PHI 943-12 Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

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Omega Graduate School

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Professor

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**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.**

Quinton, you did a good job with your Developmental Reading Log.

Quote/Paraphrase: You selected reading portions that reflected your research interest for the course.

Essential Element: You accurately identified relevant Course Essential Elements for each reading selection.

Additive/Variant Analyses: Your Additive/Variant Analyses demonstrated critical thinking. You demonstrated how faith-learning integration applied leadership and ministry.

Contextualization: Your Contextualizations showed relevant applications.

**Works Cited**

Every Works Cited entry is to begin at the left margin and then should be in a .5” hanging indent form. Book titles are to be in sentence case: Capitalize first letter of first word in the title and subtitle and any proper nouns. Article titles are to be in sentence case. Journal Titles are to be in Title Case and italicized.

**Source 1**: Afaradi, A. (2023). Holistic Christian Leadership: The Combination of Orthodoxy,

Orthopraxis and Orthopathy. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, *104*(4).

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**  “Orthopraxy, the practice of Christianity, demonstrates one's dedication to their religion. It involves righteous deeds, proper conduct, and proper practices in the context of Christianity. These practices, such as prayer, worship, and acts of charity, show one's commitment and responsibility to practice their religion daily. This practical application of faith is significant in Christian leadership, as it influences daily decisions and actions and leads to personal growth and self-awareness” (p.8).

**Essential Element:** This statement is associated with Orthopraxis.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The comment is additive to my discussion, research, and understanding of orthopraxis. My knowledge of orthopraxis is putting orthodoxy/religion into action. It is one thing to read or listen to what it means to be religious; however, it’s entirely different putting what is learned into action.

**Contextualization:** As a minister occupying a leadership position and, more importantly, a person who is a practicing, devout Christian, I learned that although people cannot earn their way into heaven, faith without actions is dead (James 2:17). Learning about the way a Christian should behave is vitally essential. In Christian leadership, the role of orthopraxy is not just paramount. Still, it is the guiding light that shapes the behavior and decisions of leaders, enlightening them on the path to effective leadership.

**Source 2**: Afaradi, A. (2023). Holistic Christian Leadership: The Combination of Orthodoxy,

Orthopraxis and Orthopathy. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, *104*(4).

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Comment**: “Orthopathy is an essential aspect of Christian spirituality, providing a means of experiencing God's presence and grace in their lives. Moreover, orthopathy is a potent incentive for moral conduct. It inspires Christians to do the right thing out of genuine love for God and their neighbor rather than out of duty or necessity” (p.8).

**Essential Element:** The comment is associated with Orthopathy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The statement is additive to my research and discussion regarding orthopathy. Orthpathy is a term translated in layperson’s terms, meaning right or rightful suffering. As Christians, our Lord and Savior suffered for our sins and rose for our purpose so that we will have a direct connection through him to our heavenly father (John 14:6). In terms of drilling down on suffering, as Christians, we must endure the storms associated with living in this world all the while knowing that it’s simply a segway to our permanent one.

**Contextualization**: A level of sufferingis par for the course by being a Christian. Part of which is simply that an adversary is working against us. Not only are we faced with constantly battling an adversary, but most, if not all, of the world's ways work contrary to most of our beliefs and behaviors.

For example, lying to make the best sell or gain any financial advantage is customary for most, whereas Christians place their values ahead of taking advantage of people. We all need money to survive, but for Christians, money does not rule our world; his word does.

**Source 3**: Afaradi, A. (2023). Holistic Christian Leadership: The Combination of Orthodoxy,

Orthopraxis and Orthopathy. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, *104*(4).

**Comment 3**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Christian leaders are expected to uphold the faith's doctrines and ideals, which is where orthodoxy comes in. Effective leadership requires the ability to direct people toward spiritual growth and development, and adopting the ideas and practices of the Christian religion is one way to do just that. Orthodoxy is a uniting factor that helps people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs come together under the Christian religion.

**Essential Element:** The comment is associated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The comment complements my research, understanding, and life experience regarding orthodoxy. In summation, orthodoxy, the word "Orthodox" comes from the Greek word orthódoxos, which means "correct opinion." This indicates that the word and or doctrine shared by a church organization is believed to be accurate. Another definition I came across defined orthodoxy as “correct in teaching.” Orthodox Christians, Jews, and others who may fall under the banner of Orthodox, what have you. You feel blank; all believe their teachings are grounded in traditional and accurate footing.

**Contextualization:** When dealing with churches with the word orthodox in their title, such as “the Christian orthodox church,” two things come to mind (dated/traditional) and primitive. That is not to say that being associated with an orthodox religious system is overtly different than being involved with many others.

However, it has been my experience that most of those who are not orthodox, so to speak, may be grounded in tradition, but at the same time, they are more progressive. Threading the needle between holding on to religious practices that may be obsolete, such as women wearing head coverings and not being able to talk in service, versus customs, such as treating your neighbor as yourself, should be approached differently. Women should be treated equally in church and treat their neighbor as they should be the norm for all religions.

**Source 4**: Mujahid, I. (2021). Islamic orthodoxy-based character education: creating moderate

Muslim in a modern pesantren in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim*

*Societies*, *11*(2), 185-212.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) has contributed to building a moderate character for Muslims in Indonesia towards globalization. However, amid the peaceful Islam disseminated in the country, nowadays, a radical Muslim movement challenges this character; furthermore, the modernization of pesantren education is required to prepare students for life in the era of globalization, which demands spiritual, intellectual, and moral preparedness. Today’s world dynamics require modernization”(p.185 & 187).

**Essential Element**: This comment is affiliated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The statement is additive to the discussion of orthodoxy in mentioning two components that must work simultaneously. To begin with, orthodoxy is a term/practice that infers traditional beliefs and behaviors. And traditional beliefs/behaviors are generally rooted deep in history, which indicates that they are usually dated.

Modernization speaks to being current; therefore, Pesantren (an Islamic boarding school) appears to be on track in the sense that it is helping people hold on to their traditional values while enabling them to navigate these trying modern times.

**Contextualization:** Living a religious life by mixing church-based standards, which have been around for hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of years, with current life challenges/standards can be highly challenging. As a devout Christian affiliated with various Christian denominations, it can become confusing to follow all of the rules, usually man-made, regarding the tempo of the particular church while attending. One consistent thing: each church has a laundry list of traditions/customs that they push as the gospel, many of which they can back up with scripture. However, I often see that the personality of the church leaders has infiltrated their church system as well, which could be contrary. When it comes to orthodoxy (church manners, traditions, and beliefs), it’s been my experience that although there are some significant distinctions, for the most part, the goal, which is to lead people to Christ, remains the same.

**Source 5**: Salzman, D. (2022). The Constitutionality of Orthodoxy. *The University of Chicago Law*

*Review*, *89*(4), 1069-1112.

**Comment 5**:

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “In the summer of 2020, Manhattan Institute fellow Christopher Rufo received a tip that the City of Seattle was conducting “internalized racial superiority” training for city employees. These trainings allegedly taught that “black Americans are reducible to the essential quality of ‘blackness’ and white Americans are reducible to the essential quality of ‘whiteness.’” The Constitutionality of Orthodoxy 1071 program contacted Rufo and issued an executive order prohibiting training advocating certain “divisive concepts” from all federal programs.4 The executive order defined “divisive concepts” to include views that “the United States is fundamentally racist or sexist” and that meritocracies are racist or sexist.5 The accompanying implementation memorandum suggested that agencies might identify programs violating the executive order by searching for phrases such as “critical race theory,” “systemic racism,” and “unconscious bias.” (pp. 1071-72).

**Essential Element**: The comment is affiliated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/variant analysis**: The comment is both additive and variant to my research understanding and life experiences. Although the comment could be classified under either category, additive or variant, my position will reside under variant.

Variant because orthodoxy means something to the effect of “rightful/correct teaching.” Denying that there is a problem in America regarding systemic racism and sexism is laughable. Moreover, we all have unconscious bias; some accept and attempt to deal with it, while others do not. History supports the fact that America is fundamentally racist and sexist but is making notable progress in dealing with that situation.

**Contextualization:** America is the most beautiful country in the world; for the most part, people can work hard and accomplish a level of success unlike anywhere else. Even though America has many upsides, it is still a work in progress. For example, two black women were elected to the Senate for the first time. Furthermore, the pay difference between men and women fulfilling the same job duties is still substantial, and less than 11% of CEOs are racially or ethnically diverse. America, the most wonderful country in the world, has come a long way in leveling the playing field of people of color and women, yet there is still a way to go!

**Source 6**: Portone, P., & Giorgetta, V. (2024). What are the boundaries? Discerning “Pietas”

From “Superstition” in a Frontier diocese: The pastoral action of the bishops of Como

between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.*Religions, 15*(9), 1108.

doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091108

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The “singular” way in which diocesan ordinaries sought in the aftermath of the Tridentine Council to re-establish orthopraxy in the only diocese in the peninsula subject to secular authorities of the Reformed faith and in which an Italophone Protestant community was permanently present for several decades, represents a critical case study for understanding the anomaly of the local bishop’s courts (and the inquisition) transformed during this time from bitter enemies of the sect strigiarum into “witch lawyers,” and for illuminating the deeper reasons for the limits of the fight against superstitions in the entire peninsula (abstract).

**Essential Element**: The statement is associated with orthopraxis

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The comment is additive to my research and understanding because it sustains that orthopraxy is imperative in supporting orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is reaching an acceptable/correct understanding of one’s religion, and Orthopraxis is putting those understandings into practice. Furthermore, the challenge facing the Italophone Protestant community is still prevalent in some religious institutions today. Superstitions and or traditional beliefs that are not substantiated by the bible still have a home in too many religious institutions to date.

**Contextualization:** Being a minister and acting like one can be different. Growing up in the church world has allowed me to be exposed to so many church politics, practices, tendencies, and, of course, missteps. In some churches I attended, our behavior differed from those with no church affiliation. We were familiar with the word of God, but we didn’t understand or put in the work to apply it to our lifestyles. Sadly, according to my “limited” recollection, which is undoubtedly too familiar in the church, some ministers allowed their flesh to influence them more than the word of God. Being a minister and acting like one can be challenging, but it must be the only acceptable standard.

**Source 7**: Dumitrașcu, N. (2024). Towards an “Ecumenical” council inside of

orthodoxy!*Religions, 15*(1), 48.

doi:https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15010048

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “The war in Ukraine showed very clearly how the autocephalous Orthodox Churches are positioned towards Patriarch Kirill's imperialist policy, which is incompatible with his religious status and openly supports the invasion of a brother people of the same faith. If, in the Western Christian world, his name is associated, either directly or indirectly, with the crimes committed by the Russian army, in the Eastern world, the opinions are more nuanced because the links between political and religious power are different” (p. 6).

**Essential Element**: The comment is affiliated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The comment is additive to research, understanding, and discussion regarding orthodoxy. One definition of orthodoxy is “right opinion,” which calls for the question of what is right about an opinion. Nonetheless, the one ostensibly position taken by an orthodox church is that it is okay to go to war with other people of the same faith in a different country. Based on that statement, people, even those of similar if not the same religious denominations, place politics and nationalism over their spiritual/religious values.

**Contextualization**: A few things in this world should unite us, with God/religion arguably being the dominant cause. However, it is evident that if churches split over differences of opinion locally, there is a slim chance that churches will unite internationally.

Being involved in various ministries representing many denominations, it has been my experience that, for the most part, all religions aim to do good. That is to be peaceful, caring, tolerant, morally astute groups of people helping to make this world a better place for all. Unfortunately, religion has become a tool for power and influence as opposed to being a means to care for and uplift all humankind regardless of race, creed, or color. In true religion, people realize that our status/value comes from God, the creator of heaven and earth, who made us in His image (Genesis 1:27). If that does not unite us, nothing else will.

**Source 8****:** Soloveitchik, H. (2021). *Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Modern*

*Orthodoxy*. Liverpool University Press.

**Comment 8**:

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “If religion is now transmitted to the next generation by institutional education, it is a small wonder that the influence of educators has increased dramatically, especially the sway of the scholar, the one most deeply versed in the sacred texts. The text is now the guarantor of instruction, as the written word is both the source and the touchstone of religious authenticity” (page 14).

**Essential Element:** The comment is associated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/ Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to the discussion regarding orthodoxy. Although the researcher has mentioned several factors in the quote, I will elaborate on the two that resonate with me. Those two are religion and instructional education.

Bringing it into focus, one could argue that religion and instructional education shouldn’t be tied together because educational-based instruction does not have the responsibility to teach scholars/students what to think; the obligation is to teach students how to ascertain information for themselves and draw their conclusions.

**Contextualization:** As a collegiate student who attended both secular and religious institutions, I have experienced both sides of the coin. In my experience on the secular side, I have seen Christians lean more into their studies, which negatively impacted their walk with Christ. It was as if education became their primary focus, often allowing it to override their Christian beliefs. While attending seminary (and other Christian Universities) , the education was anchored on the word of God. Most people gravitated to Christ first, while embracing and understanding the importance of acquiring a solid education was a close second. Considering the statements mentioned above, I conclude that the institution's role is to encourage the student/scholar to learn how to ask the right questions and find a suitable answer. Religion and education can and do coexist. However, Christians must remain vigilant and steadfast when obtaining a secular education.

**Source 9:** Kitromilides, P. M. (2024). *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in*

*southeastern Europe's culture and political thought*. Taylor & Francis.

**Comment 9**:

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “How long have we been sitting at the gates of the city, anxiously awaiting the end of history? For the orthodox, it sounds worth waiting for. Will it come with the sound of a trumpet, as the author of the apocalypse promised” (forward).

**Essential Element:** The comment is associated with Orthodoxy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The comment is additive to the discussion of orthodoxy. Looking at things through an orthodox lens laced with traditional values and understanding suggests that the end of history based on the context written by the researcher will be a glorious moment. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. It is my understanding that for the orthodox Christian, being on this earth takes endurance, but the joy associated with eternal life spent in heaven makes it worthwhile.

**Contextualization:** When spending time as a youth attending Pentecostal marathon church services at least twice weekly. I thought Jesus was coming back each night as I went to sleep. I often expected to be woken by the sound of the trumpet mentioned in earlier reading. In my church, steeped in tradition, primarily suitable, but some surely outdated, as a youngster, each day was filled with uncertainty. The Word says he will come like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

I was not quite sure what that meant when I was ten. In the Pentecostal system, the ministers spoke perfect Christianese; I just needed someone to speak plain, simple English to help me process the biblical jargon I was constantly exposed to when I was ten years old.

**Source 10:** Malešević, S. (2020). Nationalism and the Orthodox worlds. *Nations and*

*Nationalism*, *26*(3), 544-552.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/ Paraphrase**: “Some could also question the overly culturalist analysis of the Orthodox institutions and their representatives, as the Church is not and has never been free from politics. Although Kitromilides is a cultural historian who focuses on the history of ideas and, as such, has less to say about the political history of the churches, I believe that having more analysis of the politics of the Orthodox churches would enhance the cultural analysis of this institution. Kitromilides is fitting that the activities of Orthodox churches should be analyzed on their terms without our own secular biases. However, the Church authorities themselves had historically to navigate the religious and the secular world, which inevitably made them into political agents whether some of them liked it or not” (page 551).

**Essential Element: The comment is associated with orthodoxy**

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The comment adds to my discussion. My research about politics and religion has erased the line separating church and state. Politics plays a significant role in the church, and the church strives to impact the political landscape profoundly.

This is prominent in the religious nationalist group that supported the Republican presidential candidate. It was apparent that his stance regarding some or at least one political (hot)topic garnered him tremendous support.

The troubling part of the situation is that although the candidate may deliver on some policy issues, his unethical behavior is, as it should be, a topic of discussion.

**Contextualization:** As a Christian, I believe there is a strong need to separate church and state. Once God is inserted in the situation, people often believe they completely understand it and are to align themselves with that understanding, even if mistaken. With God, for most people, things are absolute. Therefore, getting some people to have an impartial discussion (even when substantiated by facts) can be insurmountable. When it comes to politics, people should “agree to disagree.” Regarding religion, especially Christianity, we must love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40) and treat everyone with respect and kindness regardless of political persuasion; Christ must supersede politics.

**Source 11**: Gauthier, F. (2022). Religious change in Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe: From

Nation-state to the global market. *Theory and Society*, *51*(2), 177-210.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “As elsewhere, the Orthodox Church is making organizational changes that implement ‘modern’ management, accounting, marketing, communication, and branding practices, blurring the boundaries between religion and management, advertising, and economics” (p. 206).

**Essential Element:** This comment is affiliated with orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive (although somewhat variant) to my research, understanding, life experience, and current discussions regarding Orthodoxy—an additive in the sense that Orthodoxy and the Orthodox church are changing with the times.

While progress is essential in every facet of life, some things, especially in the church, must remain intact for that sacred institution to function appropriately. Most importantly, the church needs to function as a business without being driven by money. Pastors under the guidance of God must drive the church to save souls while following an intelligent economic plan/strategy to ensure its purpose/mission can be fulfilled. For example, in business, the bottom line is to make a profit; in the church, the bottom line should be to lead people to Christ!

**Contextualization:** During my four decades of ministry, I have been involved with churches that function primarily as a business, churches that lack business acumen, and everything in between. Those who run like a business have resources to sustain and grow along with the needs of their communities. Those who fail to run like a business always look for ways to remain afloat, and some have shuttered. Moreover, I have seen God move in almost all those places. Therefore, I am convinced that a church with a solid business plan that has been “blessed by God” coupled with the understanding and embracing of Matthew 6:33 is the church that massively spreads the gospel.

**Source 12**: Oz-Salzberger, F. (2020). Enlightenment, Haskalah, and the State of Israel. *The*

*European Legacy*, *25*(7-8), 801-825.

**Comment 12**:

**Quote/Paraphrase**: “Many Eastern European Jews remained within the confines of the shtetl, small town, or neighborhood harboring mainly traditional orthodox communities. Many other Jews adopted modern customs without seeking a compromise between modernity and ancestral legacies” (p. 804).

**Essential Element:** The statement is associated with Orthodoxy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: The statement is additive to the discussion regarding orthodoxy and the orthodox church. According to the researchers' statement, the Jews mentioned in the statement were able to accomplish what is needed to keep the orthodox church steady on its foundation while at the same time being relevant.

The author stated, “Many adopted modern customs without seeking a compromise between modernity and ancestral legacies.” The goal of any viable religious institution is to hold steadfast to the core of which it was built while being able to connect in modern terms.

**Contextualization**: The goal of the church, including the orthodox church, is to connect a tried-and-true belief system of the past with the people of the present.

Indeed, God's Word is always relevant, although it was written several thousand years ago. The more significant challenge is not spreading the word but spreading the (frequently) man-made outdated rituals engrained in the church's history and legacy.

As I have experienced, I'm sure most of them are good and still have a place in the service, but perhaps some should be revisited. I believe that the church, as we are, is constantly evolving within the parameters of God’s revealed design. Church values are not to change, but the message must be relevant.

**Source 13**: Cornelio, J. S., Gauthier, F., Martikainen, T., & Woodhead, L. (Eds.).

(2021). *Routledge international handbook of religion in global society*. London and

New York: Routledge.

**Comment 13:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Like any other subject, the study of religion is a child of its time. Shaped and forged over the twentieth century, it has reflected the interests and political situation of the world at the time.

As the twenty-first century unfolds, religion is undergoing a significant transition. Like the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church has changed its attitude towards new communication and information technologies. It has developed extensive multimedia networks, blurring the boundaries between religion and the secular, the private and the public, and religion and entertainment.

The influence of globalizing processes has been evident in social and cultural networking through new media like the Internet, in the extensive power of global capitalism, and the increasing influence of international bodies and legal instruments. Religion has been changing and adapting, too (Gauthier 2020, p.206; Cornelio et al. 2021 Abstract, emphasis added).

**Essential Element:** The comment is associated with orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** The statement is additive to my research, understanding, and life experiences regarding orthodoxy. One of the well-received definitions of Orthodoxy is “right belief.” A good working definition of orthopraxis is “right practice. " The two evolutionarily working in concert will help keep religion and orthodox religion particularly relevant.

**Contextualization:** I understand the researcher's comment stating that religion is a child of its time, like any other subject. Furthermore, when religion is viewed as another subject, perhaps the researcher's comments are vividly accurate. However, being a devout Christian, I don’t view religion, especially Christianity, through the lens of being a subject. Instead, I view it as being an essential part of my life.

Considering that statement, my life has been constantly evolving; therefore, religion/Christianity (at least from my perspective) has been adapting as well; after all, religion has to be constantly relatable; it is the catalyst that forms many people's worldviews.

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