COM 803: Hermeneutics and Communication

Steven Mills

Omega Graduate School

Date (August 17, 2024)

Professor

Dr. James Strecker

**Assignment 1 - Content Questions**

Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week

of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during

the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

**Faith-Integrated Hermeneutics: Reading for Worldviews**

**NOTE:** I acknowledge using ChatGPT (iPad App) to find sources for, shorten, and clarify this essay.  I entered the prompt: “Find sources for an essay on Faith-Integrated Hermeneutics.” Then, after writing the essay, I used the prompt: ‘Shorten this essay to 350 words and clarify the subject matter.” I used the output to edit this final draft. I also acknowledge using Grammarly to help with proper punctuation and sentence structure and to check for plagiarism (Grammarly. (2024). Grammarly Handbook. https://www.grammarly.com/handbook/).

Faith-integrated hermeneutics aligns biblical interpretation with a Christian worldview, recognizing faith's role in shaping understanding of the text. It views the Bible as a living document that addresses diverse worldviews, emphasizing that everyone reads texts through their worldview—a comprehensive framework through which individuals perceive reality. For Christians, a worldview grounded in biblical teachings is crucial for interpreting scripture and other texts in alignment with their faith.

A core principle of faith-integrated hermeneutics is that the interpreter's worldview influences all interpretations. Smith states that "reading for worldviews means being open to the ways Scripture confronts our assumptions, reshaping them in light of God’s revealed truth" (Smith, 2021. p. 23). This approach challenges the idea of neutrality or pure objectivity, arguing that one's beliefs, especially religious ones, inevitably shape the interpretative process. Thus, Christians are encouraged to intentionally integrate their faith into their hermeneutics, ensuring their interpretations are consistent with a biblical worldview. Vanhoozer notes, "hermeneutics detached from faith risks reducing Scripture to a mere historical artifact, stripping it of its transformative power" (Vanhoozer, 2020. p. 17).

One challenge of faith-integrated hermeneutics is balancing faith with academic rigor. Critics argue that traditional models may not resonate with other Christian traditions or pragmatically oriented academic disciplines. The model may sometimes seem too rational or competitive, potentially overlooking contemplative and cooperative aspects of Christian scholarship. However, proponents believe the model can adapt to various traditions and disciplines, emphasizing a Christ-centered understanding without compromising academic integrity (Christian Scholar’s Review, 2024).

This approach also highlights the importance of a robust theological foundation, ensuring that interpretations are faithful to the text and reflective of a broader Christian worldview. This is particularly significant in fields like counseling, where integrating faith with practice leads to more holistic, faith-informed care (Biller, 2024). Additionally, faith-integrated hermeneutics emphasizes the communal nature of interpretation, relying on the collective wisdom of the faith community throughout history. The church’s historical interpretations guide contemporary readers, helping them avoid individualism in interpretation (Bartholomew, 2019).

In conclusion, faith-integrated hermeneutics is vital for Christians seeking to interpret texts in alignment with their faith. It challenges neutral interpretation, integrates faith with learning across disciplines and traditions, enriches the interpretative process, and strengthens the connection between faith and understanding (Christ in the Classroom, 2024).

WORKS CITED

Bartholomew, C. G. (2019). Introducing biblical hermeneutics: A comprehensive framework for hearing God in scripture. Baker Academic.

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Christian scholar’s review. (2024). Where faith and learning intersect: Re-mapping the

contemporary terrain. https://christianscholars.com

Smith, J. K. A. (2021). You are what you love: The spiritual power of habit. Brazos Press.

Vanhoozer, K. J. (2020). Faith speaking understanding: Performing the drama of doctrine. Westminster John Knox Press.