PHI 815-22: History of the Integration of Religion and Society

Lemma Degefa

Omega Graduate School

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Dr. David Ward

**Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements**

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the first

week of the term. Post this document in DIAL.

b. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

**I enjoyed reading your discussion for PHI 815-22. Lemma, you did a good job identifying the Course Essential Element of Christianity’s influence on society as the focus for your Assignment #1. This is very eloquently stated: "there is a need for deeper understanding of Christianity, deeply examining the context within which we live, and defining principled manners to engage with our sphere of influence in particular and the world in which we live in general." Nice work using scholarly citations to support your responses, but note the recommendations on your APA form for the Works Cited. What an inspiring close to end your discussion: "As much as I understand the level of difficulty of my role as Christian in a society, I sense the responsibility and opportunity to faithfully shine the light of the gospel to my sphere influence. I’m glad that Omega Graduate School equips me to gain deeper understanding of both the text and the context, godly ways to become a better leader, and a principled and wise way to discharge my social duties for the glory of God." Keep up the great work! -- Prof. David Ward**

**Grade: A**

**Christianity’s Influence on Society**

Septiadi (2023) states that religion is one of the most important components of human existence; it has the power either to unify or to divide a society. The role of Christianity is no different. From the historical theology perspectives, Christianity has shaped societal values, and social context in return has played important role in shaping Christian doctrines (McGrath, 2022).

From biblical point of view, Christians are to be the light and salt in the world (Matthew 5: 14-16). In this text, Jesus Christ describes the unique identity and purpose of his followers in the world. In practical terms, being light and salt means living and serving in a way that reflects God’s truth and love. According to Christian Pure (2024), the text implies the need to stand for justice, to show compassion, to speak the truth, and to demonstrate the transformative power of the Gospel to the world around us.

Although Christian communities remain committed to shining the light of the gospel to the world around them, Christianity has failed to sustainably and consistently impacting the world. Although Christianity is gaining strength in influencing the society in the global south (Pauw, 2024), it’s being threatened and influenced by the world in the global north (Ilesanmi, 2023).

Nevertheless, whether in global south or global north, Christianity is in a constant battle with the dark world. One of the battle grounds that comes both in as an opportunity and a challenge for Christianity today relates to the role of the church in the formulation of public policies that contradict Christian values. Even though religion is frequently used to influence policy decisions (Castles, 2019), whether a religious-based policy will be fair to groups with differing views has always been a concern for policy makers (Maeckelberghe, 2023). Therefore, the interface between religion, basic human rights, and public governance makes it increasingly tougher for Christianity to play its role in a society.

Despite this fact, Kumar, Sahoo, Lim, & Dana (2022) state that religion has both the solution and the space to continue to influence the society. Alina (2022) emphasizes that since our Christian wellbeing is affected by our connectedness to the society within which we live, there is no choice but to continue to shine brighter in the thickening dark world. Thus, it’s imperative that Christianity continues to revitalize itself to its current context without compromising its essence. To this effect, there is a need for deeper understanding of Christianity, deeply examining the context within which we live, and defining principled manners to engage with our sphere of influence in particular and the world in which we live in general.

As much as I understand the level of difficulty of my role as Christian in a society, I sense the responsibility and opportunity to faithfully shine the light of the gospel to my sphere influence. I’m glad that Omega Graduate School equips me to gain deeper understanding of both the text and the context, godly ways to become a better leader, and a principled and wise way to discharge my social duties for the glory of God.

**Works Cited**

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