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Assignment 10

The difference between reader response and authorial intent.

The description of reader response is how the reader perceives or interprets what is written, connecting it to one's own belief or world view. The context can be misconstrued or deviated from the author's intent. This can be problematic when the author is trying to teach a particular topic. What if students read history books and instead of learning and understanding the material written they just formed opinions about how they felt? Many students would fail the course. Many books or pamphlets are written to give directions. For example, if someone bought a desk and had to put it together but did not read the instructions thoroughly, the desk may be unsteady and eventually fall apart.

The Bible is a book that gives us prophesy, history, and direction (the law and commandments). One cannot pick and choose what they want to believe or which parts they want to follow and stay true to God, but that is what most religions do. Many pastors and church leaders have led so many people away from the truth. As well as taking verses out of context without fully understanding the meaning, such as Philippians 4:13 ESV "I can do all things through him who strengthens me", which many take it as they can accomplish any physical task as long as you put your mind to it, but Paul was telling his audience, while he was in prison facing persecution, that they can overcome trials and how to be content with what they have.

verses

Reader response is appropriate when examining the text of the Bible and how it relates to you, connecting a personal experience but without changing the author's intent. It again gives us direction and that is what the reader should focus on.

Communication of authorial intent.

Communication is key to authorial intent because it determines the author's purpose or message, letting readers know what the author is trying to convey. Without proper communication, this can lead to interpretation of the reader which may not grasp the author's message at all. There are many who misinterpret Paul's writing in the Bible because he was writing to specific churches with unique problems that many of today's readers misconstrue the actual meaning and message. Even at that time, many were getting the message wrong as we read 2 Peter 3:15-16 when Peter states "There are some things in them (the letters) that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scripture". Many pass over the meaning of some verses in the Bible because they do not understand the meaning or do not agree with it. Readers should also consider the time and circumstances around the text to get a better understanding of what the writer is trying to convey to his audience.

When readers intentionally change the author's intended meaning.

Readers who do not understand certain verses will often twist the meaning to something else. Take for example Jeremiah 29:11 ESV "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and hope", many people take this to mean themselves, but this was intended for the Israelites who were taken into captivity in Babylon. People throughout the world take the verse in Acts 20:7 "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread" to mean the Sabbath was changed to Sunday, even though Paul kept Saturday Sabbath (Acts 13:42, 13:44, and 18:4), as did Jesus (Luke 4:16, 4:31, 6:6). Since most churches keep Sunday as the day of worship which occurred when Roman Emperor Constantine I, made a law mandating Sunday as the day of rest in 321 AD, to combine pagan worship and Christianity and then Roman Catholic Church formalized it in 364 AD.

Another example is in Mark (7:18-19), Jesus states "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from the outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and then is expelled?" which has led people to think all foods are clean (this was actually stated in parentheses in the ESV version) but Jesus was talking about the Pharisees calling him out about not washing his hands before eating which was commanded by tradition and stating that instead of thinking of cleanliness on the outside that the Pharisees needed to examine their hearts and how they were treating others. He wanted them to show mercy, love, and kindness to others.

Thank you Karen. You write well and thoughtfully, and have given excellent examples to illustrate your points. Well done!