

Fieldstone Foundations

A Creation

FLJ, 2014, N. 18. John T. McMahan III

Every important function that requires application has a system. As I attempt to examine family values and its impact on the foundation of education, I will begin to focus on the value system and how education has impacted three men.

Redding(1998) posits that “a common experience includes or involves all students in a school and is related to one or more educational values of the school community” Values and the manner in which they are taught at school and amalgamated to the values from the home have an impact on the educational experience.

As I collected and created some interview questions, I wanted to try to narrow my focus to values and the educational system. To do this I wanted to have a collection of questions that did three things. I wanted to have some basic, demographical information. Two, I wanted to ask a set of questions that involved family values and finally I wanted to ask, educational questions.

Tyack (1972) states that “the founders of public education clearly wished their values to prevail in the classroom” This fundamental belief was not uncommon across the board with parents and educators. Parents have a value set, educators have a value set and as they unite in the classroom as a new birth of philosophy, they are witnessed and nurtured at times, behind cold walls. When it comes down to it, there must be driving forces in your life that help create and mold our value systems. There is a pecking order in the family food chain and the same in the

classroom. The classroom order of education has been gripped by standards and parents directly have their same “standard” grip.

(Johnson, Collins, Dupuis & Johansen) explain that “without such a philosophy, a teacher has no underlying purpose for teaching. A philosophy is not just purposeful for the teacher, it is absolutely essential.” Connect that with a certain model at home, this new creation can range from exquisite to ugly. As those factors range one way or another the development of our new creation is held in the balance. Here are three of those creations that I interviewed.

John is a 90 year old man who was raised in the 1930’s and 1940’s at the end of the one room schoolhouse era. Thresh is a 75 year old man who grew up in the fabulous fifties, and Steve, who will be graduating in 2012. Steve grew up in the inner city as did Thresh. John grew up in the country. I asked each of these three men twenty questions and I will speak about some of my findings. As I began to compare and contrast some of their responses there were some interesting retorts.

One of the questions that I asked was what was the impact of your extended family? Steve stated that their have been many teachers, an administrator and his grandparents that were key in his development of his value system. In turn this has helped him be successful in his academic and athletic career. Thresh said he had no extended family connections except for a Math teacher named Peg Hysel. He said she was a tough teacher who helped him become more disciplined in his scholastics. The most interesting answer came from John. He stated that when he went to school in the 1930’s that not only were there great expectations for him to do well in school and be a citizen of “Good moral character” but it was demanded by the community

as well. John said that the community played an integral role at how he viewed life and that the community played a major role in enhancing his value of education and how he viewed the world. When John graduated in 1940, he entered the armed forces and left for Europe. Growing up in a rural area, his character and frugal family standards molded him and assimilated him within this country life.

Thattai (2001) stated that "American schools have thus tended to reflect the educational values and financial capabilities of the communities in which they are located" Educational values that are high can allow opportunities for a better financial future but it sure doesn't hurt to come from means. This leads into another question that garnered some interesting responses from the three men. The question "When did you understand that sometimes things don't go your way" got a very reflective reaction from Steve. He said that when he was living in Florida his parents divorced when he was two and half. By the age of 10, his mother had lost her corporate job in Florida and they went from a family of means to a family that struggled and could not afford nice things anymore. This is when he knew that life wasn't fair and you don't always get what you want. Zeigler(1977) states that there has been a "loss of control over the education of our children" When financial devastation through divorce or job loss there are times a family has to go into survival mode where the family unit has to rise above the loss. This is certainly not easy. Thresh stated that when he was younger, his father had a heart attack and had to change into an easier job. This made him realize that everything in life is not perfect. He also said that his mothers nagging of his father didn't help. John stated that as he grew up in the depression with very little made him appreciate all that he

has today. There are several more questions that were asked along with a short PowerPoint that will add interest to this analysis.

Cutler (1989) states that, "the schoolhouse has become a representation of U.S. cultural values and ideals". I say that it is what lies within the ever changing architecture that is the true representation. The schoolhouse over the history of our country has played a myriad of roles in everyone's life and the people within those walls have impacted students either in a large way or a lesser way.

Our value systems that are created at home with our parents merge with our educational and social journey through school and other periphery experiences and create a new set of values that are unique to our blended beliefs that have been built during our initial life's travels. This creation is unique to each individual and this new value set becomes the doctrine that lives in each of our incomparable voice of values.