

PLENARY 4  
**Christian Schooling in a Secular Age:  
Reimagining Education as Mission**

**Introduction: Christian Schools in a Secular Age?**

**I. An Ethnography of our Present: Ghosts in the (Secular) Machine**

- A. Skylights in our Brass Heaven: Popular Culture’s Enduring Longing for Transcendence
- B. Not Quite Atheists: Julian Barnes and Steve Jobs
- C. The Doubter’s Doubt is Faith: The Case of David Foster Wallace

**II. We’re All Secular Now: Reading our Age with Charles Taylor**

- A. Secularity  $\neq$  unbelief but = *contestability* of belief
- B. “The secular” is an *accomplishment*, not what’s merely “left over” when we “subtract” transcendence
- C. The “immanent frame” is only a viable space to inhabit with the advent of “exclusive humanism” which generates *immanent significance*
- D. But the immanent frame is *cross-pressured*, pulled and pressured by (nostalgia for?) transcendence/fullness

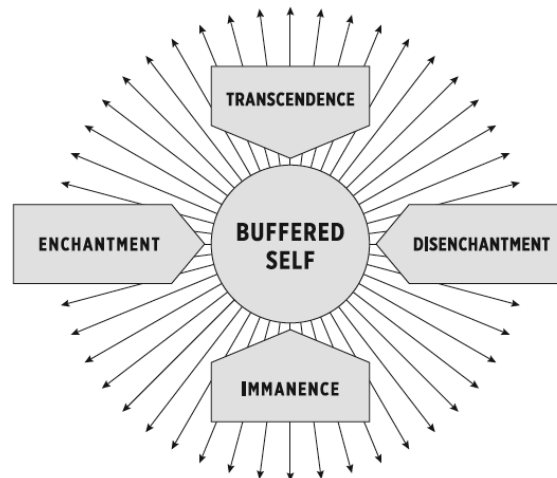


Figure 1. Nova effect from cross-pressures in a secular age.

- E. So secularity does not end belief; instead, the cross-pressures generate a *nova effect* of many modes of believing otherwise

### **III. Christian Schooling *in* and *for* a Secular Age**

- A. Cultivating a Community of Patience: Christian Schools as “Urban Monasteries”
  
- B. Undoing Excarnation: Service and the Sacramental Imagination
  
- C. Christian Schools as a Porch: A Missional Opportunity

### **Conclusion: Christian schools as the vanguard of the church’s witness**