PHI 943-32

Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

Kay Lyn Carlson

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course. The

Learning Journal integrates the essential elements of the course within your professional field of

interest. The objective of the course journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating

new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to

communicate with your professor insights gained as a result of the course. The course

learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

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.

Orthodoxy & Orthopraxis Learning Journal

The intent of the Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis course is ultimately about personal and professional spiritual transformation. Through faith reflection and learning the difference between orthodoxy, orthopraxis, and orthopathy, OGS students gain a deeper knowledge of what and how Jesus was trying to teach and show us during his earthly ministry. One is about knowing the scriptures; two, is about love and meeting people non-judgmentally and unconditionally where they are; and three, it is about living in faith, being directed solely by the Holy Spirit, and being in tune with what is happening on a spiritual level. That is, having the ability to see beyond the daily circumstances of life and recognizing the devil’s schemes, which can easily throw Christians off track without recognizing the cause and harm, that has been my personal experience, as well as that of all Christians who live in a fallen world. Living in orthopathy is experiencing and using your faith versus just believing one has faith.

I would have to question the course's position in the curricular sequence. Due to the nature of the essential elements learned, this class seems out of order and should be completed before taking the faith-learning integration course. A Christian student should be more balanced in their faith walk before integrating beliefs into their profession, especially when their profession is secular and vulnerable to incessant spiritual attacks. I believe I would have been better prepared for the class and possibly other courses as well. Naturally, this is an opinion, and each student brings different life experiences with different levels of spiritual maturity and readiness to serve God.

I am grateful that the 100-day Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis class assignment allowed us to examine Christian practice within a personal context. Indeed, I now realize how unprepared I have been in the past while trying to serve God and do His will in my life. The lack of orthodoxy left me openly vulnerable to soul wounds, with feelings of depression and fear engulfing me, as Oden (2020) refers to when one becomes disconnected from God, as well as struggling with anxiety issues. The amount of time and emotional energy it took to recover from a past experience and have peace within myself and others is staggering. Even though I thought I had forgiven others and put the situation discussed behind me, I had not. However, what has happened can remain in the past, and my spiritual growth moving towards orthopathy is what matters most. Not only will this experience help me in my personal life, but it will also serve me well in my professional life. The outcome of the experience has made me a more competent leader who can recognize specific areas of spiritual weaknesses in others with a continued awareness of my vulnerabilities and spiritual blindness and the necessity to draw upon and use the spiritual powers of faith that exist within me through God.

Specific to the insights and skills acquired, after the essay assignment, I felt drawn to study in greater detail what Paul emphasizes as putting on the full armor of God. I knew the scripture verses found in Ephesians 6: 10-18 (New King James Version, 2007)*,* which Paul describes as a way for Christians to withstand the evil forces of our time, but I had never considered the rich context that each piece represents or the realization of its critical importance and what the detrimental outcome can be if we remain ignorant of the depth of knowledge and rewards that Biblical knowledge and instruction such as the armor can give.

With a social work background, I have been secularly educated and trained to pathologize feelings and behaviors rooted in worldly knowledge. How many times have I read over the need to put on the full armor of God without understanding and not heeding it nearly as seriously as examining, diagnosing, and treating what could have been prevented in the first place? Putting on the full armor of God is the difference between standing firm versus falling prey to Satan’s lies and deception. This mindset constitutes a God-centered focus versus a self-centered approach. Looking at symptoms for classifications of mental diagnosis constitutes a humanistic worldview versus a Christian worldview, carefully considering that the thoughts and accusations are lies trying to dissuade me and others from moving closer to God.

Reflecting on the new learning within my professional field of social work, the greatest relevance came while considering the act of betrayal as it relates to moral injury. While writing about my experience with a regional men’s ministry leader, I gravitated towards looking beyond the leader to the institution he represents. The church. That is, as an institution, how does or how can an institution, such as the church, betray, and what does that look like? Expanding it further to include my personal and professional life experiences related to abortion, numerous institutions have betrayed millions and millions of men and women, resulting in Institutional Betrayal Trauma (IBT) (Tamaian & Klest, 2018). Reaching another level of abortion understanding, IBT appears to be the next step forward to researching and with the potential to open Pandora’s box with the millions of people who have and can testify to how they, too, experienced IBS in addition to their own personal betrayal of conscience.

The Orthodoxy and Orthopraxy course has been a profound blessing in meeting my professional, religious, and educational goals. I would deem this course one of the best OGS courses I have taken thus far, which I believe will have lasting, eternal consequences as I share what I have learned with others. Knowledge is powerful, and understanding the resources God gives us in much greater depth will be forever etched in my mind and soul. No longer will the journey toward righteousness dwell primarily within the self’s strength; it now resides in a different place and at a much higher level than before taking this class. Daily putting on the full armor of God and suiting up provides all the tools necessary to combat evil and to witness and see beyond the earthly circumstances of the day. Truly, it is a fight between good and evil, and the spiritual realm is alive and active wherever we go, whatever we do, and wherever we are in life. Orthopathy is a place that I have only recently resided in and a place that is accessible to all; one must take the time to find it. Rejoicing in the Lord, and thankful to Dr. Ward for his spiritual leadership. This class was indeed an inspiring gift from the Lord.

WORKS CITED

Life Application Study Bible. (2007). Tyndale.

Oden, P. (2020, March 13). *TH559-04 Orthopathy.* [Video]. You Tube.

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Tamaian, A., & Klest, B. (2018). Institutional Betrayal in the Canadian Medical System: Reliability and Validity of a Self-Report Questionnaire. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *27*(7), 703–719. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2017.1294638