A Pedagogy for Christian Education in a Postmodern Society

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ABSTRACT
- Postmodern American poses external threats to Christianity and to Christian higher education, including growing secularism, alternative religiosity, urbanization, and rapid technological change as features of the wider society. Furthermore, Christianity and Christian education have long had internal threats, including syncretism with pagan religions and human philosophies, and conflation of the faith with ethnic, cultural, political, and economic interests.

Agenda
- Examine internal and external threats to Christian education in postmodern America, ranging from the growth of secularism to the creeping insurgence of anti-Christian philosophies.
- Explore Judeo-Christian Values as a foundational role in America
- Establish a framework for modern Christian education to match Biblical patterns of rigorous scholarship coupled with fearless religious devotion.

Definitions
- Pedagogy
- the function or work of a teacher; teaching.
- the art or science of teaching; education; instructional methods.
- The root meaning of Pedagogy is leading children. It is defined as the art or science of being a teacher and it generally refers to strategies of instruction, or a style of instruction.
- (Jo McShane, 2007)

Christian Pedagogy
- T. Groome defines Christian pedagogy as engaging the very 'being' of... students, to inform, form and transform their identity and agency--who they are and how they live--with the meaning and ethic of Christian faith.
- Foundational to this pedagogical model is social action, in which learners become empowered to use their knowledge to transform society.
- Groome (1996)

Definitions
- Postmodern Society
- Postmodernism is the cultural worldview that now penetrates and owns our society. This worldview values:
- spirituality, pluralism, the experiential, relativity, altruism, community, creativity, the arts, environmentalism, globality, holism, and authenticity
Examine internal and external threats to Christian education in postmodern America, ranging from the growth of secularism to the creeping insurgence of anti-Christian philosophies. Sekulow (2012)

Religious freedom is one of the core principles upon which the American system of government is based. And yet religious freedom in America is under assault: Politicians mock the Christians claims of religious conscience, while government entities and actors treat religious freedom and expression as obstacles to be overcome rather than as important values to protect.

Sekulow (2012)

The real battle raging in our country isn’t so much between liberal vs. conservative and Democrat vs. Republican so much as it is faith vs. a lie and liberty vs. tyranny.

Kimbreel (2103)

The dawning of Christianity's third millennium finds many Christian colleges and universities in search of identity.

Diekema (2000)

Though established to preserve Christian values and prepare leaders for the church, some historically religious institutions “slid down the ‘slippery slope,’” becoming secular and sometimes even hostile to people of faith.

Ewert (2007)

Perhaps the most frequently asked question of Christian college and university presidents is some variant of: “Are you still Christian?” “Are you keeping the faith?”

Ewert (2007)
Explore Judeo-Christian Values as a foundational role in America

Judeo-Christian Values have a foundational role in America, beginning with the Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...."

Our Founding Fathers separated church from state, but they wisely did not separate God from state; Cerry (2007)

John Adams said:

"We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Our sense of right and wrong and our sense of wisdom come from the use of reason and common sense, but also, and importantly, from the Bible which, by faith was considered by our Founding Fathers to be God's inspired text; and not just from the mind or heart of man.

This faith lead to the mottos: “In God We Trust” and “One Nation under God.” Our Founding Fathers were believers in the God of the Bible, Prager (2007)
Framework

- Establish a framework for modern Christian education to match Biblical patterns of rigorous scholarship coupled with fearless religious devotion.

A Framework for Christian Education

- Christian pedagogy has at least these four hallmarks, which are true across
- 1. Christian teaching honestly faces
- 2. Christian teaching focuses upon social justice

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Trevor Cairney, in New Perspectives on Anglican Education, believes pedagogy ultimately shapes the very nature, …………………………………………

(Cairney, Cowling & Jensen, 2011),

A Framework for Christian Education

- 3. it is synoptic,
- 4. it engages the whole of the educational experience,
- Bruner (1996)

A Framework for Christian Education

- 1. Uniqueness:
- 2. Relationship:
3. Community:

4. Agency: Christian pedagogy should teach students that their actions can and will impact the world. Perhaps one of the greatest structural sins we have seen in education is teaching some students to believe that, while some are able to impact the world, most are not. Simply stated, we believe the educational system should help all students come to believe they can impact the world powerfully.

5. Stewardship:

6. Service:

7. Edification:

Kieser, Parsons (2016)

Considerations:

Trent Batson, … in a time of knowledge stability, teach; in a time of rapid change in knowledge, learn.”

Batson (2011)
The higher the level of education (senior high school, undergraduate and graduate) more andragogical strategies are used. And teachers must facilitate more and enliven learning.

Andragogy, Knowles (1980) the methods or techniques used to teach adults.

Andragogy, or learner-centered education, which may be the most effective method of learning in this digital age but also describes the adult learning process, such as the ..........

Those born around 1990 can be said to belong to the Digital Communication Culture. And because of this deluge of information, the theologian, the religious person, the teacher and the student have been enormously empowered and made independent.

Our Christian colleges and universities exist to forester and enrich..........................

Christian colleges and universities will have new and special opportunities in the academy during this period of postmodern cultural transformation.....
Considerations

- It will be important for Christian colleges and universities to help guide the community of faith.
- Dickema (2000)