CHRISTIAMITY AND THE SECULAR BORDER PATROL

The Loss of Judeo-Christian Knowledge

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1. Blinded by Secular Interpretations of Religious Knowledge

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Stanley Fish, literary scholar and public intellectual, who himself influenced post-modernist thought, predicted more than 10 years ago that the academy would ultimately turn back to religion (Fish, 2005). What was more unexpected is that he suggested that intellectuals would once again have to consider religion, not just as an object to study but rather "as a candidate for truth." This has yet to happen. Prior to his prediction above, Fish had warned the religious that they should not be satisfied with gaining a seat at the secular academic table where they would simply be patronized and marginalized.

If you persuade liberalism that its dismissive marginalizing of religious discourse is a violation of its own chief principle, all you will gain is the right to sit down at liberalism's table where before you were denied an invitation; but it will still be *liberalism's* table that you are sitting at, and the etiquette of the conversation will still be hers. That is, someone will now turn and ask, "Well, what does religion have to say about this question?" And when, as often will be the case, religion's answer is doctrinaire (what else could it be?), the moderator (a title deeply revealing) will nod politely and turn to someone who is presumed to be more reasonable. To put the matter baldly, a person of religious conviction should not want to enter the marketplace of ideas but to shut it down, at least insofar as it presumes to determine matters that he believes have been determined by God and faith. The religious person should not seek an accommodation with liberalism; he should seek to rout it from the field, to extirpate it, root and branch. (Fish, 1996)

Consciously and/or unconsciously, over the last century secular scholars have all but ruled out the possibility that there is knowledge in religious frameworks, particularly in Judeo-Christian thought, that is true, effectual and unavailable from any other source. Challenges to the exclusivity of secularism in the academy have continued to escalate over the past 20 years, and were reinvigorated after Charles Taylor published his classic historic work, *A Secular Age* in 2007

12 Mary Poplin

(e.g., Baker, 2009; Berger, 1999; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, & Van Antewerpen, 2011; Carter, 1993; Habermas, 2006, 2008, 2011; Habermas & Ratzinger, 2006; Hart, 2010; MacIntyre, 2009; Malik, 1990; Manent, 2016; Marsden, 1994, 1997; Pera, 2011; Poplin, 2014; Ratzinger & Pera, 2006; Reuben, 1997; Sacks, 2012; C. Smith, 2003; J. A. K. Smith, 2014; S. Smith, 2010; Sommerville, 2006, 2009; Vitz, 1995, 2013; Warner, 2010; Willard, 2009; and this volume). Secularism can range *from* the atheist complete denial of the possibility of the existence of God *to* something more akin to the French *laïcité*, indicating simply the censoring of any form of religious or spiritual knowledge in the public realms, such as education, government, law, and economics, but making the allowance that individuals may believe such things privately.

Despite the attention given religion in the last few years, the major halls of power and influence in the West remain resolutely secular and, if anything, have become increasingly hostile to the suggestion that there is knowledge, understanding and wisdom in Judeo-Christian thought that is not available elsewhere. Alongside this, the university culture seems to have lost the heart to examine itself and its curricula relative to big intellectual and cultural issues, except solely in either au currant ideological terms (e.g., class, race and gender) or through empirical "big data" sets. The questions of what our students are learning and experiencing here in the university and what should they be learning and/or experiencing have faded into what do we want them to believe and are they happy here. This has led higher education to exchange "the big questions of life" such as what is good, true and beautiful and questions of human flourishing for a concentration on the vocations, large data sets, and/or post-modern constructions of reality (Volf, 2013). While higher education has become quick to disdain those who think it should prepare students for careers, with the few exceptions, it offers no real alternatives to postmodern cultural and political ideologies in the social sciences and humanities, or the materialist view in the sciences (Scruton, 2015).

Nevertheless, even with very little knowledge of Judeo-Christian principles, secular scholars do sometimes study the relationship of religious belief to other factors, particularly in large quantitative analyses in the social sciences where scholars frequently find that people who report they are Christians or Jews (and are regularly engaged in churches and synagogues) exhibit advantages over non-believers and the less engaged. For example, in October of 2016, a Harvard epidemiologist, VanderWeele and journalist, Siniff in an article in *USA Today* reported that those who attend church regularly have better mental and physical health and lower rates of early mortality. Their conclusion is stated in the title "religion may be a miracle drug" (VanderWeele & Siniff, 2016).

Still many scholars who use religion as one variable and find it significant tend to interpret their results using one of three secular lenses—materialism, secular humanism or comparative religion. From a *materialist* stance, scholars focus on the biochemistry of religious beliefs. However this is disassociated from whether God, in whom their participants believe and communicate, is real and acts in their lives. For example, Bartlett quotes David Sloan Wilson who suggests, "trying to discover why we believe is more intriguing than the debate over whether anyone is up there looking down" (Bartlett, 2012; Wilson, 2002, 2011).

Scholars find that people who are religious generally fare better than their secular peers psychologically and medically (Koenig & Cohen, 2002), educationally (Jeynes, 2003, 2010; King et al., 2013), economically (Brooks, 2003, 2006), and sociologically (Bellah, 2011; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2007; Putnam, 2001). However, secular scholars are most likely to default to secular conclusions rather than to suggest their results may just possibly be related to what participants tell them—that knowing, honoring, communicating with and following God, however imperfectly, makes a difference.

Third, secular scholars may study religion via *comparative religion* frameworks. This research often assumes similarities among religions that may or may not exist and tends to diminish critical differences, presuming that very different principles and practices are essentially the same across very diverse religious frameworks. For example, equating mindfulness in Eastern thought with contemplative prayer to God in Christianity.

The following section offers examples of scholars interpreting religious knowledge through secular lenses, using four examples from political science, sociology, and psychology. The examples demonstrate the need to acknowledge that at least *one possibility* for their persistent findings that Judeo-Christian believers fare better may be that it is simply more effectual than its secular or even religious alternatives; or in more shocking terms—it just may be true. While their data demands a religious epistemology, in most cases here a Gospel explanation, there is none to be had. The subsequent section will include reflections of atheist European philosophers who are concerned about the effects of secularism on the Western culture, while a final section will briefly summarize the secular imperative's effects on the academy worldwide.

Political Science—The Clash of World Civilizations

Harvard political scientist, Samuel Huntington in his popular book, *The Clash of Civilizations* (2011), writes that "the twentieth century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism is only a fleeting and

14 MARY POPLIN

superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity" (p. 209). Hidden in this sentence are a number of assumptions that need to be engaged. First, the assumption that most of the world's troubles are coming from a conflict between Christianity and Islam is odd since the presence of Christianity in these conflicts is almost non-existent except for instances of martyrdom.

Secondly, this assumption puts religion at the center of world conflicts and conveniently leaves secularism, not only uncontested, but also unidentified. This can be unintended, as I believe Huntington is here, but it can also be a conscious strategy. Witness, for example, the works of Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens since 911 that claim religion is the world's major problem. This leaves secularism assuming the stance of a unified innocent neutral by-stander, who can/must negotiate these troubled waters between those of us who are less rational.

Oddly enough, radical Islamic terrorists did not attack Christianity on September 11, 2001. Rather they were contesting the proliferation and mass dispensation of secular economic and moral norms in Western culture to the rest of the world. Their targets were the Trade Towers, the Pentagon and the White House, not the National Cathedral.

The new secular meta-narrative about religion, especially prominent since 9/11, is that religion is the primary source of violence in today's world. Harvard scholar, William Cavanaugh (2009) challenges this:

The myth of religious violence helps create a blind spot about the violence of the putatively secular nation-state. We like to believe that the liberal state arose to make peace between warring religious factions. Today, the Western liberal state is charged with the burden of creating peace in the face of the cruel religious fanaticism of the Muslim world. The myth of religious violence promotes a dichotomy between us in the secular West, who are rational and peacemaking, and them, the hordes of violent religious fanatics in the Muslim world. Their violence is religious, and therefore irrational and divisive. Our violence, on the other hand, is rational, peacemaking, and necessary. Regrettably, we find ourselves forced to bomb them into the higher rationality.

One of the major conundrums of secularism is its naïve assumption of neutrality, an un-self-reflective position that makes its superiority seem plausible. But secularism is no more neutral than Global Christianity and has many more contestations inside itself and with the outside world. None of the wars in the last two centuries, for example, were Christian; they were secular. These two—radical Islamic terrorists and radical secularists share a good deal in common—the radical intolerance of all other worldviews (Phillips, 2010).

Lastly, strangely unnoticed in many such analyses is the fact that much of the contemporary upheaval around the world is internal to nation states. It is often an attempt of citizens inside their own cultures to import Western ideals of egalitarianism, freedom, justice, democracy, human rights, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, speech and assembly, all of which grew out of Judeo-Christian thought. Part of the secular strategy, conscious or unconscious, has been to rewrite the history of Western civilization without reference to these contributions and, at the same time, to lay the blame for all the West's sins—colonization, war, and oppression—on Christianity. However, if Huntington were to make the claim that the coming clash is between the secular West (whose origin was largely shaped by Judeo-Christianity) and radical Islam (largely shaped by a radical theocratic vision of society) then we may have a more accurate prediction.

Sociology-Society without God?

Prominent secular sociologist, Phil Zuckerman was lauded in the secular media in 2011 for beginning a "Secular Studies" program at Pitzer College. Never mind that it is impossible for a student at his or any other secular college/university to get any other kind of degree, even most who get degrees in religion and theology. Prior to this, Zuckerman (2008) published an often-quoted book, suggesting one reason we should abandon divine authority is that the most prosperous, happy and healthy cultures are secular. Zuckerman suggested that as Denmark and Sweden became more secular they became more contented.

The methods and facts related to his observations are important. Zuckerman's data compares statistics from Denmark and Sweden (more secular) to the United States (less secular) and concludes that the "better" cultures are less religious. However as a social scientist, this comparison is at best questionable, although it was never contested in the media. For example, Denmark is less than twice the size of Massachusetts and has about 20% fewer inhabitants. They have less than 10% immigrants, 54% of which are European. So one cannot simply compare the cultures of Denmark to the U.S. A more scientifically accurate investigation of his hypothesis would have compared, for example, Denmark to Denmark and/or Sweden to Sweden as they became more secular.

In 1960, Denmark had 100,000 crimes committed; in 2000 it had five times as many (500,000) with only 13% growth in population. In 1960 there were 300,000 people of working age who received full time government welfare; in 2000 there were three times as many (900,000). From 1970 to 2002,

the divorce rate grew from 18% to 37% (Hansen, 2003). Eighty three percent were married in 1970 and 47% in 2002. These are not signs of improvement or even stasis; these are the same signs of decline experienced everywhere in the West as nations weaken their Judeo-Christian base.

Swedish scholars, Lejon and Agnafors (2008, 2011) reviewed Zuckerman's book and point out that these two societies are still largely shaped by their Lutheran backgrounds, which encourage many of the virtues that Zuckerman exalts as secular achievements (e.g., the literacy and the work ethic that undergirds Denmark and Sweden's economic prosperity and values). Lejon and Agnafors report that while only 2–3% regularly attend church, 80% say they belong to the church and 50% go on occasions such as baptisms, weddings. They conclude his results "lack validity."

Popular and prolific 20th century historian, Will Durant, though not religious himself, summed up similar ebbs and tides of human history in this passage:

The Movement of liberation rises to an exuberant worship of reason, and falls to a paralyzing disillusionment with every dogma and every idea. Conduct, deprived of its religious supports, deteriorates into epicurean chaos; and life itself, shorn of consoling faith, becomes a burden alike to conscious poverty and to weary wealth. In the end a society and its religion tend to fall together, like body and soul, in a harmonious death. (1976, p. 71)

Psychology—Forgiveness by God, Forgiveness of Others and Well-Being

After writing about psychology and religion, psychologist, Paul Vitz wrote several books about the psychology of atheism. He admitted that his colleagues would find it disturbing because psychologists have focused on the psychology of religious beliefs, as though it might result in psychological troubles but never focused on the psychology of their own atheism (Vitz, 1995, 2013). For the most part research finds that religion is a positive force in people's mental and physical lives (Koenig & Cohen, 2002). Christianity addresses many of the same psychological issues as secular psychology, however it does so using different basic principles and starting places.

For example, forgiveness is perhaps the single most significant psychological principle in the Judeo-Christian approach to human flourishing, including psychological health. Forgiveness in Judeo-Christian terms is a two-pronged principle—people can receive forgiveness from God for things we do or fail to do, and simultaneously we are called to forgive others unconditionally and immediately.

Secular psychologists also explore the relationship between forgiveness and psychological well-being. However, these psychologists do not generally consider the role of God (although they may study church attendance). On the other hand, secular psychology often emphasizes self-forgiveness, which is not a Christian principle. So what happens when the findings confirm the efficacy of the Judeo-Christian framework and yet the research must be fit into the secular language policed in the academy? I use the example below because it is methodologically rigorous and particularly insightful. It extends a long line of research that demonstrates generally positive relationships between forgiveness and various aspects of physical and mental health.

Neil Krause and Christopher Ellison (2003) administered a survey via interview to over thirteen hundred adults, ages 66 and above (Christian and non-Christian, African American and White, male and female) looking at variables that are related to well being in late life—depression, somatic symptoms, and death anxiety, forgiveness of others, forgiveness by God, general life satisfaction, church attendance and private prayer. The authors report their most significant finding is that "the relationship between forgiving others and psychological well-being is stronger than the relationship between forgiveness by God and psychological well-being" (p<0.001). Yet forgiveness by God is associated with fewer depressed affect symptoms (p<01). Importantly the authors further find the levels of psychological well-being are higher for those who forgive without requiring acts of contrition (p<0.001). In a secondary analysis the authors find that "O]lder people who feel they are forgiven by God are approximately two and a half times more likely to feel that transgressors should be forgiven unconditionally than older people who do not feel they are forgiven by God" (p < 0.0001)" (p. 83).

First, note in the above text, the authors' use the term *feel* three times, not *know* or *believe*, even though the survey question asked about *beliefs*. To be fair, in the summary they return to the word *belief*. I would contend however that this *slip of tongue* reveals the secular culture's assumption that religious belief is largely about *feelings*, and not about knowledge—true effectual principles. They summarize their major findings in the following conclusion:

Finally, as noted earlier, official church doctrine advocates forgiving others and seeking forgiveness from God. Yet, we know relatively little about how these theological issues are brought into practice in daily life. Two intriguing leads are provided in the literature. First, a recent study by Wuthnow ... suggests that small formal groups in the church, such as prayer groups and Bible study groups, may promote the forgiveness of others.

Second, research indicates that the general psychosocial climate of the congregation may have an important influence on the thought and behavior of church members....

Perhaps specific aspects of the congregational climate, such as the overall level of expressiveness, empathy, and social concern among church members, may contribute to a parishioner's willingness to forgive. Because the general psychosocial climate of the church is likely to affect the way that prayer groups and Bible study groups are run, comparing and contrasting these two institutional influences may provide valuable insight into the factors that encourage people to be more forgiving of others. (p. 90)

The second suggestion here, regarding the value of institutional influences is a rather odd conclusion because in the results section, the authors have reported, "the relations between forgiveness by God and the odds of forgiving right away (p < 0.0001) is substantially larger than the corresponding effects of any other independent variable in the equation, including church attendance (p < 0.05) and frequency of prayer (n.s.) (p. 88)." But in the end, the authors take up a familiar secular hypothesis—that it is the emotional climate of the congregation (people helping people) that has produced these benefits, though the empirical evidence for this conclusion is weak.

The first claim in this summary—"official church doctrine advocates forgiving others and seeking forgiveness from God.... we know relatively little about how these theological issues are brought into practice in daily life" is even more curious. This is a perfect example of the hold secularism has on the definition and interpretation of knowledge and its publication. There is roughly two thousand years of literature on how this works, beginning with the New Testament, which claims that the Word of God was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, who lived for approximately 33 years on earth, experienced every temptation known to humanity and yet did not sin. Because of his divinity and sinless life, even though his physical body could be murdered, death literally could not hold him. He rose from the dead and was seen and heard by many for 40 days. He understands and sympathizes with human weaknesses, having once had a physical body and undergone every temptation. Therefore when a person asks Christ for forgiveness the spiritual power demonstrated and won by Christ's sinless life, death and resurrection becomes operative in the believer allowing the Spirit of Christ to cover the confessed sin since he had overcome them all prior to mounting the cross. Thus, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John1:9, ESV). A confessed sin is not only forgiven, but subsequently the confessor is even cleansed of the guilt, as well as the desire that prompted the sin (iniquity), either gradually or sometimes immediately. This obviously encourages the forgiven person to do as Christ taught (forgive immediately without conditions), just as Jesus did when he

forgave those who were crucifying him even though none knew they needed forgiveness, nor had any asked to be forgiven.

In Judeo-Christian knowledge, this is a *spiritual transaction*, which, when applied, is a highly effectual principle of human life and its possibilities have been experienced, confirmed and documented by millions for over two thousand years. It is not the result of secular "psychology", "institutional influences" or "psychosocial interactions" among human beings. Outside of Christ, no one person, process, institutional arrangement, or form of secular counseling can bring about this kind of *power* to the act of repentance and forgiveness. This *spiritual reality*, like anything that is real, is ultimately likely to be measureable in any number of ways from psychology to biochemistry, because reality should be effectual and knowable. Indeed, Krause and Ellison have uncovered evidence for the effectiveness of this Judeo-Christian principle.

However, the study's conclusions fail to include even the slightest suggestion that an actual *spiritual transaction* may have taken place between their "subjects" and a living God that set in motion a relief of their burdens, which were assumed by Christ, prompting them to be able to more easily release others. It may be that the authors even believe or suspect there was a spiritual transaction but undoubtedly they also knew that their work would not have been published had they offered such a suggestion, even as one of many possibilities. This is the tragedy of secularism's exclusive rights to interpretation in the academy.

In the conclusion, the effectual factors that cause people to forgive others unconditionally are summarized as psychological *feelings* influenced by people in a relationship in a particular *psychosocial institutional* setting, not by God's forgiveness as the title of the article, the data, and their participants suggest. The actual spiritual experiences of the participants have been reinterpreted through a secular lens. This is a perfect example of what philosopher Dallas Willard calls "the calamity of displacing the central points of Christian knowledge into the domain of mere faith, sentiment, tradition, ritual or power" (Willard, 2009, p. 132).

Philosophers' on Radical Secularism's Effects

Joseph Ratzinger, when he was Cardinal, held high level meetings with philosophers, like himself, in Europe. A number of important dialogues were held and published between himself and prominent atheist philosophers such as German Jürgen Habermas and Italian politician and philosopher, Marcelo Pera. Habermas explains his position:

20 Mary Poplin

For the normative self-understanding of modernity, Christianity has functioned as more than just a precursor or catalyst. Universalistic egalitarianism, from which sprang the ideals of freedom and a collective life in solidarity, the autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, the individual morality of conscience, human rights and democracy, is the direct legacy of the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love. This legacy, substantially unchanged, has been the object of a continual critical re-appropriation and reinterpretation. Up to this very day there is no alternative to it. And in light of the current challenges of a post-national constellation, we must draw sustenance now, as in the past, from this substance.... Everything else is idle postmodern talk. (Jürgen Habermas, 2011, pp. 150–151)

Here Habermas, who calls himself a "methodological atheist," is claiming above and has elsewhere claimed that essentially all that people admire about Western culture emerges from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the last few decades, both religious and secular scholars are examining the reality that Habermas (2006, 2008) named "post secular modernity." Many other prominent European philosophers are now seriously considering the consequences of decades of secularism on their nations.

In addition to Habermas, Italian philosopher, senator and atheist, Marcelo Pera (2011) notes that the liberals in Europe who once formed an intellectual class that then informed their politics, have exchanged their intellectualism for particular set of ever-changing "progressive" ideological frameworks. Further, when secularists equate religions as essentially the same, their uniqueness is lost, so that the religious foundations of very different forms of government and socio-cultural life are blurred. Thus, as Habermas suggests, Pera confirms—Judeo-Christianity is the foundation of all that we love about Western culture. However, in the secular culture, Judeo-Christianity is equated with Islam, which is radically different and has never produced the same socio-political culture. This results in what Pera calls the loss of the ability to discern and admit—this is better than that. He proposes that because of radical multiculturalism, postmodernism and relativism, Europe can no longer defend herself against radical Islam and other aggressors because she cannot bring herself to say that one thing is "better" than another, thus cannot privilege one form of culture over another. Though also an atheist, Pera believes that Europe dooms itself to impotence if it does not return to its Judeo-Christian groundings and suggests we "all call ourselves Christian". He elaborates,

Two divergent theories may be compared on the common ground ... and one may be judged better than the other. By better we mean that it has greater empirical content, more heuristic capacity, and so on.... Two religious systems may be compared by their cultural consequences, and here too one may be judged better

than the other. By "better" we mean that it recognizes and respects more fundamental rights, satisfies more expectation, allows for more efficient, transparent, democratic institution and so on. (Pera, 2011, p. 137)

More recently, French philosopher and Christian, Pierre Manent (2016) outlines the historic development of the morally neutral liberal stance demonstrating its effect on virtually all life in Europe. The morally neutral liberal state he believes has essentially no power to serve higher purposes, nor any authority to regulate life. When human autonomy becomes the highest goal, the culture as an entity is left rootless. The loss of the Judeo-Christian framework leaves Europe with no way to successfully integrate Muslims into society, while preserving its own culture born of Judeo-Christian roots. Nonetheless, he believes it is possible if France makes it clear to immigrants from the outset just what kind of country they are entering and therefore what freedoms and limits they can expect. Without holding fast to Judeo-Christian principles, France, like the rest of us, is left with no substantial or permanent moral boundaries, no clear definition of what it means to be human, to be good, to be true, or even what it means to be French or European.

Effects on the University and the Search for Truth

Cultural conflict and rootlessness is nowhere more evident than in the academy. Despite the fact that the world remains resolutely religious and/or spiritual, the division between the "real" world and our ability to understand and engage it on any terms outside of materialism and/or postmodernism widens. We know only how to hold religious/spiritual knowledge in suspicion and deconstruct what few scholars understand (and may in fact be unable to comprehend from the outside). Religious scholars who read such work clearly understand that the secular critics (1) do not have a fuller picture, (2) do not comprehend the dimensions of religious/spiritual knowledge and reality, and (3) are reluctant or unable to interrogate or deconstruct their own secular assumptions.

My concern here is not so much how the exclusivity of secularism silences the religious (as in rendering the Judeo-Christian scholars voiceless, marginalized or even micro aggressed), though it does (and other chapters discuss this). More importantly I am concerned about the limits secularity places on the search for truth and the proper interpretation of research and theory. This failure is revealed time and again in prominent research and theory featured in the academy that purports to look at religious phenomena but fails to address it through a religious epistemology.

22 Mary Poplin

There are many such instances of misinterpreted phenomena in the academic world but few ever notice because we have grown up accepting that scholarship (the search for truth) can only be defined in strictly secular terms. Most of us can hardly imagine thinking outside of a secular framework, even those of us who know and believe. The now longstanding trend in the social sciences is to think of all reality as simply human constructions, so that we rarely even think to ask—is this true? Because something fits our standard image of constructing meanings by race, culture, gender, class and/or human desires, we are predisposed to accept conclusions that may be false because they fit our preconceived biases—our secular academic training. If there is a suggestion that something is actually true, universally true (especially beyond secularism's limits), social scientists must refashion it as a human construction to make it publishable. This limits our ability to engage real phenomena—reality.

Philosopher Dallas Willard (2009) posed a set of questions in response to the secularization of the academy that could reinvigorate both its academic integrity and its potential for advancing human and natural flourishing through more complete and robust intellectual frameworks.

Is reality secular? Is adequate knowledge secular? And is that something that has been established as a fact by thorough and unbiased inquiry? Is this something that today's secular universities thoroughly and freely discuss in a disciplined way? Certainly not! Nowhere does that happen. It is now simply assumed that every field of knowledge or practice is perfectly complete without any reference to God. It may be logically possible that this assumption is true but is it true? (Willard, 2009, pp. 123–124)

If reality is secular, higher education is forging ahead the best it can to advance knowledge useful in promoting individual, social, and natural flour-ishing—via an endlessly changing array of human constructions. If reality is not secular, the university is woefully intellectually and morally diminished. I conclude here by suggesting that the radical secularization of the academy has produced five major problems that are bankrupting the academy and, in turn, the culture.

- First, otherwise highly educated people (ourselves and our students) are left woefully ignorant of things many human beings in the world experience and believe.
- Secularization has radically diminished the university's commitment to the unbridled whole-hearted search for truth; thus it is no longer the free and open marketplace of ideas.

- The exclusivity of secularism and its tendency to disdain orthodox Judeo-Christian principles, in particular, contradicts the university's own self-professed commitment to pluralism.
- Radical secularism has left the university with what law professor Steven Smith (2010) calls a "thin, desiccated public discourse." Faculty and students are expected to conform to speech codes that privilege particular ideological frameworks over others, as well as the secular over religious.
- Without understanding religious knowledge in its specificity and in its spirituality, the university, at best, promotes a false perception that all religious/spiritual knowledge is essentially the same and thus fails to distinguish between religious and spiritual worldviews that are radically different and result in very different outcomes. In its race to create "interfaith movements" we replace specific religious frameworks with good will and service projects. I believe this is an intentional act to dilute the power and distinctiveness, of religions, particularly Judeo-Christian religion, so that secularism is made the only default space available.

In one of Willard's last public lectures, a young philosophy student asked him, "What is truth?"—the same question asked of Jesus by Pilate. Willard thoughtfully considered her question for a few moments and then answered, "Truth is reality. And reality is what you run into when you are wrong."

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26

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