An Examination of Christian Practice Within a Personal or Professional Context

Vera Halezina

Omega Graduate School

Dr. Anique Elmes-Matthew

Submission Date: 07/11/2023

 100 Day - Essay

Using the An examination of Christian Practice essay outline [Course Resources], write a 10-page essay selecting a personal or professional context.

1. Structure (Paper Evaluation includes the following structure below).

a. Download the “OGS APA Course Assignments Template 7th Ed 2021” template

from the General Helps folder in the AA-101 The Gathering Place Course on

DIAL. Using the template, create the following pages.

b. Title Page (Not included in page count).

c. Copy and paste the assignment instructions from the syllabus starting on a new

page after the title page, adhering to APA 7th edition style (APA 7 Workshop,

Formatting, and Style Guide, APA 7 Quick Guide).

d. Start the introduction on a new page after the copied assignment instructions.

2. Be sure to meet the following expectations.

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA

7 Quick Guide)

e. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA style, 7th

edition

f. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources. Three to four books and

the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, ideally from your

developmental reading.

3. Submit the completed paper to DIAL.

An Examination of Christian Practice

Within a Personal or Professional Context

Scholar-Practitioner Name: Vera Halezina

Profession Description: I have been working in education for over fifteen years, but in fact, teaching is almost my whole life. I made my first steps in a teaching career after completing a language course at the City and Guilds of London Institute in the county of Buckinghamshire. Later on in my hometown I became a teacher of foreign languages, and ever since I have been devoted to my vocation. I graduated from the University, got married and became a mother of two children, but I have always been interested in professional development and research. Currently, I am a senior lecturer and teach a variety of courses on the English Language and Intercultural Communication Postgraduate program at the Institute of Continuing Education in Moscow.

 Description of the Context of the Selected Event:

1. Event Selected for Reflection

1.1. Describe the setting, occasion, or repeated experience, which for you involves a stretch (new learning) or a struggle (problem-solving).

The event I selected appeared in the professional context at the university I work at. The situation was that, as a lecturer at the university, I was assigned a certain task of conducting an academic research. I completed the assigned task and tried to prove my point of view on the issue I researched. But, when it turned out that my point and ideas were contrary to the views of the government, my colleagues immediately expressed their negative attitude to my research, and said the type of research I conducted was not within the field of Linguistics, although previously the research had been officially approved, and I had been sent on trips to England and the USA to collect the necessary information and data for the research. However, the findings were not to their liking, and I simply stated the truth, which, as it turned out, was not actually needed.

1.2. Why did you select this experience? What makes the selected event a stretch (new

learning) or a struggle (problem-solving) for you?

I selected this event because it was the most difficult experience in my professional career. At that moment, my professional life at the university was in jeopardy, as one is expected to conduct academic research for further professional growth. Thus, I was assigned an academic research task, and I worked hard and completed this task the way it was supposed to be done, but, as I was told later, it turned out not to refer to academic research. That was a deeply shocking experience for me.

1.3. How did you react/respond initially?

At first, I was shocked and at a loss, and I experienced emotions of anger, disappointment and despair; I felt I was being betrayed by my colleagues.

1.4. Why does it provoke reflection about God, about yourself, about ministry?

This experience, that I had to go through, provokes reflection about God because at the time I was at an impasse and at a loss, and I thought a lot about this situation and experience. I realized and felt it was a sign for me. While conducting that research, in the process of studying the literature on the issue and analyzing the data, I found that many people turned to Scripture for guidance in a difficult situation. And it was like a revelation, I found the words and guidance in Scripture, “…And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13) I realized it wasn’t my fault that I was trying to find the truth, and the truth and my findings were rejected. I understood I should not despair, and I should go along my own path and my faith journey, as I believe.

2. Situational Dimensions

2.1. Setting:

The setting of the experience was in the context of my professional duties as a lecturer at the university, when my future professional career was in jeopardy, as a result of the situation I encountered so unexpectedly.

2.2. Role/s: (functions or skills used or needed)

I am thankful for the people I met and got to know while visiting churches in England, as I was fortunate to have visited England at quite a young age. And I am grateful to my mother for everything she has taught me.

2.3. Design: (Capabilities used/limitations surfaced; or those of others)

2.3.1. Capabilities (God-given abilities)

Until that unexpected and shocking situation, God had delivered me from trials and strong temptations. Everything was fine and easy, but all of a sudden, I was faced with a situation, when my views, values and beliefs were in conflict with those of my colleagues’ and went against my professional growth. I searched for answers and a way out, and then I found a very important one, which was to read Scripture and listen to the Word of God.

2.3.2. Limitations (temperament)

I experienced anger and despair, but it is impossible to live with those emotions. So, I decided to accept the situation as it was and let go of the negative emotions to move on and forgive those, who betrayed me.

2.3.3. Strengths (virtues)

I have forgiven my colleagues at the university and pray for them because they traded the truth for money and lies. “But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44).

2.3.4. Weaknesses (vices)

Despair is hardest to deal with, but only faith and love for the neighbor, love for family and children can help to cope with it.

2.4. God/spirituality: (God’s presence or grace in the situation or your response to it)

I felt that experience was a sign for me, and I remembered my mother’s words, as well as the kind words I heard from the people I met and talked to in the churches that I visited, so I read and listened to the Word of God.

2.5. View of God, Biblical Truths, Principles: (Questioned)

I remain firm in my faith and beliefs. Why do these things happen? Why did that situation occur? I think that was the way it was meant to be. And I am grateful to God for the confidence and guidance in life, that He gives me, and for the hope in in the future I can have.

3. Operational Beliefs

What implicit Operational Belief is guiding your [or others’] decision-making? Be willing to discover less than ideal tendencies. If you were to say in a sentence the belief/s demonstrated by your actions or others’ actions in the situation, how would you state it/them?

3.1. How would you distill your operational belief in the event?

Matthew 22:14: For many are called, but few [are] chosen.

 1 Corinthians 10:13: …And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

3.2. To the best of your understanding, what are the possible roots of this operational belief? What do you think may have contributed to its development?

The experience I gained during my stay in England and the USA came into conflict with the realities of Russian way of thinking in academic circles. And the conflict turned out to be so sharp, that I experienced a deep spiritual crisis, which I was able to overcome, after I turned to the values and guidance I found in Scripture and church.

3.3. What are the consequences of this belief: On your relationship with God? On your

relationship with others? On your ministry?

It was very hard at first; my search for an answer and a way out took a long time, and it was very difficult. And at last I have found all the answers I was looking for, and I have met like-minded people. This path has been hard but successful, and I have become more convinced in my values and Christian beliefs.

4. Christian Critical Thinking

4.1. Scripture (What biblical images speak to your chosen situation/issue? What biblical

doctrines, commands, or promises speak to scripture/biblical images? What passages

address the situation/issue?)

The conflict of different views and betrayal at work:

Matthew 6:14: For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Matthew 6:15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

 4.2. Christian Tradition (Which level of Scripture, tradition, historical church trends still in effect, denomination, or local practice contribute to this event?)

In the Christian tradition, I see a way out, as those, who preach lies, should repent. And as Christians, we need to practice patience, and forgive them, but point out their fallacies by our example, by living out our faith and values, for them to see the truth.

4.3. Cultural/Reason (What cultural trends affect the situation? What do resources from

[other academic/scientific disciplines or spheres of life/culture] provide here?)

At the current moment and at the time of the situation, the main trend affecting the situation has been the spread of social networks and unimaginably wide variety of views. With regard to academic circles, there has been certain contempt for humanities, when the majority tends to believe that all problems can be solved through technologies and technical sciences, and it is not worth while spending time on humanities and human spiritual problems, which is a huge misconception.

4.4. Personal Experience (How do your past experiences, temperament, gifts, ideas, feelings, or values contribute to the experience? On reflection, how do you sense God at work?)

I have survived betrayal, and I found the strength to move forward, after I began reading Scripture and heard the Word of God. And the result is that I have moved on and I have been bringing up my children, doing my favorite job, and I have met like-minded people.

5. Theological Significance

5.1. Understanding the interaction between the sources of theology, what principles or values emerge that can contribute to your growing philosophy of ministry?

I find answers to all my questions in Scripture, and I also find the right words for my children and students, and that helps a lot in every sphere of my life.

5.2. What were the key sources? Why?

I try to find the right words for every life situation in Scripture. And I was brought up on the books by Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky whose great works are based on the Christian values and truths of humanity, goodness and human dignity.

5.3. Has the authority of Scripture shown itself in any practical ways?

It is through reading Scripture, that I was able to overcome my emotions of anger and despair to live through that situation I faced, and survived betrayal and the deep spiritual crisis. The Word of God gave me the strength and confidence I needed. That was a miracle, and I am pleased, that I feel so much better, now that I can continue being myself and, what is more, I can develop and move forward in my career and life.

6. Contextual Application

6.1. What are you going to do/what did you do?

I am going to be myself, keep praying and reading God’s word and be true to the foundational Christian values and principles, and teach my children and students these foundational truths.

6.2. How do/did you need to trust God to work in the situation and/or in your life?

I needed to trust God to give me the strength to overcome my anger and despair to live through the conflict and betrayal at work.

6.3. What values drive/drove your mission in the situation?

As a Christian, I trust God with all of my heart, and I would like to share the gift of God’s Love with others, so that there would be more love, truth and goodness in our world, because I am a mother and a teacher, and I would like to change life and our world for the better.

6.4. What are/were your goals?

To survive a deeply shocking experience of betrayal at work, to overcome my spiritual crisis and cope with my negative emotions of anger, disappointment and despair through the answers and guidance I found in Scripture and the strength that God gave me to live through that situation;

To remain true to the foundational Christian values and principles;

6.5. What personal courage issues require/d faith steps?)

 I did not have the courage to speak openly against my colleagues; I got over the situation within my soul, and I have forgiven them.

6.6. Comments on what happened

I would like to comment on the situation with a quote from the article “Forgiving others” by John Wesley:

 “This ‘forgiveness’ thing must be very important to our Lord Jesus Christ. Because first, he gives us this wonderful, comforting promise, “If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”(Matthew 6:14-15)…Mother Teresa said, “If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive.” And theologian, C.S. Lewis wrote, “Everyone thinks forgiveness is lovely idea, until they have to forgive someone.” …Now, there is another very important point I want to emphasize. And that is, forgiveness does not condone the offence. … It does not make a wrong suddenly become right. And it does not necessarily mean forgetting. And in this regard, Jesus even said to love and pray for our enemies …Because by praying for them, perhaps they will come to the realization of what they’ve done, and seek forgiveness and change. …as followers of Jesus Christ, we are to be a conduit of his compassion, mercy and forgiveness to others” (Wesley, 2019).

WORKS CITED

Wesley, J. (2019) Forgiving others, John Wesley Methodist Church <https://johnwesleyumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Sermon-Forgiving-Others-072119.pdf>