History of the Integration of Religion and Society

Kay Lyn Carlson

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

**Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements**

**1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:**

 **a. Asynchronous Cores 2 and 4**: Create a 350-word original discussion paper

(with cited sources) during the first week of the term. Post this discussion in DIAL

Discussion Forum. Then, provide two peer responses of 100 words each (total of

200 words) in the Discussion Forum.

 **b.** Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

 This brief discussion paper addresses the course’s essential element of social reforms as it pertains to the sanctification of human life. The mores and norms of the sanctity of human life have ebbed and flowed since the beginning of time. In Genesis 1:27, mankind is referred to as being made in the image of God (NIV, 2003) and Christians, therefore, regard all human life as valuable, holy, and with an intrinsic worth that should be without question honored and protected. Yet, human sacrifices of children to Baal were common practice among non-Christians (Jer 19:5), where life was devalued and cheapened -- expendable versus exalted (Schmidt, 2004).

 These principles regarding the sanctity of human life have been debated through the lens of cultural and religious worldviews. Besides infanticide, Schmidt (2004) details other cultural shedding of blood acts, such as child abandonment, gladiatorial shows, and abortion, that were also considered barbaric in nature, inhumane, and as a sin against God -- breaking His commandment “you shall not kill” Exod 20:13 (NIV, 2003).

 Throughout the centuries, Christians have served as change agents in the redemptive history of mankind in efforts to restore the holiness of body and soul. Where shedding of blood acts was once a cultural norm in many parts of the world, through social reforms, Christians were successful in creating laws and norms forbidding the practices of what they considered as murderous acts. The effect of their social reform movements is still visible within our society today, and we, too, recoil at the inhuman features of the past (Schmidt, 2004).

 However, liberal theology and secularism opposition has caused a shifting of values regarding the sanctity of human life (Schmidt, 2004). For example, in 1973, abortion was legalized in the United States (Harrison & Naylor, 1991), and viewed abortion as healthcare, and a woman’s choice (Schmidt, 2004). Ecclesiastics 1:9 warns that “what has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (NIV, 2003). Indeed, history repeats itself. Likewise, a social change regarding abortion is on the horizon with understanding abortion through a moral injury construct and thereby restoring the sanctity of human life.

 WORKS CITED

Harrison LK, Naylor KL. The laws that affect abortion in the United States and their impact on women's health. Nurse Pract. 1991 Dec;16(12):53-9. doi: 10.1097/00006205-199112000-00013. PMID: 1798604.

*New International Bible.* (2003). Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Schmidt, A. J. (2004). *How Christianity Changed the World.* Zondervan.