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Abstract:

One's philosophy is a direct extension of their worldview and beliefs about humanity. The approach that one takes to education must adopt a position on the role of teachers, students, parents, et cetera; and this position should be consistent with a worldview. Phillips and Brown state that a worldview is "a view of the world and a view for the world" (Phillips and Brown, 1996).

Philosophy of education

Anthony J. D'Angelo once said, "You can learn a lot from people who view the world differently than you do" (D'Angelo, 2011). After months of reading, research, and personal introspection, one cannot help but agree with D'Angelo's statement. By considering the history of education in America and throughout the world, I have personally been forced to re-evaluate my philosophical positions. This process has been helpful to solidify some core fundamentals that shape my worldview and my philosophy on life and education. This paper will seek to summarize my philosophy of education, with specific attention related to my worldview, my basic philosophical beliefs, the roles of educators, and practical beliefs about educational issues.

Worldview

Phillips and Brown define worldview as a "view of the world, and for the world" (Phillips & Brown, 1996). Often illustrated as a tinted pair of shaded sunglasses, one's worldview truly does shape how one views the world, and determines the answers to critical questions: like who is man, who is God, and why am I here. One cannot discuss philosophy and its specifics, without first discussing worldview. With roots in religion, worldview must dictate everything a person does and says. In fact, one cannot separate themselves from their worldview. Michael Bauman has been noted as having said, "You may not live what you profess, but you will live what you believe."

Additionally, one's worldview is often shaped by their religious beliefs, experiences, and upbringing. Comparatively, as I researched various educational philosophers, it has been interesting to note how their childhood experiences, parental involvement, and even life crisis have shaped their worldview and philosophies. For example, Thomas Aquinas grew up in the

Catholic Church and was formerly educated in a monastic school. One should not be surprised then by his development of Theistic Realism (Guttek, 2011).

For me, I am the product of a Christian home and Christian education. Therefore, one should not be surprised that I have developed a philosophy that is rooted in Scripture and a Biblical worldview. I believe strongly in the free will of man, and have chosen to logically and intentionally adopt a Biblical worldview by choice; however, I realized that my exposure to these concepts at a young age have shaped who I am.

Unapologetically, my worldview is based upon a personal relationship with God, through His Son, Jesus Christ. As a result, the practicality of my worldview and philosophy has roots in Scripture. Some main elements of my worldview are as follows:

John 1:1 reminds us that there is one God, and one Creator. God is a personal God, who is actively involved in His creation. Therefore, He serves as the Ultimate and Final Authority in all things, including education.

Mankind is His creation, and is innately sinful as a result of the fall of man, which is recorded in Genesis 3. Scripture records in Romans 3:23 that, “All have sinned, and have fallen short of the glory of God.”

Since man is sinful at his core, he is in need of a Savior and cannot do anything good in and of himself. This concept stands in direct contradiction to famous philosophers, such as Gandhi and Confucius, who have worldviews rooted in Eastern religions. These man and others would place high emphasis on self-actualization and educational processes that allow students to discover truth that is within.

I could continue in great length to write about my worldview, the fundamentals of Christianity, and the Gospel. However, to remain focused on the topic of education I must add

one final worldview position, which has great impact on my philosophy of education.

Deuteronomy 6 strongly emphasizes the roll of parents as the primary educators and teachers of their children. As we begin to discuss the roles of educators, this principle will have tremendous influence on my philosophy of education. From philosophy to roles and practical applications, the system of education must remain committed to protecting the integrity of the parent's rights and role in education.

Unfortunately, the modern approach to education places the responsibility upon government. Thomas Jefferson said that education is, "to be general for all people to provide them with the basic skills to participate as citizens of a nation with representative institutions" (Gutek, 2011). While I agree that education plays a key part in the development of society, I do not agree that it is the responsibility of government to fund and educate children. That right should be held for parents, and communities who agree to partner together in education.

Where the American "No Child Left Behind Act" has assumed the responsibility for setting educational standards and providing accountability for reaching those standards, we are currently living in a society that has surrendered the right and privilege for educating our own children. My personal philosophy cannot support or condone a socialistic approach to education; therefore I tend to advocate private schools, charter schools, and home schools, which tend to maintain the integrity of parental roles.

Basic philosophy

Every philosophy must answer questions related to metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology. In regards to metaphysics, I have discussed much of that in my comments related to Biblical worldview. When we ask questions like: what is the meaning of life, what is my purpose, what is God, what is reality, and why am I here; we must understand there is an

absolute truth that defines one's answers to those questions. If one accepts that there is One God, who is eternal and actively involved in Creation and that He is the Final Authority, then one can accept that there is an absolute truth. It is the principal of absolutes from which one can develop a consistent philosophy.

In regards to epistemology, one can build off of the existence of absolutes to determine the reality of knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge. When one admits that truth cannot be discovered internally, but lies in the person of God; then one can walk with the quest for knowledge being the acceptance of God as the Author of truth and knowledge. We know what we know, because we are made in the image of God. I often say that we understand who we are more fully when we understand who God is. Since I am made in His image, the more I gain knowledge of His character; I will then better understand mine.

In regards to axiology, I must allow my ethics to be rooted in an understanding of God's ultimate authority and that all the world and humanity is His creation. My ethics then develop out of respect for God's creation. I must honor God by treated others fairly, by caring for His world, and by teaching others to do the same. I must value what He values, especially the people He has created. It is the value of people that gives motivation for education as the vehicle by which we can use to help people become the person God has created them to be.

Philosophy of Schools and Learning

As I consider my personal philosophy and view of mankind, it is important to transfer that philosophy specifically to schools and learning. In consideration of the historical, educational philosophers studied in the course, there are several that contribute to my philosophy. However, none of them entirely line up with my personal philosophy.

Froebel's approach to symbolism and object lessons are valuable to my approach to education. Emphasizing the power of a visual learner, Froebel recognizes the significance of a child's need to visually connect an object to the learning objective (Gutek, 1995, p. 265)

The natural approach of Pestalozzi is largely contradictory to my philosophy. However, I do appreciate the significance of Pestalozzi's phases of general and special methods. The emotional security that the general method provides recognizes the importance of a safe environment. Additionally, Pestalozzi recognized the reality that human nature is unchanging. (Gutek, p. 236) As we living in a fallen and sinful world, the reality of human nature will never change. We will remain in need of a Savior.

Educational Practice

Thankfully I was made aware at a young age of my need for a Savior. The safe environment that I was given to learn and grow in enabled a secure place to be nurtured. As I transfer these philosophies and my personal experience to a personal educational practice, I am reminded of the investments that have been made in my life. The unwritten curriculum that teachers and coaches taught me has been invaluable. As I approach education I intentionally practice one-on-one mentoring and discipling as much as possible. The relational investment that others made in me is a practice that I choose to make in others.

Teacher and Learner Relationships

With that being said, what role to teachers and administrators play? A school is a legitimate institution. A teacher should serve as a facilitator who guides a student to become fully aware of the person God has created them to be. A teacher is not the ultimate authority in a

student's life. God plays that role. A teacher is not the ultimate educator in a student's life. Parents play that role. A teacher does facilitate the process of teaching a child about the world, about God, about authority, and about who they are. This facilitation can be maximized by utilizing the Socratic method, which emphasizes dialogue and discovery (Guttek, 2011).

A teacher can also assume the role of a life coach or mentor. As character education continues to grow in popularity, teachers will continue to find opportunities to impact the thoughts, life, and beliefs of a student. Unfortunately, many parents fail to assume their responsibility to educate their children. This creates tension, as a teacher may need to guide a child, as they also strive to guide the parents. There is then a critical relationship that must be developed between a teacher and a parent. This relationship must consist of clearly defined boundaries and frequent communication. (Guttek, 1995)

A student must assume the role of an active participant, who understands authority. If a student understands that God is the Final Authority, and that He has empowered earthly authority in the form of parents and adults, then the student can fully become aware of the person that God has created them to be.

Diversity

If one believes that God created the entire world, then one must accept that He created people with different cultures, races, and backgrounds. This simplifies matters of diversity. One can learn to embrace diversity as a picture of God's grandeur, rather than viewing diversity as an obstacle or a challenge.

It is important that a teacher remains sensitive to the ethnic and cultural needs of a class. Curriculum, illustrations, and graphics should represent the diversity of a school and community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, everything begins and ends with God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. We exist to bring Him glory! We must be committed to educate all of humanity to understand our existence. This truth must shape philosophy and ethic for education, and every aspect of life as well.

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