

Special S.N.A.P. Section

Biblical Integration in Business: A Trip Through the Looking Glass?

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Dr. Beadles emphasizes the importance of hermeneutics for those who seek biblical integration in business.

The science and art of hermeneutics is a crucial field of study for those who would seek to write and think clearly in their attempts to integrate business concepts and biblical truth. This paper points out some potential pitfalls that can occur if those who till this field fail to recognize the impact of hermeneutics upon the integrative process.

The Challenge of Interpretation

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master, that’s all” (Carroll, 1923, p. 213).

In the exchange with Humpty Dumpty, Alice was eventually

reduced to silence. Humpty’s approach to the use of language made it nearly impossible for her to understand him. Alice struggled with understanding Humpty Dumpty because he used words in a manner unfamiliar to her. For those of us seeking to do integrative work in business, we have a similar struggle: we must interpret words that are used in a manner that is not familiar to us. We must seek to rightly understand the words of a book inspired by God, written by multiple authors involving multiple genres, written at different times from ours, and in different languages from our own. Like Alice, we are faced with questions of interpretation.

In Chewing’s plenary address to the 1997 Christian Business Faculty Association Annual Conference, he recommended that we recognize the sufficiency, necessity,

authority, and perspicuity (clarity) of Scripture in order that we may “avoid errors of judgment in our associative work” (Chewning, 1997, p.12). He indicated that we need to concern ourselves with the task of interpretation, the task of hermeneutics; he reminded us that hermeneutics is a necessary element of the process of integration. But he also reminded us that the process is not easy. Chewning indicated that the clarity of Scripture is a “tough nut to crack” (Chewning, 1997, p.12), yet if we are to integrate¹ biblical concepts with our various business disciplines, we must deal with this “tough nut.” It is not enough to agree with him that the task is difficult, shake our heads, and fail to address it. Though the science and art of hermeneutics² is difficult, we must seek to understand it better so that our integration does not devolve into error and fanciful speculations.

Recently, the importance of that issue was brought to my attention when a conversation I was having with the president of a Christian college (a former business executive) turned toward business. While discussing the issue of biblical integration in the business disciplines, he discovered that I taught human resource management at a secular

institution and asked me whether performance appraisal was “biblical.” He went even further and asked if I could explain how I would integrate my faith into performance appraisal. I explained that I had not given it much thought, but that methods of performance appraisal were neither biblical nor non-biblical; they were merely tools. He disagreed, saying that all of business was “integratable” and proceeded to challenge me to study the Bible and discover how performance appraisal has a biblical basis.

Never one to turn down a challenge, I picked up my Bible and was amazed to discover the first instance of performance appraisal before getting out of the first five chapters of Genesis. There in chapter two, I found God (the chief executive officer) creating man (the first manager) and woman (man’s helper—the first employee). I discovered that God had provided the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a means to evaluate performance. He gave them clear instructions and expected obedience. Adam and Eve both failed the test and were summarily terminated. Although God expected performance, he was a model of the compassionate chief

executive. Rather than merely dismissing Adam from his current “cushy” job, God gave Adam another opportunity to prove himself as he tilled the ground anew and awaited his redemption.

By now I hope that you are as puzzled as Alice was at Humpty Dumpty. Of course, this interpretation is incorrect and an inappropriate importation of a framework of thinking upon the text of the Bible.

The example is intended to show what kinds of problems can arise if we who

integrate the Bible and business do not clearly understand the importance of hermeneutics in integration. In this case the “extremeness” of the example makes the error easily recognizable.

The Problem of Worldview Confusion

The error itself is a form of what D. A. Carson has termed “worldview confusion.” This error occurs when an interpreter thinks that his own worldview is the proper framework to interpret the Bible and imports it upon the text. The problem is that the interpreter has not recognized the “distance” between himself and

the text. Rather than accounting for differences and distance between the reader and the text, the reader merely imports his own assumptions, questions, and biases upon the text and reaches an unwarranted conclusion (Carson, D. A., 1996).

In the example above, I used the worldview of a business professor who was seeking to “discover” the hidden truths of business in the text as he read the text “through the looking glass” of a business professor. While this example makes the problem easy to recognize, other examples of the same interpretational error are not so easy, yet they are no less erroneous. In our quest for integration, we must not allow our discipline to interpret the Bible, rather we should allow the Bible to interpret our discipline.³

The Need for a Conscious Approach

Perhaps unfortunately, biblical integration in business requires that we understand, at a minimum, two different fields of study. We must understand our “professional field” (i. e. management, economics,

...we should allow the Bible to interpret our discipline.

accounting), and we must understand the Bible. Many of us spent years of education attempting to master our discipline and receive training on how to interpret research in our field correctly. Yet most of us have not had the same rigorous training in interpreting the Bible. It is the thesis of this paper that we must understand basic hermeneutical issues and be consciously aware of the methods we apply or, at worst, we are doomed to error in our associative work and, at best, have mere ignorance leading to random accuracy.

For those of us writing and teaching an integrationist perspective, an understanding of hermeneutics is important for us to avoid error in our associative work, but beyond that, it is important because, when we teach and write, we teach a method of interpretation. Whenever we use the Bible to teach, we are teaching hermeneutics. The business professor who allegorizes a passage to suit his discipline legitimizes allegorization as a means of Scripture interpretation. If allegorization is the professor's conscious choice as an appropriate form of interpretation, that is one thing. However, if the

professor would be shocked to realize that he has allegorized a passage to suit his discipline, then that is another. If we seek to integrate business and the Bible, we must give as much attention to an accurate rendering of the text as we do to the theories of business we are explicating, and we must do so according to appropriate methods of biblical interpretation, methods which we consciously choose. To do this will require that business professors give as much attention to the study of hermeneutics as to their discipline.⁴

The primary intent of this paper is to make us aware that we need to consciously choose a hermeneutical approach and to consistently apply it when we think integratively. At issue is whether we will consciously choose a method that suits our tradition and approach to the Scriptures or whether we move down the continuum toward adopting the method which allows for the most room for integration. Allegorization might provide the most room, but is it the method we would consciously choose to use?

Secondly, I intend to address some issues that I suggest we be aware of when we use the Bible integratively.⁵ I recognize that

individuals reading this journal are from diverse backgrounds and may choose different approaches from my own, but I do suggest that each of us should choose our approach both consciously and intelligently and that we should read integrationist perspectives with the same critical eye that we would apply to more specific research in our related disciplines.

Do We Need Hermeneutics?⁶

Though we interpret the language around us relatively painlessly, this lack of effort belies a complex process. Whether we realize it or not, we have all been trained in the science of interpretation. From birth we have been taught how to use context and intent to determine the meaning of language in our own culture, and this process of interpretation has become second nature to us. Every bit of information we receive, we interpret, and we do so through our informational, cultural, and linguistic grid. We do not struggle to read the newspaper and make sense of what it says, because our unconscious application of our science of interpretation serves us well. We interpret naturally because we are the product of our culture, interpreting a product of our culture.

On the other hand, many of us read classic works in high school and experienced the difficulty of understanding works written in a different era. Although the language was our own, our teachers explained nuance and meaning which we could not perceive on our own and which the original intended audience could perceive immediately.⁷ The historical distance alone created a barrier to full and accurate interpretation. We needed hermeneutical assistance with documents that used the same language as our newspaper and whose cultural and historical distances, though different, were not so very far from our own. Now consider the Bible: it is a divine-human document, written in foreign languages in foreign cultures, using multiple literary genres, and written by multiple authors. Is it any wonder that the science of interpretation has spawned a vast literature and that if we are to handle the Bible accurately in our quest for integration, we must have some passing familiarity with this literature?

The starting place with hermeneutics is to realize that we are all interpreters. When we approach a biblical text, we "interpret" it with all of our

experiences and culture, and we can easily read all kinds of foreign ideas into the text (Fee and Stuart, 1993). If we fail to realize this fact, we will surely fail to see the differences between what the text is talking about and what we as interpreters tend to gravitate toward. It is not that we must operate without preconceptions, but that we should be aware of those we hold and account for them. Failure to do so will result in a confusion of our worldview with those of the author (Carson, D. A., 1996).

The Problem of Principlization

In addition to being particularly susceptible to worldview confusion, narratives appear to be subject to an error I will term “principlization.” This error arises when we, as integrationists, fail to be conscious of our usage of the passage and use a historical event in a narrative to give biblical warrant to whatever theory we propose. When using a narrative, are we using it to claim a biblical basis for our theory or are we using the narrative to illustrate a principle found elsewhere? The distinction is important. Narrative passages are wonderful sources of illustration for biblical principle and doctrine. And, if handled with

a regard for the genre, they are wonderful sources for the principles and doctrines themselves. But if we do not recognize the nature of the passage and apply principles that are fit for the task, we risk error.

Unfortunately, many times what we represent as biblical principle is really biblical illustration. Biblical illustration apart from biblical principle has no warrant or authority. If we find a narrative passage which illustrates that an Old Testament character planned, and then argue from that passage that the Bible teaches the management principle of planning, we have failed in our task. Apart from commentary in the narrative itself (or elsewhere in the Bible), we cannot be sure that the action itself is one that is to be recommended.⁸

It is not that the Bible does not teach planning. It does. God Himself plans and the Proverbs represent planning as an appropriate activity of the godly man (Proverbs 23:3). The issue revolves around the appropriate use of the text, as given by God, to teach what He has intended to teach. We might as well find an illustration of an Old Testament character who failed to plan (and had good success) and propose the Bible teaches that a failure to

plan is recommended. Or we may argue that lying and murder are appropriate means of dealing with unjust rulers or managers because the Bible records incidences of lying and murder of unjust leaders and assigns the death to a deliverance of God (see Judges 4:4-23).⁹

The Problems Illustrated *The Joseph Narrative*

Consider the Joseph narrative found in chapters 37 and 39-50 in the book of Genesis. Is it the story of a young man with administrative acumen, a crisis manager who at a crucial moment in his life brought together his considerable administrative talents to save Egypt? Is it the story of a leader who understood the managerial functions of planning, leading, organizing, and controlling so that at a crucial moment in time God could deliver His remnant (Creighton, Arendall, and Pray, 1995)?

If we make that argument, we are clearly missing the point of the story. As Fee and Stuart state, “Whatever Joseph’s managerial skills may have been, they clearly played a secondary role to God’s intervention in his life. Unfairly jailed, Joseph rose to inmate-

administrator. Why? The Bible again leaves no doubt: ‘The Lord was with Joseph, and showed him loyalty, and gave him favor’” (p. 85). Can we use the Joseph narrative as an illustration of planning? Yes, of course, but we must do so realizing that the illustration is just that—an illustration. It is not indicative of whether planning is a good or bad thing. Even less is it indicative that planning is a “biblical” concept.

Often the focus on isolated events in narrative passages misses the point of the narrative.¹⁰ Sadly, by focusing on the individual events of Joseph’s life rather than on the story as a whole and on God as the author of the historical events, we miss the One who plans. In reality it is God who is the hero of the story. God is the one who plans and who brings to pass His plans.

Should we seek a model of planning...we should look to God Himself rather than His instruments.

Though Joseph’s brothers meant evil (planned evil) God meant their deeds for good. It is God who planned to have Joseph in place to deliver His remnant

through the famine and it is God's plan which sets the stage for Moses, the deliverer of Israel, the foreshadower of the true deliverer, Christ, the one in whom the divine plan culminates. Should we seek a model of planning from the narrative, we should look to God Himself rather than His instruments.

The Joshua Narrative

Narratives are particularly susceptible to the problem of worldview confusion. I illustrated this problem in the introduction with an extreme example, but consider the following example. What child is not familiar with the story of Joshua and the battle of Jericho—Joshua, the faithful servant of Moses and the man chosen to lead the people of Israel following Moses' death? When Joshua took over from Moses and led the people of Israel into the land, he was certainly the leader of Israel and was "responsible" for the victory at Jericho. Yet can we draw a parallel between the leadership of Joshua and modern managers? Can we argue that Joshua "sold the vision" of the defeat of Jericho to his followers (Creighton, Arendall, and Pray, 1995)?

If we reason that he must have convinced the people to

follow him by communicating a consuming vision of victory which captured the hearts of the people, then we are engaging in worldview confusion. By doing so, we reveal that we seriously misunderstand the nature of kingly leadership in the time of Joshua, and we are reading our assumptions about the process into the text. A careful reading of the verses in Joshua 6:6-10 indicates that Joshua commanded the priests and the people (he did not "sell the vision"), and the priests and the people obeyed.¹¹ It was Joshua's obedience to the command of God, the fact of God's blessing upon him, and the obedience of the people to God's man which insured victory at Jericho. Perhaps the lesson in leadership to be drawn from the passage is that godly leadership obeys the command of God. Perhaps there is another lesson, but reading the selling of a vision back into the passage, when none is indicated in the text, represents a clear misreading of the text.

Will we argue that Joshua was unknowingly using expectancy theory when he commanded the people of Israel to march around Jericho (Creighton, Arendall, and Pray, 1995)? Perhaps he was, but perhaps not. One might just as easily argue that Joshua had

actually employed anti-expectancy theory, because while God had communicated to Joshua that the walls would fall, the text indicates neither Joshua nor God communicated that crucial fact to the people. Thus the people themselves could not have had any expectation that the wall would fall, and the constant marching for seven consecutive days may have produced discouragement and shame rather than increasing expectation. Rather than increasing their expectation that their effort would lead to performance and the performance to the desired outcome, the view from the ground of the walls of Jericho may have produced a sense of hopelessness in their own effort and a sense of their need of God's intervention. They would realize that no effort of theirs could possibly insure the desired outcome.

This is crucial since Vroom's model is framed as a mathematical equation with motivational force being a multiplicative function of the components. Although the following explanation is a bit of an oversimplification, for Vroom, motivational force equaled expectancy times instrumentality times valence.¹² He consciously

framed the function as a multiplicative one so that if any of the components were missing, the motivational force would be zero no matter how much of the other two components were present. If my hypothesis is correct, the demotivation of marching around the city would render expectancy nearly zero, and the resultant motivational force of Joshua's command would be nearly zero.

Yet if we take one of Fee and Stuart's principles for interpreting narrative, that of making God the hero, we may indeed find expectancy theory.¹³ Consider that once God had intervened, once the walls had fallen, their expectancy of victory in the land would be at an all-time high as they could see "... the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land" (Joshua 6:27). At this point, if anyone is using expectancy theory, it is God Himself.

This interpretation of the event is more consistent with the nature of a narrative—first, because this interpretation exalts God as the hero of the story, and second, because it does not isolate the event at Jericho from the rest of the narrative. Thus the affirmation that Joshua used expectancy theory, albeit unknowingly, is doubtful.

Perhaps when we use a historical narrative account in order to give a biblical basis for a particular theory of business (or motivation), we should find the principle or proposition explicated elsewhere and then use the narrative to illustrate the theory. While one might argue that Joshua is an illustration of the usage of expectancy theory, one cannot from that illustration argue that expectancy theory is therefore a “biblical” concept. The use of the text in that way represents faulty integration.

A Frame of Reference

As a frame of reference, we might consider the use of hermeneutics as similar to the use of statistics in our quantitative journals. In our business disciplines, many of us were trained to use statistics as a tool for research, and we were trained to question whether a statistical method was the appropriate means to test the hypotheses and reach the proffered conclusions. We realized that incorrect use of the tools of statistics could easily lead to incorrect conclusions and incorrect theory development. Thus, when we engage in the process of peer review, we not only examine the theory development, but we examine

also the research methods our peers employ. We ask ourselves whether the method used was appropriate for the data and whether the approach taken undermines the validity or reliability of the research.

Similarly, the science of hermeneutics offers to us various methods and approaches in interpreting the text of the Bible. The failure to understand hermeneutical issues and the tools which are available can lead to the incorrect application of the tools and incorrect conclusions as well. We ought to be as aware of the weaknesses and appropriateness of various hermeneutical approach(es) as we would be of our statistical methods if we were writing for a quantitative journal.

Suggestions for a Conscious Hermeneutical Approach

First, we should recognize the divine-human nature of the Bible. It is a book that, though written by men, is inspired by God. It is the divine nature of the Book which gives it eternal relevance to every age and to all cultures. And it is this combination that requires we exercise familiarity with hermeneutical rules.¹⁴ This divine Word was not communicated directly, rather it

has been written in the words of men. While each book of the Bible has a divine source, each book also has a historical context, a context that cannot be ignored. Fee and Stuart have called it a “historical particularity.” They write, “But because God chose to speak his Word through human words in history, every book in the Bible also has historical particularity; each document is conditioned by the language, time, and culture in which it was originally written (and in some cases also by the oral history it had before it was written down). Interpretation of the Bible is demanded by the tension that exists between its *eternal relevance* and its *historical particularity*” (Fee and Stuart, 1993, p. 17).

This recognition then imposes on us the task of understanding (as much as we can) the original intent of the author and the probable understanding of his intended audience. Robertson McQuilken has echoed this perspective when he recommends that those who interpret the Bible should seek the single meaning intended by the author. He writes, “To determine the single meaning is the objective of biblical interpretation. Otherwise, the fancy of the interpreter, or the

preconceptions he imposes on the text, becomes the authority” (McQuilken, 1983, p. 66). Thus the reason for this as a starting place is that it represents a safeguard on our usage of the text. If we divorce the divine meaning from the human author’s meaning, “the text itself no longer exercises effective control over what meanings we derive from it” (Poythress, 1994, p. 84). As an extension, if one derives a meaning which the author could not possibly have meant (i.e. by forcing foreign/modern ideas upon the text), then there is an indication that the ideas do not exist as a legitimate interpretation of the text.¹⁵

This task is essentially one which requires an understanding of history, culture, and perhaps language. We, as integrationists, may desire more training in these areas and seek it. On the other hand, for those of us who have not been trained in these areas, we might consider co-authorships with those outside our disciplines who have been trained.

Second, we should identify the nature of the literature within the Bible and account for it as we interpret the passages. It is what we might call the literary context. Obviously the Bible is not just one book. It is a collection of

books from a variety of genres (i. e. epistles, narratives, parables, prophetic literature, wisdom literature). Each of these types of

...each book of the Bible has a...context that cannot be ignored.

literature have specific rules for accurate interpretation, and failing to account for each genre opens us up to error. As has already been illustrated, the narrative appears to be particularly susceptible to the importation of our worldview, and it should be interpreted with due consideration for its literary context.

This is true of other forms of literature in the Bible as well. What are the proper principles for the interpretation of prophetic literature, of parables, and of wisdom literature? We are less likely to consult the book of Revelation to find principles of management than we are to consult Genesis, but if we fail to pay due consideration to the genre we are no less likely to discover “truth” that is really no truth at all.

Conclusion

I haven’t yet answered whether performance appraisal is

biblical or integratable,¹⁶ but I believe that the proper application of hermeneutical tools can prevent me from venturing where I ought not. Does this approach to hermeneutics mean that all management theory must be based in propositional truth? Of course not. Sharon Johnson has rightly written:

While the Bible represents the primary source for building a Christian philosophy of management, it is not the exclusive source. Christian managers must examine a variety of sources for better ideas about the phenomena of management. The Bible makes no claim for itself as an encyclopedia. It does not contain all the knowledge a Christian manager will need. What it does contain is the dear expression of God’s will in the most important areas of our lives: our relationship to God and our relationship to other people. Its truths and values act as the core of the Christian management philosophy.

Ideas from other sources may be incorporated as aids in clarifying specific applications of these truths and values and in bringing understanding of phenomena not covered in Scripture, so long as these foreign

ideas are logically complementary with the truths and values revealed in Scripture. In building a Christian philosophy of management, the manager should be open to incorporate any ideas that are consistent with the truths and values of the Bible and that contribute to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of his stewardship (Johnson, 1989, p. 19).

The absence of a biblical basis or principle for a management theory does not, in itself, mean that the theory cannot possess working truth. We should not expect to find support for every management theory in the pages of the Bible. Neither should we feel compelled to “discover” secret management principles from the text of the Bible. The task is for us to understand the Bible and to understand our discipline. Then we are to allow the Bible to interpret our discipline rather than our discipline interpreting our Bible. As Chewning has observed, we must be “good Bereans,” examining the Scriptures daily (Chewning, 1997), but we must be good “hermeneutes” in the process. We ought to think carefully and consciously choose

methods that will help us to find good answers to hard questions. If we travel any other road, we will find ourselves conversing with one another in Alice’s Wonderland.

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ENDNOTES

¹In this paper I am focusing on vertical integration (Smith and Johnson, 1997).

²I am using the word "hermeneutics" to encompass the whole field of interpretation (as it appears Chwening does also) rather than in its narrower sense of seeking contemporary relevance of ancient texts (Fee and Stuart, 1993).

³Sharon Johnson has addressed this problem indirectly by arguing that an inductive approach is stronger than a deductive approach for integrative purposes: "An inductive approach helps avoid our tendency to use Scripture to back conclusions we have already reached" (Johnson, 1996, p. 2).

⁴This is itself a daunting task. I am not contending that we are to become experts in the science of hermeneutics—to do so would require a lifetime of study. Rather I am recommending that we cannot blissfully ignore basic principles without reaching faulty conclusions.

⁵The treatment of the array of hermeneutical perspectives and issues is beyond the scope of this paper (indeed even a listing of references would be beyond the scope of this paper). The interested reader should consult Kaiser and Silva's *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* as a starting point and move on to *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* edited by Silva. These two books provide relevant discussion, works by multiple authors, and ample references for the interested reader to pursue.

⁶For this section I am indebted to Moises Silva's thoughtful chapter, "Who Needs Hermeneutics Anyway?" (Silva and Kaiser, 1994).

⁷This is not an issue of whether or not a text can speak in principle to different ages (Johnson, 1989). It can. It is instead an issue of whether we accurately understand the text. An accurate reading of the text is foundational to the ability of the text to speak in principle to different ages. If, because of the historical distance, the text is misunderstood, then the application/observation of the text is faulty.

⁸For helpful discussions, see Fee and Stuart (1993, p. 78-94), Silva (1996, p. 69-86), and Kaiser and Silva (1994, p. 299-409).

⁹As integrationists, we should realize that we are "expositing" the text. David Deuel's comments regarding biblical exposition have relevance to us as integrationists: "An expositor should use great caution in proving a theological or ethical principle by employing an OT narrative. He should find clear admonitions of 'do or believe this' or 'do not do or believe this' elsewhere in Scripture before drawing on narrative illustrations to elaborate on the point. Adopting the theology of Job's counselors indiscriminantly, for example, is not wise. Similarly, a blind

following of the ethical example in narrative portions of Scripture is unsafe. In other words, the expositor wants to assure that the Bible advocates a certain doctrine, attribute, or behavioral quality before illustrating it with an OT narrative. Professing Christians have at times wrongly justified bad theology or immoral actions on inferior grounds that 'so and so, an otherwise virtuous Bible character, spoke/did it'" (Deuel, 1991, p. 57).

¹⁰Related to this issue, David Deuel has written, "This is not to say that subsections of narratives may not be used to preach or teach topical, biographical, or other conceptual formats originating with the preacher or another writer of the Bible. Smaller units of stories do affirm various truths, but do not do so independently of the total narrative of which they are a part. The function of such lessons as subordinate to the primary message of the whole story must be kept in perspective. This is the only way to assure that one's interpretation of the passage and expository preaching based on it will capture the intention of both its divine and human authors" (Deuel, 1991, p. 55).

¹¹Joshua 6:6 (New American Standard Bible)—So Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests carry seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." 7 Then he said to the people, "Go forward, and march around the city, and let the armed men go on before the ark of the LORD." 8 And it was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD went forward and blew the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 And the armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while they continued to blow the trumpets. 10 But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout!" ¹²Motivational force = (expectancy) x (instrumentality) x (valence). See Victor H. Vroom, *Work and Motivation*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964).

¹³I am not advocating this as a perspective for this portion of the narrative. I am merely using it to show how a principle of hermeneutics may help in the interpretation of a narrative

and *may* lead to more accurate integration of business theory with the Bible.

¹⁴If the book were merely divine, one could argue that there would be no need of hermeneutics at all. Moises Silva quotes a Catholic scholar who has cogently argued that a purely divine word is the only word that potentially would not require a hermeneutic because God would be the only one who could express Himself without ambiguity (Silva, 1994, p. 16).

¹⁵While we should seek the intent of the author as a safeguard for our interpretation, we should be aware that the author's conscious intention does not necessarily exhaust the meaning of the text. This is particularly true in the cases of poetic and prophetic literature. The interested reader is encouraged to consult Payne (1994) for a thoughtful discussion of this issue.

¹⁶Though at this point in my integration, I stand by my original statement with the college president. I see performance appraisal as a tool of the manager. In itself, a particular method of performance appraisal is a neutral instrument, much like a calculator or a computer. The issue for a Christian manager is not so much the tool itself as it is the manner in which the tool is used. Like performance appraisal, the use of a computer was not anticipated in the biblical record, and I daresay should we find it there we should question our hermeneutical methodology.

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