VU Research Portal

Worldview Literacy in the Academy and Beyond

Valk, John; Selçuk, Mualla; Miedema, Siebren

Link to publication in VU Research Portal

Worldview Literacy in the Academy and Beyond: Advancing Mutual Understanding in Diverse Societies*

John Valk, Mualla Selçuk & Siebren Miedema

Published online: 04 Jun 2020.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 200

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

Worldview Literacy in the Academy and Beyond: Advancing Mutual Understanding in Diverse Societies*

John Valk[a], Mualla Selçuk[b], and Siebren Miedema[c]

[a]Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick Fredericton, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; [b]Faculty of Divinity Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey; [c]Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

Diverse societies face increasing racial tension, social divide, religious illiteracy, and secularism. What role can education play in confronting these challenges? Universities generate scientific knowledge but less so the search for meaning. Worldview studies encompasses both views of life and ways of life. Exploring various worldviews becomes a search for meaning and a journey into knowing self and others. This article seeks to engage multiple partners to develop teaching pedagogies, curricula, and educational tools to enhance greater knowledge, awareness, and understanding of various worldviews.

Introduction

Certain phenomena are creating challenges in our modern and diverse societies. Increasingly, individualism, secularism, and consumerism are *views of life* that vie for the hearts and minds of many. They have brought numerous benefits, but at the same time lead to *ways of life* that become worrisome today. More worrisome is a rise in religious tribalism, racial tension, and social divide, as domestic strife, economic imbalances, and immigration test national and regional levels of tolerance, openness, and compassion for the other. But no less worrisome to religious educators is an increase in religious illiteracy and the rise of religious "nones," where past social cohesiveness grounded in common visions of meaning and purpose have been shattered if not truncated and are replaced by what could best be characterized as new forms of polarization and segregation. Adding to all of this is a public square where discussions and debates become increasingly polarized and vociferous, as civil society as an encompassing entity begins to lose any sense of its meaning. What role can education play in confronting these challenges?

Over the past century and beyond, universities have increasingly shifted focus to that of science-based knowledge, with a stress on what has become known as STEM programs—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (Ismail 2018; Ossola 2014). Knowledge from such programs has benefited numerous societies, both East and West, with innovative advancements in travel, medicine, communication, and technology that have added ease, comfort, and opportunity to many worldwide.

In all of these advancements, however, a sense of meaning and purpose appears to allude all too many. Yet the search for it continues unabated in society at large and can be seen in numerous self-help, group-help, and even substance-help programs and initiatives that proliferate in the land. But the search for meaning and purpose from religious institutions seems to have been minimized, and in many cases even abandoned (Toynbee 2019; Stroop and O'Neal 2019; Pew Research Centre 2018; Kregting et al. 2018; Bibby 2017; Clarke and Macdonald 2017). There is decreased involvement and membership in traditional religious organizations, and not least that of the younger generation, many of whom prefer to call themselves "spiritual but not religious" (Parsons 2018; Mercadante 2014). Yet interest in religious and spiritual questions remain (Thiessen and Wilkins-Laflamme 2020; Bartunek 2019). Further, the social and natural sciences have challenged traditional religious perspectives on many aspects of life (Atkins 2018; Coyne 2015). This has resulted in some downsizing of religious education programs and even departments in the academy (Turner 2019; Hafner 2015; Gibson 2015). In that sense, religious education faces a dire future.

Religion will, nonetheless, survive in this new state of affairs. It is not the first challenge religion has faced and overcome in its long history (Wright 2017). Religious education too will persist in the face of this new reality, but its success may be limited. Its exclusive and narrow focus on religious traditions alone may become its own undoing. In a time when the search for meaning continues unabated in an increasingly secular society fewer and fewer seek it from religious institutions, or even religious education. Yet religious education needs to speak again to faculty and students so as to overcome the increasing challenges facing us today, and not least the religious tribalism, racial tension, and social divide that perplexes so many (Valk and Selçuk 2017; Stoekl 2015; Lukenbill 2016). But it cannot do so in its current rendition.

A new paradigm is needed for this diverse and divisive age—worldview education. Knowledge and awareness of the various worldviews, both religious and secular, and how they impact self, others, and societies at large can lead to greater understanding of differences, so that focus can shift to tensions that become creative rather than divisive. In essence, worldview education is a journey into knowing self and others (Valk 2009).

There is already a growing realization that the study of various worldviews needs to be incorporated into religious studies. But maybe that new paradigm needs to have its beginning in reimagining religious education *as* worldview education, or worldview studies. This will be a bold step for those steeped in the longstanding field of religious studies, but it might be a necessary one in terms of where we are today. Yet it needs to go beyond the mere name change of a traditional program. It needs to extend into education in general, so that worldview literacy spills out into the larger academy (Valk 2017). And further, it needs to spill out into the public square (Valk 2009). Let us spell out why all of this might be the case.

Current challenges to religious education

Religion has an image problem—in the media, the academy, and in the public realm. The media is more inclined to mention its failures than its contributions, as well as

offer its essential teachings in trivial sound bites (Lundsby 2018; Stoddard and Martin 2017; Marshall, Gilbert, and Green Ahmanson 2009). Politicians in general are reluctant to link their private beliefs to their public policies (Coons 2019; Gurney 2019; Sison 2013). Religion has been thought to poison everything (Hitchens 2007) its God the most unpleasant character in all fiction (Barker 2016). Such comments may be rather extreme, for it is no longer the case that higher education is a hotbed of secularism, even if there exist tensions between the sacred and secular (Schmalzbauer and Mahoney 2018; Aune and Stevenson 2017; Waggoner 2011). Nonetheless, religion has an image problem.

But so does the academy, if not more so. One of those problems has to do with its current STEM focus, which is under scrutiny. Some are insisting that its focus should be STEAM, rather than STEM, so that the Arts, themselves under scrutiny, remain a crucial aspect of a university education (Sousa and Pilecki 2013). This issue has resulted in no small number of debates, and at very high levels.

Not lost in some of these debates, but often under the radar, is that the large questions of life continue to be raised by students, although more reluctantly engaged in by faculty (Mayhew & Bryant 2013). All too often, unfortunately, these questions and interests are consigned to religious studies or religious education departments, which are themselves increasingly placed at the margins of academic inquiry (Hand 2012). When issues about faith and beliefs, about stories of God and gods, and about rituals and symbols linked to them are focused on traditional religions, it cloisters them into narrow academic sectors, communicating to all too many that these are optional compartments of life. Not only is the richness of religious traditions cloistered, a wide array of life's questions and issues are often viewed in terms of exclusive perspectives. Both become isolated from learning as a whole, from mainstream society in general, and from their contributions to dialog in the public square in particular (Valk 2009; Miedema 2014). They fall off the radar screen for all too many educators and students, whose interest in religion in particular becomes narrowed, waned, or hostile as a result. Today students can graduate with the highest degree the academy offers without having rubbed two religious or existential thoughts or ideas together (Hauerwas 2007). Small wonder that a growing religious illiteracy has surfaced in society (Dinham and Francis 2016; Prothero 2007).

Limiting or cloistering some of life's most important questions and issues leads to another problem—the uncritical acceptance of other perspectives: other beliefs and values that hold great sway in the public academy, if not the public square. Other perspectives or worldviews, most particularly secular ones, with markings and traits similar to those of traditional religions— metanarratives, teachings, symbols, rituals, and more— come to dominate the public square and influence the lives of younger and older alike, often without a broader sense of how, where, and why. A focus on worldviews or "worldview education," rather than only religions or "religious education," can turn matters around. Various perspectives and viewpoints, both religious and secular, are given greater exposure, leveling the playing field when it comes to competing for the hearts and minds of people, and seeing the extent of their reach in the public square. It also presents an opportunity to compare and contrast, to see where and how an awareness of other worldviews might broaden and deepen one's own—a journey into knowing self and others.

Worldview studies, rather than religious studies, opens up many new possibilities (Van der Kooij, de Ruyter, and Miedema 2013; 2017). It is inclusive of all traditions—religious and secular. While numerous and competing differences exist between them, each has its own richness, beliefs, and values (Kim, McCalman, and Fisher 2012). Each can contribute meaningfully to discussions in the public square, which is increasingly multicultural and multi-faith. An awareness of them leads to an increased awareness of the ways in which they are at play in politics, media, economics, the academy, and more. Not to be minimized is the further awareness that we all have a worldview—a *view of life* that gives shape to a *way of life*. The search for meaning and purpose is a search or exploration of our own worldview, and those of others (Davis 2009; Griffioen 2012). Above all, it leads to increased literacy. It is a recognition that various views and ways of life are portrayed and depicted in film, music, poetry, novels, and more. Education is enhanced when there is awareness that worldviews, traditional or alternative, come in many different shapes and forms (Gardner, Soules, and Valk 2017; Valk 2017).

Worldview education: challenges and opportunities

Use of the concept "worldview" brings certain challenges. It is often inadequately used, casually used, and even inaccurately used. Students, scholars, and members of the larger public would benefit from a more robust discussion to uncover its value, especially for education, as it increasingly engages plural voices. Its implication and implementation for schools and institutions of higher learning are beginning to surface as multiple perspectives now challenge education and educators. In this, a great opportunity arises to uncover its value for enriched dialogue in the academy and in a diverse public square, where meaningful engagement with the other becomes increasingly important.

A first opportunity begins with worldview education itself, but it also comes with a challenge. The challenge is to avoid or move away from an exclusive focus on the worldview of the self— worldviews explored only in terms of one's own personal beliefs and values. This remains, in effect, an exclusive study of "the self." Such a focus becomes attractive in a society increasingly beset by an individualism, where personal formation, personal identity, and personal well-being draw great attention. In itself, such focus has importance and is necessary, potentially spawning creativity, imagination, and independence in terms of the self. But, in the end, it is insufficient, leading to a privatization of one's faith and beliefs; a fulfillment of an individualized self that fits nicely with today's post-religious, post-secular, and individualistic culture (Knox 2016). The self can remain disconnected, isolated from the other, from a sense of community, and from the rich traditions of the past and present—from the "wisdom of the ages." Worldview education offers an opportunity for the individual to study and engage with larger entities, larger collectives, with longer histories of communal care and thoughtful responses to some of life's big questions, giving opportunities to compare one's own percolating thoughts and ideas to others. All worldviews, and no less traditional religious worldviews, have creative forms, innovative expressions, artistic outlets, and engaging theologies, to offer richness to individuals while developing their own views of life.

The second opportunity is the flip side of the first, working to move beyond a sole focus on the worldviews of others, especially more longstanding religious worldviews. Study of the various religious traditions that have greatly influenced and shaped humans since the dawn of time can be intriguing, especially in an era where secularization has taken a strong foothold. But such individual interest easily treats them as entities of the past—museum pieces—and hides a secular-centric view of life. These forms of museo-logization fail to tap religious worldviews that are experiential and dynamic. These worldviews are alive and well today, able to assist students and others in the development and formation of their own worldview. Study of the self and of the other go hand in hand. Worldview education provides an opportunity to explore the other—their beliefs and values, sources, rituals, where they stand on certain issues and why. Questions asked of others quickly become questions asked of the self. Knowing self necessitates knowing others.

A third opportunity comes in overcoming disciplinary isolation, an increasing challenge to the modern academy. Worldview education by its nature is interdisciplinary. It cannot be confined to one discipline, for it touches on all disciplines. Worldviews are *views of life*—our beliefs and values—and *ways of life*—our behaviors and actions. Various disciplines—psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, the-ology—all deal with aspects of how beliefs and values impact behavior and action—individually and collectively. These scholarly areas have individually rendered valuable insight into various aspects of individual and collective life—our narratives and meta-narratives, teachings, ethics, ontologies, epistemologies, cosmologies and more, past and present. An interdisciplinary approach to worldviews gives the opportunity to explore these in greater depth, revealing the breadth and richness of human thought, ideas, imagination, creativity, and innovation.

The fourth opportunity is the most daunting and with the greatest challenge. It is entering into the public square so that an exchange of different views and ideas of the world we want can lead to robust discussions and interactions. Public policy, economics, environmental concerns, and communal care are rooted in individual and collective starting points, in essence one's worldview. The public square is finally the place where worldviews should be engaged critically, so that a secular public square is not mistaken for a neutral one (Williams 2012; Butler, Habermas, and Taylor 2011).

The waters of worldview education have already been tested by some who have ventured in its direction. Valk (2020) has embarked on a study of the concept of worldview and has developed a comprehensive framework by which to explore various dimensions of both religious and secular worldviews, highlighting their impact on numerous academic disciplines and various aspects of life and society. That framework consists of a number of sub-frameworks: personal and group identity, cultural dimensions, ultimate/existential questions, ontological/epistemological questions, and ultimate/particular beliefs, values, and principles. That framework undergirded 20 years of teaching an undergraduate course on "Worldviews, Cultures and Religions." Valk and Tosun (2016) tested the effectiveness of such an approach on students in a research study, comparing those who had taken such a course with those who had not. They noted that a world-views course opened the minds and hearts of students to recognize the prevalence of worldviews, and their impacts on economics, public policy, education, and more. It also

engaged them in a discovery or rediscovery of their own worldview. In essence, it was a journey into "knowing self and others."

Valk, Albayrak, and Selçuk (2017) tested the waters even further by engaging in a project at Ankara University. A group of younger and older scholars at the university employed a comprehensive worldview framework to self-explore their understanding of Islam. Doing so allowed members to think systematically, creating new areas of thoughts and ideas. Many gained a stronger connection to their faith tradition and beliefs through the process. Asking the right questions served to provide new insights about self and others. Aspects of this methodological approach are now used in developing further pedagogical approaches and curricula for teaching religious education in Turkey (Selçuk and Valk 2012).

The successes experienced by these initial endeavors indicate that students and others have gained a considerably greater understanding of their own worldview, those of others, and how worldviews impact what we think and what we do, both in the past and in the present. These suggest that further study and engagement of worldview education bodes well for the future.

Van der Kooij, de Ruyter, and Miedema (2013) published the results of an in-depth analysis of the worldview concept based on theoretical as well as empirical literature. They offered a more precise description by distinguishing between organized and personal worldviews. They wondered whether four elements often mentioned in the literature are conceptually necessary: existential questions, moral values, influence in people's acting and thinking, and providing meaning in life. They concluded that

> an organized worldview is a view on life, the world and humanity that prescribes answers to existential questions. This way, organized worldviews aim to influence the thinking and acting of people. Organized worldviews contain moral values and aim to provide meaning in people's lives. (217)

With respect to personal worldview, they concluded that

> a personal worldview is a view on life, the world and humanity that consists out of norms, values, ideals that can be but are not necessarily moral and out of answers to existential questions. When a person has a personal worldview, these norms, values, ideals, and existential notions influence his/her thinking and acting and either give meaning in life or, in the nihilistic case, deny that there is meaning in life. (222)

According to the authors, worldview education stimulates and inspires students to reflect on and learn about their own worldview and the worldviews of others. Existential and meaning of life questions become important aspects of discerning one's worldview. Engaging younger and older students in this way are vital educational topics.

A pedagogical and didactical approach must be inclusive of all worldviews, whether religious or secular. It underscores the fact that everyone has a worldview, and as such, all students are included: there are no "nones"! Worldview education aims at stimulating identity formation and fostering and encouraging student personal worldview development. As they learn of the worldviews of others (personal and organized), they come to better understand their own. German philologist Max Müller (1873) stated some time ago that "he who knows one (only their own) knows none."

Worldviews are both *views of life* and *ways of life.* As such, the pedagogical aim of worldview education is to keep the individual and the social together, to foster tolerance and openness to both religious and secular worldviews (Miedema 2017; 2018; Aslan and Hermansen 2017). This can contribute to enhancing citizenship education, as the European REDCo study of students from secondary schools in eight countries has shown (Bertram-Troost and Miedema 2017; Jackson et al. 2007).

Worldview educators as public intellectuals

Great thinkers, such as Charles Taylor, Martha Nussbaum, Jürgen Habermas, and others, have frequently addressed the importance of religion in the public sphere (Miedema 2014). Its legitimate places need to be continually recognized, especially in a liberal-democratic public square. Yet there is another aspect related to this as well. It might be argued that the need for worldview education embedded in a holistic view of personhood formation is self-evident and does not require attention in the wider public. However, worldview educators need to persistently voice their views in the public square, in part to counter a small minority of vociferous atheists, as well as fervent proponents of consumerism, who increasingly dominate the public space. Taking worldview education out of the academy and into the public square is a major step for most religious and worldview educators (Miedema 2019). Religious and worldview educators are, with few exceptions, virtually invisible in the public arena, characterized as it is by clashes of power-knowledge and by knowledge-politics (Foucault 1980).

Discussion of worldviews in the academy is necessary but not sufficient. Thus, what is needed are religious and worldview educators acting as public intellectuals in the public square, joining forces with different societal stakeholders with whom they share similar aims. They are to be challenged to become public intellectuals for the benefit of students, supporting and encouraging them to develop their self-determined personhood in education in general and in worldview education in particular. In addition, from a pedagogically strategic perspective perspective it is imperative to position new generations of educators and worldview educators in governmental, semi-governmental, and nongovernmental organizations and institutions as gate-watchers—to voice from within the "know-how" and "know-that" of worldview education.

In summary

The initiatives embarked on thus far engaged literature review and analysis, conceptual analysis, and insights from communities of students, scholars, and practitioners. Some pedagogical methods have been explored and implemented. Some curriculum materials have been developed and implemented. But a more comprehensive strategy is needed. Something new is being envisioned.

Enhancing worldview literacy and fostering worldview personhood formation in education is of benefit to all. Advancing mutual understanding in diverse societies encourages universities to teach students to be responsive to different *views of life* and *ways of life*—their own and those of others. Enhancing worldview literacy in the larger society affords an opportunity to overcome social divisiveness, racial tensions, religious

illiteracy, and an uncritical acceptance of any one dominant worldview. It creates an opportunity to explore the richness of numerous worldviews and how they can contribute to an open and robust public square that creates space for those from multiple perspectives who seek to contribute to a freer society.

The above has paved a way for moving in this direction. There may be other initiates. We seek now to move to the next level and to engage multiple partners from multiple nations in a large research project. That project seeks a variety of partners to develop teaching pedagogies, curricula, and educational tools to assist students younger and older alike to enhance greater knowledge, awareness, and understanding of various secular and religious worldviews as a journey into knowing self and others. Further, it seeks to develop synergy projects to provide support for small groups of principal investigators to jointly address research problems that would otherwise be difficult to do individually. Last, it seeks strategies for engaging the public to increase worldview literacy in the public square as one way to overcome social divide and racial tensions. Engaging religious and worldview educators is the first step in that larger journey.

Notes on contributors

John Valk is Professor of Worldview Studies at Renaissance College, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. E-mail: valk@unb.ca.

Mualla Selçuk is Professor of Religious Education in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Sciences, Ankara University, Ankara Turkey. She was President of the Religious Education Association in 2017-18. E-mail mualla.selcuk@divinity.ankara.edu.tr.

Siebren Miedema (1949) is Emeritus Professor in Educational Foundations and Emeritus Professor in Religious Education. He was President of the Religious Education Association in 2013-14. E-mail: s.miedema@vu.nl.

References

Aslan, E., and M. Hermansen. 2017. *Religion and Violence: Muslim and Christian Theological and Pedagogical Reflections*. Weisbaden, Germany: Springer.

Atkins, P. 2018. "Why It's Only Science that Can Answer all the Big Questions." *Aeon*. https://aeon.co/ideas/why-its-only-science-that-can-answer-all-the-big-questions?utm_source=Aeon+Newsletter&utm_campaign=567500d5ae-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_08_20_01_58&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_411a82e59d-567500d5ae-68717837.

Aune, K. and J. Stevenson (Eds.). 2017. *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America*. Oxford: Routledge.

Barker, D. 2016. *God: The Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction*. Edinburgh: Sterling.

Bartunek, J. 2019. *Spiritual but Not Religious: The Search for Meaning in a Material World*. Gastonia, NC: Tan Books.

Bertram-Troost, G. D., and S. Miedema. 2017. "Fostering Religious Tolerance in Education. The Dutch Perspective." In *Lived Religion and the Politics of (in)Tolerance*, edited by R. R. Ganzevoort and S. Sremac, 237–57. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bibby, R. 2017. *Resilient Gods: Being Pro-Religious, Low Religious or No Religious in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Butler, J., J. Habermas, and C. Taylor. 2011. *The Power of Religion in the Public Square*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Clarke, B., and S. Macdonald. 2017. *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*. Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queens.

Coons, C. 2019. "Democrats Need to Talk about their Faith." *The Atlantic.* https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/06/2020-democrats-are-talking-about-religious-faith/592966/.

Coyne, J. 2015. *Fact vs. Faith: Why Science & Religion Are Incompatible.* New York: Viking.

Davis, A. 2009. "Socially Constructing a Transformed Self-View and Worldview." *Counterpoints* 341 (7):133–54.

Dinham, A., and M. Francis. 2016. *Religious Literacy in Policy and Practice.* Bristol, UK: Policy.

Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Writings.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Gardner, R., K. Soules, and J. Valk. 2017. "The Urgent Need for Teacher Preparation in Religious and Secular Worldview Education." *Religious Education* 112 (3):242–54. doi: 10.1080/00344087.2017.1309113.

Gibson, J. 2015. "Queen's Closes Theology Program." https://www.queensjournal.ca/story/2015-11-13/news/queens-closes-theology-programs/.

Griffioen, S. 2012. "On Worldviews." *Philosophia Reformata* 77 (1):19–56. doi: 10.1163/22116117-90000521.

Gurney, M. 2019. "The Green Party is so Tolerant Elizabeth May Can't Even Talk about Her Christian Faith." National Post, September 11. https://nationalpost.com/opinion/matt-gurney-the-green-party-is-so-tolerant-and-inclusive-elizabeth-may-cant-even-talk-about-her-christian-faith.

Hafner, J. 2015. "Relating Theology and Religious Studies: Reflections on the German Landscape." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 31 (2):171–9. doi: 10.3138/tjt.3515.

Hand, M. 2012. "What's in a Worldview? On Trevor Cooling's Doing God in Education." *Oxford Review of Education* 38 (5):527–37. doi: 10.1080/03054985.2012.722862.

Hauerwas, S. 2007. *The State of the University: Academic Knowledge and the Knowledge of God.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Hitchens, C. 2007. *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Ismail, Z. 2018. "Benefits of STEM Education." https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6c0ec740f0b647abb525a7/418_Benefits_of_STEM_Education.pdf.

Jackson, R., S. Miedema, W. Weisse, and J.-P. Willaime. (Eds). 2007. *Religion and Education in Europe: Developments. Contexts and Debates.* Vol. 3. Munster: Waxmann.

Kim, D., D. McCalman, and D. Fisher. 2012. "The Sacred/Secular Divide and the Christian Worldview." *Journal of Business Ethics* 109 (2):203–8. doi: 10.1007/s10551-011-1119-z.

Knox, J. S. 2016. *Sacro-Egoism: The Rise of Religious Individualism in the West.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock.

Kregting, J., P. Scheepers, P. Vermeer, and C. Hermans. 2018. "Why God Has Left The Netherlands: Explanations for the Decline of Institutional Christianity in The Netherlands between 1966 and 2015." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57 (1):58–79. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12499.

Lukenbill, W. B. 2016. "Writing about Islam for Youth: A Study of Two Authors and Two World Views." *Journal of Religious & Theological Information* 15 (1–2):32–46. doi: 10.1080/10477845.2016.1168337.

Lundsby, K. 2018. *Contesting Religion: The Media Dynamics of Cultural Conflicts in Scandinavia.* Berlin: DeGruyter.

Marshall, P., L. Gilbert, and R. Green Ahmanson. 2009. *Blind Spot: When Journalists Don't Get Religion.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mayhew, M. J. and A. Bryant Rockenbach. 2013. "Achievement or Arrest? The Influence of the Collegiate Religious and Spiritual Climate on Students' Worldview Commitment." *Research in Higher Education* 54 (1):63–84. doi: 10.1007/s11162-012-9263-6.

Mercadante, L. A. 2014. *Belief without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but Not Religious.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Miedema, S. 2014. "Coming out Religiously! Religion, the Public Sphere and Religious Identity Formation." *Religious Education* 109 (4):362–77. doi: 10.1080/00344087.2014.924753.

Miedema, S. 2017. "The Concept and Conceptions of Interfaith Education with Neighbour Concepts. Reflections from Pedagogical Perspectives." In *Interfaith Education for All. Theoretical Perspectives and Best Practices for Transformative Action*, edited by D. Wielzen and I. ter Avest, 21–30. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Miedema, S. 2018. "Personal World View, Existential Questions and Inclusive Pedagogy. Theological and Pedagogical Underpinnings." In *Challenging Life. Existential Questions as a Resource for Education*, edited by J. Ristiniemi, G. Skeie, and K. Sporre, 137–55. Münster: Waxmann.

Miedema, S. 2019. "We Need Religious Educators as Public Intellectuals. A Manifesto." In *Public Theology Perspectives on Religion and Education*, edited by M. L. Pirner, J. Lähnemann, W. Haussmann, and S. Schwarz, 250–5. London: Routledge.

Müller, M. 1873. *Introduction to the Science of Religion.* London: Longmans, Green.

Ossola, A. 2014. "Is the U.S. Focusing too much on STEM?" *The Atlantic.* https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/12/is-the-us-focusing-too-much-on-stem/383353/.

Parsons, W. 2018. *Being Spiritual but Not Religious: Past, Present, Future.* London: Routledge.

Pew Research Centre. 2018. "Being Christian in Western Europe." May 27. https://www.pewforum.org/2018/05/29/being-christian-in-western-europe/

Prothero, S. 2007. *Religious Illiteracy: What Every American Needs to Know – and Doesn't.* New York: Harper.

Schmalzbauer, J., and K. A. Mahoney. 2018. *The Resilience of Religion in American Higher Education.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Selçuk, M., and J. Valk. 2012. "Knowing Self and Others: A Worldview Model for Religious Education in Turkey." *Religious Education* 107 (5):443–54. doi: 10.1080/00344087.2012.722473.

Sison, M. 2013. "An Activist, an Anglican, a Political Leader." *Anglican Journal*, August 2. https://www.anglicanjournal.com/an-activist-an-anglican-a-political-leader/.

Sousa, D. A., and T. Pilecki. 2013. *From STEM to STEAM: Using Brain Compatible Strategies to Integrate the Arts.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Stoddard, B., and C. Martin. 2017. *Stereotyping Religion: Critiquing Clichés.* New York: Bloomsbury.

Stoekl, K. 2015. "The Future of Religious Education in Europe." http://www.eui.eu/Projects/ReligioWest/Home.aspx.

Stroop, C., and L. O'Neal. 2019. *Empty the Pews: Stories of Leaving the Church.* Indianapolis, IN: Epiphany.

Thiessen, J., and S. Wilkins-Laflamme. 2020. *None of the Above: Nonreligious Identity in the US and Canada.* Regina, SK: University of Regina Press.

Toynbee, P. 2019. "Faith in Religion is Dwindling, but When will British Politics Reflect That?" *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/11/faith-religion-politics-british-attitudes-survey.

Turner, C. 2019. "Theology and Religious Studies Risk 'Disappearing' from Universities." *The Telegraph.* https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2019/05/22/theology-religious-studies-risk-disappearing-universities-report/

Valk, J. 2009. "Religion or Worldview: Enhancing Dialogue in the Public Square." *Marburg Journal of Religion* 14 (1):1–16.

Valk, J. 2017. "Worldview Inclusion in Public Schooling." In *What Teachers Need to Know: Topics of Inclusion*, edited by M. Etherington, 233–48. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Valk, J. 2020. "Worldviews In and Around Us: A Comprehensive Journey into Knowing Self and Others." Forthcoming.

Valk, J., H. Albayrak, and M. Selçuk. 2017. *An Islamic Worldview from Turkey: Religion in a Modern.* Democratic and Secular State. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Valk, J., and M. Selçuk. 2017. "Journeying into a Peaceful Islam: A Worldview Framework Approach." In *Religion and Violence: Muslim and Christian Theological and Pedagogical Reflections*, edited by Aslan, E. and M. Hermansen, 243–64. Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer.

Valk, J., and A. Tosun. 2016. "Enhancing Religious Education through Worldview Exploration." *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education* 7 (2):105–17. doi: 10.1515/dcse-2016-0019.

Van der Kooij, J. C., D. J. de Ruyter, and S. Miedema. 2013. "Worldview: The Meaning of the Concept and the Impact on Religious Education." *Religious Education* 108 (2):210–28. doi: 10.1080/00344087.2013.767685.

Van der Kooij, J. C., D. J. de Ruyter, and S. Miedema. 2017. "The Merits of Using 'Worldview' in Religious Education." *Religious Education* 112 (2):172–84.

Waggoner, M. D. (Ed). 2011. *Sacred and Secular Tensions in Higher Education: Connecting Parallel Universities*. Oxford: Routledge.

Williams, R. 2012. *Faith in the Public Square*. London: Bloomsbury.

Wright, N. T. 2017. *Spiritual and Religious: The Gospel in an Age of Paganism*. London: SPCK.