**PHI 923-32: Contextualization for Social Change**

## Course Learning Journal

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**Introduction Summary**

**Understanding the Relevance of Kingdom Principles Through Theological and Moral Evaluation.**

"According to Psalm 24:1 in the NIV, the earth belongs to the Lord, but he has given man authority over it (Gen. 2:15). The text raises important questions about how we manage natural resources and address poverty. It emphasizes the need for a Christian response to poverty, as highlighted in Peter Olutayo's book on Christian action. The book stresses the importance of taking action to alleviate poverty rather than solely holding the right beliefs." It's clear from the text that poverty is portrayed as a multi-dimensional problem that has widespread effects on individuals and communities. The author emphasizes the need for a comprehensive and socially relevant response to poverty, particularly from the Pentecostal Movement. This response should involve practical actions from individuals and communities to effectively address the issue. Additionally, the author provides a thought-provoking definition of poverty as the lack of essential human needs necessary for a life free from suffering and hopelessness. Through my research, I've understood that addressing poverty and effecting social change within a Christian framework is crucial. I've learned that it is the responsibility of Christians to take action to alleviate poverty and that a biblically-based response is essential. Additionally, I've found that individuals and communities play a significant role in driving effective change. The material I've studied emphasizes that poverty is the deprivation of basic human needs and that governments, in collaboration with Pentecostal movements, can lead transformation by following the Sustainable Development Goals. Overall, I now recognize the importance of practical steps and robust support in bringing about meaningful social change.

**Personal Growth:** Therefore, I need to focus on devotion, commitment, and dedication, including communication, to address this issue through campaigns, advocacy, and community integration to reduce stigma and discrimination as the first stage of reducing poverty. It is important to remember the stakeholders, such as women, elderly orphans, and children affected and infected with HIV and AIDS, who need love in the first place. I plan to communicate with government agencies, church organizations, platforms, non-government organizations, and the media to improve access to basic services for the most vulnerable.

My objectives include providing education support through school fees and improving the health of the vulnerable through a feeding program. I also plan to receive training on small business with the help of increasing resource base through resource mobilization, developing partnerships, and collaboratively working with other organizations to increase the visibility of our ministry work and activities in fundraising. I intend to involve government officials, school teachers, community leaders, and community resources such as land, as well as reach out to domestic donors like our families and friends and health departments. It will be important to identify and list possible legal and counseling partners, define and document the process of engaging counseling and legal partners, and engage legal partners for representation of needy cases in court.

In terms of timelines, between 2024 and 2026, I aim to identify regular potential supporters and partners, and from 2026 to 2030, I hope that the implementation will yield positive results. However, obstacles to anticipate include a lack of financial resources, misconceptions about the causes of poverty, such as it being a curse from dead family members, cultural beliefs about a wife's inheritance after the death of her husband, and illiteracy. This plan is essential for my personal growth as it will challenge me to develop skills in communication, networking, and resource mobilization and enhance my understanding of legal and counseling processes. It will also provide an opportunity for me to contribute positively to the community and make a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.

**Reflection Entry:** I've been reflecting on the insights shared by Laura M. Brady and Avelino regarding power, social change, and contextualization. Their work has underscored the crucial role of power in shaping social change and the inherent power dynamics involved in knowledge development and communication. Additionally, their emphasis on contextualization aligns with my own belief in the importance of understanding cultural contexts, especially in the field of psychology. I find their perspectives on power and contextualization to be enlightening and relevant to my professional growth and development.

More reflection on the ideas presented in Laura M. Brady and Stephanie Fryberg's journal article "The Importance of Cultural Context," The importance of cross-cultural interactions in enhancing psychological science's interpretive capacity strikes me. The notion that building trusting relationships with diverse communities can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes resonates deeply with me. Psychological institutions and individual scientists must acknowledge the historical mistreatment, misunderstanding, and ignorance of certain communities and actively work to address their concerns and needs through respectful and non-judgmental research design. This approach not only fosters inclusivity but also enriches the field of psychological science by incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences.

**Conclusion:** Based on my research, I have learned that communication styles vary widely between cultures, even within those that share the same language. This includes differences in language usage, non-verbal communication, and the degree of assertiveness. Understanding and acknowledging these differences is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication. It's important to be mindful of these variations to avoid misunderstandings and to communicate respectfully in diverse cultural settings. Therefore, the encouraging news of God's communication within cultures is that we, as human beings deeply ingrained in our cultural contexts, can grasp the message that God is conveying to us. Our language, thought patterns, actions, assumptions, and personal affections all reflect the cultural milieu in which we exist. It is a positive thing that God communicates within culture, using words and methods that we can comprehend. If God communicates with us in various languages, each tailored to our understanding, who am I to not embrace the diverse cultures through which God communicates? The cultural God has my undivided attention. My religious understanding of the value of human life, our eternal nature, and the inherent flaws of humanity is what I want to see in the world; I want to see it shaped by the love and grace that characterize my relationship with God.

I have been researching communication styles and cultural dynamics, drawing inspiration from Dutta's work in 2020. One crucial aspect that I have been exploring is the variation in communication across different cultures, especially in terms of language usage and non-verbal communication. It's fascinating to note that even within the same language, certain words and phrases can hold varying meanings, leading to potential misunderstandings. Moreover, the significance given to non-verbal cues such as gestures, personal space, and time differs across cultures, further influencing communication styles. In the context of God's communication within cultures, I have been delving into the idea that our cultural background heavily influences our understanding of divine messages. It is comforting to realize that God communicates in ways that resonate with our cultural contexts, using language and concepts that we can comprehend. This aligns with Paul's approach, as highlighted in 1 Corinthians 9:12, where he prioritizes spreading the gospel over personal rights and cultural norms. Paul's willingness to adapt to the cultural context of the people he was trying to reach serves as a powerful example of valuing the message over personal comfort and cultural familiarity.

My ongoing research is aimed at understanding the intricate interplay between culture and communication, particularly in the context of social change. I am exploring how effective communication strategies can be tailored to specific cultural contexts, drawing insights from Dutta's work and other relevant sources in the field of communication for social change.

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