

Kennard, Douglas Welker, ed. *The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization: Understanding Truth*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1999.

The Relationship Between Epistemology, Hermeneutics, Biblical Theology and Contextualization was written "to forge a way through the morass of options to develop a positive theory for both understanding and living truth" (i). *The Relationship* emerged from a series of discussions about the issue of the relationship of epistemology, hermeneutics, and contextualization, jointly engaged in by the Evangelical Theological Society and the Evangelical Missiology Society at the 1997 Midwest regional meetings. The book was edited by Douglas Welker Kennard of Moody Bible Institute, who also contributed three chapters, Harold A. Netland, Grant R. Osborne, and David J. Hesselgrave, all of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Osborne designates the hermeneutical stance of the authors by rejecting poststructuralism, deconstructionism, and postmodernity, and by organizing hermeneutics under the rubric of critical realism (i). This organization is done by bringing together the locutionary (the propositional side), illocutionary (what the text accomplishes), and perlocutionary (the effect it produces) in theology, philosophy, and missiology in an attempt to move from theory to practice. Further epistemology, critical realism, and hermeneutics come together to form "an ethics of reading that moves from the claims of the author in a text to the needs of the readers as they study the text," i.e., contextualization (ii).

Following the pattern of Luke ("having investigated everything carefully from the beginning to write it out for you in consecutive order," 1:4), the authors begin with the premise that "the Biblical text is concerned about truth and that the reader understand this truth in accurate, consecutive, and warranted ways" (1). Thus, the authors attempt to bring a progressive examination of the "hermeneutical maze" by beginning with epistemological concerns, moving to hermeneutics, and then going on to the issue of contextualization. Kennard and Hesselgrave approach the topic primarily from the perspective of Biblical Theology, while Netland and Osborne believe that the interpreter's tradition provides the frame for understanding issues and texts. "Neither view denies the other" (2).

In chapter 1, Kennard probes the "distinctive epistemological tools available to the premodern, modern, and postmodern thinker" (2), providing illustrations from theology, music, art, literature, science, psychology, and hermeneutics. Kennard demonstrates how concepts of experience (both scientific and spiritual) have displaced the intellectual, cognitive hermeneutics of premodernity and, further, how this has affected definitions of reality, cosmology, theism, and the interpretation of Scripture. His table, "Characteristics of Intellectual Stages," provides a useful summary of his survey of philosophy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTELLECTUAL STAGES		
<i>Premodern</i>	<i>Modern</i>	<i>Postmodern</i>
Established communal faith	Individual epistemology	Individual epistemology
Fideistically confident	Rationally confident	Rationally skeptical
Naive realism	Empirical naturalism	Phenomenalism
God's order is inherently good	Knowledge is inherently good	Knowledge can be used for evil
Unified in communal truth under God and king	Culture is unified under social contract and pragmatic workability	Relativism fragmenting culture with increasing alienation

Divine right of kings	Republic	Contextualized democracy or anarchy
God structures creation	Evolution is inevitable	Increasing pessimism to surmount the magnitude of life's problems
Science is a higher activity which ordinary life subserves	Science should benefit ordinary life	The lack in science needs a transcendental object
Church calling is special	Increased status of lay, especially the scientist	Increased status of cultural heroes (e.g. actors, athletes, etc.) who can draw you into their mythical lives
Romanticism with God	Romanticism with the transcendent	Romanticism with self as transcendent
Biblical law funds ethics	Hedonism funds communal utilitarianism	Existentially choose your own morality as a self-fulfiller
Obedience begets divine blessing	Natural order establishes personal freedom, dignity, commitment & rights	My personal space is my right

Kennard calls for a "moderate foundationalism in the spirit of Alvin Plantinga's Reformed epistemology but with the modern foundations and epistemic tools being appraised by what they can reliably provide" (3, 58). He proposes a three-part "holistic epistemology" that builds upon important hermeneutical components of the premodern, modern, and postmodern eras. From the premodern period, Kennard retains the recognition of the "communities of faith in God" and the Bible as being the "primary authority for our lives" (31). Thus, the interpretation of Scripture requires the reader "to think in the thought forms of the Biblical authors intertextual to them and not primarily our own traditions" and, simultaneously, to "value our own traditions and communities of faith as a historical and interactive guide but not to the extent that it inhibits honest study, dialog and proclamation grounded in warranted epistemic means" (31).

From the modern perspective, Kennard calls for allowing "each epistemic tool to contribute the warrant it reliably can" (31). Thus, "rational self-evidence can provide some foundations," e.g., self-existence, basic logical categories, and speech. Kennard notes that the modern period is also known for its passion, due to the influence of Romanticism. This passion may be translated into a deep conviction as believers live out their beliefs about God. Finally, testimony, as a derivative of experience, "recognizes and trusts in narrative in the Biblical text and from each others' lives" (32).

Finally, Kennard proposes that postmodernity "reminds us of our existential situation in a complex world" (33). He notes that "existentialism and language games sensitize us to our own context, intellectual heritage, and to the need to communicate in ways that deal with our deepest issues, and are understandable and attractive to the audience who hears us. Then we can woo them to truth" (33). However, Kennard warns that "complexity should temper the optimism of grand solutions" (33). But while simplified answers should not be a part of biblical scholarship, "postmodernism also reminds us of the playfulness of being engaged in a discipline which fits us as individuals and one that we pursue with passion" (33).

Kennard examines the correlation between faith and knowledge in chapter 2.

Continuing his understanding that experience and knowledge must work in tandem, he examines how the relationship between faith and knowledge has progressively changed throughout Christian history. He first categorizes epistemic approaches into fideism (Tertullian, Damian, Luther, and Hare), faith seeking understanding (Augustine, Anselm, Kant, and Hegel), simultaneous faith and knowledge (Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Austin, James, and Plantinga), understanding in order to believe (Aquinas), and knowledge as justified true belief (Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Descartes, Locke, Russell, and Positivism). Kennard notes, however, that after carefully categorizing the spectrum of stated epistemological positions there are, in the end, really only two primary epistemic categories: simultaneous faith and knowledge, into which he places Tertullian, Damian, Luther, Hare, Augustine, Anselm, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Austin, James, Plantinga, Aquinas, Descartes, and Locke. The second category is that of knowledge as justified true belief, in which he places Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Descartes, Anselm, Locke, Russell, and Positivism. Kennard believes these differentiations in epistemological approaches are important, "for this relationship frames a methodology that has great impact on how one will approach anything in one's world view" (36). He argues that "if a person is properly functioning, then faith and knowledge are largely synonymous," and "neither [faith nor knowledge] has priority over the other, but rather they are simultaneous" (36).

In part 2 of chapter 2, Kennard pursues Austin's (*How to Do Things with Words*) and Wittgenstein's (*Philosophical Investigations*) contentions that "ordinary usage of the language of knowledge and faith will show that they are synonyms" (36). Kennard notes that at times "belief is knowledge in that it reflects conventions" (62); however, "there is a fluidity in knowledge and belief. Some things I now know I used to only believe. . . . Some further things I now only believe, I once used to know. . . . With increased time and experience reinforcing awareness, faith may increase in confidence to become knowledge, and with time and experience clouding awareness, knowledge may lose confidence, leaving faith" (62-63). This, however, is not to say that faith is only mere confidence, so that faith and knowledge have no priority over one another.

In part 3, Kennard examines the biblical evidence for the parameters of faith and knowledge. He examines the several words translated "faith" and "knowledge" in Scripture by exploring each word's range of semantic field and its implications for theological methodology. His final definition for faith is "trust in someone and what he promises because he has demonstrated himself to be trusted, and a conscientious loyalty to this trust" (69). Knowledge is defined as "to have cognition, acquaintance, discernment or experience of evidenced data and a consistent application of this data" (*ibid.*). Thus there is a balance between "faith seeking understanding" and "understanding in order to believe." Kennard concludes that "faith and knowledge to a great extent are synonymous as evidenced by: (1) A Biblical Theology use of the terms in the context of salvation and Christian Life, and (2) An examination of the epistemic starting points (e.g., what reason do you have for accepting your basic beliefs? What assumptions do you make for your basic knowledge claims?" (69).

Harold Netland combines philosophy and practical missionary experience in the formation of his apologetical approach. He formulates criteria of consistency or noncontradiction in aiding the apologetical task of crossing religious and cultural boundaries: (1) "A statement that is self-contradictory is false. If two or more statements are mutually contradictory, or entail further statements which are contradictory, at least one of the statements must be false"; and (2) "if a worldview or perspective on reality entails that ultimately there is no real distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, then we have good reason to reject that perspective as false" (4). Netland calls for creativity and sensitivity

in conducting cross-cultural apologetics. What may speak eloquently to one culture may be meaningless or even offensive to another. Knowing what a particular culture's beliefs, customs, social structure, and attitudes are will help apologists to reframe the argument while retaining the true spiritual message intended by the Bible writers. He suggests several ways of accomplishing this task: "One must be sensitive to the particular issues relevant to a given context," "the means of persuasion that are appropriate will vary from context to context," "the apologist must earn the right to be heard," and "the apologist must be careful to avoid being identified with symbols of oppression and power" (92).

Grant R. Osborne examines postmodern hermeneutics by tracing postmodernity's development in Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricouer, structuralism, semiotics, and deconstruction. Then he examines the effect of postmodern thought on culture and its ripple effect through evangelicalism. He concludes that "evangelicalism must engage in an intellectual war" (4).

Osborne believes that the postmodern tendency toward tolerance has produced a negative effect in society. Because there is no ultimate truth, respect comes through the simultaneous tolerance of one another's individual beliefs, with the result of pluralism. Osborne notes that the evangelical church has struggled with the resurgence of liberalism, with a particularly telling blow occurring at the Scopes "monkey trial." In the aftermath of disappointment, conservative evangelical scholars were not, initially, allowed to express their views in meaningful dialogue with liberal scholars. Then later, when opportunities did avail themselves, they were too slow to react. Philosophical material written in the 1960s in support of postmodernity were not responded to by conservatives until the 1980s. However, Netland concludes, in spite of the slow start, conservatives have made a strong comeback in the form of such scholars as F. F. Bruce, I. H. Marshall, and Leon Morris.

Osborne concludes his chapter by examining the negatives of postmodern influence on the church. Beginning with what he refers to as "an inadvertent surrender to the prevailing culture," he notes seven areas where a postmodern shift may be seen in evangelicalism: "the ascendancy of pragmatism as the primary governing rod that determines church strategy," "the triumph of secularism has weakened the impact of the church on society," "a sad and incredible increase in biblical illiteracy," "a concomitant decline in biblical preaching and teaching," "relevance has replaced biblical mandates," "the power of possessions has turned all too many Christians into rampant materialists," "the decline of the evangelical academy has helped foster the lack of biblical and theological depth in the Church" (108-112). He notes that "the result is a new wave of pastors unable to do serious theological reflection or search the Scriptures adequately to answer the controversies of our day. Once again, postmodernism has made it easier to replace truth with pragmatics, to laud praxis while ignoring theory" (112).

Osborne then proposes that the answer to postmodernity is to "seize the day" (112). First, the church must "go to war" with postmodernity by acknowledging that while a postmodern first reading of the text has a "formative place in interpretation," interpretation cannot stop there, but must proceed to an examination of grammar, semantics, and background. Therefore, pure pragmatism must be replaced with biblical theology and secularism must be defeated by revival. There is a need to return to the Bible and for Bible-centered or expository preaching. In addition, the church can be culturally relevant without being culture-bound. The path of contextualization and materialism finds its best solution in radical discipleship. Finally, the evangelical academy needs to lead the church by finding the proper balance between academics and practical concerns.

Kennard proposes that the task for accomplishing a revolution within the church is an integration of the epistemological and hermeneutical concerns outlined thus far. He does this by developing a hybrid methodology based on a Ricouerian "existential

sensitivity that helps the reader feel placed in a story in order to obtain shared passion, motivation, self understanding and self possibilities from the symbols experienced," and a Thiseltonian approach that "shows itself through a critical realist's spiral (like a Pierceian pragmatism with a textual empiricism) within the authorial context from contextual overviews (like Biblical theology) to textual particulars." Out of this approach, Kennard develops a three-level process of interpretation, in which all the levels operate simultaneously. In level one (existential), the reader feels placed in the story by familiar relationships, traditions, and similar experiences. This prompts in the reader a shared passion and motivation and opens the door to self-understanding and self-possibilities. In level 2 (hermeneutical spiral within authorial context), the authorial context moves from contextual overviews to textual particulars, which clarifies the meaning of the text. The goal in this level is to understand the text in the same way in which the author and original audience did. To the extent that the meaning is clear, coherent, and has textual support, the reader can be assured that he or she has obtained the author's interpretation and application. In level 3 (spiral between contexts), the hermeneutical task is to move from the horizon of the text to that of the reader. This calls for the exclusion of any assumptions, understandings, or possibilities that are foreign to the text and gaining those that are appropriate to the text. Kennard concludes that "proper hermeneutics is our responsibility; do not try to do the task with too simplistic a methodology" (148).

The final primary chapter in the book brings the discussion of contextualization and biblical theology to a climax. Hesselgrave begins the chapter by defining his horizon. Three important terms that aid this process are "contextualization" ("the process of making God's revelation of his person and plan as revealed in the Old and New Testaments understandable to the people of a given culture with a view to making it possible for them to respond to it in a meaningful way" [6]), "biblical theology" ("that type of theology that deals with the words and acts of God in history as they are revealed in the Old and New Testaments with a view to displaying their progression, meaning and significance" [158]), and "culture" ("the ways in which any given group of people go about the task of thinking, acting and interacting in order to solve problems related to living" [158]).

Hesselgrave next uncovers four areas of preunderstanding that form the foundation of contextualization: conceptions of knowledge required for Christian contextualization, the nature of the Christian mission, conceptions of the Bible, and notions of culture and its role in Christian contextualization. Out of these preunderstandings, he develops five axiomatic propositions, in which Christian contextualization is concerned not only with the nature of Scripture, but also its function as God's Word; it recognizes that the Bible in and of itself "constitutes the most needful and effective contextualization of the Christian gospel"; that the starting point of Christian contextualizing is the Bible and Biblical Theology; "that the Bible must be allowed to determine its own priorities, set its own agenda, and unfold its own plan"; and that the Bible in its entirety must be communicated (163-172).

Out of his preunderstandings and axioms, Hesselgrave develops a procedure for contextualization. He begins by "drawing attention to the Bible itself" (173). This is accomplished by considering the type of book it is, by explaining its importance, and by modeling a proper usage of it. A second procedure is to allow Scripture to unfold chronologically as the primary context for the gospel message. Hesselgrave gives precedence to biblical narrative in the process of contextualization and advises making full use of pictures, drawings, charts, drama, and other art forms to more fully explicate the meaning of Scripture. He also calls for the function of the church as a "hermeneutical community." This does not mean that individual study is to be done away with, but there is an interpretational need, as

well as spiritual and social ones, for the community to come together to study the Bible. Finally, he proposes the integration of all learning with a study of the biblical text. The scientific method, which has compartmentalized areas of study and effectually separated the metaphysical and physical, has resulted in the fragmentation of knowledge.

In spite of all the difficulties in crossing religious, philosophical, and cultural boundaries, Hesselgrave concludes that the ultimate task of Christian contextualization is to make God's Word known to all people in all cultures.

The book concludes with a brief review, once again reiterating the need for a proper biblical hermeneutic and correct cultural understandings, and for the coming together of hermeneutical community.

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Lingenfelter, Judith E., and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 134 pp. Paper, \$12.99.

The Lingenfelters, a husband-and-wife team, bring to this volume appropriate credentials. Both have doctoral degrees in the subject area, and both are currently teaching: Judith at Biola University, Sherwood at Fuller Theological Seminary. Both have extensive experience in cross-cultural teaching at home and abroad. This is Sherwood's fourth book on the interplay of culture and mission published by Baker (*Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 1986; *Transforming Culture*, 1992, rev. 1998; *Agents of Transformation*, 1996).

The intended audience is "the western-trained educator who is working or planning to work in a non-western school setting or in a multicultural school or university in a major city of North America" (9). The authors set out their goals: to "help teachers understand their own culture of teaching and learning" (9), "to equip teachers to become effective learners in another cultural context" (10), and to enjoy the experience. This they do "using the perspective of Scripture and faith in Jesus Christ" (10).

Throughout the book, the Lingenfelters urge cross-cultural teachers to become "150-percent people"—75 percent culture of birth and 75 percent culture of ministry (22-23). Telling their own story, they show how this can be done.

Each culture has its own agenda for learning, and each has its traditional way of teaching and learning. Solutions from one culture do not solve the problems of another culture. What works in my group will probably not work for those, even in my own place, who have different cultural traditions. While some learn by observation and imitation, others learn by doing. For some, rote learning is *the* style, while others insist on questioning and discussion. In some cultures, students learn in a group; in others, learning is individual.

The definition of intelligence varies from culture to culture. In a Zambian tribal group, intelligence encompasses "wisdom, cleverness, and responsibility" (62). The Lingenfelters note how Gardner's seven different kinds of intelligence are valued differently in different cultural groups.

Teachers are variously seen as facilitators, authority figures, parents, or outsiders. But all teachers should teach for change. While we need cultural stability, as Christians "we seek to measure our lives and ministries against the standards set forth" by Jesus (89). Thus, we cannot conform to certain cultural patterns. One of the most powerful tools for achieving change is experiential learning, which involves doing and reflecting (90).

Efforts to teach well may be hindered by false expectations about resources, curriculum, testing, visual learning, status, and planning. The novice at cross-cultural teaching needs to face these and devise coping mechanisms, not judging but using "the