

Contextualizing the Doctrinal Dimension

What is Christian Theology?

Theology as ideas . . .

. . . human expressions of the truths that God has revealed in the Bible arranged to make sense to an intended audience.

Theology as lifestyle . . .

. . . living in a fashion that is connected to and actively pursuing God's intentions for the created order.

What Is "Doing Theology"?

- The methods and procedures used to
 - Develop theological expressions of God's truths and
 - Live the type of life that reflects God's truths.
- These methods vary from person to person, denomination to denomination, and culture to culture.
- They are inevitably defined, developed, and utilized according to the presuppositions the theologizer bring to the task.
- They are not limited to facts or abstract data; they must connect to life and lifestyle commitments.

Functions of Theology

- *Cognitive* theology
 - Enables us to explain and organize our experiences in life
 - Guides our behavior; leads us to obedience to Christ
- *Lifestyle* theology
 - Reflects Kingdom priorities to the watching world
 - Woos people to a living relationship with Christ
 - Champions causes dear to the heart of God

Types of Theology



Oral theologies



Praxis Oriented Theologies

Biblical Theologies

- Old Testament
- Pentateuch
- Wisdom Literature
- Prophets
- Historical Books
- New Testament
- Synoptic Gospels
- Johannine Epistles
- Acts
- Epistles
- Pauline
- Petrine
- James
- Hebrews



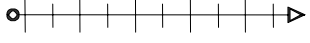
Experiential Theologies



Narrative Theologies

Systematic Theologies

- Theism
- The nature and attributes of God
- Evidences for the existence of God
- The doctrine of the Trinity
- The works of God: Creation
- The decrees of God, providence, miracle
- Revelation, the inspiration of the Bible
- Biblical anthropology
- Humanity in the image of God
- People as sinners--the fall
- People as sinners--results and implications of the fall
- The origin and antiquity of humanity
- Human life in this age
- Soteriology
- Christology
- The atonement
- Application of the atonement
- The church and the sacraments
- Eschatology
- What is eschatology?
- The intermediate state
- The resurrection of the body
- The future kingdom of Christ



Historical Theologies

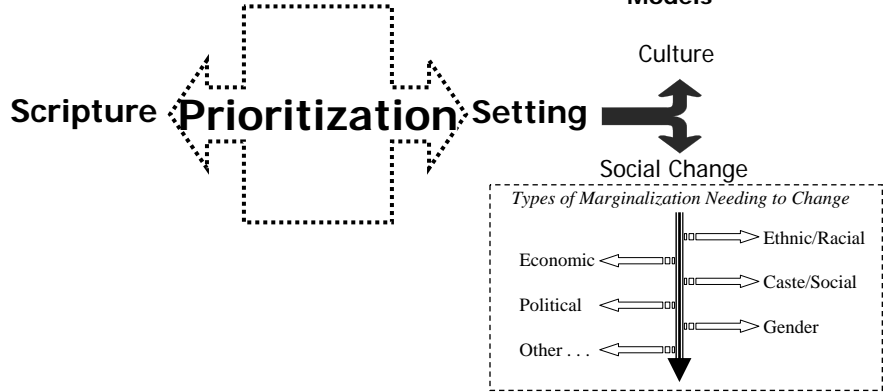
Contextually Driven Theologies



Approaches to Contextualizing Doctrine

"Translation" Models

"Existential" Models



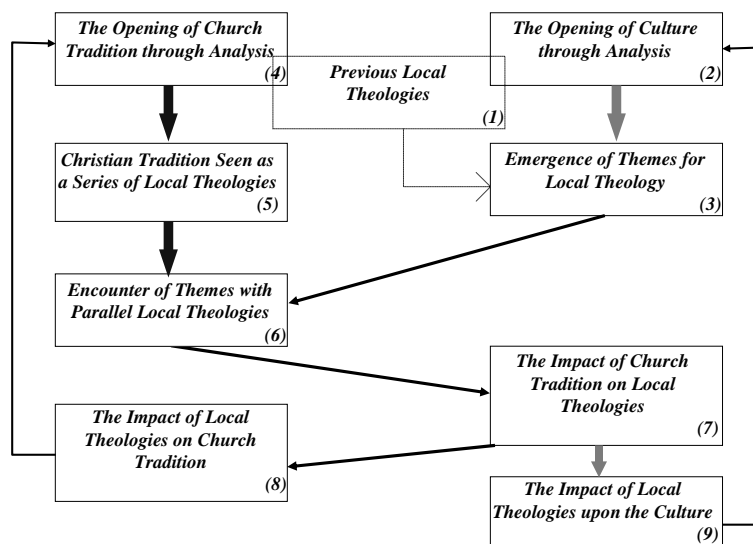
Research, Reflection, and Expression Contextualization

J. J. Davis, *Theology Primer*

- 1 **Definitional Phase:**
Define the problem
Define the key terms, concepts and distinctions
- 2 **Analytical Phase:**
Gather the biblical data
Gather the theological data
Gather relevant historical data
Gather contemporary contextual data
- 3 **Synthetic Phase:**
Inductive study of the data
Weigh the evidence carefully
Discuss with mature indigenous believers
State a tentative conclusion
Try to generalize your conclusion to test it
- 4 **Expressive Phase:**
Clearly outline what you want to communicate
What are the pastoral dimensions?

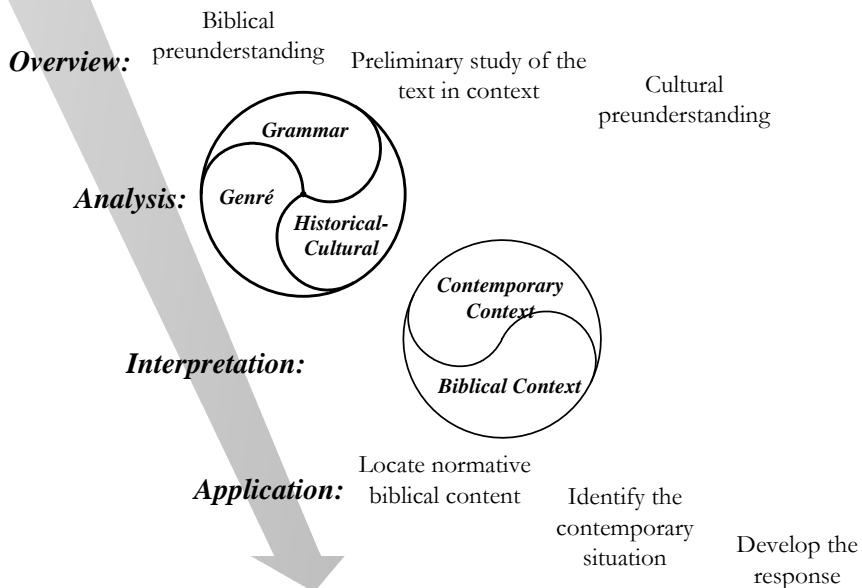
Constructing Local Theologies

Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*



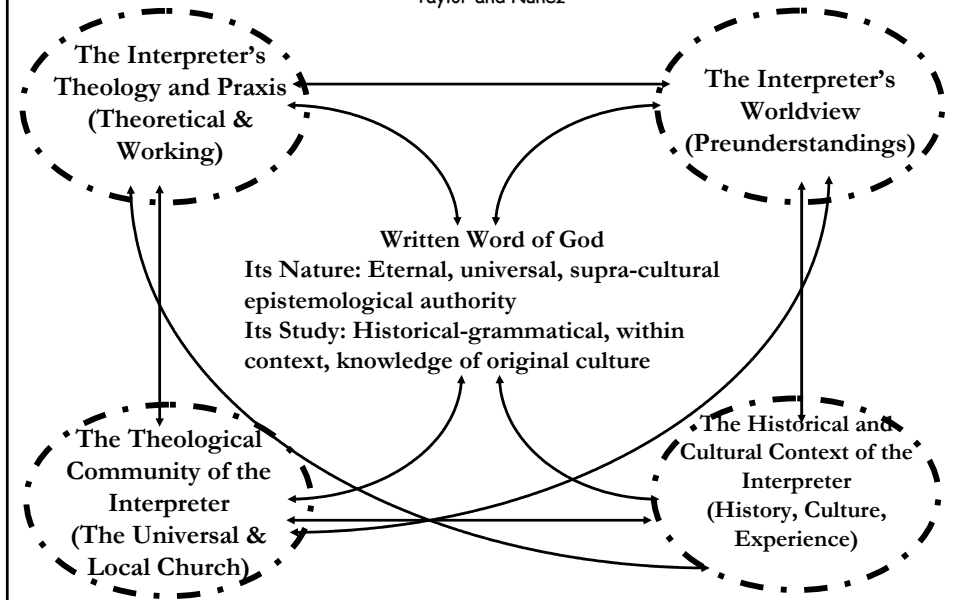
Larkin's 4-Step Approach

William Larkin, *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics*



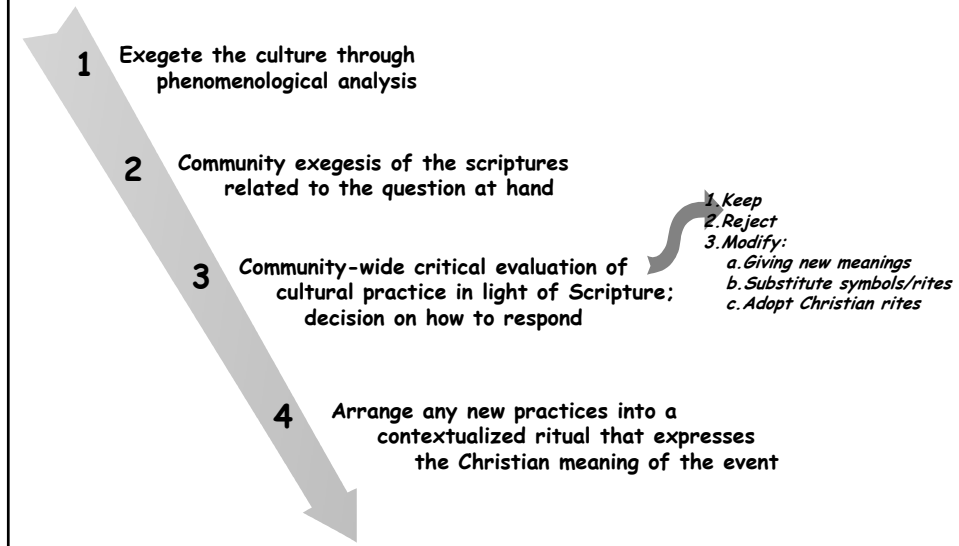
Liberationist-Based Model

Taylor and Nuñez



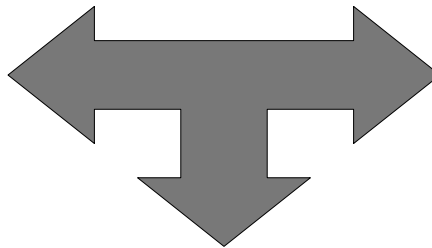
Critical Contextualization

Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*



Critical Contextualization Options

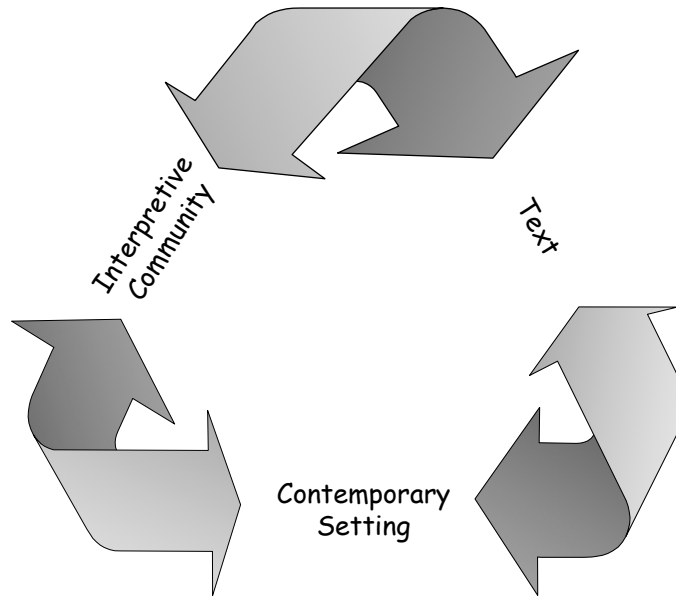
Reasoned
Rejection



Conscientious
Keeping

Community Modification:
Give new meanings
Substitute symbols or rites
Adopt Christian symbols or rites

Fusing the Horizons



The Horizon of the Text

- What type of literature is the passage?
- How does the passage fit into the larger contexts?
- What was the author's intent in writing the passage?
 - What does it say in context?
 - What did it mean to the original readers?
- How far does the teaching/imperative nature of the text extend beyond its original context?

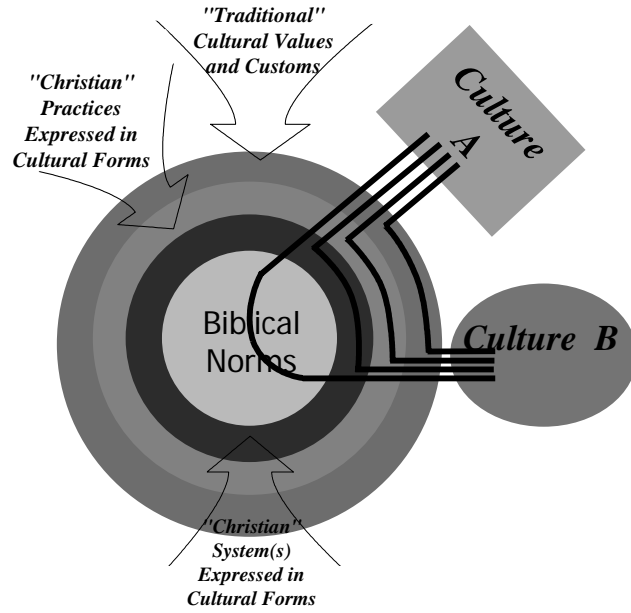
The Horizon of the Interpretive Community

- Pray for the illumination of the Spirit
- What is our view of *God* and how He relates to the created order?
- What cultural values do we have?
- How will our values predispose us in going to the text?
- What should we do in light of the text and who *God* calls us to be?

The Horizon of the Setting

- What is the *view of God* and how He relates to the created order in this setting?
- What *cultural values* are present in this setting?
- How will the values *predispose people in taking from the text to the context*?
- What *actions* will reflect *God's kingdom* most clearly?

"Layers" of Contextualization



Theological Contextualization Grid

