

**The Need for Faith-Based Based Educator Support Programs**

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## **Assignment 1: Introduction and Problem Statement**

- Draft the Introduction and Statement of the Problem sections.
- Introduce the topic, define the scope, and clearly articulate the issue.

## **Introduction**

### **Objectives and Scope**

The objective of this action research is to increase the support for Christian educators in public and secular schools through small faith-based support groups. The purpose of these groups is to encourage Christian educators through faith-based practices, such as Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship. This includes Christian educators in all areas of education, both in the classroom and in administrative positions. The purpose is to retain Christian educators already working in public and secular schools. If the church were to view Christian educators in public and secular schools, it would have an enormous impact on our nation. Different studies are linking teacher retention and student achievement and have suggestions as to how to retain teachers (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020).

Providing faith-based support for educators, in particular Christian educators, will help with teacher retention. Studies have also shown a link between teachers leaving the profession and decreasing student achievement (Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). Faith-based support for educators will help the national educator retention problem as more and more educators walk out of the schoolhouse permanently. If the church were to view Christian educators in public and secular schools as missionaries in the same as foreign missions, it would have an enormous impact on our nation. Imagine fellow Christians ministering to their public school missionaries in the same way as for foreign missions, i.e. providing financial support, visits for volunteer encouragement, volunteer work, and prayer. This would also impact others working in the school as they watch Christians coming in and loving Christian colleagues in their school. This would also provide a

cover for Christian educators and students so that they don't feel so alone and not backed by anyone.

### **A Brief History of American Public Schools**

To instill civic values in the culturally diverse migrants coming from Europe during the "Age of Mass Migration" between 1850 and 1914, states used compulsory schooling laws as a nation-building instrument. States that welcomed European immigrants with less exposure to civic norms at home adopted laws requiring attendance at school far earlier. We demonstrate that these immigrants had a considerably lower demand for American schooling before compulsion using cross-county data (Bandiera et al., 2019). To significant financial investments in education and high levels of volunteer attendance, Americans had the highest level of education in the world by the middle of the nineteenth century. From 1830 to 1890, rates for pupils aged 5 to 15 were high in the United States and other developed countries. Starting in 1850, the United States enrollment rates were above fifty percent and began to increase, and diverge from other developed nations. States in the US started enacting legislation requiring students to attend school at the same hour. However, these laws did not apply to all children. Black and other marginalized children were still effectively kept out of schools even after compulsory attendance (2019).

By 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, 2020, p. 2-3)

### **Postmodern Ideologies and Religions In Public Schools Today**

Apart from humanism, other religions are being introduced and celebrated to annihilate the Christian influence in the nation's schools. Until the late twentieth century, many Christians viewed yoga and meditation as Hindu and Buddhist practices that were ungodly. As these practices entered the United States, Asian and European promoters downplayed the religious background affiliated with Hinduism, Buddhism, and even the New Age movement. Instead, the promoters used science to gain public acceptance by highlighting the mental and physical benefits of reducing stress. The promoters strategically used tactics to move yoga and meditation more systematically into institutions and schools by secularizing them and downplaying them as Hindu and Buddhist practices (Brown, 2019). Brown's work discusses how Christianity, by certain measures, is losing its dominance in America, and more people are sympathizing with other religions. Many people are simply referring to themselves as spiritual. People from all persuasions are bringing these mindsets into our schools. The perceived problems in our schools have opened the door for yoga and mindfulness to come in as acceptable practices. Brown's work explains that while eradicating Christianity remains incomplete, other varieties of religious practices are being established, and public schools are crucibles to this change (Brown, 2019). Yoga, meditation, healing, and alternative medicine are a few examples of practices that emphasize the body to encourage self-knowledge, self-mastery, and self-healing. This study includes a section that tracks the global adoption of body-based therapy methods. The study

demonstrates how these behaviors moved from primarily religious settings into secular ones. (Pagis, 2020).

This plurality of truth is encouraged and respected; whereas, believing in an absolute supreme being and salvation for all of mankind through Jesus Christ is not. In another article, Mary Boyz discusses the importance of Christians forming friendships with people from other religions. 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, 2022, p. 188). According to Boyz, people should embrace religious pluralism, recognize the limitations of having only one religious theory, and go beyond the particular of their religious tradition. The author thinks that instead of clinging to absolute truths, individuals should embrace religious diversity. The author says that because God loves others and communicates with them through many religions, individuals have a competitive impulse that leads them to believe that this undermines their relationship with God. "Acknowledging the finitude of one's tradition requires a degree of maturity" (2022).

I believe that God has called me and many other Christ-followers into the public and secular schools, colleges, and universities for such a time as this. We may not win the overall war, but we can surely win the battle and make a difference by snatching both fellow educators and students straight from the enemy's grip. To defeat the enemy, you must first understand what it is you are fighting against, and when you go to war, you need to have an army. God has His

warriors already in position. God just needs us to be equipped for the battle and allow His Holy Spirit to do work in the minds and hearts of those He has set before us. 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).

### **Sociological Analysis of Conflict**

In analyzing the complexity of working in a system that is disrespecting and infringing on its employee's 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). 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 for organizational success (2019).

Today in public and secular education, the distinction between those who are followers of Jesus and those who are upholding practices contrary to those beliefs is unclear due to coercion to comply and fear of retributions. More respect is given to non-Christians. For example, when women who are Muslim, wear hijabs, niqab, or burqa, they are making a clear distinction of their beliefs through this practice which is in direct conflict with Western culture. Yet, we see the Muslim community making strides in Western culture through effective strategies. It is not that these Muslims have embraced Western Christian orthodoxy, but rather have learned how to negotiate and gain influence by sitting on school boards, school district committees, and other

policy-making structures. As a result, in many school districts across America, Islamic holidays are now on school calendars, and Islamic showcases are uplifted in school cases or on school bulletin boards. Muslims are also effectively working within the American system and American laws to openly protest becoming moral leaders in a country once dominated by Christian belief. In Montgomery County, Maryland, Muslim parents led the protest against the LGBT curriculum (Arnold, T., 2023). While the Christian influence is still prevalent worldwide, local school districts answer to the State and not the federal government. For this reason, it is easier to get around federal laws. For example, promoting and blatantly uplifting non-Christian religions is in direct correction of The Establishment Clause (amend. 1)

As believers and practitioners in education and all other sectors, we must come together on one accord (John 17). The Bible warns believers in 2 Timothy 2:3-5, **(3)** You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **(4)** No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please Him who enlisted him as a soldier” (NASB, 2020). In other words, to please the Lord, it is important to understand the conflict. To strategically work to dismantle some of the postmodern practices and also to effectively minister in the midst of it, there needs to be a clear understanding of the differences between a secular and Christian worldview among believers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

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). 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).

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. Educators face a dilemma in teaching about the Bible. The knowledge of the Bible is important for cultural literacy, but the different views and legal considerations have made it controversial. Since the mid-twentieth century, the Supreme Court interpreted The First Amendment to forbid public schools and other government agencies from promoting religious viewpoints to establish a state religion and from forbidding the free exercise of religion (Chancey, 2020). Religious and moral freedom is jeopardized by the policies and laws that are being created. In the education realm, Christians are being coerced to comply with policies contrary to their beliefs. 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 study centers around public school and secular educators, which include teachers, principals, professors, administrators, and other roles in the field of education.

The constant assaults and legislative attacks on the teaching profession have caused many experienced teachers to abandon their classrooms, thus, creating a teacher shortage. Colleges and

universities have seen a sharp drop in the number of applications to teacher preparation institutions. Several political leaders blamed public school teachers as they tried to gain support to privatize education. This has contributed greatly to decreasing students 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).

Political polarization is posing new problems for the American democratic system. Despite the alleged separation of church and state, religion continues to play a significant role in American politics, particularly in the Republican Party. Even though the proportion of Americans identifying as Christians is declining, Christian value systems still influence many political decisions (Treon, 2021). Outside of politics, few churches or Christian affiliations are involved in negotiating and sitting on school district communities where policies are made as representatives of the Christian community. For this reason, it is imperative that Christian educators are supported through faith-based support groups, and that the church is educated on how to come alongside Christian educators in public schools in carrying out the Great Commission.

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U.S. Const. amend. 1. <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/>