

Christian Educators In Conflict

SR 968-22 Sociology Methodology, Assignment #3 Outline

Sandra Anderson

Omega Graduate School

May 18, 2024

Professor: Dr. Joshua Reichard

Assignment #3 Outline

Assignment #3 – Essay

Complete the Hidden Threads assignment as detailed below and explained in class.

Requirements

1. Topic Selection and Approval:

Preparing Christians for Service in Secular Schools

a. Email your topic and a rough outline to Dr. Reichard for feedback and approval well in advance of the assignment due-date deadline.

(president@ogs.edu)

b. Schedule a meeting with Dr. Reichard to review feedback. (president@ogs.edu)

c. After receiving approval of the topic and rough outline, submit a rough draft to Dr. Reichard in advance of the turn-in deadline (president@ogs.edu). He will provide the feedback necessary for preparing the final paper.

2. The Essay – This paper should be approximately 5-7 double-spaced pages in length and may be longer. Provide an appropriate (and interesting) title for your essay. Write a short paragraph introducing the reader to the topic you will explore in your paper (i.e., This paper explores both theological and sociological dimensions of the obesity epidemic in the United States...).

Then, follow the steps listed below:

(Develop each in paragraph form, and clearly explicate all concepts you will develop.)

Follow this pattern and organize your work under headings, or using the numbers for the parts of the assignment listed below:

a. Identify a few concepts to be used for the interpretation of the problem you have chosen. (i.e., for a topic dealing with obesity, you might choose “hunger” or “emptiness.”) Define/explicate this concept(s), explaining how it will be employed in your analysis.

b. Identify sub-concepts that are related to the concepts you have chosen in #1. (i.e., for obesity sub-concepts might include, “gratification,” “satisfaction,” etc.) Define/explicate these sub-concepts, explaining how they offer additional analysis of your chosen problem. This extends your analysis beyond #1, offering additional depth and nuance.

c. Identify several biblical passages or concepts that provide meaning for these concepts and sub-concepts? (Perhaps something that addressed “food and drink that satisfy” ... or other passages that deal with such matters as being “filled with the spirit, “gluttony,” “fasting,” “feasting,” etc.) Drawing on these passages, and related theological ideas, explain their connection to the

d. concepts/sub-concepts you have employed in your analysis of the problem.

Note: this is not simply attaching Bible verses that “inspire” or “shed light on...”

Rather, the emphasis should center on the conceptual and analytical.

Introduction

Everything Christians believe about biblical truth and Jesus Christ being the only way to salvation puts us in direct conflict with some of the curriculum and policies in the public school system. Religious and moral freedom is jeopardized by the policies and laws that are being created. In the education realm, we are being coerced to comply. People are scared of losing their jobs and being forced into silence. Educators of all faiths, in particular Christians, are being forced to comply with teaching and uplifting state ideologies and religions. Some non-Christian religions are deemed acceptable and are being celebrated and practiced in schools throughout the United States. This essay centers around public school and secular educators, which include teachers, principals, professors, administrators, and other roles in the field of education.

Sociological Analysis of Conflict

In analyzing the complexity of working in a system that is disrespecting and infringing on its employees' and stakeholders' core beliefs, the sociological theory that may bring the best solutions is the Conflict Theory. According to CEO Jeff Bezos, "Harmony is overrated" (Contu, 2019). Rather, Amazonians are trained to be adamantly disagreeable and dedicated, to sharply criticize the opinions of their peers before uniting around a conclusion. Managers learn "to diplomatically throw people under the bus as part of normal managerial prerogative" during the yearly "rank and yank" exercise (2019). Having a good understanding of sociological theories may help to devise the best strategies to help equip those who oppose current policies. Contu further connotes that the interactionist perspective suggests that there can be too little or too much conflict, and there needs to be the right amount. Some types of conflict are necessary to organizational success (2019).

Christians working in the public school system need to come together and have a collective voice. Most Christians in public schools are uninformed of their constitutionally protected right to practice their religion. In addition, a lot of Christians feel alone in their schools and are unprepared for the hostile environment in public education (Marker, 2020). Most Christian educators working in public schools lack the skills necessary to teach in the light of the Kingdom and are unprepared for the challenges they face. Because most Christian educators are not trained on how to use their biblical influence, they are unaware of the impact that implementing biblical principles and reflecting God's character in their work may have on the Kingdom (Marker, 2020).

Divine Intervention and Response

God is raising ministries specifically targeted to Christian public school educators to help protect, equip, and support them, including the one that I started, Educators for Christ Life Group. which exists specifically to equip, encourage, and support public school educators. One ministry, The Christian Educators Ministry, started in 1953 to encourage and cover for Christian educators in public schools. On its website, it provides different packets for Christian educators to buy insurance protection against lawsuits (Christian Educators, <https://christianeducators.org>). Another organization, The Cause, exists to help bring Christian educators together to unite around serving underprivileged students in public schools (The Cause, <https://becauseofthecause.org/>). A former fifth-grade teacher, Stephen John Williams, filed a class action lawsuit against his school system for forbidding him from using primary documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, to teach history. Williams started a ministry to help equip educators and others to uphold biblical truths in an anti-Christian culture (Prepare The Way,

<https://www.preparetheway.us/navigating-public-schools>). The Holy Spirit is raising up organizations and ministries to provide support for Christian educators serving in public and secular schools around the nation. There is no other greater mission field to reach the masses of people in all socio-economic, religious, ethnicity, genders, and political parties than the public school system. The world has come to us. The Bible teaches us to, “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” (Matthew 28:19-20). This is the commandment for every Christ-follower from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sociological Theory of Conflict of Core Values and Beliefs

One of the major factors with practitioners working in the school system is how to deal with this conflict. There is overall silence in compliance due to fear of losing their jobs, fear of being ostracized or treated with hostility, and/or a lack of knowledge. This fear and a lack of knowledge of how to deal with ideological conflicts have led to isolation from many believers. The Bible teaches believers to be courageous and not be fearful (Isaiah 41:10; 2 Timothy 1:7; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9. Proverbs 29:25; Deuteronomy 31:6). The ideological conflict starts with the origin of all that exists. Evolution and Creationism theories are at the core of the deep divide (Kaden, 2018; Morris, 2022). Escalating at a rapid speed, anyone supporting only heterosexual marriage can be labeled homophobic and disagreeable and can find themselves ostracized and targeted for going against school policy. Secular institutions throughout the country are being praised, uplifted, and supported for endorsing same-sex relationships (Coley & Das, 2020). What is a Christian to do?

As I explore different sociological theories, in this brief essay, I am going to focus on the Conflict Theory because as a practitioner on the ground working in public school, there is a deep concern of not wanting to be seen as combative or divisive. The public school system is extremely complex, and every role is essential for the school team to meet the multifaceted and complex needs of the hundreds of students and their families. This is one reason why states are distributing funds for community schools throughout the nation to partner with community agencies to help meet these needs (Johnston, et al., 2020; Maier & Rivera-Rodriguez, 2023; Dryfoos & Maguire, 2019). I believe the main purpose that the Holy Spirit is moving in the public education realm is for Christian organizations, law agencies, and churches, to come alongside Christians serving in schools and help them carry out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Because there are fundamental core values in direct opposition to school values, curriculum, and practices, it is important to first acknowledge that the objectives of an organization might be destroyed by poorly managed conflicts. Conflict is referred to as harmful or dysfunctional when it prevents a group, individual, or party from performing as expected, it can also destroy relationships (Mills & Mene, 2020). In building capacity, Christian practitioners in education must first be sure to not fall into one of these conflict types, “ (a) when individuals who are competing allow their interests to override the goals of the business, (b) when managers withhold information from one another (c) employees sabotaging others’ work, either intentionally or subtly (2020). This is where scripture can give believers wisdom and guide the believer “to not give the devil a foothold (2 Corinthians 6:3; Ephesians 4:27).

The Holy Spirit’s Guidance Navigating Through Conflict

Christian educators must first realize that the gift they bring to the table is Jesus. The Bible says that God sends believers out into the world as sheep among wolves to lift up Jesus as the only way to salvation (Matthew 10:16-18; John 12:32; John 14:6). Through Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit of God working in us, and this is manifested through the fruits of the Holy Spirit, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23). Notice the later portion of this verse, “Against such things, there is no law” (5:23b).

Christian educators will need to acquire skills to bear the fruits of the spirit amid conflict in their respective roles to avoid organizational goals having negative outcomes through dysfunctional or negative conflict, which can result in employees becoming short-tempered and resentful. Conflict not properly managed can also cause employees to leave the job and increase absenteeism (Mills & Mene, 2020). Through demonstrating the fruits of the spirit, Christians can lovingly and gently show kindness and love while respectfully and courageously upholding their views. Christians need to guard their testimony and character because “Conflict must be properly managed to attain goals and objectives of the organization as well as the individual. An important aspect of overcoming dysfunctional conflict is by seeking support and cooperation amongst team members” (Mills & Mene, p. 541).

For some believers, it may be their first step is to acknowledge and understand the contrast between some of the secular curriculum and policies and scripture. Once the conflict is understood with a clear biblical understanding of God’s worldview, then, the believer can allow the fruits of the Holy Spirit to be manifested through their life in dealing with the conflict because “against such, there is no law” (Galatians 5:22).

Works Cited

Christian Educators. <https://christianeducators.org>

Coley, J. S., & Das, D. (2020). Creating safe spaces: Opportunities, resources, and LGBTQ student groups at US Colleges and Universities. *Socius*, 6, 2378023120971472.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2378023120971472>

Contu, A. (2019). Conflict and organization studies. *Organization Studies*, 40(10), 1445-1462.

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alessia-Contu/publication/>

[324295936_Conflict_and_Organization_Studies/links/5acacdcf4585151e80a922cc/](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324295936_Conflict_and_Organization_Studies/links/5acacdcf4585151e80a922cc/)

[Conflict-and-Organization-Studies.pdf](#)

Dryfoos, J., & Maguire, S. (2019). *Inside full-service community schools*. Simon and Schuster.

Johnston, W., Engberg, J., Opper, I., Sontag-Padilla, L., & Xenakis, L. (2020). *Illustrating the promise of community schools*. Rand Corporation. file:///C:/Users/Guest%20Account/Downloads/RAND_RR3245.pdf.

Kaden, T. (2018). *Creationism and anti-creationism in the United States: A sociology of conflict*. Springer.

Maier, A., Daniel, J., Oakes, J., & Lam, L. (2018). Community schools: A promising foundation for progress. *American Educator*, 42(2), 17-22. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1182081.pdf>

Maier, A., & Rivera-Rodriguez, A. (2023). State strategies for investing in community schools. *Learning Policy Institute*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED630311.pdf>

Marker, B. K. (2020). Factors to Prepare Christians for Service in Public Education (Doctoral dissertation, Regent University).

Mills, B. R., & Mene, C. T. (2020). Conflict and its management in an organisation: A theoretical review. *Int. J. Sci. Res. Publ*, 10, 540-545. CC BY.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.05.2020.p10162>

Morris, H. (2022). *Biblical creationism*. New Leaf Publishing Group

New American Standard Bible (NASB), 2020. *Lockman Foundation*. (Original work published in 1960).

The Cause. <https://becauseofthecause.org/>

Prepare the Way, <https://www.preparetheway.us/navigating-public-schools/>