

A study on the diversification of Interpretation according to the Bible didactics by Horst Klaus Berg

Jeongdo An

(Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary)

Abstract

This study seeks to shed light on the contributions of Horst Klaus Berg to German Bible didactics, underscoring the pivotal role of diverse interpretative approaches in the teaching and learning of the Bible. In an era where the complexities and intricacies of the Bible present significant challenges to contemporary readers, the prevalence of one-dimensional interpretations further obstructs the pathway to a profound comprehension of the spiritual depth embedded within its texts. By centering on Horst Klaus Berg's influential theories in the field of German Bible didactics, this research delves into the impact of varied biblical interpretations on Christian education. Berg's work is celebrated for its insightful strategies, notably his advocacy for comprehensive interpretative methods such as "Railway Tracks" and "Free-Learning." These approaches seek to reconcile traditional biblical teachings with individual experiences, thereby facilitating a more expansive understanding of the Bible's applicability to modern life. Through a detailed examination of Berg's theory on biblical interpretation, this paper argues that Christian education must prioritize the cultivation of diverse interpretative skills and their practical integration into Bible study. This educational model encourages learners to become active interpreters, capable of discerning the text's deep-seated meanings by relating it to their personal experiences. The study concludes by affirming Berg's delineation of three critical tasks in biblical interpretation: "reciprocal interpretation," "acknowledgment of the biblical texts' diversity," and "free learning." These elements are portrayed as interrelated and essential, reinforcing Berg's proposition that understanding the Bible's complexity and diversity is crucial for advancing Christian education. This paper offers a novel perspective on the significance of embracing multifaceted interpretations within the domain of biblical studies.

Key Words

Bible didactic, interpretation, diversification, experience, free learning

Received March 7, 2024 Revised March 28, 2024 Accepted March 29, 2024

Author : Jeongdo An, Assistant Professor, Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary,
comemessiah@gmail.com

Horst Klaus Berg의 성서교수학에 나타난 해석 다양성에 관한 연구

안정도*
(장로회신학대학교)

논문 요약

연구 목적 : 본 연구의 목적은 성서 교육과 학습을 위한 해석의 다양성의 중요성을 강조한 독일 성서교수학자 베르그(Horst Klaus Berg)의 교육원리를 소개하고 탐구하면서 기독교교육에서 다양한 성서해석의 중요성을 강조한다.

연구 내용 및 방법 : 오늘날 성서 읽기의 어려움은 복잡성에서 비롯된다 할 수 있다. 이 복잡성을 교육학적인 의미에서 다양성으로 이해하고 더 깊은 이해의 도구로 삼을 수 있다. 본 논문은 복잡한 성서의 다양한 해석의 당위성을 이해하기 위해 독일의 대표적인 성서교수학자 베르그의 이론에 주목한다. 베르그는 '기차 선로들'과 '자유 학습'과 같은 상징어로 성서의 다양한 해석과 방법이 학습자에게 전통과 경험 사이의 간격을 교육적으로 줄여야 한다고 주장한다. 이러한 다양한 해석에 대한 열린 자세는 성서의 광범위한 내용이 학습자가 삶의 현장과 연결되어 기초적으로 학습자가 인식할 수 있는 교육 기회를 제공한다고 믿는다.

결론 및 제언 : 본 연구에서는 베르그의 성서 교수학의 세 가지 과제: '상호 해석,' '성서 본문의 다양성 이해,' '자유 학습'이 불가분의 관계에 있다는 것을 확인한다. 이것을 통해 우리는 베르그의 성서교수학으로부터 어린이가 자신의 삶의 경험과 연결하여 성서 본문의 깊은 의미를 이해하는 주체적인 독자가 되도록 돕는 것이 기독교교육의 과제임을 다시 깨닫는다. 이런 의미에서 베르그가 주장하는 성서의 통전성과 다양성에 대한 이해는 오늘날 기독교 교육의 영역에 여전히 유효한 통찰을 주는 개념이다.

〈 주제어 〉

성서교수학, 해석, 다양화, 경험, 자유 학습

I. Introduction

This paper investigates contemporary approaches to Bible didactics, focusing on engaging with the Bible beyond traditional theological or strictly pedagogical boundaries. It addresses a critical issue that has become increasingly apparent since the late 1990s: the presumption that faith as depicted in the Bible is universally valid and applicable without critical scrutiny is no longer a tenable stance within religious education. This challenge has prompted a shift towards experience- and subject-oriented Bible didactics, marking a significant evolution in the field of religious education, especially with the introduction of concepts like “elementarization” and “children’s theology” at the dawn of the 21st century (Schweitzer et al., 2007; Lämmermann, 2001). These developments signify a departure from traditional biblical hermeneutics and didactic strategies, aiming to better resonate with the perspectives and realities of children and young people (Han, 2022; Lee, 2021).

The study delves into the importance and potential of adopting diverse interpretative approaches to cultivate a comprehensive understanding among biblical learners, challenging the conventional didactic emphasis on objective knowledge. It particularly draws on the work of Horst Klaus Berg, a notable German didactics scholar, who explored the viability and importance of varied interpretive methods for contemporary learners within the German religious education context. Since the 1970s, in German religious education, biblical didactics has set the following two main objectives. The first is the development of teaching methods that facilitate an understanding between biblical texts and readers while continuing the tradition of religious education. The second objective is to ensure that the proclamation in Bible classes is not only recognized as a religious proclamation but also seeks an educational understanding. Within these goals of German religious education, Horst Klaus Berg is evaluated as a *klassiker* or pioneer who emphasizes a pedagogical perspective in biblical interpretation to achieve these educational objectives (Lindner, 2011, 3). Specifically, Peter Müller, a master of contemporary symbolic biblical didactics, assesses that in the 1970s, when exploring various paths of biblical education, Horst Klaus Berg played a key role in pro-

viding the “keys, stimuli, and setting the scope for new biblical teaching methods”. In this regard, Berg’s perspective holds a classical and textbook position in today’s German biblical education and doctrinal education studies (Müller, 2011, 3). The paper scrutinizes the implications and opportunities presented by these innovative and multifaceted approaches, especially concerning biblical hermeneutics. Yoon (2014) has introduced a thorough exposition of Berg’s thirteen methods of biblical interpretation, highlighting their significance for biblical pedagogy in Korea. Despite the elapsed decade, Berg’s contributions to biblical didactics continue to hold profound relevance and necessity for the Korean context.

Thus, this study endeavors to reintroduce and emphasize Berg’s perspectives within the sphere of biblical teaching in Korea, advocating for the recognition and integration of his comprehensive approach to the Bible. By revisiting Berg’s insights, the paper aims to reassert the value of embracing diverse interpretative frameworks, thereby enriching the educational experience and facilitating a deeper, more personal engagement with the biblical text among learners. Through this exploration, the paper contributes to the ongoing dialogue on evolving Bible didactics, advocating for methods that bridge traditional knowledge with the dynamic and varied experiences of learners today.

II. Current challenges in biblical didactic

1. The need for clear understanding amidst the complexity of the Bible

Historically, in the context of Christian education in Korea, Bible education has maintained its critical status, especially during formative moments in history, manifesting through various modes such as Bible classes in Christian schools and congregation-centric Bible studies within churches (Oh. et al., 2008, 312-322). The contemporary demand for comprehensive Bible reading programs, like the Tong-Bible Reading, which employs visual aids to elucidate the Bible’s structure and content, underscores the ongoing challenges faced by learners in achieving a thorough and accessible understanding of biblical faith (Kwon, 2017; An, 2022). The multifaceted nature and complexity of the Bible often give rise to diverse

interpretations and potential misunderstandings in contemporary society. While some regard it as an ecclesiastical text, others view it as a compilation of personal life narratives or a societal guide. The misconception that the Bible is strictly a religious artifact has, in modern secular times, fueled perceptions of its dwindling practical relevance. The advent of artificial intelligence further complicates this landscape, promoting an informational approach to Bible study that emphasizes technological assistance over traditional interpretation and meditation practices within biblical tradition. Amidst this backdrop, there is an increasing interest in fostering collective engagement with the Bible through interpretation and meditation (Yang, 2022).

These variety of needs underscores the necessity of pursuing educational methodologies that ensure a holistic and clear comprehension of the Bible. At the heart of Christian education and biblical didactics lies the pivotal question of whether today's youth can genuinely perceive the Bible as truth. This question is of paramount importance not only to the church but also to religious education within schools and society at large. Assertive discourse on the Bible directs us to the core of the Christian faith and the intrinsic connection between human existence and biblical teachings. A deeper understanding of the Bible enriches the appreciation for individual lives, as evidenced by God's plans for humanity's betterment, positioning the Bible as a foundational text that imparts wisdom and insights for life's enrichment (Ingo, 1993, 20-21; Zimmermann, 2013, 2; Gerd, 2003, 28-36; Yoon, 2014).

The engagement with the Bible presents a unique set of challenges that stem from its inherent complexity and multifaceted nature. Gerd Theißen's perspective (2003, 15) delineates three primary lenses through which the Bible can be understood: as a confessional document of the church, a source for personal meditation, and a pedagogical tool within society. These interpretations underscore the Bible's rich thematic diversity and the varied approaches individuals might take towards its study and application. The challenge, then, lies in reconciling these dimensions into a cohesive understanding of the Bible and addressing any potential tensions that might arise between them.

Understanding the Bible as a unified entity while acknowledging its diverse di-

mensions requires a nuanced approach, particularly when considering the balance between these dimensions. This balance is not merely about equal representation but about recognizing the unique value each dimension brings to the broader understanding of the Bible. For instance, viewing the Bible as a confessional book of the church emphasizes its role in shaping doctrinal beliefs and communal identity. In contrast, its role as a source of personal meditation speaks to the individual's spiritual journey and personal growth. As an educational resource, the Bible offers historical, moral, and philosophical insights relevant to broader societal discussions.

Biblical didactics, then, becomes a critical field of inquiry in navigating these complexities. It involves a deliberate reflection on how to convey the Bible's rich narratives and teachings to contemporary audiences, especially targeting younger generations. This includes careful consideration of the purpose behind biblical education, the selection of content that resonates with today's learners, and the identification of engagement forms that are both accessible and meaningful.

Effective biblical didactics requires a dynamic approach that is responsive to the changing needs and contexts of learners. It must bridge traditional interpretations with modern concerns, enabling individuals to find personal relevance in the Bible's teachings. This involves not only a deep understanding of the biblical text but also an awareness of the learners' cultural, social, and existential realities. By fostering an environment where the Bible is approached through multiple dimensions, educators and religious leaders can help individuals navigate the complexities of the text, leading to a more profound and personal engagement with its contents.

In summary, the endeavor to understand and teach the Bible in a way that respects its complexity and multifaceted nature is a challenging yet rewarding pursuit. It requires a balanced approach that honors the Bible's historical significance, spiritual depth, and educational value, thereby enriching the engagement of all individuals with this foundational text.

2. Possibilities Presented by Horst Klaus Berg

Horst Klaus Berg, a distinguished German biblical educationalist, embarked on his research with a keen awareness of the challenges educators and learners face in incorporating the Bible into classroom discussions. His work, rooted in the recognition of the “learning opportunities and learning needs” presented by the Bible for contemporary society, underscores the Bible’s potential as a dynamic educational tool (Berg, 1993, 50). Berg’s research period and the present-day context of Korean faith education exhibit notable parallels, particularly in their shared backdrop of ecological crises and the looming threat of nuclear proliferation. These concerns, prevalent during the 1980s and persisting into 2023, serve as a reminder of the Bible’s relevance as a source of hope and guidance in facing global challenges. Berg posited that the “Bible offers a repository of salvific experiences, critical insights, and a transformative dynamism” essential for comprehensive Christian education (Berg, 1993, 37).

A pivotal aspect of Berg’s argument is the didactic potential inherent in biblical language, which he believed could cultivate trust among learners. Advocating for a Bible orientation within religious education, Berg critiqued the dogmatic, uncritical acceptance of biblical texts, urging instead for a critical engagement with the Word of God. He emphasized the importance of a hermeneutical relationship that balances biblical texts with a scientifically responsible foundation in Bible studies. To this end, Berg sought out exegetical methods that support experience-based Bible didactics, advocating for a multifaceted and comprehensive learning culture that aligns with the process-oriented nature of the Bible.

Berg’s exploration of didactic possibilities opens up new avenues for engaging with the Bible in educational settings, promoting an approach that values critical inquiry alongside faith-based learning. His emphasis on experience-based didactics offers a valuable perspective for Christian education, particularly within the Korean context, where the intersection of faith, cultural identity, and modern challenges necessitates a nuanced approach to biblical studies. Introducing and exploring Berg’s methodologies in Korean Christian education could significantly enhance the discourse on Bible didactics, offering educators and learners alike a

richer, more engaging framework for understanding the Bible's teachings and their application to contemporary life. Through Berg's insights, there's an opportunity to cultivate a learning environment that not only respects the sacredness of biblical texts but also encourages an interactive, critical, and personally relevant exploration of faith.

III. Connecting between Tradition and Experience in Bible didactic

1. The question of experience in Bible didactics

In his seminal work, "Ein Wort wie Feuer: Wege lebendiger Bibelauslegung" (A Word like Fire: Ways of Vivid Bible Interpretation), Horst Klaus Berg embarks on a critical examination of the declining engagement with the Bible in contemporary society, attributing this trend to various factors. Central to his analysis is the observation that the Bible's language is often perceived as being restricted to religious contexts, rendering it seemingly irrelevant to the everyday lives of modern individuals. Furthermore, Berg points out a common misconception among readers who treat the Bible as just another piece of news, failing to integrate its counter-worldly principles with their personal experiences.

Berg identifies a significant gap in contemporary Bible reading practices: the loss of experiential connection. This gap, according to Berg, "stems from a theological vacuum that has become increasingly detached from the lived experiences and piety found within the church community" (Berg, 1991, 18-22). In response to this challenge, Berg proposes a transformative approach to biblical interpretation that prioritizes an experience-related correlation. He advocates for a paradigm shift that reorients the focus from validating the truth of faith to exploring the direction of life. Berg argues that "the wealth of lived experiences, rather than mere doctrinal adherence, is crucial for a meaningful engagement with the Bible" (Berg, 1991, 21).

To facilitate an experiential interpretation of the Bible, Berg delineates three dimensions of experience: everyday, religious, and Christian experiences. He defines everyday experience as the mundane, repetitive aspects of modern life, while

religious experience encompasses moments of crisis or existential encounters, drawing on Karl Jaspers' notion of "Grenzsituation" (borderline situations). Christian experience, in turn, interprets these borderline situations through an existential lens, "further radicalizing them in the context of a relationship with God, anchored in the biblical hope for a transformative future" (Berg, 1991, 24-28). Berg conceptualizes the interplay between these dimensions as a "swinging movement" within a "circle of experience," a framework that echoes Nipkow's earlier discussions (Nipkow, 1982, 92; Berg, 1991, 29).

The challenge, then, for Bible didactics is to foster and maintain these dynamic "swinging movements" within the experiential circle. This task is particularly pertinent in the context of religious education in Korea, where scholars have highlighted the weak linkage between the Bible and everyday life as a significant concern. Engaging with Berg's concept of experience is thus vital for the reconceptualization of Christian education in Korea. Such an approach should aim to equip individuals with a lifestyle that reflects their relationship with God in their daily lives (Son, 2005), thereby bridging the gap between biblical teachings and contemporary experiences. Through this lens, Bible didactics can offer a revitalized framework for faith education, one that is deeply rooted in the lived realities of individuals, making the Bible a relevant and transformative force in modern society.

2. Two basic orientations of Bible interpretation

1) Direction in the Bible

Horst Klaus Berg's exploration into the core themes of the biblical tradition underscores a profound connection between the Bible and life experience. By identifying what he terms the "six basic notifications," Berg seeks to capture the essence of the overarching narratives found within both the Old and New Testaments. These core elements are envisioned "as fundamental experiences and decisions" that are pivotal within the biblical texts, offering a lens through which the "Bible's complex and rich tradition" can be understood and engaged with in a meaningful way (Berg, 1993, 76).

Berg's work comes at a time when the field of religious education in Germany

was deeply engaged in discussions about the nature of biblical interpretation. The contributions of scholars like Karl E. Nipkow and Ingo Baldermann were instrumental in shaping these discussions, with a focus on understanding the Bible through reciprocal interpretation and the process of elementarization from different perspectives. Nipkow's emphasis on "human experience from a developmental psychology" viewpoint and Baldermann's advocacy for a "biblical theology-grounded interpretation" highlight the multifaceted approaches to engaging with the Bible (Albers & Kiefer, 1979). In aligning with Baldermann's efforts to pinpoint linguistic themes such as "justification, justice, covenant, divine rule, and creation"(Ingo, 1993, 28), Berg acknowledges these efforts as essential in uncovering what is fundamental and enduring within the biblical tradition. By distilling the Bible into six basic notifications, Berg provides a framework for understanding the Bible's core messages and their relevance to contemporary life(Berg, 1993, 73):

- ① "God bestows life" (creation): This theme emphasizes the origin of life and the universe as an act of divine generosity, highlighting the value and sanctity of all creation.
- ② "God creates community" (love, partnership, covenant, ecumenism): Here, the focus is on the relationships that God establishes with humanity and among humans themselves, based on love, commitment, and mutual support.
- ③ "God suffers with and for his people" (suffering and passion): This element underscores the empathetic nature of God, who is not distant from human suffering but intimately involved and willing to endure suffering on behalf of humanity.
- ④ "God delivers the oppressed" (deliverance): Reflecting on the liberation themes prevalent in the Bible, this notification speaks to God's role as a liberator of those who are oppressed or enslaved.
- ⑤ "God gives His Spirit" (Holy Spirit and enthusiasm): This highlights the empowerment of individuals and communities through the Holy Spirit, inspiring and guiding them in their faith journey.
- ⑥ "God reigns forever" (reign of God, shalom): Finally, the eternal sovereignty of God is affirmed, along with the promise of peace and wholeness (shalom)

that characterizes God's reign.

By articulating these basic notifications, Berg establishes a cohesive narrative thread that runs through the Bible, facilitating a deeper understanding and engagement with its texts. These core themes serve not only as a foundation for biblical interpretation but also as a bridge connecting the ancient texts with the contemporary experiences of individuals and communities. Through this framework, Berg contributes significantly to the field of religious education, offering a robust model for engaging with the Bible in a way that is both deeply rooted in tradition and profoundly relevant to modern life.

2) Direction in the Experience

Horst Klaus Berg's emphasis on contextual experience within Bible didactics is a pivotal aspect of his educational philosophy. By integrating "correlation didactics," inspired by Paul Tillich and Georg Baudler, Berg seeks to bridge contemporary experiences with the biblical tradition, aiming to make the Bible's teachings relevant and meaningful for today's learners (Berg, 1993, 119). This approach underlines the importance of connecting the Bible study to the lived experiences of children and young people, ensuring that biblical teachings resonate with their current realities.

Further deepening this connection, Berg's focus on "context didactics," influenced by Karl Ernst Nipkow and Georges Casalis, highlights the dynamic relationship between Christian tradition and the life contexts of students. This approach acknowledges that the Bible and its teachings are not static but evolve through their engagement with successive generations, allowing for a text's continuous growth and development (Berg, 1993, 127-129; Georges, 1980, 41-43). Berg's acknowledgment of the text's ongoing life cycle underscores the significance of situational and contextual factors in shaping the reception and interpretation of biblical texts.

Berg's Bible didactics are characterized by an intricate balance between "basic notifications" and "context didactics," aiming to foster a deep understanding of the Bible that is both rooted in its core messages and responsive to contemporary

contexts. He outlines four essential tasks for teaching that reflect this balance:

- ① “Conveying the biblical tradition in a manner that is context-oriented”: This involves presenting the Bible’s teachings in a way that is directly relevant to the students’ life situations, making the ancient texts accessible and applicable to modern experiences.
- ② “Ensuring that the talk of God in Bible instruction is plausible”: Berg stresses the importance of making discussions about God and biblical principles credible and convincing within the context of contemporary beliefs and understandings.
- ③ “Demonstrating the narrative nature of the biblical tradition as a depiction of alternative worlds throughout”: By highlighting the Bible’s narrative qualities, teachers can present the biblical tradition as offering alternative perspectives and solutions to the world’s problems, enriching students’ imaginations and ethical considerations.
- ④ “Encouraging students’ critical discernment and active engagement in biblical instruction”: Berg advocates for an educational approach that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates critical thinking and active participation among students, enabling them to engage with the Bible in a meaningful and transformative manner.

Through these principles, Berg’s approach to Bible didactics emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of the biblical tradition that is closely aligned with the context of learners’ lives. His methodology promotes critical thinking, relevance, and active engagement, offering a comprehensive framework for teaching the Bible in a way that bridges the gap between ancient texts and contemporary experiences.

III. Diverse Approaches to Biblical Interpretation: One Path is Insufficient!

1. Thirteen Approaches to Interpreting the Bible.

The challenge of addressing the Bible's temporal and eternal dimensions presents a unique conundrum in the field of modern Bible didactics, necessitating a nuanced engagement with various interpretative complexities. The concept of diachrony serves as a pivotal tool in this discourse, facilitating an examination of the biblical text within its historical milieu while simultaneously contemplating its enduring relevance.

Horst Klaus Berg's thirteen methods of Bible interpretation, as outlined in "Ein Wort wie Feuer. Wege lebendiger Bibelauslegung" (A Word Like Fire. Ways of Living Bible Interpretation), offer a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to engaging with biblical texts. These methods are categorized into diachronic (historical) and synchronic (literary and contextual) approaches, each providing a unique lens through which to explore and understand the Bible. By utilizing these diverse methods, educators and learners are equipped to delve deeper into the complexities and rich narratives of the Bible, fostering a more profound comprehension of its teachings. Berg's approach underscores the significance of embracing the Bible's intricacy and diversity, challenging the traditional singular pathway of interpretation. Through this, a more encompassing and nuanced understanding of biblical faith can be achieved. Here is a brief overview of the thirteen methods Berg proposes, illustrating the broad spectrum of biblical hermeneutics:

Horst Klaus Berg's methodological framework delineates multiple avenues for engaging with this diachronic perspective, encompassing the "historical-critical"(1st chapter), "history of origin"(6th.), "materialistic"(7th.), "feminist"(8th.), "intertextual"(10th.) and "impact-historical interpretations"(11th.). These methodologies afford diverse insights into the Bible's messages, bridging the historical origins of the texts with their significance in contemporary contexts.

Conversely, the notion of synchrony encapsulates hermeneutic strategies that foster an immediate, present-tense engagement with the biblical text. Berg categorizes these into "existential"(2nd Chapter), "linguistic"(3rd.), "depth-psychological"(4th.), "interactional"(5th.), "Latin American Re-Reading"(9th.), "interpretation through alienation"(12th.), and "Jewish interpretations"(13th.). These varied approaches

underscore the dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, enriching the reader's understanding and facilitating personal relevance within the modern era.

Berg's systematic examination of the thirteen interpretive paths follows a structured process. Initially, he outlines the hermeneutic and methodological underpinnings of each approach, framing them as distinct "options" for engagement. He then explores the didactic possibilities inherent in each methodological stance. Critically, Berg concludes each chapter with an assessment of the "opportunities" and "limitations" inherent in each approach, thereby providing a balanced view of their applicability. Through detailed analysis of Genesis 4:1-16 and Mark 5:1-20, Berg exemplifies the multifaceted interpretations facilitated by these hermeneutic methods, illustrating the Bible's complex layers of meaning and the potential for diverse didactic applications.

For instance, when interpreting the story of the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1-20 from a diachronic perspective with a materialistic interpretation, the focus of the interpretation is placed on the context of Roman rule and the events occurring in a Gentile-inhabited area. In this context, the term "legion" is referred to as a word symbolizing Rome, allowing for an interpretation that criticizes Rome as the power of demons. Additionally, since the event occurs in a Gentile area far from Jerusalem, it can also be interpreted as a class distinction between ordinary, devout people and those who are extraordinary and cursed (Berg, 1991, 241-246). However, according to the interpretation of liberation theology in Latin America, the demon named "legion" in this text can be interpreted as representing the threat of war that endangers human lives in the context of ongoing civil strife, seen through the lens of Jesus Christ's healing ministry (Berg, 1991, 291-299).

Thus, the same text can be interpreted in various ways depending on the diachronic and synchronic perspectives, reflecting different contexts. The synthesis of the thirteen hermeneutic methods proposed by Berg offers a comprehensive schema for contemporary biblical interpretation. This schema not only acknowledges the multiplicity of meanings within the biblical text but also affirms the significance of adapting diverse interpretive lenses to enhance both scholarly and pedagogical engagements with the Bible. By delineating these approaches, Berg

contributes significantly to the discourse on Bible didactics, proposing a methodological plurality that accommodates the text’s historical depth and its present-day relevance.

〈Table 1〉 Schematic summary of the biblical interpretation (Berg, 1991, 422)

E-B: Reference to experience in the Bible text / **E-TP:** Reference to experience in the transmission process (within or outside the Bible text) / **E-T:** Experience in the today’s situation / **E-G:** Experience in the group / **D:** Diachronic approach / **S:** Synchronous approach / **D/S :** mixed form

hermeneutic approach	D/S	E-B	E-TP	E-T	E-G
1. Historical-Critical	D	-	X	-	-
2. Existential	D/S	X		X	-
3. Linguistic	S	X	-	X	-
4. Depth- psychological	S	X	-	X	-
5. Interactional	D/S	X	-	X	X
6. Origin-Historical	D	X	-	(X)	-
7. Materialistic	D/S	X	(X)		-
8. Feminist	D/S	X	X		-
9. Re-Reading	S		(X)		X
10. Inter-textual	S	-	X		-
11. Impact-Historical	D	-	X	(X)	-
12. Alienate	D/S	-	-		-
13. Jewish	D	-	X	(X)	(X)

“E-B”(Experience in the Bible text) refers to experiences directly depicted or narrated within the biblical texts themselves. It involves analyzing how experiences are represented and understood within the scope of the Bible’s narrative and theological content. “E-TP” (Experience in the transmission process) encompasses experiences related to the transmission of the biblical text, either within the text itself (e.g., the process by which the text has been passed down, edited, or interpreted over time) or outside of it (e.g., the historical and cultural processes that have influenced the text’s reception and interpretation).

“E-T” (Experience in today’s situation) focuses on the relevance and application of biblical texts to contemporary experiences and contexts. It considers how modern readers can relate to and derive meaning from the Bible in their current life situations. “E-G” (Experience in the group) emphasizes the collective or communal aspect of engaging with the Bible, focusing on how groups (e.g., study groups, congregational settings, academic contexts) experience and interpret biblical texts together. “D”(Diachronic approach) involves a historical examination of the Bible, studying its texts in light of their development over time. It includes analysis of the origins, evolution, and historical contexts of the biblical writings.

“S”(The synchronous approach) to biblical interpretation emphasizes the analysis of the Bible as it exists in its final, canonized form. This method concentrates on the text’s internal dynamics, including its literary composition, thematic elements, and rhetorical strategies, rather than delving into the historical circumstances of its production or the evolution of its textual variants over time. “D/S”(Mixed form) denotes a hybrid approach that integrates both diachronic and synchronous methods of interpretation. It acknowledges the importance of historical context and development while also valuing the final form and present relevance of the biblical texts. Each of these components plays a crucial role in comprehensive Bible didactics, offering varied lenses through which the texts can be engaged and understood. The distinctions between experiences within the text, those related to its transmission, contemporary relevance, and communal engagement, alongside the diachronic, synchronous, and mixed methods of interpretation, provide a robust framework for exploring the depth and breadth of biblical literature.

In the exploration of biblical texts, Horst Klaus Berg illuminates the inherent complexity of biblical interpretation, demonstrating that it cannot be confined to a singular hermeneutical principle. His analysis reveals that interpretation is the product of a dynamic interplay among various factors, including the textual content, personal and communal experiences, the process of textual transmission, contemporary contexts, and the interaction between individuals and groups. This multifaceted interaction suggests that biblical interpretation is a fluid and evolving practice, responsive to diverse situations and requirements. Thus, Berg’s as-

sertion of the necessity for an experiential and multidimensional approach to biblical understanding underscores the inadequacy of a monolithic interpretive strategy. He advocates for a recognition of the intricate nature of biblical hermeneutics, urging a holistic engagement that incorporates these diverse elements within their specific contextual frameworks.

Berg's conception of biblical hermeneutics, metaphorically described as "a word like fire," places a strong emphasis on the varied and dynamic methodologies available within the sphere of biblical didactics. He posits the multidimensional reconceptualization of Bible didactics as essential to the pedagogical process, advocating for innovative engagement strategies with the biblical texts. In this vein, Berg champions the approach of both "simple reading" and "reading the Bible as a stranger," aiming to transcend traditional confines of inexperienced, didactic scientific exegesis and rigid dogmatic interpretations. This perspective promotes a vision of Bible reading as an inclusive and dialogical experience, one that actively engages with the text to extract guidance and insight for contemporary life. Berg's approach calls for an emancipation of biblical interpretation from conventional constraints, fostering an environment where the Bible remains a living, instructive force within modern discourse (Berg, 1991, 442-446).

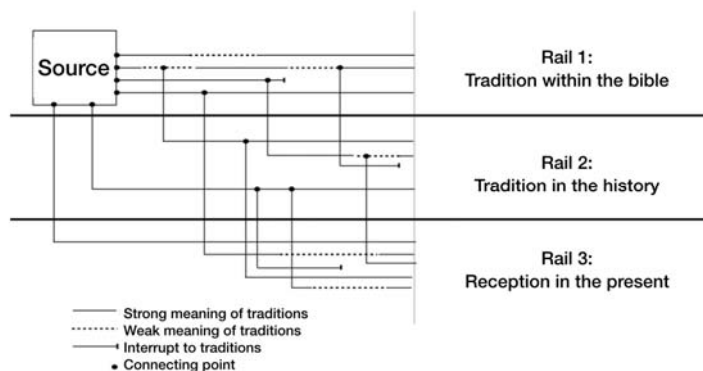
2. "Railway Tracks": Unveiling Three Layers of Bible Interpretation in Christian Education

In his scholarly endeavors, Horst Klaus Berg advocates for an experiential methodology towards the engagement with biblical texts, delineating various strategies to support this approach. Berg acknowledges the contributions of Ingo Baldermann as significant advancements in the hermeneutical exploration of biblical texts. Baldermann's focus on "sensing the existential movement of language" represents a departure from purely historical methodologies, aiming instead to forge a dynamic linkage between the lived experiences of contemporary individuals and the narratives of the Bible (Ingo, 1986).

Baldermann's efforts primarily orbit around the direct didactics of the Scripture, whereas Berg extends this conversation to encompass a broader spectrum of her-

meneutic strategies. These strategies underscore the Bible's multidimensional character, rendering it accessible and relatable to the reader. Berg introduces a conceptual framework of three-dimensionality in the realm of experiential engagement with the Bible. This framework comprises "original situations," "impact-history," and "today's history of reception," which collectively guide the interpretive journey through the biblical narrative. This triadic interplay articulates a comprehensive pathway for understanding the Scriptures, revealing the intricate layers and the extensive reach of the text that transcend its immediate context.

Berg's illustrative model succinctly encapsulates these dimensions, offering a visual representation of the interaction between the historical genesis of biblical texts, their evolving influence over time, and their current reception and interpretation. This model not only highlights the complex nature of biblical texts but also champions a hermeneutical approach that values the depth and breadth of the biblical tradition within contemporary discourse.



[Figure 1] Unveiling three layers of Interpretation like Railway tracks (Berg, 1991, 419)

In his illustrative model, Berg employs the metaphor of railway tracks diverging from a central "source" station to clarify the processes of understanding the Bible's original context, its historical influence, and its contemporary reception. This graphic metaphor serves to delineate the interpretative journey as one with multiple trajectories emanating from a singular foundational text. Berg conceptualizes the study of the Bible as an exploration of varied interpretative possibilities and

experiences, indicating that while the source or foundational text remains constant, the interpretive paths and conclusions drawn from it are manifold and open-ended.

Drawing from this conceptual framework, Berg articulates the role of religious education in fostering an engagement between the biblical text and experiential understanding as follows:

- ① “Religious education is fundamentally anchored in the biblical tradition, positing the study of the Bible as central to religious pedagogy.
- ② “The primacy accorded to the Bible within religious education is not merely a function of normative or dogmatic mandates but is recognized for the tradition’s inherent capacity to provoke critical reflection and effectuate emancipatory insights.
- ③ Access to these transformative potentials within the biblical tradition is facilitated through methodological approaches that effectively integrate the historical and cultural profundity of the biblical narratives with the lived realities of contemporary learners (Berg, 1993, 113).

Through this delineation, Berg emphasizes the indispensability of the biblical tradition in religious education, advocating for a pedagogical approach that valorizes the dynamic interplay between the enduring relevance of biblical texts and the immediacy of personal and communal experiences.

IV. “Free-Learning” in Bible didactics

“Free-Learning” is predicated on the idea that effective biblical education should not be confined to rote memorization or passive reception of content but should instead empower learners to actively engage with the text, question its meanings, and relate its teachings to their own lives and contemporary issues. This approach advocates for a learner-centered environment where individuals are encouraged to pursue their interests within the biblical canon, utilize diverse interpretive methods, and articulate their insights and questions.

1. Empowering Children's Freedom within the Classroom

In his work on educational methodologies within religious contexts, Horst Klaus Berg underscores the significance of adopting a “free-learning” approach in religious education. His publication, “Freiarbeit im Religionsunterricht: Konzepte, Modelle, Praxis” (1997), articulates a comprehensive rationale for integrating practical, learner-centered methods in Bible didactics. This pedagogical shift illustrates Berg’s commitment to centering the learning process on the needs and capabilities of children, advocating for educational practices that promote learner autonomy within the religious studies classroom.

Central to Berg’s pedagogical philosophy is the assertion that the overarching aim of education is to cultivate individuals’ capacities for autonomy and self-guided exploration. This principle of “freedom” within the educational sphere profoundly influences religious education, as evidenced by the development and utilization of various materials and activities—such as dominoes, triminos, games, workbooks, and task cards—designed to support independent learning endeavors. Berg posits that the didactics of free work transcends the provision of methodological skills (“know-how”), emphasizing the importance of engaging with the foundational motivations and objectives (“know why”) that underpin the inclusion of free work in religious education (Berg, 2003, 11-12).

Drawing inspiration from the educational theories of Maria Montessori, Berg champions the notion of free work based on a “child’s natural propensity for autonomous learning”. He aligns with Montessori’s belief that children are inherently capable of “self-education” and “self-construction”, rather than being mere recipients of externally imposed knowledge (Berg, 2003, 15). Within this framework, the success of free work in religious education is predicated on granting children the space and freedom to navigate their own developmental paths, thus affirming Berg’s emphasis on the subjectivity of the child learner. He acknowledges the child’s intrinsic religious inclination, which he interprets as a recognition of and connection to the life-affirming forces of the universe—a concept that resonates with Montessori’s views on creation.

Berg advocates for the early cultivation of this innate orientation towards crea-

tion within religious education, positing that such educational efforts are crucial for fostering a foundational respect for and engagement with the divine aspects of existence (Berg, 2003, 19-21). Consequently, Berg's educational endeavors extend well beyond the domain of biblical hermeneutics, intersecting with contemporary debates on children's theology and the role of religious education in nurturing a profound, self-directed spiritual awareness among young learners.

2. The Role of Educator in the concept of "free learning"

In the educational framework articulated by Horst Klaus Berg, the integration of "free work" within the classroom necessitates a nuanced understanding of the interplay between freedom and structure. Berg elucidates the teacher's pivotal role in facilitating this balance, emphasizing two fundamental responsibilities:

- ① The transition from a traditional authoritative figure to a role of advisor and facilitator is crucial. Teachers are tasked with guiding students towards autonomy and self-guided learning, embodying the roles of advisor and companion on the students' journey toward self-determination.
- ② The creation of a supportive and enriching learning environment is essential. This involves preparing a classroom setting that encourages exploration and growth, thereby providing students with the liberty to engage deeply with the learning material (Berg, 2003, 22).

Berg delineates two core principles underpinning the concept of free learning in the classroom: the freedom of choice in the learning process and the acquisition of methods, knowledge paths, and structural insights. To effectively incorporate these dimensions into free learning, Berg proposes a didactic model that encompasses inclusive content and developmental pathways. This model aims to furnish learners with the necessary tools to unlock and explore these aspects of learning (Berg, 2003, 29).

"Free learning in religious education" is thus conceptualized as a process that facilitates the transformation of learning materials from mere objects to active

subjects of inquiry. It underscores the amalgamation of diverse educational trajectories, selected content, individual learning experiences, transparent learning processes, and defined learning objectives. The overarching aim is to augment the learners' competencies, particularly in their engagement with biblical texts, through a holistic integration of these components. This educational approach seeks not only to impart knowledge but also to develop critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and personal reflection skills among learners, thereby enriching their understanding and application of religious concepts.

V. Conclusion

Horst Klaus Berg's contributions to biblical didactics are crystallized through three foundational principles. Initially, he underscores the criticality of fostering a dialogical relationship between personal experiences and biblical narratives, setting the stage for a Bible class that endeavors to bridge these dimensions. Subsequently, Berg advocates for embracing a plurality of interpretive approaches, metaphorically compared to railway tracks leading to various destinations. This analogy underlines the premise that the manifold pathways of interpreting the Bible, despite their complexity, enrich the educational journey by offering diverse insights into biblical understanding. Lastly, Berg champions the concept of "free learning" within educational settings, empowering students to navigate their learning autonomously. This pedagogical stance advocates for a holistic amalgamation of content, learners, and educational strategies, thereby facilitating a comprehensive integration of biblical faith.

The discourse on Christian didactics in Korea, especially since the late 1990s, reflects a shifting paradigm in the approach to biblical education. The automatic acceptance and transferability of faith as depicted within the Bible have been challenged by societal and religious transformations. This shift has given rise to approaches such as "elementarization" and "children's theology," which emphasize creative biblical hermeneutics and didactic practices tailored to the comprehension and contemporary relevance for children and youth. Within this evolving land-

scape, Berg's principles offer invaluable guidance for navigating the intricacies of biblical education.

This paper has endeavored to elucidate the interplay between biblical narratives and contemporary experiences, showcasing how Berg's didactic approach endeavors to harmonize these elements. By advocating for a connection between experience and tradition, coupled with a commitment to fostering freedom and diversity in biblical interpretation, Berg provides a framework for enriching religious education. Yet, the quest for a didactic model that resonates with Korea's current religious context underscores the necessity for innovative perspectives in biblical teaching. The traditional focus on doctrinal instruction requires expansion to include a spectrum of biblical interpretations, thereby enabling a more inclusive and multifaceted understanding of biblical texts.

The call for a diversified approach to Bible study in Christian education underscores the potential for engaging with the text from multiple vantage points, facilitating a deeper connection with the diverse experiences of learners. Berg's assertion that the Bible underpins the principles of human freedom and liberation, rooted in the faith of resurrection, advocates for a "free learning" pedagogy that aligns educational content, methodologies, and objectives.

Berg's biblical didactics hold significant implications for the adaptation of Christian education in Korea, suggesting avenues for breaking free from traditional constraints and embracing novel educational paradigms. This includes the potential application of Berg's principles in varied contexts, such as multicultural family education, peace movement initiatives, and public school Bible teachings. In summary, this analysis foregrounds the pertinence and transformative capacity of Berg's didactic principles in shaping the future of Korean Christian education, advocating for a broadened and inclusive approach to biblical learning.

References

- An, J. D. (2022). The Identity and the Direction of Ingo Baldermann's Biblical Didactic Discourse on Biblical Class as the Language-searching Game. *Korea Presbyterian Journal of Theology*, 54(5), 183-210.
- Ingo, B. (1986). *Wer hört mein Weinen? Kinder entdecken sich selbst in den Psalmen*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.
- Ingo, B. (1993). *Einführung in die Bibel*. 4th ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Berg, H. K. (1991). *Ein Wort wie Feuer: Wege lebendiger Bibelauslegung. Handbuch des Biblischen Unterrichts*, München & Stuttgart: Kösel & Calwer.
- Berg, H. K. (1993) *Grundriss der Bibeldidaktik: Konzepte, Modelle, Methoden*. München / Stuttgart: München & Stuttgart: Kösel & Calwer.
- Berg, Horst Klaus (2003). *Freiarbeit im Religionsunterricht*. 3rd ed. Stuttgart & München: Calwer & Kösel.
- Georges, C. (1980) *Die richtigen Ideen fallen nicht vom Himmel. Grundlagen einer induktiven Theologie*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
- Han, K. M. (2022) A Study on the Tasks for the Preparation Process and Application of Faith Education Related to Experience. *Journal of Christian Education in Korea*, 70, 207-238.
- Kwon, Y. K. (2017) Spiritual Guidance through Bible Reading: Lectio Divina and Bible Tongdok. *Journal of Christian Education in Korea*, 49, 151-180.
- Lämmermann, G. (2001). *Elementarization, Lexicon of religious education*, Mette, Norbert & Rickers, Folkert (ed.). Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.
- Lee, W. I. (2021). Curriculum Article's Analysis and Propection: Focus on Journal of Christian Education in Korea. *Journal of Christian Education in Korea*, 66. 49-74.
- Lindner, Heike. (2011). Bibeldidaktik(AT). *Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet*. 1-15. Retrieved March 21. from https://cms.ibep-prod.com/app/uploads/sites/18/2023/08/Bibeldidaktik_AT__2018-09-20_06_20.pdf
- Müller, Peter. (2011) Schlüssel, Impulse, Themenkreise: Aspekte einer zeitgemäßen Bibeldidaktik. Loccumer Pelikan 1/11. 3-8.
- Nipkow, K. E. (1982). *Grundfragen der Religionspädagogik, Bd. 3, Gemeinsam Leben und glauben lernen*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher.
- Oh, Intahk, et al. (2008). *History of christian Education*, Seoul: Kidok Hankyo.
- Schweitzer, F. et al. *Elementarisation in religious education: experiences, perspectives, examples*. 2nd edition. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.
- Son, W. Y. (2005). *Reconceptualization of Christian Education*. Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea.
- Theißen, G. (2003). *Zur Bibel motivieren: Aufgaben, Inhalte und Methoden einer offenen Bibeldidaktik*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher.
- Yang, K. H. (2022) A Study on Digital Epistemology and Christian Education based on Media Theory. *Journal of Christian Education in Korea*, 71, 23-59.
- Yoon, H. S. (2014). Approach to the Bible-hermeneutical Methods for the Basis of the Biblesdidactics. *Journal of Christian Education in Korea*, 40, 199-230.
- Zimmermann, M. & Zimmermann, R. (2003). *Handbuch Bibeldidaktik*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.