**Hermeneutics and Communication**

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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?

Prejudices, often rooted in our background, experiences, culture, social norms, and religion, inevitably shade our perceptions and interpretations of the worlds we encounter. I can recall when I experienced this and recognized how my prejudices colored my reading of the Scriptures. In 2015, while recovering from back surgery, I had nothing but time on my hands to do a significant bit of reading and studying. In my study of biblical texts, I had a difficult time reconciling what was clearly expressed by the author and what I had been taught in my faith tradition. This seeming crisis of conflict caused me to experience hurt and anger, causing me to shut the Bible and walk away from the study because I had felt lied to and betrayed by my teachers and pastors.

I decided to return to the study because I had to have an inward, honest conversation about whether to rely on my traditional teachings or the clear teachings of the text. When I decided to lay aside my traditional faith biases, I encountered what Hans-Georg Gadamer coined as a "fusion of horizons." Gadamer's hermeneutic approach refers to the point in the interpretive process when the reader's "horizon" encounters the text's "horizon." As I continued to engage the text devoid of my presuppositions as much as possible, it became easier to confront it honestly and openly. It allowed me to consider many other parts of the text that I'd previously robbed the text of due to my prejudices. These prejudices forced me to remove the historical, socio-political, cultural, and economic backgrounds of the text's author and audience. This new approach to scripture study was transformative because it caused me to be more than a casual student. Now, I had become an investigator of the text, asking many questions of the text that I had not asked or even considered previously.

This interpretive approach of "fusion of horizons" opened up the text and allowed me to experience its true beauty. This collaboration of horizons opened my eyes widely and allowed me to consider my biases, prejudices, and presuppositions. This shift in how I approached studying the text allowed me to become a better student of the Bible, which led to me being a better teacher. Gadamer's interpretive process, "fusion of horizons," aided in my growth and helped me better understand the importance of being aware of biases and prejudices, acknowledging those biases and prejudices, and intentionally eliminating or mitigating them as best I can when encountering biblical texts.

WORKS CITED