

Final Paper: My Philosophy of Life

Amber DeNooy

Colorado Christian University

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Professor: David Mullaney

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Over the past 13 months that I have been attending CCU, I have learned a great deal about myself. This has been especially true during the past five weeks while in the Personal and Social Ethics course. Our philosophy of life greatly influences our ethical decision-making. This paper will discuss several areas related to my philosophy of life, including my character traits, worldview, theory of knowledge and truth, and principals and values that direct my life.

### **Section 1: Character Traits**

Who am I? The complete answer to this question would be far too long to discuss in the context of this paper. Therefore, in this section, I will focus on one of my most defining characteristics and two other areas that define who I am.

I consider being a Christian my most defining characteristic. My beliefs impact everything in my life. Because my beliefs impact my view on life, they will be discussed in greater detail in section two of this paper.

Over the course of this Management of Human Resources (MHR) program, I have learned more about two other areas that define who I am. In one of the MHR courses, we took the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers & Briggs, 1993). The MBTI measures personality preferences in four different areas: extraversion (E) versus introversion (I), sensing (S) versus intuition (N), thinking (T) versus feeling (F), and judging (J) versus perceiving (P).

When I took the MBTI, I learned that my profile is I, N, F, J/P. The INFJ profile reads:

Seek meaning and connection in ideas, relationships, and material possessions. Want to understand what motivates people and are insightful about others. Conscientious and committed to their firm values. Develop a clear vision about how best to serve the common good. Organized and decisive in implementing their vision (p. 2).

The INFP profile reads:

Idealistic, loyal to their values and to people who are important to them. Want an external life that is congruent with their values. Curious, quick to see possibilities, can be catalysts for implementing ideas. Seek to understand people and to help them fulfill their potential. Adaptable, flexible, and accepting unless a value is threatened (p. 2).

I think these profiles are fairly accurate descriptors of my personality.

In another MHR course, we took the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (LEAD) instrument. The LEAD instrument profiles personal leadership styles. My primary leadership styles are S3, participating, and S2, selling. These leadership styles are appropriate for followers who are able but unwilling or insecure and unable but willing or confident, respectively. My secondary leadership style is S1, telling, and is appropriate for followers who are unable and unwilling or insecure (Center for Leadership Studies, 1998). Like my MBTI profile, I also agree with my LEAD profile.

Both the MBTI and the LEAD helped me to gain insight into my personality preferences and leadership styles. While no particular profile is superior to another, both instruments point to areas for growth, and in that way, I found both to be very helpful tools.

## **Section 2: Worldview**

I have been taught the Christian theistic worldview my entire life. However, over the past 18 months, the beliefs that make up my worldview have become more solidified and more personal due to a variety of reasons.

The first tenet of my worldview is the belief that God created the world. I have always believed that God created this world. Up until recently, I believed this due to the words of Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Holy Bible, 1995). Recently, I have become aware of scientific evidence backing this belief. This evidence includes

the anthropic principle, which states that Earth has just the right combination of features to support life. The concept of irreducible complexity says that organisms are too complex to have evolved step by step, because without any of their structures, organisms cannot survive (Colson, 1999). In addition, the fossil record is incomplete, showing no signs of transitional life forms. This is a fact that even Darwin himself pointed out (Intelligent Design and Evolution Awareness Club, 2001).

The second tenet of my worldview is that God is a personal, loving, all-knowing, all-powerful God. I grew up hearing Bible stories that taught me about a personal, loving, all-knowing, all-powerful God. Over the past 18 months due to a variety of circumstances and experiences, I found this to be ever so much more true of God. He is always faithful, loving and guiding us down the paths that we take. And even more, nothing is impossible for God; He can take any situation, no matter how desperate it seems and work things out for good (Romans 8:28).

The third major tenet of my worldview is that at the time of death, our spirits live on in one of two places: heaven or hell. Christ is needed for an eternity in heaven: “A man may go to heaven without health, without riches, without honors, without learning, without friends, but he can never go there without Christ” (Hughey and Hughey, 1994, p. 166). This statement is not just a creative quip; it is based on Biblical truth. The Bible tells us that the penalty for sin is death and separation from God. Paul taught about this in Romans. He said, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23-24). How gracious God is to have provided a way for us to be with Him despite our sinful nature.

My worldview has been shaped and molded throughout my life. It influences both my decisions and my outlook on life. I am so grateful for God’s mercy and grace and I hope that I

never lose sight of what He has done for me.

### **Section 3: Theory of Knowledge and Truth**

Knowledge and truth can be attained and discovered through a variety of methods – too many methods to be discussed in the context of this paper. As a result, I will focus on how I believe ultimate Truth can be known. I believe that ultimate Truth comes from God; therefore ultimate Truth can be known through reading and studying God’s word, revelation from God, and having a relationship with God.

Since I believe Truth comes from God, one way to learn about Truth is by reading and studying God’s word. The most amazing Truths are found in scripture. From reading and studying scripture, I have come to know with certainty that God loves me, I have a direct line to God through the Holy Spirit, all things work together for good, Christ died for my sins, I am forgiven, and I have a future in the presence of God. I think the most important piece of knowledge to be gained from Biblical Truths is the fact that we are free from sin because of what Christ did for us. This freedom brings joy because I know I have eternal life. Joy, in turn, can be seen by others and hopefully will lead others to know the Truth and the joy that the Truth brings.

The other ways that I think we can know about ultimate Truth include revelations from God and having a relationship with God. To me the two go together. In order to fully understand if something is a revelation from God, we must first have a relationship with God. This way, we will recognize His voice and know that what we are hearing is the Truth. I have been fortunate enough to have received revelations from God concerning my well being as well as my future. I know the voice that God speaks to me in, so I have come to recognize it when I hear it. For me, it is a small, quiet voice, so it is important to quiet my own mind when I am

conversing with God so that I do not miss what He wants to share with me.

God's Truths provide me with a compass with which to direct my life. There are many scientific truths, but when it all boils down, God's Truths are the only ones that really matter. God's Truths bring "beauty for ashes, strength for fear, gladness for mourning, and peace for despair" (Lewis, 1996, based on Isaiah 61:3). God's Truths have eternal significance. I would much rather put my faith in unfailing God than faith in a failing world. As a result, I desire to follow God's Truths rather than worldly truths. I hope that my ethical decisions reflect my desire to follow God's Truths.

#### **Section 4: Real Life Ethical Case Study**

Recently, on *48 Hours Investigates*, correspondent Harold Dow reported a story on the Canal Street Brothel in New Orleans, Louisiana (Zirinsky, 2003). This section will discuss the facts of this ethical case study, the issues, the alternatives, and what I would do and why.

##### What are the facts?

The Canal Street Brothel in New Orleans was part of a nationwide ring of brothels. The Canal Street Brothel was a "family business" that involved three generations of women. Tommie Taylor worked the phones; her daughter, Jeanette Maier was the madam; and Jeanette's daughter, Monica Montemayor was a working girl. Tommie got involved in the brothel because she was unemployed and was about to be evicted out of her apartment. She heard that the brothel needed someone to work the phones, so she took the job. When Jeanette was a child, she was hungry and needed some food. She knew that one of her neighbors gave girls presents if they did what he wanted them too. This neighbor gave Jeanette 25 cents for turning her first trick at the age of eight. This became a pattern in Jeanette's life and subsequently, she got involved in the brothel as the madam, as she felt this was all she deserved. Years later,

Jeanette's daughter, Monica, became a working girl at the brothel, following in her mother's footsteps. In 2001, the FBI arrested the women on charges of conspiracy prostitution. None of their customers were arrested, even though they too were involved in the prostitution (Zirinsky, 2003).

#### What are the issues?

The first ethical issue revolves around women selling their bodies for money. It is true that prostitution brings quite a lot of money, but that does not make it right or honorable. The second ethical issue revolves around the men who engage in prostitution, including the man who paid Jeanette 25 cents for having sex with him at the age of eight. The third ethical issue involves the prosecutors in this case. The three generations of women are facing a possible five years in prison. The men who paid for their services are not facing any penalties, because they hold prominent positions in the community.

#### What are the alternatives?

Each woman involved in the brothel had a choice on how to earn money. They could have found other jobs elsewhere. The men had a choice as to whether or not to be involved in prostitution in the manner that they were involved. The prosecutors had the choice to prosecute everyone involved, since the men were involved in the same crime as the women.

#### What I would do and why

I do not think sex should come with a price, nor should it occur outside of the union of marriage. Therefore, I would have found a different type of work, even if it meant cleaning toilets. If I were one of the prosecutors, I would have charged everyone involved equally, since the people involved are guilty of the same crime. I would not have a different set of standards for the men who hold prominent roles in the community.

In this country, it is an unfortunate reality that sex sells – in more ways than one. However, in my eyes, unethical situations do not become more ethical just because some people in this culture find certain behaviors to be acceptable.

### **Section 5: A Comparison of My Ethical Values and the Ethical Values of the Groups I**

#### **Belong To**

To a large extent, my own ethical values line up closely with the ethical values of my organization, my church, my school, and other groups I am involved in. This is probably due to the fact that I belong to each group that I am involved in by choice and I would not choose to be a part of a group whose ethical values were in stark contrast to the ethical values that I hold.

A good summary of my ethical values would be that I let God direct my decisions. As a result, when it comes to ethical decision making, I am likely to decide based on Biblical standards or truths. Another thing that I frequently do when I am faced with ethical dilemmas is to turn to God in prayer and be directed by the Holy Spirit. The central value that ethical decisions seem to revolve around is honesty. Since God's standards are the basis for my ethical values, I often consider if lying or cheating would be the outcomes of an ethical decision. Lying and cheating are not things that God looks upon favorably; therefore, I make ethical decisions based on honesty and integrity.

I believe that my ethical values are most closely aligned with the ethical values of my church. This is likely due to the fact that my beliefs are in line with the beliefs in my church's statement of faith. I am not aware of the ethical decisions that are made by the leaders of my church. But, I do know that the leaders of my church are men after God's own heart. Therefore, I believe that ethical decisions made by the leaders of my church would be made based on God's standards.

Since CCU is a Christian school and most, if not all, students are Christians, my ethical values are also closely aligned with the ethical values of the students in my CCU cohort group. This again is probably due to the fact that we most likely share the same beliefs. I am pretty confident in saying that the other students in my cohort group are guided by God's standards.

My organization's ethical values are largely aligned with my own. I did run into one interesting ethical value stated by my supervisor recently. She basically said something along the lines of the ends justifying the means. This is a statement I do not agree with. As I have stated before, the value of honesty is something that largely influences my ethical decision-making. I am not going to lie, cheat, and steal in order to attain the ends I hope to attain. This difference is likely due to the fact that my organization is not guided by the same beliefs that I am directed by.

I think honesty is an important value to direct ethical decision-making. I hope that my ethical decisions have reflected this belief and will continue to reflect this belief in the future.

### **Section 6: The Principles, Values, and Ethical Standards that Direct My Life**

As I have stated many times in this paper, the principles, values, and ethical standards that direct my life are based on God's standards. In this section, I will discuss the specific principles, values, and ethical standards that direct my life, as well as the sources that have informed me.

As has been previously stated, the source that provides me with the principles, values, and ethical standards that direct my life is God. Through God's word and the direction of the Holy Spirit, I have been directed to make the decisions that I have made. Several of the basic principles, values, and ethical standards that direct my life come from Galatians 5:16-26. Paul says that if we live by the Spirit, we will not succumb to sinful acts. Galatians 5:22-23 states that

the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”. When we live by the Spirit, we are directed by God rather than by the law. Since I choose to follow God, I am guided by the values of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Jesus taught another value or principle that directs my life when he was talking about having love for your enemies. In Luke 6:31, he tells us to “Do to others as you would have them do to you”. This is a principle that is not always easy to live by, especially because not everyone else lives by this principle. It is often tempting to be rude or seek revenge when someone has mistreated us. But Jesus calls us to “do good to those who hate [us], bless those who curse [us], pray for those who mistreat [us]” (Luke 6:27-28).

One final principle that guides my life that I would like to discuss is that God is in control. If we trust in Him, leaning not on our own understanding, and acknowledge Him in all of our ways, He will make our paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6). It is not always easy to realize the God is in control when times are tough. But, it has been my experience that God’s way always works out better than my way ever could have and I need to trust Him because He is trustworthy.

To me, God’s standards are the only standards worth following. I am grateful that I have been raised with and have grown in my knowledge of God’s standards.

### **Section 7: How My MHR Experience Has Contributed to My Determination and Potential Realization of My Short-Range and Long-Range Objectives**

My MHR experience has come with many benefits. I am very grateful that I learned about CCU’s Fort Collins campus and about the MHR program. My experience at CCU has increased my determination to realize both my short-term and long-term goals.

For some strange reason, I have always thought that once I completed a bachelor’s degree

program, I would have the knowledge necessary for the careers that are related to bachelor's degrees. I am at the point where I am extremely close to receiving my bachelor's degree, yet I do not feel like I will magically have all of the knowledge that is necessary to go into the human resource field. It is not as though I have not learned anything in the past 13 months I have been at CCU. I have learned a great deal about leadership, management, and human resources while at CCU. More importantly, however, my education at CCU has taught me that knowledge is not the only thing that will help you in your chosen career. And fortunately, my education at CCU has provided me with knowledge, plus the tools and resources that I need to do well in the field of human resources.

One of my short-term goals includes taking the GRE and going into the Organizational Change and Performance graduate program at Colorado State University. My long-term career goals include obtaining and excelling in a human resource position. I used to be very intimidated by both of these goals. As I stated before, my education at CCU has provided me with the tools and resources that I need in order to attain these goals. This is worth far more than a vast amount of knowledge.

More importantly, because of the way CCU classes are structured, I have experienced spiritual growth as well as intellectual growth. Spiritual growth is something I place high value on and is something that I will carry throughout my life. A strong spiritual base and strong relationship with God is something that I know will help me navigate through the good and bad times in life. For that, I am very grateful for my CCU MHR experience.

In conclusion, since our philosophies of life contribute so much to the decisions we make, it is important to understand the philosophy we hold. I have enjoyed learning about my philosophy of life and hope that I will continue to hold onto the Godly values that direct my life.

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