PHI 943-12

Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

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Professor

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** Mohler, A. (2014). *The conviction to lead.* Bethany House Publishers

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**A God-centered worldview brings every issue, question, and cultural concern into submission to all that the Bible reveals, and frames all understanding within the ultimate purpose of bringing greater glory to God” (p. 45).

**Essential Element:** Faith-reflection for Christian scholarship

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The quote above is an additive analysis of the need and benefit for Christian leaders approaching faith reflection to utilize orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy as a framework for how we should live—giving us understanding, revealing growth opportunities, and providing guidance if we are willing to humble ourselves and seek truth.

**Contextualization:** I can use this quote for personal introspection. It reminds me that the ultimate purpose of doing anything is for God’s glory, not our own. It’s not about winning an argument, being right, or how people may treat you.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“[If] you put a microphone in front of someone, they will talk and say the most amazing (and sometimes revealing) things” (p. 159).

**Essential Element:** Faith-reflection for Christian scholarship

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Using humor is a variant analysis of how to improve Orthopraxis if the humor is directed at someone else. However, as Mohler (2014, p. 154) points out, self-deprecating humor (an additive analysis of understanding) helps audiences affirm the human condition—that we are all fallible—and puts them at ease.

**Contextualization:** Remembering the human condition—as fallible creatures that make mistakes—applies to this author in the here and now. I wanted to open my essay using the above quote, adding a bit of humor related to the subject material, but it was at the expense of another person, which is wrong both in Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis. I felt a prick in my spirit that using this as an example was wrong. Laughing at the quote in the context of the experience revealed unforgiveness, lingering anger, avoidance issues, and a haughty spirit toward another person, which was not representative of acting Christlike. Perhaps this author’s professor can appreciate the self-deprecating humor within the contextualization of orthodoxy and orthopraxis and laugh alongside her at this new revelation (Othroproxy).

**Source Two:** Stone, H. W., & Duke, J. O. (2023). *How to think theologically: Fourth Edition*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

Theological reflection on the reasons for commending a course of action must deal with at least three concerns. It seeks first to uncover the real reasons behind the action in question. Second, it attempts, from all reasons given for a particular action, to separate out the distinctly Christian reasons. And third, it examines whether the reasons given are sufficient to justify a particular action. After all, an earnest attempt to be faithful to our Christian calling does not necessarily mean that any given deed is the one and only faithful action to be taken (p. 127)

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The above quote is an additive analysis. During faith reflection, one may determine that a different course of action should be taken and that many options are available that might be better overall, considering the circumstances and opportunities involved.

**Contextualization:** Reflecting upon previous public speaking events, it may be more advantageous to spend less time making public speeches and more timerecording short videos for people to watch. There is a tremendous need for churches to understand how, through their overt and covert actions, they are driving people away from the church. However, it comes at a price, and it isn’t healthy for me to continue – a least for now. For example, over 28,000 people watched a short educational/testimonial video online versus speaking to a group of 250 people, which, in the end, was a drain on time, resources, and emotional energy and caused distress.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

More probably, they give up on the faith because of what they have gathered about it from the embedded theological testimonies or actions of other people and their churches. Most mental health professionals and pastoral counselors have spent time tending counselees who were scarred by what passed for Christianity in their homes or their home churches. (p.6).

**Essential Element:** Faith-reflection for Christian scholarship

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The above quote is an additive analysis of my understanding that faith reflection is a process of critically assessing your past regarding embedded theology.

**Contextualization:** Being introduced to the term embedded theology, it makes sense why this author sought out professional Christian therapy. That is, having been raised in a legalistic home, memories of how the church has responded to me and the abortion issue, feeling rejected, abandoned, and hell-bound due to overwhelming ruminating shame and condemnation.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“Occasions arise that require us to think about our embedded theology, to put it into words and then subject it to serious second thought. Frequently it is during crises that people first experience this call to theological reflection” (p. 8).

**Essential Element:** Faith-reflection for Christian scholarship

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The above quote adds to my analysis of the need for personal theological reflection. The crises arises when our embedded theology is limited within orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy.

**Contextualization:** Working through this assignment has led this author to a crisis point, where it was necessary to advance in understanding the barriers that exist within me to fulfill the calling God has placed on my heart. While this theological reflection is still occurring, this author is taking it slow and allowing this growth opportunity to draw closer to God – leaning into His love for me and being challenged in areas of pride, self-righteousness, humble submission, and His amazing grace. Developing more of a love relationship and realizing it’s a continual battle for the inner peace of God that is unsustainable without a daily renewing of the mind and putting on the full armor of God.

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**Source Three:** Sumerau, J. E., Cragun, R. T., (2016). “I think some people need religion”: The social construction of nonreligious moral identities. *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review* 2016, 77:4 386-407 doi:10.1093/socrel/srw031

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**[R]espondents spoke specifically about interactions with religious people they found uncomfortable. They highlighted the ways their experiences of religious people’s actions suggested judgment or lack of feeling rather than acceptance and caring for others” (p.401).

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Because orthopraxy involves correct practice, this above quote is additive to my analysis when thinking theologically.

**Contextualization:**  While much of this paper will deal with this author’s personal struggle regarding an experience that occurred, the struggle of feeling judged, rejected, and misunderstood is not an isolated event among people with an abortion past in need of healing. In another experience, this author was approached by two Christian women who served in the pro-life community, who had requested a meeting and stated that the work I was doing (an abortion recovery ministry) was going to fail unless I could see the body parts of an aborted baby as well as confronting my clients with the same truth.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Respondents noted many ways some religious people (and especially their treatment by such religious people) facilitated their desire to avoid religion” (p.401).

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote adds to my understanding of the importance of Orthopraxy. Correct practice should not drive people away from religion but toward it.

**Contextualization:** The struggle with the abortion issue is twofold. One is through Orthodoxy – where correct opinion and beliefs focus primarily on the sanctity of human life and that abortion is taking a life (killing) and less on showing compassion, grace, and mercy to abortion sufferers. Secondly, Orthopraxy, where widespread resources have consisted primarily of funding Pregnancy Care Centers for babies and abortion prevention and not on abortion recovery. This author can relate to avoiding religious people due to an inability to trust and feel safe, with the expectation of being judged and misunderstood.

**Source Four:** Jinkerson, J. D. (2016). Defining and assessing moral injury: A syndrome perspective. *Traumatology*, *22*(2), 122–130. <https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000069>

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

Moral injury is a particular type of trauma characterized by guilt, existential crisis, and loss of trust that may develop following a perceived moral violation…Guilt, shame, spiritual/existential conflict, and loss of trust are identified as core symptoms. Depression, anxiety, anger, reexperiencing, self-harm, and social problems are identified as secondary symptoms (p. 122).

**Essential Element:** Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Relating moral injury to abortion trauma is an additive analysis for Christians to expand their orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

**Contextualization:** As the moral injury of abortion construct grows, more people will learn how abortion is traumatizing in the hopes that churches will not further harm sufferers but embrace them with the mercy God has shown them. Furthermore, for post-abortion Christians to have mercy on others as well.

**Source Five:** Coleman, P.K. (2011). Abortion and mental health: Quantitative synthesis and analysis of research published from 1995-2009. *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Results from a meta-analytic review revealed that “women who had undergone an abortion experienced an 81% increased risk of mental health problems…” (p. 180)

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The research on the high percentage of mental health problems associated with abortion is an additive analysis for Christians to both think and act like Christ when confronted with the abortion issue.

**Contextualization:** There is substantial evidence indicating that abortion is traumatic. From this author’s experience, the vast majority of churches are at a loss for how to address the issue. Abortion is a delicate subject, and not everyone is equipped to lead, and no one is perfect. The question that lingers in this author’s mind is what direction God wants me to go and where to focus my energies.

**Source Six:** Rafferty, K. A., & Longbons, T. (2020). #AbortionChangesYou: A Case Study to Understand the Communicative Tensions in Women’s Medication Abortion Narratives. Health Communication, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1770507>

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

They all tell you ‘it’s your choice’ in the moment, but you don’t feel that it is. Being unable to afford it, unable to tell your loved ones, not having the help or feeling unable to support a child. When your partner doesn’t want it like you do. All these things push you, blind you to a decision that you don’t realize will destroy you.”

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is an additive analysis demonstrating through personal testimony the need for Christians to practice less orthodoxy and more orthopraxy as it relates to abortion.

**Contextualization:**  While orthodoxy and orthopraxy are equally important, striking a balance has proven difficult throughout the ages. Jesus is our example to emulate. Should it not be obvious that women harmed by abortion share in the conviction that abortion is wrong? That many to most women must already share in the orthodoxy that abortion is wrong? What is required in the aftermath of abortion pertains to matters of the heart first, where grace and mercy abound. Additionally, where are the men? Experience has shown me that men are the accusers versus the protectors and providers of women.

As I walk this journey, I am reminded to pray the prayer that Jesus prayed: “Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.” I acknowledge this need for forgiveness in myself. We all have strengths, weaknesses, and blind spots. It’s incumbent upon all Christians not to become self-righteous and proud by our own understanding.

**Source Seven:** Joffe, C. (2013). The politicization of abortion: And the evolution of abortion counseling. *American Journal of Public Health,* Vol 103, No. 1, pp.57-65

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “

All of a sudden it occurred to me, why am I not using her language? You know, we were told, you never, never, say ‘baby.’ And if a patient says ‘baby,’ you correct her. You tell her, ‘It’s not a baby, it’s cells, it’s a fetus,’ whatever. And after a point, it felt offensive to be denying this woman her own experience, using her own language. And so once that hit me, I remember [realizing] if you can hear that, then you can hear everything else that she’s saying (p. 63).

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This example is an additive analysis demonstrating the need for Christians to understand how their actions can further harm and drive away lost souls deeply in need of care, compassion, and God.

**Contextualization:** John 10:10 is a reminder that Satan is always trying to destroy humankind with his lies and schemes. The abortion facility worker was following instructions on what to say and do. Having the same words (it’s not a baby, it’s a cluster of cells, a blog of tissue, a product of conception) spoken to me was the tipping point that led to my decision.Having the heart of God, Christians should practice less Orthodoxy and more Orthopraxy such as Jesus demonstrated to the adulterous woman.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

[We] all had the same complaints: we were being rushed, and we wanted to be able to have more time with the patients, because things would come up. They would start talking about guilt, they would start crying, they would start talking about killing the baby—we couldn’t say to them, ‘scuse me, I have 10 minutes for this [counseling session] (p. 60).

**Essential Element:** Orthopraxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This above quote is additive to orthopraxy regarding how Christians should expand their orthopraxy to include issues of the heart.

**Contextualization:** This quote demonstrates that women who are about to have an abortion and abortion facility workers recognize the ambivalence women have prior to an abortion. Women were not ready emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually to undergo the procedure -- tormented that they were killing the baby.

**Works Cited**

Coleman, P.K. (2011). Abortion and mental health: Quantitative synthesis and analysis of research published from 1995-2009. *British Journal of Psychiatry*.

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