History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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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:** Kamukwamba, S. T. (2019). Mission as the Creation of a God-Ward Culture: A Critical Missiological Analysis. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 1-9.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**The traditional definition of ‘mission’ has always carried with it the salvation or redemption connotation, leading to the division of the world into two spheres: the world for the saved

and the world for the unsaved.”

**Essential Element:** This quote references historical methodologies related to the integration of so religion and society.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to the discussion of the history of where religion started defining its mission. The old adage of the church, “we have always done it this way” is seen through Kamukwamba’s article.It provides insight as to where we have been, but starts to present ideas as to how to move forward in a different way.

**Contextualization:**  I began my discussion that I am developing into an essay that the church had its heyday of influence. Sadly, that day has been moving way. However, it doesn’t have to just sit and wonder why it is losing its influence. It can begin evaluating some of its history and views on aspects of things and see where it missed the mark on changing society. It can look at ways toward expanding its vision and see that God calls all Christians to be missional, but that mission is not limited to saving people’s souls from the pits of hell. Quite the contrary, that mission is to bring the kingdom of Heaven to earth.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “This understanding of mission in the developed world from the 16th century onwards led to the promotion of Christendom.”

**Essential Element:** This quote references historical methodologies related to the integration of so religion and society.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is also additive to the discussion of history because it gives a historical reference. The understanding of mission began all the way back to the 16th century. The traditional meaning of mission has been embedded for quite some time. Therefore, it might take some time to see any change and that change might encounter resistance.

**Contextualization:** Kamukwamba’s article starts to provide ideas and ways to move forward toward a “God ward culture.” However, a researcher must understand where the culture has been and how long it has thought a certain way to understand what resistance this change is going to undertake. Notwithstanding, the article isn’t advocating for a new Christendom or new belief system. Instead, it is calling Christians to engage mission that respects other cultures and adds God to the mix. It calls for people to see how God can make even the most embedded culture’s better.

**Source Two: Reece**, M. G. (2008). Unbinding the Gospel. ~~Nashville:~~ Chalice Press.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Evangelism makes people’s lives better. Studies continue to show that people are not as receptive to saving their souls from eternal damnation, but they are interested in making their lives better.

**Essential Element:** This paraphrase provides insights into religion & society integration Models.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is an additive source. It provides qualitative research toward the effects of people sharing the gospel. It provides stories and case studies of churches and people who share the gospel in ways that add to people’s lives.

**Contextualization:** Gone are the days of door-to-door evangelism. Sadly, these methods were a bit intrusive and abrasive. Unfortunately, many religious circles still think this is the proper method to integrate religion into society. Just share the gospel and save their wretched souls from hell and the world will be a better place. The comment is partially right. Share the gospel and show how Jesus makes their world better and the world will start being a better place.

**Source:** Stanley, A. (2020). Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Christianity has been deeply examined since the aftermath of 9/11. What was discovered was that its message was irrelevant. However, it doesn’t have to be. In fact, Jesus’ message was far from irrelevant. Therefore, the church should return to Jesus’ message.

**Essential Element:** This work reflects on Christianity’s Influence on Society.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Stanley’s work is an additive work, but it is also variant. It is a popular work. It is written from a non-scholarly point of view and very informal. Therefore, more research is needed to back up his claims.

**Contextualization:** There are some bold claims within Stanley’s work. Some of the claims are over simplified and not completely on a cultural scale. Instead, he is reflecting on his method of teaching and preaching. He is asking the masses to start doing what he does to make Christianity relevant once again. The issue here is much of what he recommends is very trivial, such as not quoting the Bible chapter and verse. Instead, saying John, a follower of Jesus says…. It trivializes real social change.

**Source:** Willimon, S. H. (2014). Resident Aliens. ~~Nashville:~~ Abingdon Press.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This work provides insight as to the ethic of living as a Christian in a non-Christian society. However, in order to understand how this is a non-Christian society, they walk people through the shift of culture over time.

**Essential Element:** This work addresses social reforms.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This work is an additive source. It reveals how Christian’s lives, living ethically, changes and shapes cultures and the world.

**Contextualization:** Society isn’t going to change because religion shoves ethics down its throat. Lately, the “celebrity” ethical conservative ministers that have been stalwart moralists have been caught in scandals and these undermine attempts to make change. However, when Christianity takes an ethical approach, recognizing that Christians live in this culture but do not belong to this culture, change happens.

**Source:** Ward, D. C. (2014). Interdisciplinary faith-learning integration for social change. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 26(1–2), 29–56.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “One long-term effect of the Enlightenment and the growth of modem disciplines was the secularization of knowledge and the marginalization of

theology as a source of an integrating perspective on disciplinary knowledge.”

**Essential Element:** This source addresses both historical methodologies and social reforms.

**Additive/Variant:** The source is incredibly additive. It addresses an approach to learning and creating social change through a process that has been reviewed and tested.

**Contextualization:** Sadly, there are aspects of Christianity that an educated person has a difficult time understanding. How can a fully educated person really believe in a created world in only 7 days? These questions have helped shaped, as Dr. Ward mentions, that theology should be marginalized in a modern society. However, there is room for both. There is room to integrate the two and see how both answer society’s larger philosophical questions.

**Source:** Rainer, T. S. (1993). The Book of Church Growth. ~~Nashville:~~ B&H Books.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “For most Christians today, church is a place they attend and where the pastor works. There are six major paradigm shifts since 1960 which have helped the people of God do the ministry of God. First, there is a renewed understanding of the Holy Spirit. Second, Christianity is now more than an institutional faith for many believers. Third, the church is becoming people-focused rather than pastor focused. Fourth, a new awareness that all God’s people are ministers has caused increased emphasis on discovery and using spiritual gifts. Fifth, a new ecumenical movement has emerged, a movement transcending denominational loyalties. Sixth, the direction of worship has undergone such change that the worship event is, in the minds of some, a new Reformation itself.”

**Essential Element:** This source addresses Christianity’s influence on society.

**Additive/Variant:** This source has a both variant and additive aspect to it. It is well researched and provides great insights as to how the church has had an affect on society. However, it is written from a primarily Baptist mindset. Therefore, the scholarship is slanted toward one denomination.

**Contextualization:** The latter portion of Rainer’s book addresses practical ways to grow a church or help the church influence society better. It addresses concerns as to why people are no longer coming to church. However, as mentioned earlier, this work has a very baptistic slant. There is a reference to liturgical and traditional churches not really growing. While there is some truth to this, it almost trivializes influence to the type of music played and goes back to the contemporary/traditional worship music debate. This is part of the focus of my research, why are mainline churches not having the influence because the issue is more than the style of music played.

**Source:** Williams, D. K. (2019). When Science Turned Secular: The Mainline Protestant Abandonment of Natural Theology and the Secularization of American Colleges in the Early Twentieth Century. *Fides et Historia*, 51(2), 1–12.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The first two decades of the twentieth century, the courses

in Christian evidences and the chaired professorships in the harmony of science

and revelation were discontinued.” Now, theology is taught but with more of a literary mindset. This is not completely problematic, but it disengages the real answers in theology. There once was an alliance; however, that has changed. Science and academia has disengaged with religions.

**Essential Element:** This source addresses Christianity’s influence on society.

**Additive/Variant:** This source is more variant. It provides the history of academia and religion’s union and separation, but it offers no real solutions to the problem.

**Contextualization:** Can a science and religion co-exist. At one point, they did. The two were taught in a mainstay liberal arts college. However, a shift happened. At some point science moved on. Religion has continued to be a major part of society but there was a shift away. This shift included academia. Eventually, the only people talking about the relationship with science and religion, generally speaking, is ministers and theologians. It is hardly spoke about in academia.

**Source:** Flatt, K. N., Haskell, D. M., & Burgoyne, S. (2018). Secularization and Attribution: How Mainline Protestant Clergy and Congregants Explain Church Growth and Decline. *Sociology of Religion*, 79(1), 78–107.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Why are churches declining and growing? What are the social elements that cause one church to grow and one church to decline? “While many researchers have empirically investigated the phenomena of secularization, church decline, and church growth, few researchers have explored the explanations given by the members of these churches themselves for why churches grow or decline.”

**Essential Element:** This source addresses social reforms that are needed within the church.

**Additive/Variant:** This source is an additive source. It addresses the social changes that the church needs to address. It studies the social aspects of churches that are growing and those that are declining. The study addresses attribution theory.

**Contextualization:** Who’s fault is it? Why are churches declining? Is it factors that are outside the churches’ control? According to this article, it depends on the perspective. The growing churches recognize the social needs to change from the institution out and adjust socially to help people. However, the declining churches recognize that there is a secular society and certain mental blocks that will never change and there is nothing the church can do about it.

**Source:** Burge, R. (2023) *The Nones: Where They Came From, Who They Are, and Where They Are Going,* Fortress Press.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** One individual can leave a church after years of spiritual soul-searching because they have a sophisticated theological disagreement with the pastor about transubstantiation. Others leave because the congregation moved the Sunday service half an hour. Broad strokes are the name of the game for all social scientists. Those of us who study American religion are not in the business of understanding why a specific individual left or changed religious affiliation; instead, we are trying to under- stand, at a broad level, what factors lead most people to leave church behind.”

**Essential Element:** This source addresses religion & society integration models through reflexive understanding.

**Additive/Variant:** This source is an additive source. It provides insight into the broad social research that has been accomplished thus far and calls for more.

**Contextualization:** The quote mentioned does address a broad range of reasons people leave the church. Unfortunately, these broad ranges have been the focus of the research. However, what is not being researched is how leaving the church has social affects on society. What are those effects? The research needs to continue.

**Source:** Dennison, W. D. (2014). For a better world?: response to David C. Ward. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 26(1–2), 57–72.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “As his method is engaged, two clarifications come to mind. First, as the purported better world is pursued, how will the fallen nature of humanity interface with the proposed better world? In the history of Christian thought there are numerous understandings of the state of sin in humanity and the noetic effects of the Fall. It would be helpful if Ward provided more insight into his particular understanding of the nature of the Fall so that the reader will have confidence that his proposal will produce a better world.”

**Essential Element:** This source addresses social and religion integration models.

**Additive/Variant:** The source is variant. While it asks legitimate questions, but it does not provide any solutions. In the quote selected, he asks Ward to explain the fall better. However, Ward’s research was not on the affects of the fall. It contained aspects, but a solid researcher should pursue those efforts and learn the affects for themselves.

**Contextualization:** The problem with any research is that it is limited. It is limited by design. However, within every limited work of research there is someone who says more should be done. This can be additive to research but it does not address the results of the current research.

**Source:** Akanbi, S. O., & Beyers, J. (Jaco). (2017). The church as a catalyst for transformation in the society. *HTS Theological Studies*, 73(4), 1–8.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This article addresses the social, economic and

political problems in Nigeria and discusses their interconnections and impacts on the

development in Nigeria.

**Essential Element:** This source addresses social reforms.

**Additive/Variant:** This article is additive but it is limited. Yes, I just spoke about the nature of research being limited, but this article explores the social/political problems of Nigeria. However, other cultures can see what similarities are found within the research.

**Contextualization:** Does the church make a difference? If so, what are those differences? This article studies and addresses the social changes that the church made to make people’s lives better. My essay will reflect that mission needs to broaden its definition to go beyond the salvific aspect and explore how Christianity makes people’s lives better.

**Michael, this is a great Developmental Readings assignment!**

**You identified appropriate Essential Elements for each selection. Your Quote/Paraphrases were relevant to your research interests as will be seen in your Assignment #3 essay. Your Additive/Varient Analyses showed both critical thinking and faith-learning integration reasoning. Your Contextualization related each entry to practical implications of personal applications you gained for the reflection. As for the APA7 formatting, see my comments in your Works Cited. You need to tighten italics usage with book titles and Journal Volume #s. Remember also that in APA7 Publisher Place is no longer needed with books. Finally, article titles are to be in sentence case.**

**Overall, keep up the good work.**

**Dr. Ward**

**Grade: A-**

**Works Cited**

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society. *HTS Theological Studies*, 73(4), 1–8.

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