PHI 815-22

History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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Date March 9, 2025

Professor

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Assignment #3 – Essay

1. Write a 5-page essay that analyzes the following items:

a. Introduction of the Present Issue: Begin with a contemporary social issue that

has a (probably unappreciated) history of positive Judeo-Christian response to it.

b. Body Sections:

i. Biblical Worldview Perspective: Locate the issue in the progress of

Biblical revelation and explain the foundations of a Judeo-Christian

perspective. What is a biblical/theological position on this issue based on

sound biblical interpretation.

ii. History of the Issue: Trace the development of the selected issue

alongside the history of Christianity's social impact on it. Summarize the

historical trend at different points in history with an eye to identifying

significant causes of the social problem, identifiable processes at work,

and enduring patterns that emerged. How did the problem/issue originate

and develop? What were the causes of the social problem? What

identifiable sociological or theological processes were at work? What

enduring patterns emerged that recur?

iii. Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration: Present a specific

example (e.g. key leader(s) or movement(s) of socially and intellectually

active Christians) of religion and society integration. If known, discuss

how God raised up the leader or movement.

iv. Applicable Principles: Distill the timeless principles of truth or leadership

derived from the historical examples above. (Develop these based on the

Body Sections #1-#3). Pose possible contemporary applications for the

integration of religion and society in your field of influence.

c. Conclusion: End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis. Discuss what

impact this research had on your sense of calling to change your world.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Sheri, excellent work on your essay for PHI 815-22!**

**Introduction:**

**Well stated thesis right at the end of the introduction. Good job. I can see how you based your topic and thesis on aspects of Christian history of social impact related to poverty and economic inequality. You used the paper to talk about your professional goals and interests in relation to poverty alleviation.**

**Biblical Worldview Perspective**

**You showed how biblical revelation consistently stresses the duty of both individuals and communities to support the poor. I liked the way you moved from Old testament illustrations to New Testament illustrations and bridged to timeless theological principles that are relevant for today: "Theological analysis shows poverty represents both a material situation and a spiritual concern linked to justice principles and communal duties of stewardship. The biblical approach to poverty involves individual acts of generosity along with systemic justice efforts and dependence on God's provision."**

**History of the Issue: Christianity’s Social Impact on Poverty**

**You showed that you were gaining the value of historical perspective to see how, as you wrote, "By studying key historical movements, we observe how Christian principles guided the development of economic justice initiatives." You did a really nice brief survey from Early Church and Medieval Period to Christian Influence on Modern Social Movements and finally to Christianity and Contemporary Economic Justice. This is great historical reasoning. You truly absorbed one of the best outcomes of this unique course: historical reasoning. That is basically what learning from biblical history is supposed to do: "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4, NASB).**

**Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration**

**Your three exemplars, 1) Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement, 2) Martin Luther King Jr., as well as Economic Justice Evangelical Responses: Ron Sider and Jim Wallis were all ecumenically relevant.**

**Applicable Principles and Contemporary Applications**

**You wrapped the essay up nicely with a good list of usable principles and brought it home with Contemporary Applications. This was not just a content course, you clearly strengthened skill in Christian historical perspective!**

**You used a suitable number of scholarly sources to support your argument and did a great job of putting everything together into a logical argument. Your paper meets the required page length and adequately conforms to APA style.**

**Keep up the supeirior work, Sheri! -- Dr. David Ward**

**Grade: A**

**Title: An historical analysis demonstrates how Judeo-Christian teachings have offered responses to poverty and economic inequality which remain underappreciated.**Exploration of Biblical Perspectives Combining Historical Impact with Current Applications  
**Introduction**  
Contemporary society faces persistent social problems represented by poverty and economic inequality which impact millions around the globe. A historical analysis shows a deep but regularly overlooked Judeo-Christian answer to poverty relief and social justice while numerous people perceive these issues as economic or political challenges. Christian drives that aim to alleviate economic disparities have been guided by biblical principles throughout history. The essay examines how biblical teachings on poverty have developed through Christian history and identifies major leaders and movements while highlighting timeless principles for contemporary application. The study proves how faith-based methods remain vital for solving today's social problems.  
**Biblical Worldview Perspective**  
The Bible serves as a complete basis for interpreting poverty and economic justice. The teachings of Jesus together with the Old Testament laws demonstrate how biblical revelation consistently stresses the duty of both individuals and communities to support the poor.  
**Old Testament Foundations**  
The Mosaic Law instituted major economic safeguards for drained individuals. Leviticus 19: According to Leviticus 19:9-10 landowners were instructed to not harvest their field margins to support the needy which showcased the principle of dignified wealth redistribution. The Year of Jubilee described in Leviticus 25 required debt cancellation and the return of land to prevent poverty from extending across generations. The prophets Isaiah and Amos often spoke against economic exploitation and demanded justice as shown in Isaiah 1:17 and Amos 5:24.  
**New Testament Teachings**  
Jesus affirmed these principles through his ministry which focused on caring for marginalized people. In Luke 4: According to Luke 4:18-19 He announced his divine mission to deliver good news to the poor while freeing the oppressed. The early Christian community, as seen in Acts 2: During the early Christian era the community followed a practice of extreme economic sharing which resulted in none of their members remaining in need.  
**Theological Interpretation**  
Theological analysis shows poverty represents both a material situation and a spiritual concern linked to justice principles and communal duties of stewardship. The biblical approach to poverty involves individual acts of generosity along with systemic justice efforts and dependence on God's provision.  
**History of the Issue: Christianity’s Social Impact on Poverty**  
Throughout history the Christian Church has maintained an essential presence in efforts to alleviate poverty. By studying key historical movements, we observe how Christian principles guided the development of economic justice initiatives.  
**Early Church and Medieval Period**  
From its beginning, the early church took significant responsibility for supporting the impoverished members of society. The Benedictines and similar monastic groups placed great importance on providing hospitality and charitable support. Christian institutions founded hospitals as well as orphanages and poorhouses during the Middle Ages which continue to operate today. Pope Leo XIII’s Rerum Novarum (1891) as part of the Catholic Church’s social teaching outlined the essential need for fair wages and labor rights. **Christian Influence on Modern Social Movements**  
Christian-based economic reforms developed throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. William Wilberforce and John Wesley were evangelical leaders who waged a battle against slavery and economic injustice through their efforts to unite spiritual renewal with social change. The Social Gospel movement arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries under Walter Rauschenbusch's guidance to position the church at the forefront of the fight against systemic poverty.  
**Christianity and Contemporary Economic Justice**  
Contemporary religious groups are actively working to end poverty worldwide. Organizations such as World Vision and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development merge biblical teachings with economic development practices. Through their leadership of microfinance programs and community revitalization projects evangelical churches illustrate how Christian social engagement remains impactful.  
**Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration**  
Important Christian leaders and movements demonstrate how faith principles are applied to achieve economic justice. **Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement**  
Dorothy Day established the Catholic Worker Movement and promoted principles of hospitality and economic justice through direct service to those in poverty. Drawing from Jesus’ messages about love and unity she became a proponent of labor rights and sustainable living.  
**Martin Luther King Jr. and Economic Justice**  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gained fame for leading civil rights efforts while he also tackled economic inequality. The Poor People’s Campaign launched by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 worked to bring together people of diverse racial backgrounds to demand fair wages along with equitable housing and employment rights. King’s approach reflected the biblical call for justice, as seen in Amos 5:24 "Let justice roll down like waters."  
**Evangelical Responses: Ron Sider and Jim Wallis**  
The book Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger by Ron Sider (1977) urged believers to reflect on their prosperity while considering world poverty. The founder of Sojourners Jim Wallis tirelessly supports political measures that reflect biblical justice while focusing on fair compensation and systemic changes.  
**Applicable Principles and Contemporary Applications**  
These historical examples reveal multiple foundational principles.  
1. The principles of biblical justice demand both systematic change and individual acts of kindness according to Micah 6:8.  
2. The Year of Jubilee serves as a biblical template that shows how sustainable economic empowerment must replace temporary relief measures.  
3. Throughout Christian history faith communities have proven their capacity to reduce poverty by engaging in grassroots efforts.  
**Contemporary Applications**  
These principles find multiple applications within modern society. Churches can fund educational initiatives on personal finance management while pushing for equitable pay systems and investing in community enterprises. Faith-based organizations should collaborate with government entities to fight systemic poverty. Business leaders and educators together with public policy experts can adopt biblical justice principles to implement ethical economic strategies at an individual level.  
**Conclusion**  
This research reveals how biblical principles from the Judeo-Christian tradition have historically addressed poverty and economic inequality and continue to provide solutions in modern times. Christianity has maintained a strong focus on justice and compassion alongside stewardship which has galvanized social movements that reshaped economic environments. My awareness of historical religious contributions to social justice strengthens my dedication to combine faith and social impact within my professional domain. The application of these principles across academic environments, nonprofit organizations, and business management results in building a society that is fairer and more equitable. As the Bible teaches, faith without works is dead (James 2: James 2:26 teaches us that faith without works is dead and we achieve our purpose of changing the world through our actions.

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