**Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements**

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(2. Faith- Integrated Hermeneutics: Reading for Worldviews was selected for this assignment)

In these current times, there appear to be several and often divisive opinions pertaining to just about everything including those of a spiritual nature. There are many religious practices in the world and within each practice there are several variations to most of them. For example, Christianity which uses the Bible is diverse in several ways and can be categorized into denominations including many versions of non-denominational sects. Within those denominations there are traditions followed by various subsets, geographical locations and relocations, and generational understandings. Variety is common and similarity appears to be becoming less as time passes.

Sacred text such as the Bible guides how many people perceive, interact, and behave in the world. This leads one to ponder how do people understand the Bible and its meaning. Several years ago, this writer was introduced to a small book which explained theological concepts in an introductory manner. The writers of *How to Think Theologically* wrote that “The biblical text does not speak for itself; every reading is someone’s interpretation of it. The actual analysis of its meaning is called *exegesis.* (Readings that impose our own ideas on Scripture instead of the meaning that is there are eisegesis.) The principles of interpretation that guide exegesis are referred to as *biblical hermeneutics* (Stone and Duke, 2013, p. 50).

Though this book was written over a decade ago, it still highlights several points which apply today. It discusses a person’s interpretation and their analysis based on that interpretation or exegesis. They referred to this process as hermeneutics while mentioning eisegesis as placing one’s own ideas into this process as eisegesis. This hermeneutic process can be difficult especially while trying to negate or minimize eisegesis. Which brings attention to the question “Can human reason by itself obtain true knowledge of God and the most authentic life this God ordained for humanity?” (Zimmermann, 2015, p. 170). With so many people today claiming to understand what the Word of God is saying, are they really conveying a message from God according to God’s will to God’s people which is leading and guiding them as God intended? Readers of the Bible are then left with another vital question posed by the authors of *Grasping God’s Word*. This crucial question is “What is meaning, and who controls it, the author or the reader?” (Duvall and Hays, 2012, p. 239).

One should also consider, does the Bible address the issue of its own interpretation? Does it mention anything about people interpreting the Word of God and the benefits of proper interpretation, consequences of inaccurate interpretation (intentional or unintentional), and will there be a time when people can or cannot interpret it based on prophecy? Does the Bible mention who can and cannot interpret it? All these factors should be considered when assessing the worldview of faith integrated hermeneutics.

References

Duvall, J. S., & Hays, J. D. (2012). *Grasping God’s Word: A hands-on approach to reading, interpreting, and applying the Bible*, 3rd. Ed. Zondervan.

Stone, H. W., & Duke, J. O. (2013). *How to Think Theologically*, 3rd Ed. Fortress Press.

Zimmermann, J. (2015) *Hermeneutics: A Very short introduction*. Oxford University Press.