

### Introduction

In this issue, Steve Bryant continues the theme ‘the battle for young minds; wokeness or godliness?’ The world is changing fast. Here are just a few developments since March.

- *Just Stop Oil* protesters disrupt world snooker finals and other sport events.
- Champion swimmer Riley Gaines was held against her will and assaulted for speaking out against the inclusion of William Thomas in women’s swimming events. Gaines has received savage criticism and threats from ‘trans-activists’.
- Several US states have banned teaching sexual and gender issues to elementary school children. This has been misrepresented in mainstream media as ‘don’t say gay’, when it is actually focused on not sexualising young children.
- A BBC programme attempted to discredit small-scale pro-life pregnancy care services in the UK in a similar way to methods used in the USA.

This article will provide ideas and resources to help our children to develop a Biblical and evidence-based view of the issues of the day, rather than one shaped by the media and popular culture. The issue of race will be covered in more detail this time, with three further themes in the next Educare. There are also some relevant points that affect how we can respond as Christians to the whole Woke movement. Each point will be covered in turn, but those relevant issues are:

- What is truth, and why do people lie?
- Where do we get our authority from?
- Developing healthy scepticism when watching, listening to, or reading ‘news’
- Recognising and avoiding language control tactics
- A simple practical step to help change culture

### What is truth?

This is not a new question. Pontius Pilate asked it during Jesus’ trial, and there were plenty of others before him. It was relevant then, and remains as a central question now. Truth does matter in every area of life. A person may try to convince the rest of us that smoking 100 cigarettes a day is good for our health; they may even be dogmatic and passionate about it, but it is not true and no amount of repetition or false argument will make it so. This principle applies in every area of life.

In the Bible, Jesus was clear about the need to believe the truth, telling us that He is the truth. This is a theme throughout the whole Bible. The Bible also condemns lying. Lies are the tactic of Satan and Jesus called him the father of lies. Clearly truth matters to God, even if it does not matter in some 21<sup>st</sup> Century thinking. We also need thinking that is true and consistent with facts not drawn directly from the Bible. Most non-believers do not respect the Bible’s authority; therefore we also need reasons for our beliefs based on clear and observable evidence from the world around us.

There has been a decline in modernity, in favour of post-modern thinking that values experience and feeling over truth. A summary of this is 'my truth may be different to your truth; it may even be different to reality, but it is still truth because I believe it'. In critical theory thinking, any statement that the facts are more accurate than someone's feelings is seen as an arrogant power tactic over that person, much more so if they are in a recognised 'victim' group. This example shows how it works:

*'There is no such thing as a [foetal] heartbeat at 6 weeks. It is a manufactured sound designed to convince people that men have the right to take control of a woman's body.'*  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11239717/Stacey-Abrams-stuns-panel-says-fetal-heartbeats-manufactured-sound.html>

This kind of lie and empty dismissal of truth would not matter much from someone with little or no influence. However, it came from Stacey Abrams, who narrowly lost in the 2018 Georgia Governor election. She lost again in the 2022 election by a bigger margin, but remains influential in the Democrat Party.

A related point to consider is why people lie. Many of the common reasons apply to people's attitudes to the Woke movement. It is essential for us to know them and teach them to our children.

A lot of people are unaware that they are being lied to, and are lying themselves when they repeat what they have learned. They are deceived and actually believe the lie. Similarly, for some there is a desire for the lie to be true; they may even believe that if it is said often enough it will become true. Believing and repeating a lie is well known in pseudo-Christian and other cults, where followers are deceived by brainwashing, and other tactics to make lies - even obvious and absurd ones - seem believable. Sometimes even the cult leaders begin to believe their own propaganda. They knew at first that they were lying, but constant repetition changes their thinking. Below is a list of a few cult features:

- Elite, special status for itself
- Us-against-them mentality
- Lack of accountability to any authorities
- The ends justify the 'necessary' means. These include lying, false fundraising, accusations, smears and character assassination against those who disagree.
- Leaving the group is treason, but 'difficult' group members are expelled.
- Splits occur over fine points of doctrine.
- There is little or no accountability about how funds are used.

All of these cult features exist in Wokeness, so it is no surprise to find that people who are deceived by the movement's propaganda reject any evidence that challenges it.

Mostly people lie because they see an advantage of some kind in doing so. It may be to avoid shame, some form of punishment, or ostracism (as in 'cancel culture', which can even result in dismissal from work). Another reason is to win the support and admiration of others (a current expression is 'virtue signalling'). Sometimes people lie because they said or did something that they must defend at all costs. They know it's a lie, and their loud protests show that they know.

One other reason is that lies can be used to exercise power over others. Lies help them control any discussion. To these people, lying is acceptable because their

bigger truth is more important. Some leading progressive politicians have repeatedly said *'we choose truth over facts'* and *'we are morally right even if factually inaccurate'*. What does this mean? There is also a more subtle argument about disjointed facts and statistics being used to tell lies. I read the book at university called *'How to lie with statistics'* (it is very easy!). However, that is not the point that these politicians are making. This is about their 'bigger truth' that they dictate and want us to believe. Inconvenient facts and evidence are dismissed and suppressed, and anyone raising them is attacked because they are causing 'harm' or 'offence'.

What do we do in response? As Christians, we are not to counter-attack and join an angry backlash. Some libertarians and social conservatives are aggressive and seem to be as angry as Woke activists. Insults, personal attacks, and distorted 'facts' should never be part of our vocabulary. Courtesy, listening, respect and gracious speech should be.

We need to educate ourselves and our children about why people lie, how to recognise it and what is wrong with it. Don't let lies go out unchallenged. When someone like Stacey Abrams lies as she did, explain that it is a lie and that the heartbeat can be detected in the unborn baby, but with older children look at the reasons for the lie as well. Or when the mantra 'a trans-woman is a woman' is recited, challenge that and explain that the whole body and every cell in that body tells the truth. Again, with older children look at why this lie is told, and the lie's results when men are placed in women's prisons and compete in women's sport.

### Where do we look for authority?

This is really important. Most people in the West, and increasing numbers elsewhere, are rejecting any revelation from God. In post-Christian cultures the Bible has been largely rejected. Even in some 'Christian' circles, the Bible is no longer God's word or it is creatively re-interpreted to make it fit the culture around us. This is not new - it has been promoted for centuries, but more Christians than ever do not look to the Bible for authority. The result is that the loudest and most aggressive voices in politics, corporations and the media become the authority of the day. Opinions and morals come from Instagram and Twitter rather than from God. But we can trust God's Word. We need to teach children the evidence of the scrolls and documents that make up the Bible. These show that we have an accurate record of the original writings. Look at the internal consistency of Bible. Discuss the inspiration that it gives to us in every area of life, what it has to say on contemporary issues, and the impact it has had on individual lives and whole cultures as they are transformed. Justify the Bible as God's Word to us and show that it is full of life.

### Healthy scepticism

We need to have healthy scepticism towards mainstream and social media, plus other social influences, and our children need to learn this too.

Whenever we look at the media, always think about what they are trying to persuade us into believing. A worthwhile exercise is to look at the website of a major news outlet such as Al Jazeera, the BBC, CNN, or ABC and ask these questions.

- How many articles are on political issues (party and identity politics)?
- What is their position on those issues?
- Which news items are only found on specialist pages?

- Which news items are not reported at all?
- How much of what is stated is fact?
- How much is 'interpretation' of facts – often called 'spin'?
- How much is opinion rather than facts?
- Is anything untrue?

Compare these results with smaller news sites from Christian sources and from more conservative sites such as Fox News or the Daily Wire. We can train ourselves and our children to look at media output like this routinely.

Widespread lack of trust in the media has given rise to 'fact-checking' sites. Even the BBC, which is clearly biased on a number of major social issues, has claimed to 'fact check' at times. But how independent are they? Here is an interesting illustration.

Snopes, a fact-checking site (<https://www.snopes.com/>) checked an article posted by the Babylon Bee satire site (<https://babylonbee.com/>) about CNN buying an industrial dryer to put their spin on the news. Snopes later backtracked on this, realising that it made them look foolish. At the time Snopes was funded by Facebook, so their agenda can be traced to the tech giants. There is little doubt that some tech giants have deliberately censored, ignored and 'de-marketed' opinions, inconvenient information, and even proven facts, that contradict the way they want us to think.

### Recognise and avoid language control

The last edition of Educare already highlighted this issue and showed how tolerance has been re-defined. This is just one example among many. Here are two more examples.

Most dictionaries contain the standard and widely-understood definition of racism as the belief that one race is superior to another. Recently though, the 'systemic' definition from critical race theory, sub-titled 'white supremacy', has been added by some. This is often used to justify and promote anti-white racism.

In the past the word 'queer' was mostly used as an insult, but based on 'queer theory' (rooted in critical theory), activists now use both this and expressions like LGBTQ+. These terms identify all those who are not heterosexual or who live outside of standard gender roles as 'oppressed'.

We need to recognise and avoid the control tactics, and refuse to allow activists to dictate how we speak, and therefore how we should think and act. Do not be trapped by pronoun 'rules' others try to enforce, and avoid using their redefined or recently-created words.

Be aware of the key players in forming these ideas, notably critical theory in its many expressions – critical race theory, radical gender ideology, third-wave feminism. Here is a very helpful resource from the Christian Institute.

<https://www.christian.org.uk/resource/critical-theory-challenging-truth-and-reality/>

Older students can read this for themselves, but parents will need to simplify and explain the ideas to younger children.

## One simple measure

Everyone has to spend money. We can ensure that money is spent in line with our Christian values. We can avoid companies and products that exploit their workers and/or damage the environment with no concern for sustainability. We do not have to buy from or invest in companies that have no respect for the sanctity of life. As big companies show support for Woke causes, we can usually buy from rivals who do not. It is not always possible to spend completely ethically but where we can, we should boycott anti-Christian businesses. That said, boycotts may help to change minds in a few companies, but they do not bring people to faith in Christ. We need to keep our eyes firmly on eternal priorities.

## The peoples of the world and race relations

The Bible contains hundreds of verses expressing God's heart for the many peoples of the world. There is no need to look for isolated proof texts, so this message is clear throughout the entire Bible. We recently found a huge list of Bible verses about the nations and the peoples in them. It is worth printing this as it makes a very effective visual aid!

See [https://momentumyes.com/en\\_gb/](https://momentumyes.com/en_gb/)

Here are just a few examples.

God called Abraham to bless 'all peoples on earth' (Genesis 12)

God's people Israel were to bless all nations, a light to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6)

Jesus came to save the world, not one ethnic group. (Luke 2:30-32 and John 3:16)

The Good Samaritan is one Jesus' best-known parables and focuses on someone from a racial group many others despised. (Luke 10)

At Pentecost, people from a huge number of countries became believers. (Acts 2)

After Pentecost, people from surrounding nations became believers. One of the first was an Ethiopian official (Acts 8)

In Revelation's visions of heaven there are people of every tribe, language and nation (Rev 5:9)

Given God's heart of love for all people, it follows that racism is a sin. There are historic, and some current, issues for some Christians to be ashamed of. As with all sin, the answer is repentance, which means both confession and real practical change. It is also true that people who are not guilty of racism do not need to repent of it. We have plenty of real sin to confess without adding false guilt created by activists.

It is no accident that so many churches are multi-ethnic. A role model of real unity, where all are accepted as co-equals regardless of race, social background, age or status speaks louder than any words. It is far better than the aggressive forced conformity of the current anti-racist movement.

Christianity is sometimes falsely represented as a Western religion backed up by colonialism. This is untrue on several counts – the roots of Christianity are firmly in the Middle East; the powerhouses of Christianity now are in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and a number of Asian states and countries, and although Europe became a Christian haven, for many centuries the Church was often inward looking.

How do we respond to the current anti-racism movement generally? A key Biblical test is to observe the fruit that it produces. Some of its goals seem not to be very different to those of hard-right racist groups. Some of the rhetoric is overtly racist such as that in the video 'What are white people superior at?' (reference below). There have been peaceful protests against genuine grievances, but there have also been riots, looting, and violence that have even led to the deaths of others. It is worth studying recent incidents of unrest, such as the actions of the BLM movement and the riots in larger French cities.

### A practical idea to help young people

Find out about relations between different races where you live. If there are tensions, what are they and what caused them? Who is involved in any racist incidents – is it an extreme minority, or is it more widespread? What, if anything, is being done to promote good relations? If there are local churches, are they the example that they should be? If not, why not? What would help them to change?

In the next edition of Educare we will look at three further areas of modern ideology.

Steve Bryant

### Resources

**Ibram Kendi; Anti-racist baby** <https://fliphtml5.com/ycdaf/zcju/basic>  
**Robin DiAngelo; White fragility**

Both of these resources explain Critical Race Theory from people who promote it. The first one is a free download of a children's book; the second is a best-selling book for adults.

**What are white people superior at?** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jM6NVwHr2k>  
Referred to in the article, the original does not seem to be available, but critiques of its obvious anti-White racism still show enough material. This one is from a well-known social conservative and practicing Catholic.

**Kenny Xu, An inconvenient minority** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2esl0yVFXE>  
From a Chinese academic, discussing why East Asians outperform other ethnic groups in studies but were being blocked from entry into top universities.

**John McWhorter, How anti-racism is hurting** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9qug9NGUcM>  
John is a professor with largely liberal views, but he identifies 'anti-racism' as a harmful influence which does not achieve its stated goals.

**Darrell Huff, How to lie with statistics** [originally 1954 but reprinted numerous times]. A classic that is still relevant today.

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