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Omega Graduate School

Professor Name

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20-Day Exercise Submission
1. For each of the following prompts, write a thorough response (2-3 well-developed paragraphs, each with 3 to 4 sentences minimum per paragraph) and cite at least one scholarly source (per prompt) to support your answer. Answer the questions in the context of your professional life, goals, and research interest:

a. What is postmodernity, and how does it undermine Christian Orthodoxy?
b. Define the key terms in orthodoxy: Theology, Doctrine, and Dogma. When
confronted with opposing worldview philosophies and beliefs in your career and culture, how does knowing what you believe help?
d. List three categories of Christian thought (i.e., eschatology) and state how they apply to your faith journey and profession.
e. In contrast to the essential core beliefs of Christianity, there are also doctrinal matters that have been the subject of continual debate. Give an example of a non-negotiable belief and an example of a disputable matter from your faith tradition.
f. Why are “professed beliefs” and “operational beliefs” significant for the study of orthopraxis? How can the distance between the two be reduced?
g. Change is a natural process in life. Give a personal example of three types of normative life changes that were discussed in this course.

2. 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

3. Submit through DIAL to the professor.

What is postmodernity, and how does it undermine Christian Orthodoxy? (2-3 paragraphs, each paragraph 3-4 sentences)
Post-modernity purports that there is no complete or absolute truth and that there is an individualistic personal centric reality based on socio-cultural truths, experiences and reality i.e. ones lived reality and world view. Post modernism therefore reasons that there is no one universal truth. Post-modernity is a period after modernity and is said to be modernity attempting to correct itself as modernity was in search of the truth of life. Leung & Milbank (2022) argue that post modernity is not merely a chronological/historical period following modernity but that it is “meta-modern reflections and evaluations of the very meaning and ideals of ‘modernity’”(p.4).

Based on postmodern nature and notion of challenging absolute, universal or complete truth, it therefore is in contravention to Christian orthodoxy and Christian belief. Christian orthodoxy reflects all truth as God’s truth. Christian Orthodoxy is right Christ-like thinking and belief which are established unchanging beliefs of Christian faith such as belief in Christ as our Lord and savior in the form of a trinity, importance of salvation through His grace, that the scriptures (The Bible) are his inspired words to his people and belief in his death, resurrection and second coming among other beliefs. These beliefs are absolute, universal and infallible to the Christian believer.

Additionally, postmodern society has sought to undermine Christian orthodoxy through fragmentation, greater pluralism and varying views and impact of ICT which has eroded social and family life (Nwaomah, 2017).

b. Define the key terms in orthodoxy: Theology, Doctrine, and Dogma. When confronted with opposing worldview philosophies and beliefs in your career and culture, how does knowing what you believe help?

Theology, doctrine and dogma are central themes in orthodoxy. Theology is the study (logy) of the doctrine and nature of God (theo), God’s word, his promises, his creation and all of what and who God is; as creator, ruler, preserver and the centre of everything. “Christ is the same yesterday today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8 NIV). He never changes. Doctrine is the teachings of the bible that centre on significant themes, e.g. sin, belief, redemption and others

Dogma is a set of doctrine, principles and precepts that have been accepted as true and unquestionable. All three concepts are central to Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

Belief is fundamental to daily life and existence. Belief in self builds self-efficacy, belief in family and community gives us social support, and belief in a power greater than ourselves (God) gives us hope. Sometimes we are confronted with varying beliefs that may be in conflict with who we are. We should never waiver with our beliefs (McFeeters, M., Hammond, M., & Taylor, B. J. 2022). When we know what we believe and study God’s teachings we can stand firm in those beliefs. I have been fortunate where my work and career in education, social work and youth work are consistent and aligned with my beliefs around work with young people and young women in particular. However there have been times on my life journey when my personal beliefs and values conflict with that of my career and culture. In these times, it is important to profess and operationalize (act) out what I believe. Other times, it is good to hold your beliefs in your heart and allow other persons to express and act upon their own worldview without contradicting each other. Knowing your worldview and philosophies help you to remain focused, steadfast and ready to act.

c. List three categories of Christian thought (i.e., eschatology) and state how they apply to your faith journey and profession.

Eschatology:

The study of the doctrine of prophetic and end-time future events. The study of end times was often a scary thought as a child as it signaled death, Armageddon, apocalypse and end of life as we know it. The books of Daniel and Revelations where a lot of the study of end time events are concentrated have held many jarring stories of prophetic end of man. However, as the signs of end time become reality and I experience growth on my faith walk the stories of God’s promise of the Earth made new are more liberating (Adventist.org, n.d.).

Soteriology:

 The study of the doctrine of salvation. Salvation is an amazing opportunity for the Christian believer. This Christian thought is an important one for me, and immediately the song comes to mind “I’m just a sinner saved by grace, when I stood condemned to death he took my place, now I live and breathe in freedom, with each breath of life I take, I’m loved and forgiven, back with the living, I’m just a sinner saved by grace” (Gaither, 2000). This is the eternal hope that salvation is possible, redemption is possible, and deliverance is possible. Amen. My Christian journey, my faith experience, my work with young people is given purpose and hope through the knowledge of salvation.

Anthropology:

Anthropology in Christian theology differs slightly from the sociological concept. In relation to Christian thought, anthropology is the study of the doctrine of humanity in relation to God. This concept around humanity takes us back to the creation of man (Adam and Eve) and their interactions and communion with God. Anthropology is an ever important study that reminds us about how our daily walk with God and how we continue to grow in his word and in his goodness. My faith journey is centered on my humanity and the infallible nature of human beings. My Christian walk is strengthened daily with prayer, frank conversation, questioning pleading and thankfulness. Though in traditional Christian thought, I was taught never to question God, but on my own faith journey there are moments when feel closer to him by questioning, wrestling and trying to make sense of my life and the world around me.

d. In contrast to the essential core beliefs of Christianity, there are also doctrinal matters that have been the subject of continual debate. Give an example of a non-negotiable belief and an example of a disputable matter from your faith tradition.

Core Christian beliefs are true and infallible and are central to Christianity. Belief in God, the trinity, salvation by grace, the life, death, resurrection and second coming of Christ and the bible as the inspired word of God are the central beliefs of Christianity (Ottati, D. F., 2022).

In contract, there are doctrinal beliefs that are unique to different dominations of Christianity. As a Seventh day Adventist for example, a non-negotiable belief is in the seventh day as Sabbath and the holy day of rest as God rested after creation. Therefore at sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday is considered a holy day of rest, worship and fellowship with the Lord and members of the church free of all labour. This practice and doctrinal belief is essential to the Seventh day Adventist Christian and their faith journey. It is fundamental, indisputable, immutable and unchanging.

A more contentious disputable belief or practice within the Seventh day Adventist (SDA) church; which is my faith tradition is the wearing of jewelry (Adventist.org, n.d.). This traditional fundamental belief was connected to the interpretation of the bible’s teaching found in the commandment in Exodus 20 verse 3, “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me” and jewelry was seen as vanity and a distraction of worship from God. Traditionally, SDA had 13 fundamental beliefs now they have been expanded into 28. Today however, there are contradictory messages and doctrinal split with those who believe wearing of jewelry is not a sin against God and others who believe that it is a worship of false gods. These are disputable matters where some members and church districts agree to disagree.

e. Why are “professed beliefs” and “operational beliefs” significant for the study of orthopraxis? How can the distance between the two be reduced?

Professed belief is what we claim as our beliefs, what we say we believe i.e. the orthodoxy of belief. We can claim to be of Christian faith but we must operationalize or put into practice the profession of our faith for it be real not only for ourselves but for others. How do people know who we are, by our love, by our acts of kindness and our Christian practice as the song states “they’ll know we are Christians by our love” Scholtes (1960) as originally expressed in John 13:35, “By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” This is operational belief, love, faith and belief in action; how we live out our professed belief.

Understanding professed and operational belief are important in the study of orthopraxis. Professed belief and operational belief are significant for orthopraxis (right practice) in order to influence and transform the lives of onlookers. Professed and operational belief (orthopraxis) should work together to promote orthopathy and fuel our passion for God. Through the triad of orthodoxy, orthopathy and orthopraxis we can reduce the gap between professed and operational belief i.e. professing right beliefs, showing and acting on our right beliefs and showing our passion for God.

f. Change is a natural process in life. Give a personal example of three types of normative life changes that were discussed in this course.

Change is important and can be useful; people can change but that process can be quite onerous. There are five stages of normative life change according to Phelan (2014), pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. These processes are essential for change to take place and be sustained.

Cognitive Change is a “change in one’s knowledge or understanding. Effective change at the cognitive level necessitates a change in how the newly acquired knowledge will be applied throughout the normal spheres of life.” There has been new knowledge throughout my Omega journey thus far and on this course in particular my understanding of theology, orthodoxy and orthopraxis has expanded. This cognitive change will go far to expand my folk level orthodox thinking and increase my faith scholar journey.

Affective Change “refers to changing one’s emotions or attitudes that impact how one lives out his/her faith throughout personal and professional contexts.” Along my faith journey I have experienced very strong emotions towards church and what it symbolized versus how its members conducted themselves and have been disappointed. As I have come of age, I have had to change my attitude, my thinking and emotions towards “church people” as being human and understanding that Christ is our example of Christ like behavior and as I continue to reflect on the theology I continue to examine my own life.

Behavioural Change is possibly the most difficult change process. It “may expose weaknesses or unexamined needs that require a change in the scholar’s behavior.” Self-awareness and self-reflection are key traits of a social worker (my chosen profession). Examined thoughts, feelings and actions are the fastest ways to acceptance of the need for behavior change.

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