PHI 815 History of the Integration of Religion & Society

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Date (Feb 13, 2025)

Professor

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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.

**Steve, this was an excellent Developmental Readings assignment! It looks like from your selection of sources you are planning to write on the ongoing issue in church history of elevating the treatment and dignity of women (Schmidt, 2024, pp. 120-121). Kudos for using Schmidt, the best seminal source for this course.**

**I sure from your ministry in Africa, you see it as a real need which you are addressing through education. You chose relevant sources that aligned with that developing theme and included complementary and different readings. Your selected readings are from appropriate and current scholarly sources.**

**You did a good job identifying the Essential Elements each reading related to which was excellent.**

**Your Additive/Variant Analyses demonstrated good critical thinking. You also demonstrated faith-learning integration with insightful observations where religion and faith can contribute to gender equality of women in family, church, and society in Africa.**

**I especially enjoyed your Contextualizations that showed relevant applications coming out of, as you said, first hand experience! They gave me more of a feel for your ministry.**

**APA style: Your Works Cited APA was perfect except for this one repeated mistake: Journal Volume Numbers are italicized along with the Journal Title because on a library shelf, the title and volume number show the librarian which journal to pull. Nice work! -- Dr. David Ward**

**Source One:** Kohm, L. M. (2008). A Christian Perspective on Gender Equality. *Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy,* ***15***.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Gender equality and religion have both been important to the law, as evident by the effective transformation of law by women of faith in the suffrage movement. Christianity motivated these women and influenced the debate on the right of women to vote, an important factor in any election year. The paramount question, therefore, is not whether Christianity influences gender equality, but to what extent (p. 101-102).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reforms. The suffrage movement was about bringing social reform by allowing women to vote.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. As a result of the suffrage movement in the United States, gender equity and empowerment were widespread as women gained the right to vote. The majority of these women were strong Christians. This rise in gender equity and empowerment can be seen today by the number of women in high government positions. Women in power in our education system have brought a higher level of gender equity and empowerment to US schools.

**Contextualization:** As a missionary, I have witnessed this firsthand. In nations where Christianity has taken root, there is a high level of gender equity in education. In nations with minimal to no gospel penetration, gender equity in education is very low, to the extent that girls are often denied the opportunity for education. The education system in much of Africa was started by missionaries.

**Source Two:** Bapolisi, Wyvine Ansima. (2024). Engaging men in women’s empowerment: impact of a complex gender transformative intervention on household socio-economic and health outcomes in the eastern democratic republic of the Congo using a longitudinal survey. *BMC Public Health*. ***24***(1). https://doi.org/ 10.1186/s12889-024-17717-5

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Behavioral change is a long process that does not depend only on the availability or intention to change. Many have defined different steps that shape a change of behavior happening in a given society. A change in behavior is more complex and there is a need to understand all the emotions of the individual and its particular context (p. 8).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reforms. Social reform is all change. If there is no change, there is no reform.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Behavioral change happens over time and is a process. A change of behavior cannot be accomplished by a list of rules and regulations but by changing the heart of the person.

**Contextualization:**  I have lived in nations where the government tries to regulate behavior through laws and regulations. This is never effective as the hearts of the people have not been changed. There have been places that I lived where the gospel has caused behavioral change with any governmental intervention. When people begin to live the gospel the natural outcome is behavioral change. In schools where the gospel is openly proclaimed the behavior of the students improves.

**Source Three:** Hermkens, A~~nna~~-K~~arina~~, Kenneth, R~~oselyne~~, and KcKenna, K~~ylie~~. (2022). Gender equality, theology and essentialism: Catholic responses to gender-based violence and inequality in Papua New Guinea. *Oceania.* ***92***(3). https://doi.org/10.1002/ocea.5348

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The Gender Equality Theology document shows a religious response to growing (secular) national and international programs, policies, and pressures for gender equality. Significantly, theology highlights that the treatment of, and opportunities and rewards for men and women should be equal. At the same time, it states that men and women, and boys and girls are different, albeit the same in God’s eyes (p. 317).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with Christianity’s influence on society. The majority of Christian theology champions gender equity and empowerment. Everywhere the gospel penetrates, gender equity rises.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Biblical theology teaches that men and women are both created in the image of God, Jesus died for the sins of both, and the Holy Spirit gives the gifts of God to both. There is a level playing field at the foot of the cross.

**Contextualization:**  In the churches and Bible schools I am associated with around the world, gender equity and empowerment are emphasized. Women play a prominent role, and their gifts and talents are highlighted. Christianity at the same time it raises gender equity and empowerment and understands that God created man and woman for different roles in the family. In the places this is acknowledged there is growth and health in the church and society.

**Source Four:** Iqbal, A., Hassan, S., Mahmood, H., & Tanveer, M. (2022) Gender equality, education, economic growth and religious tensions nexus in developing countries: A spatial analysis approach. *Heliyon*. 8(11). https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e11394

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Economic growth is found helpful in increasing gender equality in the host and neighboring countries. Hence, economic progress could improve the social conditions of the countries by improving gender equality. The world's wealthiest countries have the highest gender equality. Hence, economic growth and development might increase the demand for better environmental and social conditions in society. Consequently, economic growth helps to change women's social and economic outlook in society and improve gender equality (p. 7).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with historical methodologies. Many historical methodologies like economic growth bring a false promise of gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity in education. Economic growth is good and can play a small role in gender equity and empowerment. However, economic growth unless connected to a changed heart will not solve the issue.

**Contextualization:** In the countries where I travel, economic growth is believed to bring gender equity and empowerment. However, many countries experiencing economic growth have less gender equity. Sometimes, economic growth only fattens the pockets of the men in power and increases the gap between the genders. Gender equity and empowerment are not about the economy but about the heart.

**Source Five:** Akinwale, O. E., Akinwale, O. E., & Kuye, O. L. (2024). Gender, religion and politics: A qualitative analysis on the role of women to a sustainable quality of work-life. *IIMT Journal of Management*. ***1***(2). https://doi.org/10.1108/IIMTJM-12-2023-0076

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** There are three germane themes emanating from the data illustrated from participants’ views on gender insensitivity of men-dominated domains in the community and locality, how women make informed decisions to survive their peculiar limitations or glass ceiling, and their attitudes towards promoting a supportive environment for other women. These major themes were (1) the Deep-rooted trend of institutionalised male dominance in politics and religious leadership, (2) Optimism for a turnaround narrative on gender equality in politics and religious leadership, and (3) Women influencing the ethical and moral sense for change (p. 202).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with religion and society integration. The data shows that without a fundamental change of the heart the mind is not changed about gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Before gender equity and empowerment can happen, society can no longer accept male dominance in society. Optimism must turn to action for gender equity and empowerment to happen.

**Contextualization:** Excessive male dominance is very prevalent in the majority of Africa. In many of these countries, women are seen as second-class citizens or even as property. There is a naivety among many people in society that if they can change the elected leaders, they can change the situation. I have seen political regime after political regime change without ever affecting the gender equity and empowerment issue.

**Source Six:** Kostenberger, A. J. (2014). *God’s design for man and woman: A biblical-theological survey*. Crossway.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Some, like Christopher Rollston, are troubled by the treatment of women in the Old Testament. They do not believe in the reality of sin and consider the biblical accounts of creation and the fall to be a myth, laying the blame squarely at the feet of the institution of patriarchy and alleging male bias on the part of biblical writers (p. 71).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with Christianity’s influence on society. There are many secular thinkers who dismiss the power of the gospel to bring change to gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. When the Bible is taken out of the equations there is a remote chance for gender equity and empowerment. Sin is one of main causes for a lack of gender equity and empowerment.

**Contextualization:**  This issue has come up many times in my discussions with cultural anthropologists in Africa. Many of them blame the spread of the gospel for the ills plaguing society because they see the Bible as a book of myths. They do not take into account the seriousness of sin in society. There is a common belief with many of them I have talked with that it is better to leave people in their primitive condition rather than bringing the hope of the gospel to them.

**Source Seven:** Klein, S. S., Richardson B. L., Grayson, D. A., Fox, L. H., Kramarae, C., Pollard, D. S., & Dwyer, C. A. (2010). *Handbook for achieving gender equity through education* (2nd ed.) Routledge.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Hyde and Lindberg find that girls and boys are quite similar and should not be constrained in their curricula by gender. They find that even in areas where there have been persistent gender differences such as spatial abilities, these gender differences are related to experience and can be reduced by instruction (p. 15).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with historical methodologies. This article does not take into consideration that God created man and woman and gave them different functions within the family.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding to gender equity and empowerment in education. Instruction is an important step to gender equity and empowerment but it must start with a change of heart.

**Contextualization:** I have witnessed extensive teaching on gender equity and empowerment in numerous educational institutions and the military, yet there has been little change. Often, those receiving the training resent it because it contradicts their nature and upbringing. I grew up with a deep-seated racism, and despite the training I received in school and the military, my attitude did not change until I encountered Jesus. The transformation began in my heart and manifested externally through my love for all races.

**Source Eight:** Schmidt, A. J. (2004). *How Christianity changed the world: Formerly titled under the influence*. Zondervan.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** One scholar of ancient Rome has aptly said the conversion of the Roman world to Christianity brought a great change in women’s status. Another has expressed it even more succinctly saying the birth of Jesus was the turning point in the history of women.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with Christianity’s influence on society. This Roman scholar understood the influence Christianity had in gender equity and empowerment in ancient Rome.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. It is interesting that these ancient scholars recognized the influence of Christianity on gender equity and empowerment. The birth of Jesus was truly the turning point in human history.

**Contextualization:** This phenomenon has been witnessed in many African villages. As we go into a village, share the gospel, and make disciples, the whole social dynamic changes in the village. Crop production increases, demonic activity, violence, and crime are reduced, girls are educated and women are empowered in the home and in business. The gospel changes culture.

**Source Nine:** Ward, D. Interdisciplinary faith–learning integration for social change. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. 26(1/2).

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Transcendental modes of thinking are so basic that practitioners in any discipline often slip into making historical, philosophical, or theological assertions beyond their discipline even though not formally trained as historians, philosophers, or theologians. This can be problematic when it occurs unconsciously because unacknowledged transcendental interpretations should be acknowledged in how they influence the interpretation of disciplinary data.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with historical methodologies. In many historical methods, personal bias comes through even without the conscious recognition by the individual.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Self-discovery does not bring about gender equity and empowerment. Transcendentalism focuses more on the individual than on society. The thought is an individual can transcend to a higher plane. This does not bring change to society.

**Contextualization:**  This has been most prevalent in my travels across India. Transcendentalism is one of the major tenets of the Hindu faith. In a society where many spiritual leaders are seen as having transcended to a higher plane gender inequity is rampant. Only when the people embrace the gospel do these things begin to change.

**Source Ten:** Wolff, G. (2024). Promoting gender equality through localized development strategies: Leveraging identification. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-024-00156-7

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The empowerment of women in developing nations stands as a concern in the pursuit of gender equality and the preservation of women’s rights. Women frequently contend with an unequal distribution of economic resources in comparison to men, a discrepancy that impedes their full participation in their country’s economic and social landscape (p. 2).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reforms. The empowerment of women in developing nations is a concern especially in the distribution of economic resources.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. If women are not empowered there is no gender equity. There must be a belief in gender equity and an action to empower women for there to be a changed society.

**Contextualization:**  In the African villages were we have planted churches we are seeing gender equity and empowerment, especially in education. As people are taught Biblical principles about gender and are shown a pathway to gender empowerment their lives become better. This effects every area of society and is seen in educations system. As the kingdom of God is established in an area the whole area sees improvement because people begin to live by Biblical principles. The gospel works!

**Source Eleven:** Lwamba, E., Shisler, S., Ridlehoover, W., & Tshabalala, N. (2022). Strengthening women’s empowerment and gender equality in fragile contexts towards peaceful and inclusive societies: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Campbell Systematic Reviews.* 18(1). https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1214.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Despite gains made over the last decades towards equity, inclusion and empowerment, significant gaps remain for women accessing resources, earning livelihoods, achieving legislative and political representation, and participating in important decision‐making processes. A growing body of literature indicates that these challenges are exacerbated in contexts of conflict and fragility (p. 4).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reforms. After all the efforts made in the past few decades, there is still a vast divide in gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Gender equity and empowerment can happen in the midst of conflict as people put their trust in Jesus.

**Contextualization:**  There are several countries I visit that in the midst of conflict and sometime out right war. Despite these difficulties we are seeing villages being transformed as people turn to the gospel. In some cases we have seen combatants come to the church for prayer and counsel. People are only able to walk in peace by the power of the gospel. This can be seen in some of the church schools where there is gender equity during conflict as they see education as a way to stability.

**Source Twelve:** Akanbi, S. O., Beyers, J. (2017). The church as a catalyst for transformation in the society. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies.* 73(4). https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4635

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** It is pertinent to understand the role that religion plays in social change and the activities of certain revolutionary movements. According to Oludele Ajani, religion remains one of the oldest, yet the most dynamic of social institutions. He argues that the assumption that religion in modern societies would gradually diminish in importance or become less capable of influencing public life is now becoming a matter of dispute and that Christian doctrine and practices could be earnest and integrated into the developmental process with a bid to enhancing the livelihood of Nigerians (p. 4).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with religion and society integration models. Religion is pivotal in bringing about social change.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. Religion has played a role in society since the creation of man. The issue of gender equity and empowerment rises and falls on Christianity's influence on society.

**Contextualization:**  There are many churches across Africa, not just in Nigeria, that are making a strong impact on the society around them. Many of the schools, hospitals, and orphanages in Africa were started and maintained by churches and missionary organizations. There are governmental officials who were trained in these schools being taught the Word of God. They bring their Biblical education with them into their job.

**Source Thirteen:** Etim-James, G. (2024). The influence of culture and religion on gender inequality and its implications on women empowerment. *Wukari International Studies Journal.* 8(5) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384868032

**Comment 13:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In a situation where gender hierarchy and fixed roles control the social landscape, we cannot deny the role of religion in creating and maintaining social, economic and gender inequality in the society. Religion dictates the status of women and has continually been a foundation upon which gender inequality rests on. It is assumed that gender roles are constructed through culture, religion and upbringing. Modern data provided evidence that religion affect gender roles in the home. Women in religion have been conditioned to see themselves as subordinates to men because it is the divine will of the All-knowing God. This conditioning of the mind puts women at a disadvantaged both domestically, economically and professionally (p. 148).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with Christianity’s influence on society. Religion has either a positive or negative effect on gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. There is a misguided concept that Christianity holds women back and stereotypes them as servants in the home. Many believe that Christian teaching disadvantages women.

**Contextualization:**  In my travels I have run up against this argument. However, in my observation of many different countries and cultures that those who embrace the gospel have a higher gender equity and are more inclined to empower women. On many occasions this has started in the education system by allowing girls to go to school.

**Source Fourteen:** Bonet, I. (2018). *What works: Gender equality by design.* First Harvard University Press

**Comment 14:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Dozens of studies have now demonstrated that women face a trade-off between competence and likability. Women in stereotypically male domains encounter backlash at every juncture: when getting hired, compensated, and promoted. Psychologists believe that these negative reactions are due to a clash between our stereotypical perceptions of what women are or should be like and the qualities we think are necessary to perform a typically male job (p. 22).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reform. Preconceived ideas negatively influence our thinking about gender equity and empowerment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is variant to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. These studies try to show the negative effect that Christianity has on gender equity and empowerment in society. There is a class between the typical societal stereotype of a Christian woman and the reality of them being created in God’s image.

**Contextualization:**  I have to admit that I was raised to think like this. My dad worked on the farm and my mom stayed at home taking care of housework. The church I grew up in taught these same ideas. It was not until I had an encounter with Jesus that my attitude toward women changed. Today, in my ministry, one of our tenets of faith is “gender equity and empowerment”. We believe in an equal playing field in ministry, especially in church planting.

**Source Fifteen:** Couva, M., Talias, M. A., Christou, M., & Soteriades, E. S. (2024). Women’s empowerment and health: A narrative review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.* 21(12). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21121614.

**Comment 15:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Empowerment is grammatically a noun that is used to describe both a process and its outcome, a noun that derives from the word ‘power’ but does not necessarily mean the handing over of power. When attempting to define empowerment, one comes across a diversity of definitions listed in dictionaries and associated publications, thus verifying the complexity and broad spectrum of the dimensions and levels that contribute to this extensively discussed construct. Based on the etymological definition, it can be either considered the granting of power or authority to a person or the process where a person is enabled to make their own decisions, but still, there is no universally acceptable definition. The fact that there is no clear, single definition of empowerment is what actually adds to its value, given that there is space for adjustment in the context of women’s empowerment. In the same context though, the vagueness of the idea of empowerment has significantly affected the effectiveness of women’s empowerment programs with particular application in developing countries (p. 2-3).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with social reform. Before there can be social reform in the area of gender equity and empowerment, there must first be a solid understanding of what empowerment means.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to the understanding of gender equity and empowerment in education. A solid understanding of what empowerment means is the first step to the achievement of gender equity and empowerment. Definitions matter when trying to understand a subject.

**Contextualization:** When I first went to the mission field, I believed empowerment involved getting someone to assist me and assigning them tasks while maintaining constant supervision and oversight. I came to understand that empowerment is about recognizing a person's potential and enabling them to fulfill their God-given calling. It’s not about them aiding me with my ministry, but rather me supporting them in their ministry.

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