HERMENEUTICAL VALIDATION OF BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES
USED IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Michael R. Myers

Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Regent University
2011
Abstract

Research has revealed that biblical Christianity is declining as a life-ordering force among American Christian youth (Barna Group, 2009; Ham & Beemer, 2009; Smithwick, 2008). This trend continues despite the ubiquitous references to terms like biblical integration and biblical worldview in Christian school mission statements. In fact, from its inception, the evangelical Christian school movement has emphasized the importance of biblical integration as a means of developing a biblical worldview (Gaebelein, 1951). Lockerbie (2005) saw the attainment of a biblical worldview as a major motive for Christian education. If developing a biblical worldview is of such great importance to the body of Christ (Barna, 2003; Moreland, 2007), and if teaching and learning from biblical principles provides a pathway to attain this goal (Graham, 2003; Slater, 1975), then it is imperative that the principles used for biblical integration are biblically valid. The purpose of this study is to address the need for hermeneutical validation of biblical principles used in Christian school curriculum development in American evangelical Christian schools. A review of the extant literature revealed that the grammatical–historical approach to hermeneutics is widely accepted by evangelical Christian scholars. A hermeneutic validation protocol based on this approach was developed for Christian school educators to use to verify that the principles they are using for biblical integration are indeed biblical. A test case was selected to assess the effectiveness of the validation protocol: the first two principles of the Principle Approach®, an educational paradigm that stresses the use of principles in the teaching-learning cycle. The validation protocol proved useful and effective for evaluating the biblical
veracity of the test case principles. The validation protocol provides a vehicle for “rightly
dividing the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15) beyond the typical hermeneutical skill level of most
Christian school educators.