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Submission Date: April 13, 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?

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. A. What is the meaning of the Kingdom?

Ostensibly, there currently exists two kingdoms. The kingdoms that exist are Satan’s and God’s kingdom. Satan’s kingdom is temporary. God’s kingdom will be the final kingdom and will stand forever. “The” kingdom is God’s kingdom. It is God’s rule, reign and authority. The kingdom is God’s sovereignty. According to Ladd (1959), the kingdom is not a vast physical land or a physical palace. It is God’s sovereign rule. Ladd (1959) has explained that the Kingdom exists in two stages. This will confuse many, but I believe it is easily explained. The first stage is that we, the church, the ecclesia, are here on earth with God’s presence. The Kingdom of God has manifested. God’s word is being spoken, his will is being carried out and many submit to his authority by choice.

Ladd (1959) so eloquently delineates the work of the Kingdom in the here and now. Subtly we are destroying Satan’s hold on humanity by conquering his demonic agents. The Kingdom of God has already manifested as we God’s agents, lay hands on the sick, preach the good news of the gospel, teach scripture, witness to the lost that they may accept Christ and receive salvation and it manifests as we declare his glory here on earth. Before the second stage of the Kingdom, which is Christ’s final rule in taking over the earth, the domination is through “persuasion rather that power” (Ladd, 1959).

In the final anticipated Kingdom, there will only be one true, living God as the center. Peace and tranquility will dominate. The reign, rule and authority of God will be a physical existence. Not only will it be a physical rule but a change in spiritual order. It will be a supernatural, divine rule. Every opposing rule will cease to exist and there will be no competing authorities. Satan’s kingdom will be abolished.

“And I will put enmity, between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, Genesis 3:15).

The gospel of the Kingdom is proactively assaulting the kingdom of Satan. It is not yet a reign of bliss and there is no place for blind optimism. Small victories are occurring before the final Victory. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, 1 Corinthians 15: 24, 15). We have authority and power to usher in the Kingdom.

A Mississippi meteorologist, Matt Laubhan, recently reported on the tornadoes in his area. During his weather segment, he literally paused to pray for Jesus’s help amid this catastrophic weather event. When he was interviewed about his prayer by CBN, he alluded to God’s kingdom here on earth and God’s church carrying out the will of the Father. He stated, “isn’t that why we’re here, until the whole world hears” (Laubhan, 2023).

When the Holy Spirit led Mr. Laubhan to pray on air that day, many heard the name of Jesus. There is power in the name of Jesus. Just by that terse prayer, the seed of salvation was sown into many homes who would not ordinarily hear the gospel preached. We are stealthy, some boldly, manifesting God’s kingdom in the here and now so that as many as possible can be a part of God’s physical kingdom in the future.

B. How is the above question answered based on the modern or current prevailing

culture of the society in your country of origin?

When I taught a class for my church’s biblical institute, during the course of the semester, I made sure to explain the different types of governance or rule that exist all over the world as well as in the bible. How the United States governs compared to God’s original intention and the rest of the world was not something most of my students had ever assessed. **“**And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, 1 Samuel 8: 7, 8).

God’s original intention was for him to be the sovereign ruler and King. God appointed judges and prophets who would hear his voice and speak his instructions. There was to be no Presidents, no monarchy, and no autocracy.

“And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, 1st Samuel 8: 10 – 18”).

Here in the United States, we have a three-branch government, consisting of a President, congress and the supreme court or the executive, legislative and judicial branches. Having to subject ourselves to the rule of a President, congress and Supreme Court was not God’s original will for mankind. We have received what our forefathers asked for. For someone else besides God, to be crowned King and have rule over the land is a sort of bondage that God did not want for us. Currently the culture in the United States is to trust in man more than they do God. They look to the government to solve all their woes and bring peace to earth. When someone does not know God and does not submit to his will for their lives, there is most likely an anxiety that takes over. One attribute of the Kingdom is peace. Christ may not be the prevailing ruler at this time but by having a relationship with him and trusting in his power, one can have peace just as if he were here on earth ruling out of Jerusalem.

The government of the land does have a responsibility to govern on behalf of the people’s best interest, but ultimately, they cannot bring peace on earth. Also because of sin, greed, selfishness and wickedness are major attributes of the current government. It is not a particular party; it is sin’s influence. It is wickedness in high places. Be not dismayed, fret not, for God’s victorious kingdom will reign and before Christ comes, the church here on earth is spread out amongst various institutions, and entities, ushering in the Kingdom of God. Right now, the King reigns through us, his people. We take subtly take authority in our spheres of influence.

C. How does Matthew 24:14 magnify history with meaning for believers?

“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” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, Mathew 24:14).

From the time the nation of the Jews existed, they have been an influence in the world, representing Yahweh and manifesting his miraculous power. History has had profound meaning and significance. Because of the God’s work on the earth, first through the Jews, and then to include the gentiles, history has had meaning.

Nothing has been happenstance. The birth and existence of the Jews have been the plan of God, to culminate into the redemption of the world resulting in Christ’s return and reign. God had indeed acted in history. The rise and fall of kingdoms, the rise and fall of some elite, the birth of revivals and setbacks of the culture, wars and rumors of wars, disasters, calamities and miracles. It is a story yet unfolding. Man was created for his purpose, redeemed for his glory. God’s reign solely over Israel shifted to include gentiles who have indeed produced fruit, see (King James bible, 1769/2023, Mathew 21:43).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it (King James Bible, 1769/2023, Isaiah 2:2)

1. A. How are culture and worldview defined?

Culture is the rituals, habits, behavior, human dynamics and ways of life that dominate society. The culture is exhibited in a society’s dress, in the way it votes, its languages of expression, how it practices it sexual ethics, how it buries it’s dead, how it raises it children and how manages its finances among other cultural practices. Kraft (2012) describes culture as customs and worldview that dominate society, learned patterns, ways of living, ways of learning, and concepts. The resulting artifacts, tangible symbols of the culture. Culture has layers.

Worldview is the predominate outlook that provokes a particular response from society fashioning a particular culture. Kraft (2012) believes that worldview governs culture. Society is within culture. According to Kraft (2012), worldview is a set of assumptions, and response to reality. ”If you affect the worldview, you affect the culture. Good changes, if introduced in the wrong way, can lead to cultural degradation or even immorality” (Kraft, 2012, pp 7-8).

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). I interpret Kraft’s analogy as the worldview being deeply rooted as like a foundation for the culture. How we assess the world, its function, purpose and trajectory determines our cultural practices and responses. Honestly there has been good and bad fruit produced from an unpredictable soil we call worldview. Revivals have emerged and produced good fruit because of a worldview that the end was imminent.

Civil rights protests have emerged in the late sixties and in our current age because of the worldview of patriarchy, classism and white dominance. Cultural resistance has emerged because of a worldview that hedonism, ungodliness and lasciviousness has taken root in society. What emerges from the sector of entertainment is a deep-rooted spirit of self-gratification, a resistance to discipline, and holiness. What is emerging out of the government is a deep-rooted spirit of power, control and narcissism.

The question is, if good fruit has emerged over the years, how has the soil or the root changed. My argument is that the church, at times, has sown good seed, toiled good soil, watered and nurtured said soil, so that God would do the increase and produce good fruit. Once a soil no longer receives nourishment, good fruit cannot grow. There have been ebbs and flows in the soil of our culture. Its worldview has consistently shifted.

Kraft (2012) encourages Christians to contextualize those we engage with so that they will want to listen to what we have to say, therefore sewing a seed of righteousness and godliness even though the culture may not fit our standards.

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?

The larger the culture, the more belief systems that exist, the greater diversity of habits exist, the greater diversity of attitudes. When you begin to dissect culture, you find subsets and layers. The American culture consists of many layers. Within the American culture there exists a hip hop culture which expresses itself through a particular language and dress. There is a gay and queer culture that expresses itself through a particular language and sexual ethic. Amongst America’s church culture, there exists various Christian denominations with various traditions, diverse orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Once you tear away the levels of the various denominations, each may have a similar worldview but its cultural practices, much according to its interpretation of scripture, will vary.

D. Where do we find recordings of the contextualization of Christianity in Scripture?

One of my favorite scriptures is when Paul recounts his conversion experience in which Jesus speaks to him in Paul’s native Hebrew tongue. “And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (King James Bible, 1769/2023, Hebrews 26:14)

Jesus essentially contextualizes himself in order so that Paul will “hear” him. Of course, Paul could audibly hear Jesus when he heard Jesus speak in the Hebrew tongue, but by Jesus speaking in Paul’s native tongue, Paul felt Jesus truly knew him and cared about him and wanted to relate to him. He felt Jesus knew his struggle, understood his background and culture. When Jesus spoke to him in Hebrew, Paul knew, Christ was not a stranger, he was family.

What an appropriate question on the weekend of the Christ’s death and resurrection. Jesus, having risen from the dead, appeared to Mary Magdalene and the disciples. He had even told Mary not to touch him because he had not yet ascended. Unfortunately, Thomas was not there. The disciples told Thomas of the appearance and Thomas asked to see the nail printed hands himself. Jesus decided to return, just for Thomas. He even told Thomas to touch his hands and put his hand to his side where he had been pierced. This may not be the best example of contextualization, but certainly Christ appropriated himself and his flesh, so that Thomas would believe. See (King James Bible, 1769/2023, John 20:14 – 29).

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).

Jesus had always intended to establish a relatable, contextualized, relationship with humankind. Here on earth, we married, we got sick, we worked, we raised families, we became disappointed, and we had celebratory times. Jesus knew, in order to call the disciples to ministry, he had to relate to them on their level and make sure he understood their culture. For some of the disciples, their culture was to fish and earn money. Jesus had respect for their vocation. He saw them fishing and equated fishing with drawing other men and women to himself (Christ). The disciples may have not fully understood the whole journey before them, but they understood drawing a catch, whether it be fish or other humans. See (Mathew 18 – 21, King James Version, 1769/2023).

Biblical Christianity was reincarnated. Another scripture as proof that biblical Christianity was and is reincarnated in every language and culture:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people” (King James Bible, 1769/2023). Throughout the ages, in Hebrew, Latin, Greek, through many different cultures, farming cultures, monarchies, urban cultures, poor and rich populations, fleshly then spiritual circumcision, through all types of traditions and rituals, Christianity has made itself plain.

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