Hermeneutics and Communications

Sherry Camp

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. Ken Schmidt

**Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements**

1. Write a three-paragraph essay responding to the following question:

When have you noticed your pre-judgments influencing your interpretations? How have you experienced a "fusion of horizons" in your learning experiences?

I was privileged (with my husband) to spend two years covertly serving unregistered Christian schools and house churches/families in China. My subjective presuppositions about many aspects of living under communism, for us and our national friends, went through extreme changes when we encountered the actual context of our experiences. “Don’t poke the bear,” was a popular expression, but they do it all the time. Would you not agree that having Christian meetings in their homes and inviting American citizens in their country to teach their children academics through Christian worldview “poking the bear?” Our question was always, “Isn’t that very dangerous?” They always explained, “Everything is illegal, per se, here. On any given day, for any reason, government representatives can challenge or charge us according to their mood. We halfway expect it. And we are not afraid. We walk as Yesu directs us.”

My fusion of horizons, combining my Christian worldview with the experience of living in China was one of extreme situations that involved much interpretation of traditions in an unfamiliar country (Schmidt 2023). One of my very personal memory as I began to understand Chinese culture was Ms.Sissi, a wife, mother, educator, writer and mature Christian who became a very dear friend of mine, especially as she was my translator in the teacher training and administrator training for educated adults in these illegal schools. And to make this very special and close to me, having just taken the lecture for Hermeneutics and Communication last Saturday, I had the opportunity to live this out again. Just this week, on Tuesday, here in Indianapolis, I got to visit with Ms. Sissi Yu this week as she was helping her son, one of our students almost ten years ago in Beijing, settle into Purdue University, where he received a full scholarship. I have kept in touch with her through email and online calling since we left Beijing and was very surprised to receive this personal visit from her. For eight years she has been writing a math curriculum for elementary grades for use in China by Chinese Christians. In the last four years she has linked with ACSI (American Christian Schools International) to put her work into easily transferable PDF format for covert distribution. To hear her in person across from me at the lunch table this week was a day I will not forget! So far, she has trained 600 teachers and has direct ties to more than 40 underground schools outside of the capitol city (where covert Christian churches can no longer register for educational schools). My pre-judgements were very negative, even fearful for her and the believers there. She could be severely fined and imprisoned should she get caught. I should counsel her contextually to stop yesterday! But she understands the need and her culture and has fused her way forward to new horizons. By listening to her and watching her enthusiasm and love for her people I realized she is not afraid and exemplifies courage from Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans and thoughts that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and well-being and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope.” Could it be that Jesus is our great example of faith and dependence on Him through every circumstance and no fear is required? She is determined and is not going to stop translation work for underground Christian schools.

Another quick example, Vigi, a 17-year-old girl from our apartment complex in Beijing, was on track a few years ago to win “The Voice of China,” until it was discovered that she was a Christian believer. She played her Fender “Fusion” acoustic guitar and sang on national television several times as she advanced. Her music career has continued despite her “arranged losing” on the show. I might have explained some cautionary Scriptures to Vigi and her believing parents, our friends, but their context is not the same as ours is in America. Their worldview is about accepting risk so they can enjoy every ounce of freedom they can experience, while keeping a proverbial foot in the door for others to inch ever closer to a truly worthy horizon “for the people” as she continues to write and perform her music from Christian worldview principles. Her courage and inspiration as a young artist remind of a verse I memorized as a teen, “Trust in and rely confidently on the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways know, recognize and acknowledge Him and He will direct and make plain your paths.” Praise the Lord for these brave ones dependent on Him, alone, who have become my heroes!

WORKS CITED

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