PHI 923-32

Contextualization for Social Change

Omega Graduate School

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Professor

Dr. David Ward

**Assignment #2 – Developmental Readings**

**1. Create Developmental Readings from seminal sources and scholarly peer-reviewed**

**journal articles. Review instructions for Assignment #3, the course essential elements,**

**and course readings to identify selections of books and journals to create entries.**

**Source 1**: Kilag, O. K., Catacutan, A., Miñoza, M. L., Arcillo, M., Espinosa, S., & Figer-Canes, R. M.

 (2023). Optimizing the Teaching of Values Education Strategies for Integration and

 Contextualization. *Excellencia: International Multi-disciplinary Journal of Education*

 *(2994-9521)*, *1*(1), 65-76.

 **Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “By integrating values education, adopting an interdisciplinary approach, providing authentic learning experiences, and contextualizing values, educators can foster the holistic development of students. This, in turn, empowers them to become ethical and responsible citizens, highlighting the crucial role of values education in our society” (Kilag et al., 2023, p.2).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with Contextualization for Constructive Social Change.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The quote above adds to my research, understanding, and life experience. Integrating values (morals) and professional and personal courtesies goes a long way in developing students. In turn, those students are more likely to have a profound positive impact on their communities. Authentic learning experiences, with their enduring and life-changing impact that extends beyond acquiring a good grade, are instrumental in shaping a better-equipped person and inspire students to continue their efforts in education.

**Contextualization**: As a counselor working at the local juvenile hall, I witnessed the transformative power of education. Part of my goal was to ensure that minors (inmates) were equipped to be reinserted into society after being incarcerated.

Frequently, when spending time with them during the educational/teachable moments, we would touch on having values and what that meant, along with being guided by a moral compass. The students who did well after their stint (some of which I see in the church today) understood and embraced the learning they received while being locked up, which helped them stay free and acceptably navigate society.

**Source 2:** Jay, M. (2011). Historical explanation and the event: Reflections on the limits of

 contextualization. *New Literary History*, *42*(4), 557-571.

 **Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Temporal heterogeneity also implies that understanding or explaining social practices is contingent on historical contextualization. We cannot fully grasp the meaning and consequences of an act or utterance without understanding the semantics, technologies, and conventions—in brief, the logic—that characterize the world in which the action takes place (p. 558).

**Essential Element:** This comment is affiliated with the History of Contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This statement adds to my research and understanding. Numerous factors, such as the political, social, and religious environments (to name a few), must be considered when contextualizing a message to share information. All information is time-based; therefore, the facilitator must understand the meaning of the message they would like to convey. Considering the factors mentioned above, while being mindful of the audience receiving the message, the facilitator has a higher chance of connecting with the audience.

**Contextualization:** Adequate and easy-to-understand information is essential when working with a team. As I have worked with large ethnically diverse groups to address societal ills, one thing is sure. Different phrases and different words are received differently by members of the group. Therefore, the leadership team must know who is involved and learn to be a wordsmith to thread the needle of conversation between groups that do not exactly think the same and or interpret the language.

**Source 3:** Guirguis, Y. (2020). History of Contextualization. *Journal of Adventist Mission*

 *Studies*, *15*(2), 165-184.

 **Comment 3:**

**Quote/Phrase:** Theological contextualization asks whether the seminary seeks to do theology in a biblically faithful and culturally appropriate way for its given situation. Does it offer an approach to theological training that aims to relate the gospel more directly to urgent issues of ministry and service in its particular cultural setting? Does it move out of its milieu in expressing the gospel (p. 172)?

**Essential Element:** The statement is affiliated with the History of Contextualization**.**

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding of theological contextualization. When dealing with theological contextualization, the messenger has two main objectives and one obligation. The messenger must understand and be relatable to his audience, and he must be able to share the good news in an understandable yet accurate fashion. His one obligation is to be sure that the message doesn’t convolute or alter the word of God when attempting to meet people at their level of understanding.

**Contextualization:** Teaching and preaching the gospel is a great honor and responsibility. It’s an honor to share the good news about His Love John 3:16, and it is a tremendous obligation to rightly share His Word accurately in a format that the receiver can understand. The good thing about teaching and preaching is that the person bringing the Word is simply a vessel in the hands of the master. As the word says, one seed, another will water, and God will direct/cause the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

**Source 4**: Fluegge, G. K. (2017). The Dubious History of “Contextualization” and the Cautious

 Case for its Continued Use. *Lutheran Mission Matters*, *25*(1), 49-69.

 **Comment 4:**

**Quote/Phrase**: The term “contextualization” was first coined in the early 1970s. Some research suggests Shoki Coe coined it in 1972 as a technical term regarding the field of missiology. Furthermore, since contextualization as a word has been debated, some seem to think it does not have a standard definition.

**Essential Element**: This comment is associated with the History of Contextualization

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** Although this comment is both additive and variant to my research, understanding, and professional experiences, my conclusion/position is that it falls more into the variant category due to the last sentence stating the word/term contextualization has no standard definition. Similar to many words, “contextualization” has many definitions. For example, the Cambridge dictionary defines it as “the fact or process of considering something in its context, which can help you understand it.”

The Oxford Learning Dictionary defines contextualization as “the process of considering something concerning the situation in which it happens or exists.” During my research, I encountered various definitions that helped paint a clear picture of the term/word contextualization.

**Contextualization:** As is stated in one of the definitions, contextualization is the process of considering something in its context to understand it. When preaching the Word of God and connecting with people regarding any subject matter, the teacher must convey a coherent, understandable, and accurate message to the recipient. When I share the gospel or teach a class (secular or religious-based), I make sure two things occur. To begin with, I must have a clear understanding of the message, and secondly, I must have a clear understanding of the best way to convey that message in a format that makes sense and resonates with the audience.

**Source 5:** Miller, P**. (**2021), What is Christian Nationalism? *Christianity Today*

 **Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Christian nationalism tends to treat other Americans as second-class citizens. If it were fully implemented, it would not respect the full religious liberty of all Americans. Empowering the state through “moral legislation” to regulate conduct always carries the risk of overreaching, setting a bad precedent, and creating governing powers that could later be used against Christians.

**Course Essential Element:** This statement is affiliated withCulture & Contextualization

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my research, understanding, and life experiences. Christian nationalism, although it may be well-intended, leaves a lot to be desired. Christianity is not for the benefit of people based on race, class, or ethnicity, but it’s based on a relationship with a person and Jesus Christ. Putting it there is God and people, people don’t have the right to display God-like actions over others; however, Christian nationalism places itself on a higher platform than other religions.

**Contextualization:** During the last several years, when working in various facets of the ministry and many professional settings, I have encountered all kinds of people. Some were very religious, and others were agnostic and even atheist. Although we have different values, for the most part, we accepted and respected each other without believing that one person was superior. As a minister, I find it troubling that someone who professes to be Christian behavior suggests that they feel they are better than anyone who doesn’t look like them or share their beliefs.

**Source 6:** Raj et al. 2017, Luther Mission Matters, *Journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology*.

 Pp. 186.

 **Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “Without contextualization, people will not connect to Christ in a way that moves their hearts. Faith will feel foreign, and people will lose what they have grown up cherishing. Churches will never feel rooted in their own culture, and people will not see the true winsomeness of the gospel” (Raj et al., p.12).

**Essential Element:** This quote is affiliated with Contextualization for Constructive Social Change.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: This is additive to the discussion of contextualization for “constructive” social change as it states the importance connected people to Christianity by way of contextualization. It connects the Word of God to them and their “current” relatable circumstances. Contextualization, in this sense, is imperative because it acts as a bridge of understanding between the Word of God, which was written several years ago, and people's current living situations.

**Contextualization:** Growing up in the church, it was hard to stay awake at times when certain people preached. It was as if they were talking in a foreign language that I could not understand. The King James version, perhaps the most popular one, can be challenging for adults to grasp, let alone a ten-year-old child. The preachers who read the bible passage followed by explaining it in modern terms (contextualizing it) were able to hold my interest and helped me understand why developing a relationship with Christ was the way to go John 14:6. Contextualization is imperative to bringing people to Christ, and I am a witness and benefactor of it.

**Source 7:** Raj et al. 2017, Luther Mission Matters, *Journal of the Lutheran Society for Missiology*.

 Pp. 186.

 **Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Social scientists and anthropologists confirm that Western societies transform more frequently and rearrange themselves within a few decades. Plenteous changes occur in this generation, especially in language development, culture, and communication. Flexibility reigns supreme in all walks of life. To effectively communicate any message, the speaker and listener negotiate and choose context-specific words. Contextual communication is a natural, carefully executed “sight translation exercise,” fully respecting and honoring the context in which the exercise takes place (Raj et al., p.8).

**Essential Element**: The statement is relative to culture and contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The quote adds to my research, understanding, life experiences, and discussion of contextualization in that it confirms that language does not stagnate and, therefore, effective communication gives way to contextualization. What is vital with contextualization is rightfully explaining/expounding things without taking words, meanings, and situations out of context, especially as they pertain to the gospel. The Word of God must remain whole and wholesome.

**Contextualization:** Mostly, those who spread the gospel are good-hearted, loving, competent people desiring to help others find their way. The challenge, at times, is that some do not spend enough time studying to understand God's complex yet simple Word rightfully. Complex in the sense that it requires one to study it 2nd Timothy 2:15. Simple in the sense that through study, you learn to lean on the best teacher/helper at times (the Holy Spirit) and let Him guide you John 16:13; John 14:26. Contextualization is vital in connecting people to God, it just needs to be done effectively and accurately.

**Source 8**: Volle, A. (2024), Christian nationalism. *Encyclopedia Britannica*

 **Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Since Christian nationalism is an ideology predominantly held by white people in many countries, including the United States and some European countries, its ramifications are religious but also racial and ethnic. This connection is not lost on white supremacist organizations, who frequently point to the protection of their country’s Christian heritage as a reason to discriminate against minorities.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with culture and contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The above comment is additive to the discussion regarding culture and contextualization in the sense that culture forms contextualization, and contextualization impacts culture. Specifically, as it pertains to Christian nationalism, their beliefs have a direct impact on certain pockets of society, and their apparent mishandling of the Bible, and, therefore, their contextualization of it, drives a wedge between them and others who they may deem as outsiders.

**Contextualization**: There could be a lot of different angles one could take when unpacking the quote/paraphrase. Bearing that in mind, I will tackle two words that should not be in the same paragraph: white supremacy and Christianity. Although American history suggests that those two things can work harmoniously, one must read the Bible with an open heart and mind to know they cannot coexist. As a minister, one of the major attacks on Christianity is not only from the outside but from the inside as well from those professing to be Christian who are operating out of hate and despair instead of love and unity (1 John 4:7-8).

**Source 9**: Perry, S. L. (2022). American religion in the era of increasing polarization. *Annual*

 *Review of Sociology*, *48*(1), 87-107.

 **Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Americans are increasingly polarized by a variety of metrics. The dimensions, extent, causes, and consequences of that polarization have been debated. Yet despite the centrality of religion to early discussions, the analytical focus on America’s divides has primarily shifted toward partisan identity, political ideology, race, and class interests (p.1).

**Essential Element**: This comment is associated with Culture & Contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment adds to my research, understanding, and discussion of culture and contextualization. As the researcher states, Americans are increasingly polarized by a variety of metrics; due to the infusion of Christian nationalism, I can make a valid argument that religion is nearly at the top, if not the top, of the list. Christian nationalism takes a somewhat elitist and exclusive approach to determining who fits their criteria to be brought into the fold.

**Contextualization:** During my four decades of ministry, I have witnessed Christians maintain solid, rooted values while at the same time being pliable enough to be understood during each distinct moment in time. Today, I am concerned, as never before, because it seems a group flying under the banner of Christianity is distorting the goodness and, in effect, the Godliness of the religion. Christianity is supposed to be for everyone willing to follow Christ and His way, regardless of race, social status, or political persuasion. Recently, I overheard a conversation in which the person appearing to be a Christian nationalist said Democrats cannot be Christians.

 Wow, when did being a Christian require a person to be from a particular political persuasion, and who was qualified to make that decision?

**Source 10:** Cooper-White, P. (2022). *The psychology of Christian nationalism:*

 *Why people are drawn in and how to talk across the divide*. Fortress Press.

 **Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Most surprising for many was Trump's appeal to millions of Christians whose stated values of honesty, fidelity in marriage, humility, Charitable speech about others, and a general spirit of dignity are the exact opposite of all the former President represents (p.3).

**Essential Element:** The comment is affiliated with approaches to contextualization**.**

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote adds to the discussion regarding approaches to contextualization in that it substantiates the fact that people can contextualize things differently. For example, the Christian nationalist movement suggests that it’s okay to support a person who does not display traditional Christian values if he promotes some policies they support.

**Contextualization:** As devout Christians, we are warned we will be judged by the measure of others (Matthew 7:2). Furthermore, the bible warns us to look in the mirror to correct our mistakes instead of focusing on the mistakes of others (Matthew 7:3-5).

Keeping the following two bible verses in mind, I will tread lightly as I state my observation of former President Trump.

Looking back on what he said, it was tough for me to believe that he was close to being an honest person. I was raised to believe that dishonest people were untrustworthy and shouldn’t be the person occupying the highest office in the land, and perhaps the world should be a person of integrity, or at least attempting to be.

**Source 11:** Malka, A. (2022). 18 Religiosity and Openness to Authoritarian Governance.

 *The Cambridge Handbook of Political Psychology*, 284.

 **Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Religion and democracy represent stark contrasts as forces structuring political life. Democracy has characterized a portion of the world’s political systems for what amounts to a sliver of history. It involves checks on power, commitment to procedural rules, and compromise on matters of profound social importance (abstract).

**Essential Element**: The quote is affiliated with approaches to contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The quote from the researcher is additive to the discussion of approaches to contextualization. Interestingly, the author states religion and democracy represent stark contrasts as forces structuring political life. With careful contextualization, the two, religion and political life, can coexist strategically.

Having the two coexist does not mean that they are joined at the hip; it simply means that a value/moral-based leadership approach can be deployed and, as a result, have a meaning significant effect on religion.

**Contextualization:** During the church service today, the Pastor, who appears to be a staunch Republican, encouraged everyone to vote, which is excellent. Also, it was blatantly apparent that although he was saying vote according to your preference while carefully attempting to remain impartial, his support of one party is evident.

Threading the needle between church and state/democracy and religion is challenging. Still, it can be managed with careful contextualization, knowing that Christian people are on both sides of the aisle and that Jesus Christ is the common denominator that keeps them civil and respectful of each other.

**Source 12**: Smith, J. (2022, June). Beyond The God Gap: Mapping Religiopolitical Heterogeneity

 in the United States, 1. In *Sociological Forum* (Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 421-442).

 **Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Since the 1960s, the link between religious and political identification and behavior in the United States has grown significantly, in a phenomenon known as the “God gap.” Research has consistently found that the link between religious and political identification and behavior in the United States has grown significantly, as religious populations have increasingly aligned with the political right while secular Americans move toward the political left. Yet, other research cautions that most Americans are politically or religiously not extreme (p. 2-3).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with culture & contextualization.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: This comment is a variant of the discussion, my understanding, research, and life experiences in that although the “God gap” appears to be expanding, based on my research, generally speaking, the (white) evangelicals are leaning more towards the Republican political party, whereas blacks and other Christians who are minorities are occupying both parties but have a more prominent presence in the Democratic camp. When it comes to religion, the “God gap” may be expanding, but there is solid representation in both parties.

**Contextualization:** The political party “God gap,” as referenced in the research, is widening since more agnostics, atheists, and those who occupy other religions outside of the Christan Nationalist movement appear to lean towards the democratic party. This is not to say that some atheists, agnostics, etc., or Christians outside of the Christian Nationalist movement will not vote or register as Republicans. However, my research shows that most people who are not religious fly under the banner of being democratic, increasing their numbers of non-religious believers tremendously.

**References**

Cooper-White, P. (2022). *The psychology of Christian nationalism:*

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