

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SUMMARY NOTE

BASIC CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

- It is pursuit wisdom.
- Philosophy exists in 4 major aspects. That is, as an activity, attitude, science and body of content.
- Philosophy as an activity involves Synthesizing, Speculating, Prescription and Analyzing.
- Philosophy as an attitude involves Self -awareness, comprehensiveness, penetration, and flexibility.
- Philosophy as a science involves experimentation and setting of hypothesis.
- Philosophy as a body of content comprises 3 philosophical questions namely:

(1)METAPHYSICS– deals with study of the nature of reality and sub-divided into

- Cosmological metaphysics- deal with nature and study of reality of the universe
- Theological metaphysics – conceptions of the nature of and the person of God(atheists – no God, Deists –absentee God, Pantheists – God in everything, Theists – God the creator(monotheists-one supreme God or polytheists – many little gods).
- Anthropological metaphysics – study of the nature of the reality of man.
- Ontological metaphysics - study of the nature of reality of existence

(2)EPISTEMOLOGY – questions dealing with nature and sources of truth and knowledge. Is truth relative or absolute? Or Is knowledge subjective objective?

Two major types of knowledge are :

Prior knowledge – knowledge that is independent of human thought or experience.

Posteriori - knowledge acquired through human experience. This experience can be through the following sources of knowledge namely:

Senses , Revelation, Authority, Reason, Intuition.

(3)AXIOLOGY – study and questions of nature of value. The two divisions are ethics – study of moral value, and aesthetics – value that search for what governs the creation and appreciation of beauty and art.

Philosophical Theories of validity of knowledge are:

Correspondence – deals with agreement with existing facts.

Coherence - deals with consistency with other facts of like.

Pragmatic - workability or satisfactory consequences of the facts.

Biblical Validity of Truth and Knowledge in relation to true prophet and denomination.

This is based on these following texts:

Isaiah 28:9-13 “here a little, there a little” Biblical truth is established. This agrees with both coherence and correspondence theory of philosophy.

Isaiah 8:20 “To the law and to the testimony if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”. – Correspondence theory.

Jeremiah 28: 8,9–“ if a prophet prophesied of peace and it comes to pass, then the prophet be accepted as sent by God”.- coherence

Matthew 7: 17-20 – “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” –pragmatic theory.

1John 4: 1-4 “Any spirit that does not confess that Christ has come in flesh is not of God. – Coherence / correspondence.

Daniel chapter 2 content/ fulfillment are proof of the bible as the source of validity of true knowledge.

Nebuchadnezzar dream and interpretation

Head of Gold represent Babylon (606-539BC)

Breast and arms of silver represent Medio-Persia (539-331 BC)

Belly and thighs of Brass represent Greece Empire (331-168 BC)

Legs of Iron represent Great Roman Empire (168 BC-476 AD)

Feet of mixed iron and clay represent ten independent nations of Europe.

What is education?

It is a subset of learning, a deliberate attempt made by the learner to control, guide, direct, influence and manage a learning situation in order to achieve a desired goal (Laska 1996).

Socrates called it “midwifery of knowledge”

It came out of Latin word “educare” which is to bring-up a child in all aspects of life

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3H'S OF EDUCATION: HEAD, HAND AND HEART.

HEAD: deals with thinking, reasoning, memory, understanding, decision making. It is the acquisition of knowledge majorly through the processes stated above with the use of our brain.

HAND: integration of academic achievement with **vocational skills**.

HEART: involves spiritual growth in the **fear of the Lord and keen love to fellow men**.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: application of philosophical ideas to educational problems.

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Ellen G. WHITE defines it as “the harmonious **development of physical, mental, social and spiritual powers**.”

PHYSICAL – deals with **health living formulae known as NEWSTART**. Nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest, trust in God.

MENTAL – brain development involving **academic, moral, emotional and intellectual growths**.

SOCIAL - relational growth with fellow men

SPIRITUAL – being inclined to the things of the spirit

THE BIBLE AS AN EDUCATOR

- Bible contains collection of sacred writings accepted by Christians as inspired word God having **66 books of 39 OT and 27 NT**.
- The name Bible was derived from the Latin word 'biblia'.
- **Bible Text supporting the revelation and inspirational source of the word of God.**
- **2 Peter 1: 21** – “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit”.
- **2 Timothy 3: 16 17** –“ All Scripture is inspiration of God and is profitable for reproof, for correction etc”,(complete this from the Bible)
- **Isaiah 40: 8** –“The grass withers, the flowers fade but God’s words stand for ever “
- **Luke 24:27,44** – the Bible talks of Jesus in the law of Moses, prophets, and in Psalms.

Biblical History of education – Four major schools

The School of Eden

- The first school on earth. Home for Adam and Eve.
- Had two special trees which were **tree of Life and tree of knowledge of good and evil**.
- The garden was the **classroom**, nature was **the lesson**,
- God was the **Lecturer**, Adam and Eve –**the students**.
- Their subjects were:
 - (1) **manual(Gen. 2:15** “to dress it and to keep it). To bless them physically, strengthen their body, to expand the mind, develop character.
 - (2) **Nature(Gen. 2:2, 18-24)** – mystery of heavenly bodies was first study by Adam and Eve.

Marriage and family, manual labour and Sabbath – institutions that had their origin from Eden

The School Isreal

- Started after the fall of man in Eden.
- **God and Parents** were teachers, and family the school, **children** the students.
- It was **established for character and industry development**.

Subjects include:

- Industrial education of building the Sanctuary,”Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may live among them”(Exodus25:8).
- Sanitary studies (Deut.23:14).
- Sacred Songs (Ex. 15:21).
- The Law of God (Deut.6:6,7).
- Annual feast.

The school of the prophets

- Established by **Samuel** as directed by God.
- To serve as **a barrier against wide spread of corruption**.
- To provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youths.

- To promote the prosperity of the nation.
- Located in two campuses **Ramah and Kirjath - jearim**.
- It was compulsory for the students to learn a trade.

Subjects include:

Law of God, sacred songs, history and poetry.

The School Here After

- To be located in Heaven after the 2nd coming of Jesus.
- The students will be the **redeemed** and **Jesus Christ** the teacher.
- Textbooks will be the **books of records** of every human deeds.

E.G. WHITE AND PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian philosophy of education is based on **the Bible**.

Among Adventists, the book called **Education** by **E.G White** discusses education extensively.

E G WHITE

- Fully known as **Ellen Gould White**, but formerly called **Ellen Gould Harmon**.
- **Was born to Robert and Eunice Harmon of Gorham, Maine (USA) on November 26, 1827.**
- Stoned at **age 9** and became blind in March 1840.
- Was a Methodist by birth and was baptized into the church at age 12 on June 26, 1842.
- Disfellowshipped from Methodist church in 1843 for accepting **William Miller** new message of Christ coming.
- Experienced the **Great Disappointment of Oct. 22, 1844** with other believers.
- Married James White on August 5, 1846. had 4 sons of which 2 died and 2 survived.
- Had the first vision at **age 17, in December 1844.**
- Had other vision which resulted into production of many books of education and prophecies such **Desires of Ages, Counsels on Food and Diets, Great Controversy**, and others translated into 123 languages.
- Sustained left femur injury on **February 15, 1915** and died **July 16, 1915 at the age of 87years** with her last statement as **"I know in whom I have believed"**.

E.G WHITE'S VIEW OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Said "Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range".
- Defined **true education** and **philosophy of Christian education** " **harmonious development of the physical, mental, social and spiritual powers**".
- education is to make students **thinkers** rather than **reflectors** of others thoughts.
- Love, the basis of creation and redemption, is also the basis of true education (Luke 10: 27).
- Also that "the **greatest want of the world** is the want of men, men who can not be bought or sold, men who in their innermost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin its right name, men whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heaven fall".

7TH-DAY PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION

- S.D.A is a **church of prophecy and has Biblical foundations (Gen.2: 2-3; Exod. 20: 8-10).**
- **Advent** means Christ second coming.
- Adopted the name as a church on **Oct.1st, 1860.**
- **Its philosophy** - “the restoration in man the image of his Maker”.
- **Its objective** – “to provide students with an education within the framework of the science of salvation
- **Its core values** – Open Communication, Accountability and Integrity, Honesty and Transparency, Tolerance and Humility, Intellectual freedom and Responsibility, Unity in Diversity and Adventist Christian Heritage.

PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN OF EDUCATION AND SUBJECT AREAS

- **Literature and Literary studies** – in selection of books to read “ ask of value the book would be to human mind development.
- **Science** – study it with **Godliness**, for science is a special revelation of God.
- **Business** – consider **Prov. 21:6; Luke 6:38.**
- **Recreation** – not an amusement but meant to be uplifting, restorative and re - creative.
- **Music** – should bring glory to God (1 Cor.10:31), purify Christian thoughts (Philippians 4:8) agree with God’s Word (the Bible).

In Adventist education philosophy

A student is child of God and God’s image for whom Christ came and died.

He /she is expected to embrace Godliness, be prayerful, punctual to classes and other official gathering.

Other philosophies see student and teacher differently, for example:

To realist:

- A student is a **functioning organism** that can perceive natural order of world through sensory experience.
- A **teacher is**, a sophisticated spectator viewing the natural order of the world.
- He is to pass accurate information to students.

The 3 traditional philosophies are

(A) Idealism – ideas are the only true reality and that visible things are not real.

It was propounded by Plato (427-347 BC). Believe in power of the mind. Has 2 famous works called “the Republic and the Law”. In Republic he wrote about the separation of the world of ideas from the world of matter.

Believes

- **In dialectic method of teaching (critical discussion)**
- **That education should have a curriculum which is saturated with abstract thinking**
- **That philosophers are not to be mere thinkers but doers of their thought**

Religious idealism led by Augustine (354- 430AD) – believe that purpose of teaching was to lead people back to consciousness of a union with the source of things through moral purity and intellectual efforts.

Modern idealists –

Rene-Descartes (1596-1650) – wrote Discourse on method and meditations on the First Philosophy.

Immanuel Kant(1724-1804) – critique of Pure Reason and Critique of Practical Reason.

Aims of idealists in education

- Mind and character development
- Focus on lasting things than temporal
- Self actualization and search for ideas
- Wholistic relation of parts

To idealists:

- A student is microcosmic mind and an image of his/her Creator God.
- A teacher should be an embodiment of finest character, a facilitator and mediator between microcosmic self (student and the macro Absolute Self - God)
- He is for impartation of true knowledge into students for proper mind development.

B)Realism – held that knowledge, value, and truth exist independently of human mind. Believe in the power of the sense organs.

Propounded by Aristotle (384-322 BC) who developed the concept of Golden Mean – - holding that “soul is an entity of balance life”.

- Believed that body and mind work together.
- Used syllogism to work on logical processes.
- Syllogism – use major and minor premises to arrive at a conclusion

Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) a religious realist.

John Locke (1632-1704) modern realist who held that there is no innate idea or tendency and that man was born with plain mind. This he called tabula rasa meaning a blank sheet of paper.

Realists believe in the use of audio/visual in education.

C) Neo-Scholasticism – started from Western Europe between 1050 & 1350 based on Aristotle’s writings. Held on Rationalism

Led by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) with his major work as Summa Theologica. Neo-Scholasticism is a re-statement of scholasticism.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS IN EDUCATION

These are tests that are objectives, often standardized for the purpose of measuring individual differences and personality.

Types are:

SAT – The Scholastic Aptitude Test.

EPI – Eysneck Personality Inventory

MMPI – Minnesota Multi - Phase Inventory.

SHI – Study Habit Inventory
SPI – Students Problem Inventory etc.

CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF EDUCATION

Progressivism – meant to discourage traditional education and encouraged more freedom of expression among children.

Perennialism – a reaction to the emphasis of progressives on child – centeredness. It advocates commitment to absolute principles.

Essentialism – arose in 1930 as a reaction to progressivism in education. Claimed that progressives are too soft and attempts to make learning painless.

Reconstructionism – meant to create new and equal society. Held that education should bring new social order with democratic political principles.

Behaviourism – is related to realism. Believes that behavior is caused by environmental conditions. Some of the well-known proponents are Ivan Pavlov, John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner -who published his work Walden Two in 1948, Science and Human Behavior in 1953, and Beyond Freedom and Dignity in 1971