

Ath 613 week 7 Stone and Duke Chapter 1 – Reflection questions

1. Have you ever been singing a hymn and had a negative response to the imagery or language? Examine hymns that you love and see if you truly agree with the theological images. How do you respond when the images and language in a hymn conflict with your theology?

I am sure over the course of my life I may have come across hymns that I may not have totally agreed with, but none really come to mind at this time. However I recall a song that asked God not to move the mountains, but give me strength to climb it. Of course as you mature in the Word it tells you to speak to the mountain and God gives you the faith to move the mountain you have spoken to. So in that regard I probably would not be singing that song because I know better.

2. What is embedded in your theology? If you are having trouble articulating this, try to write a credo on a faith-related (moral/social topic. This exercise will allow everyone to examine their embedded theology.

What is embedded in my theology is what I learned as a young child and that being the 'love of God.' I learned that Christ died on the cross for my sins in order that I might inherit eternal life. I learned to love and worship God and to honor Him. I learned that if I did not keep His commandments always that He was always there to forgive me if I asked Him no matter how many times. I had to love others, even my enemies, as Jesus loved me. I knew that I needed to attend church in order to fellowship with other believers. I had to obey my parents and those that had rule over me, and I had to have faith in God and to ultimately, no matter what, trust and obey Him.

3. Can you recall events in your life that caused you to question some of you embedded theological and positions? What have you had to remove from your theology because of a change in your theological understanding?

I do remember questioning God when bad things happened to good people and I questioned Him when my Dad died. But I have since had a greater understanding of how God does things which He will never need my input or that of anyone else. One of the things I did remove my theology was wearing pants. I put that one to rest.

4. What do you think the authors mean when they say that deliberative theology helps keep "the church honest"?

I believe the author means that deliberative theology will keep the church honest in understanding that not everyone is aware that they have an embedded theology or may be able to articulate it. It would seem that one should be able to change as they grow in knowledge and understanding. You should allow every individual to come to what he

has concluded to be a theology he wants to live with that will bring them into his or her final destination. The church can offer the Word of God to individuals, but they must open up their hearts to receive it at the level that they are able.

5. Theological tensions that are felt within a community of faith can develop when the embedded theology of the church is being challenged. Can you name issues in today's world that may lead to such a challenge?

One of the major issues of the day is that of inclusion. Communities of faith, the majority of them feel that even though God loves everyone, He will never accept their sin. The world feels however that God is such a loving God, He will never send them to hell for any reason. The community of faith as many of times given ratings to sin and therefore lashed out at sinners who they feel have committed the greatest of sins and not shown certain people the love of God. All people including the household of faith need to understand because of what His Word says is that He loves the sinner man, in that He died for us all while we were yet sinners, but He hates the sin.

6. Can you recall moments or issues that caused theological tensions within you? How did you resolve the tension?

I cannot say that I had theological tensions, even as a Christian who fell into sin along the way, I always knew what the Word of God said and always believed the Word of God to be true, but I made decisions to be disobedient. I depended on time to allow me to repent, but I also knew that time was not promised to me and I was taking chances with where I was to spend eternity.

7. Do you agree with authors that most Christians are often unable to articulate their theological understandings and beliefs? If they are correct, why do you think this is?

I think many times the lay person may not even understand the word theological and may think it is some deep or mystical belief about something they are unfamiliar with. Others may just not want to be honest about giving up their embedded beliefs or they may just be confused not knowing the difference between what is truth, and what sounds logical or good or what is the popular belief.

8. Does your current community of faith value and practice theological reflection? In decision-making discussions, how much theological energy is devoted to the conversation.

There is a lot of energy devoted to theological reflections but there are often disagreements into what they feel is good for the 21<sup>st</sup> century believer, what is acceptable to God as it relates to His Word and what things they believe God really did not mean to have in place for this generation.

9. Is it threatening to think that possibly our embedded theologies are in need of repair/replacement? Why or why not? What other factors become threatened as well, our feelings of comfort or security, family values, social values, church doctrines, etc? Our embedded theologies are in need of repair and replacement if they do not line up with God's Word. Everything in our lives must line up with the Word whether we like it or not. If the Word makes us uncomfortable then we need to change to meet God's standards.