

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW  INTEGRATION SERIES

EDUCATION *for Human Flourishing*

A Christian Perspective

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CONTENTS

Series Preface / 9

Authors' Preface / 29

Précis of Book and Chapters / 35

1 HUMANITY REVISITED / 39

2 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION
LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE / 69

3 WHO KNOWS? EDUCATION AND EPISTEMOLOGY / 100

4 THE INFORMATION ECONOMY OF EDUCATION / 125

5 SOCIAL ETHICS AND THE INSTITUTION OF EDUCATION / 170

6 ISSUES AND QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE,
POLICY AND LEADERSHIP / 218

INDEX / 249

PRÉCIS OF BOOK AND CHAPTERS

THESIS

The purpose of this book is to revive and ground a perennial philosophy of education that integrates essential tenets of the Christian faith. The text simultaneously reflects on the old and new, offering a new, critical, and integratively Christian educational agenda for a twenty-first-century global community, and secures this analysis within an appropriate framework of thought. This book makes a case that the complex educational good is not sustainable in the present technical environment of schooling and higher education. This technical environment within the educational field limits information and knowledge that makes us most human. For learning to contribute to human development and flourishing, including important dimensions of freedom, education as an institution requires conditions of knowledge and practice that are grounded in the Christian liberal arts tradition. As a text, the book is written specifically for emerging practitioners and scholars in the field, upperclassmen and graduate level college students in education degree programs in higher education across the world.

MAIN SKILLS

In chapters one through three readers will be encouraged to think about what it means to be human, and how their conception of humanity both theologically and philosophically affects how they go about educating others. They will learn to better consider how education developed throughout history, and how today's modern educational field is a result of those historical decisions. They will discover a proper sense of

what it means to pursue truth and knowledge in a way that enables them to have confidence in their educational endeavor.

Chapters four through six emphasize the intellectual virtues and the skill domains of the liberal arts: *logos* (reason), *mētis* (cunning, practical know-how), *aretē* (upholding virtue, including justice), *sophia* (the development of wisdom), *phronēsis* (habituated good action), and *praxis* (helping to realize individual and community excellences).

CHAPTER PRÉCIS

Chapter 1: In this first chapter, students will wrestle with theological and philosophical anthropology and how it impacts the field of education. To have an understanding of what it means to be human is necessarily at the core of the educational project. We believe that the project of education is fundamentally an investigation of Christian theological principles and philosophical understanding. As students develop these skills they will be able to assess the successes and failures of both broad and specific educational theories. It will also enable students to think carefully about what the primary role of education is. Fundamentally, this chapter will enable students to think about the field of education in terms of what role education plays in the pursuit of human flourishing for followers of Christ.

Chapter 2: The second chapter surveys the philosophical and historical development of educational theories as well as introducing students to the basic philosophical categories that they should know as educators. To have a clear understanding of modern educational theories we must be conversant with the philosophical commitments that have developed over the years within education broadly. We also need to be able employ basic philosophical tools so that we can grapple with various beliefs within the educational field. An increased ability to employ historical and philosophical tools will enable students to comprehend how educational theories develop from deeply held (often tacit) philosophical commitments. This skill is foundational for comprehending diverse educational theories.

Chapter 3: In chapter three students will wrestle with the nature of knowledge. It is important for students to know what counts as knowl-

edge because this is the cornerstone of both curriculum development and assessment. Having a strong working understanding of how we are to think of knowledge grants us confidence in our abilities to pursue what is truly real. Within the field of education knowledge should be understood as something more than convention. Education should be about revealing to students what is real or true about the world. Thus, normative skeptical philosophies are antithetical to an educator's epistemological commitments and educational project. This is to say that there are right and wrong ideas, and this chapter will enable students to make judgments about the rightness and wrongness of ideas as they become more conversant with the principles that undergird knowledge.

Chapter 4: In chapter four students will come to understand more fully the larger institutional and informational forces at work across education. Knowing the information economy of education will offer teachers an important strategic advantage in negotiating for better (more liberal) conditions for student learning. Unfortunately, many of these information forces work against the very integration that Christian educators are concerned with, nudging both teacher preparation and the schools in a narrow and technical direction. This trend presses education into conformity with conceptual systems and models which deny too much its primary nature. As a result, an improper model of education stunts institutional performance and human development. No other book on the market has made this argument available to Christian educators.

Chapter 5: This chapter contrasts social ethics and moral education seen as a mere technical procedure with social ethics and moral education seen as a result of the intellectual and moral virtues. In the technical procedure, virtue becomes less necessary: the focus is away from the achievement of human excellences and toward managing utility functions. Such people as John Dewey believed that the good of education (and human nature itself) could be molded by technical means. We show why this is an insufficient conception of social ethics. Teachers will be shown how to intelligently integrate Christocentric morality and character education into their practice.

Chapter 6: In general terms, there are two arcs of practice in the development of teachers: (a) practice that is a further descent into a technical model, where teachers are technicians, and (b) practice that moves away from the technical model and ascends toward the education good, where teachers are scholars. There are tremendous social costs when teachers are trained as technicians and not as scholars. Perhaps the most important cost is the loss of agency in the development and flourishing of individual human beings. Christian schools of education can awake to these costs and restructure the manner in which new teachers are educated. We take for granted that Christian educators will become school leaders. What are the necessary policy and leadership questions for the twenty-first-century education? How can teachers and leaders integrate their worldview by recasting these questions in the light of the truths of Jesus Christ? Hence, this chapter briefly examines where educational policy and leadership stands today and what future opportunities Christian integrationists might have to help reform the institution of education.