

CDG Education and the Self: What is Truth?

'The biblical world view holds that God is the authority over all things and that pleasing him should be the foundation of every endeavour. Secular humanism proclaims that man not God is the final authority and that everything exists for personal pleasure and affluence'¹,

1. Introduction

Our aim here is to look at how we can raise children and young people who have confidence in God, through his Word in Christ and live by the power of the Spirit, at this time- in this culture.

In other words, people who will stand *'in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom (they) shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life'²*

'There was no longer a moral world outside the individual that restrained and directed that individual. Now we have become self directing, each in his or her own way.'³
'The self has turned itself into its own moral authority.'⁴

2. Personal Reflection

Background and Church Community

'Christianity is not merely religious truth, it is total truth- truth about the whole of reality.'⁵

Worldviews: a way to interpret culture

3. From Ivory Towers to the Chalk face.

Secular Educational Theory

Major players and what they stood for

'John Dewey has been credited with the turning around of educational thinking and practice from a traditional to a progressive (child-centred) approach to learning. He was hailed as 'the philosopher of American democracy'

¹ Harry Reeder III, *The Leadership Dynamic*, (Wheaton: Crossway, .2008) , 18

² Philippians 2:15

³ David Wells, *The Courage To Be Protestant*, (Leicester: IVP, 2008) 153,

⁴ David Wells, *The Courage To Be Protestant*, 159

⁵ Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, (Wheaton, Crossway, 2004) ,18

'...it was Darwin's naturalism that shaped his thinking and presented him with the rational to develop a theory of learning that 'saw *human beings as historic members of an animal species, adapting themselves to their environment and their environment to themselves.*'⁶

'So faithfully did Dewey live up to his own philosophical creed that he became the guide, the mentor, and the conscience of the American people; it is scarcely and exaggeration to say that for a generation no issue was clarified until Dewey had spoken'.⁷

If this was his legacy we have to ask what he stood for.

'The hallmarks of the new school are freedom, activity, and creative expression. The old school is described as the 'listening regime', a place of fears, restraints, and long weary hours of suppression,' whose philosophy is based on outmoded allegiance to discipline and subject matter. The new school is devoted to 'self expression' and 'maximum child growth,' a place where children are eager to go to school because...'they model in clay and sand: they draw and paint, read and write, make up stories and dramatise them: they work in the garden: they churn and weave and cook' it's philosophy is the concept of Self.

John Dewey & Harold Rugg, *The Child-Centred School* (1928)

The Self and Truth

'The Self has been made to bear the weight of being the centre of all reality, the source of all our meaning, mystery and morality, finds that it has become empty and fragile. When God dies to us, we die to ourselves...

*The Self movement is the very symbol of our collective emptiness and insecurity*⁸

The Child-Centered /Self-Centered World

'The touchstone of reality is my own experience. No other person's ideas and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is in the process of becoming in me .Neither the Bible nor the prophets- Neither Freud nor research- neither the revelations of God or man- can take precedence over my own experience.'

Carl Rogers.

⁶ Melanie Phillips, *All Must Have Prizes*, (Little Brown and Co. 1996), 210

⁷ Commager, *The American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 100

⁸ David F. Wells, *The Courage To Be Protestant*, (Leicester: IVP, 2008)

4. The impact of Child-Centeredness and The Self with regard to Truth

'If knowledge is a social construction, as Dewey said, then the goal of education should be to teach students how to construct their own knowledge. Read this description by a proponent of the method:

Constructivism does not assume the presence of an outside objective reality that is revealed to the learner, but rather that learners actively construct their own reality.⁹

5. Teaching God's Truth in God's way

- Biblical, Cohesive world view

'Christian Education is likely to be an exercise in futility if it does not prepare our young people to confront and survive the worldview challenges that they will surely meet as soon as they leave the security of the Christian home, and probably even while they are still living at home and being educated in a Christian environment, due to the pervasive influence of the media and the Internet.¹⁰

- True Spirituality

'Knowing the Truth has meaning only as a first step to living the truth day by day.'¹¹

⁹ Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 241

¹⁰ Philip Johnson, Foreword to Pearcey, *Total Truth*, 13

¹¹ *Ibid*, 355

The Self and Secular Education

Sources and Recommended Reading

Jane Jenks & Sue Plant, *PASSPORT, Framework for Personal and Social education*, (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Aug 1998)

+Ken Myers, *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*, (Crossway 1989)

+Paul Vitz, *Psychology as Religion*, (Eerdmans.)

+Michael and Diane Medved, *Saving Childhood*, (Harper/Zondervan 1998)

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+E.D. Hirsch, *The Schools we need and why we don't have them*, (Doubleday 1996)

+Douglas Wilson, *The Case for Classical Christian Education*, (Crossway 2003)

+Douglas Wilson, *The Paedia of God*, (Canon Press 1999)

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+Nancey Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*, (Crossway, Wheaton, 2005)

Robert B. Talisse, *On Dewey*, (Wadsworth Philosophical Series, 2000)

Kirschenbaum and Henderson, *The Carl Rogers Reader*, (Constable, London, 2001)

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+American publications