

SECULAR HUMANISM

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For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8,9

I. What is Humanism? I'll let the leading proponents define it themselves!

J. Hoover states "Humanism simply refers to the philosophy or ideology that recognizes the value or the dignity of man and teaches the worth of the personality and the right of self-realization." (Sounds OK so far doesn't it?)

Fredrick Edwords wrote in 1989 that Humanism offers the good life, enjoy any experience the world has to offer (with some possible limitations) as there is no proof of an afterlife, yet there is proof that you can enjoy life now.

Humanism is a progressive lifestance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives capable of adding to the greater good of humanity. • *American Humanist Association approved definition*

Corliss Lamont states "Modern Humanism – a naturalistic philosophy that rejects all supernaturalism and relies primarily upon reason and science, democracy and human compassion." (getting a little shaky)

Sir Julian Huxely states "Humanism – a belief that humans are just as much a natural phenomenon as an animal or a plant; that our bodies, and souls were not supernaturally created but are products of evolution, and that we are not under the control or guidance of any supernatural being or beings, but have to rely on ourselves and our own powers."

Aldous Huxely states "I simply call (it) Humanism because it can only be based on our understanding of man and his environment, Taking account of the discovery that man is part of a comprehensive evolutionary process, and cannot avoid playing a decisive role in it.. It will have nothing to do with the absolutes, including absolute truth, absolute morality, absolute perfection or absolute authority..." (foundation gone)

Biblically "it is the attitude of which the apostle Paul spoke in Romans 1:28 as he discussed those who "refused to have God in their knowledge." It has to do with those who have "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25). It is a willful determination on the part of man not to have God in his mind or in his life, and instead to replace Him with something—anything—non-divine and non-supernatural." {Christianity and Humanism by Bert Thompson}

Sometimes humanism is defined as the study of the worth and dignity of man as such worth is given to him by God. As Christians, we must be careful not to build a false case about all uses of the word humanism and then attempt to refute that false case. {unknown}

II. There is no doubt as to what they believe and are trying to accomplish as noted in The Humanist Manifesto I and II

I (1933)– Preface states – "The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased **knowledge and experience**. In every field of human activity, the vital movement is now in the direction of a candid and explicit humanism."

"Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the (pleasurable) fulfillment of human life."

II (1973)– Preface states – "As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. **Reasonable** minds look to other means for survival. "

Basic Tenants

Religion 1- "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."

2- "Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful."

Ethics 3- "Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest."

4- "Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion."

Personal 5- "Although science can account for the causes of behavior, possibilities of individual freedom of choice exist in human life ..."

6- "We believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults."

Gov't 7- "It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide."

8- "People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations. "

- 9- "It should not favor any particular religious bodies through the use of public monies, nor espouse a single ideology and function thereby as an instrument of propaganda or oppression, particularly against dissenters. "
- 10- "Humane societies should evaluate economic systems... (on how they) enhance the quality of life."
- 11- "We are concerned for the welfare of the aged, the infirm, the disadvantaged, and also for the outcasts -- the mentally retarded, abandoned, or abused children, the handicapped, prisoners, and addicts -- for all who are neglected or ignored by society."
- World View 12- "we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government."
- 13- "War is obsolete. So is the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons."
- 14- "Ecological damage, resource depletion, and excessive population growth must be checked by international concord."
- 15- "World poverty must cease. Hence extreme disproportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced worldwide."
- 16- "We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds."
- 17- "The world must be open to diverse political, ideological, and moral viewpoints and evolve a worldwide system of television and radio for information and education."

"We urge that parochial loyalties and inflexible moral and religious ideologies be transcended."

It was signed by a number of influential people from almost every walk of life, including, among others, Linus Pauling, Isaac Asimov, Francis Crick, Sir Julian Huxley, Anthony Flew, Corliss Lamont, Betty Friedan, Norman Fleishman, B.F. Skinner and Kai Nielsen.

So is it a religion or a philosophy?

"As far back as 1961 the supreme court, in the case of Torcaso vs. Watkins found that "secular humanism is a religion – a world and life view based on faith or belief." Those who believe it will try to convert you as they see you as a threat to the new world they so desperately seek to create. HMI states, "In the twentieth century, humanist awareness has developed at a rapid pace; yet it has to overcome powerful anti-humanist forces that seek to destroy it."

Humanism In Summary

- denies the Bible account of creation and teaches evolution.
- denies the reality of a personal God, the inspiration of the Bible, and the deity of Christ.
- denies the presence of a soul that lives forever.
- denies moral values and teaches there are no absolutes - no right or wrong. Do your own thing "as long as it does not harm anyone else."
- denies the distinctive roles of male and female.
- believes in sexual freedom between consenting individuals regardless of age, including premarital sex, homosexuality, and incest.
- believes in the right to abortion, divorce and euthanasia.
- believes in the removal of national patriotism, the free enterprise system, disarmament, and the creation of a one-world government.

Interesting to consider

They mock faith, religion and belief yet constantly use words like "new faith of humanism", "our souls", "belief" and "our gospel"... Man is his own god in humanism, and the humanist worships man himself.

Interestingly humanists "can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species." Yet they claim "Humanism can provide the purpose and inspiration that so many seek; it can give personal meaning and significance to human life." {HMI} They also claim to ascribe "worth and dignity to each human being", while noting that, "Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change." {Internet document called HMIII}. Thus the only purpose is to please yourself here and now!

They note in one breath that "Freedom of speech and religion is essential" then state "Education... must be kept as free as possible from specific religious and ideological biases" {Carleton Coon in Progressive Humanism}

Consistency is not a tenet of Humanism, but it sure can sound good if your not listening close enough.

Some thinking which led to the supporting of Humanism

In an article titled "Confessions of a Professed Atheist," Aldous Huxley addressed this very point. I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning; consequently, assumed it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption.... The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics; he is also concerned to prove there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do.... For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom(1966)

III. Where does it intersect my life?

A. School

Any opportunity to "deprogram" these poor misguided children must be taken

Take a strong clue from secular humanist publications that say "...the battle for the hearts and minds of children is being fought in the classrooms. The new religion of humanism will win that battle for the children over the rotting corpse of Christianity." {A Christian Light internet publication}

Dr. Milton Friedman, educator and Nobel Laureate, made this comment: "Public schools teach religion too - not a formal, theistic religion, but a set of values and beliefs that constitute a religion in all but name. The present arrangements ABRIDGE THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM of parents

who do not accept the religion taught by the public schools, yet are forced to pay to have their children indoctrinated with it, and to pay still more to have their children escape indoctrination." {Revealing Humanism Internet publication}

John J. Dunphy, writing in the 1983 issue of Humanist magazine, said this: "I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith ...they will be ministers," says Dunphy, "of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach (preschool to university). The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new -- the rotting corpse of Christianity ... and the new faith of humanism." { Revealing Humanism Internet publication }

Your pleasure is the most important pursuit in life

Increasingly, sex education is explicitly anti-religious. The leading experts in the field (such men as Lester Zkikendall and Sol Gordon, signers of the HMII) state bluntly that their aim is to help students "get over their hang-ups". This guilt free hedonism is deemed necessary to a psychologically healthy existence. {"What is Secular Humanism by James Hitchcock}

To state unequivocally that pornography is bad would be to invoke some objective moral standard higher than the individual, which Humanists find unacceptable.

Is this occurring in your schools? The only way to know is to be intimately involved in your child's education. "Train up a child in the way they should go and when they are older they will not depart from it" **Proverbs 22:6** The humanists know this and " Educators are now saying that if they have the child for two years before he reaches kindergarten, they can so affect his value system that the child will not depart from it when he grows up. If they cannot have him before kindergarten, the next best thing is to undo, at as early an age as possible, the damage done to him in his home environment. Seventh grade is considered much too late to begin this process of retraining." {Revealing Humanism Internet article}

B. Home

How could you raise a child to believe such "way-out" ideas

Implicit in much Humanistic Psychology, for example, is the assumption that people of strongly orthodox religious beliefs or firm moral principles are psychologically unhealthy. Such beliefs are treated as signs of a "rigid" and neurotic personality. So far, there have only been isolated instances of the power of law used against people deemed overly "fanatical" in their beliefs. (Religious beliefs have been used as a negative factor in deciding child-custody cases.) {True and False Humanism by James Hitchcock}

The home and family are only needed if you need them

The prevailing Humanist idea of freedom tends to undermine the sense of personal moral responsibility which the individual possesses. It discredits the sources of this responsibility and systematically encourages people to assert their "rights" against all the demands of duty. (Thus if a parent abandons the family, it is assumed that this is because the parents "need" outweighs whatever responsibility he or she owes the family.) {True and False Humanism by James Hitchcock}

C. Work, Social

Sorry but you can't tell others that they are wrong based on your own beliefs

Because humanists believe that standards of human behavior are derived from within human experience and that the plurality of human beings and their experiences requires pluralistic standards, then it follows that, for humanists, everyone in society must be permissive and tolerant of every other person's standards and behavioral conduct. {Humanism vs Christianity by R. L. Waggoner}

You are not in touch with reality and quite possibly are crazy

Kai Nielsen, humanist philosopher and former editor of *The Humanist* magazine. In cultures such as ours, religion is very often an alien form of life to intellectuals. Living as we do in a post-enlightenment era, it is difficult for us to take religion seriously. The very concept seems fantastic to us...that people in our age can believe that they have had a personal encounter with God, that they could believe that they have experienced conversion through a "mystical experience of God," so that they are born again in the Holy Spirit, is something that attests to human irrationality and a lack of sense of reality (1977, p. 46).

You can go as far as you believe you can in this world and as this is the only life you get you may as well go for it

Humanists declare that "man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. {HMI}

D. Spiritual

Just find a place where you can fit in and enjoy the service

It is determined that each individual should be given sense of belonging...an opportunity for affirmation of one's philosophy of life. Religion is that which serves the personal and social needs of a group of people. Individuals that cannot feel at home in traditional religion should be able to find a home in non-traditional religion. {Fredrick Edwards AHS website}

We are not here to divide but to build up what we have in common

Churches that promote religious humanism make sure that **doctrine** is never allowed to subvert the higher purpose of meeting human needs in the here and now! { Fredrick Edwards AHS website}

We need to make this world a better place to live

By denying man any link to eternity or any ability to transcend time, Humanists place man in bondage to history. {True and False Humanity by James Hitchcock}

IV. Where does humanism fail?

Josh McDowell notes that Humanism fails on two counts:

First, man operating by himself cannot set up true standards of justice or values in the world without God. If one man decides his human view of values is correct and another man decides his view, which is different, is correct, who will decide between them? Who would decide between the Nazis and the Jewish race in World War II? Each had a set of values, but who was right? The majority? The nicest? The meanest? Without a higher standard of authority to go to, which is God, all of life is based on the values of the majority or of a dictator in power. They have no sure truth to turn to; it is all a matter of opinion.

Second, humanism believes man is "getting better and better every day in every way." However, with two world wars in this century and the world on the brink of nuclear holocaust, the demise of optimistic humanism is a foregone conclusion. (add terrorism, tyranny, ethnic cleansing)

Humanism also denies almost all that cannot be proven by the "scientific method" this conveniently leaves a lot of areas closed to the possible refutation of humanism. Primarily the annals of history.

V. What are we to do ?

A. Claim the ground where you stand for God and do not let it go

God's people are to uphold that which is right and oppose that which is wrong. In so doing, we set an example for all around us to see. We must oppose humanism because its teachings are contrary to the teachings of God's Word. We must come to understand, and help others to understand, the folly of human "wisdom" such as is found in humanism.

Christ said: Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under a bushel, but on a stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house, even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

Why do we find the world in the state it is today? Tim LaHaye, in his book, *The Battle for the Mind*, suggested: "Our present society is in a state of moral decay, not because the majority of Americans love degeneracy, but because the influence of humanism has been greater on our culture than the influence of the church" (1980, p. 189).

B. Preach the true purpose of creation and the remedy for the fall of man

Christianity gives true worth and dignity to man and secular humanism makes all human dignity subjective and self-centered. Francis Schaeffer comments:

I am convinced that one of the great weaknesses in evangelical preaching in the last few years is that we have lost sight of the biblical fact that man is wonderful. We have seen the unbiblical humanism, which surrounds us and to resist this in our emphasis on man's lostness, we have tended to reduce man to a zero. Man is indeed lost, but that does not mean he is nothing. We must resist humanism, but to make man a zero is neither the right way nor the best way to resist it....

From the biblical viewpoint, man is lost, but great. (He was created in the image of God and expressly for the pleasure of the Lord.) (Rev. 4:11)

VI. In Closing - teach the truth of the Bible to your children (and others), the Word of God is a sure defense I Tim 3:16

A. In all areas of life at all times

"and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and thy shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy hours, and on thy gates." (Duet. 6:7-9)

B. Reminding them of God's power and wisdom

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and discernment of the discerning will I bring to naught. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of the world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe (1 Corinthians 1:19-21).

C. Note where the philosophies of man fail

Humanists have failed to comprehend one of the greatest of all truths—that the "fear of the Lord" is both "the beginning of knowledge" and "the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10). True wisdom is in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30). He alone is the way, the Truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him (John 14:6). It is His Truth that will make us free (John 8:32) and protects us from the "philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men" which is able to destroy us (Colossians 2:8).

C. Combat humanist philosophy with truth from God's Word

It is the Christian system that places man in his proper place in the Universe—as a specially created being (Genesis 1:26-27) made a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:4-5). Man is not “up from the slime” as humanism advocates, but instead is “down from heaven.” In addition, Christianity correctly teaches that ethics is not situational, but instead always must be based on God's Word since in that Word we find “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). Far from being situational, the ethical system of the Bible is governed by revelation provided by the Creator. Prohibitions against many of the things that humanism advocates (divorce, homosexuality, extramarital and premarital sexual activity, etc.) are frequent in the divinely inspired text (1 Corinthians 6:9-19; Romans 1:26-32; Matthew 5:27; Matthew 19:9; Genesis 2:24, etc.).

The wisdom that man values so highly, God often sets at naught (1 Corinthians 3:19-21; 2:6; 1:19-21). The Bible urges us to pray often (1 Thessalonians 5:17), with the assurance that we will be heard by our God (Matthew 7:7-8). Humanism denies these things. The Bible warns us against “friendship with the world which is enmity with God” (James 4:4) and promises us instead the “abundant life” (John 10:10) through Christ. Jesus Himself promised eternal life to those who were faithful to God (John 17:3; Matthew 10:32-33; John 14:1-3,23-24). {christianity and humanism} *Reason & Revelation*, September 1983, 3[9]:37-40. Copyright © 1983 Apologetics Press, Inc. All rights reserved.
<http://www.apologeticspress.org>

While the humanists start and end with man, the Bible starts and ends with God. It was God who was in the beginning (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3), not impersonal, self-creating nature from which man gradually evolved. The Bible consistently teaches that it is upon the infinite God that this finite world depends for its existence. For primordial, non-intelligent mass to produce human intelligence assumes, contrary to reason, that an effect is greater than its cause. To account for that human intelligence by a higher intelligence in whose image the human was made, and who sustains the very life of the human and his world, is reasonable -and biblical. {Josh McDowell}

D. Pray for their salvation and teach it clearly from God's Word

Humanist Manifesto II states that we **must** save ourselves. Ephesians 2:8-10 reminds us:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (NASB).

“Neither is there salvation in any other...whereby we **must** be saved” Acts 4:12

E. Identify where this thinking has infiltrated my life

Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting (Psa. 139:23,24)

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests made known unto God (Phil. 4:6)

The ultimate nail in the Humanist coffin

Let us not forget that Christ's grave is vacant and the burden of proof shows he is risen indeed. There is a “ghost in the machine” and life does continue after this earthen vessel is broken. The Humanist has no hope for man now and definitely not for eternity!

Secular humanism rejects the idea of life after death, dogmatically asserting that it is impossible to prove. On the contrary, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a fact of history, verifiable by standard historical tests (Humanism almost exclusively relies only on scientific methods). His resurrection becomes the seal and hope of every Christian. {Josh McDowell}

Without the resurrection of Christ “we are of all men most miserable!” , “but now is Christ risen from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:19,20)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Those confronting Humanism on their grounds have had the major tenants of Christianity crumble one by one as when you leave the firm foundation of the scripture you immediately begin sinking. James Hitchcock in “What is Secular Humanism” recounts the route that liberal Christianity has taken over the last 150 or so years when trying to win over the intellectual humanist with compromises that will meet with the so-called scientific method of examination.

1. While the bible as a whole is inspired, certain passages not compatible with modern science, e.g., the creation accounts are human inventions.
2. While certain miracles central to the Christian faith, especially Christ's resurrection from the dead, must be believed, other miracle accounts in the scripture are merely expressions of simple people.
3. Christians must believe that Christ rose from the dead. However, they need not believe that the tomb was empty on Easter morning. The resurrection can be understood as his continuing spiritual presence among his disciples.
4. While Jesus was certainly the only begotten Son of God, secondary beliefs merely meant to reinforce that, e.g., his virgin birth, need not be believed.
5. While God was certainly present in Jesus in a special way, it is not meaningful to speak of him as the Son of God in the traditional sense.
6. What is central to Christianity is the message of salvation brought by Christ uniquely achieved through him. The circumstances of this redemption are subject to varying interpretations.
7. To speak of man's being saved by Jesus presents problems since many people do not feel a need of being saved. Jesus is better seen as the greatest moral teacher in the history of the world and Christianity as the pinnacle of world religions.
8. To regard Jesus as unique, and his teaching as superior to that of other religious leaders like the Buddha, is arrogant cultural chauvinism. God reveals himself in every culture in different ways.
9. Whatever one may think about the various religions of the world, what is crucial is to believe in an all-powerful God who created the universe and sustains it in being.
10. The word “God” is one which men have used throughout history to refer to some ultimate reality which is the deepest dimension of existence. Personalization of God, and talk about his being creator and lord of the universe, are merely means men have used to make that awareness more vivid to themselves. (Some Universalists, Unitarian churches and Ethical communities have reached this point)

Thus we arrive at Ecumenicalism and that's where we began the summer!

