Rachel Gonatas

Omega Graduate School

Contextualization for Social Change

Dr. David Ward Ph.D.

April 16, 2023

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 20-Day Exercise Submission In a 3-5 page essay, submit answers to the following questions. 1. Read “The Gospel of the Kingdom” (Ladd, George). Responses should be expressed in well-developed paragraphs (3-5 sentences). a. How do you answer the fundamental question, “What is the meaning of the “kingdom”? b. How is the above question answered based on the modern or current prevailing culture of the society in your country of origin? c. How does Matthew 24:14 magnify history with meaning for believers?  2. Read “Culture, Worldview, and Contextualization” (Kraft, Charles). Responses should be expressed in well-developed paragraphs (3-5 sentences). a. How are culture and worldview defined? b. Discuss your experience or thoughts regarding Kraft’s analogy on worldview and culture change: “Just as anything that affects the roots of a tree influences its fruit, so anything that affects a people’s worldview will affect the whole culture and, of course, the people who operate in terms of that culture” (Kraft, 2012, p.6). c. Why does Kraft state that there are several levels of culture? Why does Kraft argue that there is more diversity at the “higher” levels of culture? d. Where do we find recordings of the contextualization of Christianity in Scripture? e. Use Biblical evidence to support Kraft’s statement: “Biblical Christianity be ‘reincarnated’ in every language and culture at every point in history” (Kraft,2012, p. 9).  3. Structure (Assignment 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 assignment on a new page after the copied assignment instructions. e. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA 7 Quick Guide) f. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition (not included in page count).  4. Submit through DIAL to the professor. |  |  |

1. “The Gospel of the Kingdom” (Ladd, George).
   1. The Kingdom of God is founded on faith in a single, revealed, eternally living God. In our modern understanding of what a conventional kingdom or monarchy consists of, we have lost sight of the central biblical truth underlying the word kingdom. However, the biblical meaning derives from the Greek word *basilea*, which signifies the king's dignity, authority, and sovereignty. It does not refer to the geographical territory over which He reigns. This is not to be confused with the New Kingdom Revelation, which refers to the day when God brings an abrupt manifestation of power that overthrows evil human regimes and fills the entire earth with righteousness and peace. It distinguishes those baptized with the Holy Spirit from those baptized with the flames of final judgment. The author refers to this as the "mystery of the kingdom" (Ladd, G. E. 2009).
   2. Once we perceive and comprehend that if the kingdom of God is not a kingdom or a people, we can embrace that it is God's reign in us. Jesus said we must accept the kingdom, which signifies God's authority in our lives right now and through His power. In John 1:12 it is stated, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name".  When we realize the distinction between knowledge of something and knowing something relationally, we transform. We recognize and accept God’s authority to rein in and through us, this is His divine purpose and power that cannot be overcome. In the society and culture of today, we need to meet people where they are and tell them about the love, hope, and power that God gives through faith in Him (Ladd, G. E. 2009).
   3. God gives us life purposes, with a big picture of the life He has given that shapes everything we do and think and His picture of how we should think about life as a whole. If we abide by the Spirit all the time, we will be ready to meet the Lord. Matthew 24:14 states, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come”, the verse refers to the manifestation of the dominion and majesty of God upon the return of Jesus. God magnifies history with meaning for believers. God’s kingdom is revealed in us and His promise of the second coming. Instead of making us follow out of fear, He gives us another way to think about the end of the world. This is a positive and encouraging way to show that we long for Him to come back and for praise and honor to be fully restored. We demonstrate that we welcome Him by taking part in His purpose and plan, as seen in the great commission: Matthew 28:16-20, “Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Our hope for the future Kingdom is shown through our dedication to the Kingdom He has empowered us with to fulfill His purpose and plan (Ladd, G. E. 2009).
2. “Culture, Worldview, and Contextualization” (Kraft, Charles).
   1. Culture is the set of rules and beliefs about the world that people follow every day. It is made up of ideas about behavior, learned and structured beliefs, and artifacts. Culture is how a group of people live and deal with their physical and social surroundings, it includes worldview, which is a deeper level of culture. Worldview focuses on values, obligations, and allegiances that are at the foundation of a group of people. It's the way a group of people reacts to the world based on the assumptions they live by. Our orthopraxis establishes links between Christianity and normal life, culture, and professions. Our beliefs, vocations, and other spheres of influence demonstrate the acknowledgment of God's faithful presence in us. Bringing honor to Christ, and finding His purpose for each day in your life is what establishes what we have been called to do by Him. The basis of our call and purpose is God's faithful presence in us, as demonstrated by our beliefs, careers, and other spheres of impact. The examination of one's own culture and worldview, both in their personal and professional life, can reveal a greater capacity for the integration of religious practices into secular society (Kraft, C. H. 1999).
   2. Christianity isn't meant to be like a tree that grew and was cared for in one culture and then was moved to a different culture with leaves, branches, and fruit that make it clear that it came from the original culture. The gospel is like a seed that needs to be placed so that it can grow within and be fed by the rain and nutrients in the cultural soil of the people who hear it. Even though the buds don't look the same as the full-grown tree, the roots and ground where the tree came from look the same. The source of both the roots and the life is the same. I compare this to the story of a missionary named Hudson Taylor. Taylor made multiple mission trips in the vicinity of Shanghai beginning in 1855. Despite bringing medical supplies and skills with him, he was repeatedly rejected by the locals. He decided to adapt native Chinese attire and a pigtail with a shaved head to obtain an audience without causing a disturbance. Before this, Taylor realized he was being called a "black devil" everywhere he went because of his overcoat. He distributed thousands of Chinese Gospel tracts and biblical passages in and around Shanghai.  Taylor connected to the people in their culture instead of expecting the people to accept his culture, he was then able to plant the seeds and forward the gospel to the Chinese communities. If we operate within the worldview and culture of those we are evangelizing to, we will have a better opportunity to connect to them more deeply (Kraft, C. H. 1999).
   3. Culture is the organizing principle of human behavior. Individual, family, community, and national cultures are addressed by the worldview known as the deeper culture. It determines how one perceives reality. Culture acts as if it were an individual. The power of habit maintains a person's cultural adherence. Society refers to the individuals, whereas culture refers to a structure. These subsystems of culture are referred to by Kraft as surface-level behavior, deep-level behavior, surface-level structure, and deep-level structure, respectively. Behavior at the surface is what we do, think, say, or feel, whether consciously or unconsciously, primarily out of habit but also creatively. Deep-Level Behavior assuming, assessing, and committing predominantly habitually but also creatively: Regarding selecting, experiencing, reasoning, interpreting, and assessing, relating to the meaning assignment, regarding explanation, relating to others, committing to a course of action, and adapting to or deciding to attempt to alter the surrounding environment. In Surface-Level Structure, the cultural patterns govern what we routinely do, say, or experience. Worldview's Deep-Level Structure Deep-level behavior's assumptions, evaluations, and commitments are carried out by the corresponding patterns. Patterns of choosing, experiencing, reasoning, interpreting, valuing, explaining, relating to others, committing ourselves, and adapting to or deciding to attempt to change the things that occur around us (Kraft, C. H. 1999).
   4. The Bible shows recordings of the contextualization of Christianity in the New Testament. An example of this is shown in Acts 15, the early leaders of the Greek churches were Jews, and there was a possibility that Jewish religious practices might come to dominate those of the early Greek churches. However, God directed the apostle Paul and others to engage with Jewish Christians to adapt Christianity for Greek-speaking Gentiles and make it more relevant to their culture. Paul had to fight over and over again with many of the Jewish church officials to accomplish this goal. These Jewish church leaders believed that it was the responsibility of Christian leaders to simply force Jewish theological beliefs on new converts. Paul fought to secure the right for Greek-speaking Christians to have the gospel communicated to them in a manner that was appropriate to their language and culture (Kraft, C. H. 1999).
   5. The Jerusalem Council reaffirmed the demonstration of salvation by grace in Acts 15, saying that "God had taken from among the Gentiles a people for himself." The personal and textual evidence explains how God truly saved; he had chosen a people from among the uncircumcised Gentiles for himself.  As many cultures place a premium on the reality of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ, the fundamental theme of Acts 10 is God's goal for the church. In every language and culture at every moment in history, God intends for Christianity to be dynamically equivalent to the Christianity of the New Testament, and excitingly pertinent to the problems people face today. In a genuinely contextualized church, the essential message will be the same and the central doctrines of our faith will be obvious because they are based on the same Bible; however, the formulation of this message of many of the issues addressed will vary by society and be relevant. We should respect a person's culture and the worldview it incorporates; refrain from appropriating it. This is the approach Jesus incorporates. The purpose of Christian witness is to see people come to Christ and be formed into groups we call churches that are both biblically and culturally relevant. If introduced improperly, even positive changes can result in cultural decline (Kraft, C. H. 1999).

Works Cited

Kraft, C. H. (1999). Culture, worldview, and contextualization. *Perspectives on the world*

*Christian movement*, *3*, 384-391.

Ladd, G. E. (2009). The Gospel of the Kingdom. *Perspectives on the World Christian*

*Movement: A Reader*, 83-95.

McArthur, H. K. (1976). The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An

Exegesis of Matthew 28: 16-20 (SBL Dissertation Series 19).