PHI943 Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

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Professor

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Assignment

### *60 Day Developmental Readings*

Review 100-day assignment, course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

Each OGS program and Core has specific grading criteria for Developmental Readings. Follow the **Developmental Reading Rubrics** for the **required number of sources, comments, and quality criteria**.

See the **General Helps** in **AA-101 The Gathering Place in DIAL**for the following resources:

* Refer to the “NEW Student Guide to Developmental Readings” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.
* Download the “NEW Developmental Reading Assignment Template” Word document to begin writing your developmental reading assignment.
* For **grading criteria**, go to the “NEW Developmental Reading Rubrics” document.
* Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition ([APA 7 Reference Example](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MOW2xmjS9fBRboojA-ADFQBlpahm2iFM/view?usp=sharing), [APA 7 Quick Guide](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/documents/APA%20Poster%2010.22.12.png)) for in-text citations and for Works Cited. Include page numbers.
* Include a separate **Works Cited** page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition.
* Submit through **DIAL** to the professor.

**Source One:**

Cullum, D. R., & Middleton, J. R. (Eds.). (2020). *Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis: Essays in Tribute*

*to Paul Livermore*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “At its purest and simplest a “covenant” is a contract: nothing less and hardly ever anything more. Because covenant does figure prominently in the scriptural narrative and because God is the Divine Initiator of all the really important covenants, we tend to invest the term “covenant” itself with the aura of the faithful lovingkindness (hessed ve emet), the righteousness, the justice, the grace and the mercy that are rightfully associated with the person and character of God. Yet the fact remains that by simple definition- in faithfulness to reasonable semantic methodologies and findings- a covenant is simply a contract.” pp. 4

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopathy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the discourse around covenant. A covenant is indeed a contract but in the context of a relationship and passion for Christ covenant is far beyond contractual obligation. At times, covenant has been confused with commandments, signifying a top down approach to the contract which is not so. Because covenants cannot exist without a relationship, a covenant is a promise of commitment to God and a complete giving of the heart and showing of oneness with Christ. But as we give over to him we also receive.

**Contextualization:**  There are many covenants that were established in the bible with God as Initiator- Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. But the covenant that is most personally significant is the one that established God’s law written on the hearts of man and that we are his people and he is our God. Jeremiah 31: 31-34.

There are many covenants that have been entered into over the author’s lifetime; covenants with banks, schools, places of employment and others. The covenant that is however most important is the covenant with God. The relationship and passion for God is ever present in my chosen profession- social work/social work education and my daily existence is a testament to this. My prayer life has improved and there is more work to be done to ensure a deeper walk with the creator.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “When Abraham was finally reaping the fruits of waiting and believing, believing and waiting, for he now had a son of Sarah as promised, God initiated the movement of the story by telling Abraham to offer up his beloved son as an ‘old’- a whole burnt offering. This same God had made Sarah a mother when she was not only barren but old and barren, ordered Abraham to make a holocaust of the bringer of laughter, the would-be-father of a great nation.” pp. 14

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of faith reflection.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to the discourse around faith and trust. It seemed cruel to ask for such a sacrifice after the period of waiting that Abraham and Sarah endured. This God of hope that gave was ready to take away one of Abraham’s most prized possession; his son. What if Abraham had resisted this ultimate sacrifice? What would God have done then? This was the ultimate test.

**Contextualization:** In my own life, I have had periods of waiting, trusting and believing God for what he has promised. It often felt daunting and when I received it and sometimes it is taken away it feels in the moment that I serve a cruel God of disappointment. But it has been revealed time and time again that in the moments when his gifts are “taken away” they were never from him and he was only hoping for me to let go so he could bless me. Our faith is tested daily and on the faith journey we must reflect on a God that is thoughtful, giving and never wrong.

**Source Two:**

Louw. (2021). A Christian spirituality of imperfection: Towards a pastoral theology of descent

within the praxis of orthopathy. *Acta Theologica*, *41*(2), 70–95. <https://doi.org/10.18820/23099089/actat.v41i2.5>

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Creation is described as fulfilment in terms of atelic dimension. The question is not whether life is perfect or not, but rather to what purpose is life created. The creation narrative records that God created over against nothingness (the darkness that can rob human beings of hope and meaning). Creation is an act of hope, despite the existential reality of human failure and imperfection. This is why the Bible gives no rational or causative explanation for failure, suffering, death, dying and imperfection. To be exposed to imperfection is a kind of existential, even ontic reality. Anxiety, guilt feelings, despair, loneliness, anger, fraud, greed, and hostility are facts of life that constantly remind us of the fact that human beings are frail and essentially imperfect.” pp. 71

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment to the hope and darkness/nothingness discourse. Negative experiences and imperfection are a part of the human existence. Creation signifying hope is a beautiful reminder that though there are times of negative experiences there is light hope amid the darkness. Additionally, negative experiences such as failure as identified in the quotation should not be necessarily identified as negative. Failure can be seen as a learning opportunity and thereby create hope for success in the future.

**Contextualization:** As humans we are surrounded daily with imperfection, suffering, death, despair, hostility and other parts of human existence. As Christians we often question God about why he allows these negative experiences. As a social worker, we see suffering and despair and as helping professionals we know we can’t wave a magic wand but depending on the setting as a Christian Social Worker prayer is often used. Along with prayer other ‘tools of the trade’ such as problem solving, case management and clinical assessment. The core of our belief can and often change situations. Through this work, purpose and hope can be created.

**Comment 4**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Two factors dictated my understanding of spirituality in Christian faith. First, specific stipulations and prescriptions of the church on life issues. On my first synod in 1972, the Dutch Reformed Church reissued that dancing and swimming on Sundays are sinful activities and improper Calvinists. While teaching at the faculty of theology, the curatorium of the Dutch Reformed

Church (1979) decided that all students who wish to enter the ministry must sign a document, promising that they will never dance. If not, they could not be ordained as ministers. Personally, I saw how many signed the document simply to make sure that they will be ordained, although they were involved in dancing activities at the students’ hostels. In the meantime, the church still attempted to justify apartheid theologically, while Blacks could not study at the faculty. Ethically and theologically speaking, I was totally confused.” pp. 73

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of faith reflection.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment to the spirituality discourse. The author reflects on the symbolism of spirituality and what is “Christian.” She reflects on what some believe and how they practice and how people often lie to themselves about who they are. This was seen through ministerial students signing an agreement not to dance but dancing none the less. She reflects on racial and apartheid restrictions and is left confused. Overall she questions spirituality in the Christian faith, which is seen as hypocrisy and exclusion. This is often seen on the Christian journey as people seek to define what right belief is and what right practice is, as interpreted through the bible.

**Contextualization:** As a Seventh Day Adventist there have been many prescriptions and stipulations of the life of a Seventh Day Adventist Christian. For the author, some have stuck and others not so much, given the level of conviction about the issue. Some onlookers of SDA faith may question my ‘SDA-ness’ based on these factors. I will continue to reflect and ask for discernment on my spiritual journey.

**Source Three:** Clark, M.J., Perkins, A. K., & Reimer-Barry, E. (2023). Intersectional Methods and Moral Theology–Table of Contents. *Journal of Moral Theology*, *12*(Special Issue 1). https://doi.org/10.55476/001c.74892

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**What would it mean to do theology in a community that invites each theologian to critically reflect on their own positionality, and that sees this critical self-reflection as an ethical praxis of humility and truth-telling in the task of theology itself? What would it mean to do theology in a community that recognizes the humanity of its interlocutors in this way? We envision the practice of theology as a communal task in which each person—from their own standpoint and lived experience—shares their truth and learns from other witnesses to truth. Much like a synodal ecclesiology, this way of thinking about standpoint epistemology and the communal work of theology is central to our vision of the discourse of theology” p. 6

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of faith reflection

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment to the theological self-reflection discussion. This notion of self-involvement in any research methodology is often frowned upon by traditional researchers. In the theological community this is no different. The authors propose critical, stand-point reflection and positive positionality when studying the nature of God. I would take it even a step further and propose that this type of standpoint epistemology and self-expressed positionality enhances the experience and study of God and biblical beliefs; after all we were made in his likeness and his image.

**Contextualization:** Self-reflection has been a core part of self-assessment. In social work, this is core to our principles and practice. Theologians should be encouraged to critically examine their own positionality as they practice and study the word of God, as it is with social work it enhances the practice.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

**Contextualization:**

**Source Four:** Spurgeon, C. H. (2023). *A Good Start: A Book for Young Men and Women*. Aneko Press.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote** “There are some people whose hearts are not right toward God, who nevertheless are very zealous about externals of divine worship. It is much easier to build a temple for God than it is to be a temple for God. It is much more common for people to show zeal in repairing temples than reforming their own manners.” pp. 108

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopraxis.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. **“**It is much easier to build a temple for God than it is to be a temple for God.” This statement rung true about life and for us as Christians. The walk with God is a daily commitment to live for him, be about him and about his business, eat, walk, dance, pray, be like he is and that can be hard at times being imperfect humans.

**Contextualization:** In my work with young people, being like Christ is an important decision when your patience is tested and tried daily and you have to hold fast to what you believe and make valiant efforts to be like Him. It starts with the heart, then your mind and emotions and move forward to think ‘what would Jesus do’ (WWJD).

**Source Five**: Mlambo, M. (2022). From Orthodoxy to Orthopraxis: A Theological Analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Engagement with Development, Relief and Humanitarian Crises in Zimbabwe in the 21st Century. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, *48*(1), 19 pages. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2412-4265/10596>

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Kambudzi (2000, 35) avows that by preaching and promoting peace, welfare and salvation, the church stands above national political issues and can easily be seen by any citizen or political party—and even political authorities—to be non-partisan, neutral and human-centred in its outlook. Thus, as a social institution, the church should not barricade itself from political, social and economic evils but should identify human problems and come up with appropriate action plans. Bosch (1979, 20) states that the church can either legitimate the *status quo* or call for its reconstruction and transformation. The church should continuously and faithfully allow its prophetic voice to be heard so that the Kingdom of God can become visible in all areas of life. Indeed, the church has a very important role to play in the development of Zimbabwe. From the onset, it is essential to note that the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)—through its arm of service, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)—has dealt with the provision of development and welfare to the people in post-colonial Zimbabwe.” p 2

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopraxis.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. I believe that the church should be involved in the social, political and economic life of human existence, making its voice and stand heard on issues of concern to mankind especially that of social ills. This would be right practice while remaining apolitical and non-partisan. Its role in service through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has always been felt throughout the world in times of disaster, emergency and general need. However, it is important to be involved in not only service but human rights advocacy.

**Contextualization:** As a seventh day Adventist born and raised, this point is even more real. I have always seen the work of the church as extremely valuable and ADRA has been ever present. I recall, volunteering as a relief officer and shelter manager after hurricane Ivan in Jamaica in 2004 just after completing my BSc social work. This experience gave me a firsthand look at the important relief work of the church. Though the government of the day, managed their own shelters, the SDA church was a key part of this multi-institutional approach to relief. There were moments when partisan politics tried to raise his head but the church remained firm about its role and kept a non-partisan attitude to its welfare efforts.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**In social analytical mediation, the encounter with the Lord of history takes place in the encounter with the poor person (Matthew 25:31–46). The poor love God simply because they are poor. To know God is to do justice; to fail to do justice is to deny God of justice. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), a German theologian who also had an experience of suffering under Hitler’s regime, sharpens this question with another: “Who is Jesus Christ for us today?” The God of the Christian faith is God who suffers in Jesus Christ; to speak of God in a world-come-of-age means to speak of God who suffers. To live in a world without God, before God, and without God demands that a Christian shares in God’s suffering (Bonhoeffer 1997).” P. 11

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is variant to the quote. Christians often believe that to be a Christian you ought to experience suffering and be poor which they often align with Godliness. As highlighted in Matthew 19:24, “it is much easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for rich man to enter heaven” and I must highlight it did not say impossible. Riches is often misconstrued as evil. But 3 John 2-5 says “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

**Contextualization:** In my work, I have seen where having enough to share can alleviate suffering and can heal the world. Earthly wealth can and should help others. We acknowledge that Jesus suffered and died for us, so that we can live for him, not suffer and help others. A lot goes back to the question asked by the author “Who is Jesus Christ for us today?” He is my savior, deliverer from suffering. He is my all.

**Source Six:** Feldman. (2020). How Can You Know the Bible and Not Believe in Our Lord? Guiding Pilgrims across the Jewish–Christian Divide. *Religions (Basel, Switzerland )*, *11*(6), 294. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11060294>

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “In the study of other societies, we often ask, “what do they believe?” as if, once that formulation is achieved, we can identify the nature of the group and its boundaries and explain individual actions. Yet belief itself is extremely fluid, as are the relationships between belief, practice, belonging, and identity. Ruel (1997) has summarized how in the history of Christianity, belief or faith has taken on a wide variety of meanings. From Abraham’s trust in his relationship with God, to Paul’s emphasis on the conversion experience as the foundation of Christian faith and marker of group adherence, to the Nicene faith in a particular dogma as truth and an identifying sign of belonging (Ruel 1997, p. 46), to Luther’s location of God’s grace in the conviction that results from an inward struggle. The emphasis on belief, Ruel shows, is particular to modern forms of Protestantism, and in placing this question at center, we subject other societies and religions to often inappropriate Protestant frameworks.” p. 3

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. Belief is important to Christian practices and though within Christian Faith we may believe different things there are some central beliefs to Christianity.

**Contextualization**: My belief in helping others and my work with youths helps to create an identity and belonging that aligns with my beliefs about who God is and what his purpose is for my life.

**Source Seven:**  Woodbridge. (2010). Living theologically – Towards a theology of Christian practice in terms of the theological triad of orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthopathy as portrayed in Isaiah 6:1–8: A narrative approach. *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*, *66*(2), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v66i2.807>

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Frost and Hirsch (2009:156) assert that *orthodoxy* – right belief is an indispensable element of any Christian discipleship. However, the church frequently sees *orthodoxy* in the narrow sense, as a commitment to propositional truth, assuming that the knowledge of God is only received cognitively, purely through mental processes; that is, to come to a full appreciation of God, our thinking about Him must be right. However, the cognitive knowledge of God needs to be complemented by *orthopraxy* and *orthopathy* in order for the believer to come to a full-orbed, biblical engagement with (and knowledge of) God...” p. 3

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment around the important of the trio orthodoxy, orthopraxis and orthopathy. Though it is a necessary first step, merely believing is not enough. This knowledge of and belief in God must be complemented with belief in action and passion for God and His work.

**Contextualization:** The author’s research interest around women and balance is central here.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “To say that God is *holy* means that He is unique, with no rivals or competition. As Sproul (1985:55) puts it: ‘When the Bible calls God holy it means primarily that God is transcendentally separate ... To be holy is to be “other”, to be different in a special way.’ This aspect of God’s holiness is portrayed in Exodus 16:11 (NIV): ‘Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?’

But God’s holiness is more than just being unique and without comparison. It also encompasses the idea of purity. When the angels sing, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’, they mean that God is pure and that all righteousness is defined by who God is. God’s purity is depicted in Habakkuk 1:13 (NKJV): ‘You are of purer eyes than

to behold evil and cannot look on wickedness.’” P.5

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopathy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment around the uniqueness and purity of God. This, I believe, is undebatable. God is not only holy, he is unmatched, magnificent and all powerful.

**Contextualization:** The expression of adoration and passion for God is clear here. My own experience attests to this holiness of God. In my daily walk, I call on Him because there is none like Him.

**Comment 13:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**  “Land (1994) first deals with the relationship between spirituality and theology. He argues that Pentecostal spirituality is a distinct, lived experience in the Spirit of God and should be the starting point and ongoing contributing aspect of Pentecostal theology. His book consists of an analysis and revision of Pentecostal spirituality. On the basis of his analysis, Land argues that there are three perspectives in the relationship between spirituality and theology. He claims that, when *theologia* is restored to its ancient meaning, the dichotomisation that so often occurs between theology and spirituality can be overcome. To state this claim in a more formal way, he describes the relationship between theology and spirituality in terms of the triad of *orthodoxy-orthopathy-orthopraxy*” p. 3

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential elements of orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. Experiencing God for yourself is of utmost importance.

**Contextualization:**

**Source Eight:** Johnson. (2021). Love Amidst Fear: Julian of Norwich, Affect, and Orthopathy. *Spiritus*, *21*(2), 282–301. <https://doi.org/10.1353/scs.2021.0034>

**Comment 14:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Fear also has a significant place in religion and spirituality. Its role in this context is no less complicated. In Christianity, there are myriad ways in which fear functions as an aspect of practice, or as a means of defining identity. Encounters with the devil or the demonic, the contemplation of divine punishment, or the cultivation of a pious fear of God, are but a few examples. Fear is recognized, given a particular meaning, and in some cases inculcated by pastors, theologians, and between lay people. As such, fear has a number of different uses and definitions within Christianity. Fear can be construed as a positive aspect of what it means to be authentically spiritual or Christian—a good Christian should, for example, reflect fearfully on God’s wrath against sin. Fear can also be thought of as a force to overcome, as Philippians 4:6 might seem to dictate, and therefore the suppression or amelioration of fear becomes a dimension of conversion or discipleship.” pp. 1-2

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive and variant comment. Fear has definitely been taught by theologians and pastors and has made route as part of Christian teaching. However, Fear should not be seen as positive spirituality, fear of God is even a theme that I do not align with, reverence, belief in his might and power over the world but I choose not to align with a negative sentiment that the term ‘fear’ elicits. Aligning with a more positive psychology of reverence, revere and awe helps to give credence to a serious but loving God.

**Contextualization:** My experience of fear in theology was off putting. As a teenager, I shied away from sermons that taught as the fire wheeling God that damns his people. Though the teaching of hell and un-repented sin is clear, the instilled fear was not the best way to receive the message. Today my way of teaching and sharing with students comes from a more positive andragogy.

**Comment 15:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “To that end, James evaluates the psychological states that different religious experiences can either reflect or create. He insists that “healthy-mindedness “should be a criterion in judging religious experience. Against “old hell-fire theology,” James heralds the psychological superiority of “liberalism”in Christianity. He speaks in glowing terms about the “mind-healer movement,” which sought to root out negative and counterproductive emotions, fear in particular. He makes the theological claim, in fact, that sanctity is marked by the abolition of fear. James expresses concern about the political and social consequences of this type of religious disposition—noting that “the healthy-minded” are less susceptible to “religious intolerance and hanging and burning.” pp. 286

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. I align more easily with this quote that speaks to a more positive psychological state when relating to spiritual and religious experiences.

**Contextualization:** Brimstone and Fire fear of hell teaching may often have the opposite effect on some Christian believers who may stop listening. My own teaching to students is guided by positive psychology to help students to better align with the content and make it more palatable especially when the subject matter might be particularly sensitive.

**Source Nine:** Selak. (2017). Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis, and Orthopathy: Evaluating the Feminist Kenosis Debate. *Modern Theology*, *33*(4), 529–548. <https://doi.org/10.1111/moth.1235>

**Comment 16:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Christian theology has a long history of distorting the issue of suffering and sacrifice, especially as related to women. Theologies, often created by men in power, have functioned to keep women in powerless, subservient roles. Perhaps no phrase better captures the misguided sentiment of instructing women to endure abuse than kenosis or “self-emptying.” Modern theological discourse agrees that it is inappropriate and inaccurate to use kenosis as a tool to keep women in oppressive or abusive relationships or environments. However, a common understanding of the meaning of kenosis remains elusive, especially within feminist theology.” P. 529

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment to the discourse around feminist theology and kenosis. Women has powerless in the church is not totally accurate in modern theology. However, there is evidence to support the subservient roles they continue to play. Kenosis has been also used in the sense where Jesus left his heavenly home as King and became a carpenter, a servant and abused by men. This debasing of women is likened to kenosis or self-emptying as women continue to be abased in feminist theology.

**Contextualization:** As a feminist, the researcher’s experience of women’s othering in the church is of great concern. The church remains one of only of few institutions that continue to exclude women from positions of power and relate them to subservient caring roles in the church. It must be expressed however that some denominations have broken the mold and women have broken the glass ceiling but there needs to be greater policy and advocacy in this area.

**Comment 17:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “This three-pronged understanding of power is key to Hampson’s understanding and rejection of kenosis. To Hampson, kenosis is equated with powerlessness, a product of a patriarchal system. It is men who promote self-sacrifice as a worthy virtue for women, perpetuating a system where women’s self-sacrifice keeps them in situations of oppression.” pp. 532

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive. Kenosis, the idea of self-emptying and filling up with the Holy Spirit and the likeness of God is seen as powerlessness in patriarchal society. Patriarchal systems continue to pervade society including the Church. However, kenosis can be seen a powerful place of Godliness.

**Contextualization:** My own thinking on this as a woman is ‘how can women elevate themselves within a Christian patriarchy? What change is needed in the self-talk of women? How can we begin to align with what God wants for us?

**Source Ten:** McColman, C. (2021). *The Big Book of Christian Mysticism: The Essential Guide to Contemplative Spirituality*. Broadleaf Books.

**Comment 18:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Christian mysticismgets overly fanciful when you place too much emphasis on having “cool” experiences like cosmic consciousness or secret visions. While it is true that mysticism is experiential, Christian mysticism is also grounded in the love of God- a love which leads to healing, transformation, and growth in holiness. In other words, Christian mysticism is never an end to itself. The point behind mysticism is not to dazzle the mind with ecstatic wonders or heady feelings, but to foster real and lasting changes, for the purpose of becoming more like Christ, which is to say, more compassionate, more forgiving, more committed to serving others and making the world a better place. In other words, the experience is really just a small part of the overall package.” pp. 17

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopraxis

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. The purpose of real mysticism is about building a stronger relationship with God. It is transformative and not for show.

**Contextualization:** Mysticism was a huge thing in my church and I recall two women who would almost seemingly compete to ‘catch the spirit’ and speak in tongues. It was a scary ordeal as a child as I did not understand it. This type of fanciful mysticism was almost an end in itself to show how close they were to the Father and creator.Based on this experience having visions was always a scary surreal thought.

**Source Eleven:** Dávila. (2022). Building a Church of Liberation: Orthopraxis as the Public Shape of the Church’s Common Good. *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, *42*(2), 265–272. <https://doi.org/10.5840/jsce2022/2023422104>

**Comment 19:**

**Quote:** “Liberation theology was (and continues to be) in many ways a project for Christian life and faith with a deep ecclesiological component. In the rituals, sacraments, prayers, documentary history, and as repository of scripture, the church holds a particular common good of the Christian life, instrumental to building the “Beloved Community. “More importantly, the church gathers the people who make the Christian life possible—lay and clergy who through the generations must make sense of the goods entrusted to them in each changing age, historical moment, and context. Therefore, I focus my question thusly: How are we to build and use the common good of the church for the purpose of building a church of liberation? The work of liberation (to which the church must commit as mission flowing from its very identity) concerns not only the ‘what’ of the goods (or gifts) stewarded by the church but also the how. Liberation theologians have navigated this tension between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, ultimately privileging orthopraxis as essential to becoming the evangelical church of the poor.” pp. 266

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopraxis

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment.The liberated church is one that serves the community. The community of believers and concerns itself with the common good.

**Contextualization:** Liberation theology is aligned with social work and focuses on the common good for the vulnerable among us. It is my daily though, how can I impact social justice and poverty and change the course of a family, for the youths and others? Additionally as a seventh day Adventist, the common good, welfare and development of others is tantamount to our shared realities.

**Comment 20:**

**Quote: “**Building a church of liberation means examining our practices within  
and outside the church continually, acknowledging our own faults and flawed practices, prophetically witnessing to what the Spirit is calling for in every new  
moment, and responding to the perennial challenge of becoming the church of  
the poor. The quote above by Oscar Romero, archbishop of El Salvador during  
its cruel and bloody civil war, points to a key good of the church as an institution. In addition to its rituals, sacraments, scriptures, and documentary heritage,   
it is the people of the church, its saints and martyrs, and all the baptized who  
make up its most precious gift to the world.” pp. 267-268

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of orthopraxis.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive comment. Self-examination is key to the church of liberation. Helping others and responding to the needs of others is important in prophetic witnessing.

**Contextualization:** This idea of service to others and responding to needs is essential to my own existence and purpose in life.

**Works Cited**

Clark, M.J., Perkins, A. K., & Reimer-Barry, E. (2023). Intersectional Methods and Moral Theology–Table of Contents. *Journal of Moral Theology*, *12*(Special Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.55476/001c.74892>

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