

Third Horizon Ethnohermeneutics: Re-Evaluating New Testament Hermeneutical Models for Intercultural Bible Interpreters Today

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Communicating the message of the Bible to others is the goal of every biblical exegete. Whether that exegete be a pastor, seminary professor, missionary, Sunday School teacher, or individual Christian, the goal is the same: making a particular Bible passage relevant to others. An integral part of this communicative process involves interpretation.

Biblical interpretation is difficult enough when done in one's own culture. When it is attempted in a cross-cultural situation, the hermeneutical complexities involved often become overwhelming. This is especially true for Western missionaries who are attempting to make the Bible relevant in another culture but who have only received training in Western hermeneutical methodology. Likewise, for non-Westerners theologically trained in the West, or even for those non-Westerners trained in their own country but influenced by Western theologians, their subsequent interpretation of Scripture for and among their own people and culture is often a frustrating task.

This paper is an attempt to bring some help to those involved in the cross-cultural interpretation of Scripture (henceforth referred to as "ethnohermeneutics"). First, the paper will examine what has become the typical Western hermeneutical model, looking at some of the strengths and weaknesses of this model for ethnohermeneutics. Second, the paper will examine some newly emerging hermeneutical models. The examination of these alternative models will show how even biblical interpreters weaned on the typical Western hermeneutical model are currently gaining the freedom to experiment with new models, many of which have insights for those involved in ethnohermeneutics. Third, the paper will examine the hermeneutical models of the New Testament writers as they interpreted the Old Testament in the first century, A.D. Such an examination will show that these New Testament models have much to offer those currently involved in ethnohermeneutics. It is the contention of this writer that in light of the increasing movement away from the typical Western hermeneutical model, a re-evaluation of these New Testament interpretation models will give all those involved in ethnohermeneutics more freedom, and hence greater relevance, in their interpretative task.

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THE TYPICAL WESTERN HERMENEUTICAL MODEL

Mickelsen (1963:55-57) popularized what, for Evangelicals, has become the standard model for biblical interpretation: the two-step method! The first step of this method draws upon the best which the historical-critical² approach to Scripture emulates. This step theoretically enables the exegete to comprehend what a particular Bible passage meant in its original context to its original audience. The second step of the method involves the application process: what that passage means for today. Step two draws directly from what has already been completed in step one. As a result, the meaning of the passage as derived through the processes of the first step should be applied as similarly as possible in the second step.

As will be shown below, this two-step method is but one of many interpretation models. Good biblical interpretation is not limited to this particular model. There is much to the argument, however, that the two-step method offers a usable model when trying to answer the question: What does the biblical text say to the exegete and his or her audience in their present situation? The first step of this method, by employing historical-critical methodology, broadens the interpreter's perspective and helps move him or her away from individualistic, mono-cultural worldview assumptions.

Precisely because of this broadening of the interpreter's perspective, theologians who still hold fast to historical-critical methodology are justified in their concern for a system of checks on the results of interpretation done by those exegetes who, to various degrees, attempt to abandon the first step. But two things need to be kept in mind here. First of all, a total disregard for historical criticism in the interpretative process is highly unlikely given the influence of historical criticism and the insights it does offer to exegetes. Furthermore, most exegetes realize their need to get beyond their own worldview assumptions when interpreting Scripture, which means, once again, that an absolutely total disregard for historical criticism probably will not occur. Those exegetes, therefore, who do attempt to abandon the first step need to be aware of many of the real values of historical criticism and their indebtedness to it.

At the same time, however, this two-step method based on historical criticism has often times proven itself woefully inadequate for interpreting Scripture in cross-cultural situations. While the two-step method of interpretation may indeed be a good model for interpreting Scripture in the Western world, it must be seen that this particular model has arisen out of Western philosophy after the Reformation and as such has little relevance in cultures which do not have a similar Western philosophical background. This typical Western hermeneutical model, in other words, is greatly influenced by Western worldview assumptions. Nevertheless, most Western cross-cultural biblical interpreters have taken the historical-critical method with them when crossing cultures, attempting to interpret Scripture in the new culture with varying degrees of success and frustration. Two-Third's world theologians, likewise, have carried much Western baggage along with them as they have interpreted the biblical text in their own cultures. The Westerners have failed to take into account the worldview assumptions in the receptor culture affecting the successful interpretation of Scripture in that culture. The Two-Third's

world interpreters have failed to account for the amount of Western influence on their hermeneutical processes.

Is it no wonder, then, that in the thinking of many missionaries to the Two-Third's world, as well as in the minds of many Two-Third's world theologians, the traditional historical-critical interpretative approach has been weighed and found wanting? As a result, there is a need for both Western and non-Western interpreters to re-evaluate the appropriateness of the historical-critical process to biblical theologizing in the non-Western world; a need to look for interpretation models which perhaps will prove themselves to be more appropriate for those exegetes involved in ethnohermeneutics. To such an examination we now turn.

NEWLY EMERGING HERMENEUTICAL MODELS

The fundamental assumptions of the two-step method of interpretation, based upon historical-critical techniques, are increasingly undergoing challenges from various disciplines, not the least of which are challenges originating from within the theological community itself.³ As a result of such challenges, new hermeneutical models are emerging both from the theological community as well as from disciplines once considered quite distant from that of theology. Many of these new models are undermining the traditional strict conformity to the historical-critical approach. Space considerations will confine the following discussion to those models which are beginning to influence the Evangelical theological community, especially those models which are offering, or will perhaps offer in the future, insight for ethnohermeneutics.

Philosophical Hermeneutics

Philosophical hermeneutics have been used by Schleiermacher (1959), Dilthey (1962), Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (1975), Bultmann (1955, 1964, 1969), Fuchs (1959, 1964, 1971), and Ebeling (1959, 1963), to transform the question of interpretation into the question of knowledge ("How do we know?") and of being ("What is the mode of being of that individual who exists through understanding?"). In the 1960's this philosophical approach to interpretation was popularized in theological circles in the United States by Funk (1966), Robinson and Cobb (1964), and Achtemeier (1969). They took this European philosophic model and renamed it: "The New Hermeneutic." More recently Thiselton (1980), despite moving away from the New Hermeneutic school, has done much on this same philosophical level to show the necessity for, in Gadamer's words (1975:273), a "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*) between the original text and the modern interpreter. Yet, Thiselton himself calls into question the use of the historical-critical method when he says: "For neither primitive Christian hermeneutics nor Jewish hermeneutics entailed the use of critical historical inquiry" (1980:20). Thiselton, unfortunately, fails to see the implications of this for his own "two horizon" model. Furthermore, he fails to examine hermeneutics from a cross-cultural perspective.

Thiselton's influential "two horizon" model is good, but it is limited to those who are primarily involved in mono-cultural interpretation. He fails to deal with problems involved in cross-cultural interpretation by neglecting a crucial third element in his model, a "third horizon," as it were. There is a need for both Western

and non-Western interpreters to see not just two but **three** horizons in the cross-cultural interpretative process: biblical text, interpreter, and the receptor's culture.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship of these three horizons for Western interpreters (cf. Nida 1960:33-58; Conn 1984:188-190; Carson 1984:17-20):

Figure 1: The Three Horizons in Biblical Interpretation Involving Western Interpreters in Cross-Cultural Contexts

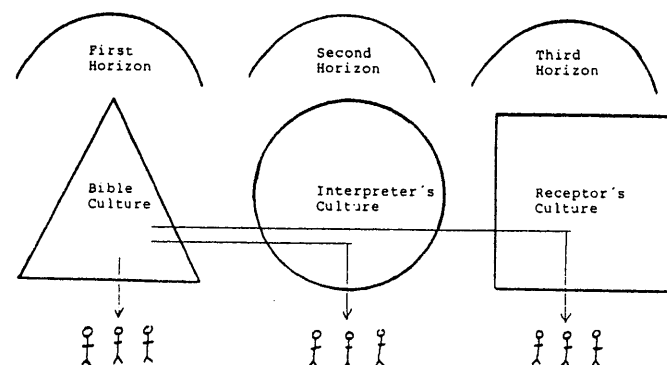
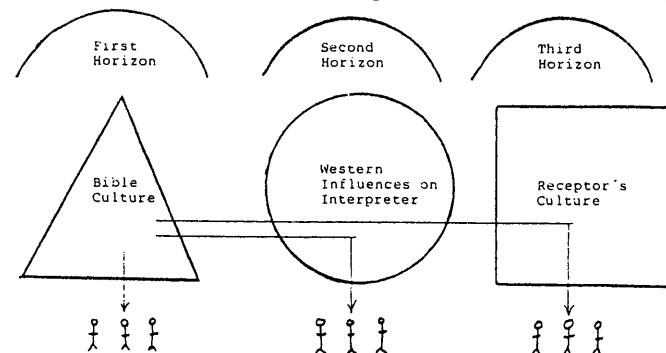


Figure 2 illustrates this same relationship of the three horizons for non-Western interpreters:

Figure 2: Three Horizons in Biblical Interpretation Involving Western-trained Two-Third's World Interpreters in Cross-cultural Contexts



While giving fascinating new insights for theologians in the Western world, Thiselton's new philosophic hermeneutical model proves itself to be, thus far, incomplete for ethnohermeneutics. Thiselton, unfortunately, does not go far enough.

Structuralism

Structuralism is a complicated new field of study.⁴ As Carson so aptly observes: "For the unwary, structuralism is a minefield of explosive and sensitive topics, laced with the barbed wire of esoteric language and pitted with deep unknowns" (1980:17). Derived from some of the same philosophical background as that just

mentioned in the above section, but with an emphasis upon linguistics, from Noam Chomsky, structuralism has been popularized in the United States by McKnight (1978), Detweiler (1978) and Daniel and Aline Patte (1978).⁵ At its most basic level structuralism deals with a linguistic examination of the literary structures found in the biblical text. At other levels it treats the biblical text as narrative story or examines the text from the perspective of the reader, as in "reader-response criticism."

One area of structuralism especially pertinent to our discussion here is semiotics. Semiotics, the science of the life of signs within society, through the pioneering work of Pierce (1931-35), de Saussure (1974), and Levi-Strauss (1963), maintains that knowledge across cultures is possible because humanity has a common biological make-up. Thus, semiotics has little need for the historical-critical method. Signs in the Bible are understood today because of the commonality of humanity which spans time and space. The implications of semiotics present some real possibilities for ethnohermeneutics, though little had been done with it from the cross-cultural perspective until Schreiter's *Constructing Local Theologies* (1985). Influenced by Geertz (1973), who, from an anthropological viewpoint, evaluated symbols and saw them as the key to understanding other cultures, Schreiter has produced a full-blown application of semiotics towards the goal of constructing Third World theologies which are relevant to the local people. Although primarily dealing with oral societies, and highly influenced by Liberation Theology, Schreiter's monumental work in this area cries for evaluation and application by ethnohermeneutical exegetes coming from the Evangelical perspective.

Canon Criticism

Another new model is canon criticism. Through the works of Childs (1979, 1985), Sanders (1972), and Barr (1983), canon criticism has called into question the possibility of ascertaining the original audience, and thus the original meaning. In the thinking of canon critics, what the biblical text meant to the particular religious community at the time it was canonized determines its meaning for today.⁶ Like structuralism, canon criticism may hold some key insights for ethnohermeneutics but as yet it has not had proper evaluation from a cross-cultural perspective.

Three other disciplines affecting modern hermeneutical approaches are anthropology, cultural criticism and indigenous theologies, especially those theologies emerging from Asia. These three disciplines offer even more hope for ethnohermeneutics.

Anthropology

Anthropology has been used by Nida (1960, 1968), Kraft (1977, 1978, 1979), Taber (1978, 1980, 1983), Hesselgrave (1978), Conn (1984), Hiebert (1985), and Filbeck (1985), to show how the interpreter's worldview assumptions influence his or her interpretation of Scripture⁷. To be an effective biblical interpreter in another cultural context, therefore, one must be aware of his or her own worldview assumptions as well as those worldview assumptions of the target culture. In general, anthropology seeks to discover a hermeneutical model which is relevant to each particular culture where the truths of the Bible are communicated. Kraft, in par-

ticular, has made the case for a multiplicity of culturally relevant forms to the supra-cultural truth of Scripture, especially in his work, *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1979:116-146). While placing a high priority on the historical-critical process, he calls into question its dependence upon philology and history, and instead places more emphasis upon linguistics and anthropology. Kraft allows for interpretative flexibility outside of that which he sees as a particularly Western interpretative method. In his opinion, the historical-critical process esteems too highly the ability of the interpreter to be objective. Kraft, and these other anthropologists, have many helpful insights for ethnohermeneutics.

Cultural Criticism

Theologians, too, are beginning to evaluate the Bible from the standpoint of anthropology through a mixture of sociology and cultural anthropology. This "cultural criticism" (my term) has been carried out by Old Testament theologians since the late nineteenth century, primarily under the guise of the History of Religions school. Recently, however, there has been a renewed explosion of interest in this field. The ground-breaking work of Gottwald (1979, 1985) in the Old Testament has been joined by Rohrbaugh (1978), Key (1980), Malina (1981), Meeks (1983), and Wilson, (1984).⁸ These recent studies, although not entirely doing away with historical-critical methodology, are certainly incorporating new tools which push it into the background. While the hermeneutical implications of cultural criticism are just beginning to be worked out, there seems to be much of importance in this model for ethnohermeneutics. Gottwald (1983) has attempted to address just this issue from the viewpoint of Liberation Theology. Certainly there are other valid cross-cultural applications of this hermeneutical model.

Indigenous Theologies from the Two-Third's World

Indigenous theologies are emerging today from all parts of the Two-Third's world. Asia especially is seeing a divergent group of independent theologies. Theologians such as Koyama (1976, 1977, 1985), Song (1979, 1982, 1984), Fabella and Torres (1978, 1983, 1985), Bong (1984), Athyal (1980), and Chow (1984), to list only a few, show the varied flavor of the Asian theological scene. These Asian theologians are attempting to theologize in their own contexts. However, since most of them have either been theologically educated in the West, or have come under Western influence in their theological training, even they are oftentimes struggling to produce relevant theologies (cf. Taber, 1978:9-10).

A case in point is Song.⁹ Born and raised in Taiwan, but theologically educated in the West, Song epitomizes these Asian theologians' return to their cultural roots. Song acknowledges the fact that God is involved in human history. Consequently, the historical-critical method is of value in studying God's past actions. For him, though, theology must be active, forced out of the "shelter of academic theology" (1979:80). His model of hermeneutics is a circle whereby "each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then to go back and reinterpret the word of God again, and so on" (1979:81, quoting Segundo 1976:8). Unfortunately though, for Song and many of these other Asian theologians, try as they might, the theologies they arrive at all too often have simply used Western hermeneutical forms dressed in Asian

clothing.¹⁰ Despite the deficiencies, however, these new Asian hermeneutical models have many insights for ethnohermeneutics. The recent publication of **The Bible & Theology in Asian Contexts** (Bong and Eshenaur, eds., 1984), by the Asia Theological Association, is a good example from the Evangelical perspective.

As we have seen, philosophy, structuralism, canon criticism, anthropology, cultural criticism, and indigenous theologies are all incorporating hermeneutical models which are moving beyond historical-critical methodology. Western theologians have been, at least in the past, uncomfortable when exegetes have failed to implement historical-critical methodology into their interpretative models. But with all these new hermeneutical models emerging today from within and without the Western theological community, these Western theologians are being forced to be less critical of the movement away from strict historical-critical methodology. At least this is true for their attitudes towards their Western colleagues. Regarding those non-Western theologians who are doing this same thing, however, the attitude of Western theologians is oftentimes not so magnanimous (cf. Taber 1978:8-9). This is true, as well, of those non-Western theologians who are still clinging to the historical criticism with which they were trained.

What is the answer to this dilemma? The answer comes in seeing that many of these Two-Third's world indigenous theologies, by moving beyond the historical critical model, are returning, knowingly or unknowingly, to hermeneutical models closer to those used by the New Testament writers. How so? Thiselton's comment concerning the lack of critical historical inquiry in primitive Christian hermeneutics and Jewish hermeneutics is precisely where the dilemma is solved. Jesus and the New Testament writers, particularly Paul, use interpretative principles, with regard to the Old Testament, which in no way conform to historical criticism or to the two-step method. The primary interpretative principle of the New Testament interpreters is that meaning is determined by present context (cf. Palmer, 1969). Anthropologically speaking, the New Testament interpreters determined meaning based upon their own worldview, and that of their audience, and the immediacy of the situation (particularly the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ). It seems their emphasis was almost entirely at the application level of the modern two-step method. Likewise, while not entirely neglecting the historical-critical processes, these Two-Third's world theologies have been much more concerned with the application of Scripture to their present situations; as Song said, "each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh..."

It is now time to examine, albeit all too briefly, these New Testament hermeneutical models and their contributions to ethnohermeneutics.

THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS' INTERPRETATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The examination of the New Testament's (hereafter NT) interpretation of the Old Testament (hereafter OT) has been undertaken by biblical scholars since the time of Jerome in the fourth century A.D. (Black 1971-72:1). This field of study has received renewed interest in the last few years. In fact, many view the NT's use of the OT as one of the major issues of debate in Evangelical circles today. Important works have recently emerged like those of Doeve (1954), Stendahl (1954), Daube (1956), Ellis (1957, 1978), Bruce (1960), Lindars (1961), Gundry (1967), Shires

(1974), Longenecker (1975), Johnson (1980), Waltke (1981), Mayo (1982), Hanson (1983), Moo (1983), McNamara (1983), Chilton (1984), and Kaiser (1985), to mention only some of the most significant.¹¹ The writing of most of these newer works has been motivated by a desire to bring a renewed diligence to the study of the OT for the purpose of bringing a new relevance for the use of the OT by Christians today. Unfortunately, though, none of these works (or any others of which I am aware) addresses the issue of how the NT's use of the OT is relevant to interpreters involved in cross-cultural situations.

When attempting to analyze the NT's use of the OT, one must first distinguish between the different hermeneutical models possibly employed by the NT writers. Weir (1982:67-70) lists five major models¹² from which to choose: 1) the literal historical model (where quotations from the OT have the same meaning in the NT as in their original OT contexts); 2) the pesher model (where NT texts meet the immediate needs of the community to which they were written without regard to the original OT contexts from which those texts derive); 3) the typological model (where there is a divinely ordained relationship between OT "type" and the NT "antitype"); 4) the allegorical model (where meaning in NT texts comes from the hidden or symbolic meaning in the OT texts); and 5) the theological model (where general NT themes find their background in the OT texts). Biblical scholars usually choose to place their emphasis upon one or two of the models. Kaiser (1985), for example, eliminates the pesher, allegorical and theological models and instead sees the NT writers primarily using the literal historical model and, to a lesser extent, the typological model. Longenecker (1975), by contrast, eliminates all but the pesher model as the way the NT writers interpreted the OT.

At this point, however, a question arises: Upon what criteria does one select a particular model? Bock (1985), helps to answer this question by changing the emphasis from an examination of the worldview assumptions of the NT writers of the biblical text to the worldview assumptions of the exegete who is attempting to interpret that text.¹³ In other words, Bock differentiates between various Evangelical approaches which are seeking to gain an understanding of how the NT writers interpret the OT. Bock lists four different "schools" (his quotes) which outline the various modern approaches: 1) the full human intent school ("all that is asserted in the OT passage must have been a part of the **human author's intended meaning** [210, his stress]); 2) the divine intent-human words school ("prophetic passages all draw on the human author's words but... the human author did not always fully intend or comprehend the prophetic reference, while God did intend the full reference" [212-213]); 3) the historical progress of revelation and Jewish hermeneutic school (the NT's use of the OT employs historical factors, "especially making use of the models of first-century Jewish interpretation and exegesis" [216]); and 4) the canonical approach and New Testament priority school ("the text's intention became deeper and clearer as the parameters of the canon were expanded [219, quoting Waltke 1981:71]). Thus, again using Kaiser and Longenecker as examples, Kaiser's worldview assumptions cause him to select the full human intent school while Longenecker's worldview assumptions cause him to select the historical progress of revelation and Jewish hermeneutic school.

While all these various delineations of the ways of understanding the NT's use of the OT at first glance may seem confusing, what the debate is basically

coming down to concerns whether the OT quotations used by the NT writers "are careful reproductions or translations of the original Scripture.... [Where] in most instances the historical sense [of the OT quotations] is carefully preserved" (Shires 1974:38, as quoted in Kaiser 1985:228), or whether the exegesis of the NT "is heavily dependent upon Jewish procedural precedents" (Longenecker 1975:207). As can be readily deduced by now, Kaiser and Longenecker are the best representatives of these opposing camps.

Given the worldview assumptions of this writer, namely, that the Bible is a Divine/Human book whereby God inspired humans to record His Word, but by using their own cultural forms, it seems most reasonable that God inspired the NT writers to record Scripture, including their use of OT quotations, in a way consistent with the current interpretative principles within the Judaism of their day, i.e., pesher interpretation. Again, quoting from Longenecker's **Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period**:

It is hardly surprising to find that the exegesis of the NT is heavily dependent upon Jewish procedural precedents, for, theoretically, one would expect a divine redemption that is worked out in the categories of a particular history — which is exactly what the Christian gospel claims to be — to express itself in all its various manifestations in terms of the concepts and models of that particular people and day (207).

In other words, Longenecker is saying that all hermeneutical models are culturally conditioned, including those used by the NT writers. In his opinion, therefore, the tools of historical criticism must be used to help ascertain those hermeneutical models of the first century A.D. which subsequently influenced the NT writers, in order to gain a better understanding of how to interpret the NT for today.⁴ What follows is an all too brief analysis, but nevertheless one which explains the general parameters of the first century hermeneutical models and their subsequent influence on the NT writers.⁵

All of the biblical interpretation models in the first century A.D. have often been categorically lumped together, as by Weir above, under the generic term "pesher." In point of fact, however, this term is incomplete. Biblical interpretation during this time period actually consisted of three different categories, of which pesher was but one: rabbinical midrash techniques, pesher interpretation, and, to a much lesser degree, allegorization.

Rabbinical Midrash

Rabbinical midrash techniques, as the phrase suggests, consisted of exegetical principles developed by the rabbis in order to better interpret the OT text. Hillel was the rabbi primarily responsible for developing the seven principles (**middoth**) which guided this exegetical model of Pharisaic Judaism. Longenecker succinctly describes this model:

Midrashic interpretation... takes its departure from the biblical text itself... and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed upon hermeneutical rules in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God. It may be briefly characterized by the maxim:

"That has relevance to This"; i.e., What is written in Scripture has relevance to our present situation (37).

Since Hillel was either the father or grandfather of Gamaliel, Paul's rabbinical teacher,⁶ it is not surprising that Paul's writing is full of rabbinical midrash. An obvious case of this technique can be found in Paul's use of Deut. 30:12-14 in Rom. 10:6-8:

But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming...

Here Paul quotes the "that" of Deuteronomy and interprets it in light of the "this" of Jesus Christ. What Paul does here in this passage is common to all of the interpretation models of the NT: because of the coming of Jesus Christ everything in the OT is open to re-evaluation and re-interpretation. For other examples of this rabbinical midrash model as used by Paul, compare 2 Cor. 3:13-18 — Ex. 34:33; and Rom. 5:15-21.

Pesher

Pesher interpretation⁷ has been predominantly equated with the interpretation techniques of the Qumran community (approximately 100 B.C. to 100 A.D.) as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Pesher interpretation can be distilled to two elements: 1) the **raz pesher** element, where "the **raz**, the mystery, is divinely communicated to one party, and the **pesher**, the interpretation, to another. Not until the mystery and interpretation are brought together can the divine communication be understood," particularly in the case of the book of Daniel (Bruce 1960:8); and correspondingly, 2) the "This is That" element, where the "this" interpretation in the present fulfills the past "that" of the OT text. The **raz pesher** element, although necessary to understand the entire pesher technique, did not have much direct use in the NT.⁸

The "this is that" interpretation model was the primary one used by Jesus. Perhaps the most obvious example of Jesus' use of "this and that" is found in Lk. 4:16-21, where Jesus, in the synagogue at Nazareth, reads from the Isaiah scroll (Is. 61:1-2) and ends his reading with the announcement, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." The "this" of Jesus very presence among them made the "that" of the Isaiah passage obtain a new relevance for all of those gathered inside the walls of that synagogue. For other examples of pesher interpretation see Mt 13:13-15 — Is. 6:9-10; and Mk. 12:10-11 / Mt. 21:42 / Lk. 20:17 — Ps. 118:22-23.

Allegory

Allegorization has been a popular, though highly debatable, form of biblical interpretation for thousands of years. In rabbinic circles it had varying amounts of influence. Popularized among Hellenistic Jews of the first century A.D. by Philo, its influence was not very great within Palestine itself (Longenecker:48), although Paul uses allegory in I Cor. 9:9-12 and Gal. 4:21-31.

Midrash, Peshet and Ethnohermeneutics

What does all of this have to do with ethnohermeneutics? Precisely at the point of the "that is this" of rabbinic midrash and the "this is that" of peshet interpretation. Both of these hermeneutical models were employed by the NT writers to make the OT passages meaningful to their particular audiences in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because these hermeneutical models were already culturally acceptable the NT writers did not face opposition from the Jewish community over their interpretative principles (but of course the same cannot be said of the Christocentric emphasis of their interpretations!).

What does this say to us today? Just as God used the cultural forms of the first century A.D. to communicate the message of the NT to a new generation of believers in Jesus Christ, so today we also need to recognize that God can use culturally relevant hermeneutical models to carry the Gospel message within cultures and across cultures. Historical-critical methodology is not the only way. It is a proper model for the Western world. What makes for a proper model in the non-Western world, however, is something else again. The Two-Third's world theologians, and those Western missionaries working in the Two-Third's world, need to be given the freedom to return to hermeneutical models which resemble those of the NT¹⁹.

Ironically, though, there is a problem here. Even Longenecker himself sees no place for incorporating his results into modern hermeneutical methods (cf. 218-220). For once Kaiser is not only in agreement with Longenecker, but actually carries the prohibition one step farther. In the second-to-last paragraph of his book Kaiser quotes from anthropologist/linguist Taber's article, "Is There More Than One Way to Do Theology?" Here Taber said:

I also wonder about the relationship of our whole approach to hermeneutics to other, also culturally conditioned views. For instance, the NT writers used a hermeneutic in relation to many OT citations which was derived from rabbinic interpretation but was at the opposite pole from what we would consider legitimate today. In our terms, some of the OT passages cited are clearly taken out of context... But the fact of the matter is that what they considered proper hermeneutics was part and parcel of their cultural heritage (1978:8, quoted on 234).

Kaiser comments that Taber's approach is "... a lever to soften up a waiting church for a pluralistic theology" (234).

We must strongly object to Kaiser's position, and to all the other Western and non-Western biblical scholars who agree with him. For rather than abandoning NT hermeneutical models because of the unsubstantiated fear that their use may "soften up a waiting church" we must learn from these NT models in order to better reach a waiting world with a relevantly interpreted Gospel. If the Third Horizon of the Two-Third's world will be more effectively reached by employing hermeneutical models which resemble NT rabbinical midrash and peshet interpretative techniques, so be it.

SUMMARY

This paper has briefly examined some of the alternatives to the historical-critical model now available to cross-cultural biblical interpreters. It has been shown that many of these alternative models are coming directly from the theological community itself, with varying degrees of helpfulness to those involved in ethnohermeneutics. As a result of this emergence of creative hermeneutical innovation, Evangelical theologians need not be threatened by other models which are emerging outside of theology, namely, from anthropology. At the same time, Christian anthropologists need to be sympathetic to the theologians' well-warranted fear that the resulting interpretations of Scripture will not be biblical. Both groups, likewise, need to be sensitive to the fact that many of the Two-Third's world theologians are attempting to do hermeneutical analysis without the benefit of either Western theology or anthropology. They are seeking to make the Bible as relevant as possible in the Third Horizon. These Two-Third's world hermeneutical models, while undergoing the scrutiny from the Christian community as a whole which is necessary for all interpretative models, should not be viewed as threatening since they oftentimes parallel the hermeneutical models of the New Testament.

Footnotes

1. Cf. also Ramm (1970).
2. Also known as the grammatico-historical method.
3. Cf. especially the works of Maier (1977, 1982) and Stuhlmacher (1977) and the ensuing debate; see also Padilla (1981).
4. For a general overview of structuralism see Poythress (1978, 1978-79), Thiselton (1977-78), and Armending (1979).
5. For an analysis of the contributions of these individuals to hermeneutics and exegesis see Jobling (1979).
6. However, as Sheppard (1982) points out, care must be exercised when using canon criticism to insure that material being analyzed is not being unduly influenced by the hermeneutical principles of the exegete.
7. It should be noted here that anthropologists themselves are seeking to understand those factors which affect their own interpretation of cultures. See Watson-Franke and Watson (1975), who, interestingly enough, approach this problem from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics.
8. For an analysis of the historical background leading up to the present statement of the research in cultural criticism see Norris (1979), Rogerson (1978), and Scroggs (1980).
9. Though not numbered among the Evangelical community, Song's contributions nonetheless need to be seriously considered and evaluated by Evangelicals.
10. For a critique of the "Westernness" of Song's theology, see Moore (1982).

11. For an up-to-date bibliography of sources pertaining to the NT's use of the OT see Kaiser (1985: 238-253). Kaiser's bibliography is unique because it is divided into two parts: the first part lists all works pertinent to each specific book in the Bible, and the second part is a list of general works.
12. Weir actually describes these five as "methods," but for the sake of consistency within the overall thrust of this paper the word "models" has been substituted. For Weir these five methods serve as the components of his analogy model for describing the use of the OT in the NT. Weir's analogous fulfillment model has some real strengths, yet its emphasis upon historical criticism weakens its overall relevance for ethnohermeneutics. Despite this weakness, there is much to Weir's contention that: "An acceptable model... should be derived from four factors: 1) the hermeneutic of the NT writers; 2) the conclusions of historical-critical exegesis; 3) the recognition of the OT as revelation; 4) the finality of the NT as revelation" (66). While this paper argues the relative merits of the first two factors, it must be seen that these last two factors are essential to any ethnohermeneutical model.
13. Although Bock's article does not approach the debate from the perspective of worldview assumptions, what he says in his article implies underlying worldview differences among the various Evangelical approaches.
14. But see Carson's three valid cautions to this approach (1980:19-20).
15. For an exhaustive treatment of this subject see Longenecker (1975).
16. See Longenecker (33-34, n. 50) concerning sources for further debate over this issue.
17. The phrase "pesher interpretation" technically is redundant since the Aramaic word **pesher** itself means "solution" or "interpretation."
18. But see Longenecker (129-132).
19. It may be argued here that since Jesus, Paul and others in the NT were primarily involved in mono-cultural interpretation, their particular hermeneutical models are of little relevance for ethnohermeneutics. That argument, however, misses the point. While there is indeed a need for more research into the extent of genuine cross-cultural ministry carried out by Jesus and the NT writers, their hermeneutical models still warrant serious investigation. The question is not over whether the NT consists of documents written for cross-cultural consumption but if the hermeneutical models found in those documents are relevant for either mono-cultural or cross-cultural hermeneutics for today.

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