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February 28, 2024

Professor

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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?

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In 1973 my family attending service in a dually aligned Black Baptist church. It was in Crescent Hill, a historic neighborhood in East Louisville, Kentucky. The church was founded by Rev. Elijah P. Marrs who was also the first president of Simmons Bible College now referred to as the 107th HBCU Simmons College of Kentucky. Throughout a host of cultural and societal shifts, Black institutions in particular, had their stake and voice in these movements. The culture of the day was patriarchal, discriminatory, and at times inhumane from chattel slavery through the institution of mass incarceration of the 1980’s. Nevertheless, in Black ecumenicalism in America, the church took its cues from White protestant ecumenicalism since its start during slavery as it relates to religious traditions, practices, and norms.

As children we were introduced to such in the church. One that aroused a great deal of curiosity was the mysticism and use of the pulpit; or what we heard referred to as sacred space or the sacred desk. It was ingrained that non-clerical members of the church should not walk across the pulpit. This was something that you just did not do as a reverential respect was developed. For years, this observance was upheld without inquiry or protest. However, as I matured in my worldview of church and biblical knowledge expanded, it was discovered that the word pulpit was only mentioned one time in the Bible. Nehemiah 8:3, 4 (KJV) says that Ezra the scribe *stood upon* a pulpit of wood, which was made for that purpose as he read the law to the congregation. The term for pulpit is a raised platform on which a speaker stood and was not considered a lectern or high reading desk behind which a reader stands (p.1153). It was at that point as a young adult I began to question everything I had been taught to think and believe.

One incident comes to mind in reference to challenging or testing in curious defiance of the notion of not walking across the pulpit. The elders in the church had built this “boogey man” idea in our heads that we thought if we crossed that God would get us. As a young child I found myself alone in the sanctuary while my dad was in a meeting with the pastor. Not knowing at the time what he was doing, knocked on the door to see if we were close to leaving. I was told to go sit down until he was finished. On both sides of the pulpit were choir stands. Passing by the left choir stand, I stopped and looked across at the right choir stand with the thought in mind to run through the pulpit. I was scared. Heart palpitating, pulse racing, yet in my mind I was going to do it, I was going to run through the pulpit area to the other side. So, I took off full speed and when I reached the other side I turned around quickly, took my hands, and touched my body only to discover nothing happened to me.

The prejudgment was based upon oral tradition of having respect for the house of God and that the pulpit area was for clerics only as it was considered sacrilege to do otherwise. A church pulpit must be a sacred place. A place where believers should use as a place of contact with their Lord should they choose to come forward to it and cast their burdens unto Him (Rukwati, 2013).

**Works Cited**

Butler, T. C., Smith, M. A., Jackson, F., Logan, P., Church, C. (1991). Holman Bible

Dictionary; p. 1153. Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee.

Rukwati, Takura. (2013, March 19). Uphold the holiness of the pulpit. The Herald.

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