Sociological Methodology:

Interpreting Changing Cultures

SR 968-22

Tiffanie Willis

Omega (OGS) Graduate School

Date December 9, 2024

Professor

Dr. Joshua Reichard, PhD, EdS, CCS

Assignment 4 Writing Journal Details

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.

Journal Essay: A Christian Framework for Youth Development and Cultural Analysis

Introduction

The sociological framework for cultural analysis, faith-integrated study, interdisciplinary approaches to social issues, and methods for Christian social change collectively provide a rich context for addressing the challenges faced by today’s youth. This journal response shares on how these elements intersect to guide young men and women toward a life rooted in the Gospel, emphasizing the importance of early exposure to biblical principles. It also delves into the impact of media consumption and mindset on current and future choices, underscoring the transformative role of temperance in shaping destiny. Drawing on theorist Charles Horton Cooley and insights from Hidden Threads: A Christian Critique, these themes are interwoven into most of my research response for my advanced graduate research, biblical understanding, DoD business career and professional work in coalition building and youth leadership. Youth of today are at revolving crossroads between cultural influences that prioritize self-indulgence and the revolutionary call of the Gospel to live purpose and a broad definition of temperance for overall healthful living. As the world shifts further into media-driven consumption, early exposure to Biblical Truths and True Temperance becomes essential in guiding young people to a fulfilling life with Gods way and will. Instagram reports youth media consumption is greater on 15 year-old girls. By integrating sociological frameworks, faith-based analyses, interdisciplinary social strategies, and the key methods for Christian social change shared and implemented. Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savrin wrote “ The Physiology of Taste” in the early 1800’s. In it he implies that the foodw eat has a bearing on our mental and physical conditions. The old adage goes, “You are what you feed on” Gives you the visual imagery of someone continually eating a certain food and then turning into the very food that they just consumed. Food here is defined as the consumption of what, satisfies or comforts the human soul (in the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual)

Cultural analysis and faith integration involves understanding the social forces shaping youth behavior, beliefs, and values. Faith integration adds a vital dimension by grounding this understanding in biblical truths. From a Christian perspective, the culture of self-indulgence, disobedience, and idolatry described in Exodus 20—the Ten Commandments—is a central challenge. Youth must learn to counter these influences by bringing their minds into close application to God’s Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to shape their values and choices.

Quote that impacted my writing was from, the Theorist Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929) cited in the Heddendorf, R. Voice, M (2010) *Hidden threads: A Christian critique of sociological theory. New Youth: University Press of America. “*Cooley also believed that human society functions "organically," and is healthy and successful when each individual member lives for the sake of others, not limited by selfish individualism. He is known for his criticism of apparently successful nations, such as [England](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/England) and the [United States](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/United_States), noting that selfish individualism prevented them from achieving an ideal society.”

Cooley’s theory of the “looking-glass self” highlights how individuals develop their self-concept based on their perceptions of how others view them. In Hidden Threads: A Christian Critique, Cooley’s ideas are examined through a biblical lens, revealing that youth often derive their sense of worth from worldly approval rather than divine grace. This distorted self-perception can hinder their spiritual growth and decision-making. Faith-integrated cultural analysis, therefore, emphasizes the necessity of teaching youth to view themselves through God’s eyes, fostering a sense of divine purpose and identity.

The sociological Framework for Cultural Analysis allows for youth and adult the forces that are truly shaping youth behavior, mindset, and future choices. Charles Horton Cooleys concept of the “looking glass self” suggests that our self-identity is largely shaped by how we perceive others view of us. Adults must teach the knowledge learner to STOP being worried on what another perception is of there person. Self-identity is shaped by Christ-my-identity. The peer-to-peer validation is worthless and only solid-worth is to be the driver. This misalignment of self is one leading to a life focused on temporal pleasures of idolatry instead of eternal purpose for human flourishing until the second advent.

An interdisciplinary approach and methods for Christian based social change brings together sociology, psychology, theology, and education to address youth development holistically. Early exposure to biblical principles equips young people to overcome obstacles and resist cultural pressures. Temperance—a key biblical principle—teaches self-control and discipline, enabling youth to make healthful choices aligned with God’s will.

With the research I learned about a new project titled Screenager, while watching the documentary the challenges reflected in the youth, adults and clinicians in Screenager, a documentary exploring the effects of digital media on youth, underscores the urgency of temperance. Excessive media consumption often leads to stagnation, self-indulgence, and a diminished ability to conquer life’s challenges. Without knowledgeable restraint established as a preliminary guide youth lack the clear discipline toward purpose, and discernment. Teaching temperance towards principled character develops stagnation and a failure to know to live to their God given potential. Youth must learn that unselfish, devotion, and spiritual seal are essential qualities for Christian social change.

Methods for Christian social change—discipleship, community engagement, mentorship, and advocacy—are crucial in addressing these issues. Discipleship involves teaching youth to live according to God’s Word, fostering selflessness and devotion to others. Community engagement and mentorship provide opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and build positive relationships. Advocacy ensures that Christian principles are integrated into educational systems, emphasizing the importance of spiritual zeal and authentic empathy in shaping future generations.

One way to start interdisciplinary methods is to involve integrating faith-based lessons into educational curricula. For example, teaching the Ten Commandments not just as religious mandates but as love letter guidelines for ethical living can help young people internalize concepts of love, empathy, mercy, genuine care, and grace. This approach prepares the youth or juvenile to know to first steps to resist, limit pleasure response and cultural idols of today, like self-indulgence and pleasure and material gain, and align their choices and lives with Gods purpose first.

Another interdisciplinary strategy involves mentoring programs or the annual eco class I strategically plan and facilitate with the ‘clean and green’ them in our neighborhoods and community built-environment. Participants in these programs are afforded to connect with youth and adult for multigenerational learning levels and perspectives. These critical thinking skills enable youth the guidance and healthy positive experiences required to develop their spiritual and social impacts on present and future health response.

Faith-integrated analysis and the role of temperance connects cultural observations in the built-environment to Biblical truths, of temperance, for self-control, is essential for early moral principled character development. When youth are taught and modeled to practice temperance, and prepare for the revolutionary wedding day, they will become more likely to follow the pattern of obedience, positive response, and no more idolatry, as warned in Exodus 20. This will support youth to grow into mature believers who can overcome obstacles and conquer victory after victory from challenges that God endorses to improve character.

Although there are four known social determents or more in the built-environment, I propose these to be four that are important for Christian social change: Discipleship, Community Engagement, Mentorship and Advocacy.

**Discipleship:** Consistency in teaching youth to gain and enjoy a relationship daily with Gods Word, equipping them with purpose and a temperate moral response.

**Community Engagement:** Specific spaces where young people can apply real Biblical principles in a way that will groom the youths effective leadership and service, in a way that brings Glory to God and gives Glory to His name.

**Mentorship:** God desires youth to choose to be of solid-worth and remaining grounded in the Faith not religious traditions.

**Advocacy:** Presenting policy and accomplishing incitive that ensure youth are not left to mature in a silo and cultivate rebellion is prudent for the earth.

These methods address the need for a holistic and Global approach to youth development and early, emphasizing both personal faith and community responsibility. With coalition building intervention work I am doing these methods ensure that youth are guide buy adults who are solid about the importance of a healthy spiritual undisrupted journey.

Personal growth and Biblical understanding, is a foundational tier that should be forged with youth, be they religious or not. Knowledge of the God of heaven and earth must be exposed. For example, this weekend I attended a Christmas Cantata at the Bible Museum in Dallas. The Bible Museum was concentrated with the dominant believe of one of the primary religions, this was evident BUT many other perspectives of the Biblical story were also displayed through various artist. I believe unequivocally in and on the Holy Ghost inspired Words captured in the King James Version Bible and the defenders of our Faith are the way and not many other ways to Christ. My advanced graduate research has deepened my understanding of biblical teachings on marriage, divorce, and youth development. Reflecting on Jesus’ response to divorce, I learned that God’s design for relationships is rooted in love, commitment. Jesus the divorcee was Revolutionary.

My advanced graduate research has provided profound insights into the role of biblical principles in addressing societal issues. The areas that I had personal growth were in 1. Biblical understanding of divorcee: reflecting on Jesus’ teachings about divorce and He as an divorcee and his empathy for individuals navigating fractured relationships or the joy in the saving health of His redemptive power; 2. Youth leadership development, continued now I am learning to integrate the Bible practical principles into break out sessions and leadership trainings facilitated by myself, helping youth gain greater resilience; 3. Community Engagement: My work has reinforced the importance collaborative relationships, that promotes spiritual growth and health social impact justice.

Reflective learning has emphasized from my research coalition building and effective youth leadership are interconnected BUT without Godfearing graces being knowledgeable, youth will be delayed in life successes upfront in the built environment.

Some **questions and counterarguments**, that have surfaced during this course and year journey:

1. How can churches and church schools and neighborhood centers effectively collaborate to integrate Christian principles into secular environments?
2. What strategies can be employed to counter resistance to faith focused outcome initiatives in the private and public spaces?
3. How can technology be used as a tool for spiritual growth rather than a source of distraction?

Counterarguments of society as studied show that secular or non-religious frameworks are more welcoming often than the Christian interventions. Non-Christian youth and church youth could enjoy the evidence of many of the points above and the transformative power of integration faith with culture and social stages. I am a living witness that Youth exposed to Gods Word and a genuine knowledgably relationship with God, be they guide by parents or not are better equipped to navigate life’s challenge’s, make faith and indispensable element of any comprehensive approach to youth development.

My overall learning was that youth must be informed earl of God’s revolutionary journey for our will and our Earth successful Victorious journey. By living True Temperance, youth can overcome cultural pressures, stigmas, tensions, and norms when balancing all with God’s purpose. Adults, YES have a purpose and responsibility to marrying the good news of the Gospel early, allowing for youth to be equipped to live noble, God centered lives. These guides methods I gleaned from research and theorist all have the potential when implemented to punctuate effective – leadership in youth living in county and city built-environments of the religious or non-religious centers. Early on the Gospel must have prudence, perspective, and practical response for our youth to hear. Youth must know we are all imperfectly living but progressive, while honoring a perfect God who will one day perfect us!

**Scripture references: Romans 7:7-12, 2 Corinthians 3:7-8, 2 Corinthians 3:12-14, 17-18**;