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

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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.

1. Refer to the "Student Guide to Developmental Readings" in the General Helps folder for updated information on sample comments, the grading rubric, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** da Silva, J. B., Grint, K., Pereira, S., Thoene, U., & Wiedner, R. (2023). Habitual leadership ethics: Timelessness and virtuous leadership in the Jesuit Order. *Journal of Business Ethics, 188, 779–793*.<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05501-1>

**Comment 1**:

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "In our study, we found that the Jesuit model of habitual leadership reveals a form of ethical practice that is both cyclical and enduring. This model is characterized by repeated, time‐honored processes that embed virtue in everyday decision-making. The approach emphasizes that ethical behavior is less about the individual leader and more about the sustained practices that cultivate moral order over generations. Our findings suggest that such habitual leadership can serve as a blueprint for social reform, fostering environments where ethical principles guide transformative change." (p.780)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Social Reforms.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**This quote is variant to my understanding because it challenges the conventional ideology that reform depends solely on individual charisma. Instead, it expresses that lasting social reform is achieved through persistent, ethical routines that build a foundation of moral order over time. This perspective calls for models of reform that are rooted in collective, habitual practices rather than isolated heroic acts.

**Contextualization:**Reflecting on my own journey, I recall a period when a senior leader at my one of my former jobs (a health advocacy organization) implemented a required daily routine of journaling reflections that transformed our daily interactions. I experienced firsthand how this 90-day journaling intensive in reflection eventually manifested into better daily operations in our management team. It not only improved our team’s work but also inspired me to adopt similar habits in my personal leadership style. This quote resonates deeply with me, confirming my belief that social reform is an extrinsic process that begins intrinsically. It also reminds me that by practicing ethical routines in my daily life, I can better contribute to social change and reform as a shared, collective endeavor.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "Our findings demonstrate that the cyclical nature of habitual leadership ensures that ethical principles are continuously reinforced over time. The timeless quality of these repeated practices means that virtue is not dependent on a single leader, but is embedded in the organizational culture. This model of leadership emphasizes process over individual heroism, allowing Christian virtues to influence society on a broad scale. It stands as evidence that longstanding traditions can shape contemporary social norms in powerful ways." (p. 781)

**Essential Element:**This comment is associated with the essential element Christianity’s Influence on Society.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: This quote is also variant to my understanding because it too shifts the focus from individual acts of leadership to the enduring power of collective, ritualistic practices. It shows that Christian principles, when institutionalized, have the capacity to shape social norms over multiple generations. The text challenges the notion that exceptional leadership is a one-time event and instead argues that continuous, shared practices create lasting societal impact over time. This deepens the conversation by highlighting the long-term influence of a consistent moral framework.

**Contextualization:** As a Church leader, I have often observed that the most significant changes in my church community were not the result of a single charismatic leader, like my Bishop is, but of persistent, collective efforts made by our entire presbytery, of which I am a member. My personal faith career trajectory shows that I too will one day lead a group of presbyters and this inspires me to prepare for my eventual ascension in the same way. This is the same idea that Jethro provided to Moses when the burden of leading the freed Israelites from Egypt became too great for one man; which caused him to appoint seventy men that would share the burden with him. If a leader can lead his senior team well, this will certainly translate into the greater and broader community that we desire to impact.

**Source Two:** Sekhaulelo, M. A. (2022). Restoring the ethics of the common good in the South African pluralistic society. *Verbum et Ecclesia, 43(1), a2484*.<https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v43i1.2484>

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "The research indicates that restoring the ethics of the common good requires both formal and informal societal constraints. Leaders who adhere to the South African National Constitution’s values, combined with personal codes of honor, help bridge the gap between idealistic principles and everyday practices. This demonstrates that ethical leadership, when practiced with transparency and accountability, can revitalize social institutions. The findings underscore that a stable society is built upon shared values that are continually reinforced through consistent, ethical behavior." (p. 62)

 **Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Social Reforms.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding that connecting institutional constraints with individual moral codes creates a balanced model of social reform. It emphasizes that both external frameworks and personal virtues are essential to achieving a common good. The quote also critiques overly simplistic models of reform by showing the complex relationship between structured regulations and ethical leadership. This view acknowledges reform as a multifaceted and integrated process rather than one-dimensional effort.

**Contextualization:** Anytime there was an absence of transparency in my work spaces, it led to demoralization and disunity. Leaders that I have worked under who consistently demonstrated openness inspired me to seek similar balance in my actions. This balance strengthened my commitment to uphold structured policies and personal values in both public and private spheres. Social reform is stronger when there is personal reform.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "…leadership rooted in Christian values significantly enhances societal well-being. When leaders embody fairness, justice, and compassion, their influence extends beyond their immediate circles and helps shape public institutions. The research indicates that ethical leadership fosters improved governance and community cohesion. This influence is observable in the way social reforms are successfully implemented and sustained over time." (p. 64)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Christianity’s Influence on Society.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding in that it directly links Christian ethics to measurable improvements in societal structures. It shows that leaders who practice fairness and compassion have a transformative effect on social institutions; creating a ripple effect, benefiting not just singular organizations but entire communities. This reinforces the idea that the influence of Christian values reaches both locally, regionally, and eventually globally.

 **Contextualization:** My mentor’s acts of compassion have reshaped my understanding of leadership. He has always made sure that my actions contribute to building a community marked by fairness and unity. It serves as a personal reminder that my faith is not only a source of inner strength but also a powerful tool for influencing groups in society. Singular faith may possibly help singular organizations, yet a faith that becomes shared helps multiple groups. I am continuing to commit to these values in every career endeavor.

**Source 3:**Haynes, J. (2023). Christian nationalism and politics in Ghana. *Religions, 14, 1202*.<https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091202>

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Christian nationalism in Ghana is not merely a political tool but a transformative ideology aimed at remaking public policy according to biblical principles. Our analysis reveals that prominent leaders actively use their platforms to advocate for social reforms that reflect Christian morals and values. The movement is characterized by its dual focus on elevating national identity and challenging societal injustices. This approach underscores the power of religious conviction to drive comprehensive reform and reshape the very fabric of society.” (p. 1202)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Religion and Society Integration Models.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is variant to my understanding in that it challenges traditional political paradigms, arguing that Christian conviction can reshape public policy. In the United States we are also currently experiencing a version of Christian nationalism that is often opposed by prominent leaders, as opposed to Ghana, where prominent leaders believe true reform involves both the elevation of national identity and the religious ideals. This integration may start with politics but can extend its influence over into social norms. It compels the recognition between faith and governance as a driving force for societal transformation.

**Contextualization**: I have seen how passionate, value-driven leadership can transform local communities and influence policy. This quote mirrors my own aspirations to blend my personal faith with a commitment to influencing others. I am learning through the research models of Omega’s DSL program of how to more effectively integrate my religious convictions in my advocacy work. The call to influence society through highly moral leadership is a difficult one to navigate because of the opposing and conflating worldviews of society, yet reading of the Ghanaian boldness is empowering.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** “The fusion of religious and political identities in Ghana is evident in the rhetoric that calls for a remaking of the nation according to Christian ideals. Leaders within this movement articulate a vision where church and state converge to create policies reflective of a shared moral order. This synthesis of faith and politics serves as a model for integrating diverse societal forces into a cohesive whole. It shows the potential for religious identity to be a unifying framework that bridges cultural and ideological divides." (p. 1203)

 **Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Religion and Society Integration Models.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is variant to my understanding of the concept of integration by demonstrating how blending religious and political identities achieves a shared ethical vision rather than imposing uniformity. It challenges the conventional ideology of separation between church and state. Faith can be a unifying force in a pluralistic society. however, it is clear that Ghana is not interested in a syncretistic approach of multiple faith ideas, but rather a Christian only immersion into Ghana’s political ideals.

**Contextualization:** I have often struggled with reconciling diverse viewpoints in my own community. I teach in healthcare and I remember covering the topic of euthanasia in one of my courses. My classroom was filled with students of various walks of life and belief systems. Even through that I attempted to stealthily introduce Christian thought on euthanasia, but I believe that I failed in bridging these ideological gaps. This quote is inspiring me to revisit the idea of my faith as a tool for unification, guiding me to create environments where differing perspectives can be harmonized. It motivates me to pursue leadership and academics that encourages the integration of various cultural and ideological voices, thereby creating a more cohesive community rooted in shared values.

 **Source Four:** Rothausen, T. J. (2023). Diverse, ethical, collaborative leadership through revitalized cultural archetype: The Mary Alternative. *Journal of Business Ethics, 187, 627–644*.<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05259-y>

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "The Mary Alternative proposes an archetype of leadership that is distinctly collaborative and ethically inclusive. It challenges the dominant solo-hero narrative by emphasizing support, creativity, and collective decision-making. This alternative model integrates feminine values and a justice-based vision to redefine leadership in a modern, pluralistic society. The study argues that such an archetype offers a robust framework for integrating diverse religious and cultural perspectives into everyday practice." (p. 635)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Religion and Society Integration Models.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is variant to my conventional understanding in that it redefines leadership from an individualistic to a collective, inclusive paradigm. The Mary alternative employs a collaborative and shared decision-making as the superior model for genuine social impact. By critiquing the solo-hero model, alternative leadership archetypes such as a feminine leadership model can create diverse modes of action, leading to more holistic social outcomes.

**Contextualization:** In my leadership experience, I have always believed that traditional models suppress the unique contributions of every team member. In the Christian context, women leadership is polarizing. Gratefully, my church sides with the acceptance of female clergy. This quote validates my desire to continue to cultivate a leadership style that values every voice and promotes collaborative growth. Our societies are nurtured and empowered by the presence of women. It inspires me to lead in a way that embraces both masculine and feminine leadership values. The Apostle Paul best describes this in Galatians Chapter 3 where he says “…there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** "An analysis of the Mary Alternative reveals that embracing a collaborative and justice-oriented leadership archetype can significantly influence societal structures. This model challenges traditional power dynamics by promoting shared authority and a commitment to the common good. The study underscores that when leadership is re-envisioned in this inclusive manner, it fosters communities that are more equitable and responsive to the needs of all. Such an approach exemplifies how Christian values can have a profound and positive impact on society." (p. 638)

**Essential Element:**This comment is associated with the essential element Social Reform.

**Additive/Variant Analysis***:* This quote is additive to my understanding in that it connects a redefined and inclusive leadership model with broader societal transformation. It argues that the application of Christian values through collaborative leadership not only challenges outdated power structures but also creates fairer, more responsive communities; prompting a re-evaluation of how leadership practices directly translate into social impact, including the sharing of authority.

**Contextualization:** In my experience, collaborative approaches to leadership have led to unexpected, positive changes in community responsiveness. I have served under the leadership and guidance of both men and women, and often saw how the community projects were more unifiable and collaborative under feminine values of leadership, while masculine leadership had a tendency to be more unilaterally and authoritative. I support the blend of collaborative and authoritative, through teams, delegation and various perspectives.

**Source 5**: Baloyi, E. (2024). Contemporary theological approaches in Zimbabwe: Navigating the challenges of the 21st century. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies, 80(1), a10205*.<https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.10205>

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In examining modern theological approaches in Zimbabwe, our research adopts a qualitative methodology that combines historical analysis with contextual interpretation. This method enables a nuanced understanding of how indigenous religious practices are adapted to contemporary social challenges. This study highlights the importance of integrating historical narratives with current realities to form a comprehensive picture of change. Such an approach not only enriches our grasp of the past but also offers practical insights for future reforms. (p. 5)

 **Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Historical Methodologies.

**Additive/Variant Analysis*:*** This quote is additive to my understanding because it describes a methodological framework that effectively bridges historical context and modern social analysis. It highlights understanding that the evolution of religious influence requires blending historical narrative with contextual interpretation, a strategy that enriches scholarly inquiry. Extracting evidence from specific indigenous sources allows researchers to contemporize methods that may not need to be eradicated but rather updated.

**Contextualization:** As an educator, I value the power of how historical insight informs the present-day professional preparation of college students. I remember long discussions with my own former professors that revealed the intricate links between foundational practices and present innovations. I am now paying it forward by engaging in the same type of conversations with my students. Detailed, context-driven approaches are necessary in learning how to present new research, ensuring that my students capture the full spectrum of what can inform their development as researchers and practitioners.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Modern theological approaches in Zimbabwe illustrate how local churches are negotiating the complexities of contemporary society by blending traditional beliefs with innovative social practices. The research shows that this dynamic integration creates models that are both contextually relevant and forward-looking. The study demonstrates that such approaches allow religion to be a living, adaptive force in society. Consequently, the church is positioned as an active participant in shaping social norms and collective well-being. (p. 5)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Religion and Society Integration Models.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding in that it redefines integration as a dynamic process where tradition and innovation should interact fluidly. It challenges traditional static models by showing that successful integration involves continuous adaptation and real-time responsiveness to social complexities. Religious communities can remain relevant by intentionally influencing other groups with both their historical foundations and newly developed contextual interpretations. This relevance then impacts society not through shallow social aggression and dominance but rather through a tactical and well-informed social prominence.

**Contextualization:** I have learned that my own faith deepens when I engage with both tradition and innovation. I learned over time to always be open to hearing new ideas while remaining rooted in my core beliefs. It reminds me of times when adapting traditional practices to modern challenges led to breakthrough moments in Church when growing up. I watched as the old guard transitioned to the new guard and the balance of past wisdom and future vision was a consistent area of contention. Yet the contention prompted necessary conversations that allowed both sides to learn how to integrate practices with practical and tactful programs, sermons, worship styles, and modernization of church-wide Bible study. All of it became useful for my current development as a faith and community leader.

**Source 6:** Schmidt,A. J. (2004). How Christianity Changed the World. Zondervan.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: "The spiritual and moral convictions of the early Christians soon produced consequences throughout the empire. The Romans were a syncretistic people who saw value in all religious beliefs; they wanted to be inclusive, as multiculturalists would say today. They were proud of the pantheon in Rome that displayed and honored all gods. They would have gladly welcomed the addition of Jesus Christ to the pantheon if the Christians would only have agreed to give at least some obeisance to the Roman gods. To do this, however, would have been idolatrous, unthinkable to the early Christians, who unequivocally held to God’s commandment: 'You shall have no other gods before me.'" (p. 25)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Christianity’s Influence on Society.
 **Additive/Variant Analysis:** This passage is additive to my understanding in that early Christian convictions created a definitive moral boundary that set them apart from a pluralistic society. It reminds us to consider the historical impact of uncompromising faith on social interactions. The clear, unwavering stance of the early Christians provides a powerful example of how strong convictions can disrupt and ultimately reshape cultural norms. Their steadfast adherence to their belief system created a strong moral standard that, though initially uncomfortable, was eventually successful in creating social change over time.

**Contextualization:** Reading this quote very easily reminded me of the current modern and overt push for a syncretism of Christian ideals with other faith and belief systems. While other faiths may be able to contribute to the totality of moral or ethical values, it is clear in the research that Christian values have always been prominent in the overall development of societal norms. The historical tension between early Christians and the Roman pantheon resonates with my own personal determination to remain true to my beliefs in very diverse cultural environments like the University where I teach and the organizations where I work. I am continually inspired to honor my faith boldly, knowing that such steadfastness is necessary for social transformation.

**Source 7:** Hunter, J. D. (2010). *To change the world: The irony, tragedy, and possibility of Christianity in the late modern world*. Oxford University Press.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Hunter contends that the dominant view of culture is that it is made up of the accumulation of values held by the majority, and that these values can be intentionally changed through individual transformation. However, he argues that real cultural change is not only slow and institutional but also emerges from elite influences and the impersonal forces of the market. This perspective forces us to rethink how historical processes shape society, challenging the simplistic notion of bottom-up change. His critique proves the necessity of a methodological approach that captures the complexity of cultural production over time.

(Chap. 2)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element Historical Methodologies.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is variant to my understanding in that it challenges the reader to rethink established assumptions about how culture evolves, suggesting that elite and systemic influences play an equally significant role. Furthermore, this challenge is deepened by how it insists the need for complex methodological approaches that capture the multi-layered nature of historical processes. This view will compel any scholar to adopt a more nuanced lens in their research.

**Contextualization**: In my personal academic journey as a student, I have frequently encountered oversimplified explanations for cultural change that failed to capture its true complexity. This quote resonates with me as it reaffirms my commitment to OGS’s rigorous and multifaceted approach in my studies. It reminds me of the countless hours needed to dissect historical texts and engage in reflective discussions with mentors. The OGS experience is significantly reshaping my understanding of cultural evolution. May this perspective continue to guide my developing efforts to merge historical insight with contemporary challenges, ultimately proving that my work will be both thorough and impactful.

Works Cited

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