Guidelines for values-education in South African Schools

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Abstract
Although the debate on values and values-education has been going on for several years, it is evident from literature that there is as yet no unanimity on what is meant by the concept values. Chapter 2 (Article 1) of this thesis is an attempt to clarify the confusion between various value-education related concepts, to analyse the phenomenon from an ontological perspective and to demonstrate that one’s choice of terminology depends on presuppositions.

Chapter 2 (Article 1) was written from a reformational perspective, based on the ground motive of creation, the fall of man, redemption and restoration. From this perspective, people were created as a value-driven being and his/her values are guided by religious convictions and a religious world view. It is then argued that principles and values are not synonymous or the same: principles are fixed, unchanged points of departure, whereas values emanate from principles and their application is determined by the demands of the contingent situation.

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, there is a value-dilemma, which is obvious in the prioritising of values by different people and groups of people. The importance of values and values-education is not ignored, and throughout the world values-education programmes are being developed. Chapter 3 (Article 2) focuses on two questions: firstly the question whether values-education is the task of the school, and secondly, if so, whose values should be taught/instilled at school.

The above-mentioned questions are addressed in chapter 3 from a reformational-educational perspective. As values and education are inseparably bound to each other, the school as an educational institution has the task of providing values-education. In order to address the question of whose values should be taught, several programmes were analysed and the conclusion was made that although universal values are being taught, the religious values are still the values that determine all the other values, and few people will compromise their religious convictions. There can be no neutral values and any value orientation will be religiously “coloured”.

The worldwide outcry for a society where the decline in values can be stopped, is evident in the development of several values-education or character-building programmes in schools by policymakers and educational planners. To address the issue of whose values should be taught, the focus is on character-building programmes that concentrate explicitly on values such as, for example, honesty and respect.

Chapter 4 (Article 3) proposes a programme that will be acceptable for Christian parents whose children attend public schools. Firstly, values-education is analysed to compile a few points of departure from a reformational perspective to analyse other values-education or character-building programmes. Results indicate that the “Cornerstone
Values” programme of John Heenan presents a possible solution for values-education in South African public schools.

Despite the fact that the Constitution of South Africa uses language that could be described as “value language”, our country is experiencing an intense moral crisis. There is an urgent need to establish ways of finding answers to the value crisis in South Africa. Morality has always been part of education. In chapter 5 (Article 4) the relationship between values, education and discipline is addressed from a Biblical (in this case, reformational) perspective. The teacher as a secondary educator plays an important role in the establishment of values among learners. In its Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, the Department of Education has made clear its intention to establish values in schools. The values emphasised in this document concur with the ideals of nation building in the new democratic South Africa. Unfortunately, the absence of discipline and self-discipline among learners and educators implies that these ideals cannot be realised. The main cause of discipline problems can possibly be identified as the absence of a value system rooted in a specific life and worldview, for without such a perspective the management of discipline problems can only be symptomatic.

The lack of discipline in South African schools and the moral decay of society are stressed in several publications. However, not much attention is paid to the way values influence the discipline in the classroom. An empirical investigation was conducted to determine the extent to which values play a role in learners obeying or disobeying class rules. Secondary school learners (N=1357) in the Potchefstroom school district participated in this investigation.

It was found in chapter 6 (Article 5) that indicators of self-values, such as self-discipline, good manners, self-control, maturity and self-responsibility, are the main factors that play a role when learners obey class rules. However, the same value, namely self-value, is also the main factor which causes when learners not to obey class rules, especially when their urge to be independent and self-responsible are not being met.

Key terms
Values; principles; norms; education; values-education; character building programme; discipline; classroom discipline