James Hollywood III

Omega Graduate School

PHI 943-12 Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis

Professor Dr. David Ward

April 4, 2025

Assignment #1 Core Essential Elements

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:
2. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.
3. Professor will check for quality of content and word count requirements. Grade assigned will be credit or no credit.

The essential element that I chose for this assignment is Faith—reflection for Christian Scholarship. Faith reflection is about pausing to consider how my faith shapes my choices, especially during complicated and challenging times. At Omega Graduate School (OGS), one of the key goals is to prepare Christian scholar-practitioners who intentionally integrate our professed belief (orthodoxy) with how we live, act, and respond to positive social and personal change (orthopraxis).

Last year, after losing my job, I faced one of the most difficult times in my life. That was not my first hardship, but it was uniquely challenging because I couldn’t control the outcome or narrative. Both were unemployed for ten months after previously enduring an illness that kept me out for six months and tested me emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Initially, my reaction was filled with stress, anxiety, and deep concern about caring for my family and others who depended on me. Everything I believed about God’s provision and faithfulness felt shaken.

These problematic moments promoted reflection on my true beliefs and whether I genuinely trusted God as profoundly as I professed. Reflecting intentionally on my faith during these two periods became critical. I saw clearly that although I said that I trusted God, my operational belief and what my actions revealed showed that I relied primarily on myself. Recognizing this was an eye-opener, as I learned that I genuinely trusted God meant to surrender control of outcomes and be transparent about my struggles with my family, friends, church community, OGS colleagues, and community. Their support became an evident reminder of God’s presence and love.

This experience closely relates to our course objectives that close the gap between professed and operational beliefs. This reflection sets a good foundation for the upcoming assignment as I explore resources to deepen my understanding of my future growth individually and professionally. I will use the resources gathered to apply to my essay on Christian Practice and Archaeology to analyze further what would continue guiding and growing me toward a better leader with Christlike integrations and scholarship.