing to.
     The book of Philemon was written by the apostle Paul while he was a prisoner. He wrote to his friend Philemon. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus who had run away. Somehow he met Paul, and Paul led him to the Lord. Paul knew Onesimus had to return to Philemon, so he wrote this letter to Philemon.

   b. Explain what HN problem/need the people faced.
     Philemon had a problem. Onesimus had run away and maybe even stole from him. Philemon would not want to forgive Onesimus, and he would never want to trust Onesimus again!

   c. Explain what the writer said.
     i. What did he say about their HN problem/need?
       Paul asked Philemon to receive Onesimus back because he was a man who had been changed by God.

     ii. What did he say or show about the nature of God (G)?
       Paul told Philemon that Onesimus had trusted God, and now he was changed from useless to useful.

     iii. What solution did he give? (ECI)
       Paul wanted Philemon to forgive and accept Onesimus because Onesimus had been forgiven and changed by God.

   d. Explain the purpose of the writer (P).
     Paul was writing this letter to Philemon to appeal to him to accept Onesimus.

13. Present the SCI

   a. Show how the ECI for those people becomes the SCI for us
     We often have the same problem as Philemon. Maybe there is someone who has done wrong against you. Maybe they cheated you. Maybe they lied to you. Maybe they shamed you. But now they are a brother or sister in Christ, and God has changed them. Paul's appeal to Philemon is the same for us today, because God is the same God who changes people who trust in Him. So Forgive and accept your brothers and sisters in Christ!

   b. Explain the SCI clearly so that people understand it.

This does not mean you must trust them right away. It does not mean that you must treat them as if nothing had ever happened. Something terrible did happen, and you must both deal with it. They must confess, and you must forgive. Then, you must start rebuilding the relationship. You must trust that God has changed them and is continuing to change them.

  c. Give a TRUE story of someone had the same HN problem/need, and who followed the SCI.

    i. What was their problem?

There were some missionaries who were trying to share the gospel with a tribe in South America. But the tribal people killed them. One of the men who was killed had a son named Steve. In the Lord's providence, he grew up among the people who killed his father, but he never knew which man killed his father. During the time he lived with the people, many of them accepted Jesus as their Savior. One day, a man named Mincaye who had accepted Jesus as his Savior, confessed to Steve that he had been the one who had killed Steve's father.

    ii. What did they do? (SCI)

Steve had a choice. Was he going to take revenge and kill Mincaye? Was he going to hate him? Was he going to hold a grudge and be angry with him? Steve knew that God changes people, and he had seen that God had forgiven and changed Mincaye. So he forgave and accepted Mincaye.

    iii. What was the result?

As a result, Steve and Mincaye became very close friends. Steve's children treat Mincaye as their grandfather. Steve's forgiveness of Mincaye was a testimony to the whole tribe of God's forgiveness toward them.

14. Conclusion – Remind the congregation of the SCI

  a. Remind people of the HN problem/need

We want to hold grudges or take revenge against people who have done wrong to us.

  b. Remind people of the nature of God (G)

But God is a God who forgives and changes people who trust in Him

  c. Remind them of the solution (SCI)

Therefore, Forgive and accept your brothers and sisters in Christ!

APPENDIX B

DATA CHARTS

CONTROL COURSE DATA CHART

TEST COURSE DATA CHART

BRIDGE SECTION COMPARED

CONTROL COURSE DATA CHART

The chart is presented rotated (landscape). The major category headings across the chart are **Exegesis**, **Bridge**, and **Application**, with a leading **Student copy/other** column and a trailing **Individual student score** column.

Exegesis columns
Repetition, Contrast, Compari, Cause and Figures of Conjunct/ Verbs, Pronoun, Means, Purpose, Gen-Spe, Actions/ Actions/ Emotion, Tone

Bridge columns
HIN, G, P, ECI, follows TCI, follows SCI

Application
Application, Individual student score

Individual student score (by student 1–22)
Student	Score
1	2.91
2	3.14
3	2.73
4	3.32
5	3.68
6	3.68
7	2.68
8	3.00
9	2.77
10	3.82
11	2.45
12	2.68
13	2.18
14	2.41
15	2.18
16	2.23
17	2.45
18	2.55
19	2.86
20	2.55
21	2.27
22	2.18
Average	2.76

Row averages (Exegesis)
4.81818, 3.5, 1.86364, 3.3818, 3.40909, 3.22727, 2.5, 2.72727, 1.86364, 2.38818, 2.5, 2.38818, 2.88818, 2.36364, 4.54545

Row averages (Bridge / Application)
HIN 2.77273, G 2.04545, P 2.28364, ECI 2.09091, follows TCI 2.13636, follows SCI 1.59091; Application 2.63636

Top 10 Average
3.6, 3.6, 2.9, 3.6, 3.1, 1.7 (HIN, G, P, ECI, follows TCI, follows SCI) — labeled "Top 10 Average"

LEGEND
- 1 wrong
- 2 bare minimum
- 3 ok
- 4 almost perfect
- 5 perfect

- 10 best papers
- papers copied from /by other students
- papers in which students collaborated

TEST COURSE DATA CHART

		Exegesis				Bridge									Application	
STUDENT	COPY/COLLABORAT	MEMORIZ	SUBJECT	COMPLEX	OUTLINE	HN	G	P	R	ECI	follows	TCI	follows	SCI	INTRO	Individual Student Average
1		4	5	4	5		3	5	2	4	3 OK		3 OK	3	4	3.75
2		5	3	5	5		4	2	3	4	4 OK		5 OK	4	4	4.00
3		4	5	4	5		4	5	3	3	3 OK		4 X	2	5	3.92
4		5	5	4	5		4	4	5	5	5 OK		5 OK	5	5	4.67
5		5	5	5	5		4	5	4	3	4 OK		4 OK	4	4	4.33
6		5	4	5	5		4	5	4	4	4 OK		4 OK	4	5	4.33
7		5	5	5	4		2	3	4	4	5 OK		4 OK	3	4	4.42
8		4	5	3	5		3	3	2	3	3 OK		3 OK	3	1	3.17
9		5	5	5	4		3	5	4	4	5 X		2 X	3	5	4.08
10		1	4	4	5		3	3	3	2	2 OK		2 OK	2	5	3.33
11		5	4	5	4		2	1	4	4	4 OK		4 OK	4	2	4.08
12		5	1	1	5		1	2	1	2	4 OK		4 OK	5	1	3.25
13		4	5	1	2		2	2	3	3	2 X		1 X	1	2	1.83
14		2	1	2	2		1	4	4	4	1 X		4 X	2	1	1.92
15		5	2	2	5		2	1	2	4	4 OK		2 X	2	1	3.08
16		4	5	1	3		2	4	3	3	3 X		1 X	2	1	2.33
17		5	3	5	5		3	4	4	4	3 X		4 X	2	1	2.75
18		5	2	2	5		4	5	4	4	4 OK		4 X	4	2	3.42
19		3	3	1	4		4	2	4	4	4 OK		4 OK	4	1	3.42
20		5	4	1	3		2	2	2	2	2 X		1 X	1	1	2.17
Average		4.35	3.7	3.2	4.25		3	3.6	3.25	3.4	3.45		3.1	2.9	2.75	3.41
Top 10 Average							3.6	4.2	3.4	3.6	3.8		3.6	3.3		

LEGEND

- 1 wrong
- 2 bare minimum
- 3 ok
- 4 almost perfect
- 5 perfect

- 10 best papers
- papers copied from /by other students
- papers in which students collaborated

Bridge Section Compared

Human Nature (HN)

Control Group	Test Group

1. dishonest, compulsion
2. The elders used to feed the flock of God the believers by serving as overseer by compulsion, for dishonest gain and as being lords.
3. not example for others
4. compulsion, dishonest, entrusted, <u>bad example</u>
5. compulsion, dishonest, untrustworthy, <u>being lord over others they can controlled or who trusted them.</u>
6. (same as 2)
7. <u>receiver</u>, shepherd, flock, elders
8. Believers want to serve the Lord with compulsion and dishonest-mind
9. compulsion, dishonest
10. compulsion, dishonest gain, <u>being Lords over</u>
	1. People are serving by compulsion and dishonest gain to the flock
	2. Most of the elders in the church are probably not serving as the shepherd the flock of God and aren't lead willingly and not faithful in serving God.
	3. Elders serve the Lord by compulsion but not willingly in many time
	4. The leaders lead in compulsion and being as Lord over to the people
	5. Man has compulsion and loves dishonest gain
	  - some of the Leaders are not serving willing and eagerly
	  - But they all hope to get a good reward
	6. the elders in the church do not serve the flock willingly and eagerly
	7. People are not honest and not doing willing and eagerly. Human are wanting to have authority who are under them.
	8. People do not comprehend the responsibility of Elder
	9. People naturally leads their followers like a boss and this is true till today.
	10. If we have some high position than others we want to compel them. Even in our works we cannot do honestly.

Vision of God (G)

Control Group	Test Group
1. glory, reveals, willingly, eagerly, serving, and honest 2. Jesus Christ is the giver of the crown of glory 3. God is an example for everyone 4. chief shepherd, <u>examples</u> 5. <u>the owner of the flock</u>, glory, <u>chief shepherd,</u> (head of the church), giver of rewards 6. (same as 2) 7. glory, <u>giver,</u> witnesses 8. God is a God who gives reward or crown of glory 9. chief shepherd, gracious 10. Willingly, eagerly, <u>being examples</u>, the chief	1. God is the chief shepherd who take care the shepherd the flock 2. God is a God who likes to give reward to those who worthy of them. 3. God is the chief shepherd 4. God is the lead and concerns his people' leadership. 5. God wants his servants to serve Him willingly and eagerly - God will reward the elders according to how they serve Him and shepherd his flock 6. God is a God who cares for His flock 7. God is a good Shepherd. He wants His

shepherd	appointed elder to be a good shepherd of His flock 8. God is the one who take care his children (church) 9. God is the true Chief Shepherd 10. God is the rewarder.

Author's Purpose (P)

Control Group	Test Group
1. Peter wanted the elders to have humble mind, serving, and honest life brings the crown of glory 2. Peter wanted the elders to feed the flock of God by serving as overseers not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly and not as being Lords but as being example because Jesus Christ will give the crown of glory 3. Peter wanted the elders to know how to take care or rule their flock and lead them by example 4. Peter wanted the elders to be an example for the flocks 5. Peter wanted them to become a partaker of the glory that will be reveal 6. (same as 2) 7. 8. Peter wanted the elders to serve not by compulsion and dishonest gain but willingly and eagerly and being examples to the flock 9. Peter wants the elders to be effective leaders (or) shepherds and be example 10. Peter wanted the elders to be examples to the flock	1. Peter wanted the elders to serve the flock of God because they had been tested from God. 2. The writer's purpose was to instruct to the shepherd the flock of God that they might get reward from chief Shepherd 3. Peter wanted the elder to know how to serve the flock of God 4. Peter wanted to see the elders are leading the people of God willingly, eagerly and by being examples. 5. Peter exhort the elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly and eagerly, not by compulsion and for dishonest gain. 6. Peter wanted the elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly and eagerly. 7. Peter exhorts the elders of the churches of Asia Minor to be godly leader and shepherd of the flock of God that they will receive the crown of glory when Christ comes. 8. Peter wanted the elder to feed the flock of God because they can faced strange concerning the fiery trial. 9. Peter wanted elders/leaders to serve others having a servanthood and hearted and setting example in the church. 10. Peter exhorted to know the requirements of leadership.

Exegetical Central Idea (ECI)

Control Group	Test Group
1. Peter said having a humble mind, serving other, and honest life teaches them to live in Godly lives. It brings the crown of Glory. 2. Peter wanted the elders to have a good example to flock 3. Peter wanted elders to lead their flock by example 4. Peter said that the elders need to have a good	1. Peter wanted the flock of God comfort by the elders till the chief shepherd appears 2. Peter wanted the elders to serve in willingly and eagerly and as good shepherd, worthy of to get reward. 3. Paul (sic) wanted elder to serve God by being example to the flock for the crown of glory. 4. Peter exhorted the leaders to lead the people

examples for the believers	willingly eagerly and by being examples.
5. Peter wanted the elder to become a good overseer willingly and eagerly not to dishonest, not by compulsion, not to rule over them but to set an example for the church how to be a good Christian. 6. 7. Peter wanted the elders to know Jesus Christ is the giver of the crown of glory. 8. Peter wanted the elders to serve the Lord willingly and eagerly. 9. 10. Peter told the elders being examples to the flock	5. Peter wanted the elders to serve and shepherd God's flock willingly that they might receive the crown of glory at the appearance of Christ. 6. Peter wanted the elders to shepherd the flock of God willingly and eagerly. 7. Peter encourages and exhorted the elders in Asia Minor to serve as overseers, willingly, eagerly and being examples to the flock, for Christ (the Chief Shepherd) will give the crown of glory. So he wanted them to be godly leader and shepherd of the flock of God. 8. Peter wanted the flock of God will take care by the elder till the chief shepherd appears 9. Peter wanted the elders/leaders to live and lead in a servant leadership style while they are waiting for the return of the Chief Shepherd. 10. Peter wanted the elders to know the requirements of leadership

Theological Central Idea (TCI)

Control Group	Test Group
1. Having a humble mind, serving other, and honest life teaches believers to live in Godly lives – It brings the crown of glory. 2. The Elders should have a good example 3. Elders should lead their flock by example 4. (same as 2) 5. A believer must have an honest life and he has to serves the Lord eagerly and willingly and he has to be a good example for others. 6. Jesus Christ will give the crown of glory to the elders who feed the believers by serving as overseer willingly, eagerly and being example. 7. Jesus Christ will give the crown of glory to the elders who serve him 8. Believers must serve the Lord willingly and eagerly 9. Church leaders (or) pastor should be example for others and effective leaders 10. God teaches the believers serving as overseers and being examples to the flock.	1. The elders should serve the flock of God till the return of Christ 2. The elders should serve as good shepherd, overseers in willingly and being example for the church member 3. Elder should serve God by being example to the flock for the crown of glory 4. Leaders need to lead the people willingly, eagerly and by being examples 5. The elders in the churches should serve the Lord willingly and eagerly by hopping (sic) good reward. 6. The elders should shepherd and serve their flock without compulsion and dishonest gain 7. The elders of the churches should be godly leaders and shepherds which is necessary element in the church's ability to function effectively in a hostile world. 8. Elder should comfort and feed the church while they are waiting the return of chief shepherd and till will receive the crown of glory 9. Believers should live or lead others by serving

	them, and without any evil expectation 10. The elders should know the requirements of leadership

Sermon Central Idea (SCI)

Control Group	Test Group
1. Having a humble mind, serving other, and honest life teaches us to live Godly lives - It brings the crown of Glory. 2. Have a good example 3. Be example in your leading to the flock 4. (same as 2) 5. We have to serve the God for His Glory 6. 7. 8. To be a good or biblical elder, live your life to be a good example, and use your time preciously 9. 10. God teaches us to be examples to the flock.	1. The elders serve and take care the flock of God will wait for the return of Christ. 2. The elders in our churches should serve us as good shepherd in willingly and being example to get reward from the chief shepherd 3. Serve God with willingness of mind 4. People need godly leaders who lead the people willingly, eagerly and by being example 5. Let us shepherd eagerly and willingly 6. The elders, shepherd your flock and feed them willingly and eagerly 7. Be a godly leader and shepherd the flock of God 8. The elders comfort and feed your church members while we waiting the come back of Christ. 9. Let us live and lead our congregation in a servant leadership style, without any evil hope from them. 10. Know the requirements of leadership!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abraham, Alex. "Contextualized Thological Education for Equipping the Unreached Unengaged People Groups in North India." In *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, edited by Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy. Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd, 2014.

Alexander, Patricia A., Jonna M. Kulikowich, and K. Schulze Sharon. "How Subject-Matter Knowledge Affects Recall and Interest." *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 2 (1994): 313-337.

B. , John. "The Story-Teller, the Dhow and the Fishers of Men: Orality in Relation to Muslim Communities Coming to Faith." *Mission Frontiers* (May/June 2014). http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-story-teller-the-dhow-and-the-fishers-of-men.

Block, Daniel I. "'That They May Hear': Biblical Foundations for the Oral Reading of Scripture in Worship." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 5, no. 1 (2012): 5-34.

Bransford, John, Ann Brown, M. Suzanne Donovan, National Research Council, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning. *How People Learn : Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.

Brown, Rick. "Communicating God's Message in Oral Cultures." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 3 (2004): 26-32.

Campbell, Linda. *Mindful Learning: 101 Proven Strategies for Student and Teacher Success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003.

"The Cape Town Commitment." https://www.lausanne.org/content/ctc/ctcommitment#p2-4-2.

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ Centered Preaching, Redeeming the Expository Sermon: A Practical and Theological Guide for Bible Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996.

Chiang, Samuel E., and Grant Lovejoy, eds. *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts, Beyond Literate*. Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises, Ltd., 2013.

_____, eds. *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education, Beyond Literate*. Hong Kong: International Orality Network, in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2014.

Chong, Calvin. "Giving Voice to Orality in Theological Education: Responses and Recommendations." In *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, edited by Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy. Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd, 2014.

Clapper, John P. "The Effects of Prior Knowledge on Incidental Category Learning." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 38, no. 6 (2012): 1558-1577.

Cohen, G. G. "2267 Simel." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed)*, edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Kenneth Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

Contributers. "Torah Reading." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia* https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Torah_reading&oldid=736654574.

Coppedge, Billy. "A Missionary Responds to Mark Snowden." *Lausanne Conversations* (2012). http://conversation.lausanne.org/resources/detail/12313/.

Coppedge, William. "Training in the Ugandan Context." In *Beyond Literate Western Practices: Continuing Conversations in Orality and Theological Education*, edited by Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy. Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd, 2014.

Coppes, L. J. "1288a Negev." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed)*, edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Kenneth Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

Donohue-Smith, Maureen. "Improving the Questions Students Ask." *Education Digest* 72, no. 3 (2006): 41-43.

Duvall, J. Scott, and J. Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible (Kindle Version)*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.

Duvall, J. Scott, and John Daniel Hays. *Grasping God's Word : A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

Evans, Craig A. "Jewish Scripture and the Literacy of Jesus." http://www.craigevans.com.

Fee, Gordon D., and Douglas K. Stuart. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.

_____. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Fourth Edition (Kindle e-publication): Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014.

Gilchrest, P. R. "871 Yamim." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed)*, edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Kenneth Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

_____. "872 Yamin." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed)*, edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Kenneth Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

Graves, Michael P. "The Public Reading of Scripture in Early Judaism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50, no. 3 (2007): 467-487.

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce Kenneth Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1981.

Harris, Stephen, and Joy Kinslow Harris. *Culture and Learning: Tradition and Education in North-East Arnhem Land*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1984.

Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Havelock, Eric Alfred. *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Hiebert, Paul G. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985.

Hiebert, Paul G., and Eloise Hiebert Meneses. *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995.

Hofstede, Geert H. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

House, Robert J., and Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program. *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The Globe Study of 62 Societies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2004.

The International Orality Network. https://orality.net/.

_____. "Text Comprehension, Memory, and Learning." *American Psychologist* 49, no. 4 (1994): 294-303.

Klein, William W., Craig Blomberg, Kermit Allen Ecklebarger, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 2004.

Leeser, Michael J. "Learner-Based Factors in L2 Reading Comprehension and Processing Grammatical Form: Topic Familiarity and Working Memory." *Language Learning* 57, no. 2 (2007): 229-270.

Lingenfelter, Judith, and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Teaching Cross-Culturally : An Incarnation Model for Learning and Teaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

Livermore, David. *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The Real Secret to Success*: New York: Amacom, 2015.

Living Water International. https://www.water.cc/orality.

Lovejoy, Grant. "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update." *Orality Journal: The Word became Fresh* 1 (2012): 12.

Lovejoy, Grant, and D. Claydon. "Making Disciples of Oral Learners: Lausanne Occasional Paper 54." In *2004 Lausanne Forum Occasional Papers*, 2005.

Luriia, A. R. *Cognitive Development, Its Cultural and Social Foundations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Mathewson, Stephen D. *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.

Moo, Douglas J. *The Epistle to the Romans.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996.

Moon, W. Jay. "Discipling through the Eyes of Oral Learners." *Missiology* 38, no. 2 (2010): 127-140.

_____. "Understanding Oral Learners." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 15, no. 1 (2012): 29-39.

Murphy, Gregory L., and Paul D. Allopenna. "The Locus of Knowledge Effects in Concept Learning." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 20, no. 4 (1994): 904-919.

Murphy, Gregory L. and Audrey S. Kaplan. "Feature Distribution and Background Knowledge in Category Learning." *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology: Section A* 53, no. 4 (2000): 962-982.

Nisbett, Richard E. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently ... And Why*. New York: The Free Press, 2003.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London; New York: Methuen, 1982.

_____. *Orality and Literacy : The Technologizing of the Word*. London: Routledge, 2003.

"Oral Society." Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/oral+society

Poythress, Vern S. "Divine meaning of Scripture." *Westminster Theological Journal* 48, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 241-279

Prior, Randall. "Orality: The Not-So-Silent Issue in Mission Theology." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 3 (2011): 143-147.

Ramm, Bernard L. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970.

Richards, E. Randolph, and Brandon J. O'Brien. *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes : Removing Cultural Blinders to Better Understand the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Ryken, Leland. *How to Read the Bible as Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1984.

_____. *Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction to the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992.

Sanchez, Daniel Raul, J. O. Terry, and LaNette W. Thompson. *Bible Storying for Church Planting*: Fort Worth, TX: Church Starting Network, 2008.

Shaw, R. Daniel. *Transculturation: The Cultural Factor in Translation and Other Communication Tasks*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1988.

Smith, Donald K. *Creating Understanding: A Handbook for Christian Communication across Cultural Landscapes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Snowden, Mark. "Are We Training Our Pastors Wrong? Or How Can We Train Our Pastors More Effectively?" *Lausanne Global Conversation* (2012). http://conversation.lausanne.org/resources/detail/12316/.

Spindler, George. *Education and Cultural Process: Anthropological Approaches*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1987.

Steffen, Tom A. "Tracking the Orality Movement: Some Implications for 21st Century Missions." *Lausanne Global Analysis* 3, no. 2 (March 2014). https://www.lausanne.org/content/lga/2014-03/tracking-the-orality-movement-some-implications-for-21st-century-missions.

Stein, Robert H. *Playing by the Rules: A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994.

Stills, David. "Responding to the Articles in Perspective Iv." In *Beyond Literate Western Models: Contextualizing Theological Education in Oral Contexts*, edited by Samuel E. Chiang and Grant Lovejoy. Hong Kong: International Orality Network in cooperation with Capstone Enterprises Ltd., 2013.

Street, Brian V. *Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education*. London; New York: Longman, 1995.

"Torah Reading," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, accessed September 19, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Torah_reading&oldid=736654574.

Virkler, Henry A. *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981.

Warren, Timothy S. "A Paradigm for Preaching." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148, no. 592 (1991): 463–486.

Wolf, H. "467 Hagah." In *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Electronic Ed.)*, edited by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer and Bruce Kenneth Waltke. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.