History of the Integration of Religion and Society

Kay Lyn Carlson

Omega Graduate School

Dec. 6, 2023

Professor

Dr. David Ward

**Kay Lyn, I am very impressed with your Course Learning Journal for PHI 815-22!**

**Your reflections on what you learned in this course are deep and meaningful. I especially appreciate your ability to integrate concepts across courses and make connections between ideas in ways that advance your own academic and professional goals.**

**Your discussion of the role the course played in giving you historical perspective and confirmation in your present calling was fabulous! What you gained from Os Hillman's The Joseph Calling was all that I could have hoped!**

**I am proud of the work you did and feel fulfilled in my calling by how this class has helped equip you for your great work in constructive social change for Christ!**

**Keep up the great work! -- Prof. David Ward**

**Grade: A**

Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal

1. Introduction –Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate

program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

2. Personal Growth - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or

challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during

the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

3. Reflective Entry - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or

adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field.

What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result

of your study?

4. Conclusion – Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious, and educational goals.

History of the Integration of Religion and Society Course

 The intent of the History of the Integration of Religion and Society course is to provide students with an overview and a general understanding of how God works in the lives of people He calls to bring about social change related to – his ways, his purposes, his created order, and his redemptive plan and provision for the souls of all mankind. The course provides students a historical roadmap to first see how Christians have served as change agents throughout history and second, to see how God is still working within us today. That is, for Christians to understand the process God takes individuals through in order to have a positive social impact within a post-modern day society. Having the ability to see beyond one’s own life and into God’s bigger story provides students the ability to recognize their life’s purpose (calling) working in tandem with God’s plans and perfect order.

 The positioning and timing of the course are relevant, giving students the opportunity to be guided and prompted by the Holy Spirit, identifying God’s direction for their lives throughout the completion of their Omega Graduate School program experience. Moreover, with the timing of the course, students receive a foundational overview sooner rather than later that will be reassuring to them that God will remain steadfast, as we have seen through the coursework, and ultimately empowering them with the spiritual strength and capabilities necessary to complete their educational needs and fulfill their life’s calling.

 The personal growth and insights gained by taking the course are many. The three most significant ones are, 1) realizing how God has been working and orchestrating His plans for me throughout my life, 2) the way I view my higher purpose calling of God, and 3) a deeper confidence in my personal relationship with God, that He will supply all my needs.

 First, for several years, I felt I lacked direction in my life, that I wasn’t close to God or serving Him the way I should. What I did not know was that God was preparing me for a higher purpose in my life. Reading through *The Joseph Calling* by Os Hillman, 2017, Moses spent 80 years in preparation for his God-given assignment to free the Israelites from the bondage of slavery. Interestingly, he spent the first 40 years living in Egypt, where he was “being educated and trained, learning the ways of the nation he would have to relate to forty years later” (p. 60-61). It occurred to me that Moses and I share similar bigger-picture stories – particularly being educated and trained (learning the ways of the secular social work discipline), providing me with the knowledge and skills I need in order to relate in a manner necessary to create social change. Until this course, I had often wondered if I had made a mistake with my undergrad and graduate degree choices, but clearly see now how my social work degrees are a vital part of creating social change within God’s cultural and redemptive story.

 Additionally, I have a deeper understanding of how God moves and is still moving people through a process and into their specific calling and purpose. For example, at the nudging of the Holy Spirit, I recently drove to Ohio to meet personally with Dr. Priscilla Coleman, who recently retired from Bowling Green University. It is clear to both Dr. Coleman and me that God orchestrated the meeting that ultimately has led us to begin working together on research projects advancing the moral injury construct through scientific research and contributing to the understanding of the devastating consequences of abortion. The impact of our research has the potential to save lives and create laws and policies to protect innocent lives both inside and outside the womb.

 Secondly, through taking this course, I have grown spiritually regarding how I view my personal calling. Although I am still being transformed in my thinking, I see my calling in a different light now. Instead of serving God through obedience, I now see it as working together in the restoration process of lost souls versus feeling alone and dreading the work. That is, I am not alone in my journey, and there are people He is putting into place to help me carry on His bringing hope to the nations.

 Finally, through the course, I have a deeper confidence in my personal relationship with God. That is, I have less fear of the future because I know God is with me every step of the way. My job is to stay close to Him, and when I do, my fears dissipate.

 Reflecting on the course in relation to the social work practice, I believe the profession will soon recognize moral injury as a construct as the research continues to progress successfully. My concern is that the two governing bodies, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the American Psychological Association (APA), will fail to recognize abortion as morally injurious like how they avoid research articles associating abortion with poor mental health outcomes. It will be interesting to see how these two organizations respond to research studies that correlate abortion with moral injury. My concern is that even if research reveals a strong connection between moral injury and abortion, the new information will not matter in a secularized society where life has become expendable and the rhetoric of my body, my choice, speaks louder than the truth and sound research studies regarding abortion-related trauma are either ignored or silenced by political pressure.

 However, MI-A is a new construct that offers the opportunity to address spiritual matters related to abortion, making transformation possible in the lives of others and for generations to come. The MI-A construct is very timely in our culture today, and people are calling it revolutionary. God has the ability to raise an army in the fight to restore the sanctity of human life for everyone.

In conclusion, the History of the Integration of Religion and Society course was effective in meeting my professional, religious, and educational goals. To be an effective change agent, one must understand the past in order to avoid the pitfalls of the future. In regard to the sanctity of human life and the need for social reform, it is good to remember that God works in us and through us to bring about social change, just as we have learned throughout this course.

WORKS CITED

Hillman, Os. (2017). *The Joseph calling: 6 stages to discover, navigate, and fulfill your purpose.*  Racine, WI: Broadstreet Publishing Group.