

Biblical World View

Ted Slater

Dec. 5, 1994

Philosophy of Education • Dr. William Cox • Regent University

## INTRODUCTION

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” the Apostle Paul wrote to a young friend of his (2 Tim. 3:16f). All of Scripture is fodder for the systematic development of a Christian worldview — an integrated system of beliefs, based on Scripture, through which one passes data in order to make sense of daily experiences; a thorough worldview based on Scripture should include the entire Bible, since none of it is extraneous.

The following outline of a Christian worldview, then, consisting of only a few Scripture references, is a mere sketch of the work which should properly be done. This work is of some value, though, in that it provides a skeletal foundation with which to understand the Christian worldview.

## **METAPHYSICS —WHAT IS REALITY?**

**METAPHYSICS** is the study of questions concerning the nature of reality (Knight, 1980, p. 9). This study consists of theological elements such as the existence and character of God; cosmological elements such as the origin, nature, and development of the universe as an orderly system; anthropological elements such as the nature of humanity; and ontological elements such as the nature of existence. The Christian worldview starts with the assumption that things do exist and that they are related to each other in a relatively complex manner.

### The general nature of God

God exists and is the only God (Deut. 6:4), is the creator of all that exists, is all knowing, all powerful, and is everywhere present. He is the standard of all that is virtuous, and is characterized by the following:

- ability to perform feats which counter natural law (Matt. 3:9, Heb. 11:19)
- ability to teach (Job 36:22, John 13:13)
- active involvement in sustaining physical phenomena (Ps. 33:7, Col. 1:17)
- agelessness (Gen. 1:1, 1 Pet. 1:20)
- faithfulness (1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Cor. 1:18)
- goodness (Ps. 34:8, Nah. 1:7)
- holiness (Ps. 77:13, Hab. 3:3)
- impartial judgment (Deut. 10:17, Rom. 9:14)
- love, grace, and compassion (2 Chr. 30:9, 1 John 4:8)

- righteousness, and indignation against those who are unrighteous and proud (Ps. 7:11, James 4:6)
- He is invisible Spirit (John 1:18, 1 Tim. 1:17).
- He fights for and defends his people (Josh. 23:10, Prov. 30:5).

#### The general nature of Universe

- All creation has value (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31).
- All of nature was created by God (Gen. 1, 2, Heb. 11:3).
- God is able to interfere with the known natural laws, performing miracles and providing revelation (Matt. 3:9, Heb. 11:19).
- Laws govern spiritual and physical phenomena (Mt. 13:31, Lk. 13:18f).
- The supernatural world and the natural world both exist and are knowable (Gen. 1:1, Eph. 6:11-18).

#### The general nature of Humans

- Humans were once in a perfect state, but have since become corrupted through the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5:8, 10, 12-14).
- People are to love and obey God (Matt. 22:37).
- People are to deny themselves, loving others and considering their needs as more important than their own (Matt. 22:39).
- Man was created to “fill the earth and subdue it,” ruling over it (Gen. 1:26, 28).
- Man was created to worship and fellowship with God (Gen. 3:9, Matt. 22:37).

*People have two aspects of being — material and immaterial.* Educators should concern themselves with the healthy development of their students toward both physical and non-physical maturity.

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7).

The burden of the word of the Lord concerning Israel. Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1).

*There is an undividable interaction between body and spirit.* Cognitive or affective problems might have a physical element to them — students might be exhibiting signs of unhealth because of a poor diet or lack of exercise. Conversely, problems which appear to be physical in nature might have spiritual elements to them, which should be addressed appropriately.

For just as the body (Strong’s Concordance number 4983g. *so\_ma* “a body”) without the spirit (Strong’s Concordance number 4151g. *pneuma* “wind, spirit”) is dead, so also faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh (Strong's Concordance number 4561g. *sarx* "flesh") is weak (Mark 14:38).

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6).

*All that animates people (e.g., thinking, emotions) are spiritual in nature.* In order to have more productive and enjoyable classes, teachers should pray in their rooms prior to the start of class, dedicating the time and location to the Lord, asking Him to have His way during the lesson, and taking authority over evil spiritual forces which might intend to disrupt the lessons.

Then he answered and said to me, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, take courage; your faith (Strong's Concordance number 4102g. *pistis* "faith, faithfulness") has made you well." And at once the woman was made well (Matt. 9:22).

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace (Rom. 8:6).

...for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh (Strong's Concordance number 4559g. *sarkikos* "pertaining to the flesh, carnal"), but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses (2 Cor. 10:4).

*People have a conscience that responds both to God and to the world.* Teachers should expect their students to feel bad if they've done something wrong against fellow students or against the teacher. In the Christian school environment, the teacher should be free to instruct the student on the biblically appropriate response and then pray with the student.

And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe (1 Sam. 24:5).

...how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience (Strong's Concordance number 4893g. *suneide\_sis* "consciousness, specifically conscience") from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:14).

...let us draw near with a sincere heart (Strong's Concordance number 3820h. *leb* "inner man, mind, will, heart") in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:22).

*People have a primary motivation to be their own god.* Teachers should not be surprised by their students' "lording it over" other students. Since it is wrong to act in such a way to usurp God's rightful place, however, the teachers should conceive of methods which might facilitate the breaking of their students' sinful attitude.

"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate (Gen. 3:65f).

And they said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4).

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons, bowing down, and making a request of Him. And Jesus said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left" (Matt. 20:20f).

*The self-life of flesh refuses to surrender to God and His ways.* Without the assistance of God Himself, both teacher and student are bound to make mistakes, acting faithlessly. Repentance and forgiveness precede any reconciliation.

For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate (Rom. 7:15).

...because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able (Strong's Concordance number 1410g. *dunamai* "to be able, to have power") to do so (Rom. 8:7).

Immediately the boy's father cried out and began saying, "I do believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

*The flesh dies to self when tolerance for discomfort is exceeded.* Teachers should consider discipline a viable tool in the training of the students placed in their care. Discipline could include both corporal and more clever types of punishment, depending on the authority given to the teacher by the parents.

Yet they did not listen or incline their ears, but stiffened their necks in order not to listen or take correction (Strong's concordance number 4148h. *musar* "discipline, chastening, correction") (Jer. 17:23).

He who spares his rod (Strong's concordance number 7626h. *shebet* "rod, staff, club, scepter, tribe") hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines (Strong's concordance

number 4148h. *musar* “discipline, chastening, correction”) him diligently (Strong’s concordance number 7836h. *shachar* “to look early or diligently for”) (Prov. 13:24).

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him (Prov. 22:15).

The rod and reproof (Strong’s concordance number 8433bh. *tokachath* “argument, reproof”) give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother (Prov. 29:15).

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (Rom. 5:3-5).

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials (Strong’s Concordance number 3986g. *peirasmos* “an experiment, a trial, temptation”), knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (James 1:2-4).

*People are motivated to experience pleasure and avoid pain.* There is a degree of validity to B.F. Skinner’s stimulus-response theory. In order to reinforce virtuous behavior in their students, teachers should reward their good conduct and withhold reward when their conduct is in need of change.

For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:2-4).

And all that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor (Eccl. 2:10).

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, that one may avoid the snares of death (Prov. 14:27).

*At salvation the spirit of the individual is linked to God.* Teachers will find that their students who are Christians are more likely than those who are not to have a more mature understanding of spiritual phenomena and the character of God.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in (Strong’s Concordance number 1525g. *eiserchomai* “to go in (to), to enter”) to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me (Rev. 3:20).

Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again (Strong’s Concordance number 509g. *ano\_then* “from above”), he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

*The regenerated spirit actively hears from God even if not heard audibly or consciously.* In the Christian school context, teachers should consider praying with their students prior to taking tests. The Holy Spirit is prepared to assist students supernaturally. The prayers will be effective, and the act of petitioning God during times of stress might be imitated by the students when they are in stressful situations away from class.

But the Helper (Strong’s concordance number 3875g. *parakle\_tos* “called to one’s aid”), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance (Strong’s concordance number 5279g. *hupomimne\_sko\_* “to cause (one) to remember, to remind”) all that I said to you (John 14:26).

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom. 8:16).

And the disciples were continually filled (Strong’s Concordance number 4137g. *ple\_roo\_* “to make full, to complete”) with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52).

*People are created with a divinely ordained destiny and life purpose.* High school counselors in the Christian school context can accompany students in seeking the Lord’s guidance when those students are in the process of considering careers and higher education. Instead of facing their future with anxiety, students should be encouraged to view it as an adventure — one that their Lord has arranged specifically for them.

I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself; Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).

The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps (Strong’s Concordance number 6806h. *tsaad* “a step, pace”) (Prov. 16:9).

Man’s steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way? (Prov. 20:24).

*Love and kindness function to destroy the basis of anger, resentment, and other negative dispositions.* Teachers who have students with disciplinary problems should not respond in impatient frustration, but in love toward their students. Discipline should be carried out in a firm, yet kind, manner — with the intention being the students’ restoration to class membership.

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger (Pr. 15:1).

There is no fear (Strong's Concordance number 5401g. *phobos* "flight, fear, dread, terror") in love (Strong's Concordance number 26g. *agape* "love, goodwill"); but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love (1 John 4:18).

Who is a God like Thee, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love (Mic. 7:18).

*People live up or down to the expectations of others.* Teachers should have high, yet realistic, expectations for their students.

Men will faint (Strong's Concordance number 674g. *apopsucho* "to leave off breathing, i.e. faint") from fear (Strong's Concordance number 5401g. *phobos* "flight, fear, dread, terror") and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21:26).

But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord (James 1:6f).

...for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light (Matt. 6:21f).

*Personal relationship is the basis for personal responsibility.* Teachers are accountable to their students' parents for those children's educational training. Teachers should therefore try to develop healthy relationships with their student's parents.

I [Judah] myself will be surety for him [Joseph's little brother Benjamin]; you [father Israel] may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever (Gen. 43:9).

He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (1 Tim. 3:4).

...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper (Strong's Concordance number 8104h. *shamar* "to keep, watch, preserve")?" (Gen. 4:9).

*There is an age of accountability before God.* Parents, rather than the underage children, should ultimately be held accountable for the children's negative behavior in the

classroom. In addition, the parents of those students should be involved in the selection of their children's classes and texts more than their children.

Also if a woman makes a vow to the Lord, and binds herself by an obligation (Strong's Concordance number 632h. *issar* "a bond, binding obligation") in her father's house in her youth (Strong's Concordance number 5271h. *naur* "youth, early life"), and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand, and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the Lord will forgive her because her father had forbidden her (Num. 30:3-5).

And should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals? (Jon. 4:11).

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things (1 Cor. 13:11).

Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him" (John 9:23).

He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy (Strong's Concordance number 5288h. *naar* "a boy, lad, youth, retainer") will know enough to refuse (Strong's Concordance number 3988ah. *maas* "to reject") evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken (Is. 7:15f).

Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them, and they shall possess it (Deut. 1:39).

### **EPISTEMOLOGY — HOW DO WE KNOW?**

**EPISTEMOLOGY** is the study of the nature of **truth** and **knowledge** and how there are attained (Knight, 1980, p. 9). This study aims to answer such questions as the following: What is true? How do we know? Can reality be known? Is truth relative or absolute? Is knowledge subjective or objective? Is there truth independent of human experience?

There are several possible ways of attaining knowledge and truth, including the following: the senses, revelation, authority, reason, and intuition. Knowledge seems to generally spring from a combination of these sources. The fundamental source of absolute truth and knowledge, according to the Christian worldview, is the Bible.

*People are motivated to be self governing.* Teachers should consider giving their students “ownership” of some of the class assignments. In other words, some of the elements of certain assignments should be selected by the students. Of course, the completed assignments must be judged according to teacher-set academic standards.

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right (Strong’s Concordance number 3477h. *yashar* “straight, right”) in his own eyes (Judg. 17:6).

Every man’s way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts(Prov. 21:2).

“Go up to the mountains, bring wood and rebuild the temple, that I may be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the Lord. “You look for much, but behold, it comes to little; when you bring it home, I blow it away. Why?” declares the Lord of hosts, “Because of My house which lies desolate, while each of you runs to his own house” (Hag. 1:8f).

*People are equipped to think the way God thinks.* On one hand, students should be expected to reason to remarkable conclusions, grasping heavenly and earthly concepts (perhaps with some difficulty). On the other hand, without a relationship with God, and without the “mind of Christ,” students remain somewhat hindered from achieving their potential.

“Come now, and let us reason (Strong’s Concordance number 3198h. *yakach* “to decide, adjudge, prove”) together,” Says the Lord. “Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool” (Is. 1:18).

For who has known the mind (Strong’s Concordance number 3563g. *nous* “mind, understanding, reason”) of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

*The natural mind cannot understand the things of the spirit.* Having students write assignments about spiritual phenomena could be unnecessarily frustrating for them, especially if they are not in a healthy relationship with God. The teacher who is spiritually more mature than his or her students should not judge the students’ spiritual understanding harshly.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind (Strong’s Concordance number 3563g. *nous* “mind, understanding, reason”) is unfruitful (1 Cor. 14:14).

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord (Is. 55:8).

There is a way (Strong’s Concordance number 1870h. *derek* “way, road, distance, journey, manner”) which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death (Prov. 14:12).

*People have an inherent understanding of who God is.* Christian teachers who work in the public sector are missionaries to the faculty and staff of that school, as well as to the students. In their interactions with their peers, teachers should keep in mind that their non-Christian peers are in denial that God exists and is good. As Paul addressed the Athenians, so teachers should reveal God as the fulfillment of their peers' divine needs.

...because that which is known about God is evident (Strong's Concordance number 5318g. *phaneros* "visible, manifest") within them; for God made it evident (Strong's Concordance number 5319g. *phaneroo* "to make visible, make clear") to them (Rom. 1:19).

And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you (Acts 17:22f).

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good (Ps. 14:1).

*Disequilibrium is a primary catalyst for learning.* Disequilibrium can both precede and accompany the learning process. Learning can be a burdensome, disorienting, potentially discouraging process for students. In choosing curricula and lessons for students, teachers should not be unduly concerned with their students' becoming temporarily confused. In fact, students will likely find making sense from confusion to be a rewarding experience.

...and Joshua said to them, "Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel. Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?'" (Josh. 4:5f).

It is good for me that I was afflicted (Strong's Concordance number 6031ah. *anah* "to be bowed down or afflicted"), that I may learn Thy statutes (Ps. 119:71).

The sayings of the wise are like goads ... and much study is a weariness of the flesh (Eccl. 12:11a, 12b).

And my soul is greatly dismayed (Strong's Concordance number 926h. *bahal* "to disturb, terrify"); But Thou, O Lord — how long? (Ps. 6:3).

*The desire to learn is as natural to humans as the desire to eat, sleep, etc.* Some, like the writer of Proverbs, found the educational process a pleasant experience; others, such as the writer of Ecclesiastes, found it an accursed drudgery. In any case, students should find the learning process a nourishing and satisfying experience.

My son, eat honey, for it is good; Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off (Prov. 24:13f).

And I set my mind to seek and explore by wisdom concerning all that has been done under heaven. It is a grievous task which God has given to the sons of men to be afflicted with (Eccl. 1:13).

The other disciples therefore were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But [Thomas] said to them, “Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

*People are motivated to be competent.* When they find themselves in a situation in which they have no competence, students could react in one of two ways: they could become discouraged and give up, or they could struggle to master the task at hand. Teachers could introduce students to subject matter about which they know little. With encouragement and assistance, the students should feel driven to develop a competence in that area. After all, humanity has received God’s blessing to subdue creation, among other things (see Gen. 1:28).

And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it (Strong’s Concordance number 3533h. *kabash* “to subdue, bring into bondage”); and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28).

Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, “I will return to my house from which I came”; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order (Strong’s Concordance number 2885g. *kosmeo* “to order, arrange”) (Matt. 12:43f).

*People are motivated to interpret for meaning.* If a teacher arouses the students’ interest, they are likely to respond by struggling to synthesize and evaluate material presented to them. Phenomena which pique interest include those found in the Scriptures provided below: rites, voice variation (e.g., shouting), uncharacteristic behavior, the unexpected treatment of props (e.g., fleece), and behavior which some might interpret as drunkenness. Teachers, then, should strive to present information in such a way that the students see it as a mystery to be solved, rather than merely as stuff to be memorized.

And it will come about when your children will say to you, “What does this rite mean to you?” that you shall say, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.” And the people bowed low and worshipped (Ex. 12:26f).

And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, “What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” Then they understood that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp (1 Sam. 4:6).

And the people said to me, “Will you not tell us what these things that you are doing mean for us?” Then I said to them, “The word of the Lord came to me” (Ezek. 24:19).

Then Gideon said to God, “If Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. If there is dew on the fleece only, and it is dry on all the ground, then I will know that Thou wilt deliver Israel through me, as Thou hast spoken.” And it was so. When he arose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece, he drained the dew from the fleece, a bowl full of water. Then Gideon said to God, “Do not let Thine anger burn against me that I may speak once more; please let me make a test once more with the fleece, let it now be dry only on the fleece, and let there be dew on all the ground” (Judg. 6:36-39).

And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” (Acts 2:12).

*Each person builds, starting even in the womb, an internal model of the world. People respond to the world by way of this internal model of the world rather than via how the world might really be.* Teachers should see to it that the model their students are constructing is as accurate to the real world as possible. They are able to judge the accuracy of their models by comparing them with Scripture, which provides an accurate description of reality. Affirming words of correction should be spoken to the students, since the words are not inert, but have a lasting effect (see Isaiah 55:11).

For as he thinks (Strong’s Concordance number 8176h. *shaar* “to calculate, reckon”) within himself, so he is (Prov. 23:7a).

Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law (Prov. 29:18).

To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind (Strong’s Concordance number 3563g. *nous* “(mind); mind, understanding, reason”) and their conscience (Strong’s Concordance number 4893g. *suneide\_sis* “consciousness, specifically conscience”) are defiled (Titus 1:15).

*People are created with some type of inherent “knowledge structure.”* Christian teachers should realize that B.F. Skinner’s *tabula rasa* theory (i.e., that people are born with a blank slate, possessing no mental software) is unscriptural, and therefore incorrect. Teachers might consider challenging curricular materials which accept or support Skinner’s theory.

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law (Strong’s concordance number 3551g. *nomos* “that which is assigned, hence usage, law”) do instinctively the things of the

Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them (Rom. 2:14f).

And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).

*People's self-concept determines how they react to the world.* If teachers want their students to have successful interpersonal relationships (e.g., with God, spouse, friends, future co-workers, employers), they should act toward them in such a way that they come to better understand their value as individuals. When they come to view themselves as loved by God, to the point that He sacrificed His Son for them, they may begin to react to others in a more healthy and secure manner.

And Saul answered and said, "Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?" (1 Sam. 9:21).

There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight (Num. 13:33).

The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness (Luke 11:34).

#### **AXIOLOGY — WHAT IS OF VALUE?**

**AXIOLOGY** is the study of questions of **value** (Knight, 1980, p. 9). This philosophical branch focuses on why humans value and prefer certain things over other things. This study aims to answer such questions as the following: What is ethical and what is sinful? What ought I do? What is the good life for all people? What is beautiful? What should I like? What is good art?

*People are made in God's image which includes being a moral being.* In order to teach the whole man, educators should address their students' morality as well as their intellect. And when their students have been instructed to discern right from wrong behavior, they should be encouraged to choose what is right.

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man (Acts 17:29).

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good (Strong's Concordance number 2896bh. *tob* "a good thing, benefit, welfare") and evil (Strong's Concordance number 7451bh. *ra* "evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity");

and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever —” (Gen. 3:22).

Then Elihu continued and said, “Let us choose for ourselves what is right; Let us know among ourselves what is good” (Job 34:1,4).

*People have God’s laws written on their hearts.* Although a sinful nature interferes with their true discernment of God’s laws, people have a degree of understanding about what is right and what is wrong. This fact could be a starting point for those teachers who are witnessing to non-Christian work associates. Those who don’t believe in the existence of a Creator could be confronted with the existence of the *Tau*, or natural laws; natural laws imply the existence of a Law Giver.

For when Gentiles who do not have the Law (Strong’s Concordance number 3551g. *nomos* “that which is assigned, hence usage, law”) do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them (Rom. 2:14f).

But the word (Strong’s Concordance number 1697h. *dabar* “speech, word”) is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart (Strong’s Concordance number 3824h. *lebab* “inner man, mind, will, heart”), that you may observe it (Deut. 30:14).

He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity (Strong’s Concordance number 5769h. *olam* “long duration, antiquity, futurity”) in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end (Eccl. 3:11).

*People are created to operate with structure or boundaries.* Students should not be given free reign in the classroom or with their time. Instead, teachers should clearly explain such things as rules of conduct and expectations for assignments.

And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure (Strong’s Concordance number 3354g. *metreo* “to measure, measure out”) the city, and its gates and its wall. And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements (Rev. 21:15-17).

So you shall keep His statutes (Strong’s Concordance number 2706h. *choq* “something prescribed or owed, a statute”) and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time (Deut. 4:40).

*People's moral being is created to operate consistent with God's moral and spiritual laws.* When teachers disobey moral laws, they will experience negative consequences. They may find themselves unprepared for class, in conflict with other teachers or administrators, or not able to effectively communicate with students. Teachers ought to make it a priority to conform themselves to God's laws as best they can — not only to serve as positive role models for their students, but to have fewer unnecessary conflicts in their work.

...and admonished them in order to turn them back to Thy law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Thy commandments but sinned against Thine ordinances, by which if a man observes them he shall live. And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen (Neh. 9:29).

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Rom. 12:2).

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart (Strong's Concordance number 5565g. *cho\_ris* "separately, separate from") from Me you can do nothing (John 15:5).

*Internal governance develops at least in part through early external guidance.* It is, in large part, up to the parents and those to whom the parents surrender educational responsibility to mold a child's ability to self-govern. Guidance includes dedication and discipline of the children.

Train up (Strong's Concordance number 2596h. *chanak* "to train up, dedicate") a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6).

All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:11).

Listen to counsel and accept discipline (Strong's Concordance number 4148h. *musar* "discipline, chastening, correction"), that you may be wise the rest of your days (Prov. 19:20).

*People are motivated to achieve or at least move closer to the "ideal."* Goals should be made clear to students, and examples of well executed projects should be provided for their study. When students gain a better understanding of the ideal completed assignment, they are more likely to come close to attaining that degree of quality. If, for example, the syllabus is unclear, students may become discouraged by their inability to discern what the "ideal" is.

I press on (Strong's Concordance number 1377g. *dio\_ko\_* "to put to flight, to pursue, by implied, implication to persecute") toward the goal (Strong's Concordance number 4649g. *skopos* "a watchman, a mark (on which to fix the eye)") for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14).

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God (Heb. 6:1).

...fixing (Strong's Concordance number 872g. *aphorao\_* "to look away from all else at") our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12:2).

*Motivations operate from inside outward.* Teachers should consider students' motivations, and when there is bad behavior look not just at the symptoms, but try to discern the real causes.

But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man (Matt. 15:18).

Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you" (Luke 11:39-41).

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4).

*People are motivated toward ongoing satisfaction or affirmation in the following areas:*

- *love.* A key quality found in good teachers is love for the students. Teachers ought to interact lovingly with their students; children are hungry for such love.

Because Thy lovingkindness (Strong's Concordance number 2617ah. *chesed* "goodness, kindness") is better than life, my lips will praise Thee (Ps. 63:3).

How well you prepare your way To seek love! Therefore even the wicked women You have taught your ways (Jer. 2:33).

Pursue (Strong's Concordance number 1377g. *dio\_ko\_* "to put to flight, to pursue, by implied, implication to persecute") love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1).

- *dignity*. Teachers ought to treat their students with dignity, recognizing their worth as blessed and valuable creations of God.

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek (Strong's Concordance number 5092g. *time\_* "a valuing, a price") for glory (Strong's Concordance number 1391g. *doxa* "opinion (always good in N.T.), hence praise, honor, glory") and honor (Strong's Concordance number 4586g. *semnos* "reverend, i.e. venerable, specifically serious") and immortality, eternal life (Rom. 2:5-7).

May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge (Ruth 2:12).

- *security*. Teachers ought to provide a sense of security for their students. In dangerous neighborhoods, school administrators should consider acquiring metal detectors and security guards. These things might allow students to focus less on self-protection and more on their studies.

How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings (Ps. 36:7).

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling (Matt. 23:37).

Then my people will live in a peaceful habitation, and in secure dwellings and in undisturbed resting places (Is. 32:18).

"Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set him in the safety (Strong's Concordance number 3468h. *yeshu'a* "deliverance, rescue, salvation, safety, welfare") for which he longs" (Ps. 12:5).

- *acceptance*. Regardless of their performance, students should be accepted for who they are — valuable and blessed creations of God. At the same time, however, teachers should maintain high expectations for their students.

No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15).

Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him, that he may see His face with joy, and He may restore His righteousness to man (Job 33:26).

- *esteem*. Recognizing who they are as creations of God, teachers ought to esteem their students. The students are likely to grow more confident, and perhaps like Moses address in a prophetic manner those with whom they have conflict.

...and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another (1 Thess. 5:13).

Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant, than he who honors himself and lacks bread (Prov. 12:9).

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people (Ex. 11:3).

- *responsibility*. Some students will try to take responsibility over things for which they are unqualified. Jesus spoke of the Pharisees, and the poor qualifications they possessed for their positions. At times, when students have broken into small groups, teachers should see to it that the more qualified students take the position of responsibility.

“So now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise! For this matter is your responsibility, but we will be with you; be courageous and act.” Then Ezra rose and made the leading priests, the Levites, and all Israel, take oath that they would do according to this proposal; so they took the oath (Ezra 10:3-5).

Jesus said, “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them. And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with {so much as} a finger. But they do all their deeds to be noticed (Strong's concordance number 2300g. *theaomai* “to behold, look upon”) by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels {of their garments. And they love the place of honor (Strong's concordance number 4411g. *pro\_toklisia* “the chief place (at the table)”) at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi” (Strong's concordance number 4461g. *rhabbi* “my master, my teacher”) (Matt. 23:2-7).

And Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever” (Gen. 43:8f).

*Those who do wrong are motivated to:*

- *get rid of righteous standards.* Teachers should expect the bright students to be picked on at times by other students. They may be physically molested or called names. Students should not be permitted to do such things.

And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him (Gen. 4:8).

...not as Cain, who was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous (1 John 3:12).

Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up, go away!” (2 Sam. 13:15).

But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and were intending to slay them (Acts 5:33).

- *invite others to engage in the same behavior.* Teachers should expect those who abuse drugs or participate in deviant behavior to try to recruit others. The administration could consider conducting a school-wide program which shows the negative effects such a lifestyle produces.

Don't be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals (1 Cor. 15:33).

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate (Gen. 3:6).

...and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them (Rom. 1:32).

- *blame someone else.* When disruptions occur in class, those who caused the disruptions might blame someone else. The teacher should use discernment before disciplining the accused.

And the man said, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Gen. 3:12f).

Men of bloodshed hate the blameless, but the upright are concerned for his life (Prov. 29:10).

The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me” (John 5:7).

### CONCLUSIONS

Everyone has a worldview — a web of beliefs, a systematic conceptual filter through which one passes data in order to evaluate and make sense of daily experiences. By understanding others’ worldviews, it becomes possible to understand what motivates them to behave as they do (for ideas *do* have consequences). By understanding their own worldview, people might come to understand why they behave as they do. And by better understanding the worldview one have found to be true, one becomes more able to conform oneself to it, and behave as one ought.

Often teachers accept educational practices without realizing that the philosophies on which they are based may be incompatible with their own. These practices fail, the participants become disillusioned, and then they may reject future implementation of educational innovations because of these negative experiences. Equipped with an understanding of the worldview they are seeking to transmit to their students, however, teachers are better able to evaluate and discuss the value of various educational practices and implement curricula and class activities which serve to properly educate their students.

REFERENCES

- Knight, G.R. (1980). *Philosophy and education: An introduction in Christian perspective*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press.
- The Holy Bible*. (1960). New American Standard Version. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.