

History of the Integration of Religion and Society

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Assignment

100 Day – Essay Draft

In this essay, the student should direct developmental readings from the 60-day assignment on the social movement of focus for this assignment.

1. Write a 10-page essay that analyzes the following items:

a. Introduction of the Present Issue: Begin with a contemporary social issue that has a (probably unappreciated) history of positive Judeo-Christian response to it. **DONE**

b. Body Sections:

i. Biblical Worldview Perspective: Locate the issue in the progress of Biblical revelation and explain the foundations of a Judeo-Christian Perspective. **DONE**

ii. History of the Issue: Trace the development of the selected issue alongside the history of Christianity's social impact on it. Summarize the historical trend at different points in history with an eye to identifying significant causes of the social problem, identifiable processes at work, and enduring patterns that emerged. How did the problem/issue originate and develop? What were the causes of the social problem? What identifiable sociological or theological processes were at work? What enduring patterns emerged that recur? **DONE**

iii. Exemplars of Religion and Society Integration: Focus on one or several specific examples (e.g., key leaders or movements of socially and intellectually active Christians) of the integration of religion and society with regard to that issue. How did God raise up the leader or movement that changed the world? Are the patterns described in Hillman's (2017) *The Joseph Calling* illustrated in any ways? **DONE**

iv. Applicable Principles: Distill the timeless principles of truth or leadership derived from the historical examples above. (Develop these based on the Body Sections #1-#3). **DONE**

c. Conclusion: Provide a contemporary contextualization of the historical issue. Pose possible contemporary applications for the integration of religion and society in your field of influence. Discuss what impact this research had on your sense of calling to change your world. **DONE**

2. Structure (Paper Evaluation includes the following structure below).

a. Download the “OGS APA Course Assignments Template 7th Ed 2021” template

from the General Helps folder in the AA-101 The Gathering Place Course on

DIAL. Using the template create the following pages.

b. Title Page (not included in page count).

c. Copy and paste the assignment instructions from the syllabus starting on a new page after the title page, adhering to APA 7th edition style (APA 7 Workshop, Formatting, and Style Guide, APA 7 Quick Guide).

d. Start the introduction on a new page after the copied assignment instructions.

3. Be sure to meet the following expectations.

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms the thesis.

d. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA 7 Quick Guide)

e. Include a separate Works Cited page, formatted according to APA style, 7th edition (not included in page count).

f. Use a minimum of fifteen scholarly research sources (two to three books and the remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

4. Submit the completed paper to DIAL.

Religious and Parental Liberties in Education

In today's climate, one of the most pressing issues in the United States of America is who has the right to determine curriculum, morals and values that will be taught in public schools, colleges and universities with tax dollars. The First Amendment calls for the separation of church and state. This determination even extends to hiring, even with private companies and organizations (Robb, M. G., 2019). In the American democratic society, a collective voice of all of the citizens should be making this determination. The framework of independence in the United States was founded on a claim to justice and a collective voice. American leaders like "Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King successfully challenged the country to bring its political practice and treatment of citizens in line with the principles of the Declaration, and of constitutional government" (Estrellado, E., 2023). Yet here we are in 2023 discussing this very topic in many segments of society. In education, the question is "Who has the right to determine the curriculum, morals, and values that will be taught in public schools, colleges, and universities receiving tax dollars from the people of this country?" In this article, I will review the history of American public education, and some of the leading organizations defending the rights of citizens, and will offer propositions for more support to Christians in all sectors of education in serving as ambassadors for Jesus Christ in this struggle.

1. Biblical Worldview Perspective

In Matthew 28: 18-20, reads, "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Jesus told his followers to go into the world and teach of His love and sacrifice for the

salvation of all humanity. This is one of the most serious issues with Christ-Followers today. Christ-Followers are working in secular professions and must uphold beliefs that are contrary to the Bible. The Christian influence is significant but waning as policies and laws are chipping away at religious freedom. Consequently, Christians are coming under fire as they try to speak up or act contrary to these laws and policies. For Christian educators, this is especially challenging. Christian educators are required to teach, lead, and support ideologies and practices in direct conflict with their Christian beliefs.

Zimmerman discussed when President Bill Clinton invited James Davison Hunter (American Sociologist) to the White House to ask him how America could solve cultural wars. Hunter said it is impossible to solve because these cultural worlds are built on fundamental beliefs and assumptions that do not allow for compromise. “From prayer in the classroom to “multiculturalism” in the curriculum, Hunter warned, our “school wars” reflected incompatible belief systems” (Zimmerman, J, 2022, pp. xi). God has His warriors already in position. In John 17, Jesus prayed for us (NASB, 2020). The Bible tells us three things in John 1:1-4, first, that Jesus made us all, second, that nothing happens apart from Him, and third, that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. (NASB, 2020). Jesus is our hope.

God has not forgotten the children and young people in public schools, colleges, and universities. God has called His people to work within these institutions for such a time as this. But the enemy's tactics are surprising to many believers. We are living in a time when other religions and ideologies are actively recruiting Christians. In one journal article, Mary Boys discusses the importance of people in other religions forming friendships with Christians to help them be good neighbors. Boys believe that since the United States is no longer a Christian nation, but rather, a religiously plural nation, it is important for Christians to have relationships

with people from other faiths so they can see that their faith is not the only truth. Boys' article gives recommendations for re-educating Christians after asking, "What, then, might we do to educate Christians in such a way that the religious "stranger" becomes "neighbour"?" (Boys, M. C., 2022, p. 188). In John 14:6, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me (NASB, 2020)

2. History of the Issue

Christians started public education (Schmidt, 2004, p. 170-172). Unfortunately, the roots of public education have been lost, even among Christians. In the very early life of the church in A.D. 80-110, the first Didache appeared, a manual for new Christ-Followers, and Ignatius, a bishop of Antioch in the second century, called for children to be taught the Holy Scriptures. Christians also followed Jesus' command and began teaching both men and women as "catechumens" orally through questions and answers. Schmidt notes that while others had formal teaching, from the very beginning, Christianity included both men and women in getting an education; also, in being catechized, baptized, and receiving church membership (2004, p.172). Catechetical instruction led to catechetical schools being set up in Europe and Africa. Around A.D. 150, Justin Martyr established catechetical schools in Ephesus and Rome, and many believe Athenagoras or Pantaenus Clement (ca.150-215) was its first head. Pantaenus Clement later became the bishop of Alexandria, and under Clement, the school in Alexandria, not only had a strong literary emphasis but taught mathematics and medicine and developed an excellent reputation for more than a century. These schools developed Christian leaders like Origen (185-254) and Athanasius (ca.296-373). Origen succeeded Clement and added grammar classes to the curriculum (Schmidt, 2004, p. 170-172).

As we look at God's influence in education, many of these educational gains had deteriorated by the sixteenth century, but all was not lost. Martin Luther started a movement for

universal education across all social classes and ethnicities in the sixteenth century during the Protestant Reformation. Martin declared that “people needed to understand both the word of Scripture and the nature of the world in which the word would take root” urging schools “to include vernacular primary schools for both sexes, Latin secondary schools, and universities” (Schmidt, 2004). Luther criticized the popes in the late Middle Ages for just training clergy and insisted that all children get an education to become God-fearing and law-abiding lay citizens involved in all sectors of society. John Calvin joined Luther as a leader in the Protestant Reformation. In Calvin’s Geneva plan, he wanted public education to include “a system of elementary education in the vernacular for all, including reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and religion, and the establishment of secondary schools for the purpose of training citizens for civil and ecclesiastical leadership.” (Schmidt, 2004, p. 177).

Martin Luther believed that the civic authorities should fund public education as they do the military, roads, bridges, dams, and other facets of society. A leader collaborating closely with Martin Luther name Phillipp Melanchthon (1497-1560) convinced the civic authorities to fund the first public school in Germany, and a pastor named Johannes Bugenhagen, where Luther attended and often preached, is credited with the organization of these public schools. Luther also is credited with not only starting public schools but in his effort to educate the masses, he argued that public schools should be compulsory for all children (Schmidt, 2004, p. 179).

Between 1850 and 1914, public education became a part of the fabric of the United States of America. To justify the excessive cost, public education was used in order to instill civic values in the culturally diverse European migrants during the "Age of Mass Migration" between 1850 and 1914, one study gives qualitative and quantitative evidence that states used compulsory schooling laws as a nation-building instrument. The study demonstrated using cross-county data

that states that welcomed European immigrants with less exposure to civic norms at home adopted laws requiring attendance at school far earlier in an effort to conform these immigrants who had considerably lower demand for American schooling prior to compulsion using (Bandiera et al., 2019). These White immigrants were educated with White American children to emerge into American culture from 1850 to 1914 (Bandiera et al, 2019). This experience was quite different for members of the African American community.

Going against farm society, freed African American slaves were the first among native southerners to campaign for universal, state-supported education. Once freed from the chains of slavery, African Americans rallied the support of Republican politicians, the Freedmen's Bureau, northern missionary societies, and the Union Army. The plantation owners tolerated some poor whites getting an education but did not support any kind of universal education efforts. With the aid of Republican politicians, African Americans laid the first foundation for universal education in the South (Anderson, 2023; Scribner, C. F., 2020).

In the early 1930s, a small group of humanists made it their mission to eradicate the Christian influences in America's public schools and replace them with a new religion—humanism. Additionally, humanistic tenets like the Humanist Manifesto I, II, and III are now evident in many areas of public education, including instructional content, policies, and culture. More humanistic headway was gained when nonprofit organizations made it their mission to cleanse public schools of Christian influences as a means of upholding the First Amendment (e.g., American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], Americans United [AU] for Separation of Church and State, and Freedom From Religion Foundation [FFRF]) (Marker, B. K., 2020, p. 2-3)

Today, there are conflicting views between the progressive and classical humanist ideologies, even breaking away from the more classical humanistic views (Montanye, J. A.,

2020). In James Montanye's article defending classical humanism, he argues that "human perfectibility cannot be achieved via progressive humanist means. Rather, it can be achieved—to the extent inherently possible—only through the philosophy and economics of classical liberalism, by which ordinary individuals remain free to perfect themselves and their societies through human creativity and voluntary cooperation" (Montanye, J. A., 2020). One of the leading proponents of humanism today is Steven Pinker (Pinker, S., 2018). In his book review of Steven Pinker's work, Malhotra notes Pinker's words, "Catholicism, Christianity in general, and Islam, along with all religions have downgraded reason by upgrading faith in the scriptures and rituals and how through coercion and force they have restrained any opposition" (Malhotra, A. K., 2022). Malhotra also points out, "The biggest weakness of Pinker's work is that here he is "gung-ho" on the positive contributions of the Enlightenment by excluding its negative hand-outs spilling into racism, colonialism, apartheid, Hitlerism, Mussolinism, Stalinism and other dictatorships. This is clearly exemplified in the elevation of Trump to a cult figure and Trumpism to a cult resulting in the takeover of the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021. The Trump followers who were asserting their "white privilege" could have destroyed the very foundation of a model Democratic Republic. In their opinion, they might have construed this revolting attempt as based on the positive principles of the Enlightenment!" One thing that is clear and that is a facet of belief for all humanists is that there is no need for religion, especially Christianity (Pinker, S., 2018; Malhotra, A. K., 2022; Montanye, J. A., 2020). Followers of Jesus Christ need not be astonished because Jesus warned that this day would come when false prophets and ideologies would grip the hearts and minds of people and that even the very elect would be deceived (Matthew 24:3-8; Mark 13:3-8; Luke 21:7-11).

“In the early 2000s, the religious wars cooled, spurred by a mass exodus of religious conservatives from the public schools. Millions of Americans patronized Christian day schools or elected to homeschool their children, which meant fewer devout parents pressing for prayer, creationism, and other kinds of religious instruction in public schools. In part, this trend was fueled by voucher programs, loosened restrictions on homeschooling, and other public policies that made it easier for families to choose different educational options. But the biggest reason was devout parents’ belief that the public schools had become a lost cause” (Zimmerman, J., 2022). The constant assaults and legislative attacks on the teaching profession have caused many experienced teachers to abandon their classrooms, thus, creating a teacher shortage. Several political leaders blamed public school teachers as they tried to gain support to privatize education. This hostility against teachers has contributed greatly to decreased student enrollment in entering into education programs to be a teacher. “How can a nation educate its young without well-qualified, experienced teachers?” (Ravitch, D., 2020, p. 4).

3. Exemplars/Models of Religion and Society Integration

The work of the church cannot be dismissed or underestimated. Jesus told us that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church in carrying out His work on earth (NASB, 2020). The church’s most strategic mission is the task of education or coaching for its people or congregation. This task of the church is vital because it helps church members understand their responsibilities in society and understand doctrinal lessons following the examples of Jesus Christ. The church provides believers with a continuous effort to convey, generate or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensitivities (Widjaja, F. et al, 2021). In John 17, Jesus prayed for His followers to be able to stand in unity and stand strong in carrying out the work He has called us to do. One of the most dangerous and divisive tricks of the enemy has been to

divide the church of Jesus Christ along political and racial lines and affiliations. The church of Jesus Christ has emerged into secular politics and culture, but the lines have been obscured. Even still, the church is a major actor on the world stage.

The Alliance Defending Freedom is a Christian legal advocacy group that represents religious freedom and interest in public schools, government, businesses, and organizations around the world. The Alliance Defending Freedom is the non-profit organization that defended Rost in Harris Funeral Homes, the bakery owner in Masterpiece Cakeshop, and one of the defendants in Hobby Lobby. The Alliance Defending Freedom is also challenging LGBTQIA+ rights as a threat to religious liberty interests (Robb, M. G., 2019).

Another group that has gained popularity for defending the freedom of choice and parental rights is [Moms for Liberty](#) (Marquise, F., 2023; Swenson, 2023). This group was founded by three Florida moms to fight school closures during COVID and then moved into fighting school boards across the nation regarding the public school curriculum. Today, the group consists of mostly white suburban moms with more than 100,000 members nationwide. This group has ties to the Republican party and hosted former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis at its second-ever national convention in Philadelphia.

On Thursday, June 29, 2023, the Supreme Court “effectively overturned the 2003 ruling *Grutter v. Bollinger*, in which it said race could be considered as a factor in the admissions process because universities had a compelling interest in maintaining diverse campuses. In doing so, the court scrapped decades of precedent, including a ruling dating to 1978, that upheld a limited consideration of race in university admissions to combat historic discrimination against Black people and other minority groups” (Hurley, L., 2023). Dr. David Anderson is a Ph.D. Omega Graduate School graduate, Chancellor, Pastor, Author, and CEO of Global Gracism. Dr. David Anderson is known for his international work in building bridges (Anderson, D. A., 2023).

In his most recent article, *Supreme Court Ruling Shows It's Time to Turn From Racism to 'Gracism'* (Anderson, 2023), Dr. Anderson “urged us to embrace the concept of being "color-blessed." Being color-blessed says, "We celebrate your race or color because the beauty and diversity you bring matters to the gorgeous bouquet of humanity” (Anderson, 2023). Being color-blessed is part of a concept I call [Gracism](#). Where racism seeks to discriminate and destroy, Gracism calls us to a posture that says, "I will celebrate with you. I will consider you. I will heal with you” (Anderson, 2023). Racial healing requires acknowledging the harm done, repairing the injury, and building trust. Unfortunately, centuries of systemic barriers, unequal access to resources, and limited opportunities inflicted lasting damage on the educational landscape of Black communities for generations. By excluding race as a factor for consideration, we risk perpetuating past injustices while also slowing progress toward a more just and inclusive future. This decision by the Supreme Court on affirmative action will have profound implications for our society. But regardless of their ruling, including race and ethnicity in the admissions process is a crucial step toward being color-blessed and a tangible act of reparations” (Anderson, 2023).

4. Applicable Principles:

What is troubling is that the freedom that Jesus Christ brought to the world has somehow become entangled with left and right-wing politics and that even scholars writing about different issues have made associations with political personalities on various issues (DeKeseredy, W. S., 2019). The body of Christ is made up of people from all socio-economic backgrounds, all racial and ethnic people groups, and cultures from every corner of the earth. Yet, personal thought is labeled as being liberal or conservative. By whose definition? We need real leadership to bring just the body of Christ together to demonstrate what many people, even Christians, have

forgotten. The Earth belongs to God, not the democrats or republicans, not so-called conservatives or liberals. This world and everyone in it belongs to God (Psalm 24:1).

Conclusion:

Today, inflamed debates are happening around this one question, Who has the right to determine the curriculum, morals, and values that will be taught in public schools, colleges, and universities with tax dollars? Secular schools and universities have allowed other religions, cults, and ideologies to seep into the curriculum having dominance over the student's morals and value system (Brown, C. G., 2019; Zimmerman, J., 2022; Sosa, L., 2021). Where students' religion, morals, and values were once determined by their parents, families, and communities, public educational institutions have taken on this role. Unfortunately, many conservative Christian and non-Christian groups banning together and gaining the spotlight for religious freedom and parental rights are also the same groups fighting to eradicate all African American contributions in the American narrative, alienating many African Americans. Many of these conservative groups are also tied to the Republican party, alienating Christians in the Democratic or any other party, and these groups are also known to have ties to Nazi and white supremacist groups. The non-acceptance of differences historically is not new (Spring, J., 2021). Unfortunately, many have simply lost respect for Christian proponents of religious liberty and parental rights because some of these groups even have ties with Russia, or they continue to separate themselves from public schools altogether (Permoser, J. M. & Stoeckl, K., 2021). Other religions are winning the public's respect and even gaining support because of their civility. Sadly, enough too, there are non-religious non-profit organizations worldwide that have some of the same concerns and could collaborate on some issues (Baker, J., 2020; Boys, M. C., 2022; Sosa, L., 2021). Many African American Christians are forced to either ignore the assault on their contributions and rich history

to work with them or simply view them as an adversary. In the meantime, since the people of God are still very separated along racial and socioeconomic lines, policies being established in public institutions are mirroring local, state, and national laws, making the secular learning institution the sole authority over all of the materials and belief systems taught to students (Priest, M., 2019; Robb, M. G., 2019).

Public school systems, colleges, and universities are a field ready to harvest. As a part of their mission's ministry, many churches could consider adopting a public school, college, or university to show the love of Jesus. Public school, college, and university who students do not go to church, only see "the church" at school through the lives of Christians. Churches and parachurch groups can have Bible studies (Thro, W. E. (2021)). Sponsoring missionaries to work these in public schools and college campuses would not only strengthen Christian students and staff but help them to live out their faith in sometimes very hostile environments. Educators and staff that work outside of school and on weekends often feel unappreciated. Perhaps if the church provided more support and showed more appreciation, more educators and students would find hope and come to know Jesus.

Many if not most churches have some type of mission program. Most fail to minister in the very institutions where the Lord has placed its parishioners. Pastors and Christian leaders who are in ministry full-time need to support lay persons in the church who are working in secular schools, agencies, and companies by going to their workplaces. There is no place more evident than in our public schools, colleges, and universities, but all is not lost. As Alvin Schmidt pointed out in his book, God has placed His people in positions throughout the world to have a positive influence (Schmidt, 2004) As a part of their mission program, the church can support Christian teachers by supplementing their incomes to sponsor before and after school Bible

studies for students or for staff. Pastors and ministers can go into the schools and pray with principals, especially Christian principals, over their schools. Churches can also become active partners in blessing schools by sponsoring staff lunches, such as donating enough food from restaurants and having it delivered around lunchtime during Teacher's Appreciation Week, or anytime during the school year. Churches can provide coffee, mugs, and donuts for breakfast as teachers walk in. The list is endless.

Christian educators and students are left to fend for themselves. Yet, God has placed them in the education system on assignment (Hillman, O., 2017). The church can hire lawyers and other advocates to speak on their behalf. The church aligning itself as a covering for Christian educators and students would strengthen them immensely and serve as an advocate for their religious freedoms being respected at school board meetings, and PTA meetings collaborating directly with school leaders and staff. The church can also have representatives volunteer at policy committee meetings in public school districts. As someone who has served as a public school educator and leader, the void of not having Christian advocates within the schools is strongly felt. In my God-given assignment as a leader, I am praying for God's continual guidance as I built a ministry around supporting God's missionaries working in public schools, colleges, and universities. Christians are in schools, colleges, and universities. God has not forgotten the children, teenagers, and young people (Matthew 19:14).

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