



Can a Post-Truth Society Such as Ours Be Long for This World?

In 2017, *Time* magazine followed up on its 1966 “Is God Dead?” cover with one asking, “Is Truth Dead?” Since these two things are related, perhaps it’s surprising it took them so long.

Truth, properly understood, can’t die, of course. But people’s belief in it can. This has long been happening and is why, as my longtime readers know, the Truth vs. moral relativism/nihilism issue has been a continual theme in my writing ever since I unsheathed the pen of punditry in 2002. Yet now, suddenly, this matter is becoming a more common theme in commentary in general. The reason?



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The West’s departure from Truth has become so obvious, and its consequences so dire, that people are increasingly recognizing it as what I’ve long called “the characteristic philosophical disease of our time.”

A good example is a new book by Jeff Myers, Ph.D., president of Summit Ministries in Manitou Springs, Colorado. Titled *Truth Changes Everything*, his message is, “Enough with ‘my truth’: Society must return to ‘THE truth,’” as Fox News [puts it](#). The site then relates why this is imperative:

“A mentor I had said, ‘Always stand for truth. It is the most important thing to stand for,’” said Myers.

“In every area of life, pursuing reality, even when it’s hard, is a better course.”

People are “ultimately happier” if they can “grapple with reality,” Myers said. He said the tendency today to seek and speak “my truth” is a “symptom of the times in which we live.”

Yet the reaction to Myers’ appeal was typical. “Truth is a tricky word because what is true to one person is not true to another,” wrote “Mr. Anthrope” in the MSN.com [comments section](#) associated with Fox’s article. “In other words, truth is subjective.”

Poster Mark Kendrick chimed in, faithfully claiming that “there is no objective moral standard, only the appearance [sic] of such due to a large population of people agreeing.”

These are hardly outlier opinions, either. As I often point out, the Barna Group research company [found that in 2002](#) already only six percent of teens believed in Truth; Barna [reported](#) similar results in 2018.

Now, you might be concerned upon hearing people speak of “post-Truth science.” But is it really any less alarming when we hear about our post-Truth society?

“Post-truth” was Oxford Dictionary’s Word of the Year in 2016, mind you, and “is an adjective [defined](#)



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[as](#) ‘relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief,’” [related](#) TruthStory.org last year. We “live in such a way that feelings override facts,” the site added.

American Thinker’s Joseph Gish [echoed this](#) on Thursday, informing that the “online [Cambridge dictionary](#) defines ‘post-truth’ to mean ‘relating to a situation in which people are more likely to accept an argument based on their emotions and beliefs, rather than one based on facts.’” Barna had found this via its research, do note, [reporting](#) that “Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth on Feelings.”

This reflects what I’ve argued for decades. As I [wrote in 2013](#), what “happens when a person doesn’t believe in Truth? What then will be his yardstick for behavior?” Following “relativism out leads us to a striking conclusion,” I later answered: “Since we can’t say that anything is objectively right or wrong, better or worse, the only [or at least primary] yardstick we have left for behavior is feelings.”

Yet “Passion governs, and she never governs wisely,” warned Benjamin Franklin. We see “post-Truth’s” consequences everywhere, too. We may be incredulous when learning that schoolchildren are shown pornographic images in sex education’s name and are told they can switch sexes; that racial theorists claim punctuality (and other positive traits) are “white norms” and teaching good grammar is “racist;” and that CVS pharmacy made the “moral” decision to cease selling tobacco but now carries a sex toy. But all these things and more are a function of detachment from Truth, from moral reality, as I’ve [explained via my “dietary relativism” analogy](#).

In a nutshell, accepting this post-Truth, relativism-carries-the-day standard looses the demons of man’s animal nature, as it justifies all. “Rape, kill, steal, lie — propagandize — why not? Who’s to say it’s ‘wrong’? Don’t impose *your truth* on me.”

How can this be remedied? It isn’t easy, but here are a couple of arguments that worked wonders a few years back with a young man I know. First, as I [wrote in 2002](#):

If 90 percent of humanity said it preferred chocolate ice cream over vanilla, it wouldn’t mean that chocolate was “right” and vanilla “wrong.” Nor would it mean that chocolate was better in any objective sense — it would simply mean that people happened to like chocolate better. It’s illogical to say otherwise. But, would it be any more logical to say that murder was wrong for no other reason than the fact that 90 percent of all people preferred that others not kill in a way that we call unjust? Of course not. But if the idea that murder is wrong is simply a function of man’s collective preference, it then falls into the exact same realm as the collective preference for a type of ice cream: the realm of taste.

Do you really believe this, that all your “moral” imperatives are mere preferences?

Related to this is the second argument. [As I wrote last year](#), a more astute atheist “I know of actually told someone close to me, ‘Murder isn’t wrong; it’s just that society says it is.’ While this statement is disturbing to most, it’s also something else: coldly logical.... After all, if there’s no God — nothing above man authoring ‘right and wrong’ [i.e., Truth] — it is only man saying that murder is wrong because man is then all there is to say *anything*.”

Note here, lest there be any misunderstandings, that Truth refers to something that transcends man and is absolute, objective, universal, and eternal. It is, simply put, God’s answers to all of life’s questions.



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As for that doubting young man I mentioned, he went on a bicycle ride sometime after I presented the above arguments. When I saw him hours later, he approached me and said, “You know, you changed my mind.”

We’re going to have to change a lot of minds — and hearts — if we’re to save our civilization. And we’ll never do it if we speak and act as if Truth doesn’t exist.



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