eFolio Capstone

Professional Philosophy Essay #2

Peter Keyes

January 25, 2010
Revised: February 5, 2010
Edited: February 14, 2010

Course: THY 575 – Missiological Research Design

Instructor: Pastor James J. Vehling

Master of Arts in Christian Outreach
Oswald Hoffmann Institute for Christian Outreach
Concordia University
St. Paul, Minnesota
Table of Contents

I. Summary statement of my personal professional philosophy of ministry 4
II. Biblical and confessional support for my philosophy of outreach ministry 6
III. The influence of Christian outreach history on my philosophy of ministry 10
IV. Specific models of outreach ministry that have influenced my professional philosophy of Christian outreach ministry 12
Conclusion 16
References 20
Introduction

My burning desire is to become equipped to share my faith effectively with others in my community and to be able to equip, encourage, and empower other Christians to do the same. For this reason I chose to continue my education by enrolling in the Masters of Arts in Christian Outreach (MACO) program at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

I have always believed that learning is a lifelong process. This statement is also true for those of us who are working within the church as commissioned ministers. We need to seek and learn more effective ways to complete the tasks that we have been given: tasks that are specific to the area of Christian outreach. Even though our message stays the same, the method of delivering that message sometimes needs to be changed, because the interests of our audience have changed. For instance, they may be focusing on financial needs, health issues, or changes in their life-stage. But through all of these circumstances their basic need is still the same – they need to hear the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

I understand that we may not be able to find a “magic bullet,” a “perfect” method that will work in all cases. In fact, we are not able to do anything on our own in the area of Christian outreach, because we are completely dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit to complete the tasks that God has placed in front of us. It is this dependent relationship with God that gives us a reason to give Him our best. He is the one who has called us into His mission and has sent us out as His ambassadors. We represent Him: His message, His promises, His love, and His commitment to forgive and redeem the lost. For this reason, we need to be at the top of our game and seek ways to improve the delivery of His message.

As outreach workers we need to do a better job of understanding our audience: the way they think, the way they act and react to their environment, and the needs that they see as being
relevant to their lives. To do this, we will need to improve our listening skills, so that we can hear their cries for help. And we will also need to improve our communication skills, so they will be able to hear that the message we are bringing is relevant to their need. We are to bring the light of Christ into dark places to reveal sin and give hope to the lost. But there is more!

Too often, we are expected to serve the congregation to which we have been called as the “outreach professional”. There is an unspoken expectation of the Director of Christian Outreach to do the work of outreach for the congregation “fulltime”, while members are only expected to participate “when they have nothing better to do.” In actuality, we are not to be serving alone, but as coworkers in the harvest fields. Our primary task is to equip and prepare the harvesters to work with us in the fields. To carry out this task, we need to be informed, challenged, and stretched to become better prepared to equip those God has placed in our charge.

I. **Summary statement of my personal professional philosophy of ministry**

My mission is to do God’s missional work – to live a missional lifestyle wherever I am. It is to be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in me and to be intentional about developing relationships in which I can introduce people to my Lord, Jesus Christ. I am also to be an equipper of God’s people, to lead them to explore the ministry opportunities that God has been preparing for them to carry out as His missional partners.

I am here because God has chosen me to be one of His missional agents. My role in God’s mission is very small, but it is also very important to Him. He has been preparing me for this role from my childhood. God, in His wisdom, knowing the trials and challenges that I would face, has been working throughout my life to equip me with the necessary gifts and abilities that I would need to be involved in His mission.
In the past year my philosophy of outreach ministry has been at times challenged but mostly fine-tuned and more clearly defined. When I began working in a local congregation five years ago as their “called” and commissioned Director of Christian Outreach, I served as a generalist. My role was to provide support to the pastor and help him to minister to the people and the community. I worked with some members to develop a ministry prayer team. I oversaw the congregation’s advertising and public relations. I built and maintained a prospect file for the congregation. I taught adult confirmation courses and led other adult Bible classes. I visited the sick in the hospital and other members in their homes. I helped organize outreach activities for the congregation, became involved in social groups in the community, and participated with social ministry programs sponsored by the area ministerial association. I also led a small group of volunteers to conduct evangelistic outreach calls to people that God had placed before us.

I was blessed to have these experiences and learned a lot about my strengths and abilities in ministry. I realized that I had been gifted to teach others, to encourage and develop leaders, and to build personal relationships with people inside and outside of the church. Over the past year I have also rediscovered my passion for serving people in rural communities. I have a burning desire to equip the members of rural congregations for outreach to the people of their communities. To minister effectively in the rural environment, I will need to be more focused in my approach to ministry. Instead of working in the background and carrying out the outreach ministry for a congregation, I will need to lead people to see the potential for outreach within their communities. I will need to work beside them as I equip them with the tools to carry out their outreach work. In this role I will be serving as a catalyst for change. I will be actively working to move congregations from having an outreach ministry program to having outreach as their primary reason for being. My goal would be to help them see themselves as God’s
ambassadors: those who bring the message of Christ to others so that they might share in the experience of having a restored relationship with God (as is stated below in 2 Corinthians 5:17).

II. Biblical and confessional support for my philosophy of outreach ministry

Throughout my life I had a sense that God was going to use me in His ministry as a leader of His people, but I had to learn to wait on Him for the right timing, and in that waiting I had to learn to trust in Him to supply me with my daily provisions. God had to show me that I was not capable of carrying out ministry for Him with my own strength, but in His strength I could do things that were well beyond my personal capabilities. Most of all, I had to learn the meaning of true forgiveness – forgiveness that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

The following words of Paul to the Corinthians have given me comfort, assurance, and purpose as a child of God.

Clearly, Christ’s love guides us. We are convinced of the fact that one man has died for all people. Therefore, all people have died. He died for all people so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for the man who died and was brought back to life for them. … Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given [me] the ministry of restoring relationships. In other words, God was using Christ to restore his relationship with humanity. He didn’t hold peoples faults against them, and he has given [me] this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, [I am] Christ’s [ambassador], and through [me] God is calling you. We beg you on behalf of Christ to become reunited with God. God had Christ, who was sinless, take our sin so that we might receive God’s approval through him (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 17-21, God’s Word).
First and foremost, I have been made into a new person by the grace of God. God, in His mercy, reached down and rescued me from being destroyed by my sin. Jesus Christ died in my place and rose again. He has set me free from the bondage of my sin to live my life for Him in a new relationship. This new relationship with Christ has been made possible only by God’s love and mercy, shown for me in Jesus’ death and resurrection. I cannot take credit for any part of it, as it is a gift from God. Saint Paul has clearly stated this in his letter to the Ephesians:

We did what our corrupt desires and thoughts wanted us to do. So, because of our nature, we deserved God’s anger just like everyone else. But God is rich in mercy because of His great love for us. We were dead because of our failures, but He made us alive together with Christ. … God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God. It is not the result of anything you have done, so no one can brag about it. God has made us what we are. He has created us in Christ Jesus to live lives filled with good works that He has prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2:3-5, 8-10, God’s Word).

I am what God has made me to be. He has recreated me in Jesus Christ to carry out good works of service that will bring glory to His name. He has formed a vertical relationship with me through the cross of Jesus and has given me faith by the power of the Holy Spirit to believe in Him. My response is totally inadequate and filled with doubts, despair, and selfish desires. God’s response is one of forgiveness and blessing, because He sees only the blood of Jesus covering my sin. My ministry to others is totally dependent upon God’s vertical relationship with me, for without His presence I could do nothing for Him. It is in this vertical relationship with God, strengthened by His Word and Sacraments and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that I am given the strength to serve Him. Robert Kolb states:
What we do as Christians is always secondary to, and a result of, who we are as children of God. Our actions flow from our attitude, an attitude of trust in Jesus Christ. … Trust is more than intellectual assent. This trust grabs all of life; it permeates all decision-making for daily living. God makes that happen by talking to us… He speaks to us. He gives us His Word, a word of promise, and we respond with trust. We trust in Him first of all because we hear Him (Kolb, 1993, p. 10, 11).

In our Lutheran confessions we are taught that we can hear God speaking to us only through His Word by the work of the Holy Spirit. In Martin Luther’s explanation to the Third Article, found in the Small Catechism, he confesses: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith” (Luther, 1991, p. 15). It is the activity of God’s Holy Spirit that not only brings us into a relationship with Jesus Christ but also keeps us growing in that relationship and continues the work of preparing us to be servants in God’s ministry. It is through this vertical relationship with God that we are able to actively engage in horizontal relationships with others and to introduce them to God.

Ed Stetzer and Philip Nation state that we are “compelled by God’s love” to do good works and that this love comes to us by the Spirit of God living in us:

Herein lies a great lesson concerning the role of the Spirit in our lives. He not only teaches us about love, He is love dwelling within us. As the recipient of His indwelling presence, you are more than a student. You are a living conduit through which the Spirit extends the compassion and mercy of the Godhead to sinful and hurting people. He never tires of showing love. … His timing is perfect for all things, and we must simply allow His presence within us to work through us. Then, as missionaries to our community, we
will never have a shortage of compassion for the church or the lost (Stetzer & Nation, 2008, p. 77).

God’s Spirit makes it possible for me to serve Him in ministry. He places love and compassion into my heart for those who are living without a relationship with Jesus Christ. He uses me to speak of spiritual truths in a language that is familiar to the people within my cultural environment. He also helps me to discern between the appropriate uses of the Law and the Gospel, as I engage in conversations with these people. It is God’s Spirit that makes it possible for me to build horizontal relationships with others and to make wise choices, as I work to remove obstacles that keep them from clearly hearing the message of Jesus Christ.

I have discovered that the Holy Spirit has given me certain spiritual gifts at various times throughout my ministry at the precise time that I needed them. While these experiences have been occasional, they have been useful in showing me how the Lord has worked through me to do things that I would not have been able to do on my own. I am able to confess with Luther that I could not have come to know Jesus Christ as my Lord or believe in Him, except that the Holy Spirit has given me the faith to do so. I may also confess that I cannot make anyone believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him without the Holy Spirit working through my words and actions. My ministry and service to others is totally dependent upon God’s work in my life.

In my role as a ministry leader I hope to humbly lead others by living in submission to God’s power and authority in my life. However, I have a desire to challenge congregations to be the representatives that Jesus Christ has called them to be, that is, His messengers “sent with God’s authority for His specific purpose: to evangelize the world” (Scudieri, 1997, p. 13). I also intend to teach others to be involved in outreach by taking them with me, allowing them to have outreach and evangelism experiences that will help them to develop their ministry skills.
III. The influence of Christian outreach history on my philosophy of ministry

The early Christian church grew because of the living witness of the early Christians. They lived their faith and suffered for their beliefs. They were committed to Christ, and some died in defense of their faith. As the church was persecuted, the people scattered to other towns and countries. Some missionaries, like Paul, went from town to town to proclaim their faith in Christ. As the church became more established, changes began to occur. The focus of Christians began to shift from “going out” to “bringing in”.

By the end of the second century public mission preaching was outmoded. The practice of Christian missionaries entering a town and beginning their work by preaching in the local synagogue was discontinued. In its place there was a system of instruction and nurture found in local congregations. The congregation became the major strategy for missionary work. … Most people brought to Christ came initially through the attractiveness of the exemplary lives of the people of God. There were various things that made Christianity appealing: The promise of forgiveness for sins, miracles, exorcisms, the claim to be the ‘ancient people of God,’ promises of immortality and escape from eternal punishment, and love for the poor. In Christians people saw a counterculture, something different, something they wanted for themselves (Scudieri, 1997, p. 42).

For many Christians today the focus of evangelism is still on “bringing in” those who are outside of the church. Parishioners are told to invite their friends to come to worship with them, where they will hear the gospel proclaimed, both in the liturgy and message of the sermon. However, the lifestyle of the “average” Christian is not always all that attractive, and the “friends” may not see any reason to come into or become a part of the Christian community inside the church. Many within the church today have no interest in going out or bringing others
in. They are content with the way things are. In their view the church exists to serve their needs and their worship preferences. This is reflected in comments made by Robert Scudieri regarding the misunderstanding of some in the church today in regard to their missional calling.

Each year hundreds of churches in the cities of North America shut their doors for the last time. They do so after dwindling to a group too small to maintain basic services. Not in all cases, …but many of these congregations had closed themselves off to the people around them. The mission of the church had become the preservation of the building. Shiny waxed floors and perfectly preserved stained glass windows became victims of steel wrecking balls after a Christian congregation no longer knew how or no longer cared to bring the message of Christ into its neighborhood. Something was essentially wrong in the way it understood its mission, the way it understood [the purpose of the] church (Scudieri, 1997, p. 78).

According to Scudieri’s interpretation of *apostolic*, the apostolic church is a church sent on a mission, and this mission is to continue to do the work of Jesus Christ. He states,

The missionary characteristic is in the nature of the church because it is in the nature of God. Through His Holy Spirit God is constantly endowing the church with urgency, always challenging her complacency. God’s Spirit moves His people outside of themselves by creating a faith that is not passive, dumb, simply contemplative, or selfish, but a faith which produces in the Christian a restless concern for the salvation of others… The Christian community has been left on earth for the purpose of reaching those who are without salvation and in-corporating them [that is, to bring them into the body of Christ]. But so much time and effort is spent on the corporation [the body of Christ] (Scudieri, 1997, p. 81).
From my observations and experiences in the church, I would agree with Scudieri’s last statement. It seemed that most of the work carried out within the church was for the benefit of those who were already securely in the fold. Even as I served as a Director of Christian Outreach, I was expected to spend a portion of my time visibly serving the members of the congregation, because they were the ones paying my salary. The idea that the congregation was to be directly involved in missional activity was foreign to most of the members, and only a few responded to the call to reach out to their neighbors with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, there is hope. The same Holy Spirit who has called us into the faith is also at work stirring up the hearts and minds of God’s children to become missional people. There is a renewed excitement in some congregations, and the members are looking for ways to become involved in God’s missional activity. While the little rural congregation where I am currently serving has a long way to go, they are starting to look for ways to reach out to their neighbors with the gospel and to use the gifts that God has given them to be a blessing to others in their community. They are starting to be moved by the Holy Spirit to share in the excitement of the early Christians and are gossiping about the good news of Jesus Christ with their friends and neighbors, as they are going about their daily tasks.

IV. Specific models of outreach ministry that have influenced my professional philosophy of Christian outreach ministry

There are two specific models of ministry found in the Scriptures that have made an impression on my philosophy of ministry. The first model is recorded in Exodus, where it describes the visit of Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, to the camp of the children of Israel. When Jethro observed the burden that Moses was under as he tried to minister to all of the people, he gave Moses the following advice:
What you are doing is not good. You and your people will wear yourselves out. This is too much work for you. You can not do it alone. … But choose capable men from all the people, men who fear God, men you can trust, men who hate corruption. Put them in charge of groups of 1,000, or 100, or 50, or 10 people. Let them be the ones who usually settle disagreements among the people. … Make it easier for yourself by letting them help you (Exodus 18:17-18, 21-23, God’s Word).

Many congregations have used a form of this model for their elder care groups, but they often divide the congregation into lists of twenty to fifty families and assign each group to an elder without taking the time to equip the elders for this ministry. I believe that the “Jethro” model could be implemented, beginning with the lowest division. Congregations could assign ten families to each elder or spiritual caregiver and then assign one elder or spiritual caregiver to provide support for the leaders of every five sub-groups. The pastor of the congregation would then provide direct support for the leaders of the leaders and also conduct the ministry training for all of the spiritual caregivers.

For many congregations and in particular rural congregations, the adaptation of this model would require a significant shift in expectations that the members have of their pastor. The pastor would not be providing direct ministry to all of the members but would provide for spiritual care indirectly through the appointed and equipped spiritual caregivers. The advantage of this model, as compared to most present ministry models, is that more of the members would be receiving spiritual care and fewer people would be allowed to slip out the back doors of the church unnoticed.

The second ministry model is found in the New Testament. It is the model presented to us by Jesus Christ. As Jesus began His earthly ministry He gathered a following of men and women
who listened to His preaching and teaching. We are told that he specifically called certain men, and they left what they were doing and followed Him. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we are told that He selected twelve to be His apostles and then sent them out by twos ahead of Him into the cities of the Jewish people (Matthew 10; Mark 3 & 6; Luke 6 & 9). We are also told in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus sent out seventy-two disciples by twos on another occasion to go ahead of Him into the towns and cities (Luke 10). Yet, Jesus chose to spend His most intimate times with Peter, James, and John and even revealed His glory to them on a high mountain (Mark 9).

The model that I see developing in these examples is similar to the “Jethro” model cited above. Please bear with me as I paint an imaginary picture. I see Jesus starting out His ministry with a small following of disciples and choosing the twelve. As time went on and as the number of disciples following Him grew, the twelve became the facilitators of informal small-cell groups, where five or six disciples were able to talk about what they had seen and heard throughout the day. These small-groups became the incubators of “the 72”. These seventy-two disciples were then chosen to go out and were allowed to have the same ministry experiences that the twelve disciples had a year earlier. However, they did not go out alone but in groups of two. They were a ministry team. They learned from each other, prayed for each other, and made decisions together. They came back pumped! They had the opportunity to experience God’s power working through their words and deeds. Later, they would have the opportunity to share these experiences with the other disciples, allowing them to hold on to a glimmer of hope as they reminisced about these experiences immediately following the death of Jesus (Luke 24). When Christ reappeared to them after His resurrection, their eyes were opened, and their ministry
experiences began to make sense. On Pentecost, they were given power to go out again to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28).

Dr. Philip Bickel has introduced us to the concept of NET fishing on three levels (Bickel, 2008). I see a similarity between the three levels of NET Fishing and the formation of the ministry models of Jesus and Jethro. In NET Fishing the first level is the formation of a personal evangelism team. This is a small group of close ministry partners that encourage each other, pray for each other, and share in outreach ministries together on a very personal level. The second level is the formation of a church or ministry team. This is a group of ministry leaders from a congregation or close community that work together to develop a more complex Christian outreach ministry. This ministry meets a need within the community and also utilizes the gifts and talents of several members of the congregation. The third level is the formation of a regional ministry team. This team addresses a specific common need that is shared by many people in similar communities. The members of this team partner with other Christians to provide local and regional support, develop evangelism tools, and create opportunities for personal interactions that utilize the specific gifts and talents of individual Christians.

Jesus had His team of three, His team of twelve, and His team of seventy-two. The three were His personal team; they provided Jesus with the personal emotional support and fellowship that He needed to remain strong. The twelve were similar to the church or ministry team. They were not as close as the three, but they still had a small community focus. And the seventy-two were like the regional team. They provided several different strengths and options, they covered more territory and addressed more needs, and yet they worked together to carry out a similar ministry task.
Conclusion

I have been called to serve God in His missional work, not as a pastor, but as one who supports the ministry of the pastor(s). My role in ministry is to assist with the equipping of the saints for the work of the Lord. This ministry could be viewed as a team ministry approach for building up the body of Christ. I see my role as having two primary objectives. The first objective is to lead and equip others for outreach by taking them with me as I go out into the harvest fields. The second objective is to assist pastors by providing outreach focused Bible studies for harvest workers. I see these two objectives being fulfilled as we study and apply Biblical truths in our daily activities and in our outreach experiences.

My passion is to serve in rural ministry and, in particular, in the area of congregation transformation or revitalization. In research conducted by Ron Crandall published in *Turnaround strategies for the small church*, he lists the following twelve critical tasks that were viewed as the most important by turnaround pastors:

- Enhance congregational confidence and hope for the future.
- Stimulate concern for unreached persons in the community.
- Engage in proactive and effective pastoral leadership.
- Encourage an open, loving atmosphere in the congregation.
- Clarify your own personal vision and be an example.
- Help develop a clear, shared, congregational vision.
- Work and pray for spiritual renewal among the members.
- Provide high quality preaching and inspiring worship.
- Lead the effort to reach new people and grow.
- Emphasize and practice prayer.
- Develop new programs, especially for children and youth.
- Plan to take risks and take them. (Crandall, 1995, p. 22, 23).

I see value in each of the tasks listed above, and I will do whatever I am able to assist rural pastors to implement these in their congregations. However, I also need to have a process by which I am able to work with rural congregations. Many rural congregations are unable to support a fulltime Director of Christian Outreach or even to make a long-term commitment to a shared or part-time outreach professional.

To address this issue, I have been experimenting with a new model of ministry that would provide ministry support for rural congregations that would be within reach of their finances. This ministry would be designed to provide direct services to a congregation, dual parish, or tri-parish, one day each week, for a predetermined number of weeks, or possibly a year or two. The type of ministry provided by the outreach professional and the scheduling of the duties throughout the day would be determined by the pastor and the leaders of the congregation. The specific focus of the ministry would be to develop and equip leaders of the congregation in the area of Christian outreach.

This equipping would be carried out both in the classroom and in direct ministry in the community. The classroom activities would be Biblical studies on spiritual leadership, core beliefs, missional Christian values, the mission of the church, and the vision for a preferred missional future of the congregation. The practical activities would include conducting a community assessment of spiritual barriers and physical needs, the formation of direct outreach ministries to the community, development of follow-up ministries, and evangelism training. The pastor would also be given support and guidance to help the congregation transition from having
an outreach program to becoming a missional congregation, that is, a congregation where outreach is seen as its reason for being and the primary focus for all of the programming.

The development of this ministry is also following the model of NET Fishing’s three levels of evangelism teams. On the first level, the formation of a personal evangelism team, I am currently working with three outreach ministers for support, counsel, and guidance. These three men each have unique gifts and qualities, insights and questions, and styles of motivation, that have helped me to develop, refine, and more clearly define my proposed ministry plan. They are my prayer partners, mentors, and at times my coaches. I know that I can count on them to encourage me and to give me wise and Godly counsel.

On the second level, the formation of a church network of evangelism teams, each congregation or community site would be made up of six to twelve outreach leaders. I would be working directly with these leaders to equip them for outreach. These leaders in turn would be encouraged to develop their own level one teams, as they involve others from their congregation(s) to engage in the outreach activities. For example, a single congregation may have six to twelve leaders present for the training, and these leaders would form teams of two as they participate in outreach activities. A dual parish may have four to six leaders from each congregation present for the training. A tri-parish may have two to four leaders present from each congregation.

The third level, the formation of a regional network of evangelism teams, could be developed in two ways. In the case of dual or tri-parishes, the leaders of each parish may decide to develop their own outreach ministries and still collaborate with the other parishes in their community in the development of a common outreach ministry. The other way to develop regional ministries would be by multiplying this ministry model and thereby serving three, four,
or even five different communities. Because my focus would be to rural congregations, many of the programs developed to meet the needs in one community could be duplicated in other rural communities that are similar, thereby creating a regional ministry and making better use of the resources, talents, strengths and gifts of particular people to serve an area beyond the local community.

I have chosen to title my ministry model – **BOLD Christian Outreach Equipping Ministry: Equipping Congregations for Outreach through Biblical Outreach Leadership Development**. The mission statement for this ministry is the following:

The mission of BOLD is to equip, encourage, and empower Christian leaders to effectively lead their congregations to intentionally share Christ’s love and the message of salvation with the people of their community.

I am also working with a group of interested Directors of Christian Education and other Directors of Christian Outreach in the development of similar ministry models. As these models become field-tested and refined, they may find use throughout the entire church in many other locations. I believe that the regional concept for NET Fishing has endless possibilities. I also believe that God has been working behind the scenes, placing the ideas and concepts for these models into our imaginations. The delivery of ministry as we once knew it is changing. The way we prepare people for outreach ministry in the future is also changing. However, we can be sure that the message is still the same.

God has restored our relationship with Him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships. … God was using Christ to restore His relationship with humanity. He did not hold people’s faults against them, and He has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others (2 Corinthians 5:18-19, God’s Word).
References


Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, a division Kregel Publications.


Corunna, IN: Church Growth Center / Fairway Press.


Philosophy has been with mankind for thousands of years. Every civilization has produced many philosophers who have changed the course of history. Those philosophies have dramatically changed not only the people around those philosophers but also the people who lived far away from them. These philosophies have refined the attitudes of the people. If at all there is any refined tendency in our attitude and thinking, that can be attributed to the exposure we are given to those philosophies. After all these attributes, the basic question, “What is Philosophy?” still remains unanswered. Philosophy Essay. Thesis Statement. This paper evaluates the philosophical puzzle, “If a tree falls in the forest and there’s no one around to hear it, does it make a sound?” John Locke, a philosopher, provides the ideas that bring light in solving the puzzle. Locke reveals how the human mind assumes that it has the knowledge basing it on experiences. We will write a custom Essay on Philosophy specifically for you for only $16.05 $11/page. 301 certified writers online. Learn More. ESSAY I. LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNITZ. The lately republished philosophical writings of Leibnitz are the productions of a species of intellectual labour that is very rare in this country, but of which, in Germany, France, and America, the press is giving forth some original and many republished specimens. The amount of republished metaphysical literature of the higher kind which has appeared in foreign countries within the last thirty years, is worthy of remark. Some idea of it may be formed from