PHI 943-32: Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis (Spring 2024)

The Archaeology of Christian Practice (Orthopraxis)

Grace Godfrey

Assignment #4 Course Learning Journal

Omega Graduate School

Professor: Dr. David Ward

Submission Date: May 25, 2024.

**1. Introduction:** In my studies, I have had the privilege of attending Zoom classes with Dr. David Ward on the topics of orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy. Throughout these sessions, my understanding and appreciation of these concepts have grown tremendously. I have come to realize that Orthodoxy is not just a set of beliefs or doctrines but is deeply rooted in the history and traditions of Christianity. Through engaging in class discussions, I learned about the significance of the early church fathers, the role of councils and creeds in establishing orthodox beliefs, and the practical application of these beliefs in the lives of believers. Additionally, I have gained insight into the living and evolving nature of Orthodoxy, which seeks to interpret the teachings of Christianity in the context of contemporary issues and challenges. This understanding has allowed me to see the combination outcome of orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy as a holistic approach to living out the Christian faith in belief, action, and emotional response.

**2. Personal Growth**: After studying the course materials and the work of Asep Afaradi from the Department of Christian Education, I have experienced significant personal growth. I have gained a deeper understanding of Christian leadership and its comprehensive nature, particularly in terms of the holistic foundation it is built upon. My knowledge of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy has expanded, and I now recognize the importance of applying these principles in my daily life. This newfound knowledge has enriched my perspective on Christian leadership and has had a positive impact on my personal growth. Moreover, I have also delved into the concept of orthopraxis, which emphasizes the practical application of religious beliefs and values in daily life. Dr. Ward's teachings have illuminated the importance of putting religious beliefs into action to create positive change in the world, emphasizing that orthopraxis is not just about performing religious rituals but about living out one's beliefs in an authentic and meaningful way.

Furthermore, my exploration has extended to the concept of orthopathy, which involves the cultivation of virtuous character and the development of moral and emotional habits that lead to ethical behavior. Through my studies, I have gained an understanding of the significance of virtues such as compassion, empathy, humility, and gratitude in leading a virtuous life and establishing a deep connection to the principles and values of Christianity.

The knowledge and insights gained from Dr. Ward's teachings have not only enriched my understanding of these concepts but have also highlighted their relevance to my faith journey and their potential to create a more just and compassionate world. Throughout this learning journey, I have drawn upon various resources, including the works of Chapman and Latinovic and Droll's exploration of dreams and visions as welcoming spaces for interfaith dialogue, which have further enriched my understanding of these concepts.

3. **Reflective Entry**: In my learning reflection entry, I found Nathan, P. (2020) to be an enlightening exploration of the interplay between biblical orthodoxy and evangelistic orthopraxy within the Southern Baptist Convention. The work provided valuable insights into how these two elements intersect and influence each other within the context of social behavior change (SBC). Nathan's research prompted me to reflect on the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between biblical orthodoxy and evangelistic orthopraxy for the continued growth and relevance of the Southern Baptist Convention. According to Nathan P. and other researchers, behavioral change (SBC) is an approach that aims to lower structural barriers hindering people from adopting positive practices and societies from becoming more equitable, cohesive, and peaceful. and because it recognizes that changing knowledge alone isn’t enough to change behaviors. Instead, SBC focuses on understanding community needs, identifying strengths, and addressing barriers to positive change. My reflection on this is that I am determined to learn from these communities to know their strengths and weaknesses. Mostly, I have learned that we created every community with resources to sustain and keep them from lacking, but they do not know what they have is of any use until we put it to work. Their readiness to learn and accessibility are the primary assets of any community. Upon adopting the right beliefs in Jesus as a means of empowerment (orthodoxy) to drive positive transformations in their lives by eliminating poverty, as I contemplate my examination of Locke's writings, I am impressed by the consistent emphasis on the significance of orthodoxy in Christianity. Lockie adds that it is evident that from the early days of Christianity, the concept of orthodoxy has been emphasized as a requirement for salvation. Locke's political arguments in the Letter seem to presuppose an orthodox definition of "true religion," underscoring the importance of correct belief within the context of his work. And so we can't make the change without referring to the true religion of Jesus' life of compassion in feeding the hungry in the wilderness, who followed him on a few different occasions.

Matthew 14:13–21 NIV When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. ‘*“Bring them here to me,’”* he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. *They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.* The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**4. Conclusion:** According to Maureen Miner and Grant Bickerton, I conclude with their statement on orthopraxis that Christian leadership should examine the traits and activities of biblical figures towards the ends of God’s kingdom. However, these relational theories of Christian leadership, such as the incarnational approach of servant leadership and the motivational approach of transformational leadership, have faced criticism. I believe that it is essential to recognize that the concept of "true religion" globally and throughout history emphasizes correct religious practice, or orthopraxy, rather than just correct religious belief. Even though it may not be as widely discussed, I have found that Locke delves into the concept of orthopraxy, which he refers to as 'outward worship,' in great detail. I am beginning to understand how all three political arguments for toleration can be adapted to limit the power of the ruler within an orthoprax understanding of true religion. This is a valuable insight that I can apply in my own learning and in practicing orthopraxis.

James 1:27 New KJV, Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world. From the book of James, I've learned that regardless of how much or how little wealth we have, we should use it to advance the Kingdom of God. It's important not to show favoritism towards the wealthy or mistreat the poor. James emphasizes the advice of Jesus to store up treasures in heaven through charitable works. He reminds us that it's not enough to just hear the word; we must also put it into practice. James, often referred to as "the Proverbs of the New Testament," provides practical guidance on living out our faith and actively demonstrating love to both believers and non-believers. True faith is not just about words or beliefs, but it is demonstrated by the good deeds we do for God and for others. This concept is beautifully illustrated in the passage from James 2:1-3:12. It emphasizes that faith without action is dead. In other words, our actions should reflect and align with our faith. This passage serves as a reminder that genuine faith is evidenced by the way we live our lives and treat others. Finally, my advice to the church, "Please be mindful of the following message: Although some Christians mostly they are good without reproach good doers of the word Orthopraxis (Catholic) interpret James as proving that good works play a role in our salvation, this letter actually says that good works are the fruit of our salvation and will attract non-believers to the faith. Keep an eye out for believers who may misinterpret this message."

My conclusion on this topic is that I agree with authors of ‘Being Christian through External Giving’ by Steve Wai Lung Cheung and Khun Eng Kuah, that “Donating to the poor is one of the basic teachings God gives to humans. Throughout the Bible, God wants those who are rich and abundant to help the poor. The former should never exploit the latter. In the Old Testament, like in the Book of Ruth, it is suggested that during harvest time, some grain should be left over for the poor people to pick up. …… Moreover, I don’t think that I am ‘giving alms’ to the poor, nor am I ‘donating’ and ‘helping’ them. I simply think that providing for the poor is necessary because God (Jesus) also does so. He does not need humans for His existence, but He kindly sends us His son. Likewise, God does not need you to help the poor. He could offer His providence through whatever means.”

Asep Afaradi. (2023). Holistic Christian Leadership: The Combination of Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis and Orthopathy. *Pharos Journal of Theology, 104(4).* <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.413>

Chapman, M. D., & Latinovic, V. (2021). *Changing the Church Transformations of Christian Belief, Practice, and Life*. Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Palgrave Macmillan

Cheung, S. W. L., & Kuah, K. E. (2019). Being christian through external giving. *Religions*, *10*(9), 529. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10090529

Cheung, S. W. L., & Kuah, K. E. (2019). Being christian through external giving. *Religions*, *10*(9), 529. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10090529

Droll, A. M. (2019). Dreams and visions as welcoming spaces for interfaith dialogue. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, *28* (1), 143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455251-02801010>

Hall, B., & Ferg, E. (2023). Orthodoxy, Orthopraxy, and Locke’s Arguments for Toleration. *Locke Studies*, *22*, 1–26. https://doi.org/10.5206/ls.2022.15111

Lloyd, M. (2020). *Café theology*. Alpha Books.

Miner, M., & Bickerton, G. (2020). A new model of Christian leadership: Insights from the job demands-resources model and trinitarian theology. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *48*(4), 009164712090801. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647120908010>

Moo, D. J. (2021). *The letter from James*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Nathan, P. (2020). *An Examination of the Relationship Between Biblical Orthodoxy and Evangelistic Orthopraxy in the Southern Baptist Convention* [28595106.]

Perić, D. (2019). Orthodoxy and orthopraxy of Saint Sava. *Kultura*, *164*, 44–61. https://doi.org/10.5937/kultura1964044p

Pritchard, J., & Ballard, P. (2022). *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of the Church and Society*. Spck. (Original work published 1996)

Rodziewicz, A. (2022). Between Orthopraxy and Orthodoxy: International Yezidi Theological Academy in Tbilisi. *Kulturní Studia*, *2022*(1), 81–116. <https://doi.org/10.7160/ks.2022.180104>