

World View

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World View and Leadership

What is a worldview? Why is it important in understanding Organizational Leadership?

A worldview is an orientation of an individual's view about the world. The concept differs from person to person because every person has a different point of view and perceives the world differently. The definitions of World view revolve around four issues (Sire, 2004):

- (a) the notion that worldview went beyond basic concepts, to being a fundamental orientation of the heart
- (b) the insistence that worldviews are “really real” to those that believe them
- (c) the notion of behavior in light of our worldview and the worldview of others; and finally
- (d) the notion that worldview is connected to a story we believe and not just an idea or proposition

This paper is aimed at answering six critical questions and will also highlight Sire's (2004) view as to what makes a world view. The six critical questions are:

- (a) What is truth?
- (b) Where did we come from?
- (c) What has gone wrong with the world?
- (d) What can we do to fix it?
- (e) How now shall we live?
- (f) What happens when we die?

World View

A world view consists of a set of presuppositions, assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false, which people hold, consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently, about the basic makeup of the world (Sire, 2004). As a Black male growing up in the inner city of Youngstown, Ohio, the author's early worldview was formed in an abusive home where he witnessed his father kicking and beating his mother when she dared to question him. He and his siblings could all hear her through the paper-thin walls as she questioned his whereabouts, how he had spent his paycheck, or his sexual abuse of his daughters. The author remembers his father mercilessly teasing and beating him, supposedly because his academic performance was not at the same level as his lover's sons. This young Black man's worldview was formed as the author watched his mother succumb to depression as she worked three different cleaning jobs throughout the week since she believed that there was no hope for her and her six children.

As a young boy walking through Youngstown's drug-infested neighborhoods, the author learned that the code of streets was to live fast and die young. The author also had a first-hand view of his older brother planning robberies and preparing his supply of illegal drugs for sale on the street.

The Truth and Reason of Our Existence

The truth of our existence can be viewed from two different perspectives i.e. religious view and a secular view. According to the religious view, the truth of our existence is that we are have been sent by God for a special reason. The secular view, on the other hand, does not believe in God nor do they believe that they have been sent for a special reason.

That was the young boy's truth until one day, as the author walked while trying to avoid the hopeless men who stood on the corner drinking Olde English 800 malt liquor and smoking marijuana, his eyes gravitated to a building that housed a youth counseling center called The Needle's Eye. In the window, a cartoon of a smiling child caught his eye. The caption above read, "I am somebody, because God don't make any junk."

Irma Davis, the program director, was the first person the author met when he entered. She asked his name. The author was surprised to hear that she knew his family and about his father's abuse. While the author ate three bologna sandwiches that day, Irma Davis taught him that despite his family, he was created in the image of God. She quoted the Bible to him, saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life." She told him the story of the man who was wounded for the world's transgressions, bruised for the world's iniquities, and how he then paid the ultimate price for the sins of the world. Finally, she led the young man in the sinner's prayer of repentance. From that day on he wanted to be like Jesus. He became his role model and his hope for a better tomorrow. Later, the author heard "The Creation," by African American Harlem Renaissance poet, James Weldon Johnson, who tells the story of the beginning of the world, "And God stepped out on space, And He looked around and said, "I'm lonely --I'll make me a world." Johnson (2002) says regarding the creation on humankind:

Up from the bed of the river God scooped the clay;
And by the bank of the river He kneeled Him down;
And there the great God Almighty
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,

Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand;
This Great God, Like a mammy bending over her baby,
Kneeled down in the dust, toiling over a lump of clay
Till He shaped it in His own image; then into it He blew the breath of life,
And man became a living soul. Amen. Amen (pp. 1).

The author found these words comforting, and inspiring as they serve as a reminder of God's great care and creation. Sire (2004) asserts regarding epistemology:

Is predicated on the nature of what is, not on an autonomous ability, human reason disengaged from God...If prime reality is the biblical God, ethics will not be based on human aspirations but grounded in the character of God as ultimate goodness (p. 55)

What Has Gone Wrong In The World?

As poet and essayist Charles Baudelaire argues in *My Heart Laid Bare*, "True civilization does not lie in gas, or in steam, or in turn tables it lies in the reduction of the traces of original sin" (LXXI, para. 1). The young Black man still recalls contemplating sin in bed at night, wondering why his father was so evil if every person is made in the image of God, and why there was so much sin in the world. The world has gone wrong due to various events such as natural disasters and the changing environment.

One memorable and particularly graphic incident happened on Christmas Eve, when the author was in the fifth or sixth grade. The children were all at home playing together. What few presents we had were wrapped and placed around the tree and cookies were being baked. The father came home from work, washed up, and changed his shirt and announced to the mother that since he planned to go out, he wanted her to precisely trim his hair with a razor: "to line him

up”. Mom knew he wanted to go see his lover, who later became his second wife, so she tried to stop him by reminding him that it was Christmas, and he ought to be spending it with his family. The man became threatening and aggressive, so she complied and shaved the back of his hair all the way up to the crown, as the children looked on and snickered in the background. When he realized what she had done, he exploded and attacked her verbally and physically. The father frightened the children and made them cry. Suddenly, they heard glass shattering and saw that their mother had busted out the window with her fist. Before the shocked father could react, she grabbed the fireplace poker, placed it against his throat, and told him, “This is the last time you are going to lay your hands on me or his kids... now get out of here!” She filed for divorce soon after that.

The world has changed with respect to the business environment as well as the general environment. With respect to trade, the world has is continuously changing; the world is becoming a global village; therefore, the requirements have changed. The multinationals should look to penetrate in different countries to cope up with the change. People should make sure that they living according to the changing trends so that they do not lag behind. These changes can be taken as positive change as well as negative change in the society (Garten, 2000).

What Can We Do To Fix It? How Shall We Now Live?

Director Irma Davis is a wonderful example of how people can fix what has gone wrong with the world. She lived her life as a servant leader. Miss Davis taught this young man how to pray, and the people at the Needle’s Eye reached out to many other young men and women. Through their kindness and demonstration of the love of Christ, these servant leaders fed the hungry, provided clothing, and expressed compassion to those that were in need. She taught this

young man to speak with God about a speech impediment, learning disabilities, and failing grades; soon, he became an honor student. First, he was a student that stuttered, yet later he was public debate team representative for the entire state of Ohio. When he walked the streets again, for the first time he could not see a city of despair. Instead, he saw hope in Jesus Christ.

Additionally, The Needle Eye's demonstration of Christ changed the young man's worldview to one of caring for those that are in need, Northouse (2010) suggests, "In addition to serving, the servant leader has a social responsibility to be concerned with notes and to recognize them as equal stakeholders in the life of the organization" (p.385). They preached the gospel, yet they also changed many lives without speaking a word. Through their servant leadership style, not only did they change the worldviews of the youths from despair and doom, but they provided them with hope for a better tomorrow. They showed them a worldview of empowerment. They could accomplish any goal if they were willing to shift their paradigm of thinking. Because the Needle's Eye servant leaders themselves lived righteous lives, they showed the youth how to live moral, Christ-like lives. Human beings may never be able to fix the entire world, yet at the Needle's Eye, they were able to change the worldview of one child. That change has become reciprocal.

How Shall We Now Live?

Author and essayist Ayn Rand powerfully calls each person to live their lives in service to others:

In the name of the best within you, do not sacrifice this world to those who are its worst.

In the name of the values that keep you alive, do not let your vision of man be distorted by the ugly, the cowardly, the mindless in those who have never achieved his title. Do not

lose your knowledge that man's proper estate is an upright posture, an intransigent mind and a step that travels unlimited roads. Do not let your fire go out, spark by irreplaceable spark, in the hopeless swamps of the approximate, the not-quite, the not-yet, the not-at-all. Do not let the hero in your soul perish, in lonely frustration for the life you deserved, but have never been able to reach. Check your road and the nature of your battle. The world you desired can be won, it exists, it is real, it is possible, it's yours. (n.d.)

Human lives are like ships on a stormy night, tossed by the turbulent waves of life, but should be safely guided onto the peaceful shore. Like Davis, people should be beacons of light that never speak words of discouragement, but provide hope to a dying world through the radiant light of Jesus Christ. This is accomplished by faithfully obeying the second commandment, ‘to love one’s neighbors just as Christ has loved all.’”

What Happens When We Die?

Sire (2004) asserts that,

Within the Christian worldview is the notion that at death each human will continue in existence, eventually being resurrected either to a blissful life with God and his people or to continued unhappy existence forever separated from God and all things that bring joy (p. 85).

One of the most difficult times in any life is the death of a loved one. This event can be even more tragic if one does not know the true meaning of death; it is the fear of the unknown. The Davis family requested that the young man go to Ohio to be by her side when she had very little time left to live. Viewing her tired, withered body melted the hearts of those that were near her bedside because there were many whose lives she had changed. One child at time, she

changed youth into doctors, lawyers, judges, school teachers, bankers, and engineers. Former president, George W. Bush even sent a letter thanking Davis for all her service and presenting her with the highest award given to a civic leader. Throughout the room, hearts and souls wept as final words of gratitude were spoken. Boa (2001) states those who believe in life after death have the hope that they will see their loved ones again:

The homecoming ceremony for a person who knew Jesus Christ is a time when our hope in Christ has a true pay off. We discover that our faith is more real and powerful during these pivotal times when we are forced to acknowledge our lack of control. For a follower of Christ, death is not the end but the doorway to a new and greater domain. The body is left behind, but the spirit is in the presence of the lord until the day when it is joined to a new and glorified resurrection body. Scripture assures us that when we are absent from the body we will be at home with the lord (p. 51)

**Describe How Your Approach To Scholarship Is Impacted By Each Of These Six
Worldview Perspectives.**

It is very important for scholars to understand how their worldview relates to the worldview of others. Sire (2004) asserts:

One of the most important uses of worldview analysis is self-analysis. To become conscious of your grasp of the fundamental nature of reality, to be able to tell yourself just what you believe about God, the universe, yourself, and the world around you...Indeed, he argues, "Naming your elephant does not guarantee, you are right but does mean you know where you stand" (p. 138).

There are many worldviews as well as many interpretations of God that will pose a challenge to the author, in order to be effective in their respective work environments, scholars and leaders would be expected to offer informed, well-researched opinions in order to persuade others to accept their position.

How Does Each Of The Six Worldview Constructs Inform Your Leadership And How Will Your Worldview Impact Your Study And Practice Of Leadership?

As a Christian, the author believes that every person he leads is created in the image of God and therefore must be treated with dignity and respect. Understanding leadership as it relates to worldview has caused the author to appreciate that there are other worldviews. Indeed, Sire (2004) notes,

The world today is marked by two seemingly equal and opposite characteristics. On the one hand, we are surrounded by people who view the world very differently from us. On the other hand, all of us hold so tightly to our worldview that it operates for each individual as if it were the only worldview (p.160).

For example, at a management meeting, a supervisor began to have an emotional breakdown while he shared with the management team that he was in an abusive same-sex relationship and wanted to change his life. Someone asked, "Do you want to be made whole?" He replied, "yes," and consented to the management team's offer to pray for him. The implication of the question, "Do you want to be made whole?" was that the source of all his problems was his homosexual lifestyle itself, rather than his partner's abusiveness. The following week, he reported the entire team to the president of the company because he felt that their anti-gay, Christian views were being forced upon him. Because the author was the director of that

management team, he was held reasonable for what had occurred in that meeting and was warned not to promote religious ideas while on the job. Frankly, before being accepted into the Doctorate of Leadership program at Indiana Wesleyan, the author had no concept of the term worldview. He believed that some people were right, and others, while they might be sincere, were sincerely wrong. Now the author sees the world from other perspectives and has gained greater respect for the worldviews of others

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