

Reflection Paper # 2

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MI 435 Contextualization of the Gospel

December 2, 2017

The orthodox didactic method of contextualization described in the textbook is the most appealing. (155) The orthodox method involves creating a common ground or an ability to open the lines of communication, the screen or the roadway, to convince the hearers of the biblical truth and teach them scripture to those that are convinced of the gospel message that has been presented. The expected result from this is that word of God will cause a spiritual transformation to those that have trusted Christ allowing this transformation to cause more discipleship. The orthodox didactic method approach embraces Christian doctrines. Teaching the scriptures that the Bible shares to the reader and hears as the author intended is a major component of this method. Teaching in this way avoids any errors and problems within biblical doctrines or misinterpretations. Orthodox didactic method foundation centers around Matt 28:16-20 which references going out into the world and making disciples. This method opens the possibility of an effective presentation of the Gospel message by establishing a common ground with the people that the Gospel message will be presented too. One point that is grasped is that people cannot receive if there is no communication. Communication is a way to lower the wall of the unbeliever so that they may be won over by the gospel truth that is presented. Teaching the biblical scriptures requires a degree of trust which can be created by establishing a common ground and or communication. Once this trust is gained by the listener from the presenter, it creates a teachable environment, causing the listener to easily accept the truth of the gospel.

This method seems as if it would be useful because it first establishes a common ground or bridges gaps through communication. Finding natural ground is a great way to learn more about the culture of the unbeliever(s). Once common or natural ground is obtained it allows for the learner to share more about themselves and where they are from regionally and at times their belief system. This knowledge can be helpful in the approach on how to deliver the gospel. The

orthodox didactic method does not approach unbelievers in a way that cannot be understood or may be viewed as unbiblical. If the unbelievers are to be expected to follow after Him, they must be developed. Using this method is a sure way to establish from the start a biblical foundation. Doctrines such as conscious punishment of the unbeliever, the loss of humanity, and blood atonement could be taught from the biblical source, not from another viewpoint that someone could think to be orthodox but heterodox. If the approach is not orthodox, it leaves room for opinions on the text and doctrines, which is shown in heterodox. This method delivers a biblical centered approach to delivering the message of truth. New Testament holds examples of this to some degree. The early church could in some ways be viewed as similar to this method. They heard the preaching of Peter and united to learn how to live as a follower of Christ being taught the scriptures and allowing the Holy Spirit to bring revelation. Jesus can be read about communicating the truth of the word and teaching the scripture in real time because He was the scripture in the flesh. When the truth is given where it can be learned; the revelation of God's word can be revealed, understood and applied to situations, actions, and the whole life. This method also seems appropriate and appeals to me due to the text alluding to the idea that the essential terms of the orthodox method. For example, the gospel doctors faith received their meaning from scripture also that the context in contextualization deals with the non-Christian belief system (155).

People are to be transformed by the renewing of their mind. The Gospel should be spread throughout the world making disciples and teaching the word showing that people can live by the word of God. This method lays a solid base for this to happen within various cultures. People are more willing to listen to what one has to say when there has been some commonality found and shared. This common ground could be something within a culture, experiences, places,

education, hobbies, and so on. When Jesus meets Peter, Andrew, and some of the other disciples He used something that they had in common to help communicate to them. One of these ideas concerned a daily activity that the majority of them carried out, the idea of catching fish. This allowed a door to open for the possibility of making them fishers of men. This small piece of common ground allowed the disciples to better understand the mission of going out and be literal fishermen.

When thinking about the culture of a person group or place, it speaks of the ideas, feelings, values, behavior, and religious beliefs; the things that make up their worldview. Therefore, culture is essential to understand when wanting to present a compelling gospel to an individual or group. Contextualization takes all of this into account so that the gospel is delivered in a relevant way. For this reason, having a contextualization method is vital to the success of the presenter. It is also worth stating that the method has to give the unchanging truth of the word of God to ever-changing worldviews and cultures.

Once the unbeliever is convinced of the truth of the gospel through the Holy Spirit and a compelling presentation of the gospel; they cannot just be abandoned. Teaching those listening scriptures is how the teacher can aid themselves and the learner in the renewing of the mind. God revealing truth toward the scriptures and revealing Himself more to the new believers helps them to walk and mature in their newly established faith in God. This method of contextualization can reduce the chances of apostasy giving them a Bible-based foundation. The gospel is the power unto salvation, and the word of God can transform the lives of people. This method to me helps to share an authentic, relevant practical message to those in need as well as a way to transform the non-Christian belief systems from the new convinced believer of the Gospel message in hopes of a lasting spiritual transformation.