

PHILOSOPHY AND VAIN DECEIT

Chapter 1

They Say, "We Have No Influence on Religion"

Robert Waggoner

Chapter 2

They Say, "It is Not a Religion"

Tommy J. Hicks

Chapter 3

They Say, "Man is the Measure of All Things"

Kevin Cauley

Chapter 4

They Say, "Let Us Educate Your Children"

Derrick Smith

Chapter 5

They Say, "We Are Here by Chance"

George Beals

Chapter 6

They Say, "The Jesus of the Bible is a Myth"

Gary McDade

Chapter 7

They Say, "Intelligent Design Isn't So"

Jason Roberts

Chapter 8

They Say, "The Good Life is the Central Task for Mankind"

Trevor Major

Chapter 9

They Say, "It Takes a Village, Not Just a Family"

Travis Sweet

Chapter 10

They Say, "We Insist Upon Separation of Church and State"

Ken Ratcliff

Chapter 11

They Say, "Do Not Teach the Bible in Public School"

John Moore

Chapter 12

They Say, "We are Not at War Against Christ and Christianity"

Kirk Talley

Chapter 13

They Say, "Man Can Solve His Own Problems"

Dennis Gulledge

Chapter 14

They Say, "There Are No Moral Absolutes"

Billy Bland

Chapter 15

They Say, "Euthanasia Really is a Good Death"

Toby Soechting

Chapter 16

They Say, "We Need Planned Parenthood"

Skip Andrews

Chapter 17

They Say, "Same-Sex Marriage is Okay"

Matthew Gibson

Chapter 18

They Say, "Men and Women are Equal"

Bob Patterson

Chapter 19

They Say, "Preaching the Gospel is Foolishness"

Darwin Hunter

Chapter 20

They Say, "The Bible is Not Inspired"

Robert Taylor, Jr.

Chapter 21

They Say, "Religion and the Church Must Change"

Phil Sanders

Chapter 22

They Say, "Sacred and Secular Distinctions Can't be Maintained"

Jim Laws

Chapter 23

They Say, "It's Just Entertainment"

Jon McCormack

Chapter 24

They Say, "Truth Changes, and May Not be Knowable"

Jason Rollo

Chapter 25

They Say, "Sex Education is a Must in Public Schools"

Brock Hartwigsen

Chapter 26

They Say, "People are More Important Than the Bible"

Steve Lloyd

Chapter 27

They Say, "The Right to Divorce Should be Recognized"

Wade Webster

Chapter 28

They Say, "God is Just a Delusion"

Dick Sztanyo

Chapter 29

They Say, "Religion is the Curse of the World"

Gabriel Rodriguez

Chapter 30

They Say, "They Know What Gives True Meaning to Life"

Mel Hutzler

Chapter 31

They Say, "They Advocate a Shared Life in a Shared World"

Randy Mabe

Chapter 32

They Say, "Christian Counselors are Okay"

Dan Flourney

Chapter 33

They Say, "We Must Accept Multiculturalism"

Ted Thrasher

Chapter 34

They Say, "Man Does Not Have a Spirit"

Gary Colley

Chapter 35

They Say, "It's New, Better, and Necessary"

B.J. Clarke

THEY SAY, “WE HAVE NO INFLUENCE ON RELIGION”

Robert Waggoner



Robert Waggoner was born in Lawton, Oklahoma. He is married to the former Susan Rimer, and they have a son, a daughter and three grandchildren. Waggoner has degrees from Harding University, Harding Graduate School of Bible and Religion, Vanderbilt, and Erskine Theological Seminary. He has served as the local minister in Churches of Christ in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, New Mexico, Michigan, Tennessee, and Utah. Waggoner's book, *Christianity or Humanism* was printed in 2007.

INTRODUCTION¹

In the Western world, the Christian religion is now facing a crisis perhaps more severe than at any time since the time of Christian persecutions in the Roman Empire nearly two millennia ago. The Western world is now being invaded with philosophical ideas probably as strange to our Christian heritage as the Christian worldview was strange to paganism of the first century²—and many Christians seem unaware of these culturally changing ideas. These anti-Christian ideas are wrecking our culture by denying God's existence, by misunderstanding the nature of humanity, by blotting out an awareness of sin, and thereby creating an extremely permissive society. These anti-Christian ideas are causing a loss of faith, emptying church pews, destroying Christian homes, and making non-Christians much less receptive to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are witnessing in our nation an increase in discrimination against Christianity.

In light of these happenings, certain questions come to mind. What are these anti-Christian ideologies? Where did they come from? Who introduced them and who continues to promote them? Why have they come to the forefront of contemporary thinking? When did they enter into our society's thinking? How do they operate? What can Christians do about them? These are questions that speakers will be answering in this series of lectures. Defining and describing some of these ideologies will enable me to discuss my own assigned topic, but it will also help lay a foundation for the assigned topics for other speakers in this series.

Basically, the anti-Christian philosophy we are talking about is known as "Humanism." Sometimes it is called "Religious Humanism," and sometimes it is called "Secular Humanism." Although Humanism has been around a long time, the term "Humanism" was generally unknown to the person in the pew until just a few decades ago. Humanism may be variously defined. There are almost as many ways to word a definition of "Humanism" as there are people defining the term. I define "Humanism" as a way of thinking and acting that seeks to remove the will of God from reality and elevates humanity to judge all things. Humanists are atheists. That is, they are against God. However, their talk and their activities are focused, not primarily upon opposing God *vocally*, but rather upon politically promoting Humanistic societies without God. Humanism is a very broad term. As a philosophy, Humanism encompasses many other philosophies, seven of which will be briefly defined and described in this message.

My assigned topic is about the negative influence of Humanism against the Christian faith. I find no explicit statement from Humanists within their basic documents³ presenting a claim: "We have no influence on religion." Nor do I see within Humanists' documents any call for conspiracy against religion. On the contrary, I observe that in the past Humanists have wanted people to think that their values should be accepted as religious as readily as are Christian values. When *Humanist Manifesto I* was written in 1933, the Christian religion was strongly entrenched within the American culture. Eight of the fifteen articles within *Humanist Manifesto I* speak of "Religious Humanism," or some other religious expression to indicate that Humanists wanted their beliefs to be accepted as religious. *Humanist Manifesto II*, written in 1973, gives much less emphasis to a consideration of Humanism as a religion, while the *Humanist Manifesto III*, written in 2003, does not explicitly mention religion. They now generally want Humanism to be considered as being irreligious, i.e., as *secular*. Even so, they welcome church people to join them in promoting their values. The last sentence of one of their documents calls "upon other men and women of good will to join us in the furthering of its noble aims."⁴ They object to criticisms from Christians that Humanists' beliefs produce immorality in society. They think "morality that is not God-based need not be antisocial, subjective, or promiscuous, nor need it lead to the breakdown of moral standards."⁵ Even though Humanists may not make

explicit statements against the Christian faith, their thinking and their activities indicate that they are strongly opposed to Christianity.

Because they object to any religion that is based on supernatural values,⁶ they reject belief in the existence of God, the deity of Jesus Christ, divine revelation, the authority and inspiration of Scripture, prophecy, miracles, *et cetera*. They want a religion based on human intelligence and scientific findings from within nature.⁷ Believing that mankind is only physical, they reject the idea that people have a spiritual nature.⁸ Believing that mankind has no eternal destiny, they reject the concepts of sin, a bodily resurrection, a day of judgment, heaven and hell.⁹ For Humanists, salvation means deliverance, not from sin and its consequences, but from current social and political difficulties. They believe that everyone is basically good and that people are capable of solving all human problems.¹⁰

Humanists have had extensive negative influence against the Christian faith. In order to help us understand the nature of Humanism and how it operates against the Christian faith, we will observe several examples of Humanism in the Bible and in church history. Having done that, we will review the historical rise of some Humanist philosophies since the Renaissance and the negative influence they have had against Christianity.¹¹ Finally, we will make some suggestions about how Christians should respond.

EXAMPLES OF HUMANISM IN THE BIBLE AND CHURCH HISTORY

Humanism is not new. Throughout history, men have often considered themselves gods. Indeed, the world renowned historian, Arnold Toynbee, declared that the paramount worship of mankind throughout history has been that of self-worship.¹² Although the term "Humanism" is not used in the Bible, the Bible demonstrates many of its concepts. Eve was the first Humanist. She wanted to become like God by eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:5-6). Those who started to build the Tower of Babel wanted to make for themselves a great name. Their intent was to build a tower "whose top is in the heavens" (Gen. 11:4-7). This was probably an assertion of their independence from God. Balaam wanted to speak about Israel in a way that God did not want (Num. 22-25). King Uzziah of the tribe of Judah attempted to act as a priest, whose role God had designated to the tribe of Levi. Uzziah was strongly rebuked for it (2 Chr. 26:16-21). The rich young ruler

turned away from following Jesus because he placed his trust more in his own riches to supply his needs than in Jesus (Mt. 19:16-22). Jesus' parable of the rich fool illustrates the folly of trusting in material goods rather than in God (Lk. 12:16-21). Some false teachers in the early church tried to impose upon believers the ritual of circumcision and the necessity of living by the Law of Moses (Acts 15:1-29; Gal. 1-6). Demas loved the pleasures of this world more than serving God with Paul (2 Tim. 4:10). In each situation, the will of God was thrust aside and people put their own desires first.

Humanist ideologies and practices are also demonstrated in church history. An early departure from God's will was the departure from church autonomy and the imposition of monarchical bishops upon the churches. The imposition of Easter and Christmas holidays, derived from pagan sources, upon the Christian faith were/are Humanistic. The development of denominationalism's churches, with their creeds and manuals, and all their other attendant rituals not authorized by Scripture, is Humanistic. The use of instrumental music in worship is Humanistic, as is arbitrarily partaking of the Lord's Supper on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, rather than to do so weekly, as prescribed by the Bible (Acts 20:7). These, and an abundant listing of other non-Biblical practices which might be given, all demonstrate how people set aside the will of God and promote themselves as judges of what should be considered acceptable.¹³

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The historical rise of the Humanist worldview, which has now captivated our culture, began during the Renaissance when those who esteemed the works of humanity were known as Humanists even though their beliefs were not the same as those of contemporary Humanists. Religion-wise, they were usually Roman Catholics. They generally believed in basic doctrines of the Christian faith. However, as they concentrated upon the works of ancient humanity, read non-Biblical literature, and interpreted Scripture by human presuppositions, their convictions changed. Whereas previously they had accepted knowledge acquired from divine revelation, now they began to question and doubt all knowledge that did not come from human reasoning. Moreover, as they read non-Biblical literature, they began to absorb human thinking that did not acknowledge Biblical truths. Slowly, they turned away from God and divine thinking. Renaissance thinking

planted seeds that were to mature with the dawning of that time period that has come to be called the “Enlightenment.” (It was a time when people thought they were enlightened, because they thought they no longer needed to rely on divine revelation.)

New ideologies arrived, all of which are basic to the current Humanist worldview. We will name, define, and describe seven of them, and we will observe how they have individually and collectively impacted against the Christian faith in a negative manner. They are rationalism, scientism, secularism, naturalism, materialism, hedonism, and statism.

Rationalism

Rationalism is the belief that human reason is the only foundation for acquisition of knowledge. With the rise of rationalism, belief in divine revelation through Scripture began to diminish. The person who had the most influence upon development of rationalistic thinking was Rene Descartes (1596-1650), who has been called the father of modern philosophy. Although Descartes probably did not intend to dismiss the reality of God and make himself the judge of what is, that is what happened after he made his famous statement: “I think, therefore I am.” The impact of this thought was to place doubt upon the existence of anything that could not be proven by human reasoning. To Europeans, this seemed obviously true. That concept then was accepted as readily as the theory of evolution is now.¹⁴ Today, Humanists believe that “if America discards rationality we are truly rudderless, helpless against sectarian strife when differing groups may seek to impose their peculiar spiritual visions on American life.”¹⁵

Rationalism negatively impacted the whole Christianity enterprise. We will focus upon the subject of Biblical criticism, which was but one way rationalism impacted against Christianity. With the presumption that God had nothing to do with the origin and progressive development of Scripture, scholars conjectured how the Bible might have come into existence. They discounted what the Bible had to say about God and itself, and accepted only what could be proven from sources outside the Bible. They denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that portions of Matthew and Luke were quoted from Mark and a supposed “Q” document. They claimed that Paul wrote only four epistles. They attempted to separate Jesus of Nazareth from the Christ of faith. They denied Biblical claims of prophecy and miracles.

Scholars who did not accept the truthfulness of Biblical claims often became professors in theological schools, which were established for the purpose of training preachers. Such professors taught that the Bible was not the Word of God and therefore not trustworthy. Their students then went into churches and denied the inspiration and authority of the Bible. In this fashion, God and Scripture were undermined throughout the populace. Eta Linneman, a German, described what happened in her native land.

In Germany preaching based on biblical criticism has emptied the churches, because few people see any reason for attending worship when they are offered only the stones of arbitrary personal opinion rather than the bread of the Word of God. Biblical criticism has brought on a decay of values: historical-critical theology considers it untenable to teach adolescents that the Ten Commandments are God's binding instructions. Instead of taking to heart "whatever is noble" and "whatever virtue there may be" (Phil. 4:8), it has disparaged honesty, punctuality, hard work, and the like as mere secondary virtues, holdovers from a Prussian mentality that should no longer be upheld. In addition some streams of historical-critical thinking popularize the Communist slogan that owning property is thievery. The alleged decay of values is therefore in fact an utter destruction of values, brought about not single-handedly but with the substantial assistance of historical-critical theology.¹⁶

If rationalism had that influence against Christianity and the church in Germany, could it not also be having the same influence in our country?

Scientism

Biblical authority was challenged not only from rationalism, but also from scientism. Scientism is the belief that the scientific method and human reasoning are the only means for determining truth. As an extension of rationalism, scientism rejects divine revelation. Scientism is not the same as the scientific method. The scientific method was made possible only because during the Renaissance era, the Western world had accepted the Christian worldview. The Christian idea that nature was orderly and predictable allowed for experiments to be repeated and verified. (This means that the scientific method could not have arisen in a world wherein everyone thinks that life's events happen by random chance.) The scientific method does not allow for

the discovery of truth related to prophecy or miracles because these are not natural phenomena and, therefore, are not capable of verification by scientific procedures. For many people, if science could not verify a belief, then that belief could not be considered valid, or at least it had to be held in doubt.

The ancient Athenian philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) believed that the sun revolved around the earth. In early church history, this belief was incorporated into Roman Catholic doctrine. However, Copernicus (A.D. 1473-1543) believed that the earth and other planets revolved around the sun. Through scientific procedures, Galileo (A.D. 1564-1642) demonstrated that the Copernican belief that the earth revolved around the sun is true. His demonstration discredited the teachings of the Catholic church. Since that church was then considered the primary proclaimer of Scripture, then not only was “church doctrine” challenged, but also the teachings of Scripture. Moreover, the scientific method was established as a way to challenge Biblical teaching. August Comte (A.D. 1798-1857) gave scientism greater significance, contending that true knowledge of the world came only from empirical evidences. Today, Humanists “believe the scientific method, though imperfect, is still the most reliable way of understanding the world,” and they “look to the natural, biological, social, and behavioral sciences for knowledge of the universe and man’s place within it.”¹⁷ They claim: “Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so.”¹⁸ While Christians desire to limit scientific research whenever such is considered to be contrary to Christian ethics, Humanists are of the opposite opinion. They are “opposed in principle to any efforts to censor or limit scientific research without an overriding reason to do so.”¹⁹

The impact of scientism within Western culture has resulted in knowledge gleaned from scientific findings being considered infallible and deserving to be weighed more heavily than knowledge derived from religious data. Some have even claimed that one cannot know anything for certain unless it is scientifically verifiable. Therefore, many Christians, being enamored by science, tend to compromise Christian teachings. Some have accepted the claims of Biblical criticism and have allowed scientific claims to destroy their belief in the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Others have seemingly given in to the concept of theistic evolution, e.g., they have compromised

Biblical teaching about creation with so-called scientific teachings regarding the theory of evolution. Christians should realize that science is not infallible because all scientists bring to their scientific processes certain non-scientific philosophical assumptions which influence the results of their experimentations. Moreover, Christians should be the first to indicate that truth can be ascertained not only by scientific data but also by testimony. While humans are sinful and human testimony may not be true, God is sinless and He is truth personified (Heb. 6:13-18). His Word is true (Jn. 17:17). Therefore, everything to which God testifies must be accepted as truth, even though unbelieving scientists may claim that a particular statement from God is scientifically unacceptable.

Secularism

With the exaltation of human reasoning, the rejection of divine revelation, and the conviction that truth can be ascertained only through scientific procedures, human intelligence, and critical thinking, religion became less significant. Secularism emerged. Secularism is the belief that all things are earthly, physical and temporal, that is, that nothing is heavenly, spiritual, or eternal. The basis of secularism is human self-rule. When an individual is designated as a secularist he is considered to be "completely time-bound, totally a child of his age, a creature of history with no vision of eternity ... he cannot believe God exists or acts in human affairs."²⁰ "Secularism centers on the world and seeks to make life meaningful, completely apart from God, from the source of life, or from anything unconditional."²¹ Describing the coming of secularists, author Paul Johnson notes:

With the decline of clerical power in the eighteenth century, a new kind of mentor emerged to fill the vacuum and capture the ear of society. The secular intellectual ... proclaimed ... a special devotion to the interests of humanity and an evangelical duty to advance them by his teaching. He brought to this self-appointed task a far more radical approach than his clerical predecessors. He felt himself bound by no corpus of revealed religion. The collective wisdom of the past, the legacy of tradition, the prescriptive codes of ancestral experience existed to be selectively followed or wholly rejected entirely as his own good sense might decide. For the first time in human history and with growing confidence and audacity, men arose to assert that they could diagnose the ills of society and cure them with their own

unaided intellects: more, that they could devise formulas whereby not merely the structure of society but the fundamental habits of human beings could be transformed for the better.²²

Secularism has negatively impacted Christians by causing many to incorrectly believe that some things they do in life are *secular*, while other things they do are *religious*. That distinction comes not from the Bible, but from a Humanist worldview. The Bible says: “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17). If everything we do is in the name of the Lord Jesus, then everything we do must be considered as religious. Secularism has contributed to the destruction of the Christian mind-set within societies that profess to be “Christian.” This has not been a happenstance. At least by some, it was intended:

In the late nineteenth-century England, several small groups of scientists and scholars organized under the leadership of Thomas H. Huxley to overthrow the cultural dominance of Christianity—particularly the intellectual dominance of the Anglican church. Their goal was to secularize society, replacing the Christian worldview with scientific naturalism, a worldview that recognizes the existence of nature alone. Though secularists, they understood very well that they were replacing one religion by another, for they described their goal as the establishment of the “church scientific.” Huxley even referred to his scientific lectures as “lay sermons.”²³

Perhaps, their influence was minor compared to other influences in society. Nonetheless, the change that came to be wrought in British culture is observed by Harry Blamires, an Anglican theologian. He wrote:

There is no longer a Christian mind. There is still, of course, a Christian ethic, a Christian practice, and a Christian spirituality. As a moral being, the modern Christian subscribes to a code other than that of the non-Christian. As a member of the Church, he undertakes obligations and observations ignored by the non-Christian. As a spiritual being, in prayer and meditation, he strives to cultivate a dimension of life unexplored by the non-Christian. But as a *thinking* being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion—its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal view which relates all human problems—social,

political, cultural—to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.²⁴

Not only within our culture, but also against the church in America, secularism has made extensive inroads. In 1973, Willard Collins noticed that secularization was making an impact upon the church. This was obvious to him because he noted an annual decline in the number of baptisms and restorations resulting from his Gospel meetings.²⁵

Naturalism

Whenever God is removed from reality, then people look to nature and their own reasoning to ascertain where they came from, who they are, how they should live, and what their future may be. Without God, people turn to naturalism. Naturalism is the belief that nature is all there is. It is the most dominant belief system supporting the Humanist worldview. Naturalism rejects the supernatural. Humanists say: "[W]e find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative."²⁶ Naturalism requires the application of the scientific method to natural phenomena to discover the origins of life. They claim that "science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces."²⁷ Although many people throughout history have proposed an evolutionary development of the universe, the most significant case for the theory of evolution, based on supposedly scientific data, was made by Charles Darwin (A.D. 1809-1882). His book, *On the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published in 1859, has been an extremely large factor in turning the thinking of the Western world away from God. Because nature is believed to be only physical, and since humans are a part of nature, then humans are perceived as having no spiritual nature.²⁸

The impact of naturalism, i.e., the belief that nature is all there is, has resulted in such extensive alterations of society and the church that it would be difficult to overestimate the significance of naturalism. Its theory of natural selection, i.e., the survival of the fittest, justified warfare for Hitler, Stalin and others whereby millions of people were slaughtered because they were thought to belong to inferior ethnic groups. Although Hitler and Stalin were defeated in their quests for domination of world powers, the philosophy which motivated them to

launch their killing endeavors is still very much alive and influential. The Darwinian theory of evolution has modified nearly every discipline of study, including geology, astronomy, biology, physics, religion, theology, philosophy, law, psychology, education, history, and sociology.²⁹ In educational pursuits, the theory of evolution, not creation, is now generally considered to be the key to all knowledge. In the legal profession, law is now considered to mean nothing until it is interpreted by judges because absolute standards of statute law have been changed into relativistic standards of precedent law. In religion, the theory of evolution has lent greater credibility to rationalism's criticisms of the Bible, added to the destruction of the authority and inspiration of the Bible, strengthened secular impulses of our age, and minimized considerations of the spiritual nature of humanity. Naturalism also promotes materialism.

Materialism

Materialism is an extension of naturalism. It is the belief that matter is all that exists. The Biblical worldview does not condemn matter, or the desiring and owning of material goods. Rather, because the Biblical worldview requires reliance upon God for meeting the needs of life, it condemns reliance upon material things for satisfying life's needs. Materialists think that humanity is only physical. They deny that each human being has an immortal soul.³⁰ For the materialist there is no distinction between the mind and the brain.³¹ The rich young ruler (Mt. 19:16-22; Mk. 10:17-22; Lk. 18:18-23), the rich fool (Lk. 12:16-21), and the rich man (Lk. 16:19-31) all illustrate the materialistic mind-set. They all acted as though life is only physical. Unlike those who believe in the spiritual nature of humanity and those who measure their success in life by their faithful service to God (1 Cor. 15:44; Gal. 6:1; Mt. 16:26; 2 Tim. 4:7-8, Heb. 11:6; Rev. 2:10), materialists measure their success by the amount of material goods they can acquire. In contrast to the materialist perspective, Jesus taught:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mt. 6:19-21).

Since the materialists think that humans have no spiritual nature, then, for materialists, there exists no moral restraint upon how material goods may be obtained, unless such is imposed by their society.

Materialism negatively impacts against individuals, society, and the church. When individuals focus primarily upon acquisition of material goods, they tend not to rely upon God, but upon themselves. In business pursuits, they seem inclined to turn away from Biblical ethics. They are likely to be less charitable. People (even Christians) with materialistic ideals are more likely to be partial toward the rich (Jas. 2:1-9). A materialistic society focuses upon the pursuit of wealth and the acquiring of creature comforts. It is not concerned about building godly character qualities within its citizenry. A growing materialistic society inclines toward promoting public gambling. Churches in a materialistic society are more likely to measure themselves by physical factors such as large and grand buildings rather than by spiritual qualities.

Hedonism

Inasmuch as a culture's moral behavior is based upon its perspective about reality, then a culture that removes from its thinking the reality of God and His will, will also remove itself from godly behavior. When people believe that there is no afterlife and no accountability to God for how they behave in this life, then they try to acquire as much pleasure as possible. They become hedonists. The term "hedonism" comes from a Greek word that means pleasure. Hedonism is the belief that whatever gives the greatest pleasure is the greatest good to be sought. From a Biblical perspective, pleasure is not wrong. In itself, pleasure is good. Pleasure is a part of God's creation, of which He Himself said was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Pleasurable pursuits become sinful whenever they are granted first priority in life, i.e., whenever pleasure becomes one's goal. The goal for Christians in this life should be to glorify God and serve their fellow man. Whenever the will of God is discarded, then human behavior is influenced by the ethics of Humanism. Humanists

... affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest ... Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment,

are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life, here and now.³²

Humanist ethics is based on rationalism, naturalism and materialism. It is relative, situational, autonomous and subjective. It does not realize the existence of sin. It seeks freedom from divine authority. Humanist ethics is self-serving—emphasizing rights, not responsibilities. It requires each person to set his own moral standard and to decide for himself what is right and wrong. It results in social permissiveness.

For much of human history hedonism has not been a viable alternative because most people have had to work from daylight until dark, just to keep body and soul together. However, with abundant prosperity, Americans have become the most hedonistic nation in history, spending more money on pleasurable pursuits of all types than on religion and education combined.³³ The reason for the rise in hedonism is not just prosperity. It is also because of man's rejection of God, His Word, and Christian moral values, and his acceptance of the theory of evolution which demands that he have a moral lifestyle consistent with his own philosophy.³⁴

Hedonism has impacted against Christianity by enticing people to seek pleasure. Although Hugh Hefner has been a major promoter of hedonism in the twentieth century, he simply built upon cultural values that had largely eliminated Godly values already. Hedonism has produced a sexually permissive society, minimized the marriage institution, permitted widespread divorce, legalized abortions, endorsed unwed couples living together, promoted same sex unions, and groomed society to approve of homosexual marriages. All this is consistent with Humanists' beliefs. They declare:

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes ... unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults ... Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire.³⁵

While most Christians do not heartily endorse these Humanists beliefs, we would be mistaken to think that most Christians are adamantly or altogether opposed to them. George Barna writes: "Born-

again individuals are every bit as likely as non-believers to have suffered the agony of a broken marriage. There are some ten million Christians in the U. S. who have experienced divorce."³⁶ Although there are indeed less divorces among those who profess Christianity than those who do not, data indicates that there is surprisingly little difference in attitudes regarding divorce.³⁷

Statism

Humanists want their ideologies—such as rationalism, scientism, secularism, naturalism, materialism, hedonism, *et cetera*—to be implemented into public policies. Because Christian values restrict Humanists in achieving their goals, they campaign to “neutralize” Christianity. They couch their language in terms of “separation of church and state,” and claim that this separation is required by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. They insist that all civil governments must be *secular*, not admitting that all laws are founded upon religious beliefs—if not one religion, then that of another (that is, if not the Christian religion, then the religion of Humanism). Since Humanists reject the will of God, they contend for statism. Statism is the belief that civil government is the highest and final authority governing all human conduct. It contends that man is a product of the state, that there are no ethical standards beyond those established by the state, and that man is accountable only to the state. Statism acknowledges neither the existence nor the relevance of God. Throughout the nation, and at every level of civil government, Humanists use political activity to establish policies whereby their values can be standardized for the public. To hasten quick passage of legislation, they often use crises language.³⁸ Once their values are translated into public policy, Christians are on the defensive.

Statism has resulted in general acceptance (even by many Christians) of the concept that civil government is not limited by God. The understanding has been lost that, Biblically speaking, the primary responsibility of civil authorities is to administer justice and provide public safety.³⁹ All three branches of civil governments—executive, legislative, and judicial—have imposed anti-Christian values upon our culture. Court rulings on parental authority, divorce, abortion, pornography, gambling, zoning ordinances, *et cetera*, have opposed Christian beliefs.

Probably the most detrimental way that Humanism *in civil governments* currently impacts negatively against the Christian faith is through compulsory public education. Humanist philosophies are taught in all government (i.e., public) schools—from kindergarten through Ph.D. levels. By enlarging the power of civil governments to provide for children's education and family welfare, the influences of family and church are minimized, God is dethroned, and the state becomes the god of its citizens. Humanists freely acknowledge that schools are means by which their values should be promoted.⁴⁰ They are opposed to the Christian perspective that in Christ “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

APPLICATION AND EXHORTATION

The above seven philosophical categories of the Humanist worldview are sufficient to indicate philosophical conflict with Christianity. Additional Humanist ideologies might also have been used to demonstrate ways that the Humanist worldview confronts Christianity. We now need to demonstrate how these philosophies confront and weaken Christianity. In any society, the church will tend to mirror the thinking of its community. That was true in Biblical times, and it is true in our time.

Because Humanist philosophies dominate our culture, Christians too frequently have a tendency to think like Humanists. How? First, many Christians tend to focus more on the physical and less on the spiritual. Many give more preparation to retirement than they do to eternity. Many tend to rely more on their personal wealth and less on God. Some seem to be more focused on the physical growth of the church, i.e., the size of the congregation, than on its spiritual growth. Second, regarding the content of preaching, a large majority of sermons address the physical and social needs of human beings. Many are in the realm of psychology and sociology, disciplines that originated from Secular Humanism. While topics regarding human needs are valid, they should be secondary to evangelical presentations about God, creation, sin and its consequences, God becoming man, the resurrection from the dead, faith in Christ, eternal destiny, *et cetera*. Third, Humanism has influenced missionary efforts by causing many to focus on bringing social services to the poor, rather than giving emphasis to proclamation of the Gospel. Christians need to be more discerning about how they should relate to what is of this world and what is of God.

The dangers Christians face today are not new. Christians in former times have had their faith assaulted by false philosophies. When confronted with false philosophies, Christians should remember that Paul said:

As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:6-10).

When required to make a choice between alternative belief systems, whether in business, education, politics, medicine, law, or any other profession, Christians should remember the words of Jesus:

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven (Mt. 10:32-33).

When tempted to go along to get along with neighbors by acting in the ways of the world, Christians should remember James' statement "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). The apostle John admonished:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

CONCLUSION

To keep from being discouraged, Christians need more than ever to trust in God rather than to trust in themselves. Remember Solomon's wise words:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones (Pro. 3:5-8).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Note these comments. “In our day the religion of Christ is facing a crisis such as it has not faced, probably since the days of Constantine. By that I mean that up to this time the Church has been engaged in a kind of civil war, in which a Christian idea has battled with a misunderstanding of a Christian idea or in which sect has fought with sect. None of the great heresies of the first sixteen hundred years of the Christian era denied the existence of God, but they had misconceived the notion of the Trinity, the nature of Christ, the nature of Divine Grace, and the mission of the Church. In the last four centuries the conflict was not so much of idea and idea as the conflict of sect and sect. Today we are faced with something entirely novel. We are engaged now not so much in what might be called a civil war, but we are confronted with ‘an invasion,’ that is, a force of ideas that is as strange to traditional Christianity as Christianity was strange to Paganism. This new invading force is New Paganism.”

“New Paganism may be defined as an outlook on life that holds to the sufficiency of human science without faith, and the sufficiency of human power without grace. In other words its two tenets are: Scientism, which is a deification of the experimental method, and Humanism, which is a glorification of a man who makes God to his own image and likeness ... the New Paganism differs from the old in this, that whereas in ancient Greek Paganism the spiritual and the material were confused; in the New Paganism they are divorced, God from the cosmos, and after the divorcement has been accomplished the New Paganism “immediately throws away the better half and lives worse with the other half. That is why today there is religion without God, Christianity without Christ, and psychology without soul. From this point of view, the old Paganism was preferable to the New, for at least it acknowledged the necessity of some power above man, even though it was only a household God.” (Wilbur M. Smith, *Therefore Stand*. Natrick, MA: W. A. Wilde Co., 1945, 267, with quotations from Fulton J. Sheen, *Old Errors and New Labels*. New York, NY: 1941, 325-328.)

³ Some basic documents of Humanism are *A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*, first published in *Free Inquiry* magazine, Fall, 1988, Vol. 8, No. 4. *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, written by Paul Kurtz, and first appeared in *Free Inquiry* magazine, Winter, 1980/81, Vol. 1, No. 1, endorsed by 108 prominent people, including Isaac Asimov, Albert Ellis, Joseph Fletcher, Sidney Hook, Floyd Matson, B. F. Skinner, Antony Flew, Lester A. Kirkendall and Edwin Wilson. *Humanist Manifesto I*, drafted by Roy Wood Sellers, first published in *The New Humanist* magazine, May/June, 1933, Vol. 6, No. 3, signed by thirty four influential people, including John

Dewey, who was the first to sign the document. *Humanist Manifesto II*, first published in *The Humanist* magazine, September/October, 1973, Vol. 23, No. 5, signed by 114 prominent persons, including Isaac Asimov, Edd Doerr, Anthony Flew, Sidney Hook, Lester Kirkendall, Paul Kurtz, Corless Lamont, Lester Mondale, and B. F. Skinner. *Humanism and Its Aspirations (Humanist Manifesto III)*, first released by American Humanist Association on April 23, 2003, appeared in May/June issue of *The Humanist* magazine, originally signed by 19 Nobel laureates and 57 other intellectuals, including novelist Kurt Vonnegut and film maker Oliver Stone. More Nobel laureates signed this document than any other Humanist document. *In Defense of Secularism*, first appeared in *Free Inquiry* magazine 14. 2 (Spring, 1994).

⁴ *A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*.

⁵ *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 4.

⁶ "As secular humanists, we are generally skeptical about supernatural claims. We recognize the importance of religious experience: that experience that redirects and gives meaning to the lives of human beings. We deny, however, that such experiences have anything to do with the supernatural. We are doubtful of traditional views of God and divinity" (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 6). Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Fifth). "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, First). "Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity" (*Humanist Manifesto III*, 1st sentence).

⁷ "Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method" (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Fifth). "In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being" (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Eighth). "Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. Skeptical of theories of redemption, damnation, and reincarnation, secular humanists attempt to approach the human situation in realistic terms: human beings are responsible for their own destinies" (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, Conclusion).

⁸ "Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a

social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second).

⁹ “Secular humanists ... find insufficient evidence for the claim that some divine purpose exists for the universe. They reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners. They believe that men and women are free and are responsible for their own destinies and that they cannot look toward some transcendent Being for salvation. We reject the divinity of Jesus ... We do not accept as true the literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments ... In spite of the fact that human beings have found religions to be uplifting and a source of solace, we do not find their theological claims to be true (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, Sixth). “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” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Preface). “Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second).

¹⁰ “What more pressing need than to recognize in this critical age of modern science and technology that, if no deity will save us, we must save ourselves? It is only by assuming responsibility for the human condition and in marshaling the arts of intelligence that humankind can hope to deal with the emerging problems of the twenty-first century and beyond. If we are to succeed in this venture, must we not abandon the archaic dogmas and ideologies that inhibit creative explorations and solutions?” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Preface). “We face a common challenge to develop scientific education on a global scale and an appreciation for critical intelligence and reason as a way to solve human problems and enhance human welfare” (*A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*, IV, 2).

¹¹ For more extensive study of this subject, I recommend the reading of Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1976), Dave Breese, *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1990), Donald De Marco and Benjamin Wiker, *Architects of the Culture of Death*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004).

¹² Arnold Toynbee, *Reconsiderations*, vol. 12 of *A Study of History*. (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), 488, via Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols For Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation With American Society* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 40.

¹³ In these matters, Paul’s words to brethren at Colossae seem appropriate. “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things

indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh" (2:20-23).

¹⁴ Herbert Ernest Cushman, *A Beginner's History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, 80, <<http://books.google.com/books?id=ba15AAAAMAAJ&dq=Herbert+Ernest+Cushman&printsec=fr>> (16 June 2009).

¹⁵ *A Statement in Defense of Secularism*. Other statements from Humanist documents are: "We reiterate the convictions of a large number of American citizens, who are committed to the application of reason and science to the understanding of the universe and to the solving of human problems" (*A Statement in Defense of Secularism*). "We are committed to the use of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence in developing knowledge and testing claims to truth. Since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing inquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction. Although not so naive as to believe that reason and science can easily solve all human problems, we nonetheless contend that they can make a major contribution to human knowledge and can be of benefit to humankind. We know of no better substitute for the cultivation of human intelligence" (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 7). "Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance. Skeptical of theories of redemption, damnation, and reincarnation, secular humanists attempt to approach the human situation in realistic terms: human beings are responsible for their own destinies" (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, Conclusion).

¹⁶ Eta Linneman, *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific is "Scientific Theology"?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 11.

¹⁷ *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 8.

¹⁸ *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

¹⁹ *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 8.

²⁰ James Hitchcock, *What Is Secular Humanism? Why Humanism Became Secular and How It Is Changing Our World*. (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1982), 10-11.

²¹ Jerald C. Brauer, "Secularism," *A Handbook of Christian Theology: Definition Essays on Concepts and Movements Of Thought In Contemporary Protestantism*, ed. by Marvin Halverson and Arthur A. Cohen, (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1958), 340.

²² Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, New York Harper and Row, 1989, 1-2, as cited by George Grant, *Trial and Error: The American Civil Liberties Union and Its Impact on Your Family*, (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1989), 115-116.

²³ Nancy R. Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 19, as cited by David A. Noebel, J. F. Baldwin & Kevin Bywater, *Clergy in the Classroom: The Religion of Secular Humanism* (Manitou Springs, CO: 1995), ii.

²⁴ Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should A Christian Think?* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1963), 3-4.

²⁵ Robert Hooper and Jim Turner. *Willard Collins: The People Person*. (Nashville, TN: 20th Century Christian. 1986), 66-68.

²⁶ *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 6. Note also that “Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values” (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Fifth).

²⁷ *Humanist Manifesto II*, Second.

²⁸ Some additional statements about naturalism from Humanist documents are: “Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process” (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Second). “Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing” (*Humanist Manifesto III*). “We consider the universe to be a dynamic scene of natural forces that are most effectively understood by scientific inquiry” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 6). “Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process” (*Humanist Manifesto I*, Second). As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, First). “Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing” (*Humanist Manifesto III*). “science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second).

²⁹ See Surberg, Raymond F., “The Influence of Darwinism” in *Darwin, Evolution, and Creation*, ed. by Paul A. Zimmerman, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 168-204.

³⁰ “Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the ‘ghost in the machine’ and the ‘separable soul.’ Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the body” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second). “We have found no convincing evidence that there is a separable ‘soul’ or that it ... survives death” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 6).

³¹ "Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualist of mind and body must be rejected" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Third).

³² *Humanist Manifesto I*, Third.

³³ William S. Banowsky, *It's A Playboy World* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, Spire Books, 1969), 25.

³⁴ For a thorough historical analysis of hedonism, see Wiker, Benjamin. *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2002).

³⁵ *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixth.

³⁶ George Barna & William Paul McKay. *Vital Signs: Emerging Social Trends and The Future of American Christianity*. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1984) 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁸ Some examples of crises language from Humanist documents are given here: "Humanity, to survive, requires bold and daring measures" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Preface). "We need ... radically new human purposes and goals" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, First). "No deity will save us we must save ourselves" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, First). "The controlled use of scientific methods ... must be extended further in the solution of human problems" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Fourth). "We are responsible for what we are or will be" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Fourth). "We are responsible for what we are or will be" (HM-II, In Closing). "It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide ... massive, technical agricultural, medical, and economic assistance, including birth control techniques, to the developing portions of the globe" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, Fifteenth). "The problems that humankind will face in the future, as in the past, will no doubt be complex and difficult. However, if it is to prevail, it can only do so by enlisting resourcefulness and courage" (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, Conclusion). *Humanist Manifesto II*, Eleventh.

³⁹ Scripture summarizes responsibilities of civil authorities. They are avengers "to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (Rom. 13:1-7), i.e., to punish evildoers (1 Pet. 2:14), to praise those who do good (1 Pet. 2:14), to maintain peace (1 Tim. 2.2). Since God, through Scripture, grants no other authority or responsibility to civil authorities, then whatever else civil authorities do as governing officials, they do without biblical authority.

⁴⁰ In 1930, Charles F. Potter wrote, "Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism. What can the theistic Sunday-schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?" *Humanism: A New Religion* (New York, NY: Simon

and Schuster, 1930), 128. Other statements from Humanist documents about use of schools to promote Humanist values are: “*Education*. In our view, education should be the essential method of building humane, free, and democratic societies. The aims of education are many: the transmission of knowledge; training for occupations, careers, and democratic citizenship; and the encouragement of moral growth. Among its vital purposes should also be an attempt to develop the capacity for critical intelligence in both the individual and the community” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 10). “*Moral Education*. We believe that moral development should be cultivated in children and young adults. We do not believe that any particular sect can claim important values as their exclusive property; hence it is the duty of public education to deal with these values. Accordingly, we support moral education in the schools that is designed to develop an appreciation for moral virtues, intelligence, and the building of character. We wish to encourage wherever possible the growth of moral awareness and the capacity for free choice and an understanding of the consequences thereof. We do not think it is moral to baptize infants, to confirm adolescents, or to impose a religious creed on young people before they are able to consent. Although children should learn about the history of religious moral practices, these young minds should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. It should be noted that secular humanism is not so much a specific morality as it is a method for the explanation and discovery of rational moral principles” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 5). “*We face a common challenge to develop scientific education on a global scale and an appreciation for critical intelligence and reason as a way to solve human problems and enhance human welfare*” (*A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*, IV, 2). “Compulsory religious oaths and prayers in public institutions (political or educational) are also a violation of the separation principle” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 2). “*Evolution ... we deplore the efforts by fundamentalists (especially in the United States) to invade the science classrooms, requiring that creationists theory be taught to students and requiring that it be included in biology textbooks. This is a serious threat both to academic freedom and to the integrity of the educational process. We believe that creationists surely should have the freedom to express their viewpoint in society. Moreover, we do not deny the value of examining theories of creation in educational courses on religion and the history of ideas; but it is a sham to mask an article of religious faith as a scientific truth and to inflict that doctrine on the scientific curriculum. If successful, creationists may seriously undermine the credibility of science itself*” (*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 9).

THEY SAY, “IT IS NOT A RELIGION”

Tommy J. Hicks



Tommy Hicks is a native of Lubbock, Texas. He and his wife, the former Sue Cave, have two daughters and one granddaughter. Hicks holds an A.A. degree from the College of the Sequoias and a B.A. degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. He has done local work in Arizona, New Mexico, California, and Texas. Hicks is on *The Gospel Journal* Board of Directors. He directs the *Annual Lubbock Lectures* and preaches for the Southside congregation in Lubbock.

INTRODUCTION¹

1. “The universe is self-existing and not created.”²
2. “Man is a part of nature and he has emerged as the result of a continuous process,”³ i.e., “evolution.”⁴
3. “Holding an organic view of life, the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.”⁵

When a person advocates all three of those things, is he teaching science, philosophy, or religion? Most would answer: “It is *science* that is being taught.” Others would be inclined to respond: “*Philosophy*.” However, only a very few might think: “Religion is being taught.” Though unrecognized by the masses for what they are—such is the subtlety and deception of Humanism—all three of the above listed statements are cardinal tenets of Humanism.

Humanism’s proponent, Corliss Lamont, is deceiving his readers when he says: “Humanism’s attitude toward the universe, like its judgment as to the nature and destiny of humankind, is grounded on *solid scientific fact*” (emphasis added).⁶ Perhaps, the Humanists have deceived themselves into thinking that a scientific “theory” is a scientific “fact” when they say, “The universe is self-existing and not created,” and then attempt to prove it by citing the “Big Bang *Theory*” and/or the “Steady State *Theory*.” The same is true when they say the “*Theory* of Evolution” proves “Man ... has emerged as the result of a continuous process.” Whether or not the Humanists are self-deceived, the indisputable *fact* remains, a “theory” is *not* a “fact.” Regarding its

claims about the world's existence and man's evolution, Humanism is *not* "grounded on solid scientific fact." For them to make such a statement is nothing short of an unvarnished attempt to deceive. Actually, Humanism's science is "science falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20).

On its website, the American Humanist Association asserts: "*Humanism is a progressive philosophy* of life that, without theism and other supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity" (emphasis added).⁷ Indeed, it is universally accepted that Humanism is *a* philosophy. However, it must be emphasized that Humanism is a vain and deceitful philosophy.

This year's lectureship theme, "Philosophy and Vain Deceit," comes from Paul's statement in Colossians 2:8, where he warned: "Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy and vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (emphasis added). The word "philosophy" in this verse comes from the compound Greek word *philosophias* (*philos* + *sophos*), which originally meant "the love of wisdom."⁸ Paul is not condemning "the love of wisdom," but the context of Colossians 2:8 shows that he is condemning an errant "philosophy" which was threatening the spiritual welfare of the members of that church. From Paul's application in that case, it is safe to conclude that the same holds true for *any* philosophy which endangers man's soul. Unfortunately, when it comes to the subject of philosophy, too few approach it as they should.

THERE IS GOOD PHILOSOPHY AND THERE IS BAD PHILOSOPHY

Lest "the baby be thrown out with the wash," it must be understood that not all philosophy is bad. To the contrary, when it comes to "the love of wisdom" (philosophy), God wants Christians to seek after and possess the "right kind" of wisdom. That this is the case can be easily seen by noting the following passages in Paul's letter to the Colossians (the same book in which he warns against "philosophy and vain deceit):

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will *in all wisdom* and spiritual understanding (1:9, emphasis added).

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man *in all wisdom*; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (1:27-28, emphasis added).

That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the *full assurance of understanding*, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all *the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (2:2-3, emphasis added).

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly *in all wisdom*; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (3:16, emphasis added).

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time (4:5, emphasis added).

James instructs: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5). However, James makes a distinction between the wisdom which "is earthly, sensual, devilish" and "the wisdom that is from above [which] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (3:15, 17). The former is *from below* (man's wisdom) and the latter is *from above* (God's wisdom). Because Humanism is from below, it is "earthly, sensual, devilish," i.e., the kind of philosophy condemned by James.

Inspiration draws an emphatic line of demarcation between "man's wisdom" and "God's wisdom." For example, Paul challenged: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the *wisdom of this world*? For after that in the *wisdom of God* the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:20-21, emphasis added). Then, he declared that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" (v. 25). Contextually speaking, Paul is saying that when one preaches the Gospel (v. 17), he is preaching the wisdom of God (vv. 23-24), which is God's philosophy. Using different words, expressing the very same thought, Paul wrote that "the manifold wisdom of God" (God's philosophy) is now made "by the church" (Eph. 3:10).

Recall that the original meaning of the word “philosophy” is “the love of wisdom.” Thus, when the “wisdom of God” is its focus, the term “philosophy” is used in a good sense and is not to be condemned. Reason demands the conclusion that every faithful Christian will love God’s wisdom. Stated in another way, Christianity is a good philosophy because it is God’s philosophy. On the other hand, the philosophy that Paul warns against in Colossians 2:8 is “vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Humanism is the very kind of philosophy that Paul is condemning—it is a bad philosophy.

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Like the denominational divisions within so-called “Christendom,” Humanism has been denominationalized. Each faction within this atheistic philosophy has a “name” which supposedly distinguishes it from the others. Contemplating the various designations used in an effort to identify the divisions within Humanism, one might recall how Juliet asks Romeo, “What’s in a name?” and then, almost without a pause, she proceeds to tell him, “That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.”⁹ In other words, there is nothing in a name. Such a conclusion most certainly is *not* valid regarding the names God has given (cf. Acts 4:12; Isa. 62:2; Acts 11:26; *et cetera*), but it definitely is a legitimate conclusion regarding the various “names” by which Humanism is known. These names include: *Christian* Humanism, *Democratic* Humanism, *Ethical* Humanism, *Modern* Humanism, *Naturalistic* Humanism, *Philosophical* Humanism, *Religious* Humanism, *Secular* Humanism, *Scientific* Humanism, *et cetera*.

Acknowledging that those Humanistic labels are but variations on the same theme, Lamont admits:

Whatever it be called, Humanism is the viewpoint that people have but one life to lead and should make the most of it in terms of creative work and happiness; that human happiness is its own justification and requires no sanction or support from supernatural sources; that in any case the supernatural, usually conceived of in the form of heavenly gods or immortal heavens, does not exist; and that human beings, using their own intelligence and cooperating liberally with one another, can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty upon this earth.¹⁰

Thus, adapting a borrowed phrase from Gertrude Stein, "A Humanist is a Humanist is a Humanist."¹¹

Reflecting upon Lamont's description of Humanism, Solomon might ask him: "For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" (Ecc. 6:12). Having experimented with and experienced every avenue of life, seeking to learn what gives meaning and purpose for a man's life, Solomon could tell Lamont: "I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit" (Ecc. 1:14)—"Vanity of vanities ... all is vanity" (Ecc. 12:8). Contrary to the Humanistic philosophy of man, one wiser than Lamont exhorts:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Ecc. 12:13-14).

Of course, fearing God and keeping His commandments involves religion. Since, Humanists deny the existence of God and scoff at keeping His commandments, it might seem strange to ask: "Is Humanism a religion?"

HUMANISTS SAY THAT HUMANISM IS NOT A RELIGION

Some Humanists adamantly insist that Humanism is not a religion. For example, Bill Cooke (who said, "Humanism is so much more than [a] mere rejection of religion") praised Madalyn Murray O'Hair when he declared: "At no time did she give any comfort to the fundamentalists who work so hard to portray humanism as a religion."¹² Virtually everyone has heard of the infamous "atheist," Madalyn Murray O'Hair, but many may be unaware that she was a Humanist who edited the publication *Free Humanist* from 1962 to 1964 and served for a time on the board of the American Humanist Association.

In 1997, a symposium, entitled "Great Religions in a Pluralistic Society," was hosted on the Mobil campus of the University of South Alabama. Speaking for that gathering, explaining why Humanism is *not* a religion, Paul Kurtz said:

Is secular humanism a religion? ... No, secular humanism is not a religion. For something to be a religion means that its adherents are bound to it, that they have a faith in some unseen power, creator, or cause, and that they have some notion of prayer,

devotion, and ritual toward this power, creator, or cause. Secular humanists deny the existence of such a creator and surely are not interested in prayer or devotion to such a being. To say that secular humanism is a religion is to use the term *religion* so broadly that it means anything.¹³

Fred Edwards is now the Executive Director of the American Humanist Association. He is also the editor of that organization's official publication, *The Humanist*. Disassociating Humanism from religion, Edwards flippantly states: "Secular Humanists maintain that there is so much in religion deserving of criticism that the good name of humanism should not be tainted by connection with it."¹⁴

Going into some detail in their denial that Humanism is a religion, Matt Cherry and Molleen Matsumura contend that it is a *myth* that the Supreme Court ruled that Secular Humanism is a religion.

This myth is based on a misunderstanding about how Supreme Court decisions are written, and was finally laid to rest by a Federal Circuit Court ruling issued in 1994.

In the 1961 *Torcaso v. Watkins* decision, Justice Hugo Black commented in a footnote, "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others." Such footnotes, known as "*dicta*," are written to provide factual background to the legal principles in a decision. These *dicta* never have the force of law. They are merely comments.

The claim that secular humanism can be considered a religion for legal purposes was finally considered by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Peloza v. Capistrano School District*. In this 1994 case, a science teacher argued that, by requiring him to teach evolution, his school district was forcing him to teach the "religion" of secular humanism. The Court responded, "We reject this claim because neither the Supreme Court, nor this circuit, has ever held that evolutionism or secular humanism are 'religions' for Establishment Clause purposes." The Supreme Court *refused* to review the case; they refused to reverse a ruling that secular humanism is *not* a religion.

"But," you might ask, "even if secular humanism isn't a religion for legal purposes, isn't it really a religion in practical terms?" No. Look at it this way: Suppose Justice Black had been writing about an issue of interstate commerce in agricultural products, and in a footnote he included "apples" in a list of root crops. He

would be wrong. It wouldn't matter what laws were involved—apples are fruits, not roots! As a factual matter, he was partly wrong about Buddhism because some branches of Buddhism do worship the Buddha as a deity. And he was wrong about secular humanism.

Secular humanism is not a religion by any definition: There are no supernatural beliefs, no creeds that all humanists are required to accept, no sacred texts or required rituals. Humanists are not expected or required to have "faith" in what is said by any authority, living or dead, human or "supernatural."

People may find values and meaning in life through either humanistic or religious worldviews. But religions claim that meaning is based on a god or the supernatural, while humanists derive their meaning and values from the natural world. Secular humanism is a naturalistic, nonreligious worldview.¹⁵

HUMANISTS SAY THAT HUMANISM IS A RELIGION

Interestingly, the same Paul Kurtz who said, "No, secular humanism is not a religion," in the 1997 symposium, "Great Religions in a Pluralistic Society," wrote in the very first line of his Preface to *Humanist Manifestos I and II*: "Humanism is a philosophical, *religious* and moral point of view as old as human civilization itself. It has its roots in classical China, Greece, and Rome; it is expressed in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, in the scientific revolution, and in the twentieth century" (emphasis added).¹⁶ Kurtz personifies how Humanists say "Humanism *is* a religion," then turn right around and say, "Humanism *is not* a religion."

The thirty-four Humanists who signed *Humanist Manifesto I* definitely thought Humanism is a religion. Consider these statements from that document:

In order that *religious humanism* may be better understood we, the undersigned, desire to make certain affirmations which we believe the facts of our contemporary life demonstrate (emphasis added).

While this age does owe a vast debt to traditional religions, it is none the less obvious that any religion that can hope to be a synthesizing and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. *To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present. It is a responsibility which rests upon*

this generation. We therefore affirm the following (emphasis added).

First: *Religious humanists* regard the universe as self-existing and not created (emphasis added).

Fifth: ... *Religion* must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method (emphasis added).

Seventh: *Religion* consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. *Nothing human is alien to the religious* (emphasis added).

Eighth: *Religious humanism* considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now ... (emphasis added).

Twelfth: *Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists* aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life (emphasis added).

Thirteenth: *Religious humanism* maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life ... Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world (emphasis added).

So stand the theses of religious humanism (emphasis added).¹⁷

Add to those statements the fact that today there are Humanist Churches, such as: the Church of Scientific Humanism,¹⁸ the Humanist Fellowship of North Texas,¹⁹ the Church of Humanism,²⁰ *et cetera*. Besides those organizations, there are churches, such as the Washington Ethical Society, which identify themselves as being, “A Humanistic Religious Community.”²¹ There may be some Humanists who deny that Humanism is a religion, but there is more than ample evidence—testimony from past and present Humanists—to prove that many Humanists consider Humanism to be a religion.

THE COURTS SAY THAT HUMANISM IS A RELIGION

Meet Roy Torcaso. Upon Torcaso's death in 2007, the *Washington Post* ran a story entitled, “Roy Torcaso, 96; Defeated Md. in 1961 Religious Freedom Case.” About Torcaso, the article says: “He was a former board member of the American Humanist Association, an

educational and philosophical group, and a former president of its Washington chapter. He became a humanist counselor, with the authority to officiate at weddings in some states."²²

Prior to 1961, the Governor of the State of Maryland appointed Roy Torcaso to be a notary public. Maryland state law required that he take an oath which included a declaration of a belief in God. Torcaso, an atheist, refused to take that oath; therefore, his appointment as a notary public was rescinded. Upon losing his appointment, he filed suit against the State of Maryland. The case, which became known as *Torcaso v. Watkins*, made its way through the courts, all the way to the Supreme Court. That court decided in favor of Torcaso. Writing the court's decision, Justice Hugo Black classified Secular Humanism in the category of being a religion. In a *dictum* to the decision, Black wrote: "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God is Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others."²³

Humanists who wish to deny that Humanism is a religion want to reject the importance of that *dictum*. They make every effort to deceive people by insisting that a *dictum* is meaningless, and neither has bearing nor weight in law. Accusations by the likes of Matt Cherry and Molleen Matsumura to the contrary notwithstanding, a *dictum* is in fact very important. The *dictum* in question in the Torcaso case cited a court precedent (which is very important in law) set by the *Washington Ethical Society v. District of Columbia* decision.

Washington Ethical Society v. District of Columbia was a 1957 case of the U.S. Court of Appeals. The Washington Ethical Society functions much like a church, but *regards itself as a non-theistic religious institution*, honoring the importance of ethical living without mandating a belief in a supernatural origin for ethics. *The case involved denial of the Society's application for tax exemption as a religious organization.* The D.C. Circuit court reversed the Tax Court's ruling, *defined the Society as a religious organization, and granted its tax exemption* (emphasis added).²⁴

In other words, the court held that Secular Humanism is a non-theistic religion within the meaning of the First Amendment.

Rather than taking the word of unhappy Humanists regarding how the Supreme Court views Humanism, one would be wise to consider

what the justices themselves have said. And Supreme Court justices have clearly demonstrated that they see Justice Black's *dictum* as law.

Justice Scalia wrote:

In *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488, 495, n. 11 (1961), we did indeed refer to "SECULAR HUMANISM" as a "religio[n]."

Edwards v. Aguillard, 482 U.S. 578 (1987) note 6

Justice Harlan summed it all up:

[Footnote 8] This Court has taken notice of the fact that recognized "religions" exist that "do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God," *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 U.S. 488, 495 n. 11, e. g., "Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, SECULAR HUMANISM and others." *Ibid.* See also *Washington Ethical Society v. District of Columbia*, 101 U.S. App. D.C. 371, 249 F.2d 127 (1957); 2 *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 293; J. Archer, *Faiths Men Live By* 120-138, 254-313 (2d ed. revised by Purinton 1958); Stokes & Pfeffer, *supra*, n. 3, at 560.

Welsh v. United States 398 U.S. 333 (1970) note 8.²⁵

Humanists who deny that the courts have declared Humanism to be a religion find themselves to be in conflict with one of their own gurus, Corliss Lamont. Evidently agreeing with the court, Larmont acknowledged:

In 1961 the U.S. Supreme Court took official cognizance of religious Humanism in the case of Roy R. Torcaso, a Humanist who was refused his commission as a Notary Public under a Maryland law requiring all public officers in the State to profess belief in God. In delivering the unanimous opinion of the Court that this statute was unconstitutional under the First Amendment, Justice Hugo L. Black observed: "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others."²⁶

The courts have also granted Humanist organizations tax-exempt status as religious organizations, as noted in the *Torcaso* decision. Furthermore, "conscientious objector" status was originally granted by Congress to those who objected to war for religious reasons (i.e., because of a belief in God). However, the Supreme Court, in the *U.S. v. Seeger* case, decided that although Humanists do not believe in God,

they must be granted conscientious objector status for "religious" purposes.²⁷

CONCLUSION: HUMANISM IS A RELIGION

Yes, Humanism is a religion. Even though some Humanists deny Humanism is a religion, they have overturned state laws because of their religious beliefs, sought conscientious objector status on religious grounds, and claimed tax exempt status as a religion. Because of court decisions, Humanism is legally recognized as a religion. Humanists say Humanism is a religion in their manifestos and there are Humanist churches throughout the land. Humanists even acknowledge being a religion in their writings.

Humanists may claim that they do not believe in a God, but they do. Man, a created being, is their god. The Humanists have “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man ... and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever” (Rom. 1:23-25). They boast that they do not believe in the Bible, but the Humanists have a bible—their so-called “manifestos”—which they change every few years according to the whims of the times. Unfortunately, the Humanists’ god cannot save them and their bible is filled with the devil’s lies.

The devil is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Satan is the “deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9, ASV). In league with the devil, Humanists are “seducers” who are “deceiving” others “and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). John warns his readers: “Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 Jn. 7). This is certainly applicable to Humanists, and it is in total agreement with Paul’s warning: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1973), I, First, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, I, Second, 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, Second, 9.

- ⁵ Ibid., I, Third, 8.
- ⁶ Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972), 116.
- ⁷ About Humanism.
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism>
- ⁸ Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, n.d.), 3: 485.
- ⁹ William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, 2.2 (New York, NY: Duprat & Co., 1892), 48.
- ¹⁰ Lamont, 14.
- ¹¹ Gertrude Stein, *Geography and Plays: Sacred Emily* (Boston, MA: Four Seas Co., 1922), 177-188.
- ¹² Bill Cooke, "Atheist in a Bunker Reassessing Madalyn Murray O'Hair," *Free Inquiry*, Oct.- Nov. 2004 23: 2.
- ¹³ Paul Kurtz, "Is Secular Humanism a Religion?" *Mobil Alabama Harbinger*, 9 Dec. 1997.
- ¹⁴ Fred Edwards, "What is Humanism?" American Humanist Association.
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/What_is_Humanism>
- ¹⁵ Matt Cherry and Molleen Matsumura, "10 Myths About Secular Humanism," *Sweet Reason*, (a Humanist advice column).
<<http://www.sweetreason.org/1.htm>>
- ¹⁶ *Manifesto I*, preface, 3.
- ¹⁷ *Manifesto I*, 7, 8, 9, 10.
- ¹⁸ <<http://scihuman.org/>>
- ¹⁹ <<http://www.humanistfellowship.org/>>
- ²⁰ <<http://outside.in/places/church-of-humanism-humanist-theolo-bronx>>
- ²¹ <<http://ethicalsociety.org/article.php?id=47>>
- ²² Adam Bernstein, "Roy Torcaso, 96; Defeated Md. In 1961 Religious Freedom Case," *Washington Post* 21 June 2007: 7B.
- ²³ <<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=us&vol=367&invol=488>>
- ²⁴ <http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Washington_Ethical_Society_v._District_of_Columbia>
- ²⁵ <http://vftonline.org/Patriarchy/definitions/humanism_religion.htm>
- ²⁶ Lamont, 24.
- ²⁷ <<http://supreme.justia.com/us/380/163/>>

THEY SAY, “MAN IS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS”

Kevin Cauley



Kevin Cauley is a native Texan and is married to the former Mary Lynn Forehand. They are parents of four boys. Cauley graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in 1989, and the University of Texas in Austin in 1994 with a double major in Philosophy and Greek. He preached part time through 2001 and then worked as local minister for the Church in Berryville, Arkansas. Cauley is now working with the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, Texas as Faculty of New Testament.

INTRODUCTION¹

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was a renaissance philosopher who lived between 1463 and 1494. He authored a work, titled *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, which has been styled the “Manifesto of the Renaissance” and is representative of Renaissance Humanism. Mirandola presents an idea of the autonomous man that has been adopted by many today. He uses the literary form of a dialogue between God and the newly created man, Adam.

Adam, we give you no fixed place to live, no form that is peculiar to you, nor any function that is yours alone. According to your desires and judgment, you will have and possess whatever place to live, whatever form, and whatever functions you yourself choose. All other things have a limited and fixed nature prescribed and bounded by our laws. You, with no limit or no bound, may choose for yourself the limits and bounds of your nature. We have placed you at the world’s center so that you may survey everything else in the world. We have made you neither of heavenly nor of earthly stuff, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with free choice and dignity, you may fashion yourself into whatever form you choose. To you is granted the power of degrading yourself into the lower forms of life, the beasts, and to you is granted the power, contained in your intellect and judgment, to be reborn into the higher forms, the divine.²

Mirandola represents man as someone who may live his own life, define the limits of his own nature, make himself into whatever form

he chooses, and shape his own destiny *via* his “intellect and judgment” alone. The underlying assumption is that man is an autonomous being and has it within his authority to be whatever he desires to be.

The word “autonomous” literally means “self law.” Hence, an individual who is autonomous is a law to himself or self-governing. “Autonomous man” is the notion that man has it within his capacity to govern himself outside of other-worldly influences (God). In contrast to this notion, the Bible affirms that God created man free to choose between good and evil. However, it was never God’s intention for man to choose evil, but to always choose that which is good. Since God is the source of all goodness (Mt. 19:17), choosing what is good entails forfeiting autonomy. True autonomous choices, choices outside of God’s will, entail embracing error and doing that which is wrong. Thus, the notion of “autonomous man” is a move away from God.

PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF CONTEMPORARY HUMANISM

Emphasis upon man’s autonomy in the Renaissance paved the way for a significant shift in thinking from a God-centered (theocentric) perspective on life to a man-centered (anthropocentric) perspective on life. Ultimately, this shift resulted in subsequent philosophies which discarded God altogether and focused exclusively upon man. These philosophies were styled “existentialist” because they focus on man’s physical existence as opposed to the essentiality of God and His Truth.

Prior to the advent of the modern period of philosophy, medieval philosophy had focused upon God’s essence as the starting point of intellectual inquiry whether religious or scientific. Modern philosophy, however, created a rift between religion and science. The atheistic writings of La Mettrie d’Holbach are acknowledged as greatly contributing to this. In fact, d’Holbach’s explanation of atheism is the same framework upon which Humanism rests today. Contemporary Humanism is the heritage of atheism. Consider the following quote:

An atheist is someone who destroys human chimeras in order to call people back to nature, experience and reason. He is a thinker who, having meditated on matter, its properties and ways of behaving, has no reason to imagine ideal forces, imaginary intelligences or rational beings in order to explain the phenomena of the universe or the operations of nature—which, far from making us know nature better, merely make it capricious, inexplicable and unknowable, useless for human happiness.³

The move away from God as the source of all scientific truth, however, ultimately came from the work of Immanuel Kant. He asserted that the only truth that is knowable is scientific truth. In response to Kant, G.W.F. Hegel created a system of philosophy that brought about a stodgy religious formalism in Europe. It was to this formalism that Søren Kierkegaard reacted.

Kierkegaard is acknowledged as being the first of these "existentialist" philosophers for setting forth his philosophy "truth is subjectivity."⁴ In this thesis, truth is no longer perceived as being objective and certain, originating from an infinite and eternal God, but instead, "the highest truth attainable for an *existing* individual" is "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation-process of the most passionate inwardness."⁵ This statement makes man the center for attainment of truth. It follows that any true values man might have, come from him as well. "Man makes his own truth" is a notion entirely consistent with "man makes his own values." These are the fundamental notions that support the contemporary concept of the "autonomous man."

Subsequent philosophers make much of Kierkegaard's thesis. Ultimately, they exclude God entirely and base entire systems of philosophy upon what they presume to be the "true" human condition, namely, that man is a wholly material being essentially no different than an animal. This also is a correlate accepted by Humanists today. Philosophies built upon atheism and the view that man is a mere animal include the communism of Karl Marx, the nihilism of Frederick Nietzsche, and the existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre. Each of these philosophers embraced Humanism as necessary to their system of philosophy. Consider the following quotations.

Friedrich Nietzsche

For one thing is needful: that a human being attain his satisfaction with himself—whether it be by this or by that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold.⁶

Karl Marx

Atheism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of religion; communism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of private property.⁷

Jean Paul Sartre

There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity.⁸

This is an anthropocentric (man-centered) philosophy and may be summed up in the ancient expression of Protagoras: “Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not.”⁹ Since there is no God, according to this philosophy, man sets the standard for what is right and wrong, good and evil, holy and profane. *Humanist Manifesto II* affirms this anthropocentrism and derives it directly from these philosophical traditions, the root of which is atheism. It states:

We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures. Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life, here and now. The goal is to pursue life’s enrichment despite debasing forces of vulgarization, commercialization, and dehumanization.¹⁰

THE NOTION OF AUTONOMOUS MAN

It follows from the above thoughts that man is autonomous, that is, he rules himself and sets his own standard when it comes to matters of morals, ethics, happiness, and the purpose and meaning of life. Corliss Lamont, a self-professed Humanist and the author of *The Philosophy of Humanism*, has the following to say about autonomous man:

Third, Humanism, having its ultimate faith in man, believes that human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision.

Fourth, Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the masters of their own destiny.

Fifth, Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress—economic, cultural, and ethical—of all mankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion.¹¹

According to Lamont, man can solve his own problems through science and human reason alone. Man is the master of his own destiny and has the freedom to make that destiny what he wills. All values of ethics and morality must come from man alone since he is solely a materialistic being grounded in earthly experience. The philosophy of Humanism is, therefore, wholly materialistic and totally exclusive of heaven, hell, ultimate spiritual reality, God, and the notion that these things have anything to do with defining man's nature, his purpose, and his ethical standards.

The autonomous man specifically is a man who creates his own morality, his own ethical standards. This conclusion is a direct consequence of Kierkegaard's subjectivism and a necessary tenet of the atheistic philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and Jean Paul Sartre. About man, Nietzsche states:

Finally, at the highest stage of morality *until now*, he acts according to *his* standard of things and men; he himself determines for himself and others what is honorable, what is profitable.¹²

Marx says:

This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution.¹³

Sartre explains:

This is humanism, because we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself; also because we show that it is not by turning back upon himself, but always by seeking, beyond himself, an aim which is one of liberation or of some particular realisation, that man can realise himself as truly human.¹⁴

Nietzsche says that for man to act according to his own standards is the highest stage of morality. Marx says that Humanism/Naturalism is the genuine resolution of conflict between man and all things. Sartre says that there is no other legislator but man himself and that he must decide for himself what is right and what is wrong.

Humanism teaches that ethics, morality, and what is good, is simply what man makes it to be and ultimately, according to Nietzsche, all that exists is man's efforts in that regard or, in his words, man's power (*macht*) or might. As he says, "What is good?—All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man."¹⁵ It is out of these atheistic philosophies, each claiming to be Humanism, that have produced contemporary Humanism. From Nietzsche, contemporary Humanism gets its disdain for the other-worldly. From Marx, contemporary Humanism gets its desire to solve social problems. From Sartre, contemporary Humanism gets its subjective concepts of freedom. Humanism is, then, by and large, an amalgamation of atheism, subjectivism, communism, and existentialist philosophy.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE/RESPONSIBILITY

Humanism is anthropocentric by definition. It places humans at the center of concern and focuses upon humanity's problems (as defined by humanity), seeing that overcoming those problems as being the primary work of mankind. God and religion are acknowledged in a sort of patronizing fashion, but the praxis of Humanism is centered on man. Such is the attitude of *Humanist Manifesto II*:

In the best sense, religion may inspire dedication to the highest ethical ideals. The cultivation of moral devotion and creative imagination is an expression of genuine "spiritual" experience and aspiration. We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.¹⁶

This statement entails that man's primary responsibilities are not in his personal relationship with God, but rather in his personal relationship with the rest of humanity. Man comes first, God second. This shift of relationship implies a personal ethic of behavior that is different from one with God as its center. In Humanism, the individual's concern is no longer how to love God in holiness and purity as one who sustains a personal relationship with God. Instead, Humanism's concern is how one may be more socially conscious of society's problems and how one may work toward solutions in his relationship with his fellow man. The most pressing problems of humanity are man's relationship with man,

not man's relationship with God. As a result, sin against God takes a backseat to sin against man and the problems of society are elevated over the problems of the individual. Humanism thus views these problems as solvable on a societal level, not on an individual level.

With this man-centered (anthropocentric) ethic, society as a whole arbitrates right and wrong and the temporal problems of the culture end up being the problems with which the individual *must* concern himself. That is to say, whatever problem gets elevated by the majority of a society (popular culture), that is the problem with which the individual must concern himself. If the culture considers "global warming" to be a problem, then society deems it a "sin" not to acknowledge it as a problem and work towards its solution. If "homosexuality" is considered by society as "acceptable behavior" then it is a "sin" to characterize it as a social problem. With an anthropocentric philosophy, whatever society/popular culture arbitrates as right and wrong becomes the standard of right and wrong, and problems that the culture deems to threaten society as a whole become the problems with which the individual *must* concern himself. The standard for right and wrong is not what God says is right and wrong, but what humanity defines as right and wrong.

Under such a paradigm, "salvation" depends upon one's anthropocentrism: his ability to be concerned about and work toward the solution of humanity's problems (as defined by humanity). Personal ethical choices become matters of opinion because they do not relate to solving the larger problems of society/humanity, and because society may simply deem personal ethical choices as being harmless (whether they actually are or not). "Sin" becomes one's lack of involvement in working toward Humanistic solutions or the failure to acknowledge personal ethical choices as inconsequential if society has deemed them as such. This means that personal issues, such as abortion and homosexuality, take a back burner to cultural issues such as poverty, social justice, and global warming.

Humanism elevates social issues above individual and personal morality because the philosophy holds that the greatest of man's problems, the social issues, can be resolved through the collective efforts of men. One classic expression which reflects Humanists' philosophy is: "If we can put a man on the moon, then why can't we feed the hungry?" Notice the assumptions in this very powerful rhetorical statement. First, there is the assumption of collective effort.

It is “our” effort that “we” must do as a collective that solves humanity’s problems, not any one individual’s work. Second, there is the assumption that no problem is unsolvable if the collective efforts of humanity are aligned against it. This really negates the idea or concept of free will. What if some individual wants to be an unsolved “problem”? The moon has no freewill; hungry people do. The truth is that only certain problems are solvable relative to man’s free will. Some problems simply cannot be solved if individuals are not willing for their problems to be solved.

Moreover, since the solution for these issues must come on a societal level, as opposed to the level of the individual, it is the government’s prerogative to dictate the solutions to the individual whether the individual does anything to implement the solution or not. This system fails because one cannot get around the fact that the individual human is ultimately the one who must implement changes within his life voluntarily, not as dictated by the government. Humanists may work all day long to come up with strategies for implementing government solutions to social problems, but if individual people do not apply those solutions, then nothing is really solved. Humanism fails to deal with the most fundamental problem of society, namely, individual man’s sinful will.

Up to this point we have defined the militant philosophies that Humanism presents to Christianity. In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to focus on what our response, as Christians, ought to be to this grave challenge. First, I will demonstrate from both sacred and secular history that man has a dismal history of solving his own problems. Second, I will set forth a positive approach that exalts the Bible as the solution for the problems of man.

HISTORY’S RECORD OF MAN’S EFFORTS TO SOLVE HIS OWN PROBLEMS

If there is one lesson that Humanists need to learn, it is that humans have a dismal history of solving our own problems. The advent of the philosophy of Humanism in the Renaissance brought a renewed optimism that mankind could solve all of its problems independently of other-worldly explanations (God). It was out of this “optimism” that was born some of the most notorious regimes that the world has ever seen. The thoroughly bloody French revolution is acknowledged by both Christians and atheists alike to be a movement borne out of

atheism which naturally entails the ethic of Humanism.¹⁷ Napoleon Bonaparte who is famous for saying, "all religions have been made by men," was also a major player in this Humanistic drama that was just beginning to unfold. Major wars in the 19th and 20th centuries were fought largely upon Humanistic and atheistic grounds. The Russian Revolution of 1917 ushered in unprecedented power for Humanist thinking and philosophy. Based upon Marx and Lenin's atheism, if there were ever an opportunity to prove that humanity could accomplish great things without God, that was it. The result, however, was far from what "good" Humanists would consider desirable. Under Lenin and subsequently Stalin, millions of Russians were executed and millions more were placed into prisons in the name of political cleansing. It is estimated that 7,000,000 died during Stalin's forced famine of 1932-1933.¹⁸ Several million more died during the Great Purge of 1937-1938—all in the name of atheism/Humanism.¹⁹ More atrocities, however, were to follow. Alister McGrath writes:

It is only fair to point out that those who planned the Holocaust, and those who slammed shut the doors of the Auschwitz gas chambers, were human beings—precisely those whom Ludwig Fuerbach declared to be the new "gods" of the modern era, free from any divine prohibitions or sanctions, or any fear of future divine judgment.

McGrath continues:

It requires an act of blind faith that ignores the moral wasteland of the twentieth century to agree with the shallow judgment of Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909): "Glory to man in the highest! / For man is the master of things." This master of things has much to answer for—more violence, bloodshed, and oppression than any naïve Victorian optimist could ever have imagined.²⁰

Additional atrocities would be conducted during the Korean Conflict, and subsequent to the Vietnam War, Pol Pot would execute nearly 2,000,000 people—all as a result of the rise to power of atheist and Marxist leader Mao Zedong in China in 1949.²¹ Mao himself was responsible for the deaths of millions of China's citizens and millions more were sent to political reform camps.²² McGrath states:

There are many today who affirm belief in humanity in preference to a belief in God. Yet this humanity has been responsible for a series of moral, social, and political catastrophes, some

inspired by a belief in God, others by a belief that God must be eliminated, by all means and at all costs. The common denominator here is the humanity, not the divinity.²³

Madeline Bunting, a journalist and associate editor of the left-leaning English newspaper *The Guardian*, wrote the following in 2006 after reviewing an atheist television program against religion titled *The Root of All Evil?*:

There's an underlying anxiety that atheist humanism has failed. Over the 20th century, atheist political regimes racked up an appalling (and unmatched) record for violence. Atheist humanism hasn't generated a compelling popular narrative and ethic of what it is to be human and our place in the cosmos; where religion has retreated, the gap has been filled with consumerism, football, Strictly Come Dancing and a mindless absorption in passing desires.²⁴

Indeed, man's efforts without God leave much to be desired.

Sacred history also records a dismal record of man's seeking to resolve his own problems. The first account of a man seeking to resolve his own problems without God is found in Genesis 4 where Cain killed his brother Abel. Cain did not listen to God and his Humanistic solution turned to tragedy for all involved. Genesis 37 records the efforts of Jacob's sons to eliminate their brother Joseph. Here was another attempt to solve a problem without God. When famine came, they found out that they were not the solution to their own problems, but God was. Through Joseph, God had given them relief. Joseph's faith in God kept him from taking revenge on his brothers and providing forgiveness when he could have taken vengeance, a decidedly non-Humanistic solution. The period of the Judges brought a renewed emphasis upon Humanism where "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jgs. 17:6; 21:25). The atrocities recorded in the intervening chapters and the civil war within the nation itself showed the folly of their thinking. King Saul turned to Humanism when he declared, "the people took of the spoil" (1 Sam. 15:21). He used an anthropocentric standard of judgment. As a result, the kingdom was taken away from him and given to another. Even David thought his own actions could get him out of a scrape when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. He thought he could solve his problems by having Uriah murdered in battle (2 Sam. 11-12). Ultimately, David's example of Humanism influenced his own child, Absalom, to murder David's

children, rebel against David's throne, and sleep with his concubines (2 Sam. 13-16). David finally regained his throne, but at a steep price. David's son Solomon prayed for wisdom from God, but ultimately used it consistent with the principles of Humanism. By taking to himself multiple wives, Solomon thought he could secure peaceful alliances with other nations, but ultimately, this became his and Israel's undoing, beginning a series of compromises with false religion that ultimately led to the division of his kingdom under his two sons (1 Kgs. 11:4) and the erection of the false god Baal. Under this banner the people declared to Jehovah in the spirit of Humanism, "We are lords; we will come no more unto thee" (Jer. 2:31). This culminated with Jeremiah's exclamation: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23), the ultimate antithesis of Humanist thought.

In the New Testament, the Humanistic Sadducees declared that there was no resurrection and spirits did not exist (Acts 23:8). This political party was concerned about their own positions of power and their relationship with the Roman government (Jn. 11:48). In their zeal to crucify Jesus because of their jealousy of His influence among the people (Mk. 15:10), they denied God as their king and professed the kingship of man saying, "We have no king but Caesar" (Jn. 19:15). The result of employing their human wisdom was the destruction of Jerusalem under the hand of Titus in A.D. 70.

If there is one great lesson that the Bible teaches, it is that trust in man as the solution for humanity's problems is an idea proven to be patently false. The Psalmist declared: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8). Proverbs 3:5-6 states: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

But does the Bible contain the solution to humanity's problems? It does! This solution, however, does not come through some government imposed law, but through the individual's application of divine truth as revealed in the New Testament. The Bible provides no top-down universal government implementable solution that will erase all of mankind's problems and bring complete peace and prosperity to the world. In fact, Jesus declares that such is impossible (Mt. 26:11). One of the reasons why the Bible supplies no such solution is because such a solution is impossible, given the problem of human sin in the world.

Ninety-nine percent of society may be peaceful and orderly, but it takes only one sinful individual to destroy that peace and order. The solution to all of man's problems, then, must start at the bottom, with individual men and women who are willing to apply the teachings of the Bible to their lives and then to go out and teach others the same. In this way, we may live in a society that has less sin and more righteousness.

It is, therefore, personal and individual sin that is the root cause of problems in society today. When one man covets his neighbor's possessions, that is the foundation for materialistic consumerism. When one man commits adultery with another's wife, that is the foundation for divorce, broken homes, and scarred children. When fornication is permitted and glorified, that is the foundation for teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, and psychological issues that lead to depression and other negative attitudes. When murderers are not promptly punished for their crimes, that is the foundation for lawlessness and anarchy. On we could go with the numerous sins committed in society; however, these few illustrate that the problems humanity needs to resolve begin with the individual, not the government. The greatest solution offered for solving these problems is the Gospel of Christ, and the greatest thing that Christians can do to alleviate the problems of humanity is to preach and teach the Gospel. In that regard, we must do the following:

First, we must stand up for and defend the existence of God. The most important relationship that anyone can have is first and foremost with God. It is out of a profound sense of love and responsibility toward God *first* that man will find himself behaving appropriately toward his fellow man. God has demonstrated His love toward us through His Son Jesus (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9). When individuals understand this as the primary motivating factor for maintaining a personal relationship with God, they will follow God's example and love their fellow man as well (Mt. 5:44-48). When individuals fail to believe in the existence of God they have no real motivation to behave appropriately toward other people, as has been abundantly illustrated above.

Second we must stand up for and defend the resurrection of Christ. It is upon the foundation of Christ's resurrection that all New Testament behaviors are conditioned. It is the foundation for the authority of Jesus (Mt. 28:18). It is the foundation for morality (Col. 3:1-17). It is the foundation for hope (1 Cor. 15) and eternal life (Jn. 20:30-31). It is the foundation for ultimate judgment (Acts 17:30-31). The resurrection

of Christ is what proves that one must respect and obey the Bible and specifically, the New Covenant of Christ. Without the resurrection we have no authoritative instruction on how to behave toward our fellow man.

Third, we must stand up for and defend the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. If the resurrection brings us to the Bible and the New Testament as the source of authority, the Biblical doctrine of inspiration brings us to the significance of every word in the Bible. Many hold respect for the resurrection and Jesus who do not specifically respect the rest of what the Bible has to say. Jesus, however, promised a miraculous revealing of God's message through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:13). Thus, each prophet and apostle in the Bible was commissioned by God to pen specific words (1 Cor. 2:10-13). All were moved by the Holy Spirit to pen every word of the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Thus, every inspired document is significant to the life of each individual person (2 Tim. 3:16-17). And, each individual person is responsible to study and apply God's Word to his life correctly (2 Tim. 2:15).

Fourth, we must stand up for and defend the Biblical doctrine of love. Love is the Christian ethic (Rom. 13:8; 1 Cor. 13:1-8). Humanists like to point out that Christians are motivated solely by fear of punishment. Certainly fear of punishment is a motivation the Bible discusses. However, the greater motivation is found in the Bible's doctrine of love. Love is not merely an emotion that one feels toward someone else. It is an attitude that is characterized by self-sacrifice (Jn. 15:13). This attitude is first demonstrated by God through the person of Jesus (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Phil. 2:5ff). Jesus' example motivates individual Christians to mimic that attitude in their lives (1 Pet. 2:21). The presentation of God's love in our lives to those around us is the foundation for the practice of Christianity, the greatest ethic that man has ever known. That ethic is a remarkable demonstration of the inspiration of the Bible. No other humanly devised ethic comes close to matching the ethic of Christ as depicted within the New Testament.

When contrasting the ethic of Christ with the various ethics invented by agnostic or atheistic men, it becomes clear quite quickly which of the two is superior. There is the ethic of Christ: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). On the other hand, you have Nietzsche's ethic, "the will to power." When we think of men of power, who in history comes to

mind? Ramses, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Nero, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot are just a few. Some of these men were named by Nietzsche himself. Power is really all one is left with when excluding “other-worldly” explanations for human ethics and behavior. If history teaches us anything, it is that one simply cannot derive an appropriate ethic from the exercise of great power. In that regard, the ethic of Christ, which is the ethic of love, is superior to the ethic of man.

CONCLUSION

Humanism has nothing to offer our world except failed promises, sorrow, destruction and death. The autonomous man always ends up destroying his own life and the lives of others. In that regard, history has taught us very well that Jesus’ observation regarding life is incontrovertible. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Mt. 16:25).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, trans. Richard Hooker in *Reading About the World, Volume 1*, edited by Paul Brians (Orlando FL: Harcourt Brace),
<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_1/pico.html> (12 June 2009).

³ Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism*, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2004), 30, quoting La Mettrie d’Holbach, *Systeme de la Nature* (1770).

⁴ Søren Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* trans. and ed. Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

⁵ Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1968), 182.

⁶ Friedrich W. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann as quoted in Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York. NY: Meridian, 1975), 127.

⁷ Karl Marx, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, trans. Gregor Benton (Paris, FR: 1844). Accessed online at
<<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/epm/3rd.htm>> (29 May 2009).

⁸ Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism* trans. Philip Mairet (Brooklyn, NY: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1977), 23-56.

- ⁹ Protagoras as quoted by Sextus Empiricus (*Adv. math.* 7.60).
- ¹⁰ *Humanist Manifesto II*, (Washington, DC: American Humanist Association, 1973).
- ¹¹ Corlis Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, (New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1949), 13.
- ¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: a Book for Free Spirits* trans by Marion Faber, Stephen Lehmann (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 65.
- ¹³ Marx.
- ¹⁴ Sartre.
- ¹⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antichrist*, as quoted in Robert C. Solomon *Living with Nietzsche: What the Great "Immoralist" Has to Teach Us* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 85.
- ¹⁶ *Humanist Manifesto II*.
- ¹⁷ McGrath, 45.
- ¹⁸ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet collectivization and the terror-famine*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1987), 304.
- ¹⁹ Documented by Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- ²⁰ McGrath, 183-184.
- ²¹ Cambodian Genocide Program, (New Haven, CT: Yale University). <<http://www.yale.edu/cgp/>> (10 June 2009).
- ²² Philip Short, *Mao: A Life*, (New York, NY: Macmillan, 2001), 436.
- ²³ McGrath, 184.
- ²⁴ Madeleine Bunting, "No Wonder Atheists Are Angry: They Seem Ready to Believe Anything," *Guardian*, January 7, 2006, a review of *The Root of All Evil?* (UK TV Channel 4). <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/jan/07/raceandreligion.comment>> (9 June 2009).

THEY SAY, “LET US EDUCATE YOUR CHILDREN”

Derrick Smith



Derrick Smith was born in Talladega, Alabama and is married to the former Holly Hooker. They are the parents of one son, Harrison. Smith earned a B.S. degree from Faulkner University, an M.A. Ed. From the University of Alabama, and the Ed. D. degree in special education from Texas Tech University. At this time he is an assistant professor of education at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Smith lives in Madison, Alabama and is associated with the West Huntsville Church of Christ.

INTRODUCTION¹

Since the Garden of Eden, there has been a war being waged between God and Satan over the souls of humanity. The battles between God and Satan can be seen in every arena where human life exists, from the home to the workplace, and even in the church. Wherever man is found, the battle for souls is taking place. As we gaze across the spectrum of humanity and its many institutions, we quickly realize that one of the greatest battlefields can be found in almost every neighborhood. It is a place where hundreds, if not thousands, of souls are waiting to be taken over by the vile lies provided by Satan. It is a place that we believe to be a “safe zone,” free from the evil of the world. Yet, if we look closer, we will quickly realize that this place is one of the greatest battlefields upon the earth!

In the 1983 January/February edition of *The Humanist*, John Dunphy, an author, poet, and activist penned these infamous words:

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 the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. There, teachers must embody the same selfless dedication of the most rabid fundamentalist preacher, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level—preschool, daycare, or large state university. The

classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new—the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never-realized Christian ideal of “love thy neighbor” will finally be achieved.²

With those words, Dunphy described the blatant attack that Humanism is waging against Christianity and its strategy to attack our children within the public classrooms. Therefore, is it any wonder that they want us to stay out of the schools and “let them educate our children”?

THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

While this major battle for the minds (and ultimately the souls) of our children is taking place in the classroom, we must first understand that education, and even public education, is not inherently the problem. God places great emphasis on the ability to “hear” (Rom. 10:17), and to “read” (2 Cor. 3:2; Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). God’s Word encourages us to buy instruction: “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Pro. 23:23). If one wants to be known as a wise and knowledgeable person, he must be willing to receive instruction (Pro. 12:1; 23:12; 21:11). While encouraging Christians to strive to receive instruction, God also encourages us to teach (Deut. 6:5-9; Heb. 5:12). While these Scriptures are directly related to religion, the principles they contain are applicable, worthy and necessary to being “educated.”

Throughout time, humanity has understood the importance of education. The great educators of the ancient world (such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) focused on developing the mind through mental exercise. The educators during the Renaissance considered the liberal arts (languages, literature, history, philosophy, mathematics, and science) to be instruments that truly educated man and were disciplines proper to man, disciplines which differentiated him from the animals.³ Even today, education is considered critical because it aids in the development of the practical skills of reading, writing, and computation while refining the individual’s intellect (ability to think critically).

However, the purpose of public education in the United States has been written, revised, and rewritten many times. In the early days of public education in the United States, Horace Mann, the “Father of American Education,” explained that the purpose of public education

was to promote social harmony and ensure that the republic would be guided by an intelligent, moral citizenry.⁴ While the purpose of education has always been loosely connected with the purpose articulated by Mann, it has taken many different forms throughout the generations, typically guided by the social climate, opinion, and “needs” of the society at that particular time. An example of the change in educational philosophy and purpose is clearly evident in the advent of progressive education in the early 1900s.

DARWIN, THORNDIKE, DEWEY, AND PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

The 20th century brought drastic changes in American social, economic, political, and educational life. The population experienced rapid growth, especially in urban areas. This was complemented by the economic growth of the United States, which was fueled by the increase in production and the accelerating expansion of railroads and other transportation. The progressive reform movement focused on politics at every level and worked to increase the size and strength of government in order to bring social change. It was in this time that educational leaders such as John Dewey, Edward Thorndike, Francis W. Parker, Ella Flagg Young, and William H. Kilpatrick began to “reinvent” education with their progressivist educational movement. However, none of this would have occurred without the efforts of Charles Darwin.

On November 24, 1859, one of the seminal works in scientific literature (or fiction) was published in London, England. The 477 pages of Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* became the charter document for those who do not believe in the existence of God. It was this one document, and its blind acceptance by the leading “intellectuals” of the time, that has led to the loss of millions of souls since 1859. Naturalism, the philosophy that the world can be understood in scientific terms without recourse to spiritual or supernatural explanations, quickly infected higher education. Darwin and his Naturalistic concepts led to the solidification of Humanism as we know it today. Before evolution, “Humanists,” a politically-correct term for atheists, had no means to explain how life came into existence. With evolution as their fundamental creed, the Humanists now had a foundation for their theology.

Darwin's concepts of evolution were quickly adopted by prominent scholars in Europe and the United States. Asa Gray, a leading Harvard professor of botany from 1842 to 1873, was a close friend of Darwin and a self-proclaimed "apostle" of Darwin to the United States.⁵ James Dana, a leading Yale geologist, followed Gray and ultimately helped convert his university from orthodox Christianity belief to evolution.⁶ It was Darwin's impact on higher education that led to the change of philosophy in almost every area of science, including "human-based" fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and eventually education.

In 1897, James Early Russell, a Humanist trained in psychology, took his post as the dean of Teachers College at Columbia University. His goal was to turn Teachers College into the "West Point of progressive education."⁷ It was during his tenure at Columbia that he brought on two of the most influential psychologists in the world who have forever impacted education. The first of these two men was Dr. Edward Thorndike. Thorndike's research focused on the psychology of animal behavior and the learning processes. Thorndike believed that "human nature" is simply a mass of "original tendencies" that can be exploited for good or bad, depending on what learning takes place.⁸ He was convinced that his discoveries in animal learning could be applied to education. He wrote: "The best way with children may often be, in the pompous words of an animal trainer, 'to arrange everything in connection with the trick so that the animal will be compelled by the laws of his own nature to perform it.'"⁹ This theory of evolution, applied to the mind, became the basis for building a new theory of learning by conditioning. Children were considered animals and the classroom was to be transformed into a laboratory providing the optimum environment in which learning by reflex conditioning could take place.¹⁰

While Thorndike provided the psychological basis for progressive education, John Dewey formulated the social aims of the movement and became the most prominent educational leader of the "progressive education movement" in the early 1900s. Dewey was a renowned materialistic pantheist, or one that holds that the material universe is all that exists, nothing else. Those who adhere to this philosophy believe that our thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, and aspirations are nothing more than biochemical reactions occurring in the cells of the brain, glands, and organs. We are nothing but organic machines! Based upon

this belief system, Dewey became the founder and first president of the American Humanist Association in 1933. Ironically, it is this man who is referred to as the “Father of Modern American Education,” and there is not a school in the United States that has not felt his influence.¹¹

Webb, Metha, and Jordan describe progressivism as a “philosophy” only, but many of the tenants of this philosophy may be alarming to a Christian. They state that “progressivism came about as a protest against the emphasis on universal truth and the past at the expense of experience and social relevance.”¹² In describing the progressivist’s concept of the “nature of the learner,” they state:

Progressivism embraces the notion that the child is an experiencing *organism* who is capable of ‘learning by doing’. Progressivists perceive students to be *evolving* and active beings capable of interacting with their environment, setting objectives for their own learning, and working together to solve common problems. They are also capable of *establishing rules* for governing their classroom, and testing and evaluating ideas for the improvement of learning.¹³

Thorndike, Dewey and their devout followers, trained thousands of educators to teach students as if they were “organisms,” who have been and are “evolving” and are capable of “establishing rules” by themselves. It is through the efforts of Dewey and other progressives, with their strong connection to Naturalism and Humanism, which has led to the kind of education that is causing unbelief in our children today.¹⁴

For almost 50 years, progressive education was the dominant educational philosophy in American schools. Having been overtaken by other educational philosophies, its lasting impression on education can be found in instructional strategies such as the group process, cooperative learning, and democratic participation. The progressive curriculum was largely experience-centered, focusing on relevant problems. While many of the pedagogical, or teaching, aspects of progressive education have been found to be superb instructional strategies, the premise for which it was developed can be traced back to Thorndike and Dewey’s materialistic pantheism and its complete devotion to evolution.¹⁵

IMPACT OF HUMANISM ON EDUCATION

In short, Humanism is a system of thought (or philosophy) that rejects religious beliefs and centers on humans and their values, capacities, and worth.¹⁶ As one studies Humanism and its impact on

education, one quickly realizes that the philosophies of Humanism are ingrained in education at all levels. Russ Wise comments that "humanism is the dominant view among leading educators in the United States. They set the trends of modern education, develop the curriculum, dispense federal monies, and advise government officials on educational needs."¹⁷ Charles Francis Potter, an original signer of the first *Humanist Manifesto* and honorary president of the National Education Association, boldly stated, "... education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism."¹⁸ Humanistic thought has been developed in the institutes of higher learning (universities) by atheistic "intellectuals," and it has slowly filtered down over time to the secondary, middle, elementary, and even preschool classrooms.

While Humanism's impact on education is multifaceted, a thorough investigation leads to the fact that Humanism's major impact on education is most evident in three areas:

- Organic Evolution;
- Relativism; and
- Corollaries (a collection of smaller issues)

Organic Evolution

One of the fundamental concepts used by Humanists in education is the belief in organic evolution. About the history of organic evolution in public education, Samuel Blumenfeld states:

An absolute faith in science became the driving force behind the progressives. To them the Bible and its pessimistic view of man's nature was folklore ... The most important idea that would influence the educators was that of evolution—the notion that man, through a process of natural selection, had evolved to his present state from common ancestry. Evolution was as sharp a break with the Biblical view of creation as anyone could make, and it was quickly picked up by those anxious to disprove the validity of orthodox religion.¹⁹

While organic evolution has been taught in biology classrooms for years, the idea that evolution is merely a theory taught in this one classroom (i.e., biology) is erroneous. Blumenfeld continues:

Evolution is at the very basis of modern public education where the child is taught that he is an animal linked by evolution to the monkeys. His school materials have been designed to teach him

as an animal, using Thorndike's stimuli-response techniques which are now universally used throughout American education.²⁰

For the past century, organic evolution has been taught as *scientific fact* in most schools, at all levels. Marshall and Sandra Hall discuss the acceptance of evolution:

In the first place, evolution is what is taught in the schools. At least two, and in some cases three and four, generations have used textbooks that presented it as proven fact. The teachers, who for the most part learned it as truth, pass it on as truth. Students are as thoroughly and surely indoctrinated with the concept of evolution as students have ever been indoctrinated with any unproven belief.²¹

Socialist Jeremy Rifkin wrote: "Evolutionary theory has been enshrined as the centerpiece of our educational system, and elaborate walls have been erected around it to protect it from unnecessary abuse."²²

Evolution has been widely accepted by influential leaders from practically every field including education and government. Students at every level are told that "intelligent" people empirically *know* that evolution is true while those who are religious only *believe* in creation. Thus, a dichotomy is created between those who are "educated and intellectual" and those who are "ignorant and spiritual," with emphasis placed upon desiring to be the former. Therefore, students who are Christians are made to contend with this Humanistic/Naturalistic philosophy and its opposition to the Bible-centered concept of God and His creation on a daily basis.

Relativism And Situationism

Beyond the obvious use of organic evolution as a weapon of attack within education against Christianity, a deeper study into the impact of Humanism finds even more violent weapons: relativism and situationism. Relativism is based upon the concept that there are no universal, objective criteria for determining morals and ethics. Situationism teaches that something is "right" because the individual determines it is right in that situation. Both concepts are based upon the major premises that *absolute truth does not exist* and that laws, morals, and ethics are developed by humans as needs arise.

The *Humanist Manifesto II* proudly affirms this concept in the third principle on "Ethics." They "affirm that moral values derive their

source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest."²³ It is obvious that these fundamental principles are contrary to the authority of the Scriptures and the precepts given to mankind by God. However, it is this type of "situational," "subjective," and "relative" style of thinking that is being promoted to students in classrooms around the country.

Soraj Hongladarom explained that Humanistic-driven education is "premised on the idea that nothing is forever certain, and that there does not exist an objective, clear-cut answer to every question."²⁴ The impact of relativism is clearly evident as entire generations are living their lives with credos such as, "You believe what you want to believe and I'll believe what I believe" and "We can just agree to disagree." The belief that absolute truth does not exist can infiltrate the mind to such a point that a person can twist any concept to become a personal truth (e.g., Adolf Hitler believed that the Jews had caused all the problems in Germany).

Textbooks at various levels of education focus on teaching students to be situationalist. For example, a sociology textbook dealing with ethics states:

There are exceptions to almost all moral laws, depending on the situation. What is wrong in one instance may be right in another. Most children learn that it is wrong to lie. But later they may learn that it is tactless, if not actually wrong, not to lie under certain circumstances.²⁵

While one could see such a statement existing in a college textbook, the same principle is taught daily in elementary schools. An elementary teacher may be discussing with her students that they should always tell their mothers that they look pretty when they ask, even if it is untrue, as to not hurt their mothers' feelings. While tact is a critical tool that comes with maturation, teaching children that it is sometimes permissible to tell "little white lies" to not hurt someone's feelings is inappropriate and inexcusable.

The truth is that our children are being subjected to the philosophies of relativism and situationism from various sources including education, children's literature, and textbooks. Our children are being taught that truth is found "in the eye of the beholder" and within themselves only—and that they should make decisions based on the situation only, not by any absolute set of principles. It is this focus on

the changing the decision-making process that can lead to sin, error, apostasy, and eventually eternal punishment.

Corollaries Of Humanism's Impact Of Education

While the entrenchment of the Humanistic concepts of organic evolution and relativism in education has had the greatest impact on our children, there exists other, smaller “corollaries” of Humanistic philosophy that are attacking our children. For instance, Humanist educators believe that they must “transform” and “reprogram” their students’ minds in order to reconstruct society.²⁶ Of course, this philosophical need for transformation and reconstruction is based upon the premise that their students’ minds have been incorrectly “programmed” or “constructed” by the students’ family and/or the church. Students are vigorously encouraged to cast off their parents’ values and make their own choices through character education programs such as *values clarification*.²⁷

Rhoda Lorand, a member of the American Board of Professional Psychology, made some observations about the attitudes of educators before the U.S. House Sub-Committee on Education. Her testimony related to House Resolution 5163 having to do with education. Her words are as follows:

The contempt for parents is so shockingly apparent in many of the courses founded under Title III, in which the teacher is required to become an instant psychiatrist who probes the psyche of her pupils, while encouraging them to criticize their parents’ beliefs, values, and teachings. This process continues from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.²⁸

Therefore, is it any wonder that many young men and women leave Christianity for no other reason other than they do not want hold to their parent’s belief system (regardless if it is based upon God or not).

Another corollary of Humanistic thought that has had an impact on education is the belief that man is the center of all things. The *Humanist Manifesto II* boldly proclaims “... as nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”²⁹ Taking the premise that man is the beginning and end of all things, it is clearly apparent why many Humanistic educational philosophies place the child in the center of the paradigm. Therefore, the child becomes accustomed to being the “center” of everything and

has difficulty developing concepts of sacrifice, compassion, respect, stewardship, love, trust, and humility, all "Christian" virtues.

The list of corollaries could continue through the other current teaching practices including "sex education," "social justice," "complete tolerance," *et cetera*. However, the major premise behind each of these philosophies is the blatant disregard for God and His inspired Word.

For the most part, it is obvious how each of the Humanistic teachings can have a major impact on the young person's ability to accept the Bible's teaching. Organic evolution destroys the foundational belief that God exists and that He created the world. Without the basic belief in the existence of God, all other religious matters are inconsequential. Relativism may have a greater impact on an individual's ability to accept the Bible's teachings. While an individual who adheres to relativistic or situationalistic views may believe in God, they will hardly be able to hold to the concept that the Scriptures are perfect and provide absolute truth. These individuals will follow the lead of Pilate as he stood before Christ and uttered that darkest of questions, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38). Children steeped in Humanistic philosophy will not honor and obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-2), but will rebel because they have been programmed to do so. Children who are constantly told that they are the "center of the universe" will not understand sacrifice (Mt. 16:24), humility (Jas. 4:10), or true love (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4; 1 Jn. 3:18; 4:17). They will never adhere to the truth that Christ is the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 1:8). This combination of powerful influences can literally disable the individual's ability to believe in God and His inspired Word.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE

So how does a Christian respond to these attacks on our children through education? Do we as Christians need to pull all of our students out of public education and home-school only? Do we only need to send our children to "Christian" schools and universities only? While these are all available options that must be made by individual families, not all Christian families want to, or are able to, refuse free public education and the benefits of larger universities with more opportunities. So, what are Christians to do?

The first step for the Christian is to know what attacks are being wielded against our children. It is this author's hope that this entire

lectureship (and its book) will provide at least a basic foundation of the issues that our children will face as they enter public education—and ultimately, society. However, this author would be remiss to not directly discuss the major issues with education that have been influenced by Humanism.

The Christian's Response To Organic Evolution

The reality is that the teaching of organic evolution in schools is not going away anytime soon. The universities, schools, and textbooks rely on this set of lies too heavily to even consider removing them from the curriculum. As an alternative strategy, many Christians are lobbying their local and state school systems to incorporate “Intelligent Design” into the biology class as an alternative “theory.” While these intentions are good, this will not eliminate the weight placed upon organic evolution that is so entrenched in education. Therefore, it is up to the parents and the church to provide our children with the truth outside of the school building walls.

First, Christian parents need to be more involved in their children’s education in more ways than just occasionally visiting the classroom, PTA, or helping with homework. The Christian parent needs to listen to the words of Moses:

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 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 they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:5-9).

While one may argue that Moses was speaking of teaching God’s precepts only, the case can easily be made that teaching the truth about organic evolution and its opposition to the existence of God *is* a Christian precept!

As your young child is taught about dinosaurs and their existence “billions” of years ago, the Christian parent must teach the errancy of this thought. In middle school when the child is being taught that the geological records indicate an old earth, the Christian parent should diligently guide their children through scientific research that contradicts such claims. During biology in high school, the Christian parent

should discuss what they are learning and how it compares with the Scriptures and other credible scientific literature. As the child leaves to go to the university, the parent should believe that they have trained their children well (Pro. 22:6) and always be prepared to give a reason for your beliefs as questions may arise (1 Pet. 3:15).

It would be impossible to include all specific arguments and proof that can defeat the concept of organic evolution. However, Christianity has developed a large body of knowledge that defends the existence of God and rebukes the claims of organic evolution. If parents or the church cannot easily determine answers, organizations such as Apologetics Press, Focus Press, and the *Christian Courier* that focus directly on classical apologetics can provide ample resources. These resources for Christian parents are readily available and prepared to help overcome these obstacles.

The Christian Response To Relativism/Situationism

Our children are being told that *absolute truth* does not exist and that truth is subjective to each individual's situation. The irony of relativism is that its belief that "absolute truth does not exist" is actually their absolute truth! Brother Wayne Jackson put it this way:

... relativism falls of its own weaknesses, and its proponents will not stay with it. What if a particular culture, e.g., that of the "Bible Belt," believes that ethics is absolute? Would the relativists yield to that? Perish the thought! In some cultures, infanticide has been (or is being) deemed a proper form of population control. Is that then "right"? What about slavery, or the abuse of women? Where is the relativist that will declare openly and publicly the morality of such practices.³⁰

Thus, it is clear that relativism has no merit because no one actually adheres to this concept. Situationism is just as easily debunked under critical scrutiny. Who decides what ethical decision should take place under specific circumstances? For example, say that a man decides to murder his wife because she burned the biscuits and that made him angry. How can the police, the district attorney, the judge, or the jury say it was wrong for him to murder his wife if the husband believed the situation called for him to murder her? Who dictates the boundaries of "right" and "wrong"? Again, relativist and situationist do not actually adhere to their own philosophy because it is foundationally absurd.

As for Christian parents, they should focus on providing instruction that is consistent with the fact that the Bible is authoritative (2 Tim.

3:15-16) and provides “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). The child should understand that the Scriptures provide absolute truth (Ps. 119:142, 151; Jn. 1:17; 8:32). The Christian parent should also not only teach their children that absolute truths exist, but that they should never be broken. Therefore, the Christian parents should not give in to telling “white lies,” “agreeing to disagree” (on spiritual matters), and any other activities that blur the line between what is Godly and what is not. It is only when a child *sees* a strong example of a Christian who fully lives his or her life based upon absolute truths that this concept can have an impact (1 Tim. 4:12).

The Christian's Response To The Corollaries

Christian parents are waging a battle against evil forces that are telling their children to rebel against them. While some simple rebellion during the teenage years is typical, the type of rebellion that Humanists are propagating is not simple angst or questioning of authority. The Humanistic concept of rebellion leads to a complete removal of all beliefs, morals, and values instilled in children by Christian parents. Therefore, Christian parents need to keep Paul's word in mind to fathers (which are applicable to both parents) to “provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). Christian parents should not only teach their children the principles set forth by God in the Scriptures, nor expect respect and honor from their children as a right. Instead, Christian parents need to model Christianity and “nurture” a relationship with their children that is based upon guiding them toward a heavenly home. In regard to the idea of children taking the center place within a family, the Scriptures are clear that husband and wife (i.e., parents) are the center of the family structure (Gen. 2:24; Mk. 10:7). The parents should love, protect, and provide for their children as they prepare them to leave home and enter adulthood.

CONCLUSION

Are Humanists running our public schools? While it cannot be stated with any certainty that *all* schools are being led by Humanists, it is clearly evident that Humanistic concepts are deeply embedded within our schools. Because of the efforts of individuals such as Thorndike, Dewey, B.F. Skinner, Abraham Maslow, Maxine Greene, and sundry other “enlightened intellectuals,” education is plagued with many Humanistic fundamentals. Dunphy was correct in stating that a

"conflict" is taking place over the minds (and souls) of our children. However, Dunphy was incorrect in thinking that Christians will sit idly by while atheists take over public schools.

While Christians have a right (and some very sound arguments) for pulling their children from public education for alternative schooling, those Christians who believe in the fundamental promise of public education must not back down. Christians must take the time and put in the effort to align their personal and family study of God's truths with that of the Humanistic teachings that are taking place within schools at that specific time. Christian parents must not stifle their children's ability to think, construct reason, or problem solve (as is the contention of Humanists), but we should use these God-given abilities to show how sound, logical, and rational thinking will lead one directly to God (1 Thess. 5:12). Christian parents must always remember their responsibility to their children and *believe* what Solomon boldly proclaimed through inspiration: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Pro. 22:6).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² John Dunphy, "A Religion for A New Age." *Humanism*, January/February, 1983, 26.

³ A.J. Hoover, "What Does 'Humanism' Mean?" *Firm Foundation*, 99 (1982): 4.

⁴ L. Dean Webb, Arlene Metha and K Forbis Jordan, *Foundations of American Education*, 6th ed. (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 2010), 133-134.

⁵ Ian T. Tayler, *In the Minds of Men-Darwin and the New World Order* (Toronto, CA: TFE Publishing, 1984).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Samuel Blumenfeld, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education* (Boise, ID: Paradigm, 1984), 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-52.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹¹ L. Dean Webb, Arlene Metha and K Forbis Jordan, *Foundations of American Education*, 6th ed. (Columbus, OH: Merrill, 2010), 158-159.

¹² *Ibid.*, 74.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Bert Thompson, *Rock-Solid Faith: How to Build It* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2000).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “About the AHA,”

<www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_the_AHA>

¹⁷ Russ Wise, “The Humanist Charade,” *Education and New Age Humanism*, <www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/newageed.html>

¹⁸ Charles Krauthammer, “Education: Doing Bad and Feeling Good,” *Time*, 5 February 1990: 78.

¹⁹ Samuel Blumenfeld, *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education* (Boise, ID: Paradigm, 1984), 43.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Marshall Hall and Sandra Hall, *The Truth: God or Evolution?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1974), 10.

²² Henry M. Morris, *The Long War Against God*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 45.

²³ *Humanist Manifesto I*,

<www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I_II>

²⁴ Soraj Hongladarom, “Humanistic Education in Today’s and Tomorrow’s World,” <www.pioneer.netserv.chula.ac.th/~hsoraj/web/Humanist.html>

²⁵ Russ Wise, “The Humanist Charade,” *Education and New Age Humanism*, <www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/newageed.html>

²⁶ Carol Wintermut, “The Humanist Educator: Strengthening the Profession,” <www.humanismtoday.org/vol11/wintermute.html>

²⁷ Phyllis Schlafly, “Public Schools Change Young Evangelicals’ Values,” <www.eagleforum.org/column/2009/jan09/09-01-02.html>

²⁸ Alex Tanous and Katherine Fair Donnelly, “Your Kids are Psychic!,” *Instructor Magazine* April 1980: 65.

²⁹ *Humanist Manifesto II*.

³⁰ Wayne Jackson, “The Case for the Existence of God-Part III,” *Reason and Revelation* 15 (1995): 164.

THEY SAY, “WE ARE HERE BY CHANCE”

George Beals



George Beals was born in Brockton, Massachusetts. He and his wife, the former Marion Walters, have one daughter. Beals graduated from Northeastern University, in Boston, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Michigan, and the Preston Road School of Preaching in Dallas. He has served the Lord's Church as a preacher and teacher in Texas, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Beals is co-director of the Michigan Bible School, and directs the annual Michigan Bible Lectureship.

INTRODUCTION¹

The overall theme of this lectureship deals with Secular Humanism. I have been asked to focus on the question: “Can both evolution and the Bible be true?” This question has to do with what logic books term “consistency.” Is a belief system that contains both evolution and the Bible logically consistent? So, we look at this. Also, we address the question of which view, evolution or creation, best explains reality. To accomplish these goals, I follow this outline:

- I. Provide relevant quotations from Secular Humanist sources to establish what they teach.
- II. Define and illustrate “consistency.”
- III. Identify a relevant set of statements from the Bible on the subject of origins.
- IV. Define “evolution.”
- V. Answer the question: “When we add evolution to the statements in point III, do we still have a consistent set?”
- VI. Address the question: “Which makes more sense, macroevolution or creation?”

Much of the material presented here overlaps with a lecture I gave in the 2007 Florida School of Preaching Lectureship, titled, “Evolution’s Perversions of the God of the Bible.”² However, I introduce material in this chapter that is not in that lecture. Further, regarding point III (Identify a relevant set of statements from the Bible on the

subject of origins), in the Florida lecture, I gave 28 statements. Here, I provide a shorter list, taken from the 28, allowing me to elaborate on some.

QUOTATIONS FROM SECULAR HUMANIST SOURCES

The Humanist Manifesto I, dated 1933, lists fifteen affirmations. The first two read:

FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

SECOND: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.³

It is interesting to observe that among the signers is John Dewey, an influential philosopher of education in this country.

The Humanist Manifesto II, dated 1973, says:

We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.

But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species ... No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

[S]cience affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.⁴

Among the signers of *The Humanist Manifesto II* are:

- Isaac Asimov, the author
- Antony Flew, an atheist philosopher, who debated Thomas B. Warren in 1976 (not long after signing *The Humanist Manifesto II* in 1973), and more recently has moved from atheism to a belief in God. Some atheists are reluctant to accept this move. See the discussion of this at “Antony Flew” in wikipedia.com. In 2005, Flew provided a new introduction to his book, *God and Philosophy*. Humanist leader Paul Kurtz, quoted several times below, wrote the publisher’s forward: “And so the question is, does Antony Flew now believe in God or not? ... [I]t is up to the readers of his final introduction published below to decide whether or not he has abandoned his earlier view.”⁵ In 2007, Flew left no doubt. He wrote *There Is a God*, with Roy Varghese. The title on the front cover is interesting. It has the word “no” on it crossed out and replaced with “a” which makes the

title obviously say, "There Is a God." In this book, at the end of its introduction, Flew provides his copied signature!

- B.F. Skinner, deterministic professor of psychology at Harvard

In *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, dated 1980, drafted by atheistic philosopher Paul Kurtz, are these words:

[S]ecular humanists find insufficient evidence for the claim that some divine purpose exists for the universe. They reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners.⁶

[T]he evolution of the species is supported so strongly by the weight of evidence that it is difficult to reject it. Accordingly, we deplore the efforts by fundamentalists ... to invade the science classrooms ...⁷

The views of preachers ... go largely unchallenged, and the secular outlook is not given an opportunity for a fair hearing. We believe that television directors and producers have an obligation to redress the balance and revise their programming ... Indeed, there is a broader task ... namely ... to embark upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment concerning the relevance of the secular outlook to the human condition.⁸

In *Humanist Manifesto 2000: a Call for a New Planetary Humanism*, dated 2000, are these words:

Neither the standard modern cosmology nor the evolution process provides sufficient evidence of intelligent design, which is a leap of faith beyond the empirical evidence. We think it time for humanity to embrace its own adulthood—to leave behind the magical thinking and mythmaking that are substitutes for tested knowledge of nature.⁹

We need more than ever a world body that represents the people of the world rather than nation-states.¹⁰

[W]e must develop an effective world court and an International Judiciary with sufficient power to enforce its rulings.¹¹

[W]e recommend an international system of taxation ...¹²

[T]he development of global institutions should include some procedure for the regulation of multinational corporations and state monopolies.¹³

Among its signers are evolutionists Richard Dawkins and Richard Leakey. Dawkins is an evolutionary biologist in Great Britain, who has

made worldwide news with his theory that genes in one organism can influence bodies of other organisms. Among his writings are the books, *The Selfish Gene*, *The Extended Phenotype* and *The Blind Watchmaker*. The wikipedia.com website quotes a source saying that Dawkins retired from Oxford in 2008 to “write a book aimed at youngsters in which he will warn them against believing in ‘anti-scientific’ fairytales.”¹⁴ Leakey is the well known evolutionary anthropologist.

In another work, titled, *Embracing the Power of Humanism*, dated 2000, Kurtz says:

The humanist saint is Prometheus, not Christ; the activist, not the passivist; the skeptic, not the believer; the creator, not the conniver.¹⁵

The human species is biologically determined, in part, by its genetic inheritance, which is the result of a long process of evolution. But we are also social animals and culture builders ...¹⁶

Human life has no meaning independent of itself. There is no cosmic force or deity to give it meaning or significance. There is no ultimate destiny for the human species. Such a belief is an illusion of humankind’s infancy. The meaning of life is what we choose to give it. Meaning grows out of human purposes alone.¹⁷

The theist mistakenly believes that life is not meaningful if God is dead, or if there is no divine purpose to the universe. To that I answer, life has no meaning per se, but it is full of opportunities.¹⁸

The Humanist Manifesto III, dated 2003, says: “Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing.”¹⁹ Among its signers is Richards Dawkins.

Not all evolutionists are Secular Humanists. But we see that all Secular Humanists are evolutionists, and they resist and oppose Bible teachings. Let us keep this in mind, as we proceed.

DEFINING AND ILLUSTRATING CONSISTENCY

Logicians Bergmann, Moor and Nelson provide a carefully worded, and precise, definition of “consistency.” They state: “A group of beliefs or claims is consistent if and only if it is possible for all the members of the group to be true at the same time.”²⁰ To be concerned about *consistency* is to be concerned about truth, and to be concerned about

truth is to be concerned about consistency. Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible, are concerned about truth. He said "the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). The Bible stresses truth-seeking, for example, by the encouraging command in Proverbs 23:23 to "Buy the truth" (so to speak), the instruction to love truth and the warning of not doing so in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, and the expression "speaking the truth in love" in Ephesians 4:15.

Consider the following set of teachings in curly brackets that are based on the Biblical verses indicated:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| { | 1. The day will come when all in the tombs will be raised and will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Jn. 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10). | } |
| { | 2. Jesus' travel into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey described in Matthew 21 is a fulfillment of Zechariah's prediction in Zechariah 9. | } |

These two statements form a consistent set.

Add this statement:

3. Abraham Lincoln was the U.S. President in 1864.

All three of these statements can be true at the same time. So we still have a consistent set. When we include two or more statements (beliefs, claims) such that all in the set can be true at the same time, we have a consistent set. There is no problem.

Add these statements:

4. When people die, they go out of existence forever.
5. All of Christ's travels were by foot.

Now we have an inconsistent set. Each of statements, 4 and 5, makes the set inconsistent. If we still want truth, either we will have to abandon the whole set, or remove each statement from our belief system that makes the set inconsistent.

Of course, since God has made us with free will (Rev. 22:17ff), we have the ability to ignore the problem of inconsistency and go on *as if* all were well. We might set aside truth to be accepted by someone or some group, to be perceived as intelligent, or to avoid being made fun of, and so forth. But, these and lots more are *psychological* causes for not accepting something, not *rational* causes. They ignore the Biblical warning and encouragement to seek and follow truth that we referenced.

**IDENTIFYING A RELEVANT SET OF STATEMENTS
FROM THE BIBLE ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD
AND THE SUBJECT OF ORIGINS**

1. Genesis 1:1-2:4 is a chronological account of creation. That this is so is seen in how the narrative is organized: “first day,” “second day,” etc. I believe we can show that Genesis 2, beginning at verse 5, is topical, and not thorough going chronological. But the events documented in Genesis 1 clearly are given to us in time sequence day-by-day. So the events on day 1, for example, took place before those of day 4.
2. There was light before the sun was created (Gen. 1:3-5, 14-19).
3. Genesis is history: the events actually happened, according to later parts of the Bible (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 11:3; Lk. 3:38; Heb. 11:4), and according to Jesus Christ Himself (Mt. 23:35; cf. 19:4-5; 24:37-39).
4. The Bible is the inspired, and thus inerrant, Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).
5. The first human being did not emerge out of preexisting animals naturally or supernaturally but was created mature, out of the earth, on the sixth day of creation week (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:7).
6. God created the first animals as distinct kinds separate and apart from one another (Gen. 1:20-25).

DEFINING EVOLUTION

In his book, *Ancient Views on the Origins of Life*, Ernest Abel says: “[T]here are only two possibilities in answer to the problem. Either life was created *ex nihilo* by a supernatural power, or it arose from non-living material.”²¹ Abel quotes several authors from the ancient world. The first one I reference is the fifth-century B.C. philosopher, Empedocles. Empedocles states:

The first generation of animals and plants were not complete but consisted of separate limbs not joined together. [There were] faces without necks, arms wandered without shoulders, unattached, and eyes strayed alone, in need of foreheads ...²²

After a while, things joined together. But some “sprang forth as ox-headed offspring of men ...”²³ Still later, for example:

... even though the first animals were all born with spines that were straight, some animals now had rounded spines because certain of their ancestors adopted the habit of turning their necks backward for some reason.²⁴

The fifth-century B.C. philosopher, Anaxagoras, postulates that *Mind* separate from matter is responsible for the present world.²⁵ The pre-Socratic philosopher, Archelaus, is quoted as saying: "Living things are generated from the earth when it is heated, and it throws off slime consisting of milk to serve as a sort of nourishment; and in this same way the earth produced man."²⁶

The fourth-century B.C. philosopher, Aristotle, speaks of *classes* of men and animals and plants and that there was no crossover among them. As to humans, he says, "... man had never been anything except what he was at present."²⁷ But as to origins, Aristotle speaks of animals coming from "putrefying earth or vegetable matter, as was the case with a number of insects while others spontaneously generated in the inside of animals out of the secretions of their internal organs."²⁸

The first-century B.C. Roman naturalist, Lucretius, speaking of the formation of the worlds and inhabitants by chance, states: "Many living creatures even now spring out of the earth taking form by rains and the heat of the sun ... Mother Earth herself gave birth to mankind."²⁹ The first-century B.C., Diodorus, a Greek historian, claims to have seen in his travels what some today might call very fast punctuated evolution:

... even at the present day the soil of Thebes at certain times generates mice in such size as to astonish all who have witnessed the phenomenon; for some of them are fully formed as far at the breast and front feet, and are able to move, while the rest of the body is unformed, the clod of earth still retaining its natural character.³⁰

The second-century A.D. physician and philosopher, Sextus Empiricus, said, as to origins, that some come from sexual union and others not. Those that do not, come from "putrid water, like gnats ... others from earth, like grasshoppers; others from marsh, like frogs; others from mud, like worms."³¹

Some early theologians apparently accommodated this view while wanting to hold to the Bible. The fourth-century bishops, Basil and Augustine, suggest interpreting "Let the earth bring forth" (Gen. 1:24) as an explanation.³²

What about fossils? These were known to the fifth-century B.C. philosopher, Xenophanes. Sea shells were found on mountains and rocks with impressions of fish were known. Xenophanes interpreted this as indicating that the earth had been covered by water, and that life came from the mud and rocks.³³

Creation, evolution, fossils—different views and interpretations were known to the ancients. The Bible claims to document what really happened and, by implication, claims that conflicting accounts from antiquity corrupt the original. This is not unlike present-day evolutionary speculation. Let us now seek modern explanations of evolution.

We start with the word “evolve.” According to dictionary.com, the English word “evolve” derives from the Latin *evolvere*, which means “to unroll.” Today, the word has different senses: “1. a. To develop or achieve gradually ... b. To work (something) out; devise ... 1. To undergo gradual change; develop.”

Now, no one who is thinking straight denies that some things in reality do change (evolve). None of us is exactly like our biological parents, for example. But it is also true that some things in reality do not change. For example, we have been human beings all of our lives.

The noun form, “evolution,” can mean different things. Some degree of change in inorganic (non-living) things might be in mind, or some degree of change in organic (living) things could be meant. Further, the degree of change in mind might be small or large. Often, the word “evolution” today refers to large-scale organic change, such as ape-like animals turning into human beings over long periods of time. *Natural* organic evolution refers to such large scale change of living things without divine intervention. Today’s *theistic* evolution accepts the large-scale change and says that God (the *supernatural*) is behind the process. So, theistic evolutionists who want to hold to the Bible also want to accommodate large-scale evolution. Such large-scale organic change is sometimes called “macroevolution.” Small-scale organic change is sometimes called “microevolution.” The controversy is over macroevolution.

Another term for macroevolution is seen in the title of a controversial, pro-evolution/anti-creation high-school textbook several years ago—*Biological Science: Molecules to Man*. Creationist biochemist Duane Gish calls molecules-to-man evolution the “Fish-to-Gish Theory.”

Another way of expressing the distinction between "micro" versus "macro" evolution is to use the Biblical language of "kinds" of creatures. In discussions among creationists, you might hear that there is organic change *within* kinds but not *across* kinds. (On the Biblical kinds, see Gen. 1:11-30; 6:19-21; 8:17-9:10; Lev. 11:13-30; 1 Cor. 15:37-39.)

Evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson provides this definition:

Evolution is a fully natural process inherent in the physical properties of the universe by which life arose in the first place and by which life continues to develop both divergently and progressively.³⁴

Seven years later, in the same publication, evolutionist Theodosius Dobzhansky defines the extended sense:

Evolution comprises all the stages of the development of the universe: the cosmic, biological, and human or cultural development ... Life is a product of the evolution of inorganic nature, and man is the product of the evolution of life.³⁵

The problem of the missing links (the problem of gradualism is that it is not documented in the fossil record) has led some evolutionists to hypothesize explanations to account for the gaps. One hypothetical explanation uses the term "punctuated." Hear Stephen Gould:

I count myself among the evolutionists who argue for a jerky, or episodic, rather than a smoothly gradual, pace of change. In 1972 my colleague Niles Eldredge and I developed the theory of punctuated equilibrium. We argued that two outstanding facts of the fossil record—geologically "sudden" origin of new species and failure to change thereafter (stasis)—reflect the predictions of evolutionary theory, not the imperfections of the fossil record.³⁶

Gould explains that he is angry, amused and sad—upset because, in essence, creationists quote evolutionists themselves who refer to the spottiness. *Referring to other evolutionists*, Gould makes this interesting statement:

But most of all I am saddened by a trend I am just beginning to discern among my colleagues. I sense that some now wish to mute the healthy debate about theory that has brought new life to evolutionary biology. It provides grist for creationist mills, they say, even if only by distortion. Perhaps we should lie low

and rally around the flag of strict Darwinism, at least for the moment—a kind of old-time religion on our part.³⁷

Keeping the faith (in evolution), the claim is that fast evolution occurs sometimes within macroevolution. Along these lines, Gould said:

As a Darwinian, I wish to defend Goldschmidt's postulate that macroevolution is not simply microevolution extrapolated, and that major structural transitions can occur rapidly without a smooth series of intermediate stages.³⁸

In this overview of evolution, it is helpful to explain one more item, the geological column. Creationist Duane Gish, after providing a geologic time table according to evolutionists, writes:

This arrangement of various types of fossiliferous deposits in a time-sequence is known as the geological column. Its arrangement is based on the assumption of evolution. Thus, invertebrates are assumed to have evolved first, followed by fish, amphibian, reptiles, and mammals in that order.³⁹

Generally speaking, evolutionary biology tries to show *how* macroevolution *could* happen and evolutionary geology tries to show *that* it *did* happen (with the fossil record). Though we could provide more citations and nuances, these suffice for us now to move on to the next point.

**ANSWERING THE QUESTION, “WHEN WE
ADD EVOLUTION TO THE SET OF STATEMENTS,
DO WE STILL HAVE A CONSISTENT SET?”**

With the information before us, it is not difficult to answer this question. If “microevolution” is meant, the answer is “yes.” If “macroevolution” is meant, the answer is “no.” That is, if observable change is meant, “yes.” If molecules-to-man is meant, or the subset of this (animals turning into human beings) is meant, “no.”

Add the following statement to the set:

Ape-like beings changed into human beings and this is how human beings originated.

If this is true, then our statement 5, for example, cannot be true—The human male did not emerge out of preexisting animals naturally or supernaturally but God created him mature, out of the earth—Genesis 2:7 reads, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Further, if man evolved out of animals, then there is a ripple effect through the Bible. It would follow that later parts of the Bible—and Jesus Christ Himself—are wrong in treating *Genesis as history*. 1 Corinthians 15:45 reads: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul." Matthew 19:4-5 reads: "And he ... said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" If Jesus is wrong, He could not be what the Bible claims He is. He could not be the Christ. He could not be deity and He could not be the Creator.

Statement 4 could not be true—The Bible is the inspired, and thus inerrant, Word of God. 2 Peter 1:21 reads: "[H]oly men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Jesus said: "[T]he scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35).

Add another statement: "Molecules-to-man evolution happened: Matter>Animal Life>Man." This conflicts with the Bible-based statements we mentioned plus more. *Molecules-to-man evolution happened* and Statement 6 could not be true at the same time: *God created the first animals as distinct kinds separate and apart from one another* (Gen. 1:20-25).

Statement 2 could not be true:—*There was light before the sun was created*. Genesis 1:3-5 tells us that light existed on the first day. Verses 11-13 tell us that grass, herb that yields seed, the fruit tree that yields according to its kind whose seed is in itself were created on the third day. Then, the sun is created on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14-19). But, in evolutionary rhetoric, we often hear that present processes are the key to the past. So, they are telling us that the sun preceded all life on earth.

Light before the sun is an interesting study. *First*, it shows God's power over the physical world. *Second*, there are sources of light today that we could name other than the sun. *Third*, it is presumptuous indeed, and not defensible, for the creature man to second-guess the wisdom of the Creator, denying the possibility that He could have used some other means of light before the fourth day. A *fourth* relevant fact is that, in the Bible, God Himself is manifested through literal light or is associated with light. Notice the following passages:

- Exodus 3:2-4 (God speaks to Moses out of the burning bush).
- Exodus 13:21-22 (God went before the Israelites by night in a pillar of fire to give them light).

- Psalm 4:6 (“Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us”).
- Matthew 17:2 (“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light”).
- See also Genesis 15:17; Exodus 19:18; 34:29-35; Psalms 104:2; 2 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Timothy 6:16; Hebrews 11:3; James 1:17.

So, before day four, I conclude that God used, for some reason, a light source other than the sun. That the sun was not created until day four presents no insurmountable problem. We could say more but enough has been pointed out to conclude that macroevolution and the Bible cannot both be true.

ADDRESSING THE QUESTION, “WHAT MAKES MORE SENSE, CREATION OR MACROEVOLUTION?”

I analyze this, drawing from my experience as a technical writer, and from a logical focus. A technical writer uses a process that tries to ask key questions, with persistence, until the matter is understood, and then writes for a targeted audience. Here are some questions I offer that may help lead people to see which position (macroevolution or creation?) is reasonable.

Non-Material Reality

How did the non-material part of reality originate? We are referring to items such as the laws of logic. These are universal and invariable. The moment a person is coherent in what is said, that person thereby affirms by implication a number of laws of logic (the law of non-contradiction, disjunctive syllogism, just to name a couple). Thus, the person in China uses them as does the person in Great Britain, though they never need to meet. How do we account for the existence of these laws?

Macroevolution attempts to explain the origin and development of things in terms of material and change. The laws of logic are non-material and changeless. Macroevolution thus fails, right here, in its ability to account for such laws. Further, as with laws of mathematics and science, human observers only discover these laws, not invent them. Such laws are not dependent on culture. Thus, they are not the result of human creation. There was no wait until life evolved to the point of intelligence for them to exist. They are independent of human life.

Creation has no difficulty explaining their existence. They are consistent with the existence of the *intelligent* uncaused Cause, Who made intelligent human beings in His image. Mind implies the laws of logic.

Next, consider the existence of objective moral laws and human conscience. Atheism and macroevolution do not have the wherewithal to account for these. It would be a good exercise, but beyond the scope of this writing, to carefully critique pages 138ff of the referenced book, *Embracing the Power of Humanism*, and notice how author, Paul Kurtz, struggles in his attempt to show objective moral laws based on atheism.

Material Reality

Are not material things contingent things? That is, do not material things depend on other things for their being? For example, humans have a material component. From where did your body come? From where did your parents' bodies come? If human beings have been in existence for millions of years, intelligent beings as they are, where is the record of their existence? If not, where is the proof that a past non-human ancestor turned into a human being? Given macroevolution, there must have been millions upon millions of transitional forms. Where are these in the so-called record of the rocks (fossil record), if gradualism is true? If one answers that there is adequate evidence of transitional forms, why did Goldschmidt and Gould find it important to suggest non-gradualism? But, if non-gradualism is true, what about biogenesis (likes produce likes) that we observe? Did this turn off?

Along these lines, we think about the chicken and the egg. Which came first? Though this has been asked many times, there has to be an answer to this, for chickens and chicken eggs are in the world. We see how they come into being. Does macroevolution or creation provide an answer that makes sense? If the macroevolutionist answers that the chicken was first, with the schoolchild we ask, where did it come from if not from an egg? If the answer is that the egg was first, with the schoolchild we ask, where did it come from if not from a chicken? If the non-gradualist macroevolutionist says a non-chicken laid an egg and a chicken was hatched from it (per Goldschmidt and Gould), then (a) did this happen with that non-chicken's parent too? Do we not have the same problems, prior? (b) And, with the high school student we ask,

but what about Pasteur's experiments on biogenesis, denying that microbes spontaneously generate from non-living matter?

Does creation give us an answer that makes sense? Let us hear its explanation. The *kind* from which chickens come were created full-grown miraculously, and biogenesis (kind from like kind) occurs since. There was and is adaptation, but biogenesis continued. Which view fits the facts, and which does not?

Going back a ways further, how did living things function, including reproduction, while such systems were developing in them? Further, are there not such systems and vital organs in organisms that must exist for the organism to live? How did they live while these organs were evolving and, thus, in the process of development? (The reader might like to consider this point in light of biochemist Michael Behe's explanations of irreducibly complex biological systems.)

Pushing the matter back still further, if macroevolution is true, how did the living come from the non-living? If the root of the alleged evolutionary tree could not get started in the first place, the rest of this tree cannot even "grow."

Another question: "How could the non-living and contingent thing that allegedly turned into a living thing do so, by itself, even once, when doing so would take more intelligence than it had?" In engineering, it takes a tremendous amount of intelligent effort over time (not random effort) to get things to work. This is reality. How do *living* things function in the more marvelous way that they do, without an intelligence having put all of this together?

Probing further: Are there 'out-of-order' strata in the alleged record of the rocks? Is there at least one case of this that has no accompanying site evidence indicating how it became "out-of-order"? If so, is there something wrong with The Record-in-the-Rocks Theory?

Thus, creation makes sense of reality. Macroevolution does not.

CONCLUSION

Let me encourage us to include in our efforts the study of logic itself and then to apply those skills kindly and persistently as we study the Bible, explanations of molecules-to-man evolution, design in the natural world and the research of creationist scientists. Always as independent thinkers (1 Thess. 5:21), consider the brethren's works in Apologetics Press (www.apologeticspress.com) and Focus Press (www.focuspress.org)—and the works of other folks in the Institute for

Creation Research (www.icr.org), the Creation Research Society (www.creationresearch.org) and the Intelligent Design network (www.discovery.org/csc/). Obviously, in giving those references, it does not necessarily mean that I endorse every possible idea you might find in them.

As to theistic evolution, note E.J. Young's observation, placing "science" within quotation marks:

What strikes one immediately upon reading such statements is the low estimate of the Bible which it entails. Whenever "science" and the Bible are in conflict, it is always the Bible that, in one manner or another, must give way. We are not told that "science" should correct its answers in the light of Scripture. Always it is the other way round. Yet this is really surprising, for the answers which scientists have provided have frequently changed with the passing of time. The "authoritative" answers of pre-Copernican scientists are no longer acceptable; nor, for that matter, are many of the views of twenty-five years ago.⁴⁰

In conclusion, a careful and honest examination of the Bible and macroevolution shows that together these do not make a consistent set of beliefs. To be consistent, if we want macroevolution, we will have to abandon the Bible. If we want the Bible, we will have to abandon macroevolution. The wiser of these is the latter: To accept the Word and evidence of the Creator Himself, Jesus Christ, Who also wants to be our Savior for eternity.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² George F. Beals, "Evolution's Perversions of the God of the Bible," *Do You Understand the God of the Bible?*, ed. Brian R. Kenyon (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 2007), 356-372.

³ *Humanist Manifesto I*,
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I_II>

⁴ *Humanist Manifesto II*.

⁵ Antony Flew, *God and Philosophy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005), 6-7.

⁶ Paul Kurtz, *A Secular Humanist Declaration* (Reprint. *Free Inquiry Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1980)).

⁷ Ibid., 21.

⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁹ *Humanist Manifesto 2000* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000), 26.

¹⁰ Ibid., 56.

¹¹ Ibid., 59.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴ Richard Dawkins, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Dawkins>

¹⁵ Kurtz, *Embracing the Power of Humanism* (Lanham, NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁸ Ibid., 133.

¹⁹ *Humanist Manifesto III*, <<http://humaniststudies.org/hm3.html>>

²⁰ Merrie Bergmann, James Moor and Jack Nelson, *The Logic Book* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1990), 2.

²¹ Ernest Abel, *Ancient Views on the Origins of Life* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973), 71-72.

²² Ibid., 37.

²³ Ibid., 38.

²⁴ Ibid., 39.

²⁵ Abel, 41.

²⁶ Ibid., 49.

²⁷ Ibid., 63.

²⁸ Ibid., 61.

²⁹ Ibid., 68.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Ibid., 71.

³² Ibid., 72.

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ George Gaylord Simpson, "The World into which Darwin Led Us." *Science* 131 (1960): 969.

³⁵ Theodosius Dobzhansky, "Changing Man." *Science* 155 (1967): 409.

³⁶ Stephen Jay Gould, *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes*. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), 259, <http://www.stephenjaygould.org/library/gould_fact-and-theory.html>

³⁷ Gould, 259.

³⁸ Stephen Jay Gould, "The Return of Hopeful Monsters." *Natural History* 86 (1977): 24, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopeful_Monster>

³⁹ Duane Gish, *Evolution: The Fossils Say No*. (San Diego, CA: Creation-Life Publishers, 1973), 39.

⁴⁰ Edward J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*. (Philadelphia, PA: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1964), 53.

THEY SAY, “THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE IS A MYTH”

Gary McDade



Gary McDade and his wife Sheila have two sons. He attended Freed-Hardeman University, and holds an M.A. degree from Alabama Christian School of Religion. McDade preached for the Getwell Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee. He served as lectureship director, and was a staff writer for the *Spiritual Sword*. McDade was director of development for the *Gospel Broadcasting Network* and is now the executive director. He worships with the Highland Church of Christ in Dalton, Georgia.

INTRODUCTION¹

The church of Christ has, from its beginning, been troubled by “Philosophy and Vain Deceit.” Paul warned the Lord’s people at Colosse: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). Those caught up in the “philosophy and vain deceit” of our time, who are scattered around the world claiming to be “Christians,” are divided into almost innumerable groups with various names, creeds, and purposes while, for example, the religion of Islam has eclipsed the billion mark in numbers of adherents. Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, in their introduction to *Answering Islam*, wrote: “Islam has rapidly grown to become the second largest religion in the world, with over one billion adherents—nearly one in every five persons on earth. In the Unites States there are presently more Muslims than Methodists. The most rapid growth is in the African American community.”²

How effective do you think, given our current political environment, any non-Muslim government would be in implementing the five suggestions offered by Robert Spencer, *New York Times* bestselling author, in his book *The Truth about Muhammad, Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion?* His suggestions are:

- *Stop insisting that Islam is a religion of peace.*
- *Initiate a full-scale Manhattan Project to find new energy sources.*

- *Make Western aid contingent upon renunciation of the jihad ideology.*
- *Call upon American Muslim advocacy groups to work against the jihad ideology.*
- *Revise immigration policies with the jihad ideology in view.*³

While these seem like excellent political suggestions, how effective do you think any non-Muslim government would be in implementing even any *one* of them? We share the sentiment offered by Dave Miller in the conclusion of his in-depth work *The Quran Unveiled, Islam and New Testament Christianity in Conflict*. There, he wrote: "The single most effective tool in responding to Islam, even in its more sinister aspects, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ."⁴ It is going to take some very serious and formidable power to overcome the destructive effects of those who are absorbed in the religion of Islam, other world religions, and a divided "Christianity." Thankfully, such power readily is available worldwide; it is the Gospel of Christ. Confidently, we reaffirm as did the apostle Paul: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17).

An exposure of the destructive philosophy emerging out of Humanism, and what has come to be known as "The Jesus Myth," urgently is needed today. In order to help understand how people could ever get to the point where "They Say, 'The Jesus of the Bible is a Myth,'" we need to begin by taking a quick look at the underlying philosophy of Humanism. Humanism itself is based on the conviction that "man is the measure of all things." Norman L. Geisler, in his *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* has observed: "Secular humanism is a movement consisting mostly of atheists, agnostics, and deists. All are antitheists and antisupernatural. All are strongly naturalistic."⁵ All Secular Humanists are evolutionists. Many of them have banded together at various points in history to author their "Humanist Manifestos," which outline their beliefs (1933, 1973, 2003). N.P. Feldmeth, who is an adjunct professor of church history at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, says of Humanism: "In recent times the term 'humanism' has been loosely applied to any system of thought or philosophy which centres [*sic*] on human achievement,

sometimes to the exclusion of any divine reality.”⁶ William L. Reese of the department of philosophy in the State University of New York at Albany, commenting on the definition of “Humanism,” writes: “In more recent centuries the term has been often used in contrast to theism, locating in man the source of goodness and creativity.”⁷

The significance of the Humanist Manifestos for our study may be seen in the establishment of the principle of Humanism as a foundational belief generally held by most Americans, and even some among churches of Christ, that man, i.e., mankind, is capable and equipped to solve his own problems and to determine his own destiny. For example, the eighth principle articulated in the 1933 document says: “Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man’s life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.”⁸ Further, the ninth principle is: “In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.”⁹ A final example is the thirteenth principle, the idea of which has wreaked havoc in churches of Christ in the twentieth century, and now into the twenty-first century, which states: “Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.”¹⁰ Do you not think some in churches of Christ read this document? The document concludes with the summation:

Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. 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.¹¹

It is this last statement that is most chilling—*Man alone is the designer of the destiny he chooses!*

Seventy years has not changed the theme of the Humanist Manifestos. In 2003, they wrote: “Thus engaged in the flow of life, we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.”¹² Again, the significance of these documents to the subject at hand is this: the establishment of the principle, as a foundational belief generally held

by most Americans and even some among churches of Christ, that man, i.e., mankind, is capable and equipped to solve his own problems and to determine his own destiny. Today, we face a very serious challenge in convincing our society that they cannot "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps." Perhaps, the Judean prophet, Jeremiah, said it most succinctly: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God is a matter of divine revelation, as evidenced by the Lord's statement, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17), to Peter upon his confession of faith in Christ. Therefore, Christianity is dependent upon the Bible, the Word of God, and not the surmising of men. Elders who lead local congregations are not to be "self-willed" (Tit. 1:7), but they are dependent upon the teaching of the Bible for guiding the church of Christ. Time would fail us to discuss the areas of departure from the Bible by elders who have been "self-willed" and brought in destructive innovations—innovations that have so distracted the church from its mission to seek and save the lost that many congregations are no longer evangelistic at all. Instead, they occupy their time and treasuries with social interests, entertaining and appeasing the membership to keep them from going to another congregation that presents more pleasing and alluring distractions than they do. Preachers must "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2), not *The Purpose Driven Church/Life/Youth Ministry/et cetera*. from "America's Pastor," Rick Warren. Nor are preachers to read, study, teach, and preach the Bible with Rick Warren's slant to it or perspective of it. Rick Warren's recent participation at the Islamic Society of North America in Plainfield, Indiana during their annual convention, which usually draws about 30,000 people to urge Muslims and Christians to partner together in addressing the world's social problems, may be the only thing that convinces some members of the church that he is head-over-heels in Humanist philosophy and not in New Testament Christianity. Several churches of Christ have used, and are using, his popular *Purpose Driven Church* book as their church manual. Brethren, no one—in or out of the church—can improve on what we have in the New Testament! The Bible is right when it says: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5), and it is time, yea, high time, that we rid the church of Christ of

Humanistic philosophy by relying solely on the preaching and teaching that comes from the Word of God!

Now, with the background of Humanism in mind, let us take a look at where the offensive idea comes from that “The Jesus of the Bible is a Myth.” Through time there have arisen those who advance the view

... that much of the New Testament’s picture of Jesus and his teachings evolved over time in the social context and theological meanderings of the early Church. Jesus the man became lost in legend and myth, buried under supernatural claims of such events as the virgin birth, miracles, and the resurrection ... Besides atheists and skeptics, some New Testament scholars have made such charges. Rudolf Bultmann was in the forefront of this view of the New Testament. He insisted that the religious records must be “demythologized,” or divested of their mythological “husk” to get at the existential “kernel” of truth.¹³

In 1985, a consortium of so-called New Testament scholars organized themselves into what has become known as “The Jesus Seminar.” Norman L. Geisler tells us:

Seventy-plus scholars meet twice a year to make pronouncements about the authenticity of the words and deeds of Christ. The Seminar is comprised of liberal Catholics and Protestants, Jews, and atheists. Most are male professors, though their number includes a pastor, a filmmaker, and three women. About half are graduates of Harvard, Claremont, or Vanderbilt divinity schools.

Geisler goes on to say:

Despite their desire and achievements for drawing wide publicity, nothing is new in the Jesus Seminar’s radical conclusions. They offer only another example of unsubstantiated negative Bible criticism. Their conclusions are contrary to the overwhelming evidence for the historicity of the New Testament witnesses. They are based on an unsubstantiated antisupernatural bias.¹⁴

The Humanistic approach to Bible teaching in general, and to the so-called “Jesus Myth” in particular, has not escaped churches of Christ.

The cause of Christ has been betrayed by many in the so-called “Christian” schools which are associated with churches of Christ. At a time when the restoration plea of “speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent,” from Scriptures like Deuteron-

omy 29:29 and 1 Peter 4:11, is so desperately needed to call American society and the nations of the world back to the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice, a thing for which churches of Christ have historically been known, "Christian" schools have marshaled their scholars together and written a one volume commentary on the whole Bible which denies Bible prophecy concerning Christ and the church of Christ! The depth of the betrayal is so outlandish that a quotation on the subject from the book in question is in order. An introductory section, called "Old Testament Prophecy," written by John T. Willis from Abilene Christian University, reads:

There is no unequivocal specific prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ and/or the church in the Old Testament.¹⁵

In Wayne Jackson's review of this 8½ by 11 page size, 1,117 page book from ACU, he says: "Contrast this with Professor J. Barton Payne's calculation that there are 8,352 prophetic passages in the Bible."¹⁶ Yet, these self-styled "scholars" aver: "There is no unequivocal specific prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ and/or the church in the Old Testament." Such a statement not only denies Christ in the Old Testament, it denies what the writer of Hebrews affirmed in the New Testament concerning Christ—"Then said I, Lo, I come (*in the volume of the book it is written of me,*) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:7, emphasis added).

Bible prophecy and its fulfillment is one of the proofs of the Bible's inspiration. For example, in a discussion of the subject, Dave Miller lists the following categories as being supportive of the Bible's inspiration: Absence of Contradiction; Historical, Geographical, and Topographical Accuracy; Predictive Prophecy; Scientific Foreknowledge; Internal Unity; and Stylistic Commonalities.¹⁷ In Wayne Jackson's new book, *The Bible on Trial*, he defends the inspiration of the Bible on many grounds including the history contained in the Bible; the unity of the Scriptures; the absence of contradiction in the Bible; the silence of the Scriptures—"in areas where human curiosity clamors for information"; the apostles; the miracles of the Bible; the integrity of the text; and the flawless accuracy of the Bible in general, and as it relates to the prophecy it contains in particular.¹⁸ Now, why would 49 men and 3 women write and contribute articles on books of the Bible signing on to the philosophy of prophecy described in the mantra, "There is no unequivocal specific prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ and/or the church in the Old Testament"? The schools these

people are from need to be exposed because they are training our young men who may occupy pulpits, and the men and women who may be leaders in local congregations one day. Parents need to be admonished not to send our young people to these schools. Do you not know, with professors who agree with the philosophy of prophecy stated in the introduction of the book in question, young people who have been taught to honor the value of Bible prophecy may be robbed of their faith? The contributors who teach in what many believe to be Christian schools and the schools they represent are:

Abilene Christian University

Rodney Ashlock, Kenneth L. Cukrowski, Everett Ferguson, Mark W. Hamilton, Preston Harper, Nathaniel D. Lollar, Curt Niccum, Glenn Pemberton, Tim Sensing, Nancy W. Shankle, Kelly Shearon, David Skelton, Gregory Straughn, James W. Thompson, Stephen Weathers, Christian W. Willerton, John T. Willis, and Wendell Willis.

Amridge University

Paul L. Watson.

Harding University

Paul Pollard.

Harding Graduate School Of Religion

Allen Black, Phillip E. McMillion, and Richard E. Oster, Jr.

Lipscomb University

Mark Black and Philip G. Camp.

Lubbock Christian University

Brandon L. Frendenburg, Jesse C. Long, Jr., Mark Sneed, and Charles B. Stephenson.

Oklahoma Christian University

Richard Wright.

Pepperdine University

R. Christopher Heard, Ira J. Jolivet, Jr., Rick R. Marrs, and Thomas H. Olbricht.

Rochester College

Gregory M. Stevenson.¹⁹

A good question to ask is: "Why would any Christian parent want to run the risk of seeing their child have his or her faith damaged or destroyed by sending him or her to one of these schools?" Should one of these professors rob someone's child of his or her faith in the predictive prophecy of the Bible, and mind you they will, surely the question that will echo down the hollow halls of hell for eternity is: "Why did I send my child to that school?"

Perhaps the question upon reading, "There is no unequivocal specific prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ and/or the church in the Old Testament," is: "How do the authors explain New Testament teaching on the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies?" And, the answer is given in the next sentence from page 66 of *The Transforming Word*. There, Willis wrote: "New Testament speakers reinterpreted and reapplied Old Testament texts to Christ and/or the church."²⁰ We are asked to believe that Old Testament statements were not prophecies about Christ and/or the church, and that New Testament speakers, including our Lord, manipulated through reinterpretation and reapplication of the Old Testament Scriptures, applying them to their current situation! This is the most absurd idea I have encountered in thirty-six years of preaching.

The Old Testament in general, and the Book of Isaiah in particular, has become a battleground for the liberal theologians who have made their way into churches of Christ. Let us spend some time examining the Book of Isaiah with special emphasis on Isaiah 53. It is necessary to first answer the critics, showing positively that this is a predictive Messianic prophecy about the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. Then, second, we will explain that not only did Jesus Christ die *for* us He died *instead* of us—this is what *vicarious* means. Third, we will discuss how we as Christians must make this truth known to the world in order to "lead the lost to Calvary," which ultimately will result in the glorification of Christ and the absolute annihilation of the suggestion that "The Jesus of the Bible is a Myth."

Isaiah 53 may be outlined as follows:

- I. Prophecy Concerning Christ's Life, vv. 1-3.
- II. Prophecy Concerning Christ's Death, vv. 4-8.
- III. Prophecy Concerning Christ's Grave, v. 9.
- IV. Prophecy Concerning Christ's Suffering and Glorification, vv. 10-12.

Isaiah is known as the Messianic Prophet because of the many predictive prophecies concerning Christ contained in his work. Let us step out onto chapter 53 as a battleground for the defense of the prophetic ministry of this great prophet of God, and unfortunately, as already observed, it may be that our greatest challenge in this connection is coming from within the Lord's church. The warning Paul gave to the elders from Ephesus remains valid today. He said to them:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Acts 20:28-31, emphasis added).

ANSWERING THE CRITICS

The eighth century B.C. prophet, Isaiah, wrote that God was: "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:10). Ironically, critics of predictive prophecy who have banded together to write the one volume commentary published by Abilene Christian University, titled *The Transforming Word*, do not specifically deny the inspiration of the Bible, they simply deny that the inspiration of the Bible includes the concept of predictive prophecy! This is why they deny that from 740 to 700 B.C. Isaiah wrote the sixty-six chapters traditionally attributed to him. Their denial, penned by John T. Willis who wrote the material on Isaiah, clearly is stated in the opening sentence of the introductory remarks. He said: "The book of Isaiah contains materials originating over four centuries."²¹ Observe the position is that it did not all originate in the eighth century B.C., but it "originated over four centuries." Now, since Isaiah did not live "over four centuries," they obviously could not believe a man named Isaiah actually wrote the entirety of the Book of Isaiah. Instead of one man, Isaiah, being the author, they speak of "the book's composer." In fact, Willis, and those who contributed to the book—for not a single one of the other 51 contributors has risen up to challenge his position on any of this—are standing by the view that "the book's composer uses a variety of specific events, and God's

message derived from them, to present relevant truths to his contemporaries in Jerusalem at the end of the fifth century B.C.E."²²

In the nineteenth century, critics of the Bible sought to break up the Book of Isaiah, dividing it into two sections (and, as the movement grew, others sought to divide the book into three sections). They would write about Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah, meaning "second" Isaiah. The shift of subject matter from the Assyrian oppression to the Babylonian captivity, from chapter 39 to 40, was selected as the breaking point between the supposed two Isaiahs. Present day Bible critics, who have cursed the earth with their one volume commentary printed by ACU Press, have taken the old position a step further by denying that Isaiah wrote any of the book. They are saying that Isaiah had disciples who received his messages orally and later wrote them down. Willis wrote:

Approximately 160 years separate the setting of Isaiah 1-39 (742-701 BCE) from that of Isaiah 40-55 (about 540 BCE), during which time disciples of Isaiah and/or advocates of his messages preserved, deleted, modified, rearranged, and expanded them in chapters 1-39 orally for application in new situations; later, the composer/s of chapters 40-55 attached their oracles to chapters 1-39. Many earlier and some contemporary scholars see great incoherence between these two sections (Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40-55*, 41-55), while several contemporary scholars find coherence throughout the book (Seitz, "Isaiah 40-66," 309-21, 327-30). This commentary follows the latter approach. [Note also that Willis only finds "coherent" material in the Book of Isaiah not consistent authorship, GM.]²³

In John's account of the Gospel, Jesus is recorded saying: "[T]he scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35b). As shown earlier, by citing Hebrews 10:7, these critics cannot deny Christ in the Old Testament without denying Him in the New Testament because Jesus Christ referred to the Book of Isaiah and, instead of acknowledging a "composer/s," attributed the book to the man Isaiah himself. Not only did Jesus on occasion refer to what Isaiah said (e.g., Mt. 13:14—here, Jesus attributed the words not to supposed "disciples" of Isaiah, but to the man Isaiah himself!), He also said with emphasis: "[W]ell did Esaias prophesy of you, saying ..." (Mt. 15:7; Mk. 7:6). And, the inspired writer, Luke, attributed the words that are in the Book of Isaiah to the prophet Isaiah when he penned: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight"

(Lk. 3:4). So, the words that appear in the Book of Isaiah are not words “modified, rearranged, and expanded” from Isaiah by his “disciples,” but are the actual words of the prophet Isaiah himself. Further, note that the passage cited by Luke is from Isaiah 40:3, the supposed second section of Isaiah said to be written 160 years after Isaiah died. Evidently, Luke does not believe that. He attributed the words written there to Isaiah, and so does everyone who believes the Bible.

Although it apparently means nothing to those who hold to the dual (or triple) authorship of Isaiah error, the apostle John links the two sections together and attributes both sections to one author, Isaiah. In John 12:37-41, we read:

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? [From Isaiah 53:1, the critic’s second section, GM.] Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. [From Isaiah 6:9-10, the critic’s first section, GM.] These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Both of these sections are attributed to one and the same Isaiah by an inspired apostle, which makes it impossible to discredit Isaiah without at the same time discrediting the apostle John.

As Willis gets into the text of Isaiah, he rejects the prophecy in chapter 2 referring to the establishment of the church and corresponds with what is recorded in Acts 2. He denies the virgin birth of Christ in Isaiah 7:14—foolishly attributing the prophecy to Hezekiah, who was not virgin born. He wrote:

The young woman does not refer to Mary (see Motyer 84-87). Isaiah declares: *Look, the young woman is with child* (NRSV, Masoretic text) *and will give birth to a son* (not twins or a daughter) *and will call him Immanuel* [with us (Judeans) is God, so we have nothing to fear]; baby Immanuel *will eat curds and honey* (when his mother weans him, the only food available; verses 21-22); but before little Immanuel *knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good* (NRSV) food, *the land of the two kings* (Rezin and Pekah) *you* (the singular pronoun refers to Ahaz) *dread will be laid waste.*”²⁴

The most significant statement in this quotation is "the young woman does not refer to Mary."

The Hebrew word *almah* in the text refers not to just a "young woman," but to the specific purity of a certain "young woman" who is a virgin. Remember, "the Lord himself shall give you a sign." What kind of a "sign" would it be for an ordinary "young woman" to have a son? Young women have been doing that from the creation of the world! Edward J. Young, a conservative scholar whom the people who wrote for *The Transforming Word* commentary obviously have rejected, points out that the word "Behold," introducing the sign Isaiah spoke to Ahaz about, "is employed in Scripture to announce a birth of unusual importance and significance."²⁵ This is far beyond eliminating the birth of "twins or a daughter" from consideration. In fact, the ACU commentary is so far afield from the meaning of the text when it gives the meaning of "Immanuel" in bracketed comments "[with us (Judeans) is God, so we have nothing to fear]," that it removes the possibility that Immanuel is even an individual person! In his attempt to remove the Divine hand of the Living God from the prophecy where Immanuel refers to Jesus Christ and the young woman to the virgin Mary, the author—John T. Willis, makes Immanuel refer to Judeans!

Edward J. Young affirms: "At the outset we may confidently assert that the word '*almah* is never employed of a married woman."²⁶ So, the question now becomes: "Was the mother of Jesus chaste or unchaste?" The only way for her to be chaste, and be carrying Jesus in her womb, is for her to be a virgin. Let us hear Young out on this point:

If, however, the mother is an unmarried woman, a question arises. Was the child illegitimate or not? If the child were illegitimate, would such a birth be a sign? The whole context, indeed the whole Biblical context, rules this out. On the other hand, if the mother were a good woman, then the birth was out of the ordinary, an unusual birth. The mother is both unmarried and a good woman. When this fact is understood, it becomes apparent that in all history there is only one of whom this can be predicated, namely, Mary, the mother of the Lord.²⁷

The inspired apostle Matthew explained it in exactly those terms:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and

shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Mt. 1:21-23).

It is here that we see the premise upon which the ACU commentary is based as fatally flawed and impossible to salvage. Remember, that of Old Testament prophecy they say: “There is no unequivocal specific prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ and/or the church in the Old Testament. New Testament speakers reinterpreted and reapplied Old Testament texts to Christ and/or the church?”²⁸ A true scholar of the magnitude of Edward J. Young has affirmed: “In all history there is only one of whom this can be predicated, namely, Mary, the mother of the Lord,”²⁹ therefore, there is no way New Testament speakers could have “reinterpreted and reapplied” the Old Testament text to Christ because the Old Testament text was *always* about Christ!

Further, Willis, the author of the ACU commentary on Isaiah, denies Christ in Isaiah 9:6-7, where Isaiah said:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Willis’ comments deny the Deity of the Son of God, the establishment of His kingdom having reference to the church of Christ (Mt. 16:18-19; Acts 2:1-47, *et al.*), the kingly lineage of Christ through David, the “judgment and justice” associated with Christ’s reign over His church/kingdom now in the Christian age, the eternal nature of His kingdom, and these developments reflecting both the zeal of God for these facts and His divine providence which brought them into reality. Note Willis’ unbelief:

In verses 6-7, the statements *for a child has been born for us, a son given to us* (NRSV) refer not to physical birth of a royal prince (Wildberger 398-402; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 248-49), but to a king’s accession, which has already occurred when the prophet utters this (Clements 107; Hayes and Irvine 180-81). This *son* is Hezekiah, Ahaz’s successor.³⁰

The One about whom Isaiah prophesied in these verses, again as with the observations earlier on the virgin birth of Christ, could only be

references to Jesus Christ, not Hezekiah because the subject under consideration to qualify must reign over a kingdom concerning which "there shall be no end," and one that would be established "from henceforth even for ever"! King Hezekiah does not qualify; only the unique, one of a kind, only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ is meant.

Now, arriving at Isaiah 53, in *The Transforming Word*, the other fifty-one writers (who have contributed to the success of this theologically liberal commentary) have blended their work with what John T. Willis wrote which denies that Isaiah 53 speaks of the Messiah. He groups Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53:12 and says:

The section opens in 52:13-15. Here Yahweh speaks concerning *my servant*, probably the remnant of Jewish exiles whom Yahweh restored through the exile (49:1-6; 50:4-11), declaring *he will be highly exalted*. Formerly, *many nations were appalled at him*, because he was *so disfigured*, but now he will awe *kings* because, through him, Yahweh will empower them to *see and understand what they were not told and have not heard*—that is, Yahweh's servant will be a light to the nations (42:6; 49:6).³¹

So, what we are about to read in Isaiah 53 is not about the Messiah, but about "the remnant of Jewish exiles." The critics claim the Messiah is not the suffering servant, the remnant is! Hear Willis again:

The larger body of Judean exiles in Babylon (*we, us, our, my people*) proclaim that the remnant suffered vicariously because of its *transgressions* and *iniquities* and stubborn impenitence. Yahweh's servant *grew up before* Yahweh with *no beauty or majesty to attract his fellows to him; they despised and rejected him* (verses 1-3).³²

So, according to Willis, *the remnant* is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53, and *the remnant* "suffers vicariously because of its transgressions and iniquities" in order to atone for all the sins of the world! Willis has the remnant personified to become the righteous servant of Isaiah 53! Take notice of his complete argument for this from pages 565 and 566 of the ACU commentary:

Initially, the larger exile group considered Yahweh's servant *stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God*, but now they realize that *he was pierced and crushed* because of their *transgressions*, and *by his wounds they are healed*. They *have gone astray*, and Yahweh *has laid on his servant* (namely, the faithful remnant) the *iniquity* of the larger group (verses 4-6; 50:6).

Yahweh's servant voluntarily went *like a lamb to the slaughter* to be *stricken* because of *the transgression of Yahweh's people*, the larger exiled body. Reflecting his sacrificial attitude, *he did not open his mouth*. Though he was innocent, he suffered the indignity of burial in *a grave with the wicked and rich* for the sake of his comrades. In this way, *the Lord's will will prosper in his hand* (verses 7-10).

In verses 11-12, Yahweh speaks again concerning his servant (*my righteous servant*). Not only will Yahweh's servant, the faithful Judean exiles, restore some of their fellows, but he will also *bear the sin of* and thereby *justify many nations* (52:15; 49:5-6), or in other words, make *intercession for the transgressors*. "The individual servant's suffering and death are Israel's, on behalf of the nations."³³

Willis here views the text like an unbelieving Jew might, i.e., denying any suggestion of a Messianic prophecy foretelling the coming of Jesus Christ and His redemptive sacrifice on Calvary. Willis' effort is to lead people away from Calvary, away from Christ.

Willis has no knowledge of the righteous remnant. The righteous remnant are those who, unlike the majority, the other ninety percent of Israel (Isa. 1:9; 6:13), will listen to Isaiah and humble themselves in deep contrition admitting their sins and turning to God (Isa. 57:15-18). The remnant stood in need of healing and restoration from God (Isa. 57:18). The remnant was not innocent as Willis alleges. They were not sinless; they could not qualify as a sin offering for others. Isaiah wrote: "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way*" (Isa. 53:6a, emphasis added).

The remnant did not voluntarily offer themselves for the "larger exiled body." Six times in Isaiah, mention is made of the corrective "hand" of God wielding its force against the collective backslide of wayward Israel. The phrase familiar to those who have read the book is: "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still" (Isa. 5:25; cf. also 5:25a; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). Again, only Jesus Christ meets the demands of this prophecy. In John's record of the Gospel, Jesus says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (Jn. 10:17-18). Only He who "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22) could qualify to be the Savior of the

world. He is the one who voluntarily has "borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:4a).

AFFIRMING THE CHRIST

The outline of Isaiah 53 has as its first point the "Prophecy Concerning Christ's Life, vv. 1-3." The text says:

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

The second point is the "Prophecy Concerning Christ's Death, vv. 4-8." The text reads:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

The third point is the "Prophecy Concerning Christ's Grave, v. 9." Isaiah wrote: "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

The fourth point is the "Prophecy Concerning Christ's Suffering and Glorification, vv. 10-12." The chapter closes with the words:

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I

divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Messianic prophecy about the suffering Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, in these verses, shows that not only would He die for us, He would die *instead* of us. This is what is meant by the “vicarious” death of Christ. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief,” shows that the will of God for the salvation of men would be carried out through the suffering Servant, Jesus Christ. From even before this time in the eighth century B.C., right up until the death of Christ on the cross of Calvary, exactly how God’s Will would be accomplished in this regard was not fully revealed. The reason for this received comment from the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:6-9, where he explained:

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the conservative Old Testament scholar, Franz Delitzsch, spoke of the unfolding developments in God’s plan for redeeming fallen humanity, and he also understood the connection between the sacrificial death of the Savior and the church. He wrote:

It was *men* who inflicted upon the Servant of God such crushing suffering, such deep sorrow; but the supreme *causa efficiens* [lit. cause effective or the power to cause an effect] in the whole was *God*, who made the sin of men subservient to His pleasure, His will, and predetermined counsel. The suffering of His Servant was to be to Him the way to glory, and this way of His through suffering to glory was to lead to the establishment of a church of the redeemed, which would spring from Him; in other words, it would become the commencement of that fulfilment [*sic*] of the divine plan of salvation which He, the ever-living, ever-working One, would carry out to completion.³⁴

Would it not be wonderful if all who consider themselves to be Christians understood that the body of Christ, which is the church of Christ, is the fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation, and that it is the exclusive realm where the vicarious death of Christ is realized. In this connection, the apostle Paul wrote: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Anticipated in the vicarious death of the suffering Servant is His innocence. Peter commented:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

The qualification uniquely belongs to Christ of the sinless One offering Himself for the sinful ones. The egregious and fatal error of John T. Willis, commentator on the Book of Isaiah—and all those who have contributed to *The Transforming Word* from ACU Press, longing for its success and acceptance—is established in this observation because only a sinless sacrifice would suffice to take away the sins of others. Willis' suggestion that the Savior is absent from consideration in Isaiah 53, and that the righteous remnant which returned from Babylonian Captivity instead is meant, casts serious doubt not only on any desire he might have had to be taken seriously as a scholar, but it reflects unfavorably on his basic Bible knowledge. Do these people from ACU and their cohorts think that the world could ever forget (as apparently they all have) that God would ever and has ever accepted tainted corrupt sacrifices? How soon do people forget the courageous and soul stirring words of Malachi:

But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King,

saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen (Mal. 1:12-14).

And, further—and we just need to spend some time on this because our “scholars” have fallen asleep, if they ever were awake—forgiveness of sin is granted by God only through a blood sacrifice! Moses wrote:

And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:10-11).

The writer of Hebrews affirmed this truth to be the case in every age of the world’s existence when he said: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22). When did the righteous remnant ever vicariously shed blood to atone for the sins of Israel? Those who died in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem could not be under consideration because they were not part of the remnant who returned! What an unmitigated shame that those who wrote for this commentary have denounced Christ and His church as appearing in prophecy in the Old Testament! What a travesty for all who have supported the schools represented in that commentary with their hopes for the future of the Lord’s church remaining strong, when now others (in many cases) without the educational advantages granted to them are having to defend even the most basic truths of the Bible regarding the salvation of the world to spare the church from them!

Only Jesus Christ qualifies as the suffering Servant from Isaiah 53 because of the grammar inspiration employed. If the righteous remnant returning from Babylonian Captivity was meant, then you would expect the plural pronouns to be used. Isaiah would have spoken of “they” not “him.” But, singular pronouns are used 44 times for the suffering Servant: 22 times Isaiah spoke of “he,” 10 times he spoke of “him,” and 12 times he spoke of “his.” Not “them” but “him,” Jesus the Christ. Not even one time does the chapter use the words “they” or “them” in any context! What an unrelenting disappointment that otherwise educated people would put their name in a book like *The Transforming Word* and presume to call it a “one volume commentary on the Bible” (cover jacket).

If the Bible has one central character in both the Old and New Testaments, and if that one central character is Jesus Christ (as already shown, we unequivocally affirm to be the case), then the fact that God the Father assured both Him and the world for all time that through His sacrifice for sin forgiveness would be granted becomes, perhaps, the most meaningful and important truth in the universe. Isaiah wrote about the assurance of God on this point, saying: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11a). Think of the darkness that enshrouded the earth from noon to three o'clock on the day Christ was crucified (Mt. 27:45; Lk. 23:44). God the Father is associated with light. For example, in 1 John 1:5 we read: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." God the Father is called the "Father of lights" in James 1:17. But, when Jesus was bearing the sin of the world on Calvary, for three hours He was enshrouded with darkness confirming the truth uttered long before by Habakkuk—"Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13a). What can this refer to other than the hurt and pain in the very heart of God the Father, so much so that He had to turn away His face, from such extensive, unfathomable horror, as His only begotten Son was bearing all the sin of the world for all time? "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:11): one of the—if not *the*—greatest promises in all of the Bible!

In *The Bible Exposition Commentary* on "The Prophets" of the Old Testament, of this text Warren W. Wiersbe observes:

The death of the Servant also satisfied the Law of God. The theological term for this is "propitiation" (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). In pagan religions, the word meant "to offer a sacrifice to placate an angry god," but the Christian meaning is much richer. God is angry at sin because it offends His holiness and violates His holy Law. In His holiness, He must judge sinners, but in His love, he desires to forgive them. God cannot ignore sin or compromise with it, for that would be contrary to His own nature and Law.³⁵

In his commentary on Isaiah, Homer Hailey points out how comprehensive these "suffering Servant verses" are in the scheme of redemption, noting:

The five glorious stanzas of Isaiah's final Servant Song consider various features of the Servant's character, life, and mission: (1) His exaltation; (2) His acquaintance with grief; (3) His ill treatment and vicarious sufferings; (4) His total submission to Jehovah's will; and (5) His victory and reward. On these hang the whole of the New Testament preaching and the salvation of all mankind.³⁶

ANNOUNCING THE CHRIST

Upon "making his soul an offering for sin," God promised Him several things. One, "he shall see his seed"; two, "he shall prolong his days"; three, "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand"; and four, God "will ... divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong" (Isa. 53:10-12).

One, the prophecy that "he shall see his seed" is a reference to the resurrection of Christ—although He would sacrifice His life God would raise Him up (Gen. 3:15; Ps. 16:8-11; Ps. 110:1-7)—and to His followers who would continue the spiritual line of Abraham through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26-29). Offering an inspired commentary on the phrase, "he shall see his seed," the writer of Hebrews states:

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:9-17).

Two, the reference, "he shall prolong his days," points to the victory Christ received when God raised Him from the dead (Acts 3:15), and to the establishment of His eternal kingdom, which is the church of Christ. Isaiah had spoken of the reign of Christ in these terms:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7).

Jesus promised during His personal ministry that nothing could keep Him from establishing His church, which is His kingdom, and He means not only would His death on the cross not prohibit His reigning but, as has already been discussed, His death while seeming to end His intentions to reign would actually facilitate it. He said:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Mt. 16:18-19).

His disciples understood that, for one of them wrote: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). And, the prophetic Book of Revelation affirms, in what is considered by many to be its key verse, "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

Three, the phrase, "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand," shows how God has raised Him from the dead and highly exalted Him to His own right hand in the heavenly places. Since Christ:

... humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:8-11).

Jesus Christ is at the right hand of God in heaven where “angels and authorities and powers [are] being made subject unto him” (1 Pet. 3:22). “[T]he pleasure of the Lord” prospering “in his hand” is realized through the church of Christ, as is shown when Paul stated his desire for Christians:

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:18-23).

And, four, the statement that God “will ... divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong” points to the eternal reign of Christ victorious over all His foes. In 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Paul remarks:

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Therefore, is the innumerable company of angels in heaven

... with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and

honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever (Rev. 5:12-14).

CONCLUSION

The Bible is a book about Jesus Christ throughout. Christ affirmed this when He declared: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Lk. 24:44). The "Great Commission" is the heralding of His glorification beginning at Jerusalem, with the establishment of the church of Christ in A.D. 33, to the end of time. As Jesus "opened ... their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, He "said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:45-47).

One day, He will return, as Paul taught:

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

Because of what He did for us at Calvary, we have hope of eternal life as we remain obedient to the Gospel, continuing "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10). May our ever-growing desire be to see that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). And, finally, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 11.

- ³ Robert Spencer, *The Truth about Muhammad, Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion* (Washington, DC: Reynery Publishing, 2006), 192-194.
- ⁴ Dave Miller, *The Quran Unveiled, Islam and New Testament Christianity in Conflict* (Montgomery: AL: Apologetics Press, 2000), 257.
- ⁵ Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 342.
- ⁶ N.P. Feldmeth, *New Dictionary of Theology*, 322.
- ⁷ William L Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion* (Amherst, NY: Humanities Inc., 1981), 235.
- ⁸ *Humanist Manifesto I*
<www.americanhumanist.org/about/manifestoI_II_III.html> Eighth.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, Ninth.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Thirteenth.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Final paragraph.
- ¹² *Manifesto III*, Final paragraph.
- ¹³ Rudolf Bultmann, *Baker Encyclopedia*, 517.
- ¹⁴ Geisler, 386, 388.
- ¹⁵ John T. Willis, *The Transforming Word, gen. ed., Mark Hamilton* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2009), 66.
- ¹⁶ Wayne Jackson, *Clouds Without Water* (Stockton, CA: Christian Courier Publications, 2009), 7, quoting Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1973), 631ff.
- ¹⁷ Miller, 274-282.
- ¹⁸ Wayne Jackson, *The Bible on Trial* (Stockton, CA: Christian Courier Publications, 2008), 26-48.
- ¹⁹ *Transforming Word*, iii-iv.
- ²⁰ Willis, 66.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 533.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 558.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 557.
- ²⁵ Edward J Young, *Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 1:284.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 289.

²⁸ Willis, 66.

²⁹ Young, 289.

³⁰ Willis, 539.

³¹ Ibid., 565.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 432.

³⁴ Karl Fredrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament*, e-Sword, 517.

³⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1971), 62.

³⁶ Homer Hailey, *Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 1986), 443-444.

THEY SAY, “INTELLIGENT DESIGN ISN’T SO”

Jason Roberts



Jason Roberts was born in Denver, Colorado. He is married to the former Marcie Thacker. They have one son and one daughter. Roberts earned the B.A. degree in psychology, from Harding University, and is a graduate of Memphis School of Preaching. He was an associate minister for the Sixth Avenue congregation in Jasper, Alabama, the Forest Hill Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee, and preached for the Forrest Park congregation in Valdosta, Georgia. Roberts is now with *Focus Press* in Alabama.

INTRODUCTION¹

An atheistic-proof structure for God’s existence can be accomplished by constructing valid arguments. Four of the major arguments favoring God’s existence are: 1) *The Cosmological Argument* (the world could not exist on its own, there had to be a first cause that brought it into being), 2) *The Teleological Argument* (the argument from design), 3) *The Ontological Argument* (the argument based on reason), and 4) *The Moral Argument* (a universal law for morality cannot exist by chance; there must be a universal Law-Giver behind it).

Across the annals of time, skeptics have been quick to scoff at any argument that discredits atheism and points one to the Creator. Modern atheists, such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, have been quite eager to reach for the *atheistic baton* that their predecessors handed them, running in virtually every direction they can to militantly advance what they cherish the most—atheism. But, merely scoffing at an argument does not disprove God’s existence, nor does it bolster the claim for atheism. The truth is, theists are still waiting for the atheist who can logically dismantle any of the arguments advanced to buttress God’s existence. It is the purpose of this work to address one of these, namely the teleological, or design argument for God’s existence.

THE LAW OF RATIONALITY

One of the basic laws employed in the field of logic is the “Law of Rationality,” “which states that one should accept as true only those conclusions for which there is adequate evidence.”² This law:

... is sensible, because accepting as true a conclusion for which there is no evidence, or inadequate evidence, would be irrational. In establishing the *prima facie* case for the existence of God, theists present—through logic, clear reasoning, and factual data—arguments adequate to justify the acceptance of a conclusion that God exists. The approach is intended to be positive in nature, and to establish a proposition for which adequate evidence is available.³

To say that there is an abundance of *irrational* thinking in the minds of men today is an understatement. Rejecting the clear and convincing proofs for the existence of God is not an intellectual problem; it is a moral problem (Ps. 14:1). "The various arguments presented by theists, all combined, make an ironclad case for God's existence. Where one particular argument fails to impress or convince an inquirer, another may avail."⁴

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT DEFINED

The word "Teleology" has reference to purpose or design. In logic, the "Law of Teleology" affirms that "where there is design, there must of necessity be a designer." If we constructed the argument in logical form, it would look like this:

1. If the Universe evinces purposeful design, there must have been a designer.
2. The Universe does evince purposeful design.
3. Thus, the Universe must have had a designer.⁵

It is interesting that the argument above is conceded by infidels. Atheistic philosopher Paul Ricci wrote: "... it's true that everything designed has a designer ..."⁶ He went on to make the claim: "Everything designed has a designer,' is an analytically true statement."⁷ It is obvious that the gentleman understands that a poem implies a poet, a watch implies a watchmaker, a law implies a law giver, a building implies a builder, and a painting implies a painter.

Other infidels do not hesitate to admit the obvious design of our marvelous universe, specifically the life forms that inhabit it. Evolutionist Richard Lewontin admitted this truth in an article he authored over thirty years ago for *Scientific American*, saying:

Life forms are more than simply multiple and diverse, however. Organisms fit remarkably well into the external world in which

they live. They have morphologies, physiologies and behaviors that *appear to have been carefully and artfully designed* to enable each organism to appropriate the world around it for its own life. It was the marvelous fit of organisms to the environment, much more than the great diversity of forms, that was *the chief evidence of a Supreme Designer* (emphasis added).⁸

It is important to highlight, that while these two authors, and others of their ilk, plainly admit the basic thrust of the teleological argument (i.e., that design leads inevitably to a designer), “they do not believe that there is evidence warranting the conclusion that a Supreme Designer exists, and they therefore have rejected any belief in God.”⁹ Again, we emphasize that the question of God’s existence cannot be restricted to a mere intellectual battle. Some of the most brilliant thinkers of our day are atheists/evolutionists. In fact, many of them are perhaps too brilliant to see and believe the simplicity of the obvious. G.K. Chesterton said: “When people stop believing in God, they don’t believe in nothing—they believe in anything.”

INTELLIGENT DESIGN, NEW OR OLD?

The intelligent design argument is as old as the Bible. The writer of Hebrews spoke of the Teleological Argument in this way (though contextually, he was not primarily discussing this theme): “For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God” (Heb. 3:4). The atheist/evolutionist has no problem conceding the truth contained in the first part of this verse—“every house is builded by some man.” A person with very little intelligence knows that a house is not eternal, nor did it construct itself out of nothing, and it certainly did not explode into existence. Yet, we are supposed to believe that the Universe, which is far more complex than a house, just arrived *via* a Big Bang! Thompson observed:

The fact is the Universe is “fine-tuned” in such a way that it is impossible to suggest logically that it simply “popped into existence out of nothing” and then went from the chaos associated with the inflationary Big Bang model (as if the Universe were a giant fire-cracker!) to the sublime order that it presently exhibits.¹⁰

In their book, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, authors Nancey Murphy and George F.R. Ellis wrote:

The symmetries and delicate balances we observe in the universe require an extraordinary coherence of conditions and cooperation

of laws and effects, suggesting that in some sense they have been *purposely designed*. That is, *they give evidence of intention*, realized both in the setting of the laws of physics and in the choice of boundary conditions for the universe (emphasis added).¹¹

Thompson noted: "The idea that the universe and its law 'have been purposely designed' has surfaced much more frequently in the past several years."¹² For example, Sir Fred Hoyle wrote:

A common sense interpretation of the facts suggest that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.¹³

Australian astrophysicist Paul Davies made this fascinating statement:

If nature is so "clever" as to exploit mechanisms that amaze us with their ingenuity, *is that not persuasive evidence for the existence of intelligent design behind the universe?* If the world's finest minds can unravel only with difficulty the deeper workings of nature, how could it be supposed that those workings are merely a mindless accident, a product of blind chance? (emphasis added).¹⁴

Four years later, in his book, *The Cosmic Blueprint: New Discoveries in Nature's Creative Ability to Order the Universe*, Davies wrote: "There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all ... *It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe ... The impression of design is overwhelming*" (emphasis added).¹⁵ In 1992, Davies authored *The Mind of God*, in which he noted:

I cannot believe that our existence in this universe is a mere quirk of fate, an accident of history, an incidental blip in the great cosmic drama ... Through conscious beings the universe has generated self-awareness. This can be no trivial detail, no minor by-product of mindless, purposeless forces. *We are truly meant to be here* (emphasis added).¹⁶

Indeed, we are truly meant to be here! The universe was perfectly orchestrated by an Intelligent Being and "fine-tuned" for man's habitation. Avid evolutionist Michael Denton soured the evolutionary

punch bowl with this statement that appeared in his book, *Nature's Destiny*:

Whether one accepts or rejects the design hypothesis ... there is no avoiding the conclusion that the world *looks* as if it has been tailored for life; *it appears to have been designed*. All reality *appears* to be a vast, coherent, teleological whole with life and mankind as its purpose and goals.¹⁷

The prophet Isaiah penned: “Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein” (Isa. 42:5). As the Psalmist so aptly observed: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Ps. 19:1).

In 1995, NASA astronomer John O’Keefe said in an interview:

We are, by astronomical standards, a pampered, cosseted, cherished group of creatures ... If the Universe had not been made with the most exacting precision we could never have come into existence. It is my view that these circumstances indicate the universe was created for man to live in.¹⁸

As Brad Harrub noted: “The statistical odds of man living in a place where the correct composition of the air, atmospheric pressure, gravity, heat, stability, etc. happening by chance are beyond measure.”¹⁹

Physicist Frank Tipler put it this way:

When I began my career as a cosmologist some twenty years ago, I was a convinced atheist. I never in my wildest dreams imagined that one day I would be writing a book purporting to show that the central claims of Judeo-Christian theology are in fact true, that these claims are straightforward deduction of the laws of physics as we now understand them. I have been forced into these conclusions by the inexorable logic of my own special branch of physics.²⁰

WILLIAM PALEY AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN

One of the most popular and influential presentations of the design argument was made by the British theologian and mathematician William Paley (1743-1805) in his work, *Natural Theology*, in 1802. Wayne Jackson summarized Paley’s argument in this fashion:

Paley contended that if one were walking through a waste area and came upon a stone he might, without evidence to the contrary, assume that it simply had lain there forever. On the

other hand, if one stumbled upon a watch, due to the fact that the timepiece had integrated parts that moved in concert for the purpose of marking time, one would be forced to conclude that this object was not an accident; rather, it had been designed, and therefore had a designer. Paley then proceeded, by analogy, to argue that the design apparent in nature was evidence of a Grand Designer, namely, God.²¹

In other words, "Paley argued that just as a watch implies a skilled, intelligent 'watch-maker,' even so, a structured universe points to an intelligent universe-maker ... The fundamental premise of the argument is this: when one observes an object that reflects design, the logical conclusion is—it had a designer."²² A popular tale that describes the position of the theist and atheist (that is, their conflicting worldviews) concerns both of them taking a walk through the woods. As they are walking, they suddenly come upon a beautiful crystal sphere, two feet in diameter, lying on the trail. Immediately they stop and examine the beautiful structure. The theist asks: "I wonder how this came to be here?" The atheist states: "It's obvious somebody left it there; it didn't just appear." Seizing the opportunity, the theist then asks: "If the sphere was 20 feet in diameter, would someone still have to have left it in the woods?" "Yes," the atheist replies, "logic demands that if a small sphere had to be left here by someone, clearly a much larger one would also have to have the same means of origin." "What if," the theist asks, "the sphere was as large as this planet—would someone have to have left it here?" The atheist realizes the conundrum and quickly replies that *no one had to*—it would just be there. The design argument (advanced by Paley) is eminently logical. One naturally ascribes design (such as a crystal sphere) to a designer.

Across the years, numerous efforts have been made to discredit the force of Paley's logic. Perhaps one of the most popular of these—at least in our age—has been the work of British scientist, Richard Dawkins, who has described himself as a "a fairly militant atheist, with a fair degree of active hostility toward religion."²³ Dawkins' attacks on God and religion are sharp and unapologetic. For example:

Dawkins has boasted that his work brings home the reality of the ruthless, mechanistic explanation of human existence. "You are for nothing. You are here to propagate your selfish genes. There is no higher purpose to life." ... Dawkins has admitted, he is gratified that in reading his book, people are "losing religious faith." According to Dawkins, "religion is very largely an enemy

of truth.” He has characterized the idea that man was created by God as a “blasphemy” that atheists “have to fight against.”²⁴

In 1986, Dawkins authored one of his most significant books, *The Blind Watchmaker*, in which he attempted to negate the widespread influence of Paley’s work. Jackson notes: “Dawkins vociferously declared that the intent of the book was to negate the influence of Paley because the ‘apparent design’ that is characteristic of earth’s creatures ‘cries for an explanation.’”²⁵ The dust jacket of Dawkins’ book reads:

There may be good reason for belief in God, but the argument from design is not one of them ... despite all appearances to the contrary, there is no watchmaker in nature beyond the blind forces of physics ... Natural selection, the unconscious, automatic, blind yet essentially nonrandom process that Darwin discovered, and that we now understand to be the explanation for the existence and form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind’s eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, not sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker.²⁶

It should be noted:

The disagreement between the theist and atheist is not whether design demands a designer. Rather, the point of contention is whether or not there *is* design in nature adequate to substantiate the conclusion that a designer does, in fact, exist. This is where the teleological argument is of benefit.²⁷

THE MARVELOUS DESIGN OF THE HUMAN BODY

In 2006, editors John Asthon and Michael Westacott produced a great book titled, *The Big Argument: Does God Exist?* This eye-opening volume contains splendid articles written by twenty-four scholars, as they explore how science, archaeology, and philosophy have not disproved God. One of the authors, Frank J. Sherwin, penned a thought-provoking piece titled, *The Human Body: Evidence For Intelligent Design*. He wrote: “Evolutionary naturalists attempt to short-circuit then (*sic*) design argument for God’s existence by saying that living things (such as the human body and its 11 parts) only *appear* designed—they aren’t really.”²⁸ In fact, biologist Stephen C. Meyer said in 1996: “According to Darwin (as if he is the authority, JR), living organisms only *appeared* to be designed by an intelligent creator; nature itself was the real creator.”²⁹ Even Nobel prize winner Francis Crick admitted the same when he wrote: “Biologists must constantly

keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved."³⁰ Sherwin adds: "Darwinists attribute the exquisite detail in the living world to genetic mistakes (mutations) and natural selection that essentially take the place of a personal Creator."³¹

Sherwin was a former college Biology instructor who taught human anatomy and physiology to pre-med students for many years. "The human body is a marvelous testament to complexity and design,"³² he said. "So much could be said about the tissues organs, and systems—and their interactions—that make up the created human body. Instances abound that point clearly to detailed design."³³ The author then noted several fascinating things about the amazing design of the human body:

The lungs that look like a pair of pink sponges in our chest, for example, contain about 600 million tiny air sacs called alveoli and have 750 woven miles of blood vessels. If the lungs were flattened out, they would cover a surface area of about 1,000 square feet.

Our bone is stronger than granite. A block of bone half the size of a computer mouse can support ten tons—four times the capacity of concrete. In the "average" adult, the marrow of the flat bones (skull bones and ribs) also makes two-and-a-half million delicate red blood cells *per second*, as well as providing anchor attachments for our muscles.

Our heart, composed of unique cardiac muscle, beats at least 2.8 billion times during the average life span—resting between beats. This means it pumps 600,000 tons of blood in the average lifetime through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. If skeletal muscle from the arm or leg tried to do what the heart does day out and day in, it would be useless within minutes. The heart is a wonder of engineering.

We have two kidneys that contain 1.3 million amazing units of filtration called nephrons. With every beat of the heart, one-third of the blood goes to the renal arteries, and thus through this pair of reddish-brown, bean-shaped organs. This means they filter about eight quarts of blood every hour. The kidneys are designed, at the level of the nephron, to return glucose, ions, water, and other important substances to the blood while expelling two liters (three pints) of urine a day. Anatomists estimate our kidneys are about as complex as the brain. They are certainly not just a pair of blood filters, as many think.³⁴

The late George Gaylord Simpson of Harvard once said that in man one finds “the most highly endowed organization of matter that has yet appeared on earth.”³⁵ Another evolutionist affirmed:

When you come right down to it, the most incredible creation in the universe is you—with your fantastic senses and strengths, your ingenious defense systems, and mental capabilities so great you can never use them to the fullest. Your body is a structural masterpiece more amazing than science fiction.³⁶

How can anyone, with even an average degree of intelligence conclude that the “structural masterpiece” of the human body—with its “ingenious” system and “highly endowed organization—is the result of mere happenstance operating over billions of years of time as atheism suggests? Or would it be more in keeping with the facts of the matter to suggest that the human body is the result of purposeful design by a Master Designer?”³⁷

Amazingly, there are still infidels who will not believe in God, regardless of how powerful and convincing the evidence is. For example, the infidel writer Paul Ricci said: “Although many have difficulty understanding the *tremendous order and complexity of functions* of the human body (the eye for an example), there is no obvious designer” (emphasis added).³⁸

One of the most powerful evidences of sensory design is the eye. When Charles Darwin penned his notorious book, *The Origin of Species* (1859), he bit off more than he could chew when he wrote:

To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest sense.³⁹

Absurd indeed! We appreciate the gentleman’s honesty. However, Darwin argued that “natural selection,” with the passing of millions of years, produced the human eye. He is not alone. Agnostic Robert Jastrow questioned that possibility when he wrote:

The eye is a marvelous instrument, resembling a telescope of the highest quality, with a lens, an adjustable focus, a variable diaphragm for controlling the amount of aberration, and optical corrections for spherical and chromatic aberration. The eye appears to have been designed; no designer of telescopes could

have done better. How could this marvelous instrument have evolved by chance, through a succession of random events?⁴⁰

The eye is frequently compared to a camera. No honest person will dispute the complexity and intricate design of the modern camera. Does it not seem strange that we are to believe that the living camera—the human eye, which is far more complex than a digital camera, somehow just “evolved by chance, through a succession of random events”? As Miller and Goode stated: “The living camera of the eye photographs fleeting images by the thousands, between one moment and the next, and it makes its own adjustments, automatically and precisely, with each change in distance, light, and angle.”⁴¹ In his excellent little book, *The Human Body Accident or Design?*, Wayne Jackson has an informative section describing the remarkable features of the human eye. He concludes his analysis of the eye with these words: “If the function of a camera demands that it was ‘made,’ does it not stand to reason that the more complex human camera, the eye, must also have had a Maker? If not, where is the fallacy in our reasoning?”⁴²

The Psalmist affirmed that God “planted the ear” and “formed the eye” (Ps. 94:9). “Hearing and seeing are not developments of the evolutionary process!”⁴³ “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them” (Pro. 20:12).

The marvelous structure of the human body, with all of its intricate, complex details, could not have originated *via* the processes of organic evolution. As David declared: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth” (Ps. 139:14-15). Indeed, “there is a God in heaven” (Dan. 2:28)!

ANTONY FLEW

One of the premiere atheists of our time *was* Antony Flew. In 1976 Flew debated the late brother Thomas B. Warren on the campus of North Texas State University. The debate was on the existence of God. In 1991, while a student at Harding University, I phoned brother Warren at his home residence. I had a question that pertained to some of the teaching that was being taught by several of my professors, particularly on the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage. In the course of our conversation, I mentioned to him that I was reading *The Warren-Flew Debate*, and remarked on how much I was enjoying it. At

one point in our conversation, brother Warren said: “I pray for Dr. Flew every day that he will have a change of heart and come to a proper understanding of the truth.” Brother Warren never saw his prayer answered (having died in August of 2000). However, part of this prayer has been answered. Though Flew has not come to a proper understanding and acceptance of a number of significant Bible truths (i.e., the resurrection of Christ, the afterlife, miracles, and the inspiration of the Bible), he nonetheless has abandoned his atheistic worldview, which he had cherished for so many years.

Professor Flew, 85 years old, a legendary British philosopher and atheist (former atheist that is) was an icon and champion for unbelievers for decades. Flew’s change of mind is significant news, not only about his personal journey, but also about the persuasive power of the arguments modern theists have been using to challenge atheism.

In 2001 and 2003 respectively, it was rumored that Flew had turned to Christianity, but each time he dispelled the rumors himself. Today, we have the truth about what he now believes about God. In 2007, Flew published a book, titled *There Is A God*, which listed as having Roy Abraham Varghese as its co-author. Shortly after the book was released, the *New York Times* published an article by religious historian Mark Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer stated that Varghese had been entirely responsible for writing the book, and that Flew was in a serious state of mental decline, having great difficulty remembering key figures, ideas, and events relating to the debate covered in the book (this debate will be mentioned below). The article provoked a public outcry, in which atheist P.Z. Myers called Varghese “a contemptible manipulator.”⁴⁴ Later, Flew released a statement through his publisher that although Varghese did the actual writing, the book belonged to him and represented his thinking.⁴⁵

In 2004, Flew was interviewed by Dr. Gary R. Habermas, a prolific philosopher and historian from Liberty University, who has debated Flew several times on the existence of God and the resurrection of Christ. Both of these gentlemen have maintained their friendship despite their years of disagreement on these two issues. The interview was published in the Winter 2005 edition of *Philosophia Christi*, the journal of the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Prior to writing the interview, editor Craig J. Hazen of *Philosophia Christi* had these introductory remarks:

During a couple of telephone discussions shortly after their last dialogue, Flew explained to Habermas that he was considering becoming a theist. While Flew did not change his position at that time, he concluded that certain philosophical and scientific considerations were causing him to do some serious thinking. He characterized his position as that of *atheism standing in tension with several huge question marks* (emphasis added).⁴⁶

Those "several huge question marks" are presented and answered in this interview. The reader may wish to pay special attention to Flew's responses to Habermas' questions. They are clear, and in no way reflect a man whose mind is "in a serious state of mental decline." Below are excerpts from their interview. My comments will appear in brackets.

Habermas:

"Tony, you recently told me that you have come to believe in the existence of God. Would you comment on that?"

Flew:

"Well, I don't believe in the God of any revelatory system, *although I am open to that*. But it seems to me that the case for an Aristotelian God Who has the characteristics of *power* and also of *intelligence, is now much stronger than it ever was before ...* (emphasis added)."

[Note his reference to the "Aristotelian God." God does not need this title before His name. Though Flew has come a long way in his thinking; he is still light years away from the Creator of the Universe].

Habermas:

"Once you mentioned to me that your view might be called Deism. Do you think that would be a fair designation?"

Flew:

"Yes, absolutely right. What Deists, such as the Mr. Jefferson who drafted the American Declaration of Independence, believed was that, while reason, *mainly in the form of arguments to design, assures us that there is a God*, there is no room either for any supernatural revelation of that God or for any transactions between that God and individual human beings" (emphasis added).

[First, Jefferson was not a Deist. For a thorough refutation of this notion, the reader may want to consult the material contained in Dave Miller's excellent DVD, *The Silencing of God*. Second,

According to Flew, the design argument is persuasive enough proof to point us to a Grand Designer. We will comment more on this later. Flew's deistic view of God, rejects all supernatural revelation (i.e. Bible) and rejects any interest that God has in man. Habermas' next question was timely].

Habermas:

"Then would you comment on your 'openness' to the notion of theistic revelation?"

Flew:

"*I am open to it*, but not enthusiastic about potential revelation from God. On the positive side, for example, I am very much impressed with physicist Gerald Schroeder's comments on Genesis 1. *That this biblical account might be scientifically accurate raises the possibility that it is revelation* (emphasis added)."

[As long as Flew remains open to discussion about the scientific accuracy of God's revelation, the Bible, there is hope for his soul. We can only pray that God will grant him more time to live so that the possibility of him coming to a knowledge of the truth and being saved becomes a reality (1 Tim. 2:4)].

Habermas:

"You very kindly noted that our debates and discussions had influenced your move in the direction of theism. You mentioned that this initial influence contributed in part to your comment that naturalistic efforts have never succeeded in producing 'a plausible conjecture as to how any of these complex molecules might have evolved from simple entities.' Then in your recently rewritten introduction to the forthcoming edition of your classic volume *God and Philosophy*, you say that the original version of that book is now obsolete. You mention a number of trends in theistic argumentation that you find convincing, like big bang cosmology, fine tuning and Intelligent Design arguments. Which arguments for God's existence did you find most persuasive?"

Flew:

"I think that the most impressive arguments for God's existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries. I've never been much impressed by the *kalam* cosmological argument, and I don't think it has gotten any stronger recently. However, *I think the*

argument to Intelligent Design is enormously stronger than it was when I first met it" (emphasis added).

[Flew has read a number of books that have assisted him in his journey from atheism to theism. He cites Gerald Schroeder's work *The Hidden Face of God* and Roy Abraham Varghese's *The Wonder of the World: A Journey from Modern Science to the Mind of God* as particularly impressive. In the foreword to the new (and final) edition of his *God and Philosophy*, which Flew now describes as "an historic relic," he acknowledges that the argument from design "becomes progressively more powerful with every advance in humankind's knowledge of the integrated complexity of what used to be called the 'system of nature.'" As this progress continues, perhaps more will follow Flew's lead in conceding more ground to theism].

Habermas:

"So of the major theistic arguments, such as the cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological, the only really impressive ones that you take to be decisive are the scientific of teleology?"

Flew:

"Absolutely. It seems to me that Richard Dawkins constantly overlooks the fact that Darwin himself, in the fourteenth chapter of *The Origin of Species*, pointed out that his whole argument began with a being which already possessed reproductive powers. This is the creature the evolution of which a truly comprehensive theory of evolution must give some account. Darwin himself was well aware that he had not produced such an account. *It now seems to me that the findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided materials for a new and enormously powerful argument to design* (emphasis added)."

Habermas:

"Given your great respect for Christianity, do you think there is any chance that you might in the end move from theism to Christianity?"

Flew:

"I think it's very unlikely, due to the problem of evil. But, if it did happen, I think it would be in some eccentric fit and doubtfully orthodox form: regular religious practice perhaps but without belief. If I wanted any sort of future life I should become a Jeho-

vah's Witness. But some things I am completely confident about. I would never regard Islam with anything but horror and fear because it is fundamentally committed to conquering the world for Islam. It was because the whole of Palestine was part of the land of Islam that Muslim Arab armies moved in to try to destroy Israel at birth, and why the struggle for the return of the still surviving refugees and their numerous descendants continue to this day.” [First, Flew's problem with evil would not be a problem at all if he simply accepted the truth that every man has been endowed by God with the ability to choose. The admission of evil implies an admission of good, both of which are choices that man makes. Second, the gentleman says that if he did embrace Christianity he would simply go through the motions of whatever Christianity practiced, but would do so without any faith. Who wants to live such an empty, faithless directionless life such as this? Third, he states that if he wanted any “future life” he would become a Jehovah's Witness. He gave no reasons for wanting to do so. Sadly, there is no “future life” for those who embrace the Jehovah's Witness' doctrine. Christianity and Jehovah's Witness doctrine are incompatible].

Habermas:

“I ask this last question with a smile, Tony. But just think what would happen if one day you were pleasantly disposed toward Christianity and all of a sudden the resurrection of Jesus looked pretty good to you?”

Flew:

“Well, one thing I'll say in this comparison is that, for goodness sake, *Jesus is an enormously attractive charismatic figure*, which the Prophet of Islam most emphatically is not” (emphasis added). [It is evident that Flew has a long way still to travel in his journey to find the God of the Bible. While many in the “Christian” world have quickly tipped their hats towards Flew because of his decisive shift from atheism to theism; in reality he is still sadly just as lost as he was the day he became an atheist. Admitting there is a God is one thing; submitting to that same God is quite another!].

There is no way that Flew, suddenly facing his own mortality, is trying to cover his bases—just in case God exists. What has happened,

it seems, is what he said during a telephone conversation with Habermas in 2004, and that is he "had to go where the evidence leads."

CONCLUSION

The evidence for God's existence is overwhelming. Skeptics, who are not willing "to go where the evidence leads" them will continue to enthusiastically hand the *atheistic baton* to the next generation of deceived minds until time—as we know it—is no more, and the God of the Universe reveals Himself in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ at His Second Coming. At that time, this worn out baton will immediately drop and "every knee should bow ... every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson, *The Case for the Existence of God* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, Inc., 1996), 15.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Paul Ricci, *Fundamentals of Critical Thinking* (Lexington, MA: Ginn Press, 1986), 190.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Richard Lewontin, "Adaptation," *Scientific America*, 1978, 239[3]: 213.

⁹ Thompson, and Jackson, 17.

¹⁰ Bert Thompson, *The Scientific Case for Creation* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, Inc., 1986), 49.

¹¹ Nancey Murphy and George F.R. Ellis, *On The Moral Nature of the Universe* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 57.

¹² Thompson, 50.

¹³ Fred Hoyle, "The Universe: Past and Present Reflections," *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics*, 1982, 20:16.

¹⁴ Paul Davies, *Superforce: The Search for a Grand Unified Theory of Nature* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster), 235-236.

¹⁵ Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint: New Discoveries in Nature's Creative Ability To Order The Universe* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 203.

- ¹⁶ Paul Davies, *The Mind of God* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 232.
- ¹⁷ Michael Denton, *Nature's Destiny: How the Laws of Biology Reveal Purpose in the Universe* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster), 387.
- ¹⁸ Fred Heeren, *Show Me God* (Wheeling, IL: Searchlight Publications, 1995), 200.
- ¹⁹ Brad Harrub, "He That Built All Things Is God," *So Great Salvation*, ed., Gary McDade (Pulaski, TN: Sain Publications, 2003), 162.
- ²⁰ Frank Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1994), preface.
- ²¹ Wayne Jackson, "The Blind Bookwriter," *Christian Courier*, September 7, 2001.
- ²² Wayne Jackson, "An Atheistic Assault Upon the "Design" Argument," *Christian Courier*, June 17, 2005.
- ²³ Thomas Bass, "Interview with Richard Dawkins," *Omni* 124:58-60,84,86-89, January, 1990.
- ²⁴ Jackson, "The Blind Bookwriter."
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York, NY: WW - Horton, 1986).
- ²⁷ Jackson and Thompson, 18.
- ²⁸ Frank J. Sherwin, "The Human Body: Evidence for Intelligent Design," *The Big Argument: Does God Exist?* John Ashton and Michael Westacott, eds. (United States: Master Books, 2006), 73.
- ²⁹ S.C. Meyer, "The Origin of Life and the Death of Materialism," *The Intercollegiate Review* (Spring, 1996), 24.
- ³⁰ F. Crick, *What Mad Pursuit: A Personal View of Scientific Discovery* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1998), 138.
- ³¹ Sherwin, 73.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 75.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ George Gaylord Simpson, *The Meaning of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 293.
- ³⁶ Alma E. Guinness, ed., *ABC's of the Human Body* (Pleasantville, WY: Reader's Digest Association, 1987), 5.
- ³⁷ Thompson, and Jackson, 23.

³⁸ Paul Ricci, *Fundamentals of Critical Thinking* (Lexington, MA: Ginn Press, 1986), 44.

³⁹ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London, UK: A.L. Burt Company, 1859), 170.

⁴⁰ Robert Jastrow, *The Enchanted Loom: Mind in the Universe* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster), 96-97.

⁴¹ Benjamin Miller and Ruth Goode, *Man and His Body* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 315.

⁴² Wayne Jackson, *The Human Body Accident or Design?* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications, 1993), 57.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁴ <http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2007/11/roy_varghese_and_the_exploit.php>

⁴⁵ <<http://www.publishersweekly.com/index.asp?layout=articlePrint&articleID=CA6501078>>

⁴⁶ <<http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew/>>

THEY SAY, “THE GOOD LIFE IS THE CENTRAL TASK FOR MANKIND”

Trevor Major



Trevor Major grew up in New Zealand. He and his wife Chris have two sons, Michael and Nicholas. Major moved to Montgomery, Alabama in 1986 to work with Apologetics Press. In 2000 he moved to the Columbus, Ohio area, where he serves as the associate minister for the Alkire Road congregation in Grove City, and is director of *Central Ohio Bible Institute*. Major has under graduate degrees in science, and philosophy, and graduate degrees in science, religion, and philosophy.

INTRODUCTION¹

Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind (*Humanist Manifesto I*, 1933).²

Happiness and the creative realization of human needs and desires, individually and in shared enjoyment, are continuous themes of humanism. We strive for the good life, here and now (*Humanist Manifesto II*, 1973).³

WHAT IS “THE GOOD LIFE”?

Remy, the star of *Ratatouille*, is in love with food. His rat family is in love with food, too, but in a very different sense. Remy loves food for its smell, texture, taste and color. He loves food as an end in itself. He loves food as a medium of art. He loves food for the experiences it creates in others. For his brother rats, food is nothing more than a means to an end. Food satisfies their basic needs. Food relieves the pain of an empty stomach. Clearly, Remy stands out from the pack. He is inspired by the great Chef Gusteau who is spreading a bold and surprising message: “Anyone can cook.” If “anyone” includes rats, Remy reasons, then there is nothing to stop him becoming a cook as well, and so the adventure begins.

At one level, as a movie aimed at children, the moral of *Ratatouille* is reasonably straightforward: we should pursue our chosen vocation no

matter what others may think. Presumably, youngsters will get the point if they simply replace the word "cook" in Gusteau's maxim with "fly," "sell," "preach" or whatever they want to do with their lives.

Ratatouille, however, is not serving up the usual platitudes on self-esteem and self-realization we have come to expect from Hollywood or mainstream media outlets. Remy is an *exceptional* rat. He is not a ne'er-do-well seeking to confound the critics. He has a keen sense of smell, even to the point of detecting poison. His is a unique talent, and one that drives his passion for cookery. At first, Remy's father presses him into service as a full-time poison detector, Remy wants so much more and is capable of so much more.

We might think that Remy's special gift undermines Gusteau's maxim, but it is still true (for the purposes of this movie) that cooks *can* come from any background and in all shapes and sizes. Not everyone, however, will choose to cook, and not everyone will become a *great* cook. Indeed, Remy's human helper, Linguini, plainly admits at one point that he cannot do what the talented rat can do, despite being the son and heir of the esteemed Gusteau.

At a deeper level, *Ratatouille* presents a values system based on virtue. The name of Aristotle is most often associated with this very old idea. Like Socrates and Plato before him, Aristotle poses a very different question about values. Rather than asking, "What should we do?" he asks, "How should we live?" For any of Aristotle's contemporaries the answer was pretty obvious: we should live the good life. But what is "the good life?"

Aristotle's answer was pretty involved. Basically, the ancient philosopher thought in terms of a thing's function, of what it was *for*. So a knife, to be a knife, must cut; it is *for* cutting. Moreover, a good knife cuts *well*. Such a knife, in the Greek way of thinking, is "virtuous" or "excellent" (this is how we typically translate their word *aretē*). How does this apply to us? What are humans uniquely *for*? According to Aristotle, our essential function is rational thought. When we live according to reason we are functioning *well*, and if we are functioning well we are *happy*, and if we are happy we are living *the good life*.⁴ To put it another way: reason is the uniquely human characteristic that exists in us to make us happy.

This idea of looking at our essential nature can be applied more broadly to the use of talents and skills. Remy the rat has an extraordinary sense of smell and a gift for translating those smells into great

cooking. In Remy's case, this greatness is defined, not by the young rat's natural abilities, but by the excellence with which the skill is exemplified in someone like Chef Gusteau. Further, on Aristotle's way of thinking, it would literally make no sense for Remy to ignore his talents by foraging in garbage cans or sniffing food for poison. Being a cook was the distinct quality that existed in Remy to make him happy. Only by actively living in accordance with this virtue could Remy live the good life.

HUMANIST ETHICS

My purpose in reaching all the way back to Aristotle is to show that this phrase, "the good life," is serious business. It is not the sort of throwaway statement we might hear after a backyard cookout when the sun is shining and there is nothing left to do but lie in the hammock and digest a perfectly grilled rib-eye steak. When the phrase turns up in something as pretentious as a *Manifesto*—indeed, in two such documents over a forty-year period—we have to assume that the authors are using it in the technical sense of a life well lived.

Can we be sure, however, that Humanists are directing our attention to virtue ethics in particular? This is not an easy question to answer from the manifestos alone. Besides their brevity, these documents were left deliberately vague and ambiguous on certain points that might have divided the broader Humanist community. Moreover, "religious" Humanists—the particular variety of Humanists behind the *Manifesto* of 1933—had more to say about social responsibility than personal responsibility. They envisioned a world with better living conditions, usually organized along socialist lines, in which "the good life" would become a reality.⁵

At the same time, if virtue ethics is not under consideration, it is hard to imagine why they would use this particular "term of art." Roy Wood Sellars, who drafted the first *Manifesto*, was a professor of philosophy at the University of Michigan.⁶ Several signatories were also professors of philosophy. It seems reasonable to suppose that "the good life" was their answer to a well-known philosophical question, "How should we live?"—a question typically associated with the study of virtue ethics.

Fortunately, we can find other hints beyond the published manifestos. In 1918, Sellars wrote the following in support of religious Humanism:

The very attitude and implications of worship must be relinquished. In their place must be put the spiritually founded virtue of loyalty to those efforts and values which elevate human beings and give a quality of nobility and significance to our human life here and now ... The religion of the future will increasingly be concerned with two things, virtues and values.⁷

Not only do we see phrasing from the future *Manifesto*, with its call for self-fulfillment in the "here and now," but we also see an important role for virtue.

Another philosopher, John Dewey, had a profound influence on religious Humanism and endorsed the first *Manifesto*.⁸ Dewey rejected a hard-and-fast distinction between act-based and character-based ethics. Both questions, "What should we do?" and "How should we live?" were worth pursuing. Life was too complicated, he thought, to emphasize one system of ethics over another, and so he proposed a role for both rules and virtues.⁹

By 1973, Humanists had dropped all pretense of establishing a secular religion, but were still promoting "the good life." And again, behind the scenes, leading advocates were still offering a two-pronged approach to ethics. Paul Kurtz, co-author of the second *Manifesto*, begins with an appeal to "common moral decencies" such as integrity and trustworthiness.¹⁰ These "decencies" are, in turn, an expression of underlying virtues or "ethical excellences," such as autonomy and intelligence.¹¹ All these "decencies" and "excellences," however, are only *instrumental* goods, that is to say, they are good only inasmuch as they bring about some other good end. For "decencies," the goal is the "survival of any human community"; for "excellences," it is the "morally developed person." Finally, with a nod to Aristotle, Kurtz names "happiness" as the only *intrinsic* good, that is to say, the only goal in our life that is good in and of itself, that is worth achieving for its own sake. Here is Kurtz's summary of the position:

The intrinsic value humanists seek to achieve is *eudaemonia*: happiness or well-being. I prefer the word *exuberance* or *excelsior* to describe such a state of living, because I believe it is an active, not a passive, process. I believe the end or goal of life is to live fully and creatively, sharing with others the many opportunities for joyful experience.¹²

It is important to emphasize that ethics is an empirical or scientific exercise for Humanists. Ethics, as *Manifesto II* contends, is "situa-

tional.” We must constantly monitor the current state of human society and check to see whether our rules and virtues, or “decencies” and “excellences,” need revising. In the meantime, Humanists are willing to accept traditional values inasmuch as they advance their cause. These values are the “decencies” to which Kurtz refers, and “the best ethical teachings” of religion mentioned in *Manifesto II*. This approach raises the specter of relativism and subjectivism. Ethics ends up being relative because it varies from culture to culture and time to time, depending on our empirical findings. It is subjective because values and virtues vary from person to person, depending on any particular individual’s view of what it is to live “fully and creatively.” This seriously challenges any Humanist appeal to a system of shared values. We will return to this problem in a later section.

Whatever role virtue may play, we can be reasonably sure that Humanists would begin with something other than function. Dissension from Aristotle is nothing unusual. Through the ages, people have entertained different ideas of what it means to live well, and they have departed from Aristotle’s way of thinking to some extent or another. This would include a Biblical understanding of virtue, which we will also address below. In any case, the modern mind is unaccustomed to thinking in terms of a single end for which any given thing must be *for*.¹³ We might agree that a knife is *for* cutting, but we might endow the knife with other values. Its virtue—if we can even think in that way about knives—might have something to do with its style or brand or history. Today, secular virtue ethics (outside of Humanism) tends to focus on social roles: What is it to be a good mother, a good teacher, or a good cook?

Given their evolutionary commitments, Humanists are especially wary of Aristotle’s functional thinking. Being *for* something implies a purpose, which is entirely at odds with the blind, mechanical universe in which they take themselves to be living. The second *Manifesto* is explicit on this point: “we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.” Humanists are left to focus on what it is to be *Homo sapiens*. Philosopher and atheist, Daniel Dennett, seems to be hinting in roughly the same direction:

From what can “ought” be derived? The most compelling answer is this: ethics must be *somehow* based on an appreciation of human nature—on a sense of what a human being is or might be, and on what a human being might want to have or want to be.¹⁴

THE IS/UGHT PROBLEM

It is easy to understand why Dennett and the Humanists are attracted to something resembling virtue ethics. As in the case of Aristotle, there is no appeal to God, and there are no moral absolutes binding all people for all time. Further, virtue ethics might avoid a perennial problem known as the *is/ought gap*. This gap does not exist for Biblical ethics. If we begin with a divine, perfectly good lawgiver, we can move legitimately from command to obligation, from what a good God says to what a good person must do, from God's will to "Your will be done" (Mt. 6:10). Without God, we must make an unwarranted leap from fact to value, from the "is" of nature to the "ought" of morality.

Many ethical systems have attempted to bridge the is/ought gap. Consider the relatively straightforward case of ethical hedonism. Even if we accept the highly dubious contention that humans live for sensuous pleasures, and this desire affects every morally relevant decision, there is no reason to think that acting to maximize pleasure is always the right thing to do. The monumental failure of ethical hedonism was obvious in just about every episode of VH1's *Behind the Music*. A rare exception was the relatively squeaky clean Weird Al Yankovic, who was surprised to be featured on the series. "I was going to get hooked on crack just for the show," he joked, "but I never got around to it."¹⁵ For nearly every other musical act, however, the cocktail of gratuitous sex, binge drinking and drug abuse led to failure, loss, pain, and worse. None of this would have surprised Aristotle, Solomon (Ecc. 2:1-3), or Christ (Lk. 12:13-21). The drug of choice may have changed over the millennia, but human foibles have not. Solomon was right on this point as well: "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9).

Reaching into nature for a fact, and trying to derive value from that fact, is an occupational hazard for secular ethics. When pushed on the issue of morality, virtue ethics may seem to offer a way around the is/ought problem without appealing to God. Can this be done successfully? Aristotle, for instance, begins with a claim about what we are *for*. The next step is very important. If he moves from the "is" of function to an "ought" of morality, he has stumbled into the same trap. Does Aristotle make this mistake? There are two interpretations on this point;

both of which will be a problem for Aristotle in particular, and for any form of secular virtue ethics.

On one interpretation, Aristotle never intends to guide our actions. If he were playing the is/ought game, we might expect him to say that we are morally right when we act according to reason, and morally wrong when we act against reason. But virtue ethics is supposed to say more about the inner life of man than his public persona; it has more to do with the character of the moral *agent* than the rightness or wrongness of his *actions*. So, for example, it is better to be a genuinely courageous person than a person who performs an occasional act of bravery.

Understood in this sense, Aristotle's argument moves from "is" to "be," not from "is" to "ought." But if he never gets to "ought," he can offer no guidance on our actions. This seems, at the very least, unhelpful as an ethical theory. After all, the whole point in talking about values, both in an individual's character and in his relationship with other people, is to figure out what we approve and condemn and what we should and should not do.

Contemporary writers have reacted to this challenge in markedly different ways.¹⁶ Elizabeth Anscombe has recommended giving up on moral obligations altogether. Without a divine Lawgiver, she concluded, there was no point in talking about our duty to God and man. We can go no further than a discussion of what is, and is not, virtuous. The majority, which includes William Frankena and Rosalind Hursthouse, want to begin with virtue ethics and tack on a system of obligations. So, for instance, telling a lie is wrong because it is dishonest, and dishonesty is an indication of an individual's bad character. Therefore, we should not lie. Such an approach does not, however, avoid the is/ought trap. If right conduct ("ought") is derived from an assessment of good character, and that assessment depends on what we think about human nature ("is"), we have still tried to cross the gap, albeit with an extra step or two along the way.

On a second interpretation, Aristotle is seen to arrive at moral rules directly, without deriving them from virtues.¹⁷ Take the example of courage. This is one of those character traits we are supposed to develop in order to become a virtuous person. Aristotle thought that reason would guide us away from cowardice on one side (a vice of deficiency), and foolhardiness on the other (a vice of excess). Happiness was to be found in the "golden mean" between the two extremes.

"Everything in moderation" was the order of the day. This is not quite the same as saying that acts of cowardice and foolhardiness are just plain wrong, but it looks as though Aristotle wants to pass some kind of *moral* judgment on the presence of these vices in our life. So it seems, in the end, he has to make the move from fact to value, from an observation about human nature to a moral assessment of what we actually do.

OH TO BE LIKE THEE?

The is/ought distinction is not the only problem for a God-free virtue ethics. Subjectivism and relativism rear their ugly heads in several ways.

First, Aristotle thought a "great-souled man" would provide an example of what was truly excellent.¹⁸ Unfortunately, such a man could only be found among the aristocracy of ancient Greece. At one point, this paragon of virtue comes off sounding like Tom Bombadil in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. According to Aristotle,

... a slow step is thought proper to the proud [i.e., "great-souled"] man, a deep voice, and a level utterance; for the man who takes few things seriously is not likely to be hurried, nor the man who thinks nothing great to be excited, while a shrill voice and a rapid gait are the results of hurry and excitement.¹⁹

Sadly, this would exclude Tom's diminutive and impatient hobbit friends from the ranks of the truly virtuous. Again, on Aristotle's way of thinking, "beauty implies a good sized body, and little people may be neat and well-proportioned but cannot be beautiful." Randy Newman and Aristotle would have gotten along famously: short people really do have no reason to live.

Frankly, few of us could buy into Aristotle's elitism. Philosopher Roger Scruton likens his great-souled man to Friedrich Nietzsche's "Superman":

In each case pride, self-confidence, disdain for the trivial and the ineffectual, together with a lofty cheerfulness of outlook and a desire always to dominate and never to be beholden were regarded as essential attributes of the self-fulfilled man.²⁰

It is hard to imagine anyone—at least, anyone we would call virtuous or even socially well-adjusted—actually aspiring to be this kind of person. Nietzsche's Superman was no caped crusader, sacrificing office romance and a decent-sized changing room to save humanity.²¹ Having

proclaimed that “God is dead,” Nietzsche stripped any source of objective meaning from human life.²² So why, with the loss of meaning, should we continue the daily struggle for existence? Nietzsche points his readers in the direction of an ideal man, a superhuman being, who will impose meaning on his existence through sheer force of will, even if this means destroying the “weaker” people around him.

At first glance, Nietzsche and Aristotle make an odd couple, but their vision of greatness is decidedly unappealing and possibly creepy. Again, I venture that few of us would want to emulate either the great-souled man or Superman. As ideals, they betray the subjective beliefs, preferences and prejudices of their human creators. One is the product of an aloof Athenian aristocrat; the other is the product of a suicidal Prussian atheist. Why should we trust any human opinion of what, or who, counts as a truly virtuous person?

Second, right and wrong in Humanist ethics depend on the allegedly objective but changing “facts” of science. According to the *Manifesto* of 1933, “modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.” But why should we put our faith in Humanism when there are no guarantees? The sense of disquiet grows as we keep on reading. The document calls for “social and mental hygiene.” This sounds disturbingly like the German idea of “racial hygiene” which led, under the Nazi regime, to mass compulsory sterilization, euthanasia, and the Holocaust.²³ The Germans of this period were inspired by the success of eugenics programs in the United States, which were inspired in turn by social Darwinism—the view that Darwinian thinking can be applied to human populations.²⁴ The results in North America were bad enough but could hardly compare to the horrors of Nazi-occupied Europe. In all likelihood, this is *not* what the Humanists of this period had in mind. Social Darwinism went hand-in-hand with monopolistic trade practices and *laissez-faire* capitalism, neither of which were very appealing to left-leaning religious Humanists. For similar reasons we can be fairly sure that this is not what Dewey had in mind when he conceived of nature and science as “the willing servants of human good.”²⁵

So whose interpretation of Darwin should serve the human good? Indeed, can science really say anything much about what we should do, or how we should live? Science is often lauded for its objectivity, but it is also lauded for its tentative findings. Many of us are familiar with contradictory headlines in the field of health science.²⁶ Back in 1993,

doctors started touting the cardiovascular benefits of vitamin E. It is now generally agreed that vitamin E supplements do nothing to prevent heart disease. "Science" has also changed its opinion on sub-Saharan Africans. Thomas Henry Huxley, often known as Darwin's "Bulldog," wrote the following in 1865:

It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognisant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man.²⁷

Huxley's statement amply demonstrates the prevailing climate of scientific racism. Contemporary scientists would certainly question those "facts" today. So was racism right in 1865, but wrong in 2009? It hardly seems that the answer should depend on the findings of science.²⁸ Humanism commits us to moral relativism and all of its associated diseases.

A third and closely related problem centers on the nature of man. Who gets to decide what a human being is or might be? If ethics depends on our own assessments of human nature, then we will get different answers depending on who we ask. African slaves in antebellum America had become mere objects, chattels to be bought and sold. Jews in Nazi Germany failed to qualify as fully human. Women in Islam are only worth half a man.²⁹ The life of a pre-born child, in the eyes of the "pro-choice" movement, is worth less than the life of the mother. Each of these valuations has (or has had) a profound effect on daily life. If humanness is relative to the culture or the individual, then there is no objective view of what is good for man. Without a fixed standard of goodness, there is no way to tell whether a life is good or not.

Fourth, as mentioned earlier, the second *Manifesto* held out hope for survival and prosperity "in a world of shared human values." But whose values: Aristotle's? Darwin's? Nietzsche's? Hitler's? And how are those values going to be "shared" when they are relative to individual human experience? This is a recipe for moral anarchy, not a good society in which we strive to live the good life.

And finally ethics, according to the second *Manifesto*, "is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction." But why *should* I strive for the good life here and now, or ever? Why *should* I employ my intellect to help others? Morality without God provides no basis for obligation, for why I *ought* to do anything.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Acting On God's Love

Ironically, for all the weaknesses of Humanistic ethics in particular and secular virtue ethics in general, there is something to be said for a two-pronged approach that covers both acts and character. Humanists give equal weight to both approaches. Philosophers like Frankena give priority to character, and derive duties from virtues. But as we have seen, it is very difficult—indeed, in the light of the is/ought gap, impossible—to defend a God-free ethical system.

Scripture gives us a very clear starting point: we have, first and foremost, the duty to follow God's commands. This begins with God's instructions to Adam and Eve, reaches a great deal of sophistication in the Mosaic covenant, and continues into the New Testament Age.

After his journey of self-discovery, often pursuing egoistic or hedonistic goals, Solomon arrives at the following eternal truth: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc. 12:13, KJV). Biblical ethics is an ethics of duty.

In Matthew 22:34-36, Jesus is challenged by a Pharisaic legal expert to name the greatest command in the Law of Moses. Jesus sets out the following priorities:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 22:37-40).

It might seem that love could never be commanded, but the Scriptures make it evident that this love emerges from a response to God's love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19). It is out of this love that we desire to do His will.

We might be tempted to think that these obligations end with the arrival of God's kingdom in fulfillment of the Old Law (Mt. 5:17-18; Gal. 3:24-25). However, the apostle John reiterates the teaching of Christ: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:2-3).

Biblical ethics rejects consequentialism. We do not look at the outcome of our actions, and then determine whether our conduct was (or will be) right. From God's point of view, the end never justifies the

means. This is amply demonstrated in the case of Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6). On David's orders, Uzzah and his brother Ahio were transporting the ark of the covenant on a cart from the house of their father, Abinadab, to Jerusalem. The oxen drawing the cart stumbled on Nachon's threshing floor. Uzzah reached out to steady the load, and God promptly struck him dead for touching the ark (2 Sam. 6:13). This punishment may seem excessive to postmodern readers who are tempted to offer a number of excuses on Uzzah's behalf: he was acting with good intentions; he was "just" following orders; the ark was saved in the end. Sure the ark was off limits, "strictly speaking," but the outcome justifies Uzzah's actions. However, the ark of the covenant was the centerpiece of Israelite worship. Handling instructions were designed to uphold the object's sacred status. Moreover, this was no mere accident. The same passage in Numbers specifies that the ark was to be carried on poles by descendants of Kohath, of the tribe of Levi. There is no indication that Uzzah and Ahio were members of this family and, in any case, they were carrying the ark on a cart. When David moves the ark at a much later date, he brings attention to the role of Levites, as if to imply that he was not going to make the same mistake again (1 Chr. 15:2).³⁰

Uzzah is the example of first resort when it comes to emphasizing the rule-following aspect of Biblical faith. We should also keep in mind that Jesus died on the cross because the Law could not be kept perfectly (Gal. 3:10-12). An ethics of duty, therefore, does not justify legalism or imply a works-based religion (Eph. 2:8-9).

At the other extreme, we find people of the world and, unfortunately, members of the Lord's body, adopting an eclectic approach to ethics. At times they practice ethical egoism ("it is all about me"), and at other times it is ethical hedonism ("if it feels good, do it"), or pragmatism ("whatever works"), or utilitarianism ("the greatest happiness for the greatest number"). And, especially in this postmodern age, we find a large dose of ethical relativism ("what is right for you might not be right for me"). None of these views is sanctioned by Scripture. Our primary ethical thrust is duty ("do the right thing, no matter what")—Our duty is to love God and keep His commandments.

Character Built On Christ

Even within this call for duty, however, there is something deeper. In the exchange between Jesus and the lawyer, the Pharisee discerns

that loving God and loving one's neighbor are better "than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mk. 12:33). Jesus commends him for this insight. Even as a Pharisee and an expert in Jewish law, the man has come to understand that there was more to life—indeed, more to the good life—than the external keeping of the Law. On another occasion, Jesus chides the Pharisees for their fastidious tithing while neglecting "weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Mt. 23:23). Jesus was in no way trivializing the practice of tithing, but He wanted His people to act out of love and to develop the virtues of justice, mercy and faith.

This was not a new criticism. A similar deficit of character could be found in the time of Micah. God bemoans their thousands of rams and their ten thousand rivers of oil (Mic. 6:7). These sacrifices were required by the Law. God was not bringing temple worship to a premature end, but He wanted His chosen nation to develop justice, loving kindness, and spiritual humility (6:8).

God is very clear on this issue: He has always been interested, not only in what we *do*, but in how we *live*. In other words, in building a Christian worldview we need to understand that virtue is a necessary complement to divine command. It is not enough that we get through life having never murdered an innocent human being; we must *be* the kind of person who does not harbor hatred toward others (Mt. 5:21-22). A Christian approach to virtue ethics is evident in the preceding passages as well as in the beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12), the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), the proper objects of our thoughts (Phil. 4:8), and the qualities of Christian faith (2 Pet. 1:5-7), to name a few.

This approach to ethics begins, not with a simple fact about human nature, but with a value-drenched notion of what it is to be a child of God:

- "[F]or in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).
- "[I]t is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).
- "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

There is no attempt here to cross the is/ought gap. Instead, we move from who we *are* to who we could *be*.

Lastly, Christian virtue ethics has a model of greatness in the form of an objectively perfect Man, Christ Jesus. Our Lord is not good

because men have said He is good; He is good because He is God (Ps. 119:68). He is not merely an ideal; He is a real Man Who experienced the emotional, moral and physical realities of human existence (Lk. 22:44; Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:21). His goodness is not relative to a particular place and time; He is eternal—the One Who is, Who was, and Who is to come (Rev. 1:8). Unlike the ideal man of Aristotle and Nietzsche, this Jesus sought neither to disdain seeming trivialities (Mt. 6:28-30), nor dominate the people around Him (Phil. 2:5-8). He is the one Person, the only Person, Who deserves to be emulated.

CONCLUSION

For many people, "the good life" is probably synonymous with a life of ease. It is tempting to think that godless Humanists are likewise dedicated to the pursuit of worldly pleasure. In fact, Humanists put a lot of stock in the powers of human reasoning, especially *their* reasoning, and worldly pleasures tend to offer little in the way of mental satisfaction. The average Humanist is not opposed to immediate gratification, but it is not what he takes to be the good life.

More importantly, Humanists are trying to create a religion (*Manifesto I*) or a worldview (*Manifesto II*) that stands in the very narrow space between flaming religious liberalism on the one side and virulent atheism on the other. The result is meant to offer lapsed believers relief from the desperate emptiness of a thoroughgoing materialism. Humanists are painfully aware of statements that paint an unsympathetic, unattractive picture of unbelief. In *The Meaning of Evolution*, George Gaylord Simpson concludes that human life has no meaning:

Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind. He was not planned. He is a state of matter, a form of life, a sort of animal ...³¹

In "The Evolution of Ethics," Wilson and Ruse conclude that ethics does not exist:

Morality, or more strictly our belief in morality, is merely an adaptation put in place to further our reproductive ends. Hence the basis of ethics does not lie in God's will ... or any other part of the framework of the universe. In an important sense, ethics ... is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes to get us to cooperate.³²

Humanists want to eat their cake and keep it too. They want to play on the Darwinists' side, but they want to play nice.

Right conduct, coupled with the development of a good character (virtue ethics), is their formula for the good life. Without God as a starting point, they draw on the facts of nature to derive their ethics. As we have seen, however, this cannot be done. Nature is values-free and virtue-free—it can tell us nothing about morality. Secular ethics is doomed by the unbridgeable gap between “is” and “ought.”

For all their talk of intellectual rigor, Humanists fail to follow the implications of Darwinian evolution to their bitter, logical ends. Humanism is a cop out; it is nothing but microwaved atheism. The very name suggests that there is something exceptional about human beings—a claim that someone like Simpson would never accept. Calling for right conduct and good character assumes the existence of moral values—an assumption that Wilson and Ruse would never accept. It should come as no surprise that the American Humanist Association is effectively irrelevant to the current crop of New Atheists and hyperdarwinists.

Once God is in the picture, the central task of mankind comes into view: we are to love God and keep His commandments. A good life in the here and now means aspiring to develop those character traits that are valued by God and exemplified in the Person of Christ. Becoming this virtuous person, a good Christian, is a task that must be and can only be accomplished in the here and now.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifesto I*. Appeared originally in *New Humanist*, May-June, 1933. Accessed on July 12, 2009, from http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I

³ *Humanist Manifesto II*. Appeared originally in *The Humanist*, September-October, 1973. Accessed on July 12, 2009, from http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II

⁴ Aristotle. *Nicomachian Ethics*, 1.8. Note: (2) “Happiness” is the usual English translation of the Greek *eudaimonia*, by which Aristotle did not mean short-term pleasure. Sometimes “well-being” or “flourishing” are offered as

alternate renderings. (3) All quotes are from the W.D. Ross translation, unless otherwise indicated.

⁵ William F. Schulz. *Making the Manifesto: The Birth of Religious Humanism* (Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 2002), 117. See also the 14th thesis of *Manifesto I*.

⁶ Schulz, 59.

⁷ Roy Wood Sellars. *The Next Step in Religion* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1918), 7, 223.

⁸ Steven C. Rockefeller. *John Dewey* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 445-490.

⁹ Gregory Fernando Pappas. *John Dewey's Ethics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 129-145.

¹⁰ Paul Kurtz. *Toward a New Enlightenment* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 17.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 20.

¹³ Robert L. Arrington. "Ethics II (1945 to the present)," *History of Philosophy* (London, UK: Routledge, 1997), 10:129.

¹⁴ Daniel Dennett. *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (London, UK: Penguin, 1995), 468.

¹⁵ Julio Diaz, "'Weird AI' Yankovic," *Ink19*, September 1999. Accessed on July 9, 2009,

<http://www.ink19.com/issues_F/99_09/ink_spots/018_weird_al_yankovic.shtml>

¹⁶ Jan Steutel and David Carr. "Virtue ethics and the virtue approach to moral education," ed., David Carr and Jan Steutel, *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education* (London, UK: Routledge, 1999), 9-10.

¹⁷ Stanley J. Grenz. *The Moral Quest: Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 76.

¹⁸ Aristotle uses the Greek term *megalopsuchos*, which could be rendered in a more literal sense as "great-souled" or "great-minded." From the context of *NE* 4:3. W.D. Ross prefers "proud." The negative connotations of this word for Christian and postmodern readers alike is, in my opinion, appropriate.

¹⁹ Aristotle. *Nicomachian Ethics*, 4.3.

²⁰ Roger Scruton. *A Short History of Modern Philosophy from Descartes to Wittgenstein* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), 187.

²¹ “Superman” is a common but unfortunate translation. Nietzsche uses the German term *Übermensch*, which means literally “Overman.” As far as I am aware, the comic book character was not based on Nietzsche’s ideal man.

²² Friedrich Nietzsche. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Published originally in four parts, 1883-1885.

²³ The Nazi law on sterilization was also passed in 1933. See Robert Proctor. *Racial Hygiene* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 95.

²⁴ See Trevor Major. “Ethics and Darwinism,” *Reason & Revelation* January 1999.

²⁵ As quoted in Rockefeller, 451. According to Rockefeller, Dewey “enthusiastically embraced Darwin” but rejected social Darwinism, 222.

²⁶ For a study of this phenomenon within the medical field, see Athina Tatsioni, et al. “Persistence of Contradicted Claims in the Literature,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2007, 298(21):2517-2526.

²⁷ Thomas Henry Huxley. “Emancipation—Black and White,” in *Collected Essays 3: Science and Education* (New York, NY: Appleton, 1900), 66-67. Essay originally published in *The Reader*, 1865, 5:561-562.

²⁸ Kurtz defends this approach and calls it “objective relativism,” 28.

²⁹ *Qur’an*, sura 2:282; *Sahih Bukhari*, 1.6.301.

³⁰ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* trans. James Martin (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clarke, 1866), 330-334.

³¹ George Gaylord Simpson. *The Meaning of Evolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 345.

³² E.O. Wilson and Michael Ruse, “The Evolution of Ethics,” *The New Scientist* 17 October 1985: 108:51, 52.

THEY SAY, “IT TAKES A VILLAGE, NOT JUST A FAMILY”

Travis Sweet



Travis Sweet is a native Texan. He and his wife, the former Jeanne Givens, have two sons, one daughter, and six grandchildren. Sweet was educated at Arkansas Tech University, and the University of Central Arkansas. He also graduated from the Southern California School of Evangelism. Sweet has preached for the Lord’s Church in California at Norwalk, Palm Springs, and Grover City. He worked with the Church in Russellville, Arkansas, and now preaches for the Post, Texas Church of Christ

INTRODUCTION¹

The Word of God tells us: “[L]et God be true but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). No matter what man may do or say, God’s Word is true. It makes no difference how mankind may vote on the question, God is the final authority. However, in every generation man has tried to improve on God’s way, or has come to the conclusion that he, not God, is wise and knows best in all things.

1933, HUMANIST MANIFESTO I

In 1933, a group of Humanist philosophers came together to set forth a statement of their beliefs. What resulted from this meeting is called the *Humanist Manifesto*. Later, it was called *Humanist Manifesto I* when the revised version was published in the 1970s. One of the primary authors of this statement of beliefs was John Dewey. Dewey has had a great influence on public education in the United States, which includes the introduction of many of the Humanist doctrines into school curriculum. Brother Jim Cox, an elder in the Lord’s church and a public school teacher, once told me that John Dewey was the man most responsible for ruining American public education.

What does the *Humanist Manifesto* (which is a statement of the Humanist faith) say? It says:

1. Matter, not God is eternal.
2. Man came through the process of Naturalistic evolution.
3. There is no infallible guide because there is no God.

4. There is neither objective good nor evil, therefore man is his own god and he may decide any question for himself.
5. Science is man's real savior, not Jesus Christ.

Of course, this is only a part of the statement, but it sets the tone for the remainder of Humanist teaching.

GOD'S TEACHING OR MAN'S TEACHING?

The question must be: "Will we accept the Biblical formula for our lives or will we reject God's model for man's teaching?" God's Word tells us:

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Gal. 6:6-8).

The above question must be applied to the family life of every Christian. In our time this Humanistic philosophy concerning the family is stated in the title of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's book, *It Takes A Village*. The concept is that mere parents are not sufficient in knowledge or education to rear their own children, so it "takes a village" (i.e., government overseers) to properly bring up children. In reality, this is an age-old teaching that has been dressed up repeatedly over and over again, to which man has returned many times. What King Solomon said about 3,000 years ago is still true—"That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9). Mankind never seems to learn this lesson.

GOD CENTERED FAITH OR MAN CENTERED FAITH

The alternatives are simple: It is a God-centered faith versus a man-centered faith. Or, stated differently, Humanistic teaching versus God and His first institution, *the family*.

A man-centered faith is the highest form of arrogance. Man becomes his own god. Every generation has the same problem, but all seem to think that their philosophy is *new* and that all in the past were ignorant and unsophisticated. In his false pride, man thinks he is the first that ever thought of his new teaching. The Bible conclusively shows the ignorance of such supposedly wise men.

For example, look all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Satan's greatest appeal to Eve was straight from "modern" Humanistic teaching. What did he say to tempt her? He said: "God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). *You* can be like *God*. What greater temptation for mere human beings than to be like the God who created them? Eve, like modern-day Humanists, wanted to be her own god.

Again, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon was totally full of himself. His vain pride made him think of himself as being godlike. The true God stepped in and showed Nebuchadnezzar who was truly God, and who was merely a mortal man. The great king was driven from his throne and forced to eat grass like an animal until he acknowledged the true God of heaven (Dan. 4:24-25). It took a while, but the great king finally learned his lesson. Acknowledging the God of heaven, he said:

And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation (Dan. 4:34).

Another king, about six hundred years later, fell into the same trap. King Herod accepted the worship of the people after his speech to them. What happened to him? Luke records: "And the people kept shouting, The voice of a god and not of a man! Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:22-23). One would think that mankind after so many generations would finally understand that God will not allow His place to be taken by *anyone* or *anything*!

So then, concerning the rearing of children and the most basic unit of society, what does the Bible teach? Does it take a village, or does it take a family that will follow the simple teachings of the Lord as He intended? The Holy Spirit, through the writing of the apostle, Paul, set forth the structure and right operation of the family in Ephesians 5:22-6:4. That passage does not exhaust the subject, but it certainly serves as a model or pattern as to how God intends for us to live within the family situation.

In opposition to God's way, what does man teach? The influence of Humanism is apparent, even if the term "Humanism" is not known

or specifically used. Generally speaking, modern man wants no discipline or direction. His attitude is: "I want what I want, and I want it now!" In our time, hand-in-hand with that way of thinking, Humanistic social engineers stress (and families are led to believe) that a child's self-esteem is the most important thing—not what God wants or requires. In order for a family to follow this philosophy of life, all past teaching regarding the family and child rearing must be rejected. This manifests itself in the denial or acknowledgment of any authority which is to be followed, especially the Bible. "Authority" is a dirty word in the vocabulary of those who adhere to the modern, up-to-date "it takes a village" philosophy.

How does this differ from the Lord's teaching? Jesus Christ said: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18). He further told His disciples, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19), but He did not stop there. After teaching and baptizing them by the authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Jesus told the apostles to continue "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20). Thus, the teaching of Christ, which includes the teaching of the apostles and prophets by His authority, is binding on us: 1) as individuals, 2) as families, and 3) collectively as the church. Unlike man's teaching, "gray areas" do not permeate the teaching of Christ. Be that as it may, Biblical responsibility (thought by most to be traditional responsibility) is undermined by the Humanistic view that "it takes a village, not a family."

What is God's teaching concerning the family? He is the Creator of the family from the beginning (Gen. 2:20-25). No mere human being can possibly know as much about the family as its Creator. Man and woman are to become one flesh. The children born to this union are to be taught to give honor and respect to their parents, even when the parents are imperfect as they all are. The Lord told the Israelites: "Honor your father and your mother ... For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 20:9).

We are under a different law today (the Law of Christ, not the Law of Moses), but God's principles for the family are basically the same and are still true. Each member of the family has responsibilities that are congruent to the privileges of family life. The Holy Spirit guided the apostle Paul to set forth those responsibilities for us. He penned:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.
Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing
to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they
become discouraged (Col. 3:18-21).

We must make a choice. Will we follow God's will, or will we follow our own will?

Today, Satan's attacks on the family and home frequently come from places we formerly trusted in times past. Nowadays, Satan often uses our public schools in his efforts to destroy families and homes. In making this point, I mean no disparagement to the many dedicated Christians who are teachers. However, I personally know of a case where a tenth grade biology teacher used his position to ridicule God's account of creation and those who believed it, while at the same time he claimed to be a Christian. In far too many public schools it is permissible to teach Humanism's atheistic concepts regarding God and the family (alternative families, *et cetera*), but impermissible to teach anything about the family from a Biblical perspective.

The teaching of evolutionary descent of man is promoted, most usually without any possibility of the alternative being considered. Even the language itself is slanted to the evolutionary teaching. For example, notice the word "protozoa." It is from two Greek words meaning "first life." The obvious meaning is that we started from a one-celled organism and have evolved over millions of years. With our children being so subtly indoctrinated, it is no wonder that man has rejected God's way for the family.

Another way that the family is being undermined today is through "daycare" for children. I am not saying that all daycare is bad, but it can never replace the family as God has directed. The problem is that it takes the teaching and training of faith and the most basic ideals from the parents and turns it over to daycare professionals. The idea in the modern societal war on the family is to use opportunities to indoctrinate children early in life when they can be taught the Humanistic philosophy without family or religious interference.

God instructed the Israelites on how children were to be taught. It all had to begin with the family. At God's direction, Moses wrote: "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children" (Deut. 6:6-7). Was this indoctrination? Of course it was, but it was God's aim for them to

be educated in such a way that they could grow up understanding how is the best way to live as individuals in society and as members within their own families. It had to begin with dedication to the Lord and His will. They were told: “You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him,” (Deut. 6:13). That principle is the same today, in spite of man’s teaching to the contrary.

Our children are also bombarded with indoctrination in what Humanism calls “Sex-education.” According to the thinking of our time, very early in a child’s life he or she must be taught: 1) how to use and where to get contraceptives (perhaps “free” condoms at schools), 2) how and where to obtain an abortion without parental knowledge or consent, and 3) promoting the homosexual agenda, how the “Gay” lifestyle (including same-sex “marriage”) not only should be tolerated, but that it should be embraced as “normal” and “wholesome.” While such things as these are being openly advocated, the “village” will not permit children to be taught Biblical morality and what the Bible says about sin, right and wrong. According to the “village,” that would be “judgmental!”

Amazingly, the worst “sin” of our age is being “judgmental” about morals. We can see from Paul’s writing what the result of Humanistic teaching is and will be. How and why? Because it has all been tried before (cf. Rom. 1:24-32). Things never change. Mankind continues to make the same mistakes over and over again. What does the Lord say? “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight” (Isa. 5:20-21).

Families also face the problem of state intervention and regulation. Proponents of the “it takes a village” philosophy want states to have control over parents’ right to teach and lead their own children. Accordingly, parents who might otherwise punish their children in order to teach them right from wrong will be prevented from doing so. Many in the “village” consider spanking to be a form of child abuse. Therefore, they want parents who administer such discipline arrested and prosecuted for practicing it. Instances where this is happening are few and far between now, but all indications are that its frequency will rapidly increase in time.

As a rule, state agencies are run by Humanistic administrators and others who have been indoctrinated by Humanist teachers. My

daughter, who is a Christian with a good Bible background, observed this first hand as a social worker. She left that work and is now a school teacher, partly because of the Humanistic policies and programs mandated in social work by the state's management.

In the State of Texas, we have some notorious examples of what the fruits of state intervention can be. In 1993, the state and federal governments used the excuse of *possible* child abuse to lay siege to the compound where David Koresh and his Branch Davidian followers lived near Waco. Seventy-six people, which included women and more than twenty children, died as a result. I am in no way defending what Koresh and his followers did or might have done. However, the Waco tragedy should cause everyone to stop and seriously think, reflecting upon what can happen when the government intervenes into situations which it thinks do not meet with its approval.

A more recent example is the one that gained national attention when the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints near San Angelo was accused of abusing children. Were the members of that church abusing children? Again, not to defend the doctrines and practices unique to the people of that sect (I certainly do not agree with either), whether or not they were abusing children remains to be proved in a court of law. Perhaps they were, but the fact remains that, based upon questionable and maybe even false reports, zealots in the state government used police force and the power of the courts as a pretext to act against that group. We should not conclude that it could never happen to us.

Even now there is an effort being made by some in our nation's congress to pass a law which will make it a federal crime to criticize such things as homosexual conduct (including homosexual marriage). Not only that, they want those who do so to be charged with a hate crime. If that does come to pass, will we be willing to go to prison for our beliefs? I would hope so.

As New Testament Christians we must assume that government authority is doing right. We must be good citizens of the nation in which we live. Peter and Paul exhort us to be good citizens, pay our taxes and obey the civil authorities (1 Pet. 2:13-17; Rom. 13:7). Christians should be the best citizens in whatever nation they live. Yet, when the "village" government attempts to force us to act contrary to the Word of God, we must obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). In

such cases, we must take a stand for God, regardless of the consequences.

What did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego do? Faced with the choice of bowing to the king's image or being placed in the burning fiery furnace, they chose to follow the Lord, even if it meant certain death. What did they reply to the king?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up (Dan. 3:16-18).

We need that kind of courage and faith in our lives.

Peter and John, when faced with being beaten, imprisonment and death, told the Sanhedrin council: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Paul suffered unimaginable persecutions over a period of many years in order to remain faithful and do the Lord's will. These men could have decided to "go along to get along," but God's will took precedence in their lives, as it should with us. Whether as individuals, families or the church, we must follow the Lord's way no matter what the cost may be in this life.

In the final analysis, it always comes down to God's way versus man's way for the family.

What is God's way for the family? God intended from the beginning for a man and a woman to be joined together for life (Mt. 19:5-6). When He instituted the family in the Garden of Eden, it was then (and still is) the best way for us to live our lives.

The two had to become one flesh for God's will to be done. Aubrey Johnson stated it this way.

There is a oneness and a twoness about married couples that is modeled after the loving relationship within the Godhead ... The husband and wife do not become one person, but their yoking makes it impossible to consider one without the other. They are equal in nature, worth, dignity and standing before God (Gal. 3:26-28), yet they carry out distinctive roles for the good of the family, church and community.²

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are the Godhead, but each has a separate but interrelated function. Just so the husband and wife are two

distinct individuals with personal needs and contributions to the family setting.

Not only must God's way be followed by the husband and wife, but His way must be followed by the children also. They must be taught and trained in order to become mature adults and faithful servants of our Lord. Solomon understood this when he wrote: "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it" (Pro. 22:6). As with any teaching by the Lord, we have the choice to believe and obey or to reject and disobey. However, if the child is properly trained, it is much more likely that he will remain faithful to the Lord—and to his wife and family—when he grows to maturity. No one has ever improved upon God's teaching concerning the family.

CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, man has rejected God in his knowledge as the Right Director of his life and that of his family (Rom. 1:20-22)—the family which He created! We must choose between "the village" (State/Humanistic philosophy) and God. God is the source of all true knowledge and wisdom. Paul said: "... the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2-3). It takes God's direction, which is revealed only in the Bible, not some Humanistic "village," to have the kind of families that God wants us to have (Isa. 55:6-11).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Aubrey Johnson, *Love More, Sin Less* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 2008), 149.

THEY SAY, “WE INSIST UPON SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE”

Kenneth Ratcliff



Kenneth Ratcliff is a native of Nashville, Tennessee. He and his wife, the former Eugenia Hollon, have three sons. Ratcliff holds a B.B.A. degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, an M.B.A. degree from the University of Texas at Austin, and a J..D. degree from Southern Methodist University. He is retired U.S Air Force Colonel, and has been preaching since 1952. Ratcliff is an elder for the Lord's church in Schertz, Texas. He is the president of *The Gospel Journal* publication.

INTRODUCTION¹

This topic is one which can easily be perceived as being very complex, and requiring one or more volumes to explore. It will therefore be difficult to confine the discussion to a few pages and, at the same time, do it justice. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that the basic issue does not appear to arise from a single source but from several, and possibly from some that will not be discussed or readily perceived. It is also broader than a matter of “separation of church and state,” which can potentially lead in several directions and even lead to becoming bogged down in one area.

What needs to be realized from the beginning is that the church and the United States are faced with a serious threat. It is not new. It has been gradually working its way into our society for a number of years. The youth of today will possibly not perceive that there is a threat because it is a part of the culture to which they are accustomed. It is a repeat of the old story about the frog in water that is gradually heated until it is boiling. Because it is a gradual process, the frog is unaware of what is happening and ultimately dies. So it may be with the harm being done to the church and to the nation. However, there is a difference in that the threat and the alarm are coming from a number of sources. Are we willing to listen and respond as Christians?

Part of our problem lies among members of the church (and others). There are those who will vote based on being a member of a

particular political party, regardless of the issues or the candidate. It will make no difference if there is a clear conflict with the Scriptures. They do not want any sermons or discussions that they label as "political," but are likely to moan over the downward movement in the morals and freedom in our society. They close their eyes to the fact that they are partly responsible. In fact, those of this nature may constitute a sufficient number to have made a difference. We cannot promote the devil at the ballot box and then claim to fight him as a member of the church (or another religious body). "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24).

If one does volunteer work or gives to those they see in need, they do a good work and may be pleased with their efforts. If one gives to a beggar on the street, they do it voluntarily and could have refrained if they desired. It takes on a different appearance if the beggars get in one's face and it becomes difficult to evade them. One may be giving because they feel intimidated, but still realize it was their choice. It is a different matter if one steals from them or takes what they have by force. Then, it is a crime, and the one responsible should rightly be prosecuted and appropriately punished. That is easy to understand and likely everyone agrees, but what does that have to do with the topic?

When we work and earn our wages, we usually want to spend the money as we please. As a result, one may save while another quickly spends everything on food and entertainment. As long as it does not impact others, we are likely to say that it is their business. However, suppose the government steps in and takes part of your money and gives it to others? It may be given through a number of government programs and, although some may consider it to be a good work, it would not be a work that you would have supported. What does that have to do with the church?

Suppose government funds are used to assist abortions, would you have willingly contributed to this? True, we cannot pick and choose how our tax money will be used, but should there be a limit on where our government (local, state, federal) can spend tax dollars? Suppose tax money is used to pay for housing, medical care, and/or education for those below a certain income level. Surely, those are worthy causes. However, most people would like to make their own decision as to how their income is spent. Does this issue become even more pressing if you

have difficulty making ends meet? Suppose you have children in college and you have college loans which will haunt you for years. Do you want your tax dollars going to support other students? The same is true in the other areas. It is not that the tax money may be spent on worthy causes (after all administrative costs are deducted). It is the fact that the government could be getting into areas that are not really the role of government and is telling the taxpayer that others know best how to spend their money. It is a redistribution of wealth based on a criteria set by the government. If you were left with more of your income, would you not like to decide when and where it was to be spent? If you desired to help those in need, would you not like to decide who should receive that support? You might even be able to contribute more to the local congregation.

Keep in mind that the encroachment once started has a tendency to grow. Programs started never seem to find an end, particularly if they appear to serve a worthwhile effort. In fact, they are inclined to grow for there will always be more that can be done. That means more taxes and more government control. Do not be surprised if churches are looked to as another source of tax revenue. It could easily be determined that churches should not be free of taxation, and that all contributions as well as church property are subject to tax. Religions have grown accustomed to being exempt so that we may quickly consider this to be unlawful. On the other hand, it can readily be seen as a special privilege that should never have been given. Contributions become church revenue and subject to being taxed. If so, then the money so raised could be used for many endeavors that the church would never have considered.

Considering the general trend of today, it might become law that anyone being hired by a congregation must be hired (assuming they are considered otherwise qualified) regardless of factors such as religious beliefs on matters, such as marriage, divorce and homosexuality. The possibilities are endless. They may appear to be unrealistic and that such could never happen, but some years ago many would probably have thought that conditions that exist today could never come to pass.

Some events and involvement with the state can easily be perceived as the natural outcome of the growth and development of our society. For example, some years ago a church building might be constructed in any location and as desired by the religious body. Now, there must be compliance with a great host of regulations to meet building codes,

fire regulations, *et cetera*. If there is to be a kitchen area where food will be cooked, then the facility may be required to meet the same standards as required of restaurants. Auditoriums may be required to meet standards so as to accommodate the handicapped and, based on the auditorium's occupancy estimates, there may be requirements for a certain number of car parking spaces, adequate restrooms, *et cetera*. We might well appreciate that church buildings should not be exempt from many such regulations, but this becomes another area where the state is involved. The nose of the camel is under the tent, not just in one location but in many, which makes it all the easier for further encroachment to occur.

Let us consider some of the factors that have brought us to our present situation. In and of themselves they are not necessarily of a religious nature, but ultimately they impact religion and the church. The very fiber of our nation and our basic freedom is also placed in jeopardy. Having painted with a broad brush regarding the overall issue, attention will now be directed to the more narrow issue of "separation of church and state."

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

There is a general tendency to label groups according to their beliefs and practices. This can be misleading because splinter groups often emerge that have some differences. Remembering the names, beliefs and distinctions can at times prove difficult. Therefore, no significant effort will be made to label groups. Instead, consideration will be primarily focused on beliefs and practices. We can appreciate that no individual is exactly the same as another, and it is therefore easy to grasp that our thoughts can easily differ. Nevertheless, common goals, interests, and even common enemies can bring people together at least for a time, particularly as long as it suits the individual's or group's interest. What are some of those that might be applicable to this topic?

1. There are those who have a desire for influence and power. It is questionable if there are very many who will openly acknowledge that this is their goal. They may even fool themselves into believing this is not their motivation. For those seeking a public office, they are likely to speak of their desire to serve the public. Having obtained an office, many will seek a higher office and make politics a lifetime career. It can be much the same in the

private sector where individuals seek to reach the top in a field or profession which brings wealth, recognition and influence.

2. There are those, whose primary purpose is to gain wealth, and for some of these it may not matter to them how it is obtained. If it is obtained, it may bring with it influence and power, but that is secondary. They may use their riches to influence others, but it may not be so obvious, and even then their ultimate objective is to achieve further wealth.
3. Some focus their thoughts on man as the center of all things. It is the intellect and abilities of man that is the center of all things. The individual may (or may not) believe in God (or a god) but to him man can solve all problems. All things are for him and by him and we need look no further. It is this type of thinking which leads to a belief in evolution as the explanation of life and of various theories as to the creation of this planet. God can be eliminated from the thought process as what is considered to be a logical or scientific explanation is sought. Even some who claim to be Christians have likely bought into this form of thinking. This can also lead men to believe that they are capable of deciding and dictating what is best for them and for nations.
4. Others are almost (or completely) self-centered. Whatever pleases them is what they will do, if at all possible. They will lie, cheat and steal to obtain their desires. The fact that others may be hurt is of no consequence. How many people live for the so-called pleasures of life? The family may go without as the income is spent on hobbies or other activities that please the individual.
5. There are those who are old enough and can work but will not seek gainful employment. They would rather do without, or even beg, rather than work. They are not reluctant to seek and accept handouts and even expect society to provide for them. To put it bluntly, they are lazy.
6. Some have differing concepts as to the type of government(s) that is best for a people. All too often they are likely to think that they know best and should rule.
7. Others have differing concepts as to the creation of this universe and the nature and needs of man. These may claim to believe in

God as our Creator but then look upon man as the one who controls the earth, determines the climate, *et cetera*. To some this may be their religion, and they seek to impose their will on others by law or otherwise. If they happen to be preachers or Bible teachers in a religious group, their dogma will no doubt surface in their lessons. They have continually sought to influence our laws. If not already reflected, the impact on both church and state may ultimately be felt.

Other concepts may come to mind, but these should prove sufficient for the purposes of this study. It may be easily observed that a number of these may be linked together. Within many in the above list we can see the hand of Satan directly involved. Consider a basic principle—things tend to move along the path of least resistance (or that things tend to move downward and not upward). If one does not look after his physical life and neglects his appearance, does it improve or get worse? If we neglect the upkeep of our house or our livelihood, does it make any difference? If we allow all of our animals to run free (such as our pet dogs), will they maintain their distinct pedigree or gradually digress to a general mixture? I think we all know the answers to these questions. We must work to develop something, and then we must work to maintain or improve it. Left alone it will deteriorate.

The above concept is true with our spiritual lives and relationship with God, it is true with our nation, and the two are very closely linked together. Those who have lived very many years, or have given any attention to the history of the United States, will readily be aware that a great transformation has already occurred and continues. Some will applaud the changes, but it is believed that the trend is downward and ultimately threatens our physical liberty—including that which relates to property, speech and religion. In fact, our well being may already be threatened. It is time that Christians, and others, wake up before it is too late. Failure to know the threat and act to turn this nation around will only lead to further deterioration of the nations morals, our liberty and freedom of religion as we know it today.

Colleges In Colonial America

With regard to higher education in our early colonies, the book *Faiths of the Founding Fathers* states the following:

Readers can gain a good indication of where religious groups were concentrated in colonial America by looking at its colleges.

Because religious groups established all but one of the ten institutions of higher education in the colonies, the schools tended to be located where a denomination had strength. Thus in New England, Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth were Congregationalists, though Harvard later became Unitarian (a denomination that emerged from the liberal wing of Congregationalism). In Rhode Island, where several churches had strength, Baptists founded the college of Rhode Island (now Brown University).²

Religious groups or individuals likely initially founded even the schools for younger children, and the Bible was the textbook from which they learned to read.

The U.S. Supreme Court

Some may not perceive that the U.S. Supreme Court is a part of the issue. It is expected to be blind to the biases of politics and the different individuals or groups that would seek to sway decisions in their favor. It is the responsibility of that court to uphold our constitution and to abstain from making laws, which is the purview of the legislative branch. That may be what many either believe or expect, but that is not the way that is seen by many others. The fact that a president relishes the opportunity to appoint a replacement on the Supreme Court should tell us something. It would be desired that the most unbiased, qualified judge possible would be appointed, but that may be one of the last things under consideration. Some of the factors that appear to come first are such things as race, sex, political party, and whether they are likely to rule in keeping with the political party in power. To the extent this is true, it also tells us something of the nature of the rulings to be expected, particularly if the majority of the court leans in the same direction as the party in power. So much for the balance of power, upholding the constitution, and our liberties.

There is another factor, which must be considered. In spite of oaths being taken by those in government to uphold our constitution, there are two basic views with respect to the constitution, which weigh heavily in making decisions, along with factors already mentioned. One is that the constitution is to be interpreted to mean what it meant at the time that it was written. If some portion appears inappropriate, for whatever reason, then the constitution contains provisions whereby it may be amended. The other view is that our constitution is a “living” document. That simply means that it may be interpreted according to the time. The Supreme Court can thereby interpret the constitution to

mean whatever the court desires. The Supreme Court bypasses the constitution, the Executive and Legislative branches and makes its own laws. This should not be surprising, as some lower courts have done the same. Instead of pronouncing that, in the opinion of the court, the law is poor (or otherwise) and then ruling according to the law as written, they rule based upon what they believe the law should provide. Unless deemed to be unconstitutional, any changes in the law should be left to the legislative branch. If a law is found to be unconstitutional, then it is simply not enforced by the court.

Where do we find any evidence of members of the Supreme Court being of the opinion that the constitution is a living document subject to being revised by that court? A lengthy quotation from the book, *Scalia Dissents*, should assist in understanding this concept. This book is written by Kevin Ring, a former counsel to the U.S. Senate's Constitution subcommittee, in which he lets Associate Justice Antonin Scalia (appointed to the Supreme Court in 1986), speak for himself. Ring says:

In applying his unique judicial philosophy, Scalia bucks some modern trends in constitutional interpretation. Chief among those theories is that of a "living" Constitution. The idea is that the document's meaning changes from age to age to accommodate the evolving values of the American people. This view of constitutional interpretation, which is shared to some extent by nearly all liberal legal scholars, gives judges tremendous power. After all, it is the judge who gets to decide which rights and responsibilities are valued by the public and which can be discarded. The obvious danger in such an approach is that the rule of law becomes rule by lawyers.

In politically incorrect splendor, Scalia says he likes his constitution "dead." He argues that only a fixed and enduring charter can keep judges from reading new fads into the Constitution and less popular mandates out. He has pointed to the death penalty, ironically, as a good example of the dangers of a "living" Constitution. Although the text of the Constitution specifically contemplates capital punishment, three members of the Supreme Court during the last twenty years have declared it unconstitutional in all situations (see chapter six). In their view, government-administered execution is no longer in synch with "evolving standards of decency." Still other judges have limited states' use of capital punishment against certain classes of

convicted criminals after deciding, in their view, that it is now “cruel and unusual.”³

The writer goes on to point out that just as breezily as some Supreme Court Judges who favor a “living” Constitution would write the death penalty out of the Constitution, they are willing to write new “rights” into the nation’s charter. The book proceeds to give illustrations of such action.

The more one ponders the impact of the concept of a “living” Constitution, the more they can see the power exercised by a president when one or more judges are appointed during his term of office. Since the judge will serve for a lifetime (or until resignation) the impact can easily live well beyond the time the president is in office and as power shifts between political parties. It takes very little imagination to envision how far the Court can potentially go, and the impact that it can have on this nation. There should not be any doubt that our religious freedom can be affected even more than it already has.

Alexis De Tocqueville

Alexis De Tocqueville was born in Paris, France, in 1805 and died in 1859. Between 1831-33, he visited the United States and subsequently published *Democracy in America*, which is composed of two parts published at different times. This is part of his observation of religion in the United States:

The sects that exist in the United States are innumerable. They all differ in respect to the worship, which is due to the Creator; but they all agree in respect to the duties that are due from man to man. Each sect adores the Deity in its own peculiar manner, but all sects preach the same moral law in the name of God. If it be of the highest importance to man, as an individual, that his religion should be true, it is not so to society. Society has no future life to hope for or to fear; and provided the citizens profess a religion, the peculiar tenets of that religion are of little importance to its interests. Moreover, all the sects of the United States are comprised within the great unity of Christianity, and Christian morality is everywhere the same.

It may fairly be believed that a certain number of Americans pursue a peculiar form of worship from habit more than from conviction. In the United States the sovereign authority is religious, and consequently hypocrisy must be common; but there is no country in the world where the Christian religion

retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.

I have remarked that the American clergy in general, without even excepting those who do not admit religious liberty, are all in favor of civil freedom; but they do not support any particular political system. They keep aloof from parties and from public affairs. In the United States religion exercises but little influence upon the laws and upon the details of public opinion, but it directs the customs of the community, and by regulating domestic life, it regulates the state.⁴

There was certainly no claim that the United States was in any way perfect in religion or otherwise. However, we can appreciate his observations. He fully recognized the great number of religious bodies and beliefs, but it must have been easily observable that religion had a great influence on the young nation. There was neither an interest nor an effort to establish a state religion, or for a religious body to act to influence the laws of the nation. This did not mean that the nation was not influenced by religion. Rather, individuals who were influenced by the Christians beliefs, influenced their communities, the colonies/states with their laws and ultimately the United States. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise to find men and women in all walks of life openly speaking/writing with references to God. It would not matter whether it related to government or private communication. Would anyone even have reason to consider the appropriateness of praying in any public assembly much less a school? If anything, it would probably have been highly objectionable if prayer had not been offered. How is it that this far down the stream of time, men even consider that public prayer to God either is or could be objectionable, if not illegal? Did we fail to understand our history, the constitution, and those who founded this nation? This should tell us of the great influence our religious lives should be and of the need for God-fearing individuals to become involved in local, state and national affairs.

This writer attended a number of schools in several states before finishing high school. In fact, it was ten schools in six states. Prayers were prayed in all of those schools and at their functions. Frequently, prayers were offered at the beginning of each school day, and it was not uncommon for willing students to lead the prayers. No one was forced to pray. In the Dallas, Texas, high schools (and possibly others) in the

1940s, credit could be received for a Bible course. There was an established textbook, but the course was taught where the student attended worship. It was not a required course, and it is doubtful if anyone considered it to be inappropriate.

In some areas, a Bible course is now available in schools, but it is generally limited to being taught as either history or as a literary work. Possibly many school districts (or states) are reluctant not only because of the idea of separation of church and state, but because of the potential of facing a number of other religious groups that may insist on having the same opportunity. This is a sad commentary on how far this nation has departed not only from the Bible, but also from the attitude that prevailed in the early days of this nation.

If one traveled throughout the colonies in the 1600s and 1700s they could expect to find a great variety of religious bodies and beliefs. This was due to the religious background of those who settled in a particular area. It is said in the book, *Faiths of the Founding Fathers*:

For right or wrong, North Carolina had the reputation as the most irreligious of the American colonies. In the 1730's William Byrd of Virginia declared that North Carolinians had "the least Superstition of any People living. They do not know Sunday from any other day." Several decades prior to Byrd's comment one of a series of frustrated Anglican missionaries declared that North Carolina contained four kinds of people: "First the Quakers ... Second ... a great many who have no religion, but would be Quakers, if by that they were not obliged to lead a more moral life ... A third sort ... preach and baptize through the country, without any manner of orders from any sect or pretended Church. A fourth sort, who are really zealous for the interest of the Church (of England), are the fewest in number, but are the better sort of people."⁵

What would be the observations and writings of these same men if they could travel throughout the United States today?

An effort will not be made to touch on the religious beliefs (or lack thereof) of our founding fathers. However, considering the factors briefly discussed, it can readily be expected and appreciated that the Bible and Christian influence would be a part of the background of the men and women who formed the basic society in the early days of this nation. They were still very close to their ancestors who, for religious reasons, had come before them.

Separation Of Church And State

The Declaration of Independence adopted by the colonies' Second Continental Congress contains at least two statements related to God and thus religion. One statement is possibly the more familiar and is found in the first few sentences. The other is near the end of the declaration. The first states: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."⁶ As readily noted, there is both the reference to the fact that man is a created being and that there is a Creator.

The second statement, in part, reads:

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions ... And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.⁷

The above statements are a clear recognition of God as the ruler over all nations. It very clearly appears that those who signed the Declaration of Independence did not think of the separation of church and state in the manner that it now appears to be perceived. What it does make clear is that our founding fathers had an abiding belief in God and of His power over the universe. Their background alone would indicate that they would oppose a state religion, but surely their language does not suggest that they envisioned a separation of church and state as promoted in more recent times.

Turning to our Constitution, we give consideration to the First Amendment of the ten, which were ratified on December 15, 1791. It declares: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievances."⁸ This is the only provision that relates to religion ("religion" is not defined). Nothing within the context suggests that it was the intent to separate religion from the state. Rather, the government was not to establish a religion. The thought of other religions besides "Christian" may not have entered their thoughts, but the fact remains that the language only opposes a state religion. Even if every citizen in the new nation held exactly the same belief, law could not mandate that

religion. The common belief would exist on an individual basis. That would be freedom *of* religion and not freedom *from* religion. Considering the high respect given to God and the Bible, and that many early educational institutions were founded by religious bodies, it cannot be imagined that prayers, references to God, and the reading of the Bible would be excluded from schools or public assemblies. It is far more likely that such would be expected.

Could it be that what we are now learning is that past generations did not understand what the founders of this nation intended? We have been praying and reading the Bible in schools and public assemblies without any thought that it violated the beliefs and intentions of our founders, the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution. How long will it be before “In God We Trust” is removed from our money? How long will it be before chapels and religious services are not permitted on military installations, there is no prayer in the opening of sessions in Congress, and Bibles are outlawed from being used when administering the oath of office? That is separation of church and state. We might also live to see groups that do not believe in God, or His Word (the Bible), insist that such practices cease as it discriminates against their religion.

When did we first begin to entertain this concept, how, and why? Time and space do not permit a complete examination and explanation. We must keep in mind that freedom *of* religion is not the same as freedom *from* religion, which appears to be the direction in which the nation is moving. This is particularly true if we think in terms of the “Christian” religion. The outlook and attitudes of various individuals/groups have already been listed, and these play a role in the changes that have occurred (and continue). It may therefore be unrealistic to lay the blame on one source. Judges might be blamed, but, in turn, they may be a reflection of attitudes already existing in our society.

What should be immediately obvious is that we are speaking of two different entities, the “church” and the “state.” By “church,” for the purposes of this article, will be meant any of the so-called “Christian bodies.” Considering the great influx of groups that do not fall into that category, the term “church” more properly could be construed to mean any religion of whatever nature. Even this can require further definition as there are groups, such as environmentalist, that generally may not be thought of as a church, or religion, but because of their beliefs and efforts they might be brought under the umbrella of a church or

religion. One can see the danger if "church" is limited to those labeled as being of the "Christian" belief, and a separation is made between church and state. Would Jews be excluded? What about Muslims and other groups? There may be the impression by some that separation of church and state relates only to those considered to be "Christians."

The basic intent of our founders appears to have been to prevent having a *church of the state* or *state religion*, such as the Church of England or the Catholic Church that had dominated nations. It was not freedom *from* religion but freedom *of* religion. This was what had prompted many to come to this country and suffer many hardships, and there was no desire for history to repeat itself. Our founders were of different beliefs with their lives greatly influenced by the Bible, and they had every intention of maintaining their freedom.

The idea of "state" most likely brings to mind our government, and especially our federal government. If we are to think in terms of separation of "church" and "state," what role, if any, are either to play? Is there to be any interaction, and is it possible that one (church or state) will seek to dominate and even control the other? We have already noted among our early founders that their religious background was reflected in what they wrote, said, and did. They neither desired nor attempted to establish a state religion, but a "Christian" influence was present. The state now gives the impression of wanting to erase any suggestion of "Christian" influence. Thus, we have the removal of the Ten Commandments from public buildings, curtailing of public prayers, hindrances to teaching the Bible in public schools, *et cetera*. On the other hand, consider the government's support of such things as ease in obtaining divorces, abortions and homosexuality. This is not just a matter of separation of church and state, it is a movement away from anything relating to Christianity. An overall view of action by the state suggests that there is far more involved. The freedoms upon which this nation was founded, and for which so many have suffered and died, are being taken by the state. We are in a society that is becoming more and more socialistic in the sense that more and more control is being exercised by the government over every aspect of our lives. Private property is coming under greater control, taxation increases in every area, and businesses are taken over by the government. Some, who may not feel directly influenced, may be very pleased. They could be receiving various forms of assistance including medical care and free lunches for their school children. When problems arise, some form of

government assistance is expected. No thought is given as to the source of the aid they receive. Someone must pay taxes to make such benefits available. Corporations may pay taxes, but they pass it on to the consumer. Those who pay the taxes are carrying the load for others, and it is being taken from them without their consent in most instances.

Although such comments as those above may appear to be a deviation from the topic, it is but a part of what is happening. From every indication, the “state” is in the process of dominating and controlling every aspect of our lives, including the distribution of wealth and the control of property. A very necessary part of the process is to separate itself from the “church.” To the extent that the state controls society and separates itself from the church, it will of its own necessity need to also control the “church.”

The book, *A People's History of the Supreme Court*, by Peter Irons, gives a brief account of several cases that have played a major role in shaping the separation of church and state. Although it may appear that court cases involving religion have arisen within the last ten to fifteen years, they actually arose much earlier. They may not appear to relate to the separation of church and state, but the mere fact that the cases involve the Christian religion puts the foot in the door. The type of situations which are, or can be posed, have the potential of creating a problem even for courts which desire to keep hands off of issues involving religious bodies. Should the court consider cases involving a young child seriously ill when the parents' religious beliefs prohibit them from going to doctors, or if they believe they can be bitten by poisonous snakes and not suffer harm? Should religious beliefs enable some to escape any form of military service (even in the medical field) in time of war when the nation is seriously threatened? Where is the line to be drawn? Such issues create what might be considered a conflict in the strict concept of separation of church and state. If there is a strict and definite separation, then it might well be considered that what one does in the name of religion is of no concern to the state. However, the state, at some point, does consider that some matters are of interest to the state. That line can be moved so that the state becomes more and more involved in matters of religious bodies. This might reach into the area of discrimination so that a congregation could not limit the hiring to those of that religious belief, particularly of those positions unrelated to teaching a particular doctrine. The next step could be to prohibit the teaching of anything that is contrary to that

which is either legal or accepted by society. This might prohibit lessons on such topics as abortion, homosexuality, and divorce/remarriage. Even if not prohibited by law, the door could be opened so that congregations may be successfully sued by those offended by the teaching. Ultimately there is no limit.

The above might appear to be contrary to the concept of separation of church and state as the state becomes very much involved in religion. However, they work hand-in-hand. They control certain actions of the Christian religion while at the same time maintain the idea of separation by prohibiting as much interaction as possible between the church and state. Thus, general public prayers, displays, teachings, *et cetera*, are prohibited. The state can remain separate and aloof while at the same time have a great influence on religious bodies.

An early Supreme Court case that involved religion was Reynolds v. United States. The case arose from the Utah Territory and involved a man (George Reynolds) who was accused of bigamy. He claimed to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon), and that he had been a member for a number of years and that he believed their doctrine. Further, he claimed that the doctrine of the Mormon Church was that all males should practice polygamy. He had obtained authority from the church for the marriage in question and had been married according to the church doctrine. In spite of his religious position and doctrine, he was convicted. It was considered that the law of the land must prevail. This case obviously brought the Supreme Court into the realm of religion. An interesting factor is a statement of Thomas Jefferson that found its way into the Court's opinion, one which has been cited on other occasions. This statement was in reply to an address to him by a committee of the Danbury Baptist Association. Jefferson stated:

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of the government reach actions only, and not opinions—I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' *thus building a wall of separation between church and State*. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which

tend to restore man to all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties (emphasis added).⁹

It is the statement, “thus building a wall of separation between church and State,” that has been grasped to promote “separation of church and state.” Some thoughts come to mind. First, the Constitution and Declaration of Independence should be construed based on what they say. The intent of those who write legislation may be of assistance in determining the meaning, but it is what the document says that becomes law and should control. Second, it would be important to further examine the beliefs of Thomas Jefferson to disclose whether such a statement is out of harmony with what he has stated elsewhere.

Consider briefly a few more of the Supreme Court cases that have had an impact on the issue of separation of church and state. The first of such cases is *Everson v. Board of Education*, which was decided in 1947. In this case, New Jersey permitted the payment by school boards for the cost of transporting students to and from schools, including private schools. This included religious schools. The suit brought by *Everson* argued that this was an indirect aid to religion. The case ultimately reached the U.S. Supreme Court where, by a 5-4 decision, the law of New Jersey was upheld as being constitutional.

The next case of interest (decided in 1948) involved the State of Illinois, and again related to the school system, in *McCullum v. Board of Education*. In this case religious classes were held in public schools during regular school hours. There was no indication that students were coerced to attend such classes. It was entirely at their discretion. In an 8-to-1 ruling, the Supreme Court held that the program violated the first amendment. The basic reason was that state-supported educational facilities were used to teach religious doctrine. The rationale was that the students had a legal responsibility to attend school, and that they were released from that obligation to attend religious instruction. It was further expressed that government and religion can best achieve their goals if each works free of the other. The dissenting opinion questioned the distinction made in this case and in the *Everson* case previously mentioned. One might at least perceive the potential of judges moving in a desired direction and making distinctions that suited their personal beliefs. There is also the possibility that in all honesty they might have seen the *Everson* case as right on the verge, and the *McCullum* case as having crossed over the line. We might honestly ask ourselves how we would judge if faced with the issue. As long as taking the course was

entirely voluntary, would we have an objection when from every indication it would not add to the cost of operating the school district? Would we feel any different if only one schoolroom during one period was available and that it would be used to teach Islam?

The thought expressed in the McCollum case of government and religion working free of each other may sound reasonable at first glance. However, it is not as reasonable as it might appear. How free are those holding public office or employment to make reference to God and God given rights in their public writings and speech? To what extent is the government holding itself free from interfering in matters of religion? It might be perceived that there is an effort by government to eliminate all references to God while at the same time exercising more and more influence on religion.

The case of *Torcasco v. Watkins* was decided in 1961. In this case, the Maryland constitution required that public officials express their belief in the existence of God. The Supreme Court ruled that this was unconstitutional.

In 1962, the Supreme Court decided the case of *Engel v. Vitale*. Under the laws of the State of New York, a specifically worded prayer was to be said aloud in the school in the presence of a teacher at the start of each school day. The prayer consisted of the words: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country."¹⁰ By a vote of 6-to-1, the Supreme Court held that this prayer violated the First Amendment.

It is interesting to note how frequently the cases involved the school systems. In many respects this is not unexpected. It is within the schools that children are generally coming in contact with formal education. A part of this is learning to have proper respect for teachers and those in authority as well as fellow students. Somewhere in their educational process, it is expected that they will learn something of the history of their nation and civics. To properly understand U.S. History it would seem essential to see the role played by religion, regardless of what one might personally believe. There will always be things in our nations' history (and our personal lives) that we may not like. Nevertheless, a true account will include those factors that help to explain our past and the road we traveled to reach today. When our society thinks of itself as being "Christian," with the desire of having "Christian" principles as a part of the lives of their children, it is not unexpected

that it should be reflected in the formal education process by prayer and the reading of passages from the Bible. No objection would be expected when neither the prayers nor the readings promote a particular religious belief. If a poll had been taken in the U.S. when these cases arose, it is likely that it would have heavily favored the prayers and readings. Although that should not be the controlling factor, if true, it would indicate that *a few* could overturn what had likely been a practice going back before we became a nation. All that is needed in some instances is the threat of being sued. Is it not surprising that for many years no one would realize that our constitution was being violated?

The Impact Of Immigration

During the early history of this nation most of the immigrants to what would become the United States came from Europe, which meant they fell under the label of “Christians.” If they did not speak English, they would learn the new language and ultimately blend in with the society of their adopted home (with exceptions). Now, we have a great influx of Spanish speaking immigrants, both legal and illegal. In many instances they will not learn to speak English, and some maintain their allegiance to the country from which they came. In addition, a great number are coming from the eastern part of the world. Not only is their language and culture different, but they also bring with them religions that have been foreign to the large majority of the U.S. population. There is nothing to suggest that they be denied freedom of religion. However, should this mean that our culture must change rather than that they adapt to ours? If we have prayed to the God of the Bible and read the Bible in schools and public assemblies, should it now be expected, or required, that we either cease or grant other religions the same opportunity? Schools might be willing to have the Bible taught as history or literature but may not allow it because of the problems that might arise from various religious “non-Christian” groups.

The Government Cannot Determine

What A Christian's Service To God Is To Be

This concept is easy for a Christian to understand. From Genesis through Revelation, it is clear that God rules over all. Nations and rulers rise and fall at His pleasure (Jer. 18:1-10; Isa. 40:15-17). If there was nothing otherwise, Romans 13:1-7 is sufficient to prove that governments are ordained by God. Just as God commands that all are to be good, law abiding citizens, so also are governments/rulers to act

in harmony with the will of God, and all are accountable to Him. If there is a conflict between God's law and the law of man, we ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 4:18-19; 5:25-29).

Those who claim to believe the Bible probably understand and believe this concept. However, we are aware that there are many who are ignorant of, or do not accept, the Scriptures' teachings. They may be atheist, embrace another religion, or consider it another work of man. Such individuals are very likely to ultimately look to the attitudes and desires of man in determining the nature of government as well as the place of religion in society. Frequently, this will be based on a quest for power by individuals or political bodies. They will then to the extent possible shape matters to suit their ideology. Human desires and intellect as to what is best will control. If religion plays a role it will likely be manipulated to promote those in power, rather than being that which influences the decisions and conduct of those in power.

When the nation was for all intents and purposes "Christian" in nature, and society was strongly influenced by the Bible, it was only natural, and to be expected, that Christian principles would be a strong influence on our founding fathers and generations to follow. In our present age it is highly doubtful if the same is true. The general attitude about such things as modesty, individuals living together without the benefit of marriage, divorces, abortions, homosexuality, crime, *et cetera*, reflect a society that is becoming more and more Godless. It is made worse by the fact that some so-called "Christian" bodies condone, if not embrace, some of these sins. From every indication, society is continuing a downward trend. What this ultimately means is that man believes that he knows what is best for his life. He may attend a worship of God and carry a Bible, but he is likely to know little of its contents and will look to his personal reasoning for guidance rather than God. Should he discover that his thinking is contrary to the Scriptures, then he will find some rationale to justify his opinions and conduct. The situation is aptly described in Romans 1:16-32.

CONCLUSION

From every indication there are several forces that are driving the direction this nation is taking. Although at times our courts give every indication that they are making law, that is probably true in only a few of the total cases heard throughout the land. Generally, the courts tend to follow behind the trends rather than make them. Following WWI we

had the roaring twenties that likely had an adverse impact on our society. However, the great depression, starting in 1929 and ending at least by WWII, resulted in many people taking a more serious look at their spiritual lives. Coupled with that is the fact that much of our population lived on farms and in small communities where family and local ties were very strong. Entertainment was likely to be found among friends and neighbors with no televisions. With the end of WWII came prosperity that had not been known before and the development of products that went beyond our dreams or expectations. It might well be that people began to think: “Look what we have done!” and “Nothing is impossible for us to accomplish given the time and money.” People freely left their roots and moved about the nation and even to foreign countries. The television and air-conditioning moved families indoors and away from their neighbors, while young people frequently found their entertainment away from home and neighborhood. This was further assisted by better roads and families owning two or more vehicles.

Possibly without realizing what was happening, new generations were arising that saw little need for God. Their time was spent in pleasing self. They might go through the motions of attending religious services when it was convenient, but there was little time for serious Bible study or prayer. With any such decline there will be a decline in morals. Those who have lived for very many years can well attest to what has happened—and is happening—even if we do not have a clue as to why.

Note that no effort has been made to place the cause of change on any one factor. Those who favor the government being in complete control and/or redistributing wealth are playing a role. Those who believe that man is the end in himself and has the capability of determining his own destiny are partly responsible. The immoral and ungodly who insist on living as they desire are at fault. Primary goals such as fame and fortune turn men away from God. We must likewise not forget the lukewarm Christian who will just drift along wherever the current goes, and those who have closed their eyes to what is happening. Then, there is the impact of the “Non-Christian” religions that have increased their presence and influence.

This chapter has briefly considered the history of the development of the concept of separation of church and state. A number of issues and questions have been posed. In some instances we may believe that

the courts have been right in getting involved, but where would you draw the line? Nevertheless, it is believed that there is a real threat to our religious freedom and the freedom of this nation as it has existed in the past. There is no easy answer, and none has been suggested.

This writer hopes he is completely wrong in his observations, but he believes that the church and the nation had better wake up before it is too late. The only answer is in living a strong life as a Christian. That includes spending more time studying the Bible, being more diligent as a Christian, and taking an active interest in the affairs of our communities, states, and nation. That may mean spending less time on the things of this world and more on God's work. There is nothing to suggest that it will be easy or can readily be accomplished by the present generation. Chances are that the United States is in its present situation because those who claim to believe in God have not taken their work for Him seriously. We can change that beginning with ourselves.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² David L. Holmes, *The Faiths of the Founding Fathers* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14.

³ Antonin Scalia, *Scalia Dissents: Writings of the Supreme Court's Wittiest, Most Outspoken Justice*, ed. Kevin A. Ring (Washington, DC: Regency Publishing, Inc., 2004), 6.

⁴ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Phillips Bradley (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1994), 1:303-304.

⁵ Holmes, 23.

⁶ U.S. Declaration of Independence, (1776).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ U.S. Constitution, First Amendment, (1791).

⁹ Thomas Jefferson's statement used in *Reynolds v. United States* 98 U.S. 145 (1878).

¹⁰ *Engel v. Vitale*. 370 U.S. 421 (1962).

WORKS THAT WERE HELPFUL IN STUDYING THIS SUBJECT

Everson v. Board of Education. 330 U.S. 1 (1947).

Friedman, Lawrence M. *A History of American Law*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 3rd edition, 2007.

Hammond, Phillip E., Machacek, David W. and Mazur, Eric Michael, *Religion on Trial*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2004.

Irons, Peter. *A People's History of the Supreme Court*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 1999, *McCullum v. Board of Education*. 333 U.S. 203 (1948).

Schwartz, Bernard, *A History of the Supreme Court*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.

The Supreme Court and the Constitution. edited by Stanley I. Kutler. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co., 3rd ed., 1984.

Torcasco v. Watkins. 367 U.S. 488 (1961).

THEY SAY, “DO NOT TEACH THE BIBLE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

John Moore



John Moore is a native Texan. He is married to the former Carla Garner. They have three sons. Moore earned B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from Southwest Texas State University. He is an adjunct faculty member for Austin Graduate School of Theology, a board member for *The Gospel Journal*, of which he was a co-editor for five years, teaches at the Southwest School of Bible Studies, and, serves on the advisory board of *World Video Bible School*. He preaches for the Lord's church in Dripping Springs, Texas.

INTRODUCTION

Imagine a *public* school class where the Bible is taught and where students are required to read the Book of Genesis or the Book of Matthew. Picture this class possessing a teacher's guide book which relates the Bible's place in history and its contributions to the world of art, music, law, government, and literature. Visualize its teacher talking with the students about the life of Abraham, Deborah, David, and Jesus. Envision these students receiving credit on their high school transcripts for having completed a course in the Bible. "Wake up," you say; "It will never happen!" Well, it has occurred and *it is happening* here in the United States of America.

Nationwide there are no less than 325 public schools which are offering accredited courses in the Bible. That number continues to rise as the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS) continues its battle to reinstate the teaching of the Bible. "It's your constitutional right,"¹ they claim, and, they have the power of the court system and the U.S. Department of Education behind them.² Located in Greensboro, North Carolina, NCBCPS realizes, along with many *public* school officials, that a course in the Bible should be included in every well-rounded curriculum. In their pamphlets it is argued that many aspects of our civilization could not be properly understood apart from the Bible. In this they are unequivocally correct.

For example, in literature, one can neither fully comprehend nor appreciate Shakespeare's *King Lear* without knowing something about the book of Job. In art, an observer cannot grasp the minutiae of

Michelangelo's most famous sculpture without knowing about King David. In modern speech, many figures like "good Samaritan laws" or "the blind leading the blind" would be obscure. In World Area Studies (an advanced placement course taught in many high schools), it would be impossible to talk about the history of Europe, the establishment of the Byzantine Empire, the beginnings of America, or Middle Eastern politics without having a basic understanding of Judaism and Christianity. The Bible forms the basis for a discussion about these and many other important topics, but most young people (and many adults) are unfamiliar with some of its most basic facts and concepts.

In a recent study commissioned by *The Bible Literacy Project*, it was determined that "very few American students have the level of Bible knowledge that high-school English teachers regard as 'basic to a good education.'"³ Their findings, published in *The Bible Literacy Report*, revealed that while nearly two-thirds of all students surveyed were familiar with *some* of the basic characters of the Bible, only about one-third could identify some of its well-known facts and statements. Overall, the message was clear; Bible education in our country is seriously lacking. And, according to this same report, Biblical literacy continues to be on a steady decline.

Thankfully, more and more public educators are beginning to see this. As a result, the Bible, in some places, is now reentering public schools. The course materials offered by NCBCPS are impressive and thorough. It is, in part, a monumental return to a true basic education which is badly needed in our country and throughout the world.

THE BIBLE AND A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION

A textbook being used in several public schools around the country reveals the following: "The Bible is like a source code for much of life and language in the land where you live. If you are unaware of that source code, your education is incomplete."⁴ That statement came from a book assembled by university professors from state schools who realized that in recent years more and more of their students were having trouble understanding and relating to various aspects of literature, law, history, and world affairs, due in part to their Bible illiteracy. Realizing that a knowledge of the Bible is crucial to understanding the world in which students live, the Bible Literacy Project began its quest to place the study of the Bible and its influence back into the public schools.

Indeed, no one's education is truly complete without being acquainted with the Bible and having a relatively basic understanding of how it has shaped western civilization. The Bible has permeated the western world and it has influenced many parts of that culture. Consider, for example, English poetry and prose. In the book, *Chapters Into Verse: A Selection of Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible from Genesis to Revelation*, editors Robert Atwan and Laurence Weider compiled numerous examples of the Bible and its stories being referenced and regarded in some of the most celebrated masterpieces of English literature. Without a basic understanding of the Bible, mankind will never fully appreciate nor in many cases understand some of the great works of individuals such as Emily Dickinson, Sir Walter Scott, John Milton, D.H. Lawrence, Walt Whitman, John Keats, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Jonathon Swift, William Shakespeare, and a great many others.

In the well-known *Paradise Lost*, of 1667, author John Milton published an epic poem in blank verse about the Biblical story of the fall of man, the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan, and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Milton's purpose, stated in Book I, is to "justify the ways of God to men" and elucidate the conflict between God's eternal foresight and free will. The following quotation reveals the cultural significance of *Paradise Lost* and the implication of the Bible's role in its conception:

The cultural significance of *Paradise Lost* lies in the presentation of its themes and comparisons. The blank verse epic poem concerns the relationship between earthly characters and those that dwell in heaven. This is significant to religion in most cultures even today, as mankind in every continent has developed 'religions' or 'belief systems' involving both heavenly bodies (gods or ancestor guardians) and their representatives/believers on earth. In many of the major religions of today such as Christianity, Muslim and Buddhist orthodoxy, these ideas are taken to a high level of complexity and are still adhered to or hotly debated today. In addition to religious and philosophical themes, *Paradise Lost* contains references to significant debates today, such as the nature, purpose and morality of war. Students may like to consider the possibility that even in our modern times, defeat over a nation's leader alone does not guarantee victory over the hearts and minds of his people—

revenge, waging war and executing punishments may not be enough to truly defeat a foe forever. The idea of leadership itself is aired in *Paradise Lost*. Leaders can be democratically elected, put in place by force as part of a coup or can inherit the role by some perception of birthright. Monarchy, political leadership, democracy, capitalism and communism are all worthy themes to look for in *Paradise Lost* as these debates still rage in many countries in today's world. Questions over the belief in blind nationalism at all costs can be found underlying some of the topics in *Paradise Lost*. John Milton almost seems to say that it is right and good to have an informed opinion, and to constantly examine the directives of a country or state, air them and question them. In some cultures today, both in the east and the west—these ideas may still be seen as subversive, dangerous and worthy of punishment. *Paradise Lost*, therefore, is a huge work, and displays many profound themes which are still relevant to cultures and creeds all around the globe. The cultural significance lies in the perspective of John Milton himself, writing as a man with Christian beliefs yet schooled in the great classics from other lands. This education gave him a vast breadth of vision over many cultures across the globe and is the reason for its value in offering a hand to settle differences today.⁵

Thus, whether it is Milton or Dickinson, Shakespeare or Lawrence, one could not possibly grasp the complete significance of their works without knowing the great message of the Bible. Milton himself, "writing as a man with Christian beliefs," in many ways influenced western thought and encouraged his readers to not blindly accept the dictates of a government. Similarly, Christians of all nationalities should question the decisions of its governing bodies, especially when it comes to any form of government that would not allow the free and open discussion and study of religious ideology.

Whether it be in literature, law, education, government, science, philosophy, or history, the Bible has had a dramatic effect on each of those disciplines. In the matter of law:

[C]onsider the words of John Warwick Montgomery, professor of law and humanities, as he describes the influence of the Bible on law during his inaugural lecture 'Law and Morality' at the University of Luton in England in 1994: "First, it is an empirical fact that biblical morality has been well enough understood and effectively enough applied to constitute perhaps the most important single influence on modern Western legal systems (the

European civil law system and the Anglo-American common law).⁶

In the area of science, consider what Carol Thiessen wrote in *Faith Today*:

Glen Klassen, professor of microbiology at the University of Manitoba, puts it this way: "There's a well supported hypothesis out there that Christian theology made it possible for modern science to emerge." That's why science arose in Europe in the 1400s, he argues, and not in Asia with its advanced technology and knowledge of mathematics. With the disappearance of Greek thought that linked the creator to creation (thus making creation divine), and the appearance of Hebrew stories that taught creation as the handiwork of God (but separate from the creator), came the belief that we could experiment with nature. "That idea opened up modern science."⁷

True science is simply an unbiased study of observable phenomena. It involves the gathering of facts and information by means of a systematic process by which conclusions can be drawn about the world around us. The Bible encourages the testing of ideas and the study of the world around us (1 Thess. 5:21; Mt. 6:28), and when properly understood, it is in harmony with the known laws of science (e.g., Thermodynamics, etc.). Once more, its pages, *though at times falsely interpreted*, played a significant role in the history of religious thought and its relationship to the Catholic Church and science (e.g., Copernican theory vs. Galileo). Without a knowledge of the Bible, one could never really appreciate nor fully grasp the exchanges which often occur over science and religion.

Still further, the Bible's influence can be easily seen and identified in the English-speaking world. From the use of its names for cities and persons (such as Shiloh and James), to its phrases and idioms (such as "do unto others," Mt. 7:12; and "evil eye" Deut. 15:9), the Bible is found in nearly every area of life. For example laws have been passed called "good Samaritan laws" (Lk. 10:29-37), monuments exist which revere the ten commandments (see the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. and Ex. 20), and other elements of the Bible such as depictions of well-known Bible heroes (e.g., at Corpus Christi Bay in Texas, a sculpture exists which depicts Jesus' calming of the storm at Galilee). When it comes to culture in general, elements of the Bible are everywhere, as seen in the movies (e.g., *The Passion of the Christ*, and

Left Behind), in music (e.g., *Jesus take the Wheel*; *Handel's Messiah*), in art (e.g., the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo), and in books (e.g., *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*). With the Bible being the best-selling book of all time, and the best seller each and every year, it is little wonder that it can be found in nearly every hotel night stand in America, and beneath the hand of the most powerful man in the free world when he takes the oath of the office of the President of the United States of America.

To ignore the Bible and to refuse it its rightful place in the education of young minds is tantamount to giving a starving man food but nothing to drink. In the offering of a recent bill introduced to the Texas State Legislature which would require the offering of a course in the Bible if enough students request it, the following introductory statement was made:

Recent research studies have shown that virtually all surveyed high school English teachers and university English Department heads—including those at Yale, Harvard, Stanford, Rice, and Texas A&M—believe the Biblical knowledge confers a major educational advantage to those who have it. In one of the popular study workbooks for the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam, more than 60 percent of the allusions recommended for test-takers are from the Bible. Just one example: the works of Shakespeare have more than 1,300 Biblical references (the reader might appreciate knowing that this bill has now been passed into law, JM).⁸

One's education will never be truly complete if he or she fails to see how the Bible has, more than any other book, influenced so many aspects of life. It has already been pointed out that students will have a difficult time grasping some of the great literary classics if they do not know the stories and characters of the Bible. However, even more alarming than not knowing the meaning of Milton's words is an ignorance of how the Bible's teachings have influenced the shaping of the politics, governments, and thought of the Eastern and Western worlds.

Why, for example, is the state of Israel often given special treatment by the United States government over the Palestinians? Why do the Israelis themselves argue for a Free State and an ethical right to their existence as a country? Why are some politicians in favor of giving money to Israel? Answers to these questions lie in understanding

the Bible, and in some cases *misunderstandings* and *erroneous interpretations*. Yes, various false interpretations and ignorance of Scripture have led to some very peculiar U.S. foreign policies regarding the Middle East (e.g., the influence of the false doctrine of Premillennialism). So, whether it has to do with the Middle East or our own civil liberties as a free country, much of what is in the Bible has been influential in the forming of and/or the dismantling of governments.

Our own individual existence, as well as a nation's existence will be threatened without a knowledge of the Bible and its place in history. Within the pages of the Bible we find our rationale for the liberties and the rights of others (Mt. 7:12; Mt. 5:44; Lk. 20:25), and a foundation for the authority of a civilized form of government (Rom. 13:1-5), which calls upon its governors to be wise and honorable (Pro. 29-31), and its citizens to be respectful and law abiding (1 Pet. 2:13-14, 17). As the bedrock of freedom, the Bible should be studied and revered in our educational systems, just as it was by the founders of our nation and the generations that followed.

THE BIBLE AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Given the understanding that the Bible must be an integral part of one's education, the question to follow is whether or not, under our present form of government, such would be allowable under the Constitution of the United States of America. First, it must be understood that the Bible's use in the public school classrooms of America goes back well before the period of the American Revolution of the 18th century. For many years "the Bible was used as textbook—sometimes the only textbook—in public school classrooms. It was and is a book shared by a majority of the people in the country."⁹ Gradually other books were introduced into the classroom, namely *The New England Primer* and *The McGuffey Reader*. The latter of the two was by far the most widely recognized and used as the major reader for American classrooms, and it was filled with Bible references and allusions to Biblical morality and ethics. Not only was the Bible taught in public schools, but time was often allotted for periods of devotion while each day began with public prayer (and still does in certain areas of the country). The interrelationship between the *practice* of Christianity and public schools often went hand-in-hand. All of this began to change, however, in 1963 when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down,

in the landmark case of *Abington vs. Schempp*, all state-sponsored religious exercises, including devotional readings of the Bible.

Since the *Abington vs. Schempp* court decision a great deal of confusion has occurred regarding the use or non-use of the Bible in the public schools. In most cases, ignorance of the law has caused some school districts to take some very drastic, and sometimes criminal, action in prohibiting the study or use of the Bible at school. To be sure, there is ignorance on both sides of the issue, with some among our brethren making false claims about what can and cannot be done in public schools. Because there are times when a local school district, out of ignorance, makes a local policy prohibiting the Bible's use, some Christians over generalize and overstate the case making general assumptions that such is the case in all other parts of America. To compound the problem, occasionally a lower court judge will make a decision countermanding a longtime standard religious practice in a local school. That decision will receive national news coverage, and then it will be played up to the hilt by many of the "Christian" watchdog groups. Sometimes such lower court's rulings are overturned by higher courts and at other times they are ignored. Add to this the utter inconsistency of the various courts and their rulings versus their actual practice. For example, there are public displays of the Ten Commandments in some state-funded buildings, and there is the longtime standard practice of beginning sessions of congress with prayer—yet, all the while dictates are being issued to eliminate such in other cases. This is confusing and frustrating. What then are the laws regarding, in particular, the use of the Bible in public schools?

In the 1963 Supreme Court case mentioned above, the major concern, to which we in the church may not entirely disagree, was over the use of the Bible in promulgating certain sectarian doctrines, and government sponsored religious exercises.¹⁰ Because of the problematic issue of trying to teach a religious book without comments or interpretations being misconstrued as proselytizing or sectarian, many schools began to eliminate the teaching of the Bible altogether. Fearing possible law suits from various atheist and anti-Christian groups, it was easier in the minds of some to do away with any course on the Bible than to have to worry over whether or not a teacher might cross over a very thin gray line between teaching the Bible as history and literature versus teaching students from a personal and devotional way. To be sure, however, the Supreme Court case of 1963 which sought to

eliminate sectarian teaching, did not, as reflected in the following statement by Court Justice Thomas Clark, ever intend to eliminate the teaching of the Bible from public schools. Justice Clark states:

It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be affected consistently with the First Amendment.¹¹

This statement makes it abundantly clear that the Bible can be taught and read in public schools, and that such is guaranteed by the Constitution's First Amendment. How one teaches the Bible in its entirety "as part of a secular program" is of course where the challenge arises. While it is almost certain that many teachers may have imparted certain sectarian or denominational teachings to their students, it is nevertheless significant that the Bible was *and is* being studied in state-funded schools.

The constitutionality of the Bible being taught in public schools was further explained in *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39 (1980), where the court said that "the Bible may constitutionally be used in an appropriate study of history, civilization, ethics, comparative religion, or the like." This ruling was repeated in *Widmar v. Vincent*, 454 U.S. 263 (1981). Thus, there should be no confusion as to whether or not a public school may, by law, offer a course in the study of the Bible.

To further verify and clarify that the Bible can be, *and is being*, taught in public schools, a document from the U.S. Department of Education is included with this chapter in this book. While it is somewhat lengthy, I deem it important to include such a document to verify what I have said, and to clarify any misunderstandings about what public schools may or may not do or prohibit. This document was composed first in 1995, and then slightly modified in 1998 (during one of the most liberal Presidential administrations of the 20th Century). Then president William Jefferson Clinton directed U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley to consult with the Attorney General for the purpose of producing guidelines that would clarify the extent to which religious expression could be exercised in the public schools. The following is an unaltered transcription of those guidelines.

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student prayer and religious discussion: The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment does not prohibit purely private religious speech by students. Students therefore have the same right to engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day as they do to engage in other comparable activity. For example, students may read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, and pray before tests to the same extent they may engage in comparable nondisruptive activities. Local school authorities possess substantial discretion to impose rules of order and other pedagogical restrictions on student activities, but they may not structure or administer such rules to discriminate against religious activity or speech.

Generally, students may pray in a nondisruptive manner when not engaged in school activities or instruction, and subject to the rules that normally pertain in the applicable setting. Specifically, students in informal settings, such as cafeterias and hallways, may pray and discuss their religious views with each other, subject to the same rules of order as apply to other student activities and speech. Students may also speak to, and attempt to persuade, their peers about religious topics just as they do with regard to political topics. School officials, however, should intercede to stop student speech that constitutes harassment aimed at a student or a group of students.

Students may also participate in before or after school events with religious content, such as “see you at the flag pole” gatherings, on the same terms as they may participate in other noncurriculum activities on school premises. School officials may neither discourage nor encourage participation in such an event.

The right to engage in voluntary prayer or religious discussion free from discrimination does not include the right to have a captive audience listen, or to compel other students to participate. Teachers and school administrators should ensure that no student is in any way coerced to participate in religious activity.

Graduation prayer and baccalaureates: Under current Supreme Court decisions, school officials may not mandate or organize prayer at graduation, nor organize religious baccalaureate ceremonies. If a school generally opens its facilities to private groups, it must make its facilities available on the same terms to organizers of privately sponsored religious baccalaureate

services. A school may not extend preferential treatment to baccalaureate ceremonies and may in some instances be obliged to disclaim official endorsement of such ceremonies.

Official neutrality regarding religious activity: Teachers and school administrators, when acting in those capacities, are representatives of the state and are prohibited by the establishment clause from soliciting or encouraging religious activity, and from participating in such activity with students. Teachers and administrators also are prohibited from discouraging activity because of its religious content, and from soliciting or encouraging antireligious activity.

Teaching about religion: Public schools may not provide religious instruction, but they may teach *about* religion, including the Bible or other scripture: the history of religion, comparative religion, the Bible (or other scripture) as literature, and the role of religion in the history of the United States and other countries all are permissible public school subjects. Similarly, it is permissible to consider religious influences on art, music, literature, and social studies. Although public schools may teach about religious holidays, including their religious aspects, and may celebrate the secular aspects of holidays, schools may not observe holidays as religious events or promote such observance by students.

Student assignments: Students may express their beliefs about religion in the form of homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free of discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Such home and classroom work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, and against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the school.

Religious literature: Students have a right to distribute religious literature to their schoolmates on the same terms as they are permitted to distribute other literature that is unrelated to school curriculum or activities. Schools may impose the same reasonable time, place, and manner or other constitutional restrictions on distribution of religious literature as they do on nonschool literature generally, but they may not single out religious literature for special regulation.

Religious excusals: Subject to applicable State laws, schools enjoy substantial discretion to excuse individual students from lessons that are objectionable to the student or the students' parents on religious or other conscientious grounds. However,

students generally do not have a Federal right to be excused from lessons that may be inconsistent with their religious beliefs or practices. School officials may neither encourage nor discourage students from availing themselves of an excusal option.

Released time: Subject to applicable State laws, schools have the discretion to dismiss students to off-premises religious instruction, provided that schools do not encourage or discourage participation or penalize those who do not attend. Schools may not allow religious instruction by outsiders on school premises during the school day.

Teaching values: Though schools must be neutral with respect to religion, they may play an active role with respect to teaching civic values and virtue, and the moral code that holds us together as a community. The fact that some of these values are held also by religions does not make it unlawful to teach them in school.

Student garb: Schools enjoy substantial discretion in adopting policies relating to student dress and school uniforms. Students generally have no Federal right to be exempted from religiously-neutral and generally applicable school dress rules based on their religious beliefs or practices; however, schools may not single out religious attire in general, or attire of a particular religion, for prohibition or regulation. Students may display religious messages on items of clothing to the same extent that they are permitted to display other comparable messages. Religious messages may not be singled out for suppression, but rather are subject to the same rules as generally apply to comparable messages.

THE EQUAL ACCESS ACT

The Equal Access Act is designed to ensure that, consistent with the First Amendment, student religious activities are accorded the same access to public school facilities as are student secular activities. Based on decisions of the Federal courts, as well as its interpretations of the Act, the Department of Justice has advised that the Act should be interpreted as providing, among other things, that:

General provisions: Student religious groups at public secondary schools have the same right of access to school facilities as is enjoyed by other comparable student groups. Under the Equal Access Act, a school receiving Federal funds that allows one or more student noncurriculum-related clubs to meet on its pre-

mises during noninstructional time may not refuse access to student religious groups.

Prayer services and worship exercises covered: A meeting, as defined and protected by the Equal Access Act, may include a prayer service, Bible reading, or other worship exercise.

Equal access to means of publicizing meetings: A school receiving Federal funds must allow student groups meeting under the Act to use the school media—including the public address system, the school newspaper, and the school bulletin board—to announce their meetings on the same terms as other noncurriculum-related student groups are allowed to use the school media. Any policy concerning the use of school media must be applied to all noncurriculum-related student groups in a nondiscriminatory matter. Schools, however, may inform students that certain groups are not school sponsored.

Lunch-time and recess covered: A school creates a limited open forum under the Equal Access Act, triggering equal access rights for religious groups, when it allows students to meet during their lunch periods or other noninstructional time during the school day, as well as when it allows students to meet before and after the school day (Revised May 1998).¹²

If the Bible then can be studied and taught as a separate class, what then would prevent a Muslim group from demanding that the Koran be taught, or a Satanic group demanding that their Satanic scriptures be read? To this date, I do not know of any of these or similar groups to actually purpose and present such a systematic and educationally based curriculum for the consideration of secondary schools. But more important, could these or similar groups actually demonstrate the usefulness or validity of such a course? Could it be proven that the Koran or the scriptures of Hinduism were integral to the establishment of the United States and primary in the development of the U.S. Constitution and/or the Declaration of Independence? Have the Satanic scriptures or the Book of Mormon been on the best seller list for centuries? Have these books been the source of inspiration for the great art and literary works of Western Civilization? Have the Satanic scriptures influenced the world in the way the Bible has helped to shape the culture of the United States?

The law does not prohibit the reading or discussion of those books in the public school classroom, nor does it necessarily prohibit a course on its contents. The determination of what may or may not be taught in

the elementary and secondary public schools lies with local school boards. While each state may have subtle differences in what is or is not required, nearly every local district, if not all, has the right to establish a local policy on what may be offered as an elective. Such is the case in the State of Texas where schools not only have such an option, but are now actually required to offer a course on the Bible if enough students to form a class request it.

CONCLUSION

The Bible must and cannot be ignored or banned from public schools. Every school practices some form of censorship (e.g., not allowing certain filth-ridden or governmentally subversive books to be placed in its libraries), but the Bible, more than any other book, should be considered a foundational document for the establishment of the United States, and a key part of the history of Western Civilization. By law, it cannot be banned from the classroom.

ENDNOTES

¹ Elizabeth Ridenour, *It's Coming Back and It's Your Constitutional Right* (Greensboro, NC: National Council On Bible Curriculum In Public Schools, 2003).

² <<http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/08-1995/religion.html>>

³ David Gelernter, "Bible Illiteracy in America." *The Weekly Standard* 23 May 2005: 10.34. Retrieved Online, 27 Nov. 2005.

⁴ Cullen Schippe, and Chuck Stetson, *The Bible and Its Influence* (New York: NY: BLP Publishing, 2006), 8.

⁵ <<http://www.helium.com/items/1460715-the-cultural-significance-of-paradise-lost-by-john-milton>>

⁶ Carol Theiessen, "How the Bible has shaped the Western World", *Faith Today* July/August 1998: 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸ Texas Senate Research Center; House Bill 1287 (SRC-TMD H.B. 1287 80(R). May, 2007, 1.

⁹ Schippe, 9.

¹⁰ I cannot say that I would totally disagree with this particular element of the law, seeing that in the past some denominations were actually allowed to conduct a sort of revival during the school day.

¹¹ *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 225 (1963).

¹² <<http://www.ed.gov/Speeches/08-1995/religion.html>>

THEY SAY, “WE ARE NOT AT WAR AGAINST CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY”

Kirk Talley



Kirk Talley was born in Birmingham, Alabama. He and his wife, Esther, have two sons and two daughters. Talley graduated from Memphis School of Preaching and holds a B.A. degree from Southern Christian University. He preached for the Lord's church in Tipiersville, Mississippi, Dyersburg and Livingston, Tennessee, and is now at the Southwest congregation in Austin, Texas. Talley holds Gospel meetings, and has helped in mission efforts in Manilla, the Philippines and Ghana, West Africa.

PREFACE¹

With its theme, “Philosophy and Vain Deceit,” the purpose of this lectureship is to expose the deceptive philosophy in our land which is leading men to reject God, costing them their souls, and ruining our society. I am for people thinking, but I am not for people thinking they can direct their own steps. Jeremiah 10:23 states: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Moreover, Solomon wrote: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12; 16:25). Humanists think there is only one way—man’s. Their thinking is *wrong*, but it appears that many in our society agree with them. People must be made to understand that there are only two paths on which man can travel—God’s (which leads to salvation, Mt. 7:14), and Satan’s way (which leads to eternal torment, Mt. 7:13). It is one or the other, man cannot travel on both ways at the same time, for Man cannot serve God and mammon (Josh. 24:19; Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13)!

INTRODUCTION

Certain aspects of Humanism have been obvious in man’s behavior almost from the beginning of time. However, as a philosophical and literary movement, Humanism is generally credited to have originated in Italy during the second half of the fourteenth century. Throughout the Renaissance and Age of Enlightenment periods in history, Human-

ism transitioned itself through several phases as it spread into other countries of Europe. Today, Humanism is thought of as a philosophy which recognizes the value of man and makes him the measure of all things. Basically, denying God and all other spiritual realities, Humanism makes man the ultimate being, a being who came to be by blind chance and through evolution over a period of millions of years. This being the case, it is easy to see why Humanists have a problem with God. Reading the literature published by the Humanists, no one can deny that they have declared war on God, His Word, His pattern for salvation, His church and His plan for mankind. Needless to say, no faithful Christian can be a Humanist!

Several years ago, I received a letter from a listener to the radio program on which I spoke in Livingston, Tennessee. The listener asked: "Can a Christian be a Mason?" After much study on the Masonic belief system (I deem it the Masonic religion), I was obligated to answer with a firm "No!" While the tenets of Humanism and the Masonic belief system may seem to be at opposite poles of the religious system, in actuality they share some commonality. They both claim *not* to be a religion, when in fact they are (Humanism was declared to be a religion in 1961, in the case of Torcasco vs. Watkins). They both claim *not* to deny God, when in fact they deny every pattern and position of authority He holds.

HUMANISM EARLY ON

During Renaissance times, Humanism was neither opposed to God nor religion. In those days, coming out of the Dark Ages, the word "Humanism" was used to emphasize the importance of man, but was not used to belittle or exclude God. As a philosophical movement, it began with an interest in defending the value and freedom of man.² By the time of the Age of Enlightenment in France, those professing to be Humanists de-emphasized God. Many were agnostics. Some were atheists. In any case, they did not see God as being intimately involved in the affairs of men. Deism (the belief in God, but a God who was not involved in the affairs of men) became the concept in vogue. With these surges of exalting the value of man came an examination of the "problems" of God and providence of man's soul. The "enlightened" conclusions reached from the "intellectual" argumentation of the day amounted to something like the medieval assumptions having to do with the "wrongness of God" and the "true value of man." The

conclusions necessitated a new purpose for mankind and a fresh initiative for the world. In seeking these things, a new civil function for religion and a "modern" concept of religious tolerance had to be devised. Studying their material and seeing how men took it to reach further ideals, you can almost hear the marching of the communists!

With what has been said at this point, could you list a few people who hold, at least to a minimum degree, Humanistic views concerning God and His authority? I dare say most of us can name a few. Perhaps we might even know of a few preachers who could be placed on that list. Keep in mind that for one to espouse the philosophy of Humanism, he does not have to wear a shirt that says: "I am a Humanist, so watch out for me!" In its capturing of its victims, Humanism is much more subtle than that. For example, if you are wavering in your belief in God and His power, you could be philosophizing yourself away from God!

THE HUMANISTS' RELIGION— GODLESS, GUIDELESS, AND GAUDY

Godless

Humanists in former days would not openly admit that they were a religion. They would say that they were part of a movement. Those days passed, then Humanists proclaimed themselves to be propounding a "new" religion—*Humanism!*

Three so-called "manifestos" have been written by the Humanists. *Humanist Manifesto I*, written in 1933, before World War II, reflected a very optimistic attitude. Due to the depressing conditions around the world, mankind was down to an extremely low point. Some felt that it was time to perfect humanity. There were fifteen major themes to this manifesto, which included:

The universe was self-existing and not created; that man is a result of a continuous natural process; that mind is a projection of body and nothing more; that man is molded mostly by his culture; that there is no supernatural; that man has outgrown religion and any idea of God; that man's goal is the development of his own personality, which ceases to exist at death; that man will continue to develop to the point where he will look within himself and to the natural world for the solution to all his problems; that all institutions and/or religions that in some way impede this "human development" must be changed; that socialism is the ideal form of economics; and that all of mankind deserves to share in the fruits from following the above tenets.³

Humanist Manifesto I contains the statement: “Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers as being no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind.”⁴

A clear and blatant disregard for God was even more aggressively obvious in *Humanist Manifesto II*. By the time of its writing in 1973, Humanists had become discontent with just allowing mankind to “evolve,” so they sought to more rapidly arrive at man’s “zenith” by being more *militant* and *evangelistic*. Humanists intensified the “religious” theme expressed in *Humanist Manifesto I* and quickly became a *religion* with a message that will save the world. There was a new god in town, but this time he is man.

Humanist Manifesto II clearly spells out the *Humanists’* belief system. To see that this is the case, consider the quotes from *Humanist Manifesto II* below.

First ... We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species. Any amount of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. Even at this late date in human history, certain elementary facts based upon the critical use of scientific reason have to be restated. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural ...

But we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

Second: Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the “ghost in the machine” and the “separable soul.” Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces ... There is no evidence that life survives death of the body.

Traditional religions are surely not the only obstacles to human progress. Other ideologies also impede human advance. Some forms of political doctrine, for instance, function religiously, reflecting the worst features of orthodoxy and authoritarianism, especially when they sacrifice individuals on the altar of Utopian promises.⁵

Humanism begins and ends with man. To the Humanist, man is number one, the arbiter of all things! When we compare this ideology to God's Word, we immediately see the conflict. The Bible begins with God (Gen. 1:1; Jn.1:1-3) and ends with God! (Rev. 22:20-21).

Guideless

Every faithful Bible student will readily admit that there is no true guide for life outside of God (2 Pet. 3:15). Looking for help and guidance on certain matters, we can purchase self-help books, tune in to television's most popular motivational speakers, lean on good friends and relatives, and even consult our consciences from time-to-time. However, considering all the options available to us, no one can compare to God and the guidance He provides in His Word. Humanism rejects this approach to living.

Humanists insist that they do not need a "higher power" to aid them in their decisions. They have it all figured out. Not only have they figured it all out, they have succinctly put it into only three manifestos! An obvious question is: "If one who is a Humanist has it all figured out, and other people need to "convert" to Humanism in order to enjoy life at its best, does this not place Humanism in the position of being the superior religion and belief system?" It does, at least in *their* minds!

The simple fact that the Humanist says, "traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species" speaks volumes concerning the attack against the guidance of God in Christianity.⁶ They cannot make such claims, then say that "they" are not at war with Christianity. The Humanist actually wants no guide. He desires only to do what pleases himself. Of course, he desires for others to follow his guidance.

Gaudy

Humanism is arrogance gone to seed! For someone to say he does not need God, and that putting God at the head of every decision is a "disservice to the human species," is a slap in the face of our Creator!

When I hear the word “gaudy,” I envision several large rings on small fingers or an oversized and brightly colored brooch on a ladies’ dress—all being displayed to say, “Look at me! Am I not fabulous?” This is how the Humanists present themselves with their pseudointellectual philosophy. They might say they are not at war with Christ and Christianity, but when they conclude that they do not need Him, and that people should “look to them” for the answers, they are at war with Christ and Christianity (Lk. 11:23). Humanists admit they are still searching for the “good life,” and that this is the “central task for mankind!” When a Godless, guideless person becomes his own central task, he is not only gaudy—he is lost!

CHRISTIANITY’S RELIGION— GODLY, GUIDED, AND GRACIOUS

When one is baptized and enters into God’s saving grace (Eph. 2:5, 8), he/she begins a path of godliness. As previously stated, the Bible begins and ends with God. He was there before creation, and He will still be there after all of physical creation ceases to be (2 Pet. 3:9-11). There is but one true God (Mk. 12:32; Eph. 4:4-6). And, it is only through Jesus Christ that one can come to Him (Jn. 14:6). Paul penned these words to the church in Ephesus,

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-13).

God lets us know, in no uncertain terms, that there is nothing outside of Christ that will benefit our soul’s destiny. Therefore, Paul could confidently write: “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

Godly

When Paul argued with the Greek philosophers of his day, he testified about the sustaining power of God, saying:

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with

hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring (Acts 17:24-28).

A religious Philosopher, named Richard Purtill, stated:

... if we begin to ask fundamental questions about the universe, and follow the argument where it leads us, then it will lead us to belief in God; that is when we examine the evidence of history and of human experience, we will be compelled to acknowledge that the only satisfactory explanation of the evidence leads us to Christianity. Such Christians acknowledge that there is still a gap between intellectual assent and commitment to a Christian way of life, but they believe that reason is neither opposed to such a commitment nor irrelevant to it—rather, it is the best possible ground for it.⁷

The French philosopher Pascal said: "The evidence of God's existence and His gift is more than compelling, but those who insist that they have no need of Him will always find ways to discount His offer."⁸ While the *Humanist Manifesto II* states that mankind must save itself, we can know the Bible teaches otherwise.

In order to combat the self-exaltation of mankind, the Bible makes the path to salvation extremely clear. Salvation is not attained by anything that we might do separate and apart from God.

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:4-9).

While Peter and the other apostles *did* preach on Pentecost that those murdering sinners were to "save themselves," the apostles were not teaching that the sinners there were to become Humanists and attempt

to go at it alone! They were teaching those on that day (and everyone since that day) that there was a wrong that needed to be righted. Their sin needed to be forgiven. On that Pentecost, there were many souls needing forgiveness and cleansing of their sins! The same is true today. We need Jesus and God in order that we might live life at its best today, and be ushered into eternal life tomorrow (2 Pet. 1:3).

Guided

Every decision that a child of God makes must be made in keeping with the will of God. Everyday, one has to make a myriad of decisions—what to wear, how to behave, what to eat, with whom to associate, and how to treat others. We live, as God’s children, according to His laws. Yes, they are binding upon all mankind, but not all mankind submit to them! Sadly, not all of God’s children are obedient to them either!

Humanists are like the Pharisees in Jesus’ day. Outwardly they may be “good” people (according to the world’s standards), but inwardly they are rebellious souls heading for eternal damnation. They do not recognize the authority in God’s Word, and for this they will be eternally sorry!

As Christians, we understand that there must be doctrine—Christ’s doctrine, to be sure (2 Jn. 9-10). Carrying out worship to God and doing the work of the church would be impossible without authority (Col. 3:17). The challenging of God’s authority did not originate with the modern day Humanists. It began with Adam and Eve, about 6,000 years ago! So, learning a lesson from Adam and Eve, when Humanists challenge the guidance of God, the Christian should remember that Paul said: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” He went on to write that the Word of God is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16). Jeremiah said it this way: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). In other words, man needs for God to guide him. And, God has given us His Word to guide us. We cannot make it on our own!

God has never demanded anything of anyone without giving them the proper guidelines that they might need. Hebrews 1:1-2 says that in days gone by, God gave His guidelines to men in various ways, but that now gives them to us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus’ words are

contained within the New Testament (Jn. 12:48). God guided Noah in the building of the ark, and He guided Moses in building the tabernacle. Relative to the plan of salvation, and the New Testament church, God has given us guidance and instruction. Humanists disregard God's authority and insultingly charges: "You are a disservice to humanity." Indeed!

Gracious

Everyday we should gain a greater appreciation for the grace God is bestowing upon us as His children. In considering God's grace, the old illustration of the man drowning in the sea comes to mind. While the man is drowning, those safe on the vessel attempt to save him by throwing out a lifeline. That is grace. He did nothing to deserve the lifeline—it was his fault that he was in the sea. Likewise, when a man is drowning in the sea of sin, it is his own fault. God owes him nothing and he certainly does not deserve the lifeline (Christ) God has offered to save him. But, because of His love and grace, God is concerned with getting the drowning man out of the sea of sin and back to safety. Let us not forget John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-10.

Humanism rejects man's need for the salvation that Christ makes possible through His death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Ultimately, the resurrection is the seal and hope of every Christian (1 Cor. 15:13-14). When answering a skeptic concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Lord Darling, once a chief justice of England, stated:

We, as Christians, are asked to take a very great deal on trust, the teachings, for example, and the miracles of Jesus. If we had to take all on trust, I for one, should be skeptical. The crux of the problem of whether Jesus was, or was not, what He proclaimed Himself to be, must surely depend upon the truth or otherwise of the resurrection. On that greatest point we are not merely asked to have faith. In its favor as living truth there exists such an overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true.⁹

The Bible is replete with God's grace. One might easily admit that the Bible is a book of grace. God begins with His grace in looking upon Adam and his need for a helpmeet, and He ends the Bible by looking upon man's need for salvation and granting it through Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

Thomas Paine said: “My country is the world and my religion is to do good.”¹⁰ I do not doubt the sincerity of the Humanists. They want goodness for mankind, but they are wrong in thinking man can solve all of man’s problems and provide for all of his needs. Ralph Waldo Emerson put it this way, “There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet ... What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand.”¹¹

In 1983, a writer for the official journal of The American Humanist Association stated:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly view their role as the proselytizers of a new faith ... The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new; the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of Humanism ...¹²

By the grace of God, may we see Humanism for what it is—the greatest enemy of Christianity in modern times. Therefore:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:10-18).

As this chapter comes to its close, consider the following chart that presents a “one stop” comparison of Christianity and the religion of Humanism. Hopefully, it will help the reader to see that the Humanists truly are at war against Christ and Christianity.

HUMANISM	CHRISTIANITY
Religious Fundamentalism	
Claims to be a "philosophical, religious, and moral point of view." It is based on naturalism, rationalism, and scientism. Religion should be formulated to this age.	A philosophical and historical religion based upon supernatural revelation and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that God alone authorizes what man should believe and do.
God	
Non-existent and non-relevant. A mythical character—the product of man's imagination.	Existent and relevant—first cause of all effects. Functions as Creator, Provider, Lawgiver, Judge, Redeemer, Lord, etc. Characteristically as faithful, omnipotent, sovereign, omniscient, omnibenevolent, personal, holy, true, etc.
Nature	
Man is only physical and temporal, is basically good, and the highest form of evolutionary development; that man is self-sufficient, able to govern himself and save himself from his problems; that man has supreme authority, and is accountable only to himself; that has no eternal destiny; and that it is unrealistic to believe in the existence of God.	Man is both physical and spiritual, is a free moral agent, and was created by God in His own image; that man is the best of God's creation, is a sinner, needs salvation from sin and guidance from God; that man has limited authority, is accountable to God, has an eternal destiny; and that it is not only realistic to believe in God, but foolish not to believe in God.
Immortality	
Deny the soul of man therefore deny the eternal destiny of the soul.	Every soul has an eternal destiny. Obedient believers go to heaven and unrepentant sinners go to hell.
Since man is presumed to be a sinner, the only salvation which humanists think man needs is from his temporal problems, which man is thought able to solve sufficiently.	Since man is believed to be a sinner, he needs salvation from sin. By obedient faith in Jesus Christ, the sinner receives God's grace of salvation upon contact with Christ's blood in baptism.
Traditional religions do a disservice to humanity.	Believe humanism unrealistically rejects the supernatural, and leaves humanity unprepared for eternal judgment.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Paul Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1967), 3: 69,70.

³ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 462.

⁴ *Humanist Manifesto I*, Fifteenth.

⁵ McDowell and Stewart, 463-464.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 463.

⁷ Richard Putrill, *C.S. Lewis's Case for the Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 12, 13.

⁸ <http://ionparadox.homestead.com/files/evidence_for_god>

⁹ Michael Green, *Man Alive* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1968), 53, 54.

¹⁰ <http://thinkexist.com/quotation/my_country_is_the_world-and_mu_religion_is_to_do/225247.html>

¹¹ <<http://citador.weblog.com.pt/arquivo/241452.html>>

¹² <<http://www.lex-rex.com/humanism.html>>

THEY SAY, “MAN CAN SOLVE HIS OWN PROBLEMS”

Dennis Gulledge



Dennis Gulledge is a native of Carbondale, Illinois. He is married to the former Kathy Wood. They have six children. Gulledge earned a B.A. Degree from Freed-Hardeman University and an M.A. Degree from Alabama Christian School of Religion. He has preached locally in Tennessee and Georgia, and has been with the Mabelvale congregation in Arkansas since 1989. Gulledge has been involved in radio, television and prison ministry, as well as chaplaincy in the Georgia Department of Corrections.

INTRODUCTION¹

One of the most memorable statements in the book of Jeremiah is: “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). This verse needs to be keyed into our memory banks, but we also need to understand it in its context. Jeremiah issued threats of Judah’s approaching ruin in verses 17-25. For the Jews there would be three carryings away into Babylonian captivity (606, 597 and 586 B.C.). Jerusalem, once a strong city, now proves as weak as a temporary tent (v. 20). Blame for Judah’s decline was laid at the feet of pastors, being the priests and shepherds of God’s people (v. 21). Verse 23 actually suggests that the Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, invaded Jerusalem by the providence of God. Those who thought themselves to be stable residents in this land were forced to learn, when they were evicted by the Babylonians, that “the way of man is not in himself.” Similarly, man cannot of himself chart his own course, unless God is working with him; for “it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,” though he appears in his walking to be perfectly free to do all things his way.

Human civilization is becoming comfortable with the notion that people are perfectly able to solve their own problems without God. As people today have “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25), moral decline has been the inevitable result. In particular, we have become a culture in love with a naturalistic view of life, and far too many are worshipping at the altar of atheistic evolution. The most crucial problems that we face are those that have a moral

foundation. Currently, many foes of religion and morality are insisting that new scientific studies make belief in God obsolete in the 21st century. Consequently, social and personal character, along with individual integrity and behavior, decreasingly reflect common decency and God-given directives.

Secular knowledge and human skills are currently exalted as the answer to all things. Man's word is given as the answer to questions of origin and the meaning of life. Human counsel is offered as guidance for every human relationship, including dating, marriage and the home, as well as every form of sexual conduct and "orientation." Human wisdom is highly prized as the fix for every human problem.

WHO ARE "THEY" WHO SAY THAT MAN CAN SOLVE HIS OWN PROBLEMS?

The subject for our consideration is: "They say, 'Man can solve his own problems.'" The question is: "Who are 'they' who say this?" "They" is a third person personal pronoun identifying those who, as in Ezekiel's day, exalt themselves to where their "heart is lifted up" and *they* say, "I am a God, I sit in the seat of God" (Ezek. 28:2). *Secular Humanism* is the personal philosophy of those who argue that the God of the Bible does not exist, and that man is the captain of his own course in life, being his own god.

As the name would suggest, the word "Secular" denotes that which is worldly or temporal, and "Humanism" is a distinctive doctrine, philosophy or theory centering on humanity. Thus, it is a cause, attitude or way of life centering on human interests or values, as opposed to those of God as expressed in that record of Divine revelation, the Bible. The foundational beliefs of Secular Humanism are that there is no evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible; there is no life after death; there is no absolute standard for right and wrong; there is no ultimate meaning for life beyond the here and now; and, people do not really have free will with every aberrant human behavior supposedly having a genetic reason for being.

This spirit in the human heart has produced the most dangerous religious and philosophical enemy that Christianity currently faces. It threatens our survival as a nation "under God," as well as our governmental freedoms to preach the Gospel against the sins of humanity, namely homosexuality. Indeed, the time may not be too far distant

when we in churches of Christ will be severely tested as to whether we will obey God or man (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29).

"They" are those who follow an ancient, but up-to-date philosophy of vain deceit. This ancient philosophy was first articulated by its author, Satan, who flatly contradicted God's original pronouncement of death for disobedience by saying: "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). The expression of this same type of thinking is found in other passages, such as Judges 17:6 and Luke 12:17-19, along with warnings against it in Jeremiah 10:23; 17:5 and Proverbs 14:12. This same human philosophy was later popularized by the Greek ethicist Protagoras (ca. 440 BC), who espoused the relativistic idea that, "Man is the measure of all things." This is the belief system of those who adhere to the primacy of man as guided by science and human reason, and argue against giving God absolute authority in our lives.

"They" are those whose philosophy of vain deceit puts them on Satan's side of the contemporary cultural war of worldviews. The popular phrase of choice today is "Culture War," a term that was invoked by political analyst Pat Buchanan in 1992. It has become the conservative catch phrase of our day. A culture war occurs when a society is at odds with itself. As Jim Palmer noted: "The Culture War is a struggle over a set of significant issues that touch all of life and determine how one approaches reality."² The culture war reflects itself in the arena of political ideas. Politics, however, is not what it was in my parent's generation. In the past, elections were battles wherein the party of the working class squared off against the party of the ruling class. The old ideas of class warfare have given way to something much more dismal. Today, politics is largely a clash of worldviews, pitting an "archaic" conservatism that believes in limited government and more God against an "enlightened" liberalism that espouses more government and less God, especially in areas where sexual license is concerned. A current example of what is at stake in today's culture war is bill H.R.1913, called the *Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Acts of 2009*. It was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on April 29, 2009. Otherwise known as "the hate crime bill," it will open the door for federal prosecution of crimes that are "motivated by prejudice" and perpetrated against persons based on their race, gender, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation.

Whereas crime is crime, and all hate is wrong, this bill, if it becomes law, will offer homosexuals and other minorities not just equal protection (which they already enjoy), but special protection because of their lifestyle. It will have the added effect of putting the muzzle on free speech in the form of any preaching done against the sin of homosexuality.

The culture war is a spiritual struggle of opposing worldviews. There are only four worldviews, namely *Naturalism* as exemplified in the philosophies of atheism and Secular Humanism; *Pantheism* as expressed in various Eastern religions and the New Age movement; *Postmodernism* as evidenced in the current relativistic mind-set that absolute truth is non-existent, and *Christianity*. A worldview is a way of thinking about the main issues of life, namely God, human origins, questions of right and wrong, our destiny and human relations.

Finally, “They” are those whose philosophy of vain deceit involves three common elements. First, the outright rejection of belief in a supernatural God. Second, that of making human welfare the supreme goal in the sense of pursuing every physical satisfaction that this life has to offer. Third, the elevation of science as the final answer to all of life’s problems.

CAN WE SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS WITHOUT GOD?

Culture wars reflect societal problems resulting from the clash of ideas and philosophies of living. Culture wars have erupted since time began. There was a culture war early in human existence when “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart” (Gen. 6:5-7). In stark contrast to the worldly element, there was Noah and his family of “eight souls” (1 Pet. 3:20) that were spared death in the global flood. Moses said of the patriarch, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord ... Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:8-9). There was a culture war during the spiritually turbulent period of the judges when, for about 350 years, the rebellion of Israel fueled their continual cycle of sin, oppression, repentance and deliverance. It was during that time that in their formidable resistance to God that he “delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them” (Jgs. 2:14), and upon their reflection and repentance also redeemed them. There were cultural wars

in Israel and Judah involving Canaanite idolatry leading to their respective Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. God was always at the epicenter of these spiritual conflicts.

It is no different now. No matter what the "hot button" questions may be, the central issue is God. It may be prayer in public schools or the display of the Ten Commandments in a county courthouse. It may be same-sex "marriages," or citing "one nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. It may be abortion, euthanasia or the fetal stem cell debate. Our country is embroiled in a war of views between the conservative "right," and the secular "left" in the political arena of ideas. At the core of this worldview war is the question of God's existence.

Every effort is being waged to erase God and Christianity from American public life. Now, more than ever before, social and political liberals from Hollywood to Washington, D.C., to your local newspaper, are openly hostile to God. They are the left-wing politicians, revisionist historians, secularist educators, morally corrupt entertainers and activist high court judges. Their objective is to eradicate from our culture all vestiges of God, Christianity or the Bible, and to see that no references to God or Christianity are tolerated in our civil government, our communities, our secular institutions or our public schools.

The current culture war, which is designed to dethrone God and enthrone man, involves moral and scientific issues of seismic proportions. These issues are homosexuality and the Darwinian theory of organic evolution. In regard to the former, the U.S. Supreme Court has reversed its own stance of recognizing states' rights in upholding anti-sodomy laws. Now, states are lining up to grant legal concessions to sodomites in recognizing same-sex "marriages," allowing "domestic partnerships," or permitting "civil unions." Same-sex "marriage," is the crowning achievement of the homosexual agenda today. Perhaps we should rethink using the popular phrase "homosexual marriage" since compromising the integrity of a term such as "marriage" can only help to advance the homosexual agenda.

Marriage is viewed by many as merely a *legal* contract, allowing people, by law, to "marry" whomever they wish of either sex. Indeed, marriage is a legal contract, but it is far more. Marriage has a *sociological* purpose. God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). Marriage has a *biological* purpose in producing and rearing children. Paul wrote: "I

will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (1 Tim. 5:14). Marriage has a *domestic* purpose in establishing a home and family. Paul taught the young women “to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Tit. 2:4-5). Marriage also has a *moral* purpose of purity. Again, Paul said: “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). The idea of homosexuals marrying can never satisfy one single purpose that God intended for marriage.

Even though sixty percent of Americans still believe that marriage is between a man and a woman, it is obvious that modern law makers are unconcerned about God’s will for marriage as expressed in Scripture. As these trends continue we are watching our schools, courts, homes, and churches [denominations] sell out to an open tolerance of a not so hidden and sinful lifestyle. Even now, fair-minded people are confused by the arguments in favor of such, as their assertions seem logical (superficially at least) in dismantling discrimination. As this cataclysmic social conflict continues, the legal arm of the ACLU will continue to wield its power in the courts to say: “We can solve our problems without God,” by passing laws that flatly contradict God’s moral laws.

Jesus addressed sexuality and marriage when He asked: “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?” (Mt. 19:4-5). It is apparent that homosexuals are not included in this pairing. Marriage as it was initiated in the beginning involved one man and one woman (Gen. 2:18-25). Again, as Paul said: “[L]et every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). Marriage was instituted by God for the legal union of a man and woman for life, and “is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled” (Heb. 13:4).

Among the sins of the ancient Gentile world, showing their need for salvation through Christ, were male and female homosexual relationships (Rom. 1:24-27). In both cases the persons involved exchanged something natural for that which is not natural. That is, some women were rejecting their stronger male counterparts in

preference for lesbian unions, and some men were denying the fairer sex for homosexual companions (vv. 26-27). In both cases the participants were doing that "which is against nature" (v. 26). Contemporary defenders of homosexuality, however, argue that the practice cannot be called "unnatural," because it is perfectly natural to them. John R.W. Stott said: "So then, we have no liberty to interpret the noun 'nature' as meaning 'my' nature, or the adjective 'natural' as meaning 'what seems natural to me.' On the contrary, *physis* ('natural') means God's created order."³

Human nature is becoming decreasingly well defined in terms of male/female differences. It is popular for women to appear and act in masculine ways, and for men to appear more feminine. Sex changes, gender ambiguity and bi-sexualism hardly shock us anymore. The feminization of the American male is a trend that has been growing for years. The intersexual tendencies of epicenism (having characteristics of either sex), and androgyny (gender neutrality) only serve to break down the differences that are naturally celebrated between men and women. The growing homogenization of America is bringing us to the point of one sex saying to the other, "I don't need you." That is a crime against nature.

Further evidence of the current culture war is the debate on origins involving creation and evolution. These two models represent opposing views, not only of life's origin, but also its meaning and ultimate destiny. The evolutionary model presents life as the result of time, chance, and continued naturalistic processes. The Darwinian theory of evolution is being ushered by its supporters into the coveted realm of scientific fact. This is by no means a current development. In 1966, Robert T. Clark and James D. Bales noted: "The doctrine of evolution is regarded today as an established fact of science."⁴ As the Humanistic worldview gains strength in our culture so does the effort to build up support for the doctrine of evolution. For example, it was recently revealed that battle lines are being drawn as scientists and educators debate whether the "strengths and weaknesses" of evolutionary biology should be taught in the Texas public school system. Will Brooks and Joe Deweese revealed that a proposed revision of the 1989 *Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills* (TEKS) curriculum for the sciences is designed to push what was once taught as a theory for the explanation of life into the realm of veritable fact. The 21st Century Science

Coalition has suggested five principles which they believe must be included in the state's curriculum. These principles, they say, must:

1. acknowledge that instruction on evolution is *vital* to understanding all the biological sciences;
2. make clear that *evolution is an easily observable phenomenon that has been documented beyond any reasonable doubt*;
3. be based on the latest, peer-reviewed scholarship;
4. encourage valid critical thinking and scientific reasoning by *leaving out all references to "strengths and weaknesses,"* which politicians have used to introduce supernatural explanations into science courses; and
5. recognize that all students are best served when *matters of faith are left to families and houses of worship.*⁵

Brooks and Deweese correctly point out that a design of the Coalition is that "... they intend to remove from the classroom any and all references to the weaknesses of evolutionary hypothesis"⁶ Therefore, we are witnessing once again the effort of Secular Humanists to monopolize the discussion of origins with their pet theory of organic evolution, close the door to any debate on the subject, and eliminate free thinking and critical analysis by pigeonholing any discussion of creationism to "matters of faith" outside the classroom.

Secular Humanism is committed to scientific naturalism as the answer to the question of human origins. This is why the doctrine of atheistic evolution is so steadfastly wedded to Secular Humanism. In a succinct declaration the *Humanist Manifesto II (1973)*, says: "As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity." It is clear that the dogma of organic evolution is a sophisticated way for secularists to deny the existence of God. The idea of evolutionary sophistication disappears, however, when one learns that evolutionists must deny proven laws of science such as Biogenesis and the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics. Evolutionists teach that life, which had a beginning, had no cause outside of purely naturalistic forces. This contradicts the basic Law of Biogenesis which says that life can develop only from pre-existing life; therefore, it is reasonable to believe that, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Again, evolutionists must sidestep the First Law of Thermodynamics which says that energy in the universe remains constant and can

never be created nor destroyed. The point is that nature cannot make more energy, that is the universe could not have created itself, but had to have originated by an outside creative force [God]. Also, evolutionists must ignore the Second Law of Thermodynamics which holds that since the universe began things have been moving toward a state of decay and disorder, rather than toward a more orderly state as espoused by the doctrine of evolution.

CAN WE AGREE ON WHAT CONSTITUTES PROBLEMS FOR US TODAY?

In a postmodern culture such as ours, moral distinctions are easily blurred. Over the last sixty years, Humanistic influences have attempted to erase all standards of right and wrong in our American culture. They have been largely successful. As Phil Sanders correctly observes:

They have argued against giving God absolute authority in our lives, decisions, beliefs, and morals. They have substituted relative truth for absolutes, substituted subjective truth for objective truths, substituted religious pluralism for the unity of the faith, substituted situation ethics for God's laws, and have made faith a private matter.⁷

Those who would lead us away from a Biblical worldview to a secular worldview are attempting to change our perception of ethical and moral problems as being problematic. They would take the miraculous out of creation with atheistic evolution; they would take the inspiration out of the Bible by regarding it as a purely human product; they would take absolute truth out of our moral mind-set by affirming that religious truth is humanly manufactured rather than divinely revealed, and they would take the moral dilemma out of our problems by maintaining that we do not really have moral problems, only preferences.

As people feel increasingly comfortable in solving their problems without God, they learn alternate ways of making moral decisions. As more people embrace moral relativism, practical outcomes are replacing Biblical standards in their moral decision making (and that is not to say that Biblical standards are not practical). Most people, it seems, base their moral decisions upon whatever will bring them the most satisfying results. Others base their decisions upon what they think will please the most people so as to minimize interpersonal

conflict. By far, the minority conviction is that of basing moral decision upon the principles and teaching of the Bible.

When God is taken out of people's lives, things that were once considered important become more dubious. In view of the old adage that "ideas have consequences," it should be noted that since its legalization in 1973, abortion has become less of a "problem." The legality of a thing gives it moral certitude in the minds of many people. The popular conclusion is that a woman is free to do whatever she wants with her body since the fetus is not considered a person anyway.

Life is a gift from God. It is God that "formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1). God is the giver of life, breath and all things (Acts 17:25). That fact alone makes human life sacred. God's Word teaches general sanctity of life principles: We are made in the divine image (Gen. 1:26-27). We are not to murder another (Ex. 20:13). Our bodies are important (1 Cor. 6:19-20). For these reasons, life is not cheap (Gen. 9:6). Today, you can be fined a quarter of a million dollars and spend five years in jail for collecting eagle's eggs. But, by federal law, you can kill an unborn baby (cf., Mt. 6:26). Truly, America has abandoned a Biblical worldview.

Again, Phil Sanders identified the cultural drift of our country by citing a 2006 Pew Forum poll posing questions on common moral issues. Sanders noted an interesting aspect of this poll being the insertion of a new category. He said:

Polls before asked the question whether a behavior was moral or immoral. This poll added the category, "not a moral issue." People were saying in large numbers that one should not even be talking about whether fornication (37%), abortion (23%), excessive drinking (31%), or homosexuality (33%) is a moral issue. To them sin is not an issue at all; it is not worthy of discussion.⁸

WILL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS?

In our day of astounding scientific achievement, it is not unreasonable to think that some have concluded that the "way of man" is indeed "in himself," and that it is "in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Science has become the assumed mechanism through which we can now search for the answers to life's greatest questions and free ourselves from any dependence upon outside sources, such as God. It is the fascination with human ingenuity that has given rise to the

popular belief that science is the answer to all things. Science has become a "sacred cow" if not a religion in its own right. In this religious construct, Secular Humanism has elevated man to the position of being his own god. Many scientists have taken the theory of organic evolution to the level of a creation story for our culture. They have become a priesthood of sorts with enormous power to influence the thinking of the masses. This priesthood is the scientific community of intellectuals that educate and indoctrinate our children, telling them just how they should think in order to be among the accepted of academia. Those who adhere to a naturalistic worldview, and its atheistic presuppositions, dismiss the idea of intelligent design as mere foolishness in preference to a theory that contradicts mathematical probability along with known scientific laws. God simply does not have a place in their scientific program. It would not be unreasonable to say that many scientists are driven by pride in their belief that they have the tools necessary to explain the intricacies of life on earth, and they do not need help from God or the Bible.

Science is an open minded search for and understanding of facts about the material universe. There are different classifications of science, such as physical, biological, intellectual and political. The definition of "science" that best fits this discussion says that it is, "knowledge or a system of knowledge covering general truth or the operation of general laws esp. as obtained and tested through scientific method"⁹ There is one particular point of interest in this definition. That is, that science is concerned with "general truth or the operation of general laws." Since science is concerned with the physical system already in existence, it cannot go beyond "general truth" in attempting to answer the intricate questions about origins. So, many questions lie outside the purview of scientific knowledge. Are we just naturalistic accidents or do we owe our reality to the intelligent design of God? Did life issue from non-living matter or previous life? Is there a higher purpose to human existence than life in the here and now? The scientist can present only relative truth, as science deals with the realm of observation and sense perception. The scientist cannot claim absolute truth, and perhaps it is for this reason that many deny the very idea of absolute truth. In the world of science interpretation, hypotheses and theories can be wrong. Science is generally recognized as ongoing and changing.

There is, however, an aspect of science that comes close to claiming absolute truth. *Scientism* is an exaggerated trust in science itself and intends to replace religion as a worldview. It says that science is the only road to truth and that scientists are the sole guardians of knowledge. By definition, “*Scientism* is the belief that the scientific method is sufficient for ascertaining all truth, whether of physical and biological sciences or of other disciplines, such as the humanities and the social sciences.”¹⁰ Scientism is a tenet of Secular Humanism as evidenced in this statement: “Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the ‘ghost in the machine’ and the ‘separable soul.’ Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.”¹¹ Also, we have this more current Humanistic declaration: “The unique message of humanism on the current world scene is its commitment to scientific naturalism ... Scientific naturalism enables human beings to construct a coherent worldview disentangled from metaphysics or theology and based on the sciences.”¹²

It is easy for people who have excluded God from their knowledge to conclude that science has all the answers because it is such a powerful discipline. However, science cannot answer man’s spiritual and ethical questions. Our real problems lie outside the reach of the world of material concerns alone. We need to realize that not all knowledge issues from science. There is more than one source of knowledge. Some things we know by sense perception. Some things we know by reasoning. Other things we know because they have been revealed to us by God (1 Cor. 2:9-13).

Modern science has created the impression that faith is somehow a desperate venture of the uninformed and intellectually challenged. The truth is, however, that even those who accept the theory of atheistic evolution as an explanation of human origins are acting upon faith. They were not there to witness the beginnings of the whole evolutionary process as they believe it occurred, therefore, they have to place their faith in a system that cannot be proved. Brannon Howse correctly assesses the situation, saying:

So, the issue is not that one worldview (theism) requires faith while the other (atheism) does not—both do. The question is: Which worldview is based on a more *rational* faith? And to that, the answer is clear. There is far greater evidence for the existence of God as Creator than for the notion that everything came about by random chance.¹³

The Bible posits not only the reasonable view of the creation model, but more importantly the evidentially sound view. The Bible teaching of creation is consistent with such fundamental laws of science as the Law of Cause and Effect, the Laws of Thermodynamics, the Laws of Biogenesis and Genetics, showing that every living thing is a storehouse of genetic information. The genome pioneer Francis Collins is a strong advocate that the genetic code argues for the existence of God.¹⁴ Richard Dawkins has said that "DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music,"¹⁵ The truth is that no atheist can speak of knowing or caring about anything without giving up his atheistic worldview. For an atheist to think that morality comes from non-moral sources requires a belief system more fanciful than most of us possess.

CONCLUSION

A casualty in the culture war is the social view of absolute truth. It is because people have largely rejected God, and worshiped the creature more than the Creator, that we now think we are capable of solving our problems without God. Without God we cannot even agree that we have problems because we have taken the moral plight out of the majority of our problems. That is, problems such as abortion, active euthanasia, state sponsored gambling [lotteries], the doctrine of organic evolution, and the effort of homosexuals to redefine marriage and to win moral sanction for their sodomite practices are not really "problems" in our postmodern culture. Now they are personal choices.

It is futile for man to think that he can solve his problems without God. If truth is relative in a cultural context, and there is no real answer to our problems outside of secularism, how are we to convince anybody that sin, our greatest problem, can be solved outside of man's ways? How can we possibly lead anybody to Jesus Christ?

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

² Jim Palmer, "Does My Worldview Really Matter?" *Think* Nov. 2008: 23.

³ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans*, (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 78.

⁴ Robert T. Clark and James D. Bales, *Why Scientists Accept Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1966), 5.

⁵ Will Brooks and Joe Deweese, "A Response to the 21st Century Science Coalition Standards of Science Education," *Reason & Revelation*, 29 (June 2009: 41).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷ Phil Sanders, "Are We Being Influenced by Post-Modernism?" *The Spiritual Sword* 40.3 (April 2009): 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹ Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed., s.v. "Science."

¹⁰ Robert L. Waggoner, *Christianity or Humanism: Which Will You Choose?* (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc., 2007), 36-37.

¹¹ *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973).

¹² *Humanist Manifesto 2000*.

¹³ Brannon Howse, *One Nation Under Man?: The Worldview War Between Christians and the Secular Left* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2005), 125.

¹⁴ Richard Dawkins and Francis Collins met in a 90-minute debate in the offices of the Time & Life Building in New York City, New York on September 30, 2006. An excerpt of that discussion is in *Time* 13 Nov. 2006: 47-55.

¹⁵ Richard Dawkins, *River out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1996), 155; quoted in Jason R. Roberts, "Does the Existence of Human Morality Prove the Existence of God?" *Think* Aug. 2006: 35.

THEY SAY, “THERE ARE NO MORAL ABSOLUTES”

Billy Bland



Billy Bland is a native of Mississippi. He is married to the former Terry Collums. Bland is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching and Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama. He is an Instructor and Administrative Dean at Memphis School of Preaching, in Tennessee. Bland is one of the elders at the Coldwater Church of Christ in Mississippi where he preached for twelve years. He is Chairman of the Board of Four Seas College of the Bible and Missions in Singapore..

INTRODUCTION¹

Man is a moral being, therefore, he possesses a sense of “ought.” All people realize that there is a sense of “ought” in mankind. Whether one is a Christian, an Agnostic, or a declared Atheist, he realizes that man is a “moral” being. The Atheist would argue it is “unethical” for a person to steal from him, destroy his property or take the life of one of his loved ones. He has a sense of morality. But, how does man determine “moral rightness” or “moral wrongness”?

A thought needs to be inserted here—the very fact that “human morals” are discussed demonstrates the truth that humans are vastly different from animals. Animals have instinct, but are amoral—they have no morals. It is not a crime for an ape to “steal” a banana from its neighbor. The ape is never brought before a tribunal of his peers and sentenced to five years in a penitentiary for his immoral and/or unethical behavior. Also, a human is not charged with reckless driving and manslaughter for intentionally running over and killing a snake that was crossing the road. Why not? There is a vast difference between humans and animals. Now, since animals do not possess morality, from whence did humans obtain this sense of ought? If evolution were true, then man had to develop the sense of ought. But to develop the sense of ought, he had to first recognize the need for the sense of ought. In other words, he, in essence, had to say to himself, “I ought to develop a sense of ought.” By the very fact that we are discussing “morals” is itself a valid argument against natural evolution.

SOME SAY MORALS ARE SUBJECTIVE AND SITUATIONAL

Since humans possess morals, pertinent questions must be asked: “What is the standard for morals?” “Are there moral absolutes, that is, an objective standard for morals that says something is right or wrong based on that objective standard?” Or, “Are morals based simply on human desires and experiences?” Regarding “Ethics,” the *Humanist Manifesto II* states:

Fourth: We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest ... Sixth: In the area of sexuality, 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. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between two consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered “evil.” Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a *tolerate* one.²

An online statement/question posed to an internet site, “Ask.com,” with an answer given in reply, demonstrates how many are saying there are no moral absolutes. Although the reply given in the quote is poorly written, it does illustrate the way many in the world think. Note the following exchange:

Gerald P. asks:

Some people claim that all moral requirements are absolute, but surely "Do not steal" is not. If my children are starving and the owner of the only food available refuses to sell me any, or to help me feed them, even though he or she has plenty, I would steal and I don't think I would be doing anything wrong. Hence not all moral requirements are absolute. Which one's are, which aren't, and why?

Jennifer in part answers:

There are no moral absolutes. There are not many absolutes any of us are sure of for that matter. You cannot ignore the fact that when something is done one way here it is done another way

there. The world is different all around, hence, no absolute [sic]. Mankind tries its best to find structure and stability—these are the reasons for many institutions: government, marriage, power, ownership, don't forget these are man-made, they are not some invariable consequence [sic] of nature or existence—they do change, will change, and have changed—many and often. Being a human our objectives are to preserve our existence, hence, we don't like death, so the humanistic [sic] option is not to do it; but don't confuse this with a "moral absolute," but rather understand it for what it is—a form of cooperation. Just remember, even Newton thought space was absolute until Einstein came along and prove [sic] it wasn't. Like many things in this world/life, everything is relativistic. It's all relative.

Those who claim absolutes I feel are closed-minded and inflexible. They wish to put all their eggs in one basket and to ignore all others. This deifies [sic] the essential beauty of the human experience, of life itself. You have one chance, one time on this Earth—it's all that we have and there are so many wonderful things to see an [sic] experience. Laws, and cooperative rules formed by society are good to adhere to, but you can see for yourself—in you [sic] example about stealing food—how things are relative. A starving man's need to eat food for survival is a perfect example of how things are not absolute, because the game changes for his needs to survive. You can find example like this all throughout life.

And in response to the Christian above who thinks one should not steal under such dire consequences [sic] should be ashamed of herself. That is not Christian at all. I hardly doubt God would prioritize ownership of food over some starving person's life; and further, if that person has food, and knows of someone starving, they [sic] should grant them [sic] that food for free. Don't forget the bible was made by a simple society at that time. Simple rules are enforced that have too many loopholes. This is a fundamental [sic] error [sic] in all religions I believe. Whenever you state something as "certain" there is bound to be a problem with that.³

If one rules God out of the equation in deciding moral issues, he is left with only humans as the standard. But that poses more questions: "Which human is to decide?" "What if the majority of humanity disagrees with that human's decision?" "Are we to allow the majority to set the moral standard?" If so, "Which majority?"

Norman Geisler explains:

Protagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher, claimed that “man is the measure of all things.” Understood in the individual sense, this means that each person’s own will is the standard for what is right and wrong. The morally right thing to do is what is morally right to me. What is right for me may be wrong for another and vice versa.

The most obvious criticism is that this view implies that an act is right for someone, even if cruel, hateful, or tyrannical. But this is morally unacceptable. Second, if this theory were put into practice, society would be rendered inoperative. There can be no true community (com—unity) where there is no unity. If everyone did as he pleased, chaos would result. Finally, this theory does not tell us which aspect of human nature should be taken as the measure of all things. It is simply begging the question to claim it is the “good aspects,” for that implies some standard of good beyond humans by which we can tell what is good and what is evil in human nature or activity.⁴

Since there are problems with allowing each person to determine the standard of morals and ethics for himself, what about allowing the majority to determine what is right? Mr. Geisler continues:

One way to avoid the radical individualism and ethical solipsism of Protagoras’ position is to use the human race as a whole as the standard for good. In this way the part does not determine what is right for the whole, but the whole determines what is right for the part. In brief, mankind is the measure of all things.

In response, it should be noted first that even the whole race could be wrong. Whole communities, like Jonestown, have committed mass suicide. What if the vast majority of the human race decides that suicide is the best “solution” to the world’s problems? Should dissenters be forced to conform? Second, the human race is changing, as are ethical practices. Child sacrifice was once more commonly approved, as was slavery. Hence, we say the race has a better expression of values. But “better” implies a “best” by which the progress is measured.⁵

It should be obvious that the Humanists’ statement—“Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction”—is not true. If Ethics is autonomous (self-governing, self-ruling), the only way a person could ever be unethical or immoral is if he disobeyed his own rule(s). If one takes the position that the majority is the standard, then it stands that the whole world could never be

immoral as long as it follows its own standard—no matter how “far out” that standard is (including suicide, *et cetera*). The universal flood of Noah’s day is a clear example how the whole world can be wrong!

In Jennifer’s reply to Gerald, she stated: “There are no moral absolutes.” One might ask Jennifer if she is “absolutely sure?” Also, the *Humanist Manifesto* states: “While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between two consenting adults.” We ask: “By whose standard do they ‘*not approve*’ of certain actions?” “Is there an *objective standard* which says those ‘*exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression,*’ *would be absolutely wrong?*” (emphasis added). If they are absolutely sure of their position, then there has to be an absolute standard which is affirming moral absolutes! If there are no absolutes, then they cannot be absolutely sure that “exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression” are *absolutely* wrong!

FRUITS OF BELIEVING “THERE ARE NO MORAL ABSOLUTES”

There have been times in human history when men have acted as if there are no moral absolutes. There have been times when men have indeed practiced that morals and ethics were autonomous and situational. Even people who were supposed to be God’s people have practiced the philosophy of autonomous authority. The Bible itself records such a time. During the period known as “the Judges,” the Bible declares: “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jgs. 17:6). The same words are repeated at the end of the book—“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jgs. 21:25). Similar words are also stated in Judges 18:1. The book of Judges covers a period of time when there was much chaos and confusion for God’s people. In fact, this period of history is known as “the dark ages of the Bible.” Why was there so much chaos and why is this period of history known as “the dark ages of the Bible?” It was because every man was doing that which was right in his own eyes. Evidently, they practiced the Humanists’ concept, i.e., that ethics are autonomous and situational. Adam Clarke observed: “When a man’s own will, passions, and caprice, are to be made the rule of law, society is in a most perilous and ruinous state.”⁶

Our society is suffering from the “no moral absolutes” philosophy. This is seen in the many divorces, abortions, and sexual perversions in our country. Our country was founded upon Christian principles and was once called “a Christian nation.” Most of our founding fathers believed in the Bible, and many of us can remember when the Bible was taught and upheld in our public schools, right along with the starting of the school day with the “Pledge of Allegiance.” Unfortunately, we have allowed much of the “no moral absolutes” philosophy to eradicate much of that for which we once stood. Instead of the Bible being openly allowed, as well as encouraged in our classrooms, now it has come under attack. At the same time, the teaching of evolution is allowed and encouraged. Steve Rudd states that the effects of Humanism are:

- A. Evolution is fact
- B. There is no God
- C. The Bible is a myth
- D. Antagonistic towards all other religions
- E. Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die
- F. "If It Feels Good Do It"
- G. Man answers only to himself
- H. No absolute truth or right and wrong
- I. Man becomes self righteous
- J. General unwillingness to follow authority
- K. Sexual freedom, homosexuality, easy divorce
- L. Suicide, abortion and euthanasia encouraged
- M. Situation ethics: "lying is Ok if you need to"
- N. Children are rebellious (Spanking children is outlawed as a form of discipline)
- O. Take the "lock" from wedlock—Increased Divorce rate (If marriage partners are unhappy, divorce)
- P. Materialism and acquisition of wealth⁷

The effects of “no moral absolutes” in our society, as well as in the Lord’s church, are explained in an article entitled, “Moral Relativism or Scriptural Absolutes.” The complete article states:

In our postmodern age, the philosophy of total indulgence in sensual pleasures has become the societal norm. Television, movies, video games, and books espouse moral relativism (which teaches that there is no absolute system of morals or ethics). Television shows such as *Friends* teach that lying, stealing, and sexual promiscuity are normal and ethically acceptable—as long as you get what you want. “Just do it!” is the catchphrase of a popular, and therefore fashionably desirable, shoe marketed primarily to teenagers and college students. With this kind of pressure from the entertainment and fashion industries, it is easy to see why moral relativism is such a prevalent way of thinking. The results, though, are evident in the decadence of humanity in our postmodern world. Legalized murders bear new and acceptable names such as “abortion” and “euthanasia”; sexual perversions enjoy favored status; lying, stealing, and cheating are fully acceptable under our new “enlightened” way of relativistic thinking—get whatever you can, however you can, whenever you can, because life is short and you only go around once.

However, this idea is not confined just to contemporary society. Moral and ethical relativism has spread even into the realm of Christianity, causing faithful men and women to question scriptural absolutes and abandon clear biblical teachings. The Christian exegesis has shifted from “the Bible says,” to “I just feel this in my heart and therefore know it to be true.” Elders no longer execute scripturally mandated discipline, preachers cease to teach the truth and preach only what is commonly acceptable, and those who teach moral and scriptural absolutism are branded as legalistic, judgmental, and narrow-minded.

If this is the case, then the inspired writers themselves were legalistic, judgmental, and narrow-minded, because absolutism is clearly taught throughout the Bible! Paul wrote:

[F]or when Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are the law unto themselves; in that *they show the work of the law written in their hearts*, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them (Romans 2:14-15, emp. added).

The Gentiles did the things required by God’s law, not because they had received any specific written code, as the Jews had, but because *there exists an absolute system of morals and ethics*. God established this system, which has continued from the

Creation until now. God's absolutes cannot be superceded by man's will without drastic consequences, as the world around us bears witness. This same principle of moral absoluteness is see [sic] in scripture, because the Bible contains definite teachings that are not open to man's personal feeling and interpretation:

And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that *no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation*. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21, emp. added).

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matthew 7:21-23).

When God speaks, it is not for man to interpret via his own feelings what God has said. There *is* an *absolute* system of teaching, just as there *is* an absolute set of morals—both are defined by God, and as such are not open to postmodernism's relativistic way of thinking. Perhaps the most sobering thought in this is that by these absolutes we are judged and by these absolutes we are either confirmed or condemned. It is not by our own feelings, but by what God has established from the beginning in the form of moral and biblical absolutes.

In a time when the world around us says, "Just do it," those of us who are Christians should not be swept away by moral or scriptural relativism. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8), and as imitators of Christ, we should continue to teach absolutes that are the same yesterday, today, and forever.⁸

GOD'S MORAL STANDARD IS OBJECTIVE AND ABSOLUTE

In stark contrast to the *Humanist Manifesto*, the Word of God declares: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12). That which "seems" right (subjective) unto man ends up being the "ways of death." When flying an airplane, a pilot knows that he must trust his instruments (objective

standard), and not simply fly "by the seat of his pants" (subjective standard). He may or may not be flying in the correct direction, but he does not know for sure, unless he is correctly following his instruments. Likewise, Jeremiah declared: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

The Bible affirms that ethics is not "autonomous and situational." Man is not governed by his own will and desires, but by a higher Being Who has established the direction in which man should walk. Paul affirmed:

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:13-17).

Man, who guides himself by his own subjected standards, waxes "worse and worse." In contrast, the Scriptures are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. The man of God is complete and thoroughly furnished unto all good works by means of the Scriptures (*the* objective and absolute standard).

While some say that the Bible was written in simple times and was good for that era only, God affirms that His Word continues forever. The Psalmist stated: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89). Man does not need a new Gospel for a new age. Man's basic needs and desires have not changed. Man still needs the same physical essentials of life such as food, oxygen, clothing and shelter. His physical needs are still being met the same way as always. Only the styles have changed. He has not "out-grown" his need for food, oxygen, *et cetera*. Similarly, man's moral needs are the same as those who lived in the time when the Bible was written. The Word of God is all sufficient to meet man's moral needs. Mankind still has the same problems with temptations of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15-17). The Word of God still informs

man how to overcome these temptations (cf. Mt. 4:1-11; Jas. 4:7, *et cetera*). God's Word was not only written for those in the first century. It was penned for all generations. Jesus said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mt. 24:35). Likewise, Peter wrote:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

Does one really think that God is incapable of communicating with His creation, giving man an absolute standard by which he is to be governed? Not only is God capable of giving man such a standard, He has given such in the form of His written Word—the Bible. The problem is not in God's ability, nor His willingness to communicate such to mankind—the problem is that mankind many times does not want to submit to God's standard. Paul wrote: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). God's grace has appeared (i.e., it has been revealed). It teaches us. But, what does it teach us? It teaches us that we are to deny ungodliness and worldly lust and that we are to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world. There is an objective, absolute standard as to how we are to live morally. One day, God will call us to account as to how we have responded to His Word. In fact, we will be judged by that very objective standard. Jesus said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48). On the Day of Judgment, man will not be successful in trying to defend his behavior based on his own subjective thoughts. Jesus warns:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mt. 7:21-23).

Jesus has an objective, absolute standard by which He shall judge the world. Obviously, all in the world are expected to adhere to the same absolute standard. Regarding the judgment, Paul wrote: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). There has to be an absolute, objective standard by which man's deeds done in his body ("whether it be good or bad") are judged.

CONCLUSION

Jesus contrasted man's sayings with the truth. He stated: "Ye have heard that it was said," then He said, "But I say unto you" (Mt. 5:27ff). Likewise, men today may say, there are no moral absolutes, but God says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12). The way one can know "right" from "wrong" is by going to God's inspired, all sufficient revelation, the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). There is an absolute "truth" which is knowable and doable. Jesus said: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). John wrote: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:13).

Jesus' question to His apostles, as to whom men thought He was, illustrates the principle of human speculation versus Divine revelation. Some said Jesus was Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist or one of the prophets. But, when Jesus asked, "But whom say ye that I am," the Bible says, "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:15-16). The Word of God then records: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 16:17). Peter knew who Jesus was, not by human speculation, but by Divine revelation from the Father. What man *thinks* about Jesus does not change the reality of who He is. He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, whether one believes it or not. He absolutely is the Son of God. Man should believe it, but believing it does not make it true. We do not make the truth, the truth by believing it, we believe the truth, because it is the truth.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² American Humanist Association, *Humanist Manifesto I and II* (Amherst, New York, NY: 1973).

³ Moral Absolutes
<<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20071213093005AAqEPP8>>

⁴ Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics; Options and Issues*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 18-19.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Adam Clarke Commentary*, Comments on Judges 17:6, E-Sword.

⁷ Steve Rudd; *Humanism: The Atheist's Religion*;
<<http://www.bible.ca/tracks/b-humanism-is-religion.htm>>

⁸ A.P. Staff, "Moral Relativism or Scriptural Absolutes"? Apologetics Press.
<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1823>> (2003).

THEY SAY, “EUTHANASIA REALLY IS A GOOD DEATH”

Toby Soechting



Toby Soechting was born in Big Spring, Texas. He is married to the former Debbie Thompson. They are the parents of two sons. Soechting graduated from Brown Trail School of Preaching, in Fort Worth, Texas, attended North Texas State University in Denton, Texas, as well as the International Bible College in Florence, Alabama. He has preached locally in Haleyville, Alabama, and in Texas at Laguna Park, Leonard, and Howe. Soechting has done mission work in Jamaica, and West Africa.

INTRODUCTION¹

Because for every matter there is a time and judgment, Though the misery of man increases greatly. For he does not know what will happen; So who can tell him when it will occur? No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, And no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it (Ecc. 8:6-8).

As Solomon wrestled with the fact that he had wasted much of his life in the pursuit of something that physical life alone cannot provide, he realized that it is impossible for either life or death to have meaning in the *here and now* without God, and without His promise of life eternal in the *hereafter*. The principle behind Solomon’s realization is eternal and Biblical, but it is a concept that is often lost, unappreciated or ignored in our culture which is adrift in a postmodern sea. We are living amidst a growing generation whose battle cry is, “We demand our rights!”—even when their demand is apparently totally wrong, and even denies the rights of others. Abortion has become a “right” in regard to “reproductive freedom.” Homosexual couples seek their “rights” to be married (or at least the right to redefine marriage). And, euthanasia, which has been on the distant horizon, is now looming large as increasing numbers of people are demanding their “right to die.”

We may not want to admit it, but we are living in a culture which is apparently decreasing its value on the sanctity of human life, and placing a greater value upon a perceived “right” to cause death. It might

be said that we are living in what is becoming a death culture. During the past three or four decades, euthanasia did not attain the speedy acceptance in our society that some had feared it would. However, in recent times, efforts to legalize euthanasia have gained momentum and advances are being made to incorporate it into our culture.

CLOUDED THINKING—DEFINITIONS

What is euthanasia? The literal meaning is rooted in a Greek compound word composed of *eu*, meaning “good” or “well,” and *thanatos*, meaning “death.” Originally, the “good death” meant to die with dignity, nobility, or self-respect. Dying well is certainly a goal worthy of our attention and energy (cf. 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Rev. 2:10), but in our English vocabulary, beginning around 1869, the connotation and use of the word began to shift towards intentionally inducing death, with the focus being upon dying without pain or suffering (gentle and easy). Today, euthanasia is little more than a *euphemism* for killing (or assisting in killing) someone whose life has been subjectively judged as unfit or unbearable. The killing may be by an active or a passive means. Of course, it is labeled “mercy killing.” Wesley J. Smith, in his book *Forced Exit*, dealt with the terminology thus:

Assisted suicide, for my purpose means self-killing for the same reasons that euthanasia is undertaken. It differs from suicide in that it is not a solitary action but rather a joint effort. Another person participates, assists in, and/or facilitates the termination of life. Thus, if a doctor injects a patient with a sedative followed by a curare (a lethal poison)—the usual practice in the Netherlands—that is euthanasia. If a doctor knowingly prescribes drugs for another to use in a suicide, or someone mixes a lethal dose of drugs in liquid for another knowingly to drink, those are examples of assisted suicide.²

A cursory examination of the topic will involve the terms: “voluntary euthanasia,” “non-voluntary euthanasia,” “involuntary euthanasia,” “active” or “passive euthanasia,” “assisted death,” “physician assisted death,” “physician assisted suicide,” *et cetera*. The American Medical Association recognizes six major forms of euthanasia. One word will not suffice for all the possible scenarios. However, for the purposes of this study, when I refer to euthanasia, primarily *assisted suicide* is that being considered, with the “assisting” (active or passive) being done by a physician or some other healthcare professional.

Permit me to say what I am not talking about in this study. It is my conviction that:

1. The administration of strong pain medication such as morphine to a patient in agony from complications of a terminal disease is not *euthanasia*. "While it is true that morphine does tend to restrict certain bodily functions, as a by-product of the relief of suffering, it is not the *intent* of the administering physician, and the family, to terminate the life of the patient."³
2. When a person with a terminal illness and that person or that family together with a doctor's recommendations and supervision, decides not to prolong his or her life through extraordinary artificial means (either by drugs or machinery), that is not *euthanasia*. Wayne Jackson in speaking on this matter asks, "Where is our hope really focused? There is something to be said for quality of life; sometimes the best thing we can do is let a loved-one go on home to be with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8)."⁴

CHRONOLOGY—A BRIEF LOOK BACK

Greece And Rome

Most Bible students have some understanding of the brutalities committed by pagan societies. Even the children of Israel at various moments in their history displayed little or no respect for the sanctity of human life (especially that of infants and elderly). The Greek and Roman societies had utter disdain for children born with birth defects. While their laws prohibited the killing of another, technically, it did not prohibit *passive killing*. Thus, they would lay the child on a hillside, or abandon the infirm elderly in the wilderness, and withdraw all food, shelter, and clothing from them. However, as life became less harsh—especially as the Gospel began covering the world—such practices faded.

Germany

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) is clearly a central character behind the holocaust. Eugenics and genocide took place in Germany prior to and during World War II. Even so, the philosophy and foundation for Hitler's "Final Solution" was first born in Germany's academic circles, years before Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Hitler ruled, but the citizens of Germany, because of their *passive* or *active* actions and attitudes,

must shoulder their share of the blame for the tragedy. They succumbed to the “philosophy and empty deceit” of the world (Col. 2:8).

The first notable advocate of euthanasia in Germany was Adolf Jost, publicizing his ideas in *The Right To Death*, published in 1895. Jost considered the state to be a “social organism,” a view later adopted by many Germans, Hitler included, and he (Jost) argued that the life and death of each individual must ultimately belong to the collective.⁵

In May, 1913, shortly before the beginning of World War I, with the publication of his “open letter,” entitled *Euthanasie*, Roland Gerkan, a man actually dying from lung disease, sought to move the matter from “academic contemplation” to public application. Gerkan wrote: “Why instead of permitting us to die gently, today, do you demand that we embark upon the long martyr’s road, whose final goal is certainly the same death which you deny us today?”⁶ His story gained great public sympathy and Gerkan became the “father” of sorts to today’s euthanasia advocates (euthanists). During World War I (1914-1918), Germany was subject to harsh deprivation at home of many basic necessities. “During the war, lack of resources led to a harsh utilitarianism. Some Germans were considered expendable. Mental patients for example, were deemed not worth feeding, which led to their intentional mass starvation.”⁷

“A major development in euthanasia came in 1920 with the publication in Leipzig of a small book by two Germans, jurist Karl Binding and psychiatrist Alfred Hoche, entitled *The Release of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value*.”⁸ Hoche was a professor of psychiatry, and Binding was a well established and respected expert of penal law. Their book was a mere sixty pages in length, but no man can decipher the number of innocent lives that were devalued and cut short by the “regulations” and “procedures” they expounded for measuring and killing “life devoid of value,” especially when those regulations were accepted by the psyche of a nation (Germany) and orchestrated by a government sorely lacking in moral leadership. The rest of the story in Germany, until the end of World War II is, as they say, “history.” It is easy to associate and attribute the *holocaust* and its associated events only to Hitler, but that would be a mistake. We must not forget that it was the psyche and philosophies of a nation, coupled with a government under severe economic duress, which was sorely lacking in moral

leadership, that resulted in nothing less than state-sponsored mass murder.

Our United States

A study of the history of euthanasia in this nation takes one to various mentions, writings, and discussions in the public arena (including attempts to pass euthanasia legislation). These date back to 1906, but they are sparse until the 1920s. The public perception of euthanasia in the U.S. between 1920 and 1940, seems to parallel in many ways that in Germany. There was even the establishment of the Euthanasia Society of America in 1938. According to one writer, a public opinion poll in 1939 indicated that "roughly forty percent of all Americans polled said they supported legalizing government-supervised mercy killing of the terminally ill."⁹ The Euthanasia Society of America published polls during that time with even higher percentages. One can see that the same seed that had been sown in Germany was growing in American "soil." Fortunately, the United States had a stronger "Christian" influence upon the nation, and with greater moral leadership in the legislature and judiciary, the matter was held in check. America, after learning of the atrocities of the Holocaust, and the other crimes associated with it, dropped her favorable opinion of euthanasia and government-supervised mercy killing. Interest in Euthanasia died in a quick and painless manner, but the 1960s paved the way for an interest in its resurrection.

In 1997, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, said a great deal about the history of euthanasia in this country. In a ruling of the court, He wrote:

That suicide remained a grievous, though non-felonious, wrong is confirmed by the fact that colonial and early state legislatures and courts did not retreat from prohibiting assisting suicide. Swift, in his early 19th century treatise on the laws of Connecticut, stated that if one counsels another to commit suicide, and the other by reason of the advice kills himself, the advisor is guilty of murder as principal.¹⁰

In that same opinion, Chief Justice Rehnquist said: "More specifically, for over 700 years, the Anglo American common law tradition has punished or otherwise disapproved of both suicide and assisting suicide."¹¹

In 1973, the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision of the United States Supreme Court on the matter of abortion, may have added the greatest fuel to the fire for advocates of euthanasia. When a human baby (fetus) can be considered as *life devoid of value*, or not being human life at all, the die is cast for the acceptance of terminating any human being's life for the convenience of another human being. This ruling not only *set the stage* for euthanasia and assisted suicides in the United States—it started the clock's ticking for when they would become "legal."

The United States Supreme Court did rule, in 1997, that there is no constitutional "right" to physician (or otherwise) assisted suicide. Faced with that decision, advocates of euthanasia/assisted suicide simply redirected their efforts. Instead of trying to accomplish their goals through the courts, they are now using the political approach, going state-by-state endeavoring to change state laws to make it legal. Currently, euthanasia is considered legal in Washington and Oregon. Unfortunately, it appears that the euthanists may be successful in making euthanasia/assisted suicide legal in a number of the remaining states.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands was not only the first country in Europe to legalize euthanasia, it was the first nation in the world to legalize euthanasia. It did so in April, 2001. There is an irony in this decision. You see, the medical community of the Netherlands was intimately involved with Dutch resistance to Nazi Germany. Hundreds of Dutch doctors proved their willingness to be confined to concentration camps, or even be executed, rather than allow their medical practice to be subject to the Nazi "state" directives. They were determined to be guided by a private obligation to their patients. That culture changed and has continued to slide.

The "system" for killing (or assisting in killing) in the Netherlands was originally touted as *foolproof*. It involves euthanasia committees—composed of judges, medical and ethical professionals—who assist in offering mercy to those deemed to have *unbearable suffering*.

Since January 2002, stringent Dutch constitutional legislation has been in place, whereby regional euthanasia committees, made up of judges, medical and ethical professionals, assisted by a second medical opinion, can grant incurable patients' requests (including children above the age of 12-15 with parental consent) to have their life shortened by a medical expert.¹²

Recent years have found in the Netherlands that its "system's" focus has been less on *mercy* and more on institutionalizing *murder*. The nation's "guidelines," known as the "Groningen Protocol," have opened the door even wider from children (12-15), to ending the lives of newborn babies and the mentally ill!

The guideline says euthanasia is acceptable when the child's medical team and independent doctors agree the pain cannot be eased and there is no prospect for improvement, and when parents think it's best. Examples include extremely premature births, where children suffer brain damage from bleeding and convulsions; and diseases where a child could only survive on life support for the rest of its life, such as severe cases of spina bifida and epidermosis bullosa, a rare blistering illness.¹³

Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Thailand have followed suit with their own forms of legalized euthanasia. Yet, each of these nations have patterned their laws and procedures after those of the Netherlands.

CONCERN—THE SCENE TODAY

A study of the brief history of euthanasia in the Netherlands is alarming. It reveals the reality of a "slippery slope" when it comes to morality and logic. The Netherlands and other European countries are sliding down it at an alarming rate. It is difficult to accurately gauge what is occurring in the Netherlands, because so much of activity in this area is closed and goes unreported to the public. Still, what we do know from the information that is available to us is troubling. According to an article in the *New Zealand Herald*, Eduard Verhagen, a pediatrician at Groningen University Medical Centre, said:

The babies are there but we were never allowed to talk about them. That must change. If we take this awfully difficult decision, it must happen with complete openness ... You are trained to save the life of a child, but with these children the suffering can only be stopped by ending their lives. It takes courage to do that.¹⁴

Some surveys suggest that Dutch doctors end the lives of about 15 to 20 disabled newborns a year. The validity of the number is impossible to discern because so many cases go unreported by the doctors. It does not seem unreasonable to assume that the number is much higher. Doctors in the Netherlands are now admitting that they have adminis-

tered suicide to those who were only diagnosed as being “chronically depressed.”

In the United States, since *Roe v. Wade*, the euthanasia movement has been successful in obtaining a startling number of initiatives and propositions on state ballots across this nation. Most of these propositions have met with miserable failure on Election Day, but some have succeeded. In those states where their propositions have failed, euthanists have seemed to be energized by the closeness of the vote. Then, they regroup to fight another day. Another strategy of the advocates of euthanasia is to diversify their activities into many states, and not to stop at one law suit or one piece of legislation. For example, Arizona State Representative, Linda Lopez, has introduced legislation six times that would allow physician assisted suicide. Since 1994, nearly one-half (24) of the states in the United States have seen some form of legislation introduced which has to do with euthanasia. Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin have seen it more than once.

The news is not all bad. The 1997 Supreme Court decision firmly denied euthanasia as a constitutional right. While that decision did leave the door open for individual states to determine its legality, the resistance to and repeated denial of such legislation in our states’ legislatures is encouraging. However, some states’ legislatures may weaken in their resolve if the voters grow careless and elect the wrong legislators, or if the public’s opposition to euthanasia wanes and becomes indifferent.

The “notoriety” and acceptance of Jack Kevorkian’s publicity campaign for a person’s “right to die” was squelched with his 1999 conviction of second-degree murder (he was released on parole in 2007). Kevorkian makes speeches on the lecture circuit, but he talks now about government tyranny and the criminal justice system. He even ran for congress in 2008, but his election bid provided more fodder for comedians than it did votes for Kevorkian.

It is encouraging to know that Christians are not alone in the war against the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide. Many members of the Lord’s church are less engaged in the battle than they should be, but those who are do not go alone (Heb. 13:5). There has always been a strong stance against euthanasia by the conservative

denominational churches. We do not condone, appreciate, or fellowship their doctrinal error because it is in conflict with the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9-11), but we can work with them in the political arena and in the realm of public opinion.

Euthanasia is no longer considered the exclusive concern of the "religious right" and "pro-life" advocates. The publicity so desired by Kevorkian, combined with the legalization of euthanasia in Oregon and Washington, served to bring joined opposition from disability rights activists, nursing associations, and the hospice or palliative care industry. Even the American Medical Association, since 1997, has taken a public position for life when it comes to the subject of physician assisted suicide, although their position has weakened in recent years.

Despite any good news, if the advocates for legalized euthanasia have proved anything, it is that they are persistent and enduring. They never cease in their war of attrition against Hippocratic medical values and/or the sanctity/equality-of-life ethic. It seems that they hope to win by simply exhausting their opponents.

... despite their many recent setbacks, the American euthanasia movement is today more powerful than it has ever been, now consisting of a plethora of local organizations and several national groups such as the Hemlock Society, Death with Dignity Education Center, and the Compassion In Dying Federation (CDF). Not only do they have committed activists to perform the daily task of trying to change a culture, they now have ample money to spend on advocacy, some being generously bankrolled by several notable foundations.¹⁵

"Money talks" and the lobbyists' efforts to legalize euthanasia, combined with the fact that hospitals in this nation will soon be swamped with the aging baby boomer generation, are cause for concern. Euthanasia, if legalized and then "commercialized," would present sore temptation to the health care system in this nation. To this writer's mind, President Barack Obama's recent wrangling with our Health Care System, and his intimations of injecting the government even deeper into the matter, cannot be overestimated in importance in the battle against euthanasia. I am not saying the President is in favor of euthanasia. The point is, given the current economic difficulties in our nation, with the average hospital stay costing \$17,000 or more,¹⁶ combined with health care cost that seem excessive (even to the

insured), it does not take a stretch of the imagination to see parallels of Germany's history and our present situation.

CONTRARY TO THE WORD OF GOD—EUTHANASIA

To desire death that is free of physical pain, emotionally comforting, and is a source of spiritual rejoicing and appreciation (knowing one's pilgrimage was successfully and faithfully completed) is not wrong. All men desire these things as they approach their death. That being said, we cannot disregard or deny the doctrine of Christ (or common sense for that matter). Those who accept the Humanists' philosophy may think that we are "begging the question" when we look to God and His Word for the answer to the questions in regard to euthanasia. Be that as it may, I plead for all to consider the superiority of the Christian perspective towards humanity. No philosophy or religion gives greater significance to human life and its purpose than do Christianity and the Word of God.

Pain Is Not Always Avoidable

Where is the proof that euthanasia alleviates any and all pain? Where is the proof that death and pain exists only in the present time? The only way for one to know would be to die by the same means himself. Contrary to the claims of Humanism, death is not the end of one's existence. Death is a transition to a new and different existence. For some it will be a happy transition, but for others there will only be eternal pain and misery.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus, our perfect example (1 Pet. 2:21) had to suffer. Through His suffering, He became the Captain of our salvation and was made perfect (Heb. 2:10). The apostles suffered (2 Cor. 11:23-26; 2 Cor. 12:7). Tradition holds that all, save John, died martyrs' deaths. Early Christians suffered (Acts 14:22; Phil. 1:29; Rev.2:10), even to the point of death for our Lord's sake. We are not alone if or when we suffer. We are in grand company, and that eases the burden.

Just because someone is motivated to help end the life of a person who is in pain and suffering, it does not mean that person has considered or knows all that is entailed in dying. The Bible teaches that man is more than a mere animal. Man possesses an *eternal spirit* (Ecc. 12:7; Mt. 10:28). The separation of a man's spirit from God is painful. To end the physical life of a person and have them "die in sin" spiritually

(lost), even if it is without what we perceive as "pain," is to be shortsighted and presumptuous.

Death With Suffering Is Not Without A Purpose

No one wants to see others suffer, but they do. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that any action taken (e.g., palliative care or a form of assisted-suicide) will produce a painless death process. The Bible teaches that the sufferings which one experiences in this life (which ultimately includes physical death) can produce perseverance, character and hope (Rom. 5:1-4). If a person faces death, even death with suffering, will he not have a more earnest desire to be clothed with the eternal habitation, heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-5), than a man who did not? Will he not enjoy a greater sense of relief as the burden of his pained physical body (tabernacle) is left behind?

The Bible teaches that a Christian's endurance of pain is a source of courage and edification to those who see his example (2 Thess. 1:4-5). Regarding the possibility of contracting a disease or of there being a tragic end to my life or the life of my loved ones, I did not have any great courage before I became a Christian. In fact I was *skittish* about the matter. In the years since, on so many occasions, I have witnessed my brethren face with great courage such things as cancer, Alzheimer's, brain tumors, paralysis, the death of their husbands, wives, parents, and even their children. I have attended the funerals of the faithful with faithful families. I do not enjoy those occasions, but I do cherish them because they strengthen me to face that day with courage, and even thanksgiving, if or when pain, suffering, and death do come to my door (1 Cor. 15:54-55). Down through the years, those experiences and my study of God's Word have strengthened and matured me as a Christian, and as a preacher.

Life And Death Are Not Our "Right," They Belong To God

There is a "time to be born, And a time to die" (Ecc. 3:2). That is not to say that God is solely responsible for our "time to be born" and our "time to die." We can thank our parents for our births. Our deaths may involve a number of factors. God has placed both in the path of our existence. Both have a purpose, and no one has the "right" to destroy anything belonging to God. This is so whether one takes a life by active or passive assisted-suicide, and whether or not it is "legal" in whatever state or nation one resides.

God is the giver of all life, including man's life (Job 10:12; Ps. 139:13-16; Acts 17:25). He has given ample warning against the taking of another man's life (Ex. 20:13; 21:14-17; Mt. 5:20-22), even accidental death is a concern. The "right" to terminate human life is possessed only by God (Deut. 32:29; 1 Sam. 2:6), even if a person is requesting it for himself. Only the "Potter" has such "rights" over the clay (Rom. 9:21; 1 Cor. 6:20).

God's children will value life, protect life, and cherish life. However, we will also remember that though we might like to "stay here longer than man's allotted days," we have a home in heaven, one which we cherish and for which we yearn (Phil. 1:21-26; 2 Tim. 4:6-8).

CONCLUSION

Despite the advancements in medical technology, techniques, and medicines, every man still has an appointment with death (Heb. 9:27), unless our Lord returns first (1 Cor. 15:51-52). Only then will physical death, with its accompanying pain, be conquered. "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).

Apart from Jesus Christ our Lord, there is no such thing as euthanasia, i.e., a "good death," or "dying well." The real tragedy of our culture is that we are losing sight of that truth. In regard to the efforts being made to legalize the so-called "euthanasia" and assisted suicide in our society, for our children's sake, and for the Lord's sake, each one of us needs to actively, enthusiastically, and effectively stand against it.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Wesley J. Smith, *Forced Exit* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 1997), xxvi.

³ Wayne Jackson, "Life and Death Ethical Issues," *Christian Courier*, 1 February 2003, <<http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/607-life-and-death-ethical-issues>> (20 June 2009).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Smith, 81.

⁶ Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: Euthanasia in Germany, 1940-1945* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1986), 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸ Trevor J. Major, "A Christian Response To Euthanasia," *Essays In Apologetics* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, Inc., 1990), 196.

⁹ Ian Dowbiggin, *A Merciful End: The Euthanasia Movement In Modern America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 44.

¹⁰ Washington, et al., *Petitioners v. Harold Glucksberg, et al.* 521 U.S. 702 (1997).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ursula Smart, "Euthanasia And The Law," *BBC News*, 23 December 2002, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/2600923.stm>> (28 June 2009).

¹³ *Netherlands Grapples With Euthanasia Of Babies*, 30 November 2004, <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6621588/>> (28 June 2009).

¹⁴ *No Prosecution For Dutch Baby Euthanasia*, 23 January 2005, <<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6621588/>> (29 June 2009).

¹⁵ Smith, 159.

¹⁶ Paul A. Taheri, David A. Butz and Lazar J. Greenfield, "Length Of Stay Has Minimal Impact On The Cost Of Hospital Admission," *Journal Of The American College Of Surgeons*, August 2000.

THEY SAY, “WE NEED PLANNED PARENTHOOD”

Skip Andrews



Skip Andrews, a native of Detroit, Michigan, is married to the former Helen Burch. They are the parents of one son, one daughter, and have four grandchildren. Andrews graduated from Memphis School of Preaching and Alabama Christian School of Religion. He has done located work in Ohio, Mississippi, West Virginia, and Georgia. Andrews preaches in Duluth, Georgia, where he serves as one of the elders. He has worked in campaigns in the United States and in four foreign countries.

INTRODUCTION¹

What is the goal of woman’s upward struggle? Is it voluntary motherhood? Is it general freedom? Or is it the birth of a new race?²

These are the opening lines in the last chapter of *Woman and the New Race*, written by Margaret Sanger and first published in 1920. The title of the chapter is: “The Goal.” In her own words, here are some features of her goal:

- “Voluntary motherhood implies a new morality—a vigorous, constructive, liberated morality.”
- “It will set its face against the conversion of women into mechanical maternity and toward the creation of a new race.”
- “It is the essential function of voluntary motherhood to choose its own mate, to determine the time of childbearing and to regulate strictly the number of offspring.”
- “Thus and only thus will woman be able to transmit to her offspring these qualities which make for a greater race.”
- “Birth control itself, often denounced as a violation of natural law, is nothing more or less than the facilitation of the process of weeding out the unfit, of preventing the birth of defectives or of those who will become defectives.”
- “When motherhood becomes the fruit of a deep yearning, not the result of ignorance or accident, its children will become the

foundation of a new race. There will be no killing of babies in the womb by abortion, nor through neglect in foundling homes, nor will there be infanticide.

- “The daughters of such women will not be given over to injustice and to prostitution; the sons will not perish in industry nor upon the battle field.”
- “When the last fetter falls the evils that have resulted from the suppression of woman’s will to freedom will pass. Child slavery, prostitution, feeble-mindedness, physical deterioration, hunger, oppression and war will disappear from the earth.”³

The final paragraph of the book is a fitting transition for our study of the evil monster that Margaret Sanger labored to entrench in the cultures of the world until her death in 1966. It says:

In their subjection women have not been brave enough, strong enough, pure enough to bring forth great sons and daughters. Abused soil brings forth stunted growths. An abused motherhood has brought forth a low order of humanity. Great beings come forth at the call of high desire. Fearless motherhood goes out in love and passion for justice to all mankind. It brings forth fruit after its own kind. When the womb becomes fruitful through the desire of an aspiring love, another Newton will come forth to unlock the secrets of the earth and the stars. There will come a Plato who will be understood, a Socrates who will drink no hemlock, and a Jesus who will not die upon the cross. These and the race that is to be in America await upon a motherhood that is to be sacred because it is free.⁴

It has been almost one hundred years since she began this project which is now in more than one hundred and fifty countries through a global network of *Member Associations*.⁵

The objectives of Margaret Sanger are in place and are being promoted with more than ten billion dollars each year⁶—but the goals, the results, and the promises of her dream have not been realized. And there is no evidence that they ever will be.

Planned Parenthood was designed by Margaret Sanger to be godless, anti-biblical, and manipulative. As we learn something of its history, philosophy, and practices, we will see this to be true.

It is not about purity, family, marriage, or morality. It is not about pleasing God by learning and doing His will. It is about a very troubled woman who saw some real problems and sought to solve them with a

philosophy and vain deceit that has not worked—and it cannot work. This is not to say that all who are involved in some way with Planned Parenthood have precisely the same agenda, that all methods of birth control are sinful, that there are no real problems about who, when, and why people become parents, or that we hate those who promote the anti-biblical philosophy of this organization. But the world is filled with the plans and schemes of vain deceit, and we, as the called-out people of God, must take our place on the front lines to provide Biblical responses so that these vanities can be overturned, and the lives of people can be turned upright.

WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?

Many people have been involved in the development, evolution, and promotion of the causes of Planned Parenthood. In its various forms and causes, it has been “front-page” almost continuously for nearly a century. Its roots go back farther, and include the childhood of its founding mother, Margaret Sanger.

- Born as Margaret Higgins in 1879 to a Catholic mother and an agnostic father.
- The sixth of eleven children.
- Began her career of radical activism in 1911, learning “the propaganda techniques that were to later stand her in such great stead” from a long list of leftist stalwarts (Emma Goldman, Eugene Hebs, Bill Hegwood, John Reed) and various like-minded organizations (International Workers of the World, the United World Federalists, the Euthanasia Society of America, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Federal Council of Churches).
- By 1913, she committed herself to spread knowledge about birth control.
- Her first marriage was to William Sanger, to whom she was unfaithful. She later left him. They had two sons and a daughter.
- She was known to have many sexual partners. Milford Dodge wrote, “She was the first person I ever knew who was openly an ardent propagandist for the joys of the flesh. This in those days was radical indeed.” Her lovers included English sexologist Havelock Ellis (who wrote the preface to her book *Woman and the New Race*), Hugh de Selincourt, Harold Child, H.G. Wells,

Corey Alberson, her lawyer J.G. Goldstein, Angus S. MacDonald, and more.

- From 1914-1922, she aggressively pursued her birth control agenda, even having to flee the country (to England via Canada) to avoid arrest. She left her family behind. After coming back, she opened the first American birth control clinic in Brooklyn (1916), founded a magazine (*Birth Control Review*, 1917), founded the American Birth Control League (April 22, 1922, which was the parent of Planned Parenthood).⁷

Two significant choices were made by Sanger while she was in England. The first choice was to attend meetings with radical groups in Britain.

As soon as she came ashore, Margaret began to make contact with the various radical groups of Britain. She began attending Socialist lectures on Nietzsche's moral relativism, Anarchist lectures on Kropotkin's subversive pragmatism, and Communist lectures on Bakunin's collectivistic rationalism. But she was especially interested in developing ties with the Malthusians.

Thomas Malthus was a nineteenth-century professor of political economy whose theories of population growth and economic stability quickly became the basis for national and international social policy throughout the West. According to his scheme, population grows exponentially over time, while production only grows arithmetically. Poverty, deprivation, and hunger are thus evidence of a population crisis. It follows that the only responsible social policy is one that addresses the unnatural problem of population growth. In fact, Malthus argued, to deal with sickness, crime, privation, and need in any other way simply aggravates the problems further.

In his magnum opus *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, published in six editions from 1798 to 1826, Malthus wrote:

All children born, beyond what would be required to keep up the population to a desired level, must necessarily perish, unless room be made for them by the deaths of grown persons ... Therefore ... we should facilitate, instead of foolishly and vainly endeavoring to impede, the operations of nature in producing this mortality; and if we dread the too frequent visitation of the horrid form of famine, we should sedulously encourage the other forms of destruction, which we compel nature to use. Instead of recommending cleanliness to the poor, we should encourage contrary habits. In our towns we should make the streets narrower, crowd

more people into the houses, and court the return of the plague. In the country, we should build our villages near stagnant pools, and particularly encourage settlements in all marshy and unwholesome situations. But above all, we should reprobate specific remedies for ravaging diseases; and restrain those benevolent, but much mistaken men, who have thought they were doing a service to mankind by projecting schemes for the total extirpation of particular disorders.

Malthus's disciples—the Malthusians and the Neo Malthusians—believed that if Western civilization were to survive, the physically unfit, the materially poor, the spiritually diseased, the racially inferior, and the mentally incompetent had to be eliminated. *And while Malthus was forthright in recommending plague, pestilence, and putrifaction, his disciples felt that the subtler approaches of education, contraception, sterilization, and abortion were more practical ways to ease the pressures of over-population.*⁸

The second choice Sanger made had to do with sex.

But even more important than these institutional and intellectual connections, Margaret's English exile gave her the opportunity to make some critical interpersonal connections as well. Her bed became a veritable meeting place for the Fabian upper crust: H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Arnold Bennett, Arbuthnot Lane, and Norman Haire. And of course, it was then that she began her unusual and tempestuous affair with Havelock Ellis.

Ellis was the iconoclastic grandfather of the Bohemian sexual revolution. The author of nearly fifty books on every aspect of concupiscence from sexual inversion to auto-eroticism, from the revolution of obscenity to the mechanism of detumescence, from sexual periodicity to pornographic eonism, he had provided the free love movement with much of its intellectual apologia, so he spent his life in pursuit of new and ever more exotic sensual pleasures ...

To Margaret, Ellis was a modern day saint. She adored him at once, both for his radical ideas and for his unusual bedroom behavior. The two of them began to plot a strategy for Margaret's cause. Ellis emphasized the necessity of political expediency. Margaret would have to tone down her pro-abortion stance. She would, he said, have to distance herself from revolutionary rhetoric. The scientific and philanthropic-sounding themes of Malthus and Eugenics would have to replace the

politically charged themes of old-line labor Anarchism and Socialism.

By the time her year in England was over, Margaret's ideas were firmly in place, her strategy was thoroughly mapped out, and her agenda was carefully outlined.

She set out for America with a demonic determination to alter the course of Western civilization.

Ultimately, she succeeded.⁹

- In 1922, she married J. Noah Slee (of Three-in-One oil fame), whose great wealth financed many of her projects. They had what would be known today as an open marriage, which left her free to pursue her sexual sins.
- While an editor, her themes were constant: "(1) the value of birth control in promoting social goods such as personal health, family life, economic stability, liberation from biological slavery, and world peace; (2) opposition to birth control came from militarists and Catholics—primarily the bishops, and, of course, their servile Protestant supporters, and (3) birth control would eliminate disease, crime, and the burden of the socially and/or eugenically unfit having children."
- Through the 1920s and 30s, she pursued her agenda under the birth control label in such a way that progress was constant.¹⁰
- Accomplishing her agenda was made much easier because of a pre-nuptial agreement she forced Slee to sign. She could come and go as she pleased. He, a "conservative church-going Episcopalian," signed it even though he opposed her stand. She wanted his fortune, and he wanted her to know he loved her, so the match was made.¹¹
- In 1939, her views and "vision for dealing with the reproductive practices of black Americans emerged." Working with Dr. Clarence J. Gamble (of Proctor and Gamble) a strategy "Suggestions for Negro Project" was developed. She agreed with his assessments (including using black leaders to convince people that it was not an extermination plot). She wrote to Gamble, "We do not want the word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the minister is the man who can straighten

that idea out if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.”¹²

- Because of her Malthusian and Eugenic connections, she had become closely associated with the scientists and theorists who put together Nazi Germany’s “race purification” program. She had openly endorsed the euthanasia, sterilization, abortion, and infanticide programs of the early Reich. She published a number of articles in the *Birth Control Review* that mirrored Hitler’s Aryan-White Supremacist rhetoric. She even commissioned Dr. Ernst Rudin, the director of the Nazi Medical Experimentation program, to write for *The Review* himself. Naturally, when World War II broke out and the grisly details of the Nazi programs began to come to light, Margaret was forced to backpedal her position and cover up her complicity. The Great Depression had been a boon for racist and Eugenic arguments, but those days were now past. Charges of anti-Semitism had been harmlessly hurled at her since her trial in 1917, but now that Auschwitz and Dachau had become very much a part of the public conscience, she realized she would have to do something, and quickly. Her first step toward redeeming her public image was to change the name of her organization. “Planned Parenthood” was a name that had been proposed from within the birth control movement since at least 1938. One of the arguments for the new name was that it connoted a positive program and conveyed a clean, wholesome, family-oriented image. It diverted attention from the international and revolutionary intentions of the movement, focusing instead on the personal and individual dimensions of birth control. By 1942, it was decided. The organization would be called the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.
- She continued her promiscuous lifestyle, became involved in the occult, became addicted to drugs and alcohol through the 1940s, and on September 6, 1966, she died after spending nearly all of Slee’s fortune.¹³

The history of Planned Parenthood is filled with people who endorse Margaret Sanger, her lifestyle, and her agenda.

“Dr. Alan Guttmacher, the man who immediately succeeded her as president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, once said, ‘We are merely walking down the path that Mrs. Sanger carved out for

us.”¹⁴ Faye Wattleton, president of the PPFA in 1988 echoed the sentiments of Guttmacher by saying that she was “proud” to be “walking in the footsteps of Margaret Sanger.”¹⁵ Her grandson, Alexander Sanger, is in those footprints, too. According to Angela Franks, he argues that “abortion serves the goal of healthy families, and it is easy to see how disabled babies would be considered manifestly ‘unhealthy,’ both in themselves and also for their families.”¹⁶

This brief summary of the history of Planned Parenthood has concentrated on Margaret Sanger for the following reasons:

- The roots of a movement are very important. We need to know something of the background in order to truly understand what has grown out of it.
- The roots of Margaret’s troubled childhood, religious confusion, obsession with sex, and training in England can help us to understand why this movement began with her slogan, “No Gods, No Masters.”¹⁷ It can help us to understand why Planned Parenthood today is so interested in sex education minus morality, abortion on demand, political connections, and money.
- The attitudes she had toward large families in that (to her) they are the root of almost all social ills from disease to unhappiness to starvation to war makes it easier to understand why she would say, “The most merciful thing that the large family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.”¹⁸

WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

They are thinking about population control, sex without consequences (spiritual, physical, familial), not having to answer to anyone (spouse, parents, the unborn, or God), power without the restrictions of law, the home, or society, and they are thinking that if they can say things in just the right way, we will not get so worked up about it. Now, we will look at some of the things they think about birth control, abortion, sex education, and eugenics.

Birth Control

Controlling the population by preventing birth is a necessity to them. That might not sound so bad, until we ask how, who, when, and why! Sanger wrote of this throughout *Woman and the New Race*. On pages 44-46, she gives a concise statement with implications of what would be involved:

We must, therefore, not permit an increase in population that we are not prepared to care for to the best advantage—that we are not prepared to do justice to, educationally and economically. We must popularize birth control thinking. We must not leave it haphazardly to be the privilege of the already privileged. We must put this means of freedom and growth into the hands of the masses.

We must set motherhood free. We must give the foreign and submerged mother knowledge that will enable her to prevent bringing to birth children she does not want. We know that in each of these submerged and semisubmerged elements of the population there are rich factors of racial culture. Motherhood is the channel through which these cultures flow. Motherhood, when free to choose the father, free to choose the time and the number of children who shall result from the union, automatically works in wondrous ways. It refuses to bring forth weaklings; refuses to bring forth slaves; refuses to bear children who must live under the conditions described. It withholds the unfit, brings forth the fit; brings few children into homes where there is not sufficient to provide for them. Instinctively it avoids all those things which multiply racial handicaps. Under such circumstances we can hope that the “melting pot” will refine. We shall see that it will save the precious metals of racial culture, fused into an amalgam of physical perfection, mental strength and spiritual progress. Such an American race, containing the best of all racial elements, could give to the world a vision and a leadership beyond our present imagination.¹⁹

Birth control was not about giving people options as much as it was about preventing birth as much as possible. And this includes the concept of “mandatory population control measures—measures carefully designed to *deny* the freedom to choose.”²⁰

Abortion

Abortion has been practiced worldwide for many centuries and for many reasons. Abortion, as it is practiced in the United States today, has evolved rapidly since Margaret Sanger came on the scene. Her descriptions of abortion in *Woman and the New Race* could lead the reader to believe that she was against it. She was certainly against a system that made abortion “the” option—since birth control (as she envisioned it) was not. But she was not against abortion altogether.

- In March 1914, she hinted at approval of abortion in *The Woman Rebel* (Vol. 1 No. 1). She suggested that feminists would "claim the right to be lazy ... an unmarried mother ... to create ... to destroy ..."
- In 1916, she wrote "I found that the women of wealth were able to have abortions performed on them if it became necessary ..."
- In 1919, her magazine noted that when it came to rich women, a skilled abortionist "brings almost no danger to the life of the patient."²¹
- In 1921, at a meeting of Sanger's American Birth Control League, Dr. Andre Tridon said: "I also believe one thing, that the meaning of the perfectly insignificant operation called abortion should be made clear to all women ... the operation is extremely insignificant, much less dangerous than having your nails manicured or having your face shaved in a more or less antiseptic barber shop. You may tell me ... that we will be breaking the law ... Well ... breaking the law is not a crime, but a public duty." Margaret's comment was, "I think the question of legality is quite settled in the principles and aims of the League ... we know we have to change the law. There is no question about that."²²

Relatively few people living today—and no young people living today—remember a time when abortion was illegal or even limited. We live in a time when abortion for nearly any reason—or no reason—is a "right." It is such a right that parents of unmarried teens do not have to be informed, fathers do not have a say, and as always, the unborn are silent still. The proliferation of birth control has not slowed the progress of abortion—to say nothing of how much it has led to the increase of sexual sins and abortion among the unmarried.

A culture that wants to have its own way in spite of the God of heaven, the Bible, or the Constitution, is having its day. On this "thinking," Judge Robert H. Bork:

The extra-constitutional individualism that undergirds the "constitutional" right to abortion was made clearest in the joint opinion of three justices in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. These Justices, whose votes created a majority to sustain most of Roe, invented a heretofore unheard-of constitutional right to "personal dignity and autonomy." They attempted to explain the appearance of this previously unsuspected right by saying: "At the

heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." Beliefs about such matters were said to define "personhood," which is to be protected from state compulsion. It is not recorded that any American government, from the founding on, has ever thought it worthwhile to compel anyone's concept of meaning or of the mystery of human life. What this judicial grandiloquence means, aside from a right to have an abortion, nobody knows. But then hymns to radical individualism are necessarily murky and obscure. This particular one is known in the trade as "the mystery passage."²³

Sex Education

Upon the shoulders of the woman conscious of her freedom rests the responsibility of creating a new sex morality. The vital difference between a morality thus created by women and the so-called morality of today, is that the new standard will be based upon knowledge and freedom while the old is founded upon ignorance and submission.²⁴

Planned Parenthood today is involved in comprehensive sex education that endorses and encourages almost everything that is revealed in the Bible as sinful.²⁵ Dobson and Bauer say:

Let's deal with the obvious question head on: Why do bureaucrats and researchers and Planned Parenthood types fight so hard to preserve *adolescent promiscuity*? Why do they balk at the thought of intercourse occurring only in the context of marriage? Why have they completely *removed* the door marked "Premarital Sex" for a generation of vulnerable teenagers?

Their motivation is not that difficult to understand. Multiplied millions of dollars are generated each year in direct response to teenage sexual irresponsibility. Kids jumping into bed with each other are supporting entire industries of grateful adults. The abortion business alone brings in an estimated \$600 million annually.²⁶

The sex education agenda of Planned Parenthood is at least as revolting as the abortion agenda. Their methods are vile, evil, and from the devil (read the chapters recommended in endnote 25).

Dobson summarizes their plan in four points:

1. *Provide "value-free" guidance on sexuality to teenagers.* Heaven forbid any preference for morality or sexual responsibility being expressed.

2. *Provide unlimited quantities of contraceptives to adolescents, dispensed aggressively from clinics located on junior and senior high campuses. In so doing, a powerful statement is made to teenagers about adult approval of premarital sexual activity.*
3. *Keep parents out of the picture by every means possible.* Staff members of Planned Parenthood can then assume the parental role and communicate their libertarian philosophy to teens.
4. *Provide unlimited access to free abortions for young women who become pregnant; again, without parental involvement or permission.*²⁷

Planned Parenthood claims that their approach to sex education will reduce pregnancies among young people. Studies of their claims prove that the opposite is true.

- For every 1,000 teens enrolled in family planning clinics, there are 50 to 100 *more* pregnancies!
- Planned Parenthood's own data proves that their claims that pregnancies and abortions would decrease were both wrong!
- Researchers concluded, "When a program clearly should work, but apparently doesn't, it is important to find out why."²⁸

Dobson and Bauer proposed their own four-point plan:

1. *Secure the involvement of parents in the system.*
2. *Teach sexual abstinence to teenagers, just as we attempt to teach them to abstain from drug and alcohol usage and other harmful behavior.*
3. *Remove the incentives from teens to become pregnant.*
Today an adolescent girl can obtain her own apartment and several hundred dollars per month from the government for having a baby out of wedlock.
4. *Finally, we should lead our children early into a knowledge of the Bible and obedience to the commandments of Christ.*²⁹

*Eugenics*³⁰

Most people know by now, the twenty-first century, what abortion is, even if not all the details. Not so many, however, might be familiar with eugenics. The dictionary defines eugenics

as "... a science concerned with improving ... the human species, by such means as influencing or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have desirable genetic traits." Another definition of eugenics is "well born." The term was first coined in 1853 by an Englishman, Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin.³¹

Eugenics was and is a very important and serious element of the philosophy of Margaret Sanger and her followers to this day, including her grandson, who wrote his book in 2004. Angela Franks made the following points that show the eugenic spirit of Margaret Sanger, contemporary parallels, and Margaret's grandson, Alexander.

- Intimately linked with her belief in the goodness and necessity of birth control was a eugenic desire to control the reproduction of the "unfit." Birth control was for "fit" women like herself, who wished to be freed from the difficulties of childbirth and child rearing in order to pursue a bourgeois, romantic vision of sexual freedom. But it was also for those women who were "unfit," who "recklessly" perpetuated their damaged genetic stock by irresponsibly breeding more children in an already overpopulated world. If the latter did not voluntarily embrace birth control, according to Sanger, it should be forced upon them.
- Population control was a natural extension of Sanger's eugenic desire for population "quality, not quantity"; she insisted, "a *qualitative* factor as opposed to a *quantitative* one is of primary importance in dealing with the great masses of humanity." She was one of the first and most influential activists to extend the influence of eugenics by concentrating on population control (that is, concentrating on the "not quantity" side of the eugenic equation), and her organizations made sure she would not be the last. Indeed, scientific demography had its ideological origins in eugenics. Demography's attitude toward people was also determined by the "quantity vs. quality" dichotomy. Thus, the concern for reducing the number of people born was interwoven with the eugenic desire to reducing the number of "*unfit*" people born.
- We see in Sanger's 1920 book *Woman and the New Race* that, underlying Sanger's promotion of birth control, was her understanding of what she called the "sex servitude" of women. The

inferior place of woman was caused by her acceptance of the "chains" forged by "the maternal functions of her nature." When "unenlightened" women participated in what she called the "wickedness of large families," they foisted upon the world hordes of "cheap" human beings. Note that human beings (and, therefore, women) do not have an innate dignity. They are like a commodity that loses its value when the market is flooded. These worthless people in turn became the ignorant, idle, impoverished class. Thus, "woman has, through her reproductive ability, founded and perpetuated the tyrannies of the Earth."

- She believes, at least in 1920, that free men and women bring forth fit children, while unfree parents can only bring forth the unfit. That is, she has not at this point embraced a full-blown eugenic determinism when it comes to the poor, as she will eventually. In 1939, for example, in a letter to Frederick Osborn, the head of the American Eugenics Society, she insists that the poor as a class should have their fertility controlled; whether or not they are "free" is no longer a consideration.
- *By all means there should be no children when mother (or father) suffers from such diseases as tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, syphilis, cancer, epilepsy, insanity, drunkenness or mental disorders ... No more children should be born when the parents, though healthy themselves, find that their children are physically or mentally defective.* No matter how much they desire children, no man and woman have a right to bring into the world those who are sure to suffer from mental or physical affliction. It condemns the child to a life of misery and places upon the community the burden of caring for them, probably of their defective descendants for many generations.
- The feminine spirit, Sanger contends, when freed from fear of unwanted children, will naturally channel itself into an appropriately eugenic maternity. This is due to Sanger's hyper-romantic idea of sexual love in which the free development of the personalities of the lovers always takes precedence over the responsibilities of parenting ... What does such a life look like? "Theirs is the opportunity to keep abreast of the times, to make and cultivate a varied circle of friends, to seek amusements as suits their taste and means, to know the meaning of real recreation. All

of these things remain unrealized desires to the prolific mother.” They are, in other words, “fit mothers of the race ... the courted comrades of the men they choose, rather than the ‘slaves of slaves.’”

- This combination of eugenics with sexual free-thinking can be seen in Sanger’s essay, “The Need of Birth Control in America,” published in *Birth Control: Facts and Responsibilities* and edited by eugenicist and American Birth Control League National Council member Adolf Meyer. There she defines “what we mean by Birth Control today: *hygienic, scientific, and harmless control of procreative powers*. Thus comprehended, Birth Control places in our hands the key to that greatest of all human problems—how to reconcile individual freedom with the necessities of race hygiene.” In one sentence, Sanger links the two ideas—free sex and eugenics—that motivated her agenda, and ties them together with what makes both possible: birth control.³²

Let me emphasize that the above quotes are only part of Franks’ assessment of Margaret’s eugenics. Much of her essay is based on Sanger’s words in the book that has been used throughout this chapter (*Woman and the New Race*).

Let us move forward 91 years (from 1913 to 2004) to her grandson’s work. About it, Franks comments:

- Let us turn briefly to the arguments found in Alexander Sanger’s book, just published in 2004, *Beyond Choice: Reproductive Freedom in the 21st Century*.
- Alexander is Margaret’s grandson, and as an undergraduate he wrote his thesis on her early activism. *Woman and the new Race* falls into this period, and Alexander has read the work. Though denying that he is promoting eugenics, because he thinks that would entail the use of force in promoting or preventing reproduction, Alexander promotes eugenics nonetheless. He just calls it “biology” instead: “All of humanity has benefited when individuals have control of their reproduction. This is a biological statement, not a eugenic one.”
- Sanger’s analysis of the history of eugenics seeks to exculpate his argument from any eugenic taint. It doesn’t quite work, however, because he makes several assumptions that cannot be supported historically. For example, he argues that Margaret

Sanger's association with eugenics was fundamentally pragmatic, not ideological, but she never renounced (and frequently affirmed) the eugenic philosophy of *Woman and the New Race*. Also, he presents eugenics as a giant scientific scam perpetuated on the world by a handful of quacks. Yet almost all the prominent scientific minds of the 1920s and 1930s were proponents of one form of eugenics or another, and many of their claims (although refined) have been given new currency since the success of the Human Genome Project. For this reason, declarations of support for a "new eugenics" have been common in the last decade. Eugenics need not be unscientific, as long as there is some basis for arguing for the heredity of certain traits. Eugenics need not be openly coercive, either: the most prominent American eugenicist for fifty years in America, Frederick Osborn, popularized the "eugenic hypothesis," which argued that human beings naturally will choose eugenic reproduction when allowed to do so. Indeed, Alexander Sanger winds up unknowingly parroting Osborn's hypothesis. The former thus claims to avoid making eugenic claims, while the central argument of his book is identical to that made by America's premier eugenicist.

- A kind of "pro-family" argument has been making the rounds recently (see the April 22, 2004 article by William Saletan in *slate.com*, for example, that argues that teenagers, the poor, and mothers of disabled fetuses are all more likely to have healthy babies later, when they are better able to), but Sanger is one of the few to frame it in explicitly biological and evolutionary terms. The leap, however, from pro-choice/pro-family rhetoric to eugenics is not so difficult, as *Woman and the New Race* showed us. Rockwell, Saletan, and Sanger all argue that abortion serves the goal of healthy families, and it is easy to see how disabled babies would be considered manifestly "unhealthy," both in themselves and also for their families. Sanger makes the clear jump from the issue of individual health to the health of the race, and it is here that the discussion becomes explicitly eugenic; Rockwell and Saletan might well protest that they intend no such move. But their rhetoric provides no protection against this easy move from a kind of socially concerned libertarianism to eugenics—indeed their rhetoric promotes such a progression. After all, if something is unhealthy for a family, surely it is

unhealthy for society as a whole, and therefore, if you take a long view, for the human race or the human gene pool as a whole. As Margaret Sanger observed, if you accept that “unfit” offspring are the reliable result of certain situations (such as poverty), you have to accept that this kind of reproduction has repercussions for society. Alexander Sanger relies on her argument when he takes the language of Rockwell and Saletan to its logical evolutionary and eugenic conclusion.

- In the end, what the eugenic rhetoric that Margaret Sanger has bequeathed to us has given us not the liberation of women but the sexual wounding of untold people, the scapegoating of female fertility, and the death of many millions of children.³³

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

Planned Parenthood is about a number of willfully ignorant people inventing a plan to accomplish their aims. By “willfully ignorant,” I mean that Margaret Sanger and the others whose words are in the materials I have read are willfully ignorant of the Bible’s message about the nature and will of God, the concept of morality in the Bible (including marriage, sexual sins, the origin of the soul, and the purpose of life on earth). It is not possible for people to answer hard (or easy) questions without using the Bible.

Planned Parenthood is about a rebellious spirit. Sanger and her followers are following the pattern of Israel in the Old Testament when it comes to stubborn rebellion against the truths that they really need.

Planned Parenthood is about bad reactions to bad situations. One bad reaction is to overstate the case, making it seem worse than it really is. But often, this tactic is what makes it easier to get an audience and convince them that our message is the solution.

Planned Parenthood is about sex, and sinful sex is about self. When self is the main concern, then self needs to make all choices based on pleasing self. Planned Parenthood is Jeroboam all over again, 1 Kings 12:25-33.

Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and

they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

He overstates the case (vv. 25-27). He encourages willful ignorance (vv. 28-30). He promotes sin (v. 30). He continues the step-by-step agenda (vv. 31-33). This short paragraph is the foundation for the next 250 plus years in the ten northern tribes. No matter how many times the dynasty changed, it remained that Jeroboam's agenda was followed to the bitter end in 2 Kings 17, where the whole thing is explained again.

Will Margaret Sanger's evil empire be around that long? Do we not see that one person can "make Israel to sin"? Do we have anyone who will dig up the history and warn the world?

Another way to answer the question, "What is it all about?" is to ponder the chapter titles in the books being read in researching this study. In the Preface to *Blessed Are the Barren*, John "Cardinal" O'Connor says:

This is a sickening book, terribly difficult for any reader who wants to believe in the integrity of the political system, the judiciary, the legal and medical professions, the decency and reasonableness of people in a whole variety of influential positions. The story of deceit the book relates is devastating. One can recover balance only by setting the book aside after every ten or twelve pages, and reminding oneself of all the good and decent and honest politicians and judges and lawyers and doctors and nurses and social workers and others one knows.³⁴

In reading this (and other) books, I have found it to be quite necessary to close the book and walk away frequently before I could go back and read more. I have read more than 1,000 pages so far, and have been “down in the dumps” through most of them.

Now to some chapter headings that illustrate my point:

Blessed are the Barren

- 3 “A New Code or No Code? Planned Parenthood’s Philosophy of Sex”
- 5 “Planned Parenthood Competing with Religion”
- 7 “Planned Parenthood and Medicine: Motherhood as a Disease”
- 9 “Evolution of the ‘Right to an Abortion’”
- 11 “Planning for the Perfect: Planned Parenthood and Perfection”³⁵

Grand Illusions: The Legacy of Planned Parenthood

- 3 “Bad Seed: The Historical Legacy”
- 4 “Back Alley Butchers: The Medical Legacy”
- 5 “A Race of Thoroughbreds: The Racial Legacy”
- 6 “Selling Sex: The Educational Legacy”
- 7 “Robber Barons: The Financial Legacy”
- 8 “Strange Bedfellows: The Institutional Legacy”
- 9 “The Camera Blinked: The Media Legacy”³⁶

Aborting Planned Parenthood: Documented Proof of Planned Parenthood’s Systematic Exploitation of Teenagers and Taxpayers

- 1 Aborting Planned Parenthood: Getting the Facts (Note: This chapter is about what they found in a dumpster, SA).
- 2 The Taxpayer’s Daughter: The Scandal of Government Funding of Planned Parenthood
- 3 Chalkboard Evangelists: Selling Sex in the Classroom
- 4 Prescription for Disaster: Teenagers and Birth Control
- 5 Rubber Soul: The Hypocrisy of “Safe-Sex”
- 6 Safe and Legal: The Nightmare of Legal Abortion³⁷

Margaret Sanger's chapter titles are equally depressing, especially since they are the reasons that caused the other books to be needed.

Woman and the New Race

- I. Woman's Error and Her Debt
- III. The Material of the New Race
- IV. Two Classes of Women
- V. The Wickedness of Creating Larger Families
- XIII. Battalions of Babies the Cause of War
- XIV. Woman and the New Morality
- XVI. Why Not Birth Control Clinics in America?³⁸

WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT IT?

At long last we get to go to the Bible! What a relief! To be a person who has been taught that the Bible is the Word of God, it is the revelation of the One True God, and it has answers to all of the questions that will ever matter is a great blessing indeed. And this is the first thing that "I should do about it."

After being exposed to any degree to any philosophy and vain deceit, we need to go to the Bible. Read it, re-read it, and read it again. Let its words soothe your soul, answer your questions, and challenge you to action.

It is easy to get down about how wicked our own times are, but reading the Bible reminds us that none of this is really new. All of God's people have lived in wicked times (Gal. 1:3-4). Surely members of the church who lived when Margaret Sanger was alive and pursuing her sinful vanities thought that she was making it hard for them, too!

Here are some "don'ts" for us:

- Don't just buy into the Planned Parenthood agenda.
- Don't become numb to the immorality of our age.
- Don't let denominations fight these battles in our stead—as much good research as they do, their ultimate answers are wrong, too. But these battles must be fought.
- Don't just sit there.
- Don't fight abortion with the view that "we need to see that these babies are born." *That is not good enough.* If we are going to see to it that they are born, then we need to see to it that they are

taught the truth! What good will it do to eliminate abortion and then watch them grow up lost? We must think past life on earth and determine to evangelize every person in every generation.

From the very beginning, God has done several things. First, He has always made Himself known. He is God, He is the Voice of authority, and He is the Creator of our souls (Gen. 1:1-31). Second, He has always made it known that He has a will for us that involves commandment-keeping, honoring His will for marriage and the home, and refusing to do whatever He said we are not to do (Gen. 2-3). Third, He has always made known His will regarding children and that they are *not to be abused!*

- We are not to engage in violence against them as Cain did to Abel (Gen. 4).
- We are not to leave them to themselves for their training so that they succumb to evil early (Gen. 8:21).
- We are not to be guilty of verbal abuse that destroys the child's knowledge of his value (Gen. 21:9-11).
- We are not to be involved in any type of sexual sin with or against a child (Gen. 19:30-38).
- We are to understand that a child is a person even in the womb (Gen. 25:21-23).
- We are not to play favorites with our children (Gen. 25:27-28).
- We are not to hate a child (Gen. 27:41).
- We are not to engage in sexual lust toward a child (Gen. 34:1-2).
- We are not to abuse a child physically (Gen. 37:18-28).

What if Margaret Sanger (in 1913), or her grandson (in 2004), would have started their research about children by beginning in Genesis? How much different are the answers we hear today (in school, books, music, TV, movies, news, the web) from the will of God in the Bible?

If the world needs more food, Planned Parenthood proposes to kill more children or sterilize more couples. To cope with sexual desires, eliminate the consequences (children), because curbing sexual desire is impossible. More venereal diseases, rely upon antibiotics because chastity does not work. Fidelity is bothersome, take the Pill, get sterilized. If killing a child is morally

bothersome, simply redefine the baby out of existence. The family is breaking down in the wake of the contraceptive-clad sexual revolt, appropriate more money for government day care. Faced with growing poverty, abort (kill), contracept, or sterilize the poor. Johnny and Jane cannot read, never mind, give them condoms and the Pill before they propagate any more of their like.^{39, 40}

CONCLUSION

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:26-27).

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate (Ps. 127:3-5).

And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me (Mt. 18:3-5).

Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done (Ps. 78:1-4).

This chapter began with a series of quotes from the last chapter of *Woman and the New Race*. Margaret Sanger was planning a world where, among other things, "There will come ... a Jesus who will not die on the cross."⁴¹ I am sure that her eloquent rhetoric impresses people, but I am sorry to say that we have lost Eden through sin; the tree of life is no longer available on earth; sickness, disease and sin are here to stay; and I am happy to say that the only way out is through the Jesus Who did die on the cross! Human wisdom may be flowery, appealing, and popular, but it is empty. We need the Jesus who died on

the cross, rose from the grave, established one church, gave purpose to life, and promised to come again. Let us not hide this story from the children or parents.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (New York, NY: Truth Publishing Company, 1922), 226.

³ *Ibid.*, 226, 227, 229, 232, 233, 243.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁵ International Planned Parenthood Federation website, <www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/international-program-18972.htm>

⁶ F. LaGard Smith, *When Choice Becomes God* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), 199.

⁷ Robert G. Marshall and Charles A. Donovan, *Blessed Are the Barren, The Social Policy of Planned Parenthood* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 5-33. The points about Sanger's life are edited from chapter 1 of this book. Another good summary of her life is in *Grand Illusions, The Legacy of Planned Parenthood*, by George Grant (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, Publishers, Inc. 1988), chapter 3, "Bad Seed: The Historical Legacy," 41-61. Among other important information, Grant offers the following thoughts regarding the beginning of the twentieth century:

What they did not know was that dark and malignant seeds were already germinating just beneath the surface of the new century's soil. Josef Stalin was a twenty-one-year-old seminary student in Tiflis, a pious and serene community at the crossroads of Georgia and the Ukraine. Benito Mussolini was a seventeen-year-old student teacher in the quiet suburbs of Milan. Adolf Hitler was an eleven-year-old aspiring art student in the quaint upper Austrian village of Brannan. And Margaret Sanger was a twenty-year-old shy and out-of-sorts nurse-probationer in White Plains, New York. Who could have ever guessed on that ebulliently auspicious New Year's Day that those four youngsters would, over the span of the next century, spill more innocent blood than all the murderers, warlords, and tyrants of past history *combined*? Who could have ever guessed that those four youngsters would together ensure that the hopes and dreams and aspirations of the twentieth century would be smothered under the weight of holocaust, genocide, and triage?

As the champion of the proletariat, Stalin saw to the slaughter of at least fifteen million Ukranian kulaks. As the popularly acclaimed Il Duce, Mussolini massacred as many as four million Ethiopians, two million Eritreans, and a million Serbs, Croats, and Albanians. As the wildly

lionized Fuhrer, Hitler exterminated more than six million Jews, two million Slavs, and a million Poles. As the founder of Planned Parenthood and the impassioned heroine of feminist *causes celebre*, Sanger was responsible for the brutal elimination of more than twenty million children in the United States and as many as one and a half billion worldwide.

⁸ Grant, 51-52 (emphasis added, SA).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

¹⁰ Marshall and Donovan, 5-33.

¹¹ Grant, 56.

¹² Marshall and Donovan, 5-33.

¹³ Grant, 57, 58.

¹⁴ Grant, 59; quoted in Morgan Scott La Trobe, *The Path of Destination* (Cleveland, OH: The Ohio Life Alliance Fund, 1974), 4.

¹⁵ Faye Wattleton, "Humanist of the Year Acceptance Speech," *The Humanist Magazine*, July-August, 1986.

¹⁶ Angela Franks, *Research Bulletin (Association for Interdisciplinary Research in Value and Social Change)*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Winter, 2005. Alexander Sanger's book is *Beyond Choice: Reproductive Freedom in the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2004).

¹⁷ Marshall and Donovan, 7.

¹⁸ Sanger, 63.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44-46.

²⁰ Grant, 25. He continues, "Over the years it has proposed that our government implement such things as 'compulsory abortion for out-of-wedlock pregnancies,' 'federal entitlement payments to encourage abortion,' 'compulsory sterilization for those who already have two children,' and 'tax penalties' for existing large families." In an endnote on page 362, he adds this quote from Alan Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood in 1969, "eventually coercion may become necessary." *National Right to Life News* (March 28, 1985), 5.

²¹ Marshall and Donovan, 240, 241.

²² *Ibid.*, 242, "Birth Control, What It Is, How It Works, What It Will Do," *Proceedings of the First American Birth Control Conferences, pub. by the Birth Control Review*, 104 5th Avenue (New York, NY: Gothic Press, 1921), 145-146.

²³ Robert H. Bork, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah, Modern Liberalism and American Decline*, (New York, NY: Regan Books, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 103.

²⁴ Sanger, 167.

²⁵ See the following chapters:

- a. "Selling Sex: The Education Legacy", in *Grand Illusions*, by George Grant.
- b. "The Sex Educators", in *Blessed Are the Barren*, by Marshall and Donovan.
- c. "Chalkboard Evangelists: Selling Sex in the Classroom", in *Aborting Planned Parenthood*, by Robert H. Ruff.
- d. "The Changing World of Children", in *Children at Risk*, by Dr. James Dobson and Gary L. Bauer.

²⁶ James Dobson and Gary L. Bauer, *Children at Risk* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990), 11 (emphasis added).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-16 (Note: #4 is edited by me to avoid the denominational slant by the authors, SA).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 278-279. The connection between Sanger and the American eugenics movement is clear. Marshall and Donovan say:

Lothrop Stoddard, a member of Sanger's American Birth Control League is also interesting. In 1940 he wrote a book, *Into the Darkness*, about his trip to Nazi Germany where he was accorded the privilege of witnessing the Nazi Supreme Eugenics Court in action. Stoddard later wrote, "On the evidence of that one visit, at least, the Sterilization Law is weeding out the worst strains in the Germanic stock in a scientific and truly humanitarian way."

The close association between Sanger's ABCL and the American eugenics movement involved more than a handful of published articles. The ABCL *Birth Control Review* for March 1928 and the American Eugenics Society journal, *Eugenics, a Journal of Race Betterment*, show the following board members in common: C.C. Little, president, AES; Rosell H. Johnson, secretary-treasurer, AES; Edward M. East, Franklin H. Giddings, Samuel J. Holmes, Mrs. Helen Hartley Jenkins, Mrs. Otto Kahn, Dr. Adolph Meyer, Dr. Aaron J. Rosonoff, and Mrs. C.C. Rumsey.

Other board members, writers, and public supporters of both Sanger and the eugenics movement over the years included Norman Himes, Dr. Robert L. Dickenson, Dr. Hannah Stone, Rev. Fosdick, Rabbi Louis L. Mann, and Henry Pratt Fairchild, to cite a few. Both Sanger and the eugenics movement received money from the Brush Foundation, founded in 1929 for the purpose of "breeding out the unfit and limiting the numbers of those born into the world."

Dr. Hannah Stone, of Margaret Sanger's own Clinical Research Bureau, chose the May 1929 *Eugenics* to paint a remarkably accurate picture of the future linkage of eugenics with birth control:

The eugenicist, again, comes to birth control with a racial viewpoint. He sees in it an important aid towards controlling and improving the type and quality of the human stock. He looks at birth control, in its wider sense, to prevent the propagation of the physically and mentally unfit ... the eugenicist also favors a certain type of birth release. Certain classes of the population he would even encourage to increased fertility ...

It is [on] this biological basis that I believe the birth control clinics of the future will be organized. In connection with the birth control center there will also be a eugenic department, and both of these will, perhaps, be only a part of a more general "marriage advice station" ... In such a center the racial aspect of reproduction could be stressed.

³¹ John Hunt, Ph.D., *Research Bulletin (Association for Interdisciplinary Research in Values and Social Change)*, 16.1, March-June 2001, 1.

³² Franks, 1-8. <www.AngelaFranks.com>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Marshall and Donovan, ix.

³⁵ Ibid., v.

³⁶ Grant, ix, x.

³⁷ Robert H. Ruff, *Aborting Planned Parenthood* (Toronto, CA: Life Cycle Books Ltd., 1990), viii.

³⁸ Sanger, XI.

³⁹ Marshall and Donovan, 321.

⁴⁰ A list of web-sites that may be useful in studying further on Planned Parenthood.

<www.gutmacher.org/>

<www.stopplannedparenthoodtaxfunding.com/>

<www.plannedparenthood.org/>

<www.advocatesforlife.org/>

<www.all.org/>

<www.birthright.org/>

<www.care-net.org/newsroom/>

<www.familyfoundation.org/issues/>

<www.aul.org/>

<www.righttoliferoch.org/wblackamf/>

<www.ccli.org/>

<www.cwfa.org/main.asp/>

<www.eagleforum.org/>

<www.focusonthefamily.com/>

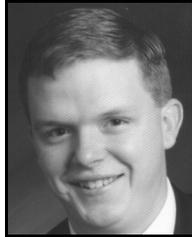
<www.humanlifereview.com/>

<www.marchforlife.org/>
<www.moralmajority.us/>
<www.community.ob.org/>
<www.frc.org/>
<www.rightwingwatch.org/content/free-congress/>
<www.hli.org/>
<www.godparent.org/>
<www.lifeadvocates.org/>
<www.nrlc.org/>
<www.oclife.org/>
<www.plam.org/>
<www.sexrespect.com/>
<www.proliferaction.org/>
<www.rutherford.org/>
<www.AngelaFranks.com/>

⁴¹ Sanger, 234.

THEY SAY, “SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS OKAY”

Matthew Gibson



Matthew Gibson was born in Laredo, Texas. He is married to the former Wendy Scott. They are the parents of four boys. Gibson graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies, and holds a B.S. Degree from Southern Christian University. He is a Commissioned Texas Firefighter and EMT. Gibson preached in Hondo and Upton, Texas, and was the director of the church of Christ Student Center, at San Antonio College. He is the local minister for the Riverside Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas.

INTRODUCTION¹

A well-socialized heterosexual recognizes his debt to society and seeks to marry and nurture children as part of his repayment. He senses himself as part of the ongoing cultural stream and seeks to preserve and enhance society for the benefit of succeeding generations. Emerging from history, he self-consciously contributes to its eternity. He lives on in the generations that follow.

A person committed to homosexual habits is a loose cog. Aside from personal pleasure, his life is essentially pointless. The best he can do is stay out of the way and refrain from damaging the social machine; at worst he might foul its running and destroy it. He has no creative part in history—the end of his life will merely remove a bit of disorganization from the social generator. Lived to their fullest, both lives serve as examples: the heterosexual as a beacon toward which to steer and the homosexual as warning of a whirlpool.²

Many in our society, and alarmingly more and more in the Church, are developing the view that homosexuality is not something they would do, but they will not condemn or speak against those engaging in such practices. Many fail to realize the seriousness of this sin and its far reaching effects upon others. A quick read of the homosexual agenda ought to alarm every citizen of this great country, and it should provoke within every Christian a sense of urgency to debunk the false ideology permeating in this boiling pot of filth. Points in the Homosexual Agenda include:

1. Hate crime legislation—Christians would be guilty for speaking against homosexuality
2. Right to marry—legalize homosexual marriages
3. Employment non-discrimination—employers required to hire homosexuals
4. Military service
5. Lesbian Health issues
6. AIDS/HIV—not as prevalent today due to advancement in medicine
7. Address issues of homosexuals that are of color
8. Adoption rights
9. Aging issues—succession and groups for homosexual elderly
10. Youth issues—young homosexuals “coming out” creating groups in schools
11. Overturning anti-homosexual laws
12. Right to privacy/choice—government has no business imposing (author’s note: it is amazing that while they make this claim, they also want government to do all these favors for them).
13. Global issues—U.S. in the middle and a push to unite countries together to accomplish these goals.³

Please be advised that such subject matter will address issues that may make you feel uncomfortable, being filled with disgust. Homosexuality is not a sin unto oneself; rather, it is a practice void of morals, affecting even the most innocent of society, our children.

Regarding the sin of homosexuality, it is past time that more Christians take a stand for what is right, living righteously and boldly proclaiming the Truth, manifesting an attitude of love for souls. Most Christians understand that homosexuality is a disgusting sin. However, in regard to this matter are we doing that which God wills us to do as servants in His Kingdom? Through Paul, God says: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10). Specifically, the *effeminate* and *abusers of*

themselves with mankind in this list are references to those who practice homosexuality.

In this chapter, we will consider: the history of same-sex marriage, society's permissiveness, whether or not homosexuality is genetic and/or natural, what God's Word teaches on the subject, what our attitude should be, and how to counsel homosexuals. It is my prayer that every reader of this material will approach this subject from God's viewpoint in order to establish a foundation upon which to build for His glory.

HISTORY OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Attempts to legalize same-sex marriage are not exclusive to United States. Such efforts have been made, with many of them being successful, down through time and throughout the world. Available records show that the vast majority of the same-sex unions involved two *men*. On the other hand, little has been recorded relative to the unions between *women*. This does not indicate that there was/is a tendency toward fewer such unions among women; rather, it is a reflection of how women have been viewed in various societies down through time. Yet, in China's history it can be seen that much attention has been given to the very formal unions between females.⁴

At least some Native American Indian tribes are known to have recognized same-sex unions between males. In the nineteenth century, in what became known as the "Boston Marriage," two women could commit themselves to each other and cohabit (though it is likely that the public did not consider this to permit sexual involvement).⁵

Rev. Troy Perry performed the first public gay wedding in the United States in 1969, but it was not legally recognized, and in 1970, Metropolitan Community Church filed the first-ever lawsuit seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages. The lawsuit was not successful. In March 2005, two Unitarian Universalist ministers Kay Greenleaf and Dawn Sangrey were charged with multiple counts of solemnizing a marriage without a license in the State of New York. The charges were the first brought against clergy for performing same-sex unions in North America, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington, D.C.-based gay rights group.⁶

In the United States of America, ongoing polarizing debates are happening because some are advocating the legalization of same-sex unions. Some are even defying the existing laws to do so. Certain states

and their leaders are campaigning and imploring for same-sex unions to be legalized. A few states have now legalized same-sex marriages. All the while this is going on, the federal government is in a quagmire, aimlessly attempting to accommodate the parties on both sides of the issue. This is a deplorably sad state of affairs in our country. With cultural norms changing, every Christian should know better than to allow society to dictate what is *right* and *wrong*.

Every sin, regardless of what it is called, it is still wrong. Same-sex marriage is no exception. Still, homosexuals feebly attempt to disguise their wrongdoing by giving new names to their old sins. “The earliest use of the phrase ‘commitment ceremony’ as an alternative term for ‘gay wedding’ appears to be by Bill Woods who, in 1990, tried to organize a mass ‘commitment ceremony’ for Hawaii’s first gay pride parade.”⁷ Proponents of the homosexual agenda deceitfully attempt to disguise their shameful, disgusting, abominable and sinful “lifestyle” by softening and buffering their terminology with terms such as “domestic partnership,” “civil union,” “registered partnership,” and “reciprocal beneficiary.”

SOCIETY’S PERMISSIVENESS

People must realize how destructive this lifestyle is, not only to the homosexual, but to society as a whole. Why say this? God ordained (established) that marriage is to be between a husband (male) and a wife (female). “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them ... Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 1:27; 2:24). Anytime people digress from God’s prescribed plan, it works to their own undoing.

As people distance themselves from God, the tendency is to make gods of themselves. Men making themselves gods, the arbiters of *right* and *wrong*, invariably “call evil good, and good evil ... put darkness for light, and light for darkness ... put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20). Immoral permissiveness becomes the behavioral norm and a society is saturated with perverted degenerate misfits. This language is strong, but it is true.

WARNING: UNPLEASANT DETAILS GIVEN

WARNING—the following information concerning homosexuality is not something pleasant for a Christian to consider. In fact, while it is not the intent of this writer to be offensive, much of what follows

should be offensive to anyone. And, while this writer finds it personally repulsive, too, it must be considered to clarify from moral and secular perspectives why homosexuality is morally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically destructive.

From a sanitary or health standpoint, people are taught to shun fecal matter. Homosexuals develop a learned behavior to carry out sexual desires upon a part of the body intended to remove feces from the body. Oral contact may be, and most often is, involved. It usually does not cease at this point. Many homosexuals engage in sadomasochism, the consumption of waste—nothing is off limits. Everything for the homosexual becomes a process or means to fulfill his/her deviant sexual desires. Children, toys, parks, public restrooms are all "fair game" in their "hunt." Yes, it is nasty, obscene and repugnant. It is a cesspool of immoral depravity. Homosexuality illustrates what can happen when man, a created being worships self rather than God. Truly, they have "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

Regarding their spiritual condition, unless they repent of their homosexuality and obey the Gospel, homosexuals are on a very steep downhill slide to disaster and doom. Most people are unaware of it, but homosexuals not only engage sexual sins, they have no inhibitions about committing other sins as well. This can be understood when it is realized that when one is so devoid of scruples in one area, he will be amiss in others.

Considered the term "straight." It is often used to describe someone who is heterosexual and monogamous. With very few exceptions, the behavior of homosexuals demonstrates that they do not want monogamous relationships. Generally, their "unions" do not last more than two or three years. Before a homosexual "union" breaks up, one or both parties has already begun "cheating."

Kinsey's study revealed that homosexuals are more likely to engage in criminal activity than are heterosexuals.⁸ Again, compared with heterosexuals, even when they are not caught doing so, homosexuals are more likely to engage in shoplifting, illegal drug use, and committing sexual crimes.⁹ Homosexuals are whiners insisting that they are not the cause for destruction to society. They claim that society has treated them unjustly; therefore, they cheat because they were first cheated. Even if that were true, every right thinking individual knows that committing a wrong in retaliation for a wrong never makes a right.

Homosexuals, 4-to-1, say they would recommend job termination over same sex unions. Half regret ever starting and would become upset if their children practiced such behavior.¹⁰ Emotionally, they are a train scheduled for a head-on collision with depression, anxiety, fear, pity, separation, *et cetera*. This is a course for suicide as reported in 5% of heterosexual males versus 19% of homosexuals and 10% of heterosexual females versus 21% of lesbians.¹¹

The philosophy emanating from homosexuals is an all-out attack on the family as God intends it. Of all crimes—sins—homosexuality is one of the most blatant when it comes to bringing repression upon others. A drug abuser will deny his/her addiction to others, but generally speaking, the drug abuser is seeking to escape the world. Homosexuality, on the other hand, schemes against society. This is evident because it is seen in their arrogant behavior to fulfill their fleshly lusts in public restrooms and parks, when they attempt to exploit our children, and when they deceitfully attempt to gain the trust of others for their own sexual advantage.

Homosexuals do not like to face the *facts presented in numbers* about homosexuals. One particular fact they do not like to face is that Gilles de Rais—a homosexual—is considered to be the world's worst mass sex murderer in history. His wickedness included the destruction of eight hundred children. He lured them into his house, then bathed and fed them. Following these kind gestures, he raped, murdered, cut up or ripped bodies, and ate them. Whatever remained of their bodies he burned. Gilles de Rais was eventually caught and hung.¹²

To be sure, homosexuals decry such an incriminating history. Their defense is that Gilles de Rais lived five hundred years ago, and that their detractors should be ashamed for even mentioning such information. But, numbers are numbers, and they tell a story. Consider the statistics, comparing heterosexuals and homosexuals, relative to mass murders. The following numbers are confined to a seventeen-year period. While only about 4% of the U.S. population are practicing homosexuals, they are over represented in the 518 mass murder deaths reported. Homosexuals killed at least 350 (68%) of the victims. They were implicated in at least 14 (41%) of the thirty-four sets of crime. They committed seven (70%) of the ten worst murder sets.¹³

Brethren, we must understand the driving force which is seeking to destroy the integrity of society, and we must oppose such foolishness with all our mind, body, strength, and soul. Homosexuals do not merely

want to have "equal status," they want to have a higher status than others.

It would seem that most homosexuals would have to know that homosexuality is wrong and that they can change, if they so desire. Surely, they know how pathetic they appear to be in the eyes of others. "To preserve any semblance of self-respect, homosexuals either have to convince others that what they do is right or that they are not responsible for their perversity."¹⁴ Yet, as cultures seek to set sexual standards, relying upon the Bible or an ideology of others, homosexuality is destructive (debasing worthy goals) rather than constructive.

Here is something else to consider. Most parents want to teach their children about sexual matters. However, the homosexual wants your children taught *on their terms*—and if possible by them, when the children are very young. Few become homosexuals "later in life"; it is something learned at an early age. Homosexuals warp their own minds by lowering them to their lowest common denominator—themselves.

Can any good come from homosexuality? No! Do not forget homosexuality's association with the sins of murder, violence, adultery, molestation, and unsanitary practices that are noted above. Yes, homosexuals will deny that you have to be one, but they will not settle for anything less than for you to totally accept their sinful behavior and lifestyle. That is something a Christian simply cannot do.

IS HOMOSEXUALITY GENETIC AND NATURAL?

Homosexuality, being a heinous practice, leaves the homosexual with three options: 1) stay "in the closet," 2) corrupt the minds of others, or 3) place the responsibility for being homosexual somewhere else. We shall now consider the third option. Homosexuals are likened unto young children who are caught misbehaving. They seek to blame someone or something else. Over the past few years there has been a very aggressive thrust made by homosexuals and their supporters to persuade the general population that homosexuals are *born that way* (or born with the inclination to be homosexuals, which is to say the same thing). Christians do not accept the idea that people are born sinners, i.e., alcoholics, murderers, or drug abusers. However, homosexuals do not think in that way because to them their "sexual desire" is not a sin. Fundamentally speaking, those who practice homosexuality either do not know what the Bible teaches, know but do not believe what the Bible teaches, or know and believe what the Bible teaches but refuse to

respect its authority. In any case, like so many others, they rip asunder the Holy Writ if it does not support their sin. Let us consider the question: “Is it possible for someone to be born a homosexual?”

This question ought to be easily and readily answered—proved or disproved—purely from a scientific basis. Homosexuals have long claimed that because of their genetic makeup they have had no choice but to be homosexuals. Now that the Human Genome Project has been completed, guess what has been discovered? There is no such thing as a “gay” gene. That is it! Nothing more! Even so, many are not willing to accept the truth of the matter.

It is sometimes falsely assumed that some humans are “born homosexual” because homosexuality occurs in the animal kingdom. What proves too much, proves nothing. Yes, findings in research done with animals have advanced medical knowledge, led to beneficial medicines, and helped mankind. That being said, this research has been “physiological” in nature and it does not correspond with behavioral studies. Physiological analysis is an empirical or physical process. Behavioral studies are entirely different. Moreover, the pro-homosexuals’ argument is easily defeated by their own fallacious reasoning. For example, since some animals engage in cannibalism, does that mean it is right for humans to engage in cannibalism? Is cannibalism natural?

The homosexuals’ cause is a popular topic for debate in many circles. Those favoring the homosexual agenda constantly insist that one is a homosexual because of his genetic composition or genetic predisposition; therefore, because “God made them that way,” they should be accepted, not be rejected or chastised, because of their “lifestyle.” First, as previously mentioned, there is no *bona fide* scientific evidence for such a claim. True, claims have been made that certain studies have proven that there is a homosexual gene. Yet, when those studies have been examined, they have been exposed to be improper studies, fraudulent studies, or contrived studies. For example, from the widely publicized study conducted by Dr. Dean Hamer of the National Cancer Institute, it was claimed that “a genetic link to homosexuality” had been found. The study reported that the families of 76 gay men included a much higher proportion of homosexual male relatives than found in the general population. Of course, people believed it because, after all, the news media cited the source of the study as the National Cancer Institute. No one seemed to pay attention to the fact that this study conducted by Dr. Hamer was solely a

disappointment because of its sample size, its lack of a heterosexual control group, and the large number of exceptions recorded with no explanation.¹⁵ One of the strongest arguments against the claim that homosexuals are "born that way" are the many notable successes of people abandoning homosexuality. How would that be possible if people are genetically born that way?

Some may mistakenly think that homosexuality is reserved for bums and prison inmates. Homosexuality, like any other sin is not limited to a particular group. A comparison of the national averages for homosexuals and heterosexuals reveals the following facts:

1. Average household income is \$55,300 (for homosexuals) to \$32,286 (for heterosexuals)
2. Percent of college graduates is 60 (for homosexuals) to 18 (for heterosexuals)
3. Percentage of professional and management positions is 49 (for homosexuals) to 16 (for heterosexuals)
4. Percentage with overseas vacations is 66 (for homosexuals) to 14 (for heterosexuals)¹⁶

Christians cannot afford to remain in the dark relative to homosexuality. And, there is no excuse for doing so because there is a wealth of information available from a wide range of sources: secular, denominational, scientific, brethren, and those who have "come out" of homosexuality.¹⁷

WHAT GOD'S WORD TEACHES CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALITY

There is no better way to study this subject than to search the Bible and read what it says on this subject. Truly, the Bible's teaching on homosexuality is vividly clear. Every verse on the subject shows that homosexuality is a moral—not a medical or biological—issue. Consider these well-known Scriptures:

And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may *know* them (Gen. 19:5, emphasis added).

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, *to dishonour their own bodies between themselves*: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who

is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their *women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly,* and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet (Rom. 1:24-27, emphasis added).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither *fornicators*, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10, emphasis added).

Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, *giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh*, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Ju. 7, emphasis added).

Amazingly, the ignorant or rebellious will reject what the Bible says and deny the seriousness and sinfulness of homosexuality. For example, on January 20, 1990, a radio debate took place between Robert Williams (the first practicing homosexual to be ordained a priest in Episcopal Church) and Jeff Asher. In this debate, Williams argued the “Lot incident” was a condemnation from God against Sodom and Gomorrah’s acts of violence, not homosexuality. He did so despite Jude 7, Genesis 2:23, and Matthew 19. When Williams was asked what passage he would use to defend homosexuality, he used Luke 7:2ff. His argument was something like this:

This is the story of Jesus’ healing the centurion’s *pias*. In this particular place the word *pias*, is translated in English as “slave.” Elsewhere, when the same story is told in the other gospels (it is not other gospels; rather, it is Gospel accounts, MG), it is obviously the same story but the word “slave” is not used. It is rather the word “boy.” So there seems to be some confusion about what the identity of this young man is. Is he a servant in the centurion’s household, or is he a son of the centurion? I would suggest that the confusion is because he is in fact neither, but is romantically linked; he is the lover, we might say, of the centurion.¹⁸

“Slave” is nowhere translated “boy” in the New Testament. When challenged on this, Williams replied that he was talking about contem-

porary writings of that time. It is clearly obvious that Williams was making ludicrous, unwarranted claims and expected people to accept them as truth.

Here is another example of how homosexuals attempt to deny the emphatic teaching of the Bible. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 respectively state: "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination ... If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them." How do homosexuals deal with these verses? They agree here that the homosexuality is wrong, but not because it is homosexuality; rather, because at this point in history the Israelites were to increase their population, and any sexual activity that did not produce a greater population was sin. Go figure!

We must accept the Bible for what it is—God’s verbally, plenary, inspired Word. Anything less is to place ourselves above God, especially if in doing so we attempt to tell Him what He meant. God makes it clear. Unless one obeys the Gospel, and in doing so repents of his homosexuality, hell will be his eternal abode. Paul said:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them (Col. 3:1-7).

In this passage, Paul challenges Christians to “walk the walk,” not just talk the talk. Versus 1-4 set forth the *challenge*, and it also provides instructions on how to achieve the goal. Actually, Paul begins this in Colossians 2. Especially note verse 12: “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” To be saved and become a Christian, one must put sin to death because it is sin that separates us from God (Isa. 59:2). Colossians 3:5 teaches we should not *conform* to the sinful ways of the world; rather, we are to put sin to death lest we

face the *consequences* of God's wrath (v. 6). Notice the words "fornication," "uncleanness," "inordinate affection," and "covetousness" (Col. 3:5). Homosexuality rears its ugly head in one form or another in every one of those words. This is even true of the word "covetousness," which Paul points out is idolatry. Homosexuals covet the creation more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25), they dishonor their own bodies, leaving natural use of their bodies, they burn in lust (Rom. 1:24-27), they will not inherit the kingdom of God because they abuse themselves with mankind (1 Cor. 6:9-10), and they are set for suffering the vengeance of eternal fire because they give themselves over to fornication by going after strange flesh (Ju. 1:7). Can anyone find anything good in Scripture about homosexuality?

Here is something good. From 1 Corinthians 6:11 and Colossians 3:7, it is obvious that those who had been caught up in homosexuality ceased to practice it. These verses imply that homosexuality is learned, and it is something that can be mortified (put to death, ceased), giving the soul hope of salvation (Rom. 8:24-25).

CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY, SIN

Faithful Christians know that homosexuality is not good, that it is sin. A chief concern for God's children should be: "How do we deal with sin, whether it is our sin or someone else's?" Having the proper attitude toward God and toward sin is vitally important when it comes to helping anyone who is guilty of homosexuality. The Bible declares that homosexuality is sin. Sin is transgression of God's law (1 Jn. 3:4). All unrighteousness is sin (1 Jn. 5:17; Ps. 119:172), and anything that is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). It must also be understood that "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17). Sin is not "natural." It is against nature. Furthermore, no one is sinful because he has inherited a "sin gene" (Ezek. 18:19-20). Therefore, because the Bible identifies homosexuality as a sin, no one is born that way. In turn, this means that homosexuality is a learned behavior—generally a behavior one has been led into. About how we involve ourselves in sin, James warns:

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth

forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren (Jas. 1:13-16).

Each individual is responsible for his own sin. One is not held to another's sin unless he is a contributor to it. We do not inherit sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).

A proper attitude toward sin is achieved by recognizing the following facts about sin. First, sin is a deceitful force (Heb. 3:13). Second, sin hardens the heart (think of Pharaoh, Heb. 3:8). Third, sin is progressive in its nature (2 Tim. 3:13). Examples of this fact are Joseph's brethren (Gen. 37), David (2 Sam. 11), and Peter (Mt. 26:58-75). Fourth, sin's pleasures are only for a season (Heb. 11:25). Fifth, the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Finally, sin kills one's sense of shame by making the heart increasingly calloused to good (Phil. 3:19).

How do we deal with sin, including the sin of homosexuality? First, there is a right way and a wrong way to "cover" sins. The wise man wrote: "He that covereth his sins (in the wrong way, MG) shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Pro. 28:13). The psalmist said: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (in the right way)" (Ps. 32:1). Second, we cannot hide our sins. Numbers 32:23 says: "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." Third, we cannot truthfully deny our sins. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8-10). Fourth, we are to confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9). Fifth, repentance is necessary to receive the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 8:22; Lk. 17:3). It necessarily follows that one cannot be a homosexual, obey the Gospel, and remain a homosexual. This is so because repentance is vital to salvation (Acts 17:30-31; Lk. 13:3, 5). Finally, we must forsake, mortify, and cease from sin (Pro. 28:13; Col. 3:5).

Regardless of the influences of society, the news media, our fellow workers, or anyone's efforts to propagandize us that we must be *understanding*, *sensitive*, and *open minded* to homosexuality, a sin, brethren, we must understand the consequence of sin. We are:

1. To *understand*—understand God’s way
2. To be *sensitive*—to the price paid on the cross lest we trample under foot that precious sacrifice because we endorse sin, including homosexuality (Heb. 10:26, 31).
3. To be *open minded*—again, open to God and His ways loving Truth and honoring the Almighty.

What does the Bible say about consequences of sin? First, sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2). It is the only thing that separates us from God (Eph. 2:1-2). Second, sin brings the vengeance of God (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Third, sin will cause us to miss Heaven (Jn. 8:21; 1 Pet. 4:17-18). Fourth, the end result of sin is death (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 21:8). There is an abundance of Scripture dealing with the fact that spiritual death is of a greater consequence than physical death. Why? Physical death is not a choice, but spiritual death results from the choices we make between right and wrong. Fifth, unforgiven sin will mean eternal punishment for the sinner (Mt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9). We are to love the souls of all sinners, but we are not to love their sins.

If you struggle in your efforts to have the proper attitude toward homosexuality, concentrate your studies on the punishment awaiting those who support sin, encourage sin (even through their silence), or die in sin. First, punishment for sin is just (Rom. 2:23-26; Jn. 3:16-21; Mt. 10:28). Second, that punishment will be eternal, forever (Mt. 25:46). Third, the soul’s annihilation, complete removal, would be a relief, but it is not a part of God’s plan (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48; Mt. 25:30). Fourth, recognize the somber reality of God’s wrath, and in so doing be motivated to employ the power of God’s Word to bring all people to obedience to the precious Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Rom. 12:9). “Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:22-23).

COUNSELING HOMOSEXUALS

Dealing with sin is a constant battle. Sadly, many do not overcome sin because they seek answers in all the wrong places. People need to understand that God’s Word provides the answers to all of the questions having to do with man’s sin problems. Sometimes in their

search for answers in the Bible, people become discouraged because they do not know "where in the Bible" to find their needed answers. Help for them will need to come from those who know how to give Bible counsel to homosexuals. To help those who might need to counsel homosexuals, this writer recommends the advice offered by brother James Meadows.

First, brother Meadows recommends that one become familiar with the possible causes of homosexuality.¹⁹ This allows the teacher to be prepared to meet and refute false claims, "understand where the student is coming from," and be informed regarding the roots of this sin. Sin is sin, but the reasons why a person will engage in one as opposed to another will vary from one sin to another, and from person to person. For example, the suggested possible catalysts for one becoming a homosexual are: a domineering mother, an absence of father, molestation, incorrect sex education, emotional imbalance, *et cetera*. Knowing these things can help a teacher know what areas of person's life must be dealt with in his efforts to help the homosexual.

Second, the Bible teacher/counselor must reflect upon his own attitude towards homosexuals.²⁰ Brethren, if we mock and make fun of a sin, our attitude is not right. Sin is never made light of in the Scripture. Sin is not to be made light of because a soul is at stake with its possible final destination being an eternity in hell. This is nothing to joke about.

Third, we must avoid stereotyping homosexuals.²¹ All homosexuals are not the same. Borrowing from Tim LaHaye, Meadows lists the following seven differences among homosexuals:

1. The unhappy gay
2. The Christian whose conscience constantly plagues him
3. The Christian who fights homosexual temptations every day of life
4. The deceived homosexual
5. The former homosexual Christian who lets guard down and falls into sin
6. The defiant deviant
7. The militant homosexual²²

It is essential that the teacher/counselor understand the background of one which might have contributed to his becoming a homosexual. To

illustrate this: if a fire is started with grease, the fire will not be extinguished by putting water on it—it will only enhance the fire. Knowing what causes the fire (sin, homosexuality) will help one to determine the approach to be used in putting it out (i.e., bring a lost soul to salvation).

Fourth, brother Meadows makes a point that the homosexual's greatest need is love.²³ The homosexual thinks he is facing a life devoid of true love. (This can be especially confusing to him since he has previously thought that happiness comes from immoral, sexual desires.) Having lost a true sense and self-respect of self, it is important to let the homosexual know that his life can have value and meaning.

Fifth, the teacher/counselor must see the homosexual apart from the problem.²⁴ The homosexual is a real person with a real soul. The goal is to help him overcome his sin. Perhaps other sins have led homosexuals to this point. People seek to fulfill life through many means, Scriptural or not (most often “not”). Many times a sinner is dealing with issues of selfishness, covetousness, or a sense of belonging. If children are being taught that homosexuality is okay, that it is not that different—that it is really those who object to it who have the problem—what do we expect the outcome to be?

Sixth, the teacher/counselor must be able to recognize those homosexuals who are genuinely concerned versus those who seeking support for their sin.²⁵ Having been involved in prison work for several years, this writer has witnessed this time and again. Prisoners would attend services for various reasons. Some attended because it was different. Others attended to develop what was called “good time” (to expedite their release date). Still some attended because they were sincerely concerned about their wrongdoing.

Seventh, steps must be taken to “unlearn” what is wrong, and then “learn” what is right.²⁶ True of any sin, this part of the process requires invaluable, self-reflection upon teacher/counselor. Knowledge, understanding, caring, and loving are essentials to gain trust of the one being taught/counseled and to bring him from a state of sin to one of salvation. Most of the time, it will begin with just listening.

Eighth, Meadows recommends the advice of John Scott, a successful counselor helping homosexuals to rid their sin.

1. Homosexuality is a sin and not a sickness from start to finish.
2. Homosexuality begins as a personal sin and ends as a sickness.

3. Homosexuality is a sickness which involves the sin of abuse.
4. Homosexuality is a sickness which is caused by a combination of factors involving both sin and sickness.
5. Homosexuality involves sin in the sense that it has destructive consequences.
6. Homosexuality is a social sin.²⁷

Ninth, the teacher/counselor must have compassion.²⁸ Several factors need to be considered here. Christians cannot pretend to care, hoping the homosexual will change. Christians cannot be afraid of dealing and working with someone in this sin. If you, as a teacher/counselor are apprehensive or scared, seek someone to help you. *Never* must we convey or leave the message that the sinner is all right in his wicked ways. If we do that, we become guilty of sin and we will be just as lost as the homosexual.

Tenth, it is just as important for the homosexual to obey the Gospel and change his life, all to the glory of God, as it is for anyone else.²⁹ Remember, 1 Corinthians 6:11 says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Like every new convert, the homosexual will be extremely vulnerable at this point in his spiritual life. Perhaps he will experience feelings of doubt and ignorance. No doubt he will have questions that will need answers. Satan will be seeking to devour this babe in Christ before he or she becomes more strengthened by the Word of God and fellowship with his brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Pet. 5:8).

CONCLUSION

The subject discussed in this chapter is neither pleasant nor pretty. But brethren, we are in a spiritual warfare. Our very spiritual well-being demands that we be able to assemble, teach and discuss this subject in a Godly manner. We must lovingly, respectfully, but forcefully take a stand for God's moral teaching. This means we must expose and oppose immorality, regardless of the form it takes. We must use the pressure of our knowledge and influence against those who would oppose God's way. This is not only our legal right, but more importantly, it is our spiritual responsibility to do so. A heart of tenderness and compassion without compromise is what God calls for. The faithful will gladly, boldly, and courageously defend what is right

as it has been set forth by God in His Word. We must do this lest we become an entire nation that suffers, sharing in the consequences of others sins, because we chose to remain silent for fear of intimidation and persecution.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:10-18).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless noted otherwise.

² *The Psychology of Homosexuality*, Institute for the Scientific Investigation of Sexuality (Lincoln, NE: ISIS, 1984), pamphlet.

³ *The Millennium March on Washington for Equality Agenda*, American Family Association.
<http://www.afa.net/homosexual_agenda/ha2000.htm, 2000>

⁴ Wikipedia, *History of same-sex unions*.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_same-sex_unions>

⁵ *Ibid.*, North America.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ P.H. Gebhard and A.B. Johnson, *The Kinsey data: marginal tabulation of the 1938-1963 interviews conducted by the Institute for Sex Research* (New York, NY: Saunder, 1979).

⁹ 4,340 adults were sampled via area cluster methods in Los Angeles, Denver, Omaha, Louisville, and Washington, D.C. in 1983; 842 in Dallas in 1984. An

extensive (over 550 items) questionnaire was answered by each respondent anonymously.

¹⁰ A.P. Bell and M.S. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A study of diversity among men and women* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

¹¹ M.T. Saghir and E. Robins, *Male and Female Homosexuality: A Comprehensive Investigation* (Baltimore, MD: Williams and Wilkins, 1973).

¹² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilles_de_Rais>

¹³ A.P. Bell, M.S. Weinberg and S.K. Hammersmith, *Sexual Preference: Statistical Appendix* (Bloomington, IN: U Press, 1981).

¹⁴ *The Psychology of Homosexuality*.

¹⁵ Richard G. Howe, *Homosexuality in America: Exposing the Myths* (Tupelo, MS: The American Family Association, 1994), 10-11.

¹⁶ Ibid. information gathered from *Freedom Heritage Forum*.

¹⁷ <www.afa.net; www.family.org; www.sbministries.org; www.christiancourier.com> brother Meadows; Institute for the Scientific Investigation of Sexuality; plethora of books.

¹⁸ *The Williams—Asher Debate on Homosexuality*, excerpt from *Out of the Closet* (Faith and Facts Press, 1990), radio debate, 11.

¹⁹ James Meadows, *Counseling the Homosexual*, information gathered from a paper I have of his, 11.

²⁰ Ibid., 13.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Tim LaHaye, *The Unhappy Gays* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1978), 89.

²³ Meadows, 13.

²⁴ Ibid., 14.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ John Scott substitutes the word homosexuality for alcoholism, but believes the principles involved are the same. From Howard J. Clinebell, *Understanding and Counseling the Alcoholic* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1968). 7:167-178.

²⁸ Meadows, 15.

²⁹ Ibid.

THEY SAY, “MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL”

Bob Patterson



Bob Patterson is a native of Austin, Texas. He and his wife, the former Luanne Tham, have two sons and seven grandchildren. Patterson is a 1977 graduate of the Sunset School of Preaching. He has done local work in Texas and Oklahoma. Patterson has held Gospel meetings in Texas, Arkansas, and Kansas and speaks on several lectureships each year. He is now preaching for the Mabank Church of Christ in Mabank, Texas. Patterson is the director of the Annual Mabank Lectureship.

INTRODUCTION¹

No one can discount the many influences that are continuing to be exerted upon the church. Thus, we must constantly be reminded, “the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). However, this is exactly what Humanism embraces. In the preface of *Manifesto I and II*, Humanism is described as “a philosophical, religious, and moral point of view as old as human civilization itself.”² Humanism insists “that man must look to human experience for moral and spiritual guidance, without believing that there is a supernatural God or divine power to support him.”³ There can be no doubt that this is an organized philosophy which removes God and focuses on man doing what man thinks is best for man. Although there are different variations within Humanism, the factors most Humanists share include: 1) They do not believe in the existence of a deity, or they do not care about the topic, 2) They believe that excellent codes of behavior and morality can be created through human reasoning alone, 3) Humans created the gods and goddesses in their own image, 4) They tend to be at the liberal end of the spectrum on such controversial topics as abortion; equal rights for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals; same-sex marriage; physician assisted suicide; corporal punishment of children; feminism; *et cetera*. With the persistent pressures of the world (its values, standards, ethics, morals, and how it measures success) being guided by this philosophy—which has infiltrated into our lives by means of education, mass media, and even

through government—if we are not careful, we can easily allow ourselves to be “conformed to this world” (Rom. 12:2).

One of the challenges the Humanistic philosophy presents is seen in its influence on the thinking of those in the Feminist Movement. With every passing decade, not only does the ever increasing pressure of the Feminist Movement change the society in which we live (and that of others, too), it is making inroads into religion as well. Many people in various religious bodies are now promoting what they deem to be “women’s rights.” It has been said: “Whatever affects the world affects the church.” This is evidently true concerning the Feminist Movement.

It has become commonplace in the religious world to have women preachers, women song leaders, women prayer leaders, women educational directors, and women elders and deaconesses. Tragically, a number of churches of Christ are utilizing women in such leadership roles, and they are encouraging others to do the same. As might be expected, their tribe continues to increase. When a congregation does so, it divorces itself from the plain teaching of the Bible. Let there be no doubt—in this time of digression—*increasing pressure is being exerted (like never before) to change the role, place, and function of women in the church!* We understand that such efforts are far removed from the loyalty that faithful brethren have to God’s Word. However, some in the Lord’s church are allowing themselves to be *deceived* (cf. Eph. 4:14) by the outside influences, one of which is Humanism.

In order to properly be set “for the defence of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17), it is imperative that we equip ourselves (Eph. 6) so that we can successfully “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). Our archenemy, the devil, will continue his adversarial efforts by means of his “wiles” and “devices” as the master of deceit (Eph. 6:11; 2 Cor. 2:11; Rev. 12:9). We must use the powerful “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) to cast “down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:5).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT

A brief history of this movement is necessary.

- The first feminist document was by the British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. Her document, *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) demanded that liberty, equality, and fraternity be applied regardless of sex, but this movement was extinguished for the time by the Code Napoleon.

- In North America, Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis pressed for the inclusion of women's emancipation in the Constitution in 1776. However, the feminist movement really dates from 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and others, at a convention in Seneca Falls, NY issued a declaration of independence. This declaration demanded full legal equality, full educational equality and commercial opportunity, equal compensation, the right to collect wages, and the right to vote. Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan Brownell Anthony, this move spread rapidly.
- In 1946 the UN Commission on the Status of Women was established to secure equal political rights, economic rights, as well as educational opportunities for women throughout the world.
- In the 1960s feminism experienced a so-called "rebirth" with the formation of The National Organization for Women (NOW) which was formed in 1966 and had over 400 local chapters by the 1970s. The National Women's Political Caucus began the press for such changes as abortion rights, federally supported child care centers, equal pay for women, the occupational upgrading of women, the removal of all legal and social barriers to education, political influence, and economic power.
- With the leadership of Bella Abzug, Betty Friedan, and Gloria Steinem, the Equal Rights Amendment was pushed through Congress in 1972, but by 1982 it fell short of ratification.⁵

Concerning the Feminist Movement, it is almost impossible to provide a single definition that is acceptable to everyone. "Feminism" is defined as "the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes."⁴ This definition sounds innocent enough, and many women (and men) have been supportive of this movement without actually knowing what its true goals are. Actually, the Feminist Movement is anti-God, and anti-family, and it supports various kinds of immorality, including lesbianism, gay rights, and other "live-in" arrangements. The Feminist Movement's goal is not to simply support and promote such sinful activities, it insists that everyone else accept, condone and endorse these lifestyles.

To help validate the Feminist Movement's *real* goals, let us survey some of that movement's leaders and prominent figures.

- *Mary Daly* was born October 16, 1928 in Schenectady, New York. Mary was educated in Catholic schools, she received her first Ph.D. from St. Mary's College/Notre Dame University in 1954. She also received doctorates in theology and philosophy from the University of Fribourg in Sweden in 1963 and 1965. Daly was at the forefront of American feminist thinking, both in terms of her early appearance as a feminist writer and in terms of the depth, originality and power of her work. In her first feminist book, *The Church and the Second Sex*, Daly both documented and explored the limitations placed on women's development in the Catholic Church by the church's perpetuation of the myth of the "Eternal Feminine." This was the belief that the true nature of women is to be self-sacrificing, passive, and docile, and that women are fulfilled only in physical or spiritual motherhood. Thus, Daly called for creative and independent women to exorcise the stifling image of the Eternal Feminism by "raising up their own image" and fulfilling their potential. She also urged the Catholic church to end discrimination against women in the ministry along with the conceptual inadequacies that underlie and perpetuate androcentric theology.⁶ (That is a theology dominated by, or emphasizing, masculine interests or a masculine point of view, B.P.)
- *Patricia Ireland* was born 1945 in Oak Park, Illinois. Patricia started her career as an airline flight attendant, became a successful corporate lawyer in the mid-1970s and later became head of the powerful National Organization for Women (NOW) from 1991-2001.⁷
- *Gloria Steinem* (born March 25, 1934 in Toledo, Ohio) enrolled at Smith College in 1952 and graduated in 1956. Steinem became a U.S. political activist, feminist, and editor. She became deeply involved in the women's liberation movement in the late 1960s. In 1971 she was founder of the Nation Women's Political Caucus, and in 1972 founded Ms., a trend-setting magazine that she subsequently edited, to treat contemporary issues from a feminist perspective.⁸
- *Naomi Goldenberg* is a full professor in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Goldenberg holds a BA, from Rutgers University (1969); MA, Yale University (1974); MPhil, Yale University (1975); PhD, Yale University (1976). Fields of interest are: Psychoanalysis, Women and Religion,

and Cultural Studies. She teaches courses on: *Women and Religion*, *Popular Culture and Religion*, *Psychology of Religion*, and *Contemporary Issues in the Psychology of Religion*. She has written several books: *Changing the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions* (1979); *The End of God* (1982); *Resurrecting the Body: Feminism, Religion and Psychoanalysis* (1993).⁹

Feminism's militancy began to be exposed when the Equal Rights Movement, in conjunction with the National Organization for Women (NOW), battled for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Most are familiar with those two organizations, however, there are other feminist groups which have been (and continue to be) quite vocal in expressing their *radical* hatred for men. For examples:

There is the *Society for Cutting Up Men* (SCUM). The *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* was written by Valerie Solanas. The New Educational edition was published in January 1988 by Phoenix Press and consist of 31 pages. As the name suggest, this group has engaged in violence to achieve the goal of overthrowing "patriarchy."

There is also the *Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy Out of Hell* (WITCH). This organization refers to marriage as a "dehumanizing institution" calling marriage "a legal whoredom for women!"¹⁰

Not only have these groups been vocal in their expressed hatred of men, in advocating rights of homosexuals and the right of women to have abortions on demand, they have been (and are) against virtually every fundamental position set forth in the Bible.

Another goal of the Feminist Movement is the *degenderization* of our language. That is, a language that is non-sexist! This language change would involve not using such terms as *postman*, *mankind*, *fellowman*, *chairman*, or *manmade*! They even go so far as to say that when a baby is born we dare not call it a *boy* or a *girl*—it will be a "person" (obviously the "kind" will have to be determined by the feminist)!

Regarding the *degenderization* of our language, the influence of the Feminist Movement manifested itself in 1983 when the ultraliberal National Council of Churches published the *Inclusive Language Lectionary*. In this work, God is referred to as "Mother and Father of mankind," and the Son of God as the "child" or the "human One." This lectionary presented gender-neutral adaptations of Scripture for the

readings prescribed in the *Common Lectionary* (1983, revised 1992), which excluded 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Timothy 2:11-15, and 1 Peter 3:1-6. The adaptations were thoroughgoing, and included gender-neutral language in reference to God. Soon after this, complete versions of the Bible featuring a moderate use of gender-neutral language began to appear. In 1985, the *New Jerusalem Bible*, a Roman Catholic version, became the first such version. But, the first version to use gender-neutral language in a really thorough and systematic way was the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV), which appeared in 1990. The NRSV was created under the mandate from the copyright holder, the National Council of Churches, to eliminate "sexist" language. And, it did attempt to remove much of the "sexist" language. However, it neither substituted gender-neutral language in reference to God, nor did it incorporate many of the misinterpretations proposed by feminists. Because of this, it did not satisfy many liberals.¹¹

To establish and recognize what the true goals of the Feminist Movement are, let us notice exemplary statements made by Naomi Goldenberg and Gloria Steinem, two of the movement's leading and best known proponents. According to Goldenberg:

Feminism will not "leave religion untouched." She goes on to state that "a male Christ has no symbolic meaning for women," thus "Feminist have to leave Christ and the Bible behind them."¹²

... the feminist movement in Western culture is engaged in the slow execution of Christ and Yahweh ... It is likely that as we watch Christ and Yahweh tumble to the ground, we will completely outgrow the need for an external God.¹³

Steinem has been a popular public figure and a spokesperson for many feminist causes. Some of her more well-known articles and essays are: *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions* (1983); *Marilyn*, a biography of Marilyn Monroe retold from a feminist perspective (1986); *Revolution From Within: A Book of Self-Esteem*, discussing ways that women could empower themselves (1992); *Moving Beyond Words*, another work of social commentary (1994). Steinem's says:

A liberated woman is one who has sex before marriage and a job after.¹⁴

By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God ... For the sake of those who wish to

live in equal partnership, we have to abolish and reform the institution of marriage ... Overthrowing capitalism is too small for us. We must overthrow the whole ... (expletives deleted) patriarchy.¹⁵

These matters are mentioned to give a word of warning to unsuspecting women who desire to please God. Surely, they would not want to allow their names and influence to be connected with these kinds of efforts!

Faithful Christians are in favor of all citizens receiving equal treatment under the U.S. Constitution. At the same time, they will defend all that the Bible has to say concerning God-given roles of men and women. However, in the interest of equal wages, homosexuality, abortion, *et cetera*, the faithful child of God will not join forces with those who hold Humanistic, anti-Bible and anti-God views! That being the case, brethren, we had better wake up, open our eyes and be alarmed by the misleading, assaulting cries sounding forth—“lack of identity,” “do your own thing,” “you owe it to yourself,” “living at a higher level”—and realize what is actually being advocated by such expressions!

STRANGE AND UNCERTAIN SOUNDS FROM WITHIN

It is much to be regretted, and a shame to say, but some in the Lord’s church have embraced the teaching of sectarianism and swallowed the fallacies of the Feminist Movement’s philosophy. They have been so bold and foolish as to advocate a role and function for women in the church that is completely foreign to the plain teaching of the Bible. Recently, within the last two or three decades, there have been a number of documentable accounts that reflect a definite moving away from the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16).

The *Sunset Ridge* congregation printed an article entitled, “1984-85 Deacons And Deaconesses,” which states:

The term deacon means servant, and is used in the New Testament to refer to those officially appointed by the church to serve in some special capacity. It is not a decision making post, *and obviously not limited to men*. Women were given special assignments by the church in the New Testament days and were called deaconesses ... Here at Sunset Ridge, we currently list 42 deacons and *deaconesses* (emphasis added).¹⁶

In 1985, “*The Worship Committee*” of another congregation distributed a questionnaire. One of the items to be checked on their questionnaire

was whether one would "agree" or "disagree" with "Ladies speaking in the assembly."¹⁷

In 1988, the elders of the Bering Drive congregation delivered a statement called "*Report On Women's Participation In Public Worship*." That "report," presented by those elders, said:

Concerning the use of spiritual gifts by both men and women, expressing our conviction that it is scriptural and appropriate for sisters as well as brothers to serve in Sunday morning worship roles of ushering, greeting visitors, receiving the offering, reading Scripture, leading prayers, leading singing, and serving communion. We pledged that the implementation of women in these roles would be preceded by sermons and Bible classes on the pertinent passages of Scripture. We also expressed a belief that the "when" and the "how" in this matter involved waiting on the Lord, and sensing the congregation's willingness to be led in this direction.¹⁸

The 21st Annual Minister's Seminar was conducted October 16-19, 1989. On that occasion Randy Mayeux stated:

You want to talk about the issues of the '90s. There are Bible majors at Abilene Christian and Lubbock Christian who are female ... there is a woman, a teenager ... that wants to be able to preach in some fashion to men and women when she gets older. You want to kick her out? ... The bottom line is that in the '90s diversity is the only game in town ... Can a woman lead prayer in a mixed group? It's a good question. And the answer, of course, is yes she can. I mean, because it is happening.¹⁹

Again, in 1992, at the ACU Bible Lectures, Carroll Osburn made known his heretical view that New Testament women guided public prayers and preached sermons in gatherings of men and women. He errantly based this conclusion on his mauling eisegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:5, which states: "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." Nothing in this verse or its context indicates that women were leading prayers or prophesying during the public worship of the church, or that they were doing so when their brothers in Christ were present. Of course, if Paul approved such a practice in 1 Corinthians 11, then disapproved of it in 1 Corinthians 14 and in 1 Timothy 2:8-12, Paul obviously would have contradicted himself! However Paul did not contradict himself. The ruling of Paul's inspiration is "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel," that they "learn in silence

with all subjection” and that they are not “to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” *There is the inspired rule! There is Paul’s commentary on Paul!*

Wayne Jackson writes:

Just as feminism has become a burning issue in society, so has it likewise in the church. Popular professors in Christian universities, and preachers in our churches, are arguing that women deserve a more vocal role in the administration and teaching program of the local congregation. Some have openly stated that they are not bothered by the prospect of women elders, or ladies occupying the pulpits (or otherwise leading the worship) in our assemblies. Passages limiting woman’s teaching role (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) are relegated to the realm of the “cultural.”²⁰

Make no mistake about it, the advocates of Humanistic feminism are constantly exerting increasing pressure—and they are making inroads—to expand the role of women in the church. Thus, there is an urgent need for us to give serious attention to what the New Testament teaches concerning women and what they can do in the church.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SOME OUTSTANDING BIBLE WOMEN

Let us begin by pointing out that God has always used men *and women* to accomplish His will on earth. The Bible’s record of God’s saints throughout the ages, makes one immediately aware that He included and involved a significant number of women in His work. Eve is the mother of the human race (Gen. 1:28; 4:1-2, 25). Sarah, the wife of faithful Abraham, was later set forth by Peter as a model of godly womanhood to serve as an example in the New Testament Age (1 Pet. 3:5-6). Deborah, a prophetess, judged over Israel (Jgs. 4:4). Queen Esther was faithful to God and was determined to act on behalf of her people, even against the king’s promise of death. Viewing such a tragic expectation, Esther’s great statement of faith was: “[I]f I perish, I perish” (Est. 4:16). Elizabeth and Mary were used by God to bring forth John and Jesus into the world (Lk. 1). Lois and Eunice, great women of faith, instilled the principles of faith in Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5). Many more godly women could be added to their number. Women who applied the will of God to their lives are presented as godly women, women who truly manifested a proper influence upon others. These,

Bible women of faith, are women that we would commend to all the women of the Christian Age!

THE ROLE OF WOMEN TODAY

Concerning the role of women in the church today, to be true to God and His Word, we must begin with a point that immediately "cuts across the grain," and "upsets," and "disturbs" all of those who embrace the militancy of the women's movements. These include: 1) Those who adhere to *Secular Feminism*—all politics and no spirituality (that say the Bible is completely irrelevant), 2) *Goddess Feminism*—a matter of religious history according to them, and *Biblical Feminism*—a belief that the identification of those texts concerning women are descriptive of first century conditions and that are not binding on the church today. The one common denominator saturating each of these groups is that it is steeped in Humanism!

Even though the Patriarchal Age ended for the Gentiles about 2,000 years ago when the household of Cornelius obeyed the Gospel (Acts 10-11)—regarding marriage and home—God's order for the family has always been *patriarchal!* This means that the role of headship and leadership has been given to the man. Bear in mind, whatever God says about the headship and leadership of man, the Bible does not present us with a picture of the husband and wife in a master and slave relationship, or a role given to man where he is a dictator or tyrant. On the contrary, God presents us with a picture showing that a husband's "love" and "care" for his wife is to be like Jesus' "love" and "care" for His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 21:2, 9). Husbands are instructed to love their wives (cf. Eph. 5:25). They are to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28). Every husband is to "love his wife even as himself" Eph. 5:33). In dealing with the proper attitude and disposition of the husband's love, Paul writes "love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:19). Peter stresses that the husband is to treat the wife according to the knowledge given in God's Word, "giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel" (generally, "she" is not as physically strong as "he"—and thus, the man has role of being the protector, B.P.) and as being heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7).

As mentioned earlier, concerning a woman's relation to a man and his headship and leadership, the Bible never gives the impression that the woman is merely a *possession*, or a *slave*, or is *inferior* to man!

Absolutely nothing stated in the Bible authorizes any man to run over any woman in “rough shod” fashion, or to abuse one in any way!

Investigating the place and role of the woman in the terms set forth in the Bible, we see that a woman is to be in subjection to her husband. From the earliest time, i.e., following the transgression in the garden, God’s rule for woman has continued to be: “[T]hy desire shall be to thy husband, and *he shall rule over thee*” (Gen. 3:16, emphasis added). Thus, the headship and leadership in the family has been given to the man.

Several passages in the New Testament provide information in this particular area. Let us notice two passages which deal directly with this point. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul writes:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

In 1 Timothy 2:9-14, woman’s subjection is commanded with the justification for it addressed in verses 13 and 14:

For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Thus, a woman’s being in subjection was established by God, with two foundational points being cited. First, there is man’s preeminence in the order of creation—“Adam was first formed.” Second, in the garden, “the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” Both sinned, but “Adam was not deceived,” however, Eve was “deceived.” Here, then, is the divine basis for the headship and leadership of man, and the subjection of woman. The point must be stressed that this is *God’s* arrangement. A man is to provide loving headship and leadership (Eph. 5). When a husband provides that kind of headship and leadership, it is not difficult for a wife to return the loving *followship!*

WHAT ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Having mentioned the home, let us here focus attention on God’s arrangement for the church. Would it not be a chaotic thing if woman was somehow in complete submission to her husband (respectful of his headship and leadership), and yet, in the gathering of the church together, she would become a tyrant and ruler over the Christian men who were assembled? Returning to Paul’s instruction, recorded in 1 Timothy 2:11-12, there it is stressed that the woman is to “learn in

silence with all subjection" (v. 11), and that she is not "to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man" (v. 12). Knowing that God has assigned the position of leadership to the man, the woman, possessing the proper spiritual disposition, would never, in any way, be out of "subjection," or in the position of a *usurper*! To "usurp" is to exercise power or authority that is not lawfully given to one. Therefore, to "usurp," is to domineer or to act upon one's own self-seized authority, which takes one out of the role of being in subjection.

A companion passage to 1 Timothy 2 is 1 Corinthians 14. There Paul discusses the conduct of the saints in regard to the exercising of spiritual gifts. Carefully note that Paul speaks of "the whole church ... assembled together" (v. 23, ASV). By that language we know that he is not speaking of an informal gathering in a home, or a class situation where those present are permitted to ask a questions or to make a point. Regardless of whether this meeting in 1 Corinthians 14 was the regular worship assembly during which spiritual gifts were exercised, or a special meeting specifically called for that particular purpose, it must be noted in verse 34 women were given the role of "silence" in the assembly.

However, Carroll Osburn, professor of New Testament at Abilene Christian University, speaking on ACU's annual lectureship in 1992, decided that New Testament women guided public prayers and preached sermons in gatherings of men and women. Again, in taking this position, Osburn uses 1 Corinthians 11:5 as his proof-text. That verse says:

But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

Analyzing that verse, one can easily see that Osburn is merely *assuming* that the women were *praying* and *prophesying* in groups of both men and women! No scholarship is involved in such a baseless assumption, and Osburn provides no Scriptural justification or proof for such an assumption. What does he offer? He says women were doing it and Paul did not tell them to stop, but did instruct the women to "Keep your veil on!" Does Osburn know *where* and *when* the women were praying and prophesying? No! Does he know that this was not a situation where women were praying and prophesying among those of their own sex? No! There is neither anything in 1 Corinthians 11:5

itself, nor in its context which prevent that conclusion. The inspired rule is:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (1 Tim. 2:11-12).

Women are instructed to “keep silence,” be in “subjection,” “for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” Women are not permitted “to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.” Does Osburn profess to have more insight and a better understanding than the apostle Paul? Does Osburn believe that Paul’s instruction contradicts itself, or that Paul is wrong on the matter? Certainly, any commentary of man that is in disharmony with God’s inspired teaching must be completely disregarded. All who hold the Word of God in proper esteem will do just that.

CONCLUSION

Men and women are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). As Christians, everyone is to “worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:23-24) and has been given work to do (Eph. 2:10; 2 Thess. 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:17; Tit. 1:10), in the areas of benevolence, edification, and teaching. However, we must recognize that man has been given the role of leadership and dominion. Due to the cultural changes which are being driven by Humanism, the place and role of women has been clouded by those who have little (if any) respect for God and His Word. We expect those outside the Lord’s body to raise up in opposition to God’s pattern, but tragically, there are those in the Lord’s church who no longer desire to remain in the “*old paths*,” who are promoting “change” under the guise of *equality*. When God made woman, He made woman from man for man. Because it was “not good that the man should be alone,” God made “an help meet for him” (Gen. 2:18). Woman’s role is not to compete with man, but to complement man. Woman’s role is not one of inferiority, but one of deference. If we have a proper esteem and respect for Biblical authority, we must respect and accept our God-revealed roles. And, regarding those roles, never for a

moment must we allow ourselves to be swayed, deceived, or deluded by the winds of change (from without or within).

Indeed, God has spoken (cf. Heb. 1:2) and His Word "endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1:25). The woman who follows Christ will want to know and abide in the place God has given to her. The godly woman will be content and glorify God in that important role (Phil 4:11; 1 Cor. 6:20). By so doing, she will be more precious than rubies (Pro. 31:10), and she shall be praised as she "feareth the Lord" (Pro. 31:30)!

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, Paul Kurtz, ed., (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), Preface.

³ Edward Ericson, *Religions of America*, (New York, NY: Simon and Shuster, 1975), 257.

⁴ *Merriam Webster's Tenth Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "feminism."

⁵ *Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed.

⁶ <www.answers.com/topic/mary-daly>

⁷ <www.answers.com/topic/patricia-ireland>

⁸ <www.answers.com/topic/ gloria-steinem>

⁹ <www.cla-srs.uottawa.ca/eng/faculty/goldenberg.html>

¹⁰ <www.jofreeman.com/photos/witch.html>

¹¹ <www.bible-researcher.com/inclusive.html> Michael D. Marlowe, January 2005.

¹² Naomi Goldenberg, *Changing of the Gods: Feminsim and the End of Traditional Religions* (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1979), 3, 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 4, 25.

¹⁴ <www.answers.com/topic/ gloria-steinem>

¹⁵ <www.newswithviews.com/Betty/Freauf106.html> 3.

¹⁶ Goebel Music, *Behold The Pattern*, (Colleyville, TX: Goebel Music Publications, 1991), 522.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 523.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 524.

²⁰ Wayne Jackson, "Times That Try Our Souls," *Christian Courier*, 6 June 1999, <www.christiancourier.com/articles>

THEY SAY, “PREACHING THE GOSPEL IS FOOLISHNESS”

Darwin Hunter



Darwin Hunter was born in Dallas, Texas. He and his wife, the former Melinda Burgett, have one son and three daughters, as well as five grandchildren. Hunter graduated from Preston Road School of Preaching, and earned a B.A. degree from Southern Christian University in Montgomery, Alabama. He has done local work in Texas and Louisiana. Hunter has gone to Nigeria, Tanzania, and the West Indies to preach the Gospel. He now works with the Sunset congregation in Shreveport, Louisiana.

INTRODUCTION¹

What an important theme is before us in this study. Humanism has had a profound impact in our nation and in the world. Its destructive influences can hardly be overemphasized. To date, it has shaped the thoughts and morals of several generations and has increasingly led our nation toward a secular, godless worldview. In such a society, nothing is right or wrong, except for believing in right and wrong. Bible-based religion and morality is castigated and ridiculed. Needless to say, preaching an absolute standard is considered passé at best, or branded as hateful speech deserving to be silenced at worst. If you have not actually heard the words, “Preaching the Gospel is foolishness,” you have certainly heard it loosely paraphrased during your lifetime. We truly face significant challenges.

Yet, as the Scriptures advise, we must not “lose heart” (Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:58). Faithful Christians believe that the Gospel is God’s power to save (Rom. 1:16), that its message is perpetually relevant, and that it has conquered evil cultures before. Immoral and godless nations rise and fall, but the Gospel of Christ is providentially perpetuated and will continue to shine forth in a sin-defiled world until Christ our Lord returns (Mt. 24:35). When God’s people “lose heart,” they sheath the sword of the Spirit and shut their mouths. To do so is to cede the battle to the enemy. One of God’s greatest warriors, the aged Paul, gives us all the admonition to “Preach the word,” despite the fact that some “will not endure” it (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

A STARTLING EXPOSÉ OF HUMAN WISDOM

What moderns are saying about preaching the Gospel message is not new. Paul addressed the same dismissive attitude in the Roman world of the first century, and particularly at Corinth. The opening section of 1 Corinthians contrasts the wisdom of men with the wisdom of God. The Holy Spirit through Paul's pen gives a bold and devastating indictment of the alleged vaunted wisdom of man. Paul wrote:

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence (1 Cor. 1:18-29).

The inspired apostle Paul makes several key points in the previous verses which cry out for emphasis.

The Inadequacy Of Human Wisdom

Against the worldly-wise, Paul makes the bold accusation that all of their alleged knowledge has not brought them to a knowledge of God (1 Cor. 1:21). The Gentile world of the first century was, in the main, a culture without knowledge of the true God. Such is very clear in Acts 17, where Paul encountered the most learned men of Athens (a city in proximity to Corinth in Greece). Paul engaged them on the Areopagus, where they met to discuss their varied philosophical viewpoints. Paul began his preaching by taking note of their great

religious interests in the city, as evidenced by the multitude of temples dedicated to various gods (idols) throughout the city (Acts 17:22-23). He seized upon one particular inscription—"TO THE UNKNOWN GOD"—which he had read on one of their altars. Paul was speaking to the most learned and scholarly men of the Greek world, in a city known for its intellectualism and philosophy, yet, in effect, he declares to them; "You do not know God." Such is a bold charge, for without the knowledge of God, man is hopelessly lost (2 Thess. 1:8-9). Paul then proceeded to declare to them the true Creator God of all mankind, a Spirit Being not housed in humanly-constructed temples, and One Who will bring all men to account in Judgment before His Son, Whom He had raised from the dead (Acts 17:24-31). The result was that some "mocked" (a dismissive and derisive rejection not unlike the reaction of many intellectuals today when faced with the Gospel), while others expressed a genuine interest to hear more (Acts 17:32). The Holy Spirit led Paul to write about the inadequacy of human wisdom in 1 Corinthians 1, however, he had already seen its sad consequences in Athens and in the other Gentile cities where human philosophy had failed to attain a knowledge of God. Tragically, the world of the Gentiles was awash in a multiplicity of gods of their own devising and artistry, and it was a world characterized by debauchery, immorality, and vice of every conceivable kind. In Romans 1, Paul, in another way of describing the Gentile world, declares: "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Rom. 1:22-23).

Human philosophical endeavors, without divine revelation, cannot acquire a true knowledge of God. Without God's instruction, man is adrift and rudderless. He is like one trying to find something, but not knowing what he is searching for, "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). This is an apt description of the godless academic world of our age. Men of erudition and vast worldly knowledge populate our world-renowned universities, but most of them do not have a clue where they came from, where they are going, or how to get there. Their learning leads to intellectual snobbery and pseudo-sophistication, which over-inflates their egos and leads them to refuse the Gospel's call.

God can only be known through His revelation, which He has graciously given by inspiration. This is Paul's marvelous point in

1 Corinthians 2:7-13. An incipient knowledge of the Creator can be obtained through observation of His creation (Rom. 1:20). However, a saving knowledge of God cannot be acquired except through the Words the Holy Spirit has revealed to mankind through the Gospel (1 Cor. 2:13; Rom. 1:16). Books of science, history, mathematics, and philosophy cannot give man the knowledge he needs the most! Those disciplines have their place, of course, but, in and of themselves, they cannot answer the needs of a man's soul.

The Condemnation Of Human Wisdom

Through Paul's Holy Spirit-guided pen, God decrees the destruction of all human philosophies. Paul, quoting from Isaiah 29:14, shows the ultimate demise of human wisdom—"For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. 1:19). Man's thoughts, developed from his own limited understanding and experience, cannot attain the heights of divine thought. This is the Holy Spirit's point in saying: "But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Without divine revelation, even the wisest and greatest of men cannot come to the knowledge of God's truth. 1 Corinthians 2:8 points out that God's wisdom, now revealed through inspired penmen, was not known by "rulers of this age" (or of any age, for that matter) because the human mind cannot achieve by mere human intellect what God knows in His omniscience. In that context, Paul goes on to say: "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit" Who knows "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). Paul, and the other apostles, were guided into all the truth by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16; 16:23), and fully revealed the Gospel in the first century (Ju. 3).

Our heavenly Father wants us to know, then, that all human philosophies are bound to fail, and the proponents of such will be condemned. It is human arrogance which asserts that we can save ourselves. The *Humanist Manifesto II*, under the section dealing with religion, bluntly asserts: "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."² Atheism basically contends that by our own intellectual and philosophical pursuits, the human race can figure it all out and arrive at all the answers. Its evil twin, evolution, believes it can figure out the issue of origins without divine revelation. Human psychology avers that it can fix what is wrong with man's mind without any direction

from God about who man is (that he has a soul, Mt. 10:28-29), and what ails him (sin, Rom. 3:23). The relativists of this age believe that each individual is in the best position to decide what is good, right, and moral through mere human experience, without any divine assistance. Denominationalism believes it can figure out the kind of religion man needs without divine revelation (or at least without a perversion of God's revelation, Gal. 1:6-9). All such assertions must seem like unmitigated foolish babble to the God of Heaven who has decreed that "no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1:29).

The Moral Ruler and Judge of this universe will "bring to nothing" the vain philosophies of men (Col. 2:8). Paul reminded the church at Corinth that they must not be deceived into believing man's foolish wisdom when he wrote:

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness; and again, The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile. Therefore let no one boast in men (1 Cor. 3:18-21a).

God declares through Paul that human wisdom is "futile," and that it will lead to the demise of those who are deceived by it. Worldly wisdom does not, and cannot, produce the knowledge of God (1 Cor. 1:21). One who discounts and turns away from worldly wisdom, one who is willing to accept God's inspired teaching as revealed in the Gospel in order to be truly wise in the eyes of God must be willing to be counted a "fool" by the world. To summarize, those who turn to the empty rhetoric of the world, and reject Heaven's message, will be lost.

The Attractiveness Of Human Wisdom

Throughout the context of 1 Corinthians 1:18-29, one cannot help but see the recurring thought—the world is repulsed by the glorious Gospel of Christ, but it is being mesmerized by the vacuous, empty-headed philosophies of men. Men are easily deceived (Jer. 17:9). Temptation and sin are deceptive. Satan uses trickery to get mankind to fall prey to him (Jas. 1:13ff; 2 Cor. 11:13-14; Eph. 6:11; Heb. 3:13). Satan makes sin and its counterpart, human wisdom, which supports and approves transgression, attractive to worldly-minded people. He deceives men into calling "evil good, and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). In the same manner, Satan deceives the world into thinking that the preaching

of a crucified Savior is “foolishness” (1 Cor. 1:21). Christ, crucified for lost humanity as the Sin-Bearer, is considered ridiculous and ludicrous by modern philosophers, and by the Greeks and Jews of the first century (1 Cor. 1:23). The sacrifice of Christ as “a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28) was not according to the Jewish concept of a conquering King-Messiah who would deliver them from the hands of their Gentile oppressors (1 Pet. 2:6-8; Deut. 21:23), and they stumbled into unbelief and the rejection of their Savior. The Greek philosophies, driven by long-embraced idolatrous concepts coupled with the elevation of human reason unaided by divine revelation, also were “turned off” by the preaching of a Savior sacrificed for mankind’s sins, and they discounted it as “foolishness.” William Barclay quotes Augustine as saying that he could find many parallels among Greek philosophers for the teachings of Christianity, except one, “[T]he Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14a). The very idea of incarnation was foreign and repugnant to the Greek mind.³ Yet, Paul boldly declares that Christ is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). He alone brings His obedient ones “righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

The worldly-wise find human philosophy appealing, but they find divine wisdom unattractive. As a result, “[N]ot many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1:26). The great leaders of every age, the powerful and wealthy and learned, are usually not good prospects for conversion. However, among the lowly and common, the Gospel finds greater success (Mk. 12:37—“the common people heard Him gladly”; Mt. 5:3-6; Lk. 6:20-23). To put it bluntly, those who already have all the answers cannot be taught anything, even by the Master Teacher. Those who are secure in their riches, and satisfied with their condition, cannot see any need for Gospel solutions to problems they do not think they possess (Lk. 12:16-21; 16:19-31; Jn. 9:24-27). As Jesus powerfully stated: “But woe to you who are rich, For you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep” (Lk. 6:24-25). To a large degree, this class of people (the rich, the powerful, and liberal academia) have no time for the Gospel! This is not to say that all of them have such an attitude, but that generally speaking their self-sufficiency inclines them toward rejection of the Gospel. Neither are all the poor receptive to the Gospel call, but they are generally more receptive to its demands. [Among the

wealthy powerful class, some converts were made in Bible times: Dionysius at Athens (Acts 17:34); Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Crete (Acts 13:6-12); the noble women at Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:4, 12); Erastus, the treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16:23; 2 Tim. 4:20); and Lydia, wealthy merchant lady of Thyatira, converted in Philippi (Acts 16:14-15).] None of Paul's inspired remarks were written to dissuade Christians from trying to reach all men, regardless of their class or background. For the same author eloquently said: "I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise" (Rom. 1:14). We are to strive to reach all men with the Gospel! Yet, we should understand the principle that human pride and worldly education often work against being an humble learner of what the world deems to be the "weak" and "base" things of the Gospel (1 Cor. 1:27-29). Being armed with such an awareness will help Christians to guard themselves from self-glorying and being arrogant toward what God has revealed in the Gospel. Even in the congregations of the Lord, we will have to admit that the Scriptures are often discredited and discounted, as human wisdom (i.e., Christian college "scholars," prevailing denominational ideas, and modern science) and cultural norms are exalted above what the Word of God declares to be true! The church is not immune from such worldly influences and must not be mesmerized by human thinking. We must always be "subject to Christ" and let His Word alone richly abide in us and guide us (Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:16-17).

HUMANISM'S ANTI-GOD ATTACK ON THE GOSPEL

The most fundamental assault on the Gospel in our day comes from the influence of Secular Humanism, which has permeated our culture. Humanism is defined as, "a system of thought that rejects religious beliefs and centers on humans and their values, capacities, and their worth."⁴ While some adherents to this philosophy claim a belief in God ("Religious Humanists"), most do not. The so-called "Religious Humanists" are not very religious in the traditional sense, as is evidenced by the fact that some who classified themselves in this manner signed both the 1933 and the 1973 Humanist Manifestos, which demonstrated an anti-God bias. *About Humanist Manifesto I and II*, Frederick Edwards, Director of the American Humanist Association writes: "From the standpoint of philosophy alone, there is no difference between the two."⁵ The worldview advocated in their two manifestos looks to man, with his capabilities to reason, to find the solutions to

everything that ails the human race. Their atheistic declarations can be stunning. For example, the *Humanist Manifesto II* boldly avers: “As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.”⁶ Again, Edwards honestly admits, Humanists “place reason above faith, usually to the point of eschewing faith altogether.”⁷ Under such influence, our culture has become increasingly godless, secular, and immoral.

With its basic premise being “there is no God,” Humanism denies that there is a Creator and Moral Governor over mankind (Ps. 14:1). Thus, they declare the Bible is not God-authored, but rather is merely man’s awkward and infantile search for meaning, and for answers to the world’s dilemmas. Since there is no God, in their view, the Bible is not to be considered authoritative at all, and must be regarded as foolish and even harmful to the human race. In *Humanist Manifesto II*, adherents to its philosophy declare: “We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.”⁸ In effect, they say man is foolish to look to some non-existent fabrication of his own mind (God) for the solutions to his problems. Their idea is that it is more noble and fruitful for man to look within himself for the solutions to his problems and to create a better world in which to live. Of course, this is a false dichotomy. Just because one believes in a self-existent, authoritative, eternal God Who “has spoken” through His Son, does not deny the need for man to better himself and to seek solutions to the great ills of mankind (Heb. 1:1-3).

God has revealed Himself to man through His Word, and has also revealed man’s greatest ill—sin, and his greatest need—salvation from sin (1 Cor. 2:10-13; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Eph. 2:1-10). In addition, God has informed man by His Word that man’s solutions will *not* be found in himself, but in God and His Word (Jer. 10:23). Yet, our Heavenly Father insists that man must cooperate, through an active and obedient faith, with Deity to access the solutions offered in His Word (Eph. 2:8; Jas. 2:17ff). In other words, the Bible does not teach, nor do faithful Bible-believers advocate, that we simply look up to God and say: “Here I am God with all my problems, and I ask you to fix it for me!”

Instead, God demands a faith-response from man, which involves believing His will, trusting in His promises, and obeying His commands. In this way, we begin to see solutions to our problems. We believe in God and in His rewards offered to those who come to Him; and, we “get our heads straight” about Who is in charge, and Who can

offer man eternal life (Heb. 11:1, 6). We come to believe in His only begotten Son (sent by the Father), His Son's claims of Deity, and His sacrifice for our sins (Jn. 1:29; 8:24; 10:11, 17-18; 1 Pet. 2:24-25). We repent of past transgressions against His will, and we see our lives being reformed and bettered as we begin to work on ourselves, our attitudes and actions, to conform to His will (Lk.13:3; Acts 17:30-31). We obey His command to be baptized in His name for "the remission of sins" to access His saving blood (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:15-16; Rom. 6:1-6). We are added by God to His kingdom, the church, and begin to live a new life in Christ, with the emphasis on improving ourselves and growing daily in Christ (Acts 2:46-47; 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18). So, the response of faith as taught in Scripture is not simply thinking God is going to do everything for us, and fix our problems, without any effort on our part. Rather it is daily walking with God, cooperating with Him in a life dedicated to Him (1 Jn. 1:7; 3 Jn. 3-4; 1 Cor. 3:9; Gal. 2:20). In other words, Humanists misrepresent our view of God. They picture us as having an unrealistic, pie-in-the-sky mentality that looks to God for the solutions to all our problems without any cooperative action on our part. That is definitely not what the Bible teaches, and not what we believe or promote.

Humanists defend their anti-God viewpoint with the rhetorical claim that it liberates men. Their emphasis on human freedom, human rights, and human capabilities will not allow room for God. Edwards quotes Robert Ingersoll, the celebrated agnostic of the late 1800s, as exemplary on this point:

When I became convinced that the universe is natural, that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell. The dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts and bars and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf, or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world, not even in infinite space. I was free—free to think, to express my thoughts—free to live my own ideal, free to live for myself and those I loved, free to use all my faculties, all my senses, free to spread imagination's wings, free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope, free to judge and determine for myself ... I was free! I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously faced all worlds.⁹

This is a telling statement because it shows the relationship between Darwinism and atheism. Ingersoll was first convinced that the universe

exists due to solely “natural” evolutionary processes (a cosmic accident of monumental proportions), as taught in our classroom textbooks across the land today. Having been convinced of that view, the next step was a full-blown atheism (all gods are myths), which he embraced as liberating to his spirit and bringing a breathtaking joy into his spirit. Indeed, evolution is the steam engine of the atheistic philosophy! The former is “the wind beneath the wings” of the latter. Evolution promotes the worldview of godless Humanism. Parents and Christian educators should wake up to this reality. Those who foolishly advocate the self-contradictory position of “theistic evolution” must realize that embracing macro-evolution to any degree weakens the position of theism and undermines faith in God for those who are won to that position. It cannot be otherwise, since even a cursory reading of Genesis 1 cannot be made compatible with Darwinism.

Ingersoll was grievously in error. Atheism does not free, it enslaves. It produces in man a false hope that man can think and imagine himself into a better self, and a better world. Its dependency upon the finite mind, as opposed to the infinite mind of God, is deeply flawed. God dwells in the heavens above His creation and surveys the entire expanse of eternity, whereas man is limited to time and place and has the very narrow perspective of one lifetime. The Omniscient Being above us, the One Who created man, knows man better than man knows himself, even as a Swiss watchmaker knows the timepiece he fashioned better than the watch knows itself! “It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture” (Ps. 100:3). It is bad enough for the created to say to the Creator, “Why have you made me like this?” (Rom. 9:20), but it a more grievous sin to say to the Creator: “You do not exist and have not made me at all!” Man is in the bondage of sin, and our only hope is the love of our God as expressed through His Son (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). Those who think they are freed by a godless philosophy are really in the most wretched bondage of all (Rom. 1:18-32). Their unbelief has robbed them of the knowledge of who they are, Who made them, why they have been made, and what their destiny is. God makes it clear that those who do so are “without excuse” (ignoring the evidence of Him in creation, Rom. 1:20), and that they are abiding under His divine wrath because of their unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18, 32), being subject to all of the vile human passions which have beset our race since the fall of man (Rom. 1:26-32). In their denial of God, atheistic men refuse God’s

gracious lifeline thrown out by a merciful hand which could save them from themselves. A denial of God is not freedom; it is hopeless slavery to sin and its condemnation!

THE GOSPEL IS NOT FOOLISHNESS

We must resist all of the world's vain philosophies which would serve to undermine the credibility of the saving Gospel (Col. 2:8). The Gospel's message is the hope of humanity. Man's shallow, pseudo-intellectual "remedies" to our problems are empty and futile because they leave out the biggest Player in man's rise—GOD! And, through their rejection of man's spiritual identity by divine creation (their false view that man is a mere animal and possesses no immortal spirit, Mt. 10:28; Heb. 12:9), they deny that man has spirit-needs which are incapable of mere human solutions.¹⁰ God presents His Gospel, revealed through His Son's life, death, and resurrection, as "the power of God." The world may denounce it as "foolishness" and impractical, and its proponents as "fools," but it is still the "power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18; 4:9-13). God informs us that the Gospel is the *imperishable seed* by which we can be begotten of God and born anew (1 Pet. 1:22-23; Jas. 1:18; Jn. 3:3, 5). Through obedience to the Gospel message, we can be saved from our sins (Jas. 1:21), and without obedience of the Gospel, we will be eternally lost (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Those who gladly receive the Word of the Gospel, submitting to its commands by faith, receive "remission of sins" and go on their way rejoicing (Acts 2:38-41; 8:35-40; 22:16). These are forgiven by God's grace, washed in the blood, and accepted in the beloved (Eph. 1:6-7). The redeemed, through their penitent obedience, conquer by the Conquering One of Calvary, put to death their former sin (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 6:1-14). They become children of God, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and walk with Jesus in the light (Gal. 3:26-27; 5:22-23; 1 Jn. 1:7). When one believes, and then experiences the "power of God" through belief and obedience to the Word, he declares with the writer of Hebrews: "[T]he word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12). He has experienced its saving power in his own life, and he no longer knows the grinding bondage of sin.

CONCLUSION

Let the world mock, ridicule, belittle, slander, and malign God's saving Word, but let the church rise up and proclaim its message

throughout the world (Mt. 28:18-20). May we in a bold, yet kind way, resist the atheistic philosophies of our day, and the compromisers in the church, and maintain our faith in the message which God has revealed, and in the Savior Whom God has sealed!

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.
<<http://www.gcmi.net/bible/manifesto2.html>>

³ William Barclay, *The Letters to the Corinthians*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956), 21.

⁴ The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed., <<http://www.ask.com/web?a=dictionary%3A+humanism&content=ahdict%7C52870&o=0&l=dir>>

⁵ Frederick Edwords, "What Is Humanism?"
< <http://www.jcn.com/humanism.html>>

⁶ *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

⁷ Edwords.

⁸ *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

⁹ Edwords.

¹⁰ *Humanist Manifesto II*, Second. The entire quote regarding their view that man is nothing more than a mere animal possessing no soul is as follows: "Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the 'ghost in the machine' and the 'separable soul.' Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives influenced others in our culture."

THEY SAY, “THE BIBLE IS NOT INSPIRED”

Robert Taylor



Robert Taylor is a native of Bradford, Tennessee. He and his wife, the former Irene Crump, have two children and four grandchildren. Taylor holds degrees from Freed-Hardeman University, Lipscomb University, and George Peabody College for Teachers. He has done local work for fifty-five years. Taylor has worked with the Lord's church in Ripley, Tennessee for thirty-five years. He has served as an instructor for the *Online Academy of Biblical Studies* for the last nine years.

INTRODUCTION¹

It is always an inestimable privilege to come to beautiful Lubbock, Texas, each fall to speak on this great lectureship and to write a chapter for its literary production. My thanks are extended to Tommy, Dale, Malcolm and all treasured saints at Southside for the extension of this invitation.

Unmasking a popular and yet poisonous philosophy, as we are doing this year, is an idea whose time has come. Our faith needs to be well fortified against this error and all pseudo philosophies of men much like Paul did in Colossians 2. He met head-on the Colossian fallacy and we are to do the same toward this “ism” that dethrones God, destroys Jesus, does despite to the Holy Spirit and vehemently attacks the Bible in all its fundamental facets. They, Humanists, are aggressively militant in denying Biblical inspiration. They cannot be Secular Humanists and Biblical believers at the same time. One has to go, and for them, it is the Bible which must exit the scene. This is sad but nevertheless true. This pernicious philosophy says, "Down with God and up with man." They begin and remain with a false premise that "man is the measure of all things and that contradictory assertions are true." This was its philosophical foundation in the time of Protagoras who lived during the fifth century B.C. He lived in the same period as Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi of Old Testament fame.

FOUNDATIONS OF SECULAR HUMANISM

It is a religion without God, minus Christ and in constant warfare with the Bible in general and its divine inspiration in particular (2 Tim.

3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21). They have to be anti and deeply hostile to all the foregoing. Accepting an inspired Bible means believing in the Godhead, accepting truth in absolute form, knowing what is right and wrong and practicing the same. This they are not about to do!

This system is about as old as is humanity. Cain and his descendants were of this devilish disposition in the early chapters of Genesis. Idolatrous nations were filled with its principles, except they accepted a plurality of gods and goddesses. Sophists, Grecian philosophers, accepted these philosophic principles about the time of Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah.

The second great wave came at the end of the Dark Ages with a beginning of the movement known as the Renaissance—a "rebirth of learning." It was a time to elevate man and his learning and put less-and-less emphasis upon God, Christ, the Spirit, Christianity and a beautiful belief in another world—Heaven. They were strictly of *this* world—not *another* one.

The third great wave came in the 1930s and has continued unabated to 2009. For years they have boasted that the 21st century will be century of Humanism. To a very great extent the 20th century was controlled by them as this philosophy and educators led theologians around by the nose. During the last 76 years, or since 1933, they have published manifestoes at regular intervals. Each one peddles the same poisonous principles. Sometime back, brother Dan Jenkins summed up these earlier documents of 1933 and 1973 by showing they deny:

(1) the Deity of God; (2) the inspiration of the Bible; (3) the Divinity of Jesus; (4) the existence of the soul; (5) life after death; (6) the reality of sin; (7) salvation and heaven; (8) damnation and hell; and (9) creation.²

On the other side of the ledger he shows that they believe in:

(1) no distinct roles for male and female; (2) sexual freedom for all; (3) pre-marital sex; (4) homosexuality; (5) incest; (6) abortion; (7) mercy killings; (8) evolution.³

The Psalmist wrote of destroyed foundations in Psalm 11:3. This pernicious philosophy is a destroyer of the deepest dye. It destroys sound, solid and well tested foundations of sobriety, righteousness and godliness (Tit. 2:11-12). In the latter part of Matthew 7 and Luke 6, Jesus spoke of sandy or earthly foundations versus rock-like foundations. Sandy foundations will not withstand the testing elements of rain,

flood and wind. Individuals and houses built on the rock, Christ's truths heard, believed and obeyed, will stand successfully against all the testing elements of rain, flood and wind.

Active members of this Philosophic system are labeled by David in Psalms 14:1 and 53:1 as "fools." This term derives from the Hebrew word *nabal* and literally means, "empty person." This means empty of head, heart and hand. This is Heaven's assessment of every God-denier—empty-headed, empty-hearted and empty-handed. Yet, these are the very people who shaped so much of what transpired in this system last century. They are no less militant during the 21st century in spreading their infamous "ism." They want and demand that all be Secular Humanists. Standing in their way are God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the Christian religion and every soldier in the Lamb's army. This is why they are at war with the saints of the most high God and His holy child, Jesus.

The late Foy E. Wallace, Jr. often said relative to false teachers and their errors, "They shall not pass!" This should be the spiritual, militant drumbeat of our battle for God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible and salvational Christianity.

WHY THEY DENY BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Humanism's infamous cause demands an aggressive denial of the Bible as God's Word. If the Bible is God's Word, as manifestly it is, then God is (Heb. 11:6), Jesus Christ is His Son (Mt. 16:16), the Gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16), man surely has a soul (Mt. 16:26), death does not end it all (Ecc. 12:7), final judgment is sure (Heb. 9:27), heaven is real (Jn. 14:1-3) and hell is no less real than heaven (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8, 27; 22:15).

Humanists have to deny Biblical inspiration to get evolution *in* and creation *out*. Atheistic evolution has *no* place for God in its Naturalistic system attempting to explain origins. They sail an uncertain sea minus compass or chart. Theistic evolution is straight from the devil denying six days of creative activity with creation ceasing on day seven. The god the theistic evolutionists have manufactured or carved is *not* the God of Genesis 1-2 or of Matthew 19:4-5. Hence, this system does not accept what Moses wrote in Genesis 1-2 or what Christ taught in Matthew 19:4-5. Mark 10:6 is also rejected by them for Jesus said man and woman have been here from the *beginning* of creation. This will

not fit either atheistic or theistic evolution. Theistic evolutionists are in the wrong camp for a surety!

They have to deny Biblical inspiration to get Darwin *in* and Deity *out*. *The Origin Of Species* and *The Descent Of Man*, 19th century books by Darwin, are preferred by them over anything Moses wrote in Genesis 1-2 or that Christ taught in Matthew 19:4-5 and Mark 10:6. Darwin has far more people bowing at his infidelic shrine than Deity does at its altar of authoritative truth.

Humanists have to deny Biblical inspiration to get atheism *in* and theism, a belief in God, *out*. The late and lamented Guy N. Woods called this system "the sophisticated form of militant atheism for our day." They are God-haters as much in 2009 as were infidelic Gentiles delineated by Paul in A.D. 58 when he wrote Romans 1:30.

They have to deny Biblical inspiration to get all forms of science *in* and salvational matters *out*. Science is *all* to them; Jesus is *nothing* to them. They would have been happier if He had never lived and yet without Him they could never had been since He is Creator of all (Jn. 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17; Rev. 3:14). They do not believe in the reality of sin and so man is not *in* sin and does not need to be saved *from* sin. Romans 3:9 and 3:23 have no meaning whatsoever to them. Salvation from sin, so near, dear and precious to all of us, is *no* part of their earth-centered interest. To them the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16 and Luke 24:47 is not worth the paper on which it is written. Science they revere; salvation they abhor with vehemence. They say that prayer, Bible Study and emphasis on salvation from sin divert people from engaging in sociable, profitable services. They even go so far as to say the foregoing are injurious to those occupied in the same.

Madalyn O'Hair spoke as an avowed Humanist when she advocated shutting down every church building in America and turning such buildings into homes for the aged or outpatient clinics for the sick and diseased. She evidently had not thought through this very carefully since euthanasia will take care of both the sick and infirm. Who of the sick will be left? These people are modern enemies of Calvary just as much as were foes of the cross in Philippians 3:18-19.

Humanists have to deny Biblical inspiration to get *free* sex for all *in* and sexual self-control *out*. They advocate pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, incest, *et cetera*. Such sexual freedom is one of the major motivations that made ancient idolatry in the Old

and New Testament so seductive and alluring to both men and women who wanted mates, many with no holds barred. No pun intended!

They must deny Biblical inspiration to get abortion *in* and respect for life in the womb eliminated from human thought *out—way out*. Since 1973, *Roe v. Wade*, our nation has put to death about 50 million children. These were little children just as much of the living as they would have been had they not been aborted by murderous doctors and nurses. They have shed innocent blood—one of the seven things God hates or considers an abomination (Pro. 6:16-19). Some years the abortion rate hits one million or more. Abortion is baby homicide; it is the slaughter of the innocents. The most dangerous place for all aborted babies has been their mothers' wombs.

One country, not the USA, reported that 500,000 abortions had been performed with *no* loss of life. In reality, 500,000 precious children lost their lives! Some of our insensitive pro-life politicians have said they are in favor of making abortion *safe* and rare. But safe for whom? Certainly not for the slaughtered children. Making abortions rare is equal to rare murders. Rarity is not the answer to this heartless evil that plagues our nation and all nations.

Life begins at conception—not at birth nine months later. What is in the mother's womb is another life—not just a blob of protoplasm! Psalm 139:14-16 makes this crystal clear.

Humanists have to deny Biblical inspiration to be free of *any* moral accountability. In this Godless system there are no absolutes or established norms of human behavior. In marked contrast, the Bible says there are absolutes. There are things we must do. This is our *ought* mechanism in operation. There are things we must not do. It was wrong for Cain to kill Abel in Genesis.⁴ It was wrong for Abraham and Isaac to lie in Genesis 12, 20, 26 about their real relationships to Sarah and Rebekah respectively. It was wrong for David and Bathsheba to commit adultery and then for David to have Uriah slain in battle. It was wrong for Israelites, such as Manasseh in the Old Testament, to offer their children as burnt sacrifices to idols. It was wrong for Herod to slay innocent babes in Bethlehem in Matthew 2. It was wrong for Herod Antipas to kill John the Baptist. It was wrong for Herod Agrippa I to kill the apostle James and to plan for Peter's death later in Acts 12. Humanism, by its denial of any standards of right or wrong, could not have condemned any of the foregoing. This system is filled to overflowing with the most horrible sins ever perpetrated by men.

ALLEGED OLD TESTAMENT CONTRADICTIONS NOTED AND REFUTED

One of the major charges unbelievers make against the Bible is that it contains contradictions. They allege, never prove, the Bible is "full of contradictions." What they do proficiently is "beg the question." This is assuming something to be so which has not been proved, and in this case, cannot be proved. Here, ten such allegations will be listed and then refuted.

Allegation Number 1

Some years ago a modernist said he could read in the Bible about the ark being large enough to house an entire family, countless animals and provisions for their survival and yet the ark was small enough to be transported on the shoulders of men. He deemed this to be a contradiction. His ignorance showed conspicuously. In the Bible the word "ark" is not used always in the same sense. He confused Noah's ark in Genesis 6-7 with the ark of the covenant, a small piece of furniture that went into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and later the temple, that was transported on the shoulders of Levites (1 Chr. 15:2, 15).

Allegation Number 2

This same modernist thought he had found a contradiction with names ascribed to Moses' father-in-law. He claimed that both Reuel (Ex. 2:18) and Jethro (Ex. 4:18) are employed as names of the same individual. He vainly viewed this as a sure contradiction. Evidently, it did not occur to him that the man in question had both names! In the Old Testament we have a number of men who went by two names. We have Jacob and Israel, Esau and Edam, Gideon and Jerubbaal, Daniel and Belteshazzar, Hananiah and Shadrach, Mishael and Meshach and Azariah and Abednego. In the New Testament we have Simon, Peter and Cephas, Thomas and Didymus, Bartholmew and Nathanael and Saul and Paul. Many of us have more than one name before reaching our surname. This writer has both Robert and Russell before reaching the surname of Taylor, with a Jr. attached after Taylor. If ignorance hurt, people like this man would stay in perpetual pain all their lives!

Allegation Number 3

Was what God made in creation good or not good? In Genesis 1:31 we read, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Yet, in Genesis 2:18 God surveyed what He had made

and stated, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." The arrogant advocate of alleged contradictions in the Bible wants to know which is true. They both are! Genesis 2:18 is spoken while creative activities are in progress whereas Genesis 1:31 is spoken when the full six days of creative activity are concluded. Unbelievers ought to be ashamed to engage in such!

Allegation Number 4

Does God grow tired and weary or is it the case that He does not tire or become weary? Isaiah 40:28 states that He "fainteth not, neither is weary." Yet, in Exodus 31:17 He "rested, and was refreshed." Jeremiah 15:6 says: "I am weary with repenting." Upon concluding His creative work God ceased from such. He was not exhausted or out of energy. He was weary with repenting relative to His rebellious children because He often had to turn away from them due to their sins and visit them with appropriate punishment. The Sovereign God of heaven took no delight in such though it was necessary.

Allegation Number 5

Is God unchangeable or does He change from time-to-time? Malachi 3:6 says He changes not and yet in the book of Jonah He changed His mind relative to Nineveh's promised destruction within the forty days uttered by Jonah. He lifted the planned destruction within forty days because they repented and turned to Him and His ways for them. There is *no* contradiction here.

Allegation Number 6

Is God good or the author of evil? Psalm 119:68 says, "Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes." Yet, Isaiah 45:7 states, "I make peace, and create evil." How can He be good and create evil the infidelic objector demands to know? Evil is used in more than one way in Sacred Scripture. At times it is synonymous with sin; at other times it means punishment such as God brought upon Noah's peers, Sodom, Gomorrah, faithless Israel in the wilderness or Korah and his cronies in crime in Numbers 16. Hadean torment and Gehenna for an eternity are realms of punishment for sinful mankind. Deity made both places. Surely, the devil and his disciples did not make either place!

Allegation Number 7

Does God approve or abhor animal sacrifices offered Him? They were commanded on a daily basis in Exodus 29:36. Yet, in Isaiah 1,

God found no delight in such. Sincerity in the former and a lack of it in the latter are the easy solutions to this alleged contradiction. God approved and accepted them when offered sincerely and devotedly. He found no delight in such when offered hypocritically or with no sincerity attached.

Allegation Number 8

Did God make man upright or one shapened in iniquity? Passages considered in this are Ecclesiastes 7:29 and Psalm 51:5. The former has man made upright and the latter says, "Behold, I was shapened in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Babies are born in total innocency. So was David. However, he was born into a world where sin abounded and men became guilty of such upon reaching the age of accountability. In Psalm 51 David is confessing multiple sins of lust, adultery, a cover-up of his crimes and the cold-blooded murder of the innocent, noble Uriah. These were sins of responsible adulthood—not when he was conceived or when he was born. Skeptics need to do some real research before they write or speak of such alleged contradictions. They "beg the question" all the time when they attack the Bible in such allegations.

Allegation Number 9

Was Pharaoh's heart hardened by Pharaoh, by God or by the Egyptian magicians? We read about this in the early chapters of Exodus. The truth is that all three were involved. God hardened Pharaoh's heart by making demands of him he was most unwilling to accept. Pharaoh hardened his own heart by resisting God's stern demands upon him and his people. The magicians hardened his heart in their attempt to duplicate what Moses and Aaron were doing. It was the case as to which one had the upper hand in "slight-of-hand tricks." All we have here is in harmony.

Allegation Number 10

Can God be found or not found by those who seek Him? Proverbs 8:17 says, "[T]hose that seek me early shall find me." Isaiah 55:6 says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Yet, Proverbs 1:28 says, "[T]hey shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." The former passages speak about seeking Him while time and opportunity last. The latter passage envisions the time when the door of mercy has been closed, much like with the five foolish

virgins in Matthew 25:1-13. This is when justice takes over with finality. The very next verse, Proverbs 1:29, pictures haters of knowledge who "did not choose the fear of the Lord." There is no contradiction here.

ALLEGED NEW TESTAMENT CONTRADICTIONS NOTED AND REFUTED

The skeptics are just as weak along this line in the New Testament as they are in the Old Testament. Eleven alleged New Testament contradictions will be numbered, noted and refuted here.

Allegation Number 1

Did Luke err in Luke 2 about the taxation enrollment? Skeptics say he did assigning the governorship of Cyrenius at about A.D. 6-11, which does not coincide with the birth time of Jesus. A.T. Robertson and Sir William Ramsey present a strong case that he was governor of Syria *twice*. The earlier taxation decree, when he was governor the first time, corresponds well with the time of Christ's birth. Luke was completely reliable in what he wrote. Ramsey was amazed at Luke's accuracy in the Book of Acts. He was just as accurate in his initial treatise of truth to Theophilus. See Luke 1:1-4 and his claim toward "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus" (v. 3). The Revised Standard Version (RSV) of 1946 has Luke to say that he had followed all these things *closely*. This calls in question Luke's inspiration and critics of the RSV were quick in pointing out such and rightly so. The English Standard Version did itself no real credit when it has Luke following such *closely*. One may follow something closely and not accurately or with perfect understanding, Luke was right in what he wrote in Luke 2.

Allegation Number 2

Is Christ the Son of God or the Son of man? He is both. Son of God establishes His Deity or that He is God (cf. Jn. 1:1-3). Son of man establishes His humanity. Jesus used both terms Himself (Jn. 10:36; Mt. 16:13, 16). Son of man is one of His very favorite expressions relative to Himself.

Allegation Number 3

Is Christ holy or One who has been made sin? Hebrews 7:26 says He is holy. A passage in 2 Corinthians 5:21 says God made Him to be

sin for us. Christ indeed was/is holy and free from any and all iniquity. He challenged His generation to prove Him a sinner in John 8:46. No hand went up with producing proof! And none has from that day until now! Pilate found no fault in Him in Luke 23:14, and neither did his wife in Matthew 27:19. Judas, his betrayer, said He was innocent in Matthew 27:3ff. In view of all this, how was He made sin? Some have said He became the greatest murderer, adulterer, thief liar, *et cetera*, the world has ever known. Such is nothing but slander and blasphemy against the Immaculate Christ. He was made a sin *bearer*. The Lord (Jehovah) laid on Him the iniquity of us all as we see in Isaiah 53:6, a prophecy about Christ and His ransom. Recall He was God's Lamb designated, designed and delivered to take away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). He had no sins of His own but took all ours upon His Herculean shoulders on the brow of cruel Calvary.

Allegation Number 4

Was Christ a Lion or a Lamb? John the Baptist called Him the Lamb of God in John 1:29. The same writer of John 1:29, John the apostle, called Him "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" in Revelation 5:5. He is both. As God's Lamb He would and did ransom Himself for man's sins. As God's Lion He possessed power, authority, ruling domination and unbounded courage.

Allegation Number 5

Is Christ a door or bread? He is both. He is the Bread of life in John 6, satisfying all our spiritual hunger. He is the door because He is God's marvelous means of entering the fold of the faithful ones. Do not skeptics ever use properly their God-given brains? At times we are made to wonder.

Allegation Number 6

Did Saul's fellow travelers on the Damascus Road hear Christ or not hear Him? Acts 9:7 says they heard a voice while Acts 22:9 says, "they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." The solution is permeated with simplicity. They heard the sound but were void of understanding the message. After all it was not aimed at them but at Saul. Such occurrences are common in ordinary conversations. From a distance, man A supplies a piece of information to man B. Man B responds by saying, "I did not hear you." He heard a sound but did not understand the message couched in words. Critics of the Bible and its

inspiration are desperate in latching on to things like this that are so easily harmonized.

Allegation Number 7

Is repentance an act of man or of God? In Luke 13:3, 5 Jesus made it an act of man. Paul does the same in Acts 17:30. Peter had done the same earlier in the book of Acts (2:38). However, in Acts 11:18 we read how God "also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Repentance is something man must do as John the Baptist taught in Matthew 3:2, and as Jesus inculcated in Matthew 4:17. Repentance is a change of mind and man is active in meeting this demand. Yet, God grants it in that He allows it and motivates us to turn from our sins. Minus Him there would be no human repentance at all.

Allegation Number 8

Was Christ in the tomb for three full days and three full nights or just from Friday afternoon to Sunday morning? Jesus said "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40. Yet, He died the day before the sabbath (Saturday) making crucifixion day Friday—not Thursday and not Wednesday as some have taught. A woman in a Bible class once corrected this writer as touching crucifixion day. She said it was Thursday. But this made Jesus in the tomb four days or parts of four days which is too much. Mark 16:9 affirms His resurrection occurred on the first day of the week. Skeptics declare such to be contradictory as touching the Friday-Sunday time elements. Skeptics advertise their own ignorance about time counting in the first century. Jews in the first century counted any portion of a day as a day/night. Hence, Friday would have been one day/night. Saturday would have been the second day/ night. Sunday would have been the third day/night. This gets the three days and nights by the Jewish mode of time counting. Again, there is no contradiction.

Allegation Number 9

Was Christ a high priest or a sacrifice? He was both. We have such an high priest as stated in Hebrews 7:26 and 8:1. Yet, He was the sacrifice for man purging our sins as we see in Hebrews 1:3.

Allegation Number 10

Which number is correct—Moses' or Paul's? This concerns the ones who died due to a major sin in the wilderness. In Numbers 25:9 Moses said the ones "that died in the plague were twenty and four

thousand." However, in 1 Corinthians 10:8 Paul said there "fell in one day three and twenty thousand." Skeptics call this a contradiction and seek to array Moses and Paul against each other. The solution is a very simple one. Moses gave the sum total of all who were killed and Paul told us how many fell in *one day*. Now where is the contradiction?

Allegation Number 11

What about the day numbers and the transfiguration of Christ? Matthew and Mark say the number of days between the conversation in Caesarea Philippi in Matthew 16 and the transfiguration in Matthew 17 was six days (Mt. 17:1; Mk. 9:2). Both of them say, "after six days." Luke's account in Luke 9:28 says "about an eight days." Unbelievers cry with glee in their voices, "Contradiction, contradiction!" Again, the solution is a very simple one. Matthew and Mark refer to six whole days. Luke includes a portion of the day before the six full days and a portion of the day subsequent to the six full days. Now, where is the contradiction?⁴

One of three things is true about alleged contradictions between two passages of Scripture: 1) The first passage is not understood, 2) The second passage is not understood, or 3) Much more likely is the realization that neither passage is understood. But it is a matter of surety that if both passages are understood correctly, there will be nothing but amazing harmony in both and not a degree of discord.

THE ASSURED CASE FOR ITS INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY

The Bible is from the Godhead. Jehovah God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Christ is the way, the *truth* and the life (Jn. 14:6). The third member of the Godhead is called the "Spirit of truth" in John 14:17 and 1 John 5:6. If Their Book lies about its inspiration, which it claims in thousands of places, then each of Them is a liar. Skeptics accept this position, daring though it is.

The Bible claims inspiration some 700 times in the Pentateuch, 161 times in Exodus alone, 400 times in the historical books, 200 times in Isaiah, nearly 500 times in Jeremiah and Lamentations, 309 times in Ezekiel, 45 times in Amos, 84 times in Zechariah, and 50 times in the six chapters of Haggai and Malachi. All Old Testament penmen were characterized as David declared himself to have been in 2 Samuel 23:2. New Testament penmen, in a multitude of places, claimed what Paul did in 1 Corinthians 2:13 and 2 Timothy 3:16. Peter has a sweeping

affirmation of Biblical inspiration in 2 Peter 1:21. Did all these penmen lie? They most assuredly did if the Bible is not inspired.

The Scriptures were/are God-breathed. They are verbally inspired; they are plenary inspired. Natural inspiration, thought inspiration or partial inspiration, popular but poisonous concepts, are all slaps in the face of these inspired scribes of both Testaments. A close look at Psalm 119, with all its 176 verses, reveals it is not natural inspiration; it is not thought inspiration; it surely is not partial inspiration. It is verbal; it is plenary, pure and simple!

Skeptics who deny the Bible's inspiration must face the highly tested and well proved arguments which demonstrate that it is inspired. Here are a few of those arguments numbered and noted.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 1

There is Biblical anticipation of all error in the realm of religion. This is where the rubber meets the road. The reader is challenged to name any ancient or modern religious error that is not refuted somewhere in the Bible. This writer cannot; it is doubtful any reader of these lines can either. This is true of Catholic, Protestant, cultic, occultic, modernistic, postmodern or World Religion errors. The writer may not know where to find it; the reader may not know, but it is there nevertheless!

Argument for Inspiration, Number 2

The Bible has much in the way of pre-scientific information. We should not be surprised in this for God is the God of all *true* science—not science falsely so-called about which Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:20. Herbert Spencer did not discover time, force, action, space and matter as "manifestations of the unknowable" as both he and his nineteenth century peers arrogantly claimed to a duped world that swallowed it hook, line and sinker. Moses put them all in proper sequence into the opening verse of Sacred Scripture (Gen. 1:1)—3,300 years before Spencer's time. How did Moses know of such? By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is just that pure and simple.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 3

Matthew Fontaine Murray learned of the paths of the sea from having Psalm 8 read to him while he was upon a bed of sickness. He charted those paths thus becoming the "pathfinder of the seas." This is still how he is remembered. How did David know of these? By his

inspiration supplied by the Holy Spirit. Recall what he wrote in 2 Samuel 23:2.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 4

Job knew of gravity in Job 26:7 long before Isaac Newton was born.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 5

Isaiah knew of the earth's rotundity in 40:22 of his amazing book. Unlike Magellan he never sailed around the globe to prove his statement, his astute observation. How did the Messianic Prophet know this? By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 6

Jesus knew at His second coming that it would be day light in some places and middle of the night in other places. Jesus had made the earth and knew of this long before man became aware of it on his own.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 7

Thirty-five hundred years ago Moses knew life was in the blood as per Leviticus 17:11. Medical men did not discover it until more recent times. They were still bleeding the sick and infirm in George Washington's day and he has been dead only 210 years.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 8

The Bible is impartial in its revelations. It shows the feet of clay of its greatest men and women such as Abraham's and Sarah's lies, Isaac's duplication of the same relative to Rebekah, Jacob's deceptions, Moses' weaknesses at the waters of Meribah, David's and Bathsheba's adultery and the ultimate slaying of Uriah at David's command, Peter's denials of Jesus and Paul's past in vicious persecutions as Saul of Tarsus. Literary people are usually the very opposite of impartial writing. If writing about their heroes, they gloss over flaws. If writing about their enemies, they ignore largely their virtues and successes. Examine their works and see if such is not the case.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 9

The Holy Spirit in the Bible does not cater to human curiosity. We know but little of our Lord's life for the first thirty years. What biographer would pass over a person's life with but scant attention about his first thirty years. No one knows what Jesus wrote on Jerusalem soil in John 8. One woman said she would not die satisfied

until she knew! Her curiosity was never answered. Paul was prohibited from telling on earth what he witnessed in the third heaven in 2 Corinthians 12.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 10

The unique unity of the Bible is a landmark argument for its inspiration. Forty men wrote it over 1,600 passing years. Earlier writers had no way of knowing what later writers would pen. Yet, it all fits together to exclaim God's glory and man's salvation in Christ. No group of literary men, forty or more, ever have come close to equaling such an extraordinary event.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 11

Prophecy and fulfillment is one of the strongest of all arguments for Biblical inspiration. Hundreds and hundreds of these dot the Old Testament with many precise fulfillments in the New Testament. In Genesis 49, dying Jacob was able to peer into the future and predict precisely the fortunes of his sons. Moses did more of the same relative to Israel's future fortunes in Deuteronomy 28. Joshua knew the family cost of the man who would rise up to rebuild Jericho (Josh. 6:26; 1 Kgs. 16:34). More than 500 years are covered in this period from Joshua 6 to 1 Kings 16. Isaiah called Cyrus by name long before the future Persian monarch was born. Daniel predicted in order the coming of the four great world empires in his prophetic product. More than 300 Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament find precise fulfillment in the New Testament. In Matthew 24 Jesus predicted precisely what unfolded in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem. No skeptic ever has been able to assail these crystal clear prophecies and fulfillments.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 12

The Bible is indestructible. Isaiah so stated in 40:8 of his book. The Psalmist said it would last forever (Ps. 100:5). In Matthew 24:35 Jesus declared His Words never would be destroyed. Peter did more of the same in 1 Peter 1:23, 25. Men have hated it, banned it, burned it, perverted it, minimized it, denied it and declared from time-to-time its sure demise. Yet, it lives and marches from victory to victory.

Argument for Inspiration, Number 13

The Bible is powerful. The Gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16-17). The Bible is quick (alive) and powerful (Heb. 4:12). Those who declare it impotent or a dead document slander its message and

blaspheme its Divine Givers—God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit. They gave it, preserved it and man will not destroy it try though he may.

CONCLUSION

Without successful debate to the contrary, the Bible *is* inspired and inerrant. It is damnable falsehood to rob it of its inspiration, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and its all-sufficiency. Like Goliath's sword—none like it—there is none like the bright, blessed and beautiful Bible. Let us love it, study it, believe it, obey it, preach it, live it and defend it even at the peril of our life as have vast numbers of others from ancient times to the present.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Dan Jenkins, *The Glendale Guide*, 22 Feb. 1981.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The works of B. C. Goodpasture and George W. DeHoff have been helpful.

THEY SAY, “RELIGION AND THE CHURCH MUST CHANGE”

Phil Sanders



Phil Sanders was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma. He is married to the former Jackie Dodgen. They have four daughters and four grandchildren. Sanders earned a B.A Degree from Oklahoma Christian College, an M.A.R. degree from Harding Graduate School of Religion, and a Ph.D degree from Theological University of America. He preached for the Concord Church of Christ in Brentwood Tennessee, and now lives in Edmond, Oklahoma and is the associate speaker for *In Search of the Lord's Way*.

INTRODUCTION¹

Walter Truett Anderson tells the story of three umpires relaxing together after a baseball game. The first umpire said, “There’s balls and there’s strikes, and I call them the way they are.” The second umpire remarked, “There’s balls and there’s strikes, and I call ‘em the way I see ‘em.” The third umpire piped in, “There’s balls and there’s strikes, and they ain’t nothin’ until I call ‘em.”²

For the postmodernist, what he thinks and knows is all that matters. We are not able to get outside ourselves and check to see whether what we think, feel, or know is accurate or objective. To the Humanist and postmodernist, human knowledge is all there is. Everything must be checked by what people think and feel. The problem is that everyone in the game has to live with the call of the postmodernist umpire. He determines the truth on his own and binds it upon everyone else. What rules does the umpire have, if he makes his own rules as he goes along? In postmodern thinking, what you end up with is no real rules at all—just the rules of the one in power. In the end, you have lawlessness toward God!

Jeremiah described the Jews of his day who had fallen into idolatry. The idolatry of ancient times is much like the corrupt beliefs of his day. They had hushed God and followed after human beliefs. Jeremiah said: “[M]y people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13). They had forsaken God to embrace man-made idols. Why would anyone make an idol?

Perhaps, people embrace idols because they can freely manipulate their beliefs regarding the idol. They can tell the idol what is to be believed, but they cannot do so with God. The God of Heaven is also Lord of all. The Lord reigns, whether men accept or reject Him.

POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernists say we should accept all beliefs as equally valid. They say we should be open without the restraint of reason, and tolerant of everyone. Truth claims, we are told, are essentially tools to legitimate power. That is why in postmodern culture, the person to be feared is the one who believes that we can discover ultimate truth. The dogmatist and the absolutist are both naive and dangerous.

What is postmodern thinking? Postmodernism is not really so much an “ism” as it is a mind-set, attitude, or worldview. Postmodernists believe truth is manufactured, not revealed in Scripture. God and His morality are manufactured to control society. The postmodernist believes he must treat God’s laws as human. By doing so he thinks he can take away the authority of God and Scripture.

Postmodernism denies the reality of absolute truth, believing that moral and religious “truths” are socially constructed by men. Doubt in absolute truth means that the Bible cannot be considered utterly trustworthy either. Brethren are now putting together a commentary based on the methods of negative higher criticism. Destructive higher criticism contains the poison of disbelief. It is born in speculation, cradled in doubt, and writhing in fantasy. Those who embrace higher criticism cast aside their hope. Postmodernism delights in doubt.

According to postmodern thinking, since all religious truths are socially constructed for the purpose of controlling society, they can be deconstructed (torn apart). All truth to them is relative and subjective. So, we will be hearing that Genesis is full of myths, that the four Gospel accounts contradict each other, and that unknown people in the church wrote the epistles for their situation in life, their own needs and culture.

Postmodernism loves the cultural argument, i.e., that what is true in one culture is not necessarily true in another. Those who embrace female leadership in the church love the cultural argument, just as do those who embrace the gay agenda. It allows them to dismiss the Word of God for their own desires.

By saying that all truths are relative and subjective, postmodernists believe no truth can claim to be superior over or exclusive of the others. Since Christianity claims to be exclusive (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12), it poses a threat to other humanly constructed social systems and must not be allowed to exert its power over others. God's truth and morals can only be one voice among many voices. In postmodern thinking, the only real sin is being controlling, exclusive, or judgmental—"We must all get along; to do that we cannot say we are right and others are wrong about anything."

The point of postmodern thinking has little to do with determining what the truth really is, since postmodernism denies that there are absolute truths that come from God. The point of postmodern thinking is *power*. It is the means by which those who oppose the truth in their own minds are able to throw off the power of the Biblical truth for the amoral and irreligious systems they prefer. They might say: "If you wish to believe in God, okay; but do not impose Him or His morals on anyone else!"

THE DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM

Radical postmodernists, like the "politically correct" crowd, are bullies. They accuse anyone with whom they disagree of being sectarian, judgmental, and narrow-minded. They are never able to see their own judgmental attitudes. Make no mistake, the postmodernists among our brethren believe that "mainstream" churches are guilty of "salvific judgmentalism" and will be lost like the Pharisees. In their eyes, we are legalistic and Pharisaical and lost (yes, lost) if we insist that God means what He says about baptism as immersion, about the baptism of responsible and penitent believers, and about the purpose of baptism being for the forgiveness of sin. In their eyes, we have never understood the grace of God.

We have some among us today who are suggesting that Biblical, Christian baptism is *not* necessary to salvation. They not only make this claim but judge us for being narrow when we insist on doing things Biblically. They see no reason to distinguish infant sprinkling from the immersion of a penitent believer. They believe both are saved.

An organist in a denominational church asked a postmodern minister in the churches of Christ if she should be baptized again—by immersion this time. She explained she had been sprinkled when she

was a few weeks old. She asked: “Do you regard me as a Christian? Do you count me as your sister in Christ? Or do you think I am lost and need to be saved?” Here was his answer:

Of course I see you as a Christian! And I’m sorry you have apparently met somebody from a Church of Christ or some other immersionist group who treated you otherwise. Please judge me only for myself, all right? I understand the word ‘Christian’ to mean ‘one who gives allegiance to Christ.’ And what you have just told me fairly screams your desire to honor him and do his will. While you and I probably won’t see eye-to-eye on everything about the Christian religion—I can’t even claim that for my wife and me—we certainly do see our faith in and love for Jesus to be at the heart of our identities.

So, yes I see the two of us as equals and peers. We are brother and sister to each other in the one great family or church of the Living God. We are sometimes-confused and always-inadequate believers who are trying to grow in our faith. We are both Christ-followers who want to be closer to the one we confess as our Lord.

And, no, I don’t think you are lost. You are no ‘unbeliever’ or ‘pagan’ in my eyes. For someone such as me who believes a Christian can fall away from grace and be lost, let me be clear: I don’t think that happens when a believer has a flaw in her theology or character. I believe people in Christ can be lost if they deliberately reject the truth and willfully sin against God. But for his grace to his children in our frailty, misinterpretations, and sins, not even one of us could have the hope of salvation.³

A close inspection of the above answer shows that this postmodernist does not believe one must hear and obey the Lord. He believes that a mistaken, deceived understanding is as good as a true one. His argument is that, because we are human and frail, we do not need to have any true understanding about God’s requirements in baptism. A mistaken sprinkling is as good as an educated immersion. A deceived infant sprinkling is as good as the immersion of a penitent believer. To him a good heart removes the need to be obedient to God’s voice. How did the response of a good but deceived heart get to be as valid in God’s eyes as the response of a good and honest heart (Lk. 8:11, 15)? How did a corrupted seed produce as good as the true seed?

Have you ever stopped to ask about baptism, who is active and who is passive? In baptism, God is active and we are passive. “Be baptized”

is a passive imperative. It demands that we allow someone to act upon us. Physically, another person immerses us in water. Spiritually speaking, however, God is acting upon us (Col. 2:12-13). In baptism, God causes us to die to sin, immerses us in the death of Christ, forgives our sins, washes us clean, buries us with Christ, raises us up with Christ to walk in newness of life, adds to us to His church, and causes our new birth so that we may enter the kingdom. In baptism, we are submitting to God's activity. We are responding to His gift of mercy and grace. To say that we do not need to be baptized to be saved is actually to interfere with God's activity in our lives.

THE APPEAL TO "CHURCH GROWTH"

Many people, having set aside the teaching of Scripture, have used "church growth" literature to bully churches into taking a more progressive stance. They constantly harp on the notion that in order for the church to grow, and for us to "save our children," we must make changes in the church.

In the biography published in 1879 of Benjamin Franklin, the Ohio preacher, the subject of instrumental music comes up occasionally. Franklin was involved with W.L. Pinkerton in the first controversy over the instrument in 1859-1860.⁴ Those who favored the instrument made the argument that we have to keep up with the times or we will lose our young people. Losing our young people has frequently been an excuse for innovations. But are we losing them? Is the argument valid?

Flavil Yeakley recently reported at Freed-Hardeman University that the more liberal the church is among us, the more likely they were to lose their youth to the world or to other religious groups. They are only retaining 39.6 percent of their children. Is that surprising? You cannot bash the church over its teachings and expect your children to keep worshipping there! They will leave, as most do among the progressives, and join some evangelical group. Among the so-called "mainstream" churches of Christ, however, we are retaining two-thirds of our youth, which is significantly higher than the national average of most religious groups at 55 percent.⁵

In 1906, the US Census recognized the separation of churches of Christ from the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ. At that time, the progressives numbered close to a million, while churches of Christ numbered 159,000 members in 2,600 congregations. In the last century, churches of Christ have grown nearly eight times larger! We have about

13,000 congregations and 1.6 million adherents. Flavil Yeakley recently said that the churches of Christ are the twelfth largest religious group in America. They are the sixth fastest growing church in America, and fourth in the nation in the total number of congregations. Churches of Christ are fifth in the nation in number of counties in which there is a congregation. They are first in the nation in distribution of congregations and first in the nation in weekly attendance (ratio of attendance to members).⁶ According to a survey by Barna about five years ago, churches of Christ were also first in donations among religious groups. A greater proportion of members of the church gave regularly than those in other groups.

Some today are suggesting that if it could just become like the Disciples of Christ, we could end the prejudice of others against us and grow as we should. What happened to the Disciples of Christ, the most liberal of the groups? In 1925, they had 8,715 churches with 1.4 million members. At their height in 1960, they had 8,000 churches with 1.8 million members (thearda.com). Today, they have 3,737 churches with 744,397 members. They sought to become more and more like the culture. They did not win, they lost! In fact, the Disciples of Christ have lost more members since 1960 than any religious group in America. By what measure of wisdom would churches of Christ want to imitate them?

Each year the United States sees about 4,000 new congregations (of all kinds) started, and 7,000 close their doors. America is losing about 3,000 churches per year. Between 2000 and 2006, churches of Christ lost 69 congregations. This is in spite of the facts that we are the 12th largest group, have the fourth most congregations, and are the best distributed for our size. When you consider that we lost only 69 churches, out of a net loss of 18,000 nationwide during that period, it is rather remarkable.

Brethren we are not dying! A closer look at the churches which are dying might show that it has much to do with local factors and leadership, and very little to do with doctrine. This is not the time for discouragement about being a member of the Lord's church. Rather it is a time to keep up the good fight of faith and finish the course. The postmodern mind-set is to dismiss God, to ignore Him, and to regard His teachings as irrelevant. To them, God is just one voice among many, and may be told to "hush." A postmodernist will tell you that he has very strong convictions about his beliefs; but, if he finds his beliefs

are offensive to others, he will take them back. (It is a greater taboo to offend someone than it is to compromise one's beliefs.) Of course, if you take it back, you really did not believe it in the first place!

THE VANISHING OF HERESY

Postmodernists regard Christianity as a socially constructed religion and not *the* truth. In their minds Christianity is no better than any of the humanly developed religions. They believe they can set aside the doctrine of Christ for whatever they prefer. Here are some examples of what I mean:

1. In June, 2005, LBI Institute announced a new edition of the Gospels that identifies Christ as a woman named Judith Christ of Nazareth. The new version was published to acknowledge the rise of women in society. It revises familiar stories, transforming the "Prodigal Son" into the "Prodigal Daughter" and the "Lord's Prayer" into the "Lady's Prayer."⁷
2. Disregard for Scripture opened the door to the ordination of women and has paved the way for practicing homosexuals to fill the pulpits of these apostate denominations.
3. B.C. has become BCE (Before Common Era) and A.D. has become CE (Common Era). Christ has been removed from our dating system.
4. For many, religion is like a big smorgasbord, from which "customers" may freely choose whichever foods they desire and may ignore other foods. "Designer" religion has become the norm for many Americans.
5. Postmodern Biblical interpretation transfers truth away from the intention of the author of the Biblical book to *the culturally biased lens of the interpreter*. The reader determines what he thinks or feels the truth is, regardless of what the writer wrote. Actually, the reader believes what he thinks about the Biblical text, not what the text actually says.
6. Ultimately, the postmodernist does not believe God enough to take Him seriously. He will arrogantly sit in judgment of God and of God's teaching rather than submit to God's Word.
7. Everyone's opinion is as good as anyone else's. The main criterion of moral and doctrinal truth is how you, as an individ-

ual, feel about it. God's Word must be filtered through how one feels.

8. In postmodern hermeneutics, the goal of exegesis is transformed from questions about what the Biblical text means into how the text can be used to serve the new social agenda of the postmodernist.
9. Slightly more than half of teens (53%) say that Jesus committed sins while He was on earth. Thirty percent of teens believe that all religions are really praying to the same God, they are just using different names for God. In total, 83% of teens maintain that moral truth depends on the circumstances, and only 6% believe that moral truth is absolute.
10. One of our Christian universities has decided to publish a commentary on the Bible that has as its base the methods of negative higher criticism. Negative higher criticism was built upon the belief that religion evolved from man instead of being divinely revealed. Higher criticism is an unbeliever's attempt to explain the origin of the Bible.

DISTINCTIVE BELIEFS

There are distinctive beliefs in Christianity, and these distinctions are tied to eternal destinies. We must by faith accept these distinctive beliefs. While this list is not exhaustive, it certainly reveals that Christians must make distinctions.

1. Jesus is the only Way to the Father (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).
2. The broad and narrow way have differing destinies (Mt. 7:13-14).
3. The wise and foolish man have differing outcomes (Mt. 7:24-27).
4. Belief in Jesus as the Christ is necessary, and disbelief will cause one to die in sin (Jn. 8:24).
5. Belief that confesses Christ openly differs from faith that does not (Jn. 12:42-43).
6. Faith that is living and working differs from faith that is dead (Jas. 2:14-18).
7. Repentance is necessary, failure to repent leads to perishing (Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30).

8. Obedience is necessary, and rejection of God's will leads to condemnation (Lk. 7:28-30).
9. There is one true Gospel, and all others lead to condemnation (Gal. 1:6-9).
10. There is one true baptism, and all others are invalid (Eph. 4:4-6).
11. There is one true body or church, and all others are false imitations (Eph. 4:4-6).
12. There is one true faith, and all others lead astray (Eph. 4:4-6).
13. There is one true Lord, and all others are fantasies (Eph. 4:4-6).
14. There is one true hope, and all others are false (Eph. 4:4-6).

THE PROBLEM OF "RIGID PATTERNISM"

The Bible says: "Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). One makes a pattern to be followed. That is the purpose of a pattern. The Bible contains patterns for our Christian lives and for the church. Paul said: "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard ["form," KJV] of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18). A "form" is a mold or a norm. The concept of a mold indicates an exact pattern to which one who submits to God willingly shapes his life. Paul is here affirming there is a pattern of teaching in the Bible which reveals God's requirements for salvation.

On another occasion Paul wrote: "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter" (2 Thess. 2:15). A tradition is an authoritative belief or practice handed down in order to set a norm. Traditions tell us what to believe or how things are to be done. While human traditions are wrong (Mt. 15:1-14), divine traditions have all the authority and characteristics of God's Law. We must stand firm in them, hold to them, and pass them on to others. Paul uses the verb form of the word "tradition" in speaking of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-3) and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:23-26). He commended the Corinthians, "because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you" (1 Cor. 11:2).

Everything God ever made has a pattern. The ark had a pattern (Gen. 6:14-22), the tabernacle had a pattern (Ex. 25:9, 40), but according to some, the Lord's church has no patterns.

Every blade of every piece of grass has within it the pattern of that plant. God determined from the beginning that plants, animals and man himself would produce only after its kind. Every one of the trillions of cells in your body has within it a greatly detailed pattern of DNA, enough information in one molecule of each cell to fill 100 encyclopedias. The sun, moon, and stars move in discernable and regulated patterns, so that we can know where and when each star, planet, moon, or comet will be. If every leaf on every tree has a pattern, and if every cell in every person has a DNA pattern, and if the whole universe is laid out in a set pattern, why should it seem so strange that the church our Lord built and died for should have a pattern?

We do not understand the thinking of our brethren who suggest that the church should be patternless, that the grace of God dismisses the rules and laws of God. If the church is patternless, it is the only patternless thing God ever made. The church is a kingdom with a King and laws, a body with a Head whom it obeys, and a household with a Father. Of course it has patterns!!

THE COVENANT OF CHRIST IS UNCHANGEABLE

We are being told that God can change His mind at the last minute and allow whomever He wishes to come into heaven. We do not wish to question the sovereignty of God, but His Word "is firmly fixed in the heavens" (Ps. 119:89). What God writes, especially in covenants, stands written. Once God sets the terms and promises of a covenant, no one can ever annul or change them. God's character is such that He will not annul or change His covenants. Galatians 3:15-17 says:

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

Notice how Paul, by inspiration, takes special note of the small points of this covenant promise. He distinguishes the singular from the plural. Even in the minutia, God's promise matters. There is a difference

between immersion and sprinkling. There is a difference between immersing a penitent believer and sprinkling an unaware infant. One action is according to the covenant, and the other sets aside the covenant. There is no covenant promise of blessing to the unbeliever, to the impenitent, to the disobedient, or to those who are involved in humanly-designed religions.

THE PROBLEM OF JUDGING

Postmodernists have an unwritten agreement among themselves: "I won't judge you, if you won't judge me." That way everyone can feel good about themselves. Anyone who makes judgments today threatens this balance of lawlessness. Almost every postmodernist knows Matthew 7:1-5.

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Jesus was here speaking against the abusive judging of the Pharisees who were condemning others on the basis of their humanly-constructed traditions. Postmodernists seem to overlook that Jesus also said: "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment" (Jn. 7:24). There is a time to exercise righteous judgment. The Bible is full of examples where men rightly make judgments.

In Matthew 7:6, one must distinguish who are dogs and who are swine. In Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus denounced the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. In Matthew 16:21-23, Jesus told Peter, "Get behind me, Satan," for setting his mind on man's interests, not God's interests. Did Jesus judge Peter? In Matthew 23, the Lord Jesus pronounced woes upon the scribes and Pharisees. He described them as hypocrites, doing everything to be seen, exalting themselves, shutting the kingdom in people's faces, being children of hell, being blind guides, being blind fools, straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, being greedy, being self-indulgent, and being sons of murderers. Jesus said: "You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?" (Mt. 23:23). Jesus did make right judgments on others.

In Acts 5:1-11, Peter rightly condemned Ananias and Sapphira for lying to God. In Acts 8:20-23, Peter rightly said to Simon that he was going to perish with his money.

In Romans 16:17-18, Paul commanded the church to take note of and turn away from those who are divisive and cause hindrances contrary to the doctrine they were taught.

In 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Paul righteously condemned the man who was living with his father's wife. He was also right to rebuke Corinth for arrogantly tolerating the man and not mourning over his sin.

In 1 Timothy 1:18-20, Paul correctly handed over Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan for making shipwreck of their faith and blaspheming. In 1 Timothy 5:20, Paul commanded Timothy: "As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear." (This is perhaps the most neglected command of Scripture.)

In Titus 1:12-13, Paul told Titus that one of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, had said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons," then he added, "This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." How could Titus fulfill this divine instruction and not make some kind of judgment on the Cretans? In Titus 3:10-11, Paul instructed Titus to reject a factious man after a first and second admonition. Titus had to put in order the things that remain. Repentance demands one look at the sin in his life and change. One cannot call for repentance, which is necessary to salvation, without making a judgment on sin.

In Revelation 2:14-16, the Lord Jesus rightly called Pergamum to repentance for holding the teaching of Balaam and the Nicolaitans. In Revelation 2:20-23, the Lord Jesus rebuked the brethren at Thyatira for tolerating Jezebel and her teaching. Was He wrong to warn Jezebel? Was the Lord even more mean-spirited for giving Jezebel a time limit and threatening her and her followers with physical harm? In Revelation 3:16-20, Jesus said to the Laodiceans: "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth." He pronounced them "wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked." Is it judgmental to tell people the truth? In verses 19-20, the Lord said: "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." Loving others at times demands reproof (a sharp rebuke) and

discipline (chastening). These forms of judgment are not mean-spirited, they are for our good and to give us life (Heb. 12:5-11). In contrast to the Lord's negative statements against tolerating sin at Thyatira, the Lord commended Ephesus for not bearing "with those who are evil," and for testing those who called themselves apostles and finding them to be false (Rev. 2:2).

We must judge moral and doctrinal error. We cannot remain faithful to God if we suspend our morality or our doctrinal beliefs so that we do not hurt someone's feelings. We must at times choose whether to be faithful to God or to get along with others. When we choose others over God, we offend God and greatly err.

An amoral society is a lot like Crete, who were always liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons. When no one speaks out against their godless behavior, later generations grow up that are even more godless. A world without God's morals and teaching is empty and hopeless. "[E]vil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

The devil, the wolf, the criminal, and the postmodernist do not like anybody making judgments. Abraham Lincoln said: "The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat, for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as his liberator, while the wolf denounces him for the same act. Plainly, the sheep and the wolf are not agreed upon a definition of liberty."⁸ The wolf wants liberty to be lawless so that he can destroy. The postmodernist wants liberty to live and worship as he pleases. He wants the liberty of impunity. This is not the liberty Christ gives, for He calls every person into account for his actions (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul urged: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13).

What happens when we do not tell people the truth? We give them false hope. Giving people false hope shows no love. It is deceptive and dangerous. Some have mistaken the call to repentance with unfair judging. The call to repentance is a kindness, it is a call to correction! Let us say you ran across a man who had broken his leg in a car accident. This man is bellowing in pain, "Please help me! Get rid of this pain! Just knock me out!" Giving him a pain shot will help for the moment, but it will not correct the problem. Unless the leg is set back in the correct place, the pain will return when the shot wears off. Repentance is the gift of correction! It is gracious and kind. What is

unkind is giving a person a shot of grace and leaving the person to think that the pain shot solves the problem. Unless the problem of sin is corrected, the pain of sin will continue. We must make judgments.

QUESTIONS FOR THE POSTMODERNISTS

Can I presume upon the grace of God and never acknowledge any need to repent?

Can I continue in my humanly constructed practices and have conviction that I am all right with God (Mt. 15:13-14)?

Must I believe that God really does not mean (will not enforce) what He says (Jn. 12:48)?

If Jesus has all authority (and He does), how can I ever really dismiss that authority to permit everyone freedom to believe and do as he pleases (Mt. 28:18)?

How can the Lord rule, if indeed there are no rules (1 Pet. 3:15)?

How can one believe that all truths are subjective or relative? (The statement that all truths are subjective and relative is self-contradictory. The phrase “all truths” points to an absolute, not a relative truth. If any truth is objective or absolute, then all truths cannot be subjective or relative.)

CONCLUSION

Let us recommit ourselves to the cause of Christ! Let us believe the truth, love the truth, fight for the truth, and even die for the truth. Nothing else can set men free.

I am part of the *fellowship* of the *unashamed*. I am strengthened in the Lord and the power of His might. The pattern has been fixed. I have made the decision to call Jesus “Lord.” I am a disciple and a soldier of Jesus Christ. I am His, body and soul, mind and spirit. I will not look up, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. There is a world lost in sin, and *only* the one true Gospel can make a difference. I am not all I ought to be, what I want to be, or what I am going to be; but, thank God that by His grace, I am not what I used to be. I have no desire to return.

I am finished with low living, sight walking, blind eyes, smooth knees, lazy preaching, deaf ears, compromised beliefs, politically correct talking, and dwarfed goals. I am finished with giving in to human religion rather than embracing New Testament Christianity. I am weary of scoffers who believe they have something better than

God's way or God's will. I am finished with the notion that the Lord's church has to change its doctrine or it cannot grow. I have seen with my eyes that the Gospel still works, the blood still cleanses, God still answers prayers, and the promises of God hold true. I am finished with foolish ways. I will do more than listen to the Lord; I will carefully obey Him. I will do more than speak for what is right; I will speak against what is wrong. I will do more than hold private beliefs; I will preach the truth without fear to anyone and everyone.

I am finished with doubting. I will believe every word of every sentence of every verse of every chapter of every book is inspired—God breathed—and is utterly, utterly, utterly trustworthy. And my faith is without apology. I am finished being wise in my own eyes, I know I do not have a better way. I will not lean on my understanding but will trust God, who knows what I do not know and can see what I cannot see.

I will stand against the compromising of doctrine, the tolerating of human traditions, the offering of false hope, and flirting with popular religion. I know there is no way to heaven but the narrow way. I am unwilling to endorse any church but the Lord's church, any way but the Lord's way, any Gospel but the Lord's Gospel, any baptism but the Lord's baptism, or any teaching but the Lord's teaching.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I have the love of Christ and the grace of God. My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my guide reliable, and my mission clear. I must not be bought, compromised, deterred, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. There are too many souls at stake, and my Lord deserves better. I will not flinch in the face of heresy, hesitate in the presence of error, negotiate at the table of the enemy, pander to the popular, or meander in the maze of the muddy.

I will not give up, back up, let up, or shut up until I have preached up, prayed up, stored up, and stayed up the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go until He returns, serve until I drop, preach until everyone knows, and work until He comes. And when He comes to get His own, I pray He will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Mt. 25:21, 23).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

² Walter Truett Anderson, *Reality Isn't What It Used To Be* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), n.p.

³ Rubel Shelly, John York, *The Jesus Proposal* (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2003), 174-175.

⁴ Joseph Franklin and Joel A Headington, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (St. Louis, MO: John Burns, 1839), 409-414.

⁵ Flavil R Yeakley Jr., *Good News and Bad News: A Realistic Assessment of Churches of Christ in the United States 2008* (Searcy, AR: self-published, 2008), 23-26.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Judith Christ of Nazareth, The Gospels of the Bible, Corrected to Reflect That Christ Was a Woman, Extracted from the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.* (New York, NY: Lightning Source Inc., 2003).

⁸ Abraham Lincoln, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed., Ray P Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 7: 303.

THEY SAY, “SACRED AND SECULAR DISTINCTIONS CAN’T BE MAINTAINED”

Jim Laws



Jim Laws was raised in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He is married to Carolyn. Laws received a B.A. degree from David Lipscomb University, an M.Th. degree from Harding University Graduate School of Religion, and the Ph.D. degree from Tennessee Bible College. He served as preacher for the Getwell Church of Christ in Memphis, Tennessee and was the speaker for The *Truth in Love* radio program. Laws speaks at brotherhood lectureships, and now preaches for the Lord’s church in Yucaipa, California.

INTRODUCTION¹

Definition Of Terms

As with any crucial issue, it is imperative to be precise with the terms that are being used to avoid any ambiguity. After all, one has not accomplished anything if he ends up building a false case using terms that do not properly apply. It would be like a Humanist building a false view of Christianity and then attacking his false view.

This is certainly the case with the subject of Humanism as it pertains to the distinction between the secular and spiritual spheres of man’s experience. It is because the terms used in the literature, and the current discussions, regarding this subject are used in various ways that it becomes important at the outset to give some consideration to the precise meanings for this discussion.

For instance, there are times when Humanism is defined as the study of the power and dignity of man. Then, there is Protagoras and his definition—“Man is the measure of all things”—which is quite different from saying that man is the standard for all things, which is more in keeping with what modern Humanists believe.

I am satisfied to let the Humanists define the term “Humanism,” and explain what it is, themselves. In 1933, Humanists drew up a statement of ideas, beliefs and goals called the *Humanist Manifesto I*.

Humanist Manifesto I asserted that as far as the world is concerned, the universe is self-existing and not created. It held that man is a result of continuous natural process and that man is molded mostly by his culture. This document avers that there is no supernatural, and therefore, there is no need for such an idea as God. Further, it asserts that man is totally physical; that all religion is the result of social evolution; that the ultimate end of man's life is found in the here and now and not in any hereafter; that worship of God and prayer to Him is rejected; that man must learn to depend upon science; and, that man alone is the hope of man and the world of his dreams. *Humanist Manifesto I* was drawn up at a time after World War I and it expressed with great optimism the Humanists' hopes and ideals.

Later, in 1973, came *Humanist Manifesto II*, which served as a needed restatement following the world's shock of the Nazi atrocities of World War II. The evil the world saw of which certain people were capable somewhat dashed the optimism of *Humanist Manifesto I*. Therefore, a rewrite was needed. In *Humanist Manifesto II*, the reader finds seventeen propositions that deal with subjects such as religion, philosophy, mankind, society, a one-world government and science.² However, there is, in practical terms, little difference from *Humanist Manifesto I*. It still rejects Biblical theism, any faith based system of salvation, any ideas of heaven and the fear of eternal damnation.

Therefore, Humanism is that philosophical system that holds that man is the measure of all things; that is, he is ultimately the standard. The Humanist denies the existence of any standard other than himself. The German philosopher, Feuerback, possibly the greatest of modern Humanists, speaks for the system when he says: "What man is not, but wills to be or wishes to be, just that and only that, nothing else, is God."³ Secular Humanism would therefore be that system of thought that holds that man is the measure of all things, the standard by which all life is measured and judged.

Angeles defined Secular Humanism as:

A philosophy that (a) regards the rational individual as the highest value, (b) considers the individual to be the ultimate source of values; and (c) is dedicated to fostering the individual's creative and moral development in a meaningful and rational way without reference to concepts of the supernatural.⁴

Therefore, when it comes to values, law, justice, good, beauty, and right and wrong, the Secular Humanist view is that all such matters are to be

judged by manmade rules with no credence given to either God or the Bible. In fact, he says that the idea of an all-powerful God and the Christian Bible are completely and thoroughly manmade concepts. Hence, the reference to *secular* as opposed to the *sacred*.

Secular Humanism is therefore, atheistic; that is, it asserts the knowledge claim that God as the Supreme Being of the universe does not exist, nor is the Bible His divine Word. Such a position may be termed "non-theistic," and it is to be distinguished from the broader and often ambiguous term of "Humanism." On the other hand, Christian Theism views God as the ultimate Being of the universe who has always existed and has created all things in the universe other than Himself.

The theist claims to know that the God of the Bible does exist and, since goodness flows from the very nature of God, all value is to be judged based upon Him as the ultimate standard. Therefore, the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is "God-breathed," i.e., inspired and the perfect revelation from God to man.

Humanism and Theism are two distinct positions which are diametrically opposed to each other. In fact, one cannot hold to the one while at the same time hold to the other without involving himself in a logical contradiction. This means that if one holds to the tenants of Secular Humanism he is also asserting that Christian Theism is in fact false. At the same time, if one holds to the tenants of Christian Theism, with its belief in the ultimate God of the Bible, then he is also asserting that the position of Secular Humanism, as defined in this research, is in fact false. There is no middle ground between the two positions. One cannot be a Secular Humanist and at the same time be a Christian Theist.

Scope, Limitations And Certain Presuppositions

As with precisely defining the terms under consideration, it is also equally important to set forth in some brief fashion the scope of the research at hand, the limitations that naturally limit the discussion, as well as certain presuppositions that will be made for this research. This discussion will address the matter of Secular Humanism and its attack upon the sacred, that is, the challenge that Humanism presents to Christian Theism. Because a large portion of this discussion centers around the correct understanding of God, man, sin, salvation, and other closely related subjects, it will not be the task of this discussion to

prove the inspiration and authority of the Bible. This is not to say that such cannot be proven, but merely that such a subject is beyond the limits of this discussion. This is not an attempt to reason in a circle and presuppose what must be proven, but rather to say that the Bible will be the reference to the important matters of this discussion as it pertains to the sacred, that is, the true Christian position. It will therefore be presupposed that the Bible, all 66 books, is inspired of God and whatever the Bible says on any given subject is right.

THE ARGUMENT FOR THIS DISCUSSION

If it is the case that man in his essential nature is both physical and spiritual in makeup, making for a distinction between the secular (the physical side of man) and the spiritual (the eternal side of man, the soul), then Secular Humanism is false in its assertion that man is physical only.

It is the case that man in his essential nature is both physical and spiritual in makeup, making for a distinction between the secular (the physical side of man) and the spiritual (the eternal side of man, the soul).

Therefore, Secular Humanism is false in its assertion that man is physical only.

THE MINOR PREMISE DEFENDED: MAN'S FREE MORAL NATURE PROVES HE IS BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

The Bible affirms in its opening chapters that man, as God's creation, was given a choice in that he could choose either to obey or to disobey God's commands (Gen. 2:16-17). By the word "free," the Christian means the capacity to accept or to refuse any activity, and the capacity to do either this or that. By referring to man as a "moral agent" one simply means man has a sense of "oughtness" instilled within him. In his letter to the Romans, Paul affirms that man has a sense of "moral oughtness." He states that the Gentiles, who did not have the Mosaic Law as their guide, were not left without a guide, for those Gentiles did "by nature the things contained in the law" (Rom. 2:14). Their conscience bore witness, and their "thoughts" either accused or excused them (Rom. 2:15-16). It is clear from the passages that Paul teaches that they had a sense of "moral oughtness" which guided them. Man has this sense of oughtness stamped in his conscience (Rom. 2:9-11). Concerning man's free moral nature, John Hick correctly observes:

There is a necessary connection between personality and moral freedom such that the idea of the creation of personal beings that are not free to choose wrongly as well as to choose rightly is self-contradictory and therefore does not fall within the scope of the divine omnipotence. If man is to be a being capable of entering into personal relationship with His maker, and not a mere puppet, he must be endowed with the uncontrollable gift of freedom.⁵

Oswald T. Allis stated: "In the very outset of man's creation, his relationship to his creator is of utmost importance. Man's responsibility to God is implied in the word command, which necessarily involves either obedience or disobedience."⁶

MAN'S RATIONALITY PROVES HE IS BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

Evidence from the Scriptures and from man's own personal experience proves that he is a rational being. If it can be seen that man is a rational being, that is, capable of abstract thought and imaginative thinking, which is not a purely physical act, then it will be proven that man is more than purely physical but is spiritual as well. Lionel Ruby explains the term "law of rationality," saying: "We ought to justify our conclusions by adequate evidence ... which is relevant to the conclusion to which it is directed."⁷ The Bible certainly teaches that man is to justify his conclusions by adequate evidence. 1 Thessalonians 5:21 states: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The word "prove" comes from the Greek term *dokimazete*, which means "to test, examine, prove, scrutinize."⁸ It follows from this passage that one is not to receive as true every proposition which might be encountered, but one is to prove or test every proposition he may meet. It is implied by this that men are to live by the law of rational thought. 1 Peter 3:15 states: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Again, one is to justify his conclusions with adequate evidence. The word "answer" is taken from a Greek word, which means "verbal defense, speech in defense." One can see that the teaching of the Bible supports the law of rationality and rational thought. Inspired writers of the Bible were rational in their approach to teaching truth and not irrational. They use a variety of teaching methods to "get the point across" to their readers. Jesus, Paul, Peter and others use well-reasoned evidence to argue their case for the

Christ and the truths of the Scriptures. All of this we often take for granted. However, it proves man's rationality, a faculty only man has; he is more than just a physical being.

Further, as was mentioned above, one can come to this conclusion from his own field of experience—that is about man's ability to reason—setting him apart from the rest of the creation. We have all wondered at the “pencil in the glass” experience where the pencil, while in the glass of water, somehow looks bent but once it has been removed we see that in reality it is straight. The ability of man to reason and to think abstractly proves that there is more to him than just the physical. He wonders about the pencil, conducts experiments to answer this puzzling question and draws conclusions based upon that evidence. The Bible's teaching about the need to justify our conclusions with evidence *is evidence* of the fact that man is created in such a wonderful way and that he is capable of using such a remarkable faculty to such great lengths.

Further, think of man's ability to imagine. In his own mind, he thinks of a beautiful blue lagoon with bright blue sky above, sea birds are circling in and out of white puffy clouds. A cool tropical breeze blows as he watches the ocean waves coming and going. The very fact that one can image such is proof that man is endowed with the remarkable ability of ratiocination, the ability to think abstractly, to imagine, and to invent, to reason. Man is the only creation of God with that ability. Man has always had this ability. Go back in time. The ancients were always great builders and inventors who developed complex cultures and achieved tremendous accomplishments. The modern world continues to be in awe of some of them. Where did such ability come from? It was not developed over long periods of time, rather, man has always had this ability which lower life forms simply do not have. Man is more than mere “molecules in motion.” He is a physical being as well as a spiritual one.

MAN'S CONSCIENCE PROVES MAN IS BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

Each of us understands what is meant when someone refers to our conscience. Someone has referred to it as the “impartial spectator” that gives us our highest sense of ourselves. Except in pathological people, the conscience with its voice is clear, “you are obligated to do this.” There is no voice in our experience that speaks to us in just such a way.

The conscience guides us and leads us in the way we think is right. The moral conscience of man is so strong many have followed the old maxim, "Let your conscience be your guide." Precisely stated, the conscience is that God-given faculty within us that makes it possible for us to distinguish what it considers morally good or bad. It commends the good; it condemns the bad and so prompts or urges us to do what we think at the time to be good and to avoid what we think at the time to be the bad. Notice that the conscience is a process of thought, a purely intellectual spiritual type of ability, a mental faculty that we as human beings have. It makes moral judgments; it is able to distinguish between these moral judgments. Further, it urges us and in effect gouges us to act upon the good and condemns us when we do not.

Many have used their conscience as their guide of life. They use the conscience as the ultimate authority for decision making, which is a purpose it was never intended to have. Paul is a good example of one who had lived in all good conscience throughout life (Acts 23:1), even at a time when he was persecuting Christians (Acts 26:9-11). He thought he was doing the right thing at the time. He was listening to the guidance of his conscience thinking that he must oppose this Jesus of Nazareth with his followers. Paul said: "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience" (2 Tim. 1:3). Even though Paul was doing the wrong thing in persecuting Christians prior to his conversion to Christ, still he thought he was doing the right thing at the time. This is a real illustration of the fact that the conscience was never intended to be the authority of our life, but rather is to function, as a God given faculty, which urges us to do what we think is right at the time.

The conscience is like a watch. It has to be set properly to work well and be of benefit. Therefore, the conscience itself is not always a reliable guide but needs to be trained. The Bible says a great deal about our conscience. The conscience can be destroyed, that is we can violate our conscience which is sinful (Rom. 14:22-23); we can defile our conscience, leading to unbelief (Tit. 1:15); and we can sear our conscience, leading to apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1-2). We can ignore our conscience or violate our conscience. A guilty conscience can soon lead to a hardened conscience and such can lead to unbelief (Heb. 3:12).

What is the origin of such a faculty? It simply could not be the result of millions of years of slow gradual development as the Humanists assert since nothing else in God's created world has one. Con-

science has the ability to impose, reproach, feel remorse and shame, and at the same time to make us feel that such consequences are deserved. It is truly a unique feature of the human mind and it proves that man is more than merely physical. Man is a spiritual being, unique in all of creation. A purely physical being would not have a conscience urging him to do what he thinks is right or condemning when he thinks he is wrong. A purely physical being would not be concerned at all about such matters. We see that fact all around us as every one has come in contact with animals that never ask, "Why did I do that?" alternatively, "Why did I bite my owner's hand?" The Humanistic approach cannot adequately account for this. However, the human creation, which is both physical and spiritual in makeup, would and does do this every day. There are times when some people brood over a problem of conscience for years. Therefore, the conscience proves that man is more than merely physical.

An important further consideration, one perhaps even more fundamental than the conscience itself, is the fact that the conscience is the recognition of a moral code to which rational people are responsible. The conscience testifies to the existence of good and evil in the world. However, Humanists do not take into account the fact that there is real moral good and evil in the world. Between 1941 and 1945 there was the massive, deliberate and well-planned extermination of upwards to 15 million people, 6 million were Jews in what has become known as the Holocaust. This included Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, Poles and Russians. Raphael Lemkin coined the word "genocide" to describe the events that took place in Germany under Nazi rule from 1933 to 1945. Their aim was a racial purification. Was this real objective evil? If so, by what standard does the Humanist appeal to such as being evil? Joseph Stalin, aiming at building socialism, exterminated 3 million farmers through starvation. By 1936, he initiated a series of purges that were conducted with the purpose of doing away with his political opposition. Was this real evil? The Humanist answers that we ought to do the act or follow the practice that will bring about the greatest possible balance of good over evil in the world. However to refer to good in this way is to reason in a circle. The Humanist uses the term "good" to define the term "good." What is good? The atheist cannot properly explain "good" without using it in his explanation. The problem with the Humanistic explanation of morals and conscience is that such cannot be grounded in matter. Science is the study of material

reality. It can only tell us what the case is materially, this is the only thing that science can do. The moral law tells us what ought to be the case. Only something spiritual can issue commands about what we must or must not do. Humanists asks us to believe that matter is the origin of what ought to be when in reality the source of, and foundation of, moral law is God.⁹

THE SOUL OF MAN PROVES THAT MAN IS BOTH PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL

The reason such essential elements as the nature of man, his ability to freely choose between the right and the wrong, his rational ability, and his conscience have no place in the Humanists' concept of man is because they have, in effect, reduced man to being nothing more than an animal among other animals. To the Humanist, there is no moral value or moral standard. This is the case because if there is no ultimate good, there is no standard by which any action may be judged either right or wrong in any meaningful way. In this case, man would be like beasts of the field in the sense that he would not be held accountable for the decisions he makes during his life. There would be no real merit to the decisions made in his life as to what is good or bad, right or wrong.

According to Humanism, pursuit of pleasure is man's chief goal in life. Therefore, do away with all religious ideals, which inhibit man. If man has no eternal destiny, then he is like any other animal that dies. In addition, if such were the case, as Paul said, "... if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32). However, the Humanists' reduction of man to an animal will not do. As has been shown, we cannot deny our freedom. We cannot consistently deny our rational ability or the conscience, which urges us to do what we think to be right. These elements are forcefully given in the files of our experiences, and every attempt to deny them presupposes their existence. Therefore, what is the truth of the matter? How shall we explain the existence of such human characteristics?

The rational explanation for man having such spiritual characteristics, and those characteristics being such an essential part of man, is the fact that man is a spiritual being created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). God created man with intellectual ability (1 Cor. 2:11), and with human emotions (Dan. 7:15). As has been seen, man has the ability to think, to reason, to distinguish between what is good and evil, and he has a conscience that hurts him when he fails to do what he

thinks is right. There is a wonderful dynamic relationship placed within man between the physical and the spiritual. In fact, we may say, that which makes a man a human being is the very soul that is within him. This is the defining element that truly makes him what he is. God gives humankind the soul at conception (Ecc. 12:7). It is God that forms the spirit that is within us (Zech. 12:1). God is described as the father of spirits (Heb. 12:9). Therefore, it is correct to say that the soul comes from God. James describes the fact that the body without the spirit is dead (Jas. 2:26), and other New Testament writers teach that the soul survives us at death (Mt. 10:28; Rev. 6:9). After death, the disobedient are punished (Mt. 25:46) and this punishment is described as suffering (1 Thess. 1:9). One must be conscious to experience suffering, which is a quality of a spiritual being.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have accomplished what we set out to do, and that is to prove the minor premise of the argument that man is both a physical and spiritual being. In doing this, it has also shown that the Humanists' position that man is a material being only, is false.

To the Humanists, God is simply a concept invented by man in coping with a worldview he does not understand. Religion itself, they say, was simply developed over a period of time in various stages until it evolved into its present form. It is something to be tolerated and, they say, all religious views are worthless. To the Humanists, religion with its views is a display of man's weakness and a social hindrance to man's progress. The Humanists' attack on religion in general, and Christianity in particular, goes on and on. It would be hard to find a greater foe to Christ and His church than the Secular Humanists. Therefore, the *why* of this study is obvious!

This study has devoted itself to one area of that attack. It has proven that the Secular Humanists' assertion that there is no distinction between the secular and the spiritual is a false concept. Man in his essential nature is not merely material, he is also spiritual. In fact, it has been proven that it is the very spiritual side of man that makes him what he is, man. The Humanists' error in attempting to remove the spiritual side from man does away with the very thing that makes man a man. The soul of man, which every individual has, is what defines humanity as being the very special creation of God that he is. Therefore, since the argument for man and his true nature has been both set

forth and defended, and since the argument of this chapter proves that Secular Humanism's view of there being only the secular is false, then one can reasonably say that Secular Humanism itself is false.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² "Humanist Manifesto I," in *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1973).

³ Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap, *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishers, 1973), 529.

⁴ Peter Angeles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 116.

⁵ John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London, UK: Lowe & Brydone Printers, 1970), 302.

⁶ Oswald T. Allis, *God Spoke by Moses* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1958), 16.

⁷ Lionel Ruby, *Logic, An Introduction* (Chicago, IL: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1950), 127.

⁸ Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1973), 154.

⁹ There were a number of works that have been helpful in the research of this topic, which the reader may find helpful: *Modernism, Trojan horse in the church* by J. D. Bales, Searcy AR: James D, Bales, Publishing, 1971; Bales article in the January issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, "The Bible and the Mind of Man," (January, 1970), 42-45; Thomas Warren's material in *The Spiritual Sword*, "Is There such a Thing As a Christian Humanist?" (January, 1982) 1, 2, as well as the article "Humanism—A No-God Religion (With Faith in Man Instead of God)," p. 6-12. Norman L. Geisler's *Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976, is a helpful introduction for those who may be new to the study of apologetics from a more conservative denominational approach; Geisler has written a helpful book, *Is Man the Measure? An Evaluation of Contemporary Humanism*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1983 in which he deals specifically with some of the background material to Humanism, which is helpful as well. The reader will want to read the issue of *The Spiritual Sword* by Thomas B. Warren and Garland Elkins, "Christianity Versus Humanism," 13.4 (January, 1982), which is very helpful for everyone studying this topic from the Christian point of view.

THEY SAY, “IT’S JUST ENTERTAINMENT”

Jon McCormack



Jon McCormack and his wife Holly are the parents of one daughter, Lucy. He graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in Austin, Texas, in 2002. McCormack has worked with the Lord’s church in Texas at Gordon, Baird, and Evant. He now labors with the Highlands Church of Christ in Highlands, Texas. McCormack preaches in various Gospel meetings and Lecture-ship programs, and each year he is privileged to teach and preach at Camp Ida Youth Encampment.

INTRODUCTION¹

Media-mogul Ted Turner has referred to Christianity as a "religion for losers."² Additionally, this broadcasting baron made his beliefs on abortion clear by proclaiming that opponents of this wicked practice were "bozos."³ Such is the thinking of others in similar positions. For many years now the general media has waged war against God, His mighty Word, and Christianity. Satan continues to use every facet of the media to sway people to perform evil actions. It is a sad fact that most Americans receive news and entertainment from sources that are controlled by immoral, unholy reprobates whose main agenda is to destroy common decency and maim the holy name of our Lord and Savior. Isaiah perfectly described the defective disposition of the modern media when he warned: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20)!

THE INFLUENCE OF THE GODLESS ON TODAY’S MEDIA

Humanism's wicked grasp has had a hold on the media for many years now. Humanism is defined as a system of thought which rejects religion and centers on human fulfillment in the natural world. One can be a practicing Humanist without having ever heard the word “Humanism,” but let us identify these practitioners for who they truly are. From henceforth, we will refer to them as the “*godless*.” Beloved, the godless have control over our media—radio, television, movies, newspapers, magazines, books, *et cetera*.

The Brainwashing Of Today's Youth (And Adults, Too)

It is not enough that the blasphemous transgressors who are in control of the media believe and practice their irreverent, lascivious, and ungodly philosophy of life, it has been, and is, their goal to convert others to their way of thinking. Consider the current bias against Christianity. When was the last time that a major motion picture did not portray a deeply religious person as an absurd lunatic? When Christians are introduced on television programs, they usually turn out to be the bad guys. This is not only the practice of the entertainment industry, our national and local so-called "news organizations" depict the god-fearing in a negative light.

In the wake of the 2006 murder of Matthew Winkler, the national news media was filled with anti-religious rhetoric, especially against the Lord's church. The transcript from a March 27, 2006 episode of *Nancy Grace* illustrates this. When the legal commentator and host of the program, Nancy Grace, interviewed Tom Rukala, a Baptist minister, about the case, the church was misrepresented and ridiculed. In part, that transcript reads:

GRACE: I want to go to pastor Tom Rukala, joining us tonight, a special guest, a Baptist minister. I've been researching the Church of Christ. I don't know that much about it. What can you tell me?

PASTOR TOM RUKALA, BAPTIST PASTOR: Well, the Church of Christ is a relatively new church. It was started about 150 years ago by Alexander Campbell. And it's, unfortunately, a very legalistic sect, and they tend to use methods of intimidation and pressure tactics. They claim that they are the only ones going to heaven, and all other people are condemned to hell. So in case ...

GRACE: Uh-oh, I'm in trouble. But I already knew that.
(LAUGHTER)

GRACE: Now, wait a minute. What more can you tell me?

RUKALA: Well, they claim that if you're not baptized by one of their ministers, that you're doomed to hell, even if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, which, of course, breaks completely from the traditional Christian view that all those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved because we're saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. For the Church of Christ folks, that's not

enough. You have to be a member of their narrow sect. It's a very exclusive group. And if you're not a member of their sect you're condemned.

GRACE: You know, Pastor, you keep saying "sect." "Sect." You make it sound like a cult.

RUKALA: It kind of is a borderline cult, unfortunately. I don't want to make it out to be some kind of Hare Krishna group, but it has cult-like characteristics and...

GRACE: In what sense?

RUKALA: Well, in the sense of the exclusivism, the attitude that they are the only ones who know the truth. The tactics that they use are sometimes just—not only un-biblical but unethical, and they can be very ungracious, unfortunately.⁴

The media bias against the church is clearly seen in the invitation of a denominational preacher to explain the workings of the New Testament church. The host continued to show little cleverness when, two nights later, her guest was Rubel Shelly, who was asked to further help the American people understand the church. There is little difference between what Rukala and Shelly believe. Both maligned the church.

No brainwashing attempt is more obvious than the ever present, ongoing indoctrination process which promotes and supports the homosexual community. Although homosexuals are only a minuscule part of our society's population, the airwaves are saturated with favorable, pro-homosexual programming.

Unfortunately, the media's constant bombardment with "gay" propaganda is changing the minds of a significant number of people.

It is evident that public opinion of this abomination has adjusted over the last fifty years. Consider the 1961 documentary, *Boys Beware*, a film which documents the *modus operandi* of the homosexuals. It characterizes the homosexuals as having a "sickness of the mind." Labeling of this kind today would be considered a hate crime. Now, instead of abhorring the homosexual lifestyle the media glorifies it. Television programs show homosexuals as being well adjusted members of society when reality tells us just the opposite is true. The persuasion to homosexual acceptance has been spearheaded by the liberal entertainment industry. They have convinced much of the population that this wickedness is humorous. Disgust has turned to laughter. As the homophiles continue to produce sitcoms with openly homosexual characters, we become desensitized. And, once we are

used to homosexuals, it is easier for them to push their corrupt ideology. Such is what has happened in our society. We know for a fact that God sees no humor in the pro-homosexual sitcoms. He refers to homosexuality as an abomination (Lev. 18:22), and clearly states that those who practice such will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). If we are to be godly, we should find no humor in sin of any kind. God hates homosexuality. Why would we laugh at anything God hates? The excuse of many is: "Well, it's just entertainment." Beloved, if we want to make it to heaven, we cannot dismiss the seriousness of sin, even if it is presented in an entertainment format.

Our entertainers and news professionals have become expert Svengalis. One of the most powerful and effective sources of "disinformation" the world has ever seen is the homosexual propaganda machine. Recently, those in the homosexuals' camp have been endeavoring to portray those who oppose their ungodly transgression as being unloving, unkind bigots.

On another front, the pro-homosexual group is working to brainwash the young. Adolf Hitler said: "He alone who owns the youth, gains the future."⁵ Those sympathetic to the homosexual lifestyle have taken up this approach in their attempt to sway the opinion of the people. They are going after our children. The Unified School District in Alameda, California, a suburb of San Francisco, is considering adopting a new curriculum that addresses homosexuality.⁶ The proposed curriculum includes a forty-five minute LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) video that those from kindergarten through fifth grade would be required to watch. Likewise, the book, *And Tango Makes Three*, will be read to students. This book is about two homosexual penguins that raise a baby penguin. However, children's books with homosexual themes are not recent acquisitions for our society. *Heather Has Two Mommies* was published in 1989, and *Daddy's Roommate* was published in 1991. For at least twenty years, the print media has tried to influence our children to accept this disobedience. Jesus said: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Mt. 18:6). As wicked as this practice is, efforts to promote it are working. Each day, our society is growing more complacent with the homosexual way of life, and the media is the major reason it is doing so.

With very few, if any, exceptions, the modern media, portrays the homosexual as a kind, gentle, well-adjusted and happy member of society. Contrary to that, in reality homosexuals are some of the most depressed people on this earth. Dr. Neil Whitehead, author of *My Genes Made Me Do It*, states: "Recent studies show homosexuals have a substantially greater risk of suffering from psychiatric problems than do heterosexuals. We see higher rates of suicide, depression, bulimia, antisocial personality disorder, and substance abuse."⁷ However, the mainstream media will never report anything remotely like this.

Few brainwashing tactics work better than those used to promote homosexuality in the movies. One would be hard pressed to find a Hollywood film that depicts homosexuals in anything but a positive light. Hollywood has gone far beyond simply portraying the homosexual as a nice guy. In today's films the homosexual is the hero. For example, in the 1993 film, *Philadelphia*, Tom Hanks plays an AIDS infected homosexual who wins a landmark case after being fired for his sexual preference. That movie's objective was to breed sympathy for homosexuals. Likewise, in the 2008 movie, *Milk*, the central character, gay rights activist Harvey Milk, is presented as a tragic hero. If making heroes out of the homosexuals was not bad enough, movie makers are producing films that blazon them across the screens as star-crossed lovers. The Academy Award winning film, *Brokeback Mountain*, portrays two homosexual cowboys as just that. These are but a few of the examples that prove Hollywood is run by the godless. No lover of truth would ever attempt to influence the public to accept what God calls "working that which is unseemly" (Rom. 1:27).

Relative to the brainwashing techniques of the godless, not any are more despairing to the Christian than those being used to push for further acceptance of abortion. On average there are about 1.3 million unborn babies murdered each year. The media has helped our society be at ease with this. Their portrayal of pro-lifers as being crazy zealots, willing to murder and commit other acts of violence, has greatly maligned those who are opposed to abortion. Children growing up today are watching television programs in which abortion is discussed in an extremely "light context" to show that abortion is no big deal. Notice how abortion, in comparison to other topics, is carried by our news organizations. It seems that every week, on just about any local or national news program, there will be a sympathetic story about some endangered species losing its home. On the other hand, there is no

sympathy exhibited for the aborted babies who have lost their lives. The public is led to pine for the loss of some salamander's habitat, but not to lift a finger to save a child from being murdered. Is the media not leading Americans to change their priorities? Our world has turned something that God hates, "hands that shed innocent blood" (Pro. 6:17), into something inconsequential—at least, according to the media's representation.

Abortion would not be the problem it is today if the mainstream media had not encouraged the rampant practice of casual sex. Homosexuality is an abomination to our heavenly Father, but so is heterosexual fornication. Television programs and movies are filled with premarital and extramarital sexual relations. God made His feelings on the matter perfectly clear when the inspired writer penned: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). One would find it extremely difficult to find a modern situation comedy or drama that does not include relationships involving fornication. It has become ingrained in our way of thinking that sex outside of marriage is the normal path to take. Whereas in the past sex was something cherished, reserved only for those who were married, many of today's teens view intimate sexual relations about as casually as they do a kiss goodnight. Virginity is no longer held in the esteem it once was. It is now a joke, a point of ridicule on anyone "not attractive" or "popular" enough to have lost their moral purity. We can partly thank our film and television industry for this, and we can partly blame the irresponsible parents who allow such fifth to enter their homes in the name of entertainment. We have been brainwashed to believe that it is *cool* to fornicate, *wise* to cohabit, and *stylish* to sleep around.

As the various forms of media contribute to our moral decline, one cannot rightfully argue that our morals relative to beverage alcohol have been unaffected. Though society has long had a problem with intoxicating beverages (and other drugs), that problem appears to have reached an all-time high in modern times (no pun intended). Our civilization has been indoctrinated with the idea that alcohol in moderation is harmless. As it is presented in the entertainment business shows, not only is the consumption of beverage alcohol "the norm," a good time can not be had without it.

On a similar note, recreational drug use is also being glorified. Recently, talks have taken place in which the legalization of some

drugs were discussed. Where do we think our hedonistic, Humanist media will stand on this issue? Given their track record, I am not optimistic.

The Decline of Morals In The Television Family

The days of *Father Knows Best* are gone. Now, fatherhood is represented by the likes of Homer Simpson and Al Bundy. At one time, the father was portrayed as the head of the household. He was loved and respected by his wife, and his children were obedient. On today's television the father is usually the idiot of the house. He is shown to be foolish, impulsive, and lazy. Gone are the moral lessons that Andy Taylor once taught to young Opie. Departed are the days when Ozzie Nelson would give the warm and fatherly advice to his two sons, or Ward Cleaver lovingly disciplined the Beaver. We realize these were all fictional portrayals, but they clearly illustrate that the role of dad on television has been changed from the better to the worse. Not only is television a reflection of society, it is a powerful influence upon society; and, by and large, respect for the Biblical father has lost its place in our society and in television programming.

The Christian wife and mother is an honored role which deserves the utmost respect and admiration. All the wonderful ladies who fulfill what God expects of them should be honored and praised, held up as examples for all girls and women to follow. However, the godless have turned this once admired and adored picture of the fairer sex into an unsubmitive, unloving feminist. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing (Eph. 5:22-24).

The modern media detests the teaching of this passage and other like verses of Scripture. A woman who does not work outside the home is ridiculed. She is accused of being "old fashioned" and is to be "pitied" by her friends and neighbors. Sadly, this attitude, embraced by our media, has even been adopted by some in the Lord's church. Members of the body of Christ are not immune to the brainwashing techniques discussed earlier. If we follow the course set by society (i.e., the world), rather than the one presented in Scripture, we, too, will believe that a

woman who stays at home to care for her children is backward, foolish and unfulfilled. Though our media depicts "housewives" as foolish, Scripture says otherwise. According to what Paul instructed Titus, the older women are to teach the younger women. Part of what the younger women are to be taught is: "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands" (Tit. 2:5).

CONTINUED ASSAULT BY THE ANTI-GOD MOVEMENT

Give attention to some recent activity that affirms that our media's anti-Christian, anti-God movement is still alive and well. At the beginning of 2009, NBC Television rejected an advertisement of a Chicago based religious institution. The ad features the video of an ultrasound of an unborn child while the announcer describes that the odds are against him. The ad concludes by confirming that though this child would have a tough life, he would one day grow up to be the first African-American president. As a picture of President Obama appears, so do the words "Life, imagine the potential." NBC initially agreed to air the ad during the Super Bowl, however it pulled out of the agreement before the ad could be broadcast. This comes from a network that has no problem with showing programs which promote abortion, homosexuality, heterosexual fornication and other forms of immorality. It is clear where companies like NBC stand in the war between good and evil. Beloved, these are the networks from which many of us receive the greatest portion of our entertainment and news. Can we sit still and say that what the television networks are airing is only entertainment? There is ample proof to know beyond the shadow of a doubt that our media has an anti-religion agenda.

One would have to abandon his common sense not to see the media's continued onslaught against God and His commandments. Take for example the *Newsweek* article published after the passing of Proposition 8 in California. Upon its approval by the voters, that proposition established a constitutional amendment which stated that same-sex marriages would not be recognized by the State of California. Apparently, the people at *Newsweek* thought this was a bad decision. Are we surprised? The article has the audacity to claim that the Bible does not condemn homosexuality. Rather, according to *Newsweek*, what the Bible teaches on "love" are arguments for the other side. The article's writer even claims a possible homosexual relationship between David and Jonathan. The magazine states: "Religious objections to gay

marriage are rooted not in the Bible at all, then, but in custom and tradition."⁸ We live in a time when the "news" we receive cannot be taken at its face value.

We do not have to view regular television programming to witness the bombardment of wickedness. One has only to see the commercials between programming to know of the ambush that is taking place. The superfluous use of immodesty has been a part of commercials for many years, but the inclusion of homosexual themed advertisements is a fairly new practice. To illustrate, consider a recent Diet Pepsi commercial. In it, a man is walking down the street being ogled by a group of ladies only to have the advertisement end with *Queer Eye* star, Carson Kressley, looking back, staring at the man he obviously finds attractive. One may view this as a small incident. However, over time this kind of thing chips away at the moral resolve of our society. In its advertisements, Pepsi has opted to take the "funny homosexual" route. Of course, the idea is that if homosexuals are funny, they cannot be bad. Wrong! I have yet to understand how this helps sell diet soda.

Home design and home selling shows are another way the entertainment media slices away at the morals of mainstream media. Shows of this kind have grown tremendously in popularity. It may seem strange to mention such shows in this context, but consider how gay and lesbian couples are increasingly being used on these programs. This media is getting us used to the idea of homosexuality. If gay and lesbian couples are continually before us, becoming commonplace, it is hoped that the public will come to see them as "normal people"—who just happen to have a different sexual orientation. Furthermore, another reason why so many homosexuals are being portrayed in the media is so that the average viewer will be led to believe that there are more homosexuals in the world than there really are. Nowadays, one who enjoys these shows watches with the hope that the two men on the program are brothers, or no more than really good friends. Sadly though, those hopes are dashed when the two "friends" share a bedroom. One may think it minor and silly to consider such things as this to be an obvious assault on Christianity, but that is exactly what it is. And, against such an assault, we must present a strong defense.

BIBLICAL PROTECTION

There is a song that we often sing to our children in Bible classes. It goes:

O be careful little eyes what you see
O be careful little eyes what you see
There's a Father up above
And He's looking down in love
So, be careful little eyes what you see.

Other verses of the song include other body parts, such as being careful little ears what you hear. When we sing this song with our young ones, we are teaching them that it does matter what they put into their minds. Of course, this is not only necessary for our children to do, it is true for us older folks as well. Satan is waging a war on everything that is holy, and he is good at his job. To protect ourselves from the ruination Satan wishes to bring down upon us, we must combat him in the ways God has commanded.

As noted above, we must realize that our children are not the only souls that we are required to protect from Satan's onslaughts of moral filth. Though the protection of little eyes and ears is absolutely necessary, we must take into account the need to guard our adult eyes and ears as well. It is foolish to believe that we can watch sin-filled, morally filthy movies and television programs, but are "mature" enough to filter out all the bad things in them. How many times must we endure the taking of our heavenly Father's name in vain before we say, "Enough is enough!"? How many instances of immodesty must we witness before we change the channel? What is the number of homosexual role models we can support before God is disturbed by our doing so? The blocking of sin from just our youth is not enough.

Children are smarter than we give them credit for being. They have some understanding of what is going on when mommy and daddy watch a film they were not allowed to see. This makes parents inconsistent in the eyes of their children—hypocrites in reality. If we want to bring our children up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), we must avoid the things that God hates, instead of being entertained by them.

Christian living offers us protection from the anti-God bias of the mainstream media and the entertainment industry. One has only to look to the Father for refuge. Paul affirmed this to the church at Colossae when he instructed the Christians there to focus on heavenly things, saying:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:1-3).

Keeping our focus on Christ and holy things, we will not allow the ways of the world to corrupt us. The same concept was expressed to the brethren of Philippi when Paul wrote:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Phil. 4:8).

With certainty, we know that verse does not describe the modern media. What is lovely about the promotion of abortion? What is pure about the homosexual agenda? What is virtuous about how television has warped the idea of the family? We must eschew the evil perpetrated in our society's entertainment, not partner with it by supporting programs which are opposed to God, the Bible, Christianity, and moral decency. Paul commanded:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

No New Testament Christian has any business encouraging sinners to continue in their trespasses. This is exactly what we do when we lend our eyes and ears to the media's rubbish. Examine Romans 1 to see if this is not the case. There, Paul penned: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32). Beloved, are we finding pleasure and entertainment in the sins of others?

The key is to study—to diligently study—God's precious Truth. Paul's command to Timothy, and to us, is: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The major reason that so many of God's children are caught in the net of wickedness cast out by Humanistic entertainers is because of mass ignorance in the Lord's church. For some time now, because they neither know what the Bible teaches nor live up to its standards, the vast majority of the people in the Lord's church cannot truthfully be called a people of the Book. It is no wonder that they are entertained by what God despises—they have no idea of what He despises because they do not study and know their Bibles. The study of God's Word can ward off any potential brainwashing attempted by the media. Beloved, knowing Truth keeps us from believing lies. The wise man affirmed this when he wrote: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil" (Pro. 16:6).

John warned us not to fall in love with this world (1 Jn. 2:15). Beloved, have we fallen in love with the world, being ensnared by the entertainment industry? Can we survive without the filth that Hollywood spews out? Again, the only true protection is that which God has provided, Biblical protection. If you are concerned about the conversion of yourself and your family to the ideals of the liberal media, there is something you can do about it. Stop supporting them! Turn off the filth and entertain yourself with wholesome films (though few and far between). Better yet, turn off the television and open your Bible.

CONCLUSION

What is our responsibility to this wicked situation? It is the same as it has always been. Serve God, and try to convince as many people as we can to do the same. We can start by not viewing the programs that promote the hedonistic ideals of Humanism. Call your local television affiliates and let them know the shows you will not watch, kindly explaining the reasons why. Contact, in writing, the sponsors supporting programs with objectionable content. Tell them that you will not watch those programs (explaining why), and let them know that you will not buy their products advertised on those programs. When the advertisements themselves are objectionable, contact the businesses being advertised. For example, when companies use "sex"

to sell their products, tell them that you will not purchase their products until they have changed their ads.

Perhaps, many view modern broadcasting as *only a curse*, but that is not so. Modern broadcasting can be a blessing. Right now, sound and faithful brethren continue to engage in the preaching of the Gospel over the airwaves. We can help by supporting financially and prayerfully, wonderful works such as the Gospel Broadcasting Network, which is streaming the Gospel message far and wide, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Let us do everything we can to take the media away from Satan and use it for God's holy purposes.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Jim Rutenberg, "Media Talk; AOL Sees a Different Side of Time Warner," *New York Times*, 19 March 2001, Business Section.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Tom Rukala, Interview by Nancy Grace, *CNN Headline News*, 27 March 2008.

⁵ <www.brainquote.com/quotes/authors/a/adolf_hitler.html>

⁶ Katie Landon, "Gay Curriculum Proposal Riles Elementary School Parents," *Fox News Network*, <<http://www.foxnews.com/story10,2933,521209,00.html>> (12 June 2009).

⁷ Neil Whitehead PH.D., "Homosexuality and Mental Health Problems," *National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality* <<http://vAwe.narth.com/clocsiwhitehead.html>> (21 June 2009).

⁸ Lisa Miller, "Our Mutual Joy," *Newsweek*, 15 Dec. 2008.

THEY SAY, “TRUTH CHANGES AND MAY NOT BE KNOWABLE”

Jason Rollo



Jason Rollo, a native Texan is married to the former B.J. Bird, and they have two sons and one daughter. He is a graduate of Houston College of the Bible and Sam Houston State University. Rollo has done all his local preaching work in Texas, for the Lord's church in Apple Springs, Huntsville, Bryan/College Station, Hurst, and is currently in Lovelady. He supports himself with secular employment in the insurance business. Rollo has been on mission trips to the Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION¹

The glorious God of Heaven has given men the wonderful gift of freewill (Rev. 3:20; 22:17). Yet, with this blessing, also comes the high likelihood of wrong choices and hence, disastrous consequences. God through His inspired Book (the Holy Bible) makes it clear—there is *right* and there is *wrong*! In other words, “truth” does exist. Not only does “truth” exist, but one may also “know,” “understand” and “obey” this truth!

In my library, is a small little booklet entitled, *Humanist Manifesto I and II*. This booklet contains many of the key thoughts outlining general Humanist ideologies. While this chapter will not present a thorough evaluation of those ridiculous writings, it will, with a few references, set forth the tone of those God-hating treatises. In *Humanist Manifesto I*, under the section labeled *Eighth*, we find: “Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man’s life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.”² This short statement summarizes the essence of Humanism quite well. Humanists view truth as being non-existent, or based on the whims and feelings of the individual, or derived via empirical means only, *et cetera*. To this false way of thinking, the concept of *absolute truth* stemming from an infinite and good Being, known as God, is utterly unacceptable. In the more detailed *Humanist Manifesto II*, the Humanists declare:

As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love 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 harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. *Reasonable minds* look to other means for survival (emphasis added).³

We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species ... As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity ... we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities ... No deity will save us; we must save ourselves (emphasis added).⁴

We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational ... Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life. Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures ... We strive for the good life, here and now ... People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations (emphasis added).⁵

Note the emphasized sections above, which we have added for quick reference. These sections show the unmistakable mind-set of Humanist thought. Make no mistake, Humanists hate religion. Humanists hate the concept of absolute truth. Humanists hate the Bible. Humanists hate God. Furthermore, the Humanist movement, with all of its grasping tentacles (i.e., pluralism, pragmatism, relativism, subjectivism, postmodernism, deconstructionism, *et cetera*), are reaching for the doctrines of God (truth) and attempt to choke them out of existence.

“In a postmodern world dominated by philosophical pluralism, there is no tolerance for exclusive truth claims about right and wrong, since no ‘objective truth’ exists by which such determinations can be made. Therefore, traditional Christianity is ‘false’ precisely because it makes such absolute claims to truth.”⁶

This point is vital to understand as we approach our topic, “They say, ‘Truth changes and may not be knowable.’” Although unspeakable to some, and abstractly plausible to others, “absolute” and “knowable” truth, are strict realities. However, there are also many false philoso-

phies and endless vain deceits (Col. 2:8). It is to this false "philosophy and vain deceit" that we turn our attention. We will analyze and refute what these false teachers say about truth. We will look at what *they say*, but we will also look at what *God says!*

**THEY SAY, "TRUTH CHANGES
AND MAY NOT BE KNOWABLE"**

In his document, *False Doctrines About Human Conduct*, Wayne Jackson correctly noted: "And so, there are but two options as to the origin of ethics. Morality is either: theocentric, that is, it is centered in an eternal source of goodness, namely, God; or, ethics is anthropocentric, that is grounded in the mere mind of man—a creature that has evolved naturally from inanimate forces."⁷ Obviously, the "they" of our topic agree with the later statement. God and absolute, objective truth is out, and full-fledged subjectivism is in. Yet, within the broad category of Humanistic thought, there are various "standards" of what they consider acceptable and/or unacceptable. For instance, some might say that truth depends on "the loving thing to do," as they define "loving" (cf. Joseph Fletcher), while others might claim that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Whether it is Fletcher's false religious version of "love" or Hitler's Humanism in action, the end result is the same—an endless groping for a standard (without a true basis for such) and/or the total rejection of a standard (i.e., absolute truth). Consider the following quotations which illustrate the various versions of "changing truth" and/or "no truth," as advocated by Humanists. Please note that these quotations are from their vantage point, not ours, and amount to a summary of vicious and wicked lies. In part, here is what "they say":

We strive to bring about a progressive society where being "good without god" is an accepted way to live life ... We count humanists and other nontheists as the core of our movement but are always willing to work with friends and allies on issues of common concern.⁸

Humanism is a ... philosophical movement that represents a turn toward the satisfaction of human needs, both material and spiritual, and the fulfillment of human potential, here and now. Humanism therefore lacks much interest in the supernatural and theological, or in an afterlife.⁹

What is Secular Humanism? ... A constant search for objective truth, with the understanding that new knowledge and experience

constantly alter our imperfect perception of it ... Secular humanists accept a worldview or philosophy called naturalism, in which the physical laws of the universe are not superseded by non-material or supernatural entities such as demons, gods, or other “spiritual” beings outside the realm of the natural universe ... Secular humanists are generally nontheists. They typically describe themselves as nonreligious ... Thus, secular humanists do not rely upon gods or other supernatural forces to solve their problems or provide guidance for their conduct. They rely instead upon the application of reason, the lessons of history, and personal experience to form an ethical/moral foundation and to create meaning in life. Secular humanists look to the methodology of science as the most reliable source of information ... In any case their cosmic outlook draws primarily from human experience and scientific knowledge ... Secular humanism as an organizational philosophical system ... can be found in the ideas of classical Greek philosophers such as Stoics and Epicureans as well as in Chinese Confucianism. These philosophical views looked to human beings rather than gods to solve human problems ... The nineteenth century Free thought movement of America and Western Europe finally made it possible for the common citizen to reject blind faith and superstition without the risk of persecution ... In the twentieth century scientists, philosophers, and progressive theologians began to organize in an effort to promote the humanist alternative to traditional faith-based worldviews ... Secular humanism, then, is a philosophy and worldview which centers upon human concerns and employs rational and scientific methods to address the wide range of issues important to us all. While secular humanism is at odds with faith-based religious systems on many issues, it is dedicated to the fulfillment of the individual and humankind in general.¹⁰

Granted, faith may help people feel better about their beliefs and generate a sense of emotional attachment or false sense of security over what they believe, but as a method of expanding human knowledge and understanding of the world around us, faith does not get the job done, and thus is [sic] fails as a reliable and consistent method of knowledge acquisition. Anyone who contends that faith is a more useful and productive method than using reason and empirical evidence must ultimately use reason or empirical evidence to demonstrate this, which negates their original claim. Or if they use faith as a justification, then their argument is circular ... So the question returns, what do we base the predictive claims of science on, if not empirical or rational

principles? Certainly not faith ... What this means is that the [sic] "treating" the principles as true is an act of pragmatism. (Note, there is a subtle difference between pragmatism and pragmatism, JR). If we want to progress human understanding, technology, science, medicine, etc., we must accept those principles that generate the most productive results. In other words, the Principle of Induction and Regularity simply work. The fact that they continue to work is what justifies them, not our knowledge, and clearly not our objective knowledge of their certainty ... If all the above is valid (which is certainly not the case, JR), then it means that we cannot treat science, or even our own reasoning, as anything other than the best that we can do to evolve our understanding. We cannot lay any claims to objective knowledge or truth, because such claims result in either circularity or a simple act of pragmatism. We have to remain skeptics, but practical skeptics ... We continue to use it until it fails, and then if it fails, we search for something else that works. No lofty notion of objective truth is required. In summary, as humanists we should dispense with the notion that Empiricism and Rationalism, reason and facts, can provide an "ultimate" epistemological justification for the rational-empirical approach, or that this method can lead us to objective truth. Objective truth is an ideal, and not even a necessary ideal. History should teach us that what some thinkers of the past thought of as objective truth, are now considered fiction. What does not't [sic] change is the power and thrust of pragmatic justification.¹¹

The Humanist view of truth is equivalent to the scientific method. For Humanists, truth isn't revealed from a supernatural source. We learn truth about our universe from experiential validation.¹²

There you have it! Human beings determine truth, not God. There is no absolute standard of truth, unless it is possibly derived from science, or nature or empirical methodology, *et cetera*. Human history or "experiential validation" might suffice as a means of knowing something, but not "revelation" (i.e., the Bible). Some might claim to accept God or "a god," but not really. While Humanists may hold a variety of views regarding truth, they all end up making "the human" the authority for determining right from wrong (if they will say there is a right and wrong). All Humanists may not claim to be atheists, and there are numerous levels and nuances of Humanistic philosophy and doctrine, but the fact remains: Humanism is a God-denying, truth-

denying, pattern-hating false religion. It is a corrupt philosophy based on vain deceit! While “they say, ‘Truth changes and may not be knowable,’” that certainly is not what God says. In fact, elementary common sense and childhood logic shows the ludicrous nature of the Humanists’ claims. They might claim that human experience or human reasoning or empirical data alone gives one a hopeful glimmer of truth, but we know there is a true standard—God’s inspired and perfect Word (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thankfully, God’s Word *does* allow one to live in the light of *knowable* and *understandable* truth (Jn. 8:32; 17:17).

As a matter of summary, consider that “they say”:

... values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance. This document is part of an ongoing effort to manifest in clear and positive terms the conceptual boundaries of Humanism, not what we must believe but a consensus of what we do believe. It is in this sense that we affirm the following: Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis. Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge, as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies ... Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough ... Life’s fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals. We aim for our fullest possible development ... Humanists rely on rich heritage of human culture ... Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships. Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern ... Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness ... Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.¹³

The rotten thread that runs through this false philosophy is summed up in one word—“selfishness.” Humanism (unlike the teachings of Christ) promotes selfishness. It is all about “me.” What makes “me” happy? What brings “me” the greatest pleasure? While the Humanist might protest this, saying, “But it is about what is good for the majority,” such will not bear scrutiny. If that excuse is used, then it must be question: “Says who?” “Who determines what is best for the majority?” Without truth—absolute truth—Humanists cannot successfully answer.

It must be asked: “Does absolute truth exist?” “If so, is it knowable?” “Is it attainable?” “From whence does it derive?” In other words,

does truth come from mere human thinking? Does it come from "experiential validation," from "science," or from some other man-derived method? Or, is God the source of absolute truth, and does it come to man from God by means of inspired revelation *via* the Bible?

**LOGIC SAYS, "TRUTH DOES NOT CHANGE
AND MAY BE KNOWABLE"**

By logic, we are referring to proper reasoning, correct analysis used to draw only valid conclusions, based on legitimate evidence. Some call it "common sense." God has given man the ability to reason. While it is true that men often deceive themselves (Jas. 1:22), it is equally true that truth may be located and known. It "is" possible to find evidence, evaluate evidence, analyze evidence and to find and know the truth! To say otherwise defies rationality. While a man cannot know everything about everything, he can and must know some things. Practically every aspect of life testifies to this fact. For instance, all things being equal, is a person capable of knowing that he exists? Is this same person capable of knowing if he is married? Is this person capable of knowing what his driver's license number is? Of course! What about non-empirical issues or issues dealing with induction and deduction, does the same hold true? Yes! Whether one is using the reliability of credible witnesses (i.e., to prove that George Washington was the first President or to prove that Jesus Christ lived on earth), or if one is properly drawing conclusions, reasoning from "the seen" (i.e., the world and the things therein) to "the unseen" (i.e., God, the Creator), the power of absolute truth, as it is demonstrated from proper reasoning/evidence, is clear!

The late Thomas B. Warren pointed out:

Surely all men can see that if the truth is not absolute—but merely relative, depending entirely upon the opinions of men—then there is no truth at all in any meaningful sense. If such were the case, there would be no objective truth to which anyone could refer in order to evaluate the truth or falsity of any statement. Clearly, therefore, the contention advanced ... that truth is relative or brought into existence by the mere opinions of men, is absurd.¹⁴

Dick Sztanyo adds:

There are two extremes that must be avoided, whether in a study and presentation of Christian apologetics or in a Christian's daily life: (1) the use of reason alone; and (2) the use of revelation

alone. In practical terms, this is not a situation of “either/or” but “both/and.” The proper relationship should be that of reason and revelation. Though many religionists posit some sort of separation between faith and reason, I argue that such is not the case. Faith and reason are to be distinguished, but never separated. To illustrate this, consider the relationship of the mind and body. The body is not the mind, nor is the mind the body. Yet they are inseparably joined in this present mode of existence. Therefore, the mind and the body can be, and ought to be, distinguished, but not separated. In a similar way, faith and reason are distinct, but not separate. Both are essential to Christianity, though each must function within its proper sphere. Faith is primarily an act of both the intellect and the will, whereas reason is essentially an act of the intellect.¹⁵

True believers in God (and the Bible) do not believe in mere rationality. In other words, true New Testament Christians do not believe that man can simply use his mind alone (or only) in pleasing God. The true Christian believes that it takes both the mind “and” the Word of God. Put another way, the faithful child of God realizes that a person needs both God’s inspired, inerrant and all-sufficient Word to be coupled with the proper use of one’s mind (i.e., properly reasoning with the Bible). Those who will please God accept both the necessity of revelation (i.e., the revealed/inspired Scripture), as well as the necessity of logic/common sense in the evaluation/analysis of such revelation. God “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him” (2 Pet. 1:3). 2 Corinthians 2:17 states: “For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God.” Hence, we have: 1) Revelation (i.e., knowledge from God), and 2) Reason (i.e., the ability to properly analyze and use the revelation, as opposed to corrupting it). Whereas the Humanist rejects revelation, the Christian understands that it take both reason *and* revelation. The Christian understands that one is able to “know.” Going into detail regarding the subject of “knowing,” and the various ways knowledge is derived, Sztanyo writes:

I cannot survey in this limited space the various words from the Greek text translated “know” in the Scriptures (there are several). I will, however, examine numerous ways of coming to knowledge as revealed in the Bible. In short, I will be examining the types of evidence that can be used to prove one’s case. I argue that the term “proof” cannot be limited to what is seen, felt, heard, tasted, or smelled (i.e., concerning only empirical

evidence). What, then, are legitimate means of coming to knowledge?

1. There is induction, which is simply a "gathering together" of available evidence.
2. There is deduction (Scripture abounds with examples), which is the marshaling of evidence in such a way that conclusive results can be obtained (see Mark 3:4, et al.).
3. There is the use of empirical data (see Luke 12:54-56), which is simply a direct experiencing of an object (for instance, a door) or an event (such as the weather outside).
4. There is credible testimony (see John 20:25-31, 1 Peter 1:8-11, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, et al.), which is testimony from witnesses who either are known to be trustworthy, or whose testimony cannot be justifiably doubted.
5. There is intuition (see Matthew 12:24-28), which must be distinguished from a mere hunch or guess (the usual modern understanding of this word). By intuition, I mean a knowledge that does not depend in any way on sense perception or empirical experience. It is evident immediately, even though it may require some effort to grasp. The passage alluded to above is an example in Scripture of such. It is intuitively absurd to suppose that Jesus would cast out Satan's coworkers by using Satanic power. Other examples include the metaphysical principle of non-contradiction ("a thing cannot both exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense"), and the logical law of contradiction (derived from the metaphysical principle) which states that "contradictory statements cannot both be true." These principles are known immediately and with absolute certainty. Any attempt to deny them, in fact, presupposes them (i.e., if you deny either principle, then your denial is either true or false; it cannot be both true and false). And this knowledge does not depend upon even a single empirical observation. For instance, these principles hold true for the Universe as a whole, and even for God Himself. I know with certainty that God cannot both exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense. He either exists or He does not. Empirical observation is worthless here. Yet this is a legitimate pathway to knowledge.
6. There is metaphysical deduction, a term that I have coined to refer to a deduction made from things that can be observed to things that potentially may never be seen (see Luke 17: 20-21 and Hebrews 11:3). Robinson Crusoe (so the story goes) was

marooned on an island. While walking on a beach, he discovered a footprint in the sand that clearly was not his own. He deduced accurately: (1) that there was another being on the island; and (2) that this other being was a human being. If he had never seen “Friday” face to face, the certainty of his knowledge nevertheless was not jeopardized. This same concept relates to the arguments for God’s existence. God has left His “footprints,” as it were, throughout the Universe (note Acts 14:17: “Yet he left not himself without witness ...”). Naturally, each person is responsible for reasoning properly and for drawing correct conclusions from the available evidence (Romans 1:19-22; Psalm 19:1-6; Hebrews 3:4; et al.). There is nothing, in or out of Scripture, to suggest that only one of these ways of arriving at truth results in “proof,” while every other means is denied such a status. One may prove his case using any, or all, of these legitimate means of coming to knowledge (so long as the limits of each method are understood). It has become apparent that many today hold that “knowledge” or “proof” is restricted to scientific investigation alone, and that whatever is not “scientific” then is designated as “faith.” Such a dichotomy accounts for the strange things one reads on the subject of faith and knowledge. One author suggested, for example: “Scientific knowledge we know, and things seen we know, but faith is the assurance of what we accept that we do not yet know but are hoping for” (Thomas, 1974, p. 137). This position agrees with that of philosopher Bertrand Russell, who said: “Whatever knowledge is attainable, must be attained by scientific methods; and what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know” (1935, p. 243). Such a position is patently false, because it disregards other important means of arriving at a knowledge of the truth.¹⁶

Under the heading “self-defeating,” another penman shows the utter self-contradictory nature of those who reject objective/knowable truth. He writes:

... the postmodern assertion that “there is no absolute, objective truth” is intrinsically contradictory, and self-defeating. It is a statement put forward as being objectively true and universally applicable—something that it argues is impossible. Such a statement also militates against the idea that all statements (linguistic constructions) of reality are incurably warped by cultural conditioning. After all, are not these postmodern propositions also linguistic expressions of reality? To be consistent, postmodernists must admit that their own statements

of reality also are mere arbitrary social constructions. As such, they, too, are culturally conditioned, and offer no compelling reason to accept the theory. If, however, postmodernists can demonstrate that their worldview is true, they will have defeated its main thesis (i.e., there is no objective truth), for, to do so would be to establish at least one objective truth—namely that postmodernism is true. From these considerations, postmodernism “either denies the plausibility of its own position or it presumes the reliability of reason and the objectivity of truth” (Leffel, 1996b, p. 53). In either case, it is self-defeating. To extricate themselves from these apparent contradictions, some postmodern thinkers have argued against the legitimacy of logical principles that guide the reasoning process. Yet, such a move only sharpens the horns of their dilemma, for to deny the validity of reason, reason itself must be employed. Such an attempt ends up being an argument that no argument is sound, or proof that no proof exists, which is nonsense.¹⁷

Taking this discussion a bit further and relating it to “pluralism” and “interpretation,” Miller declares:

What do people mean by the statement, “That’s just your interpretation”? Many mean: “You have your view of what the passage means and I have mine. Who’s to say mine’s wrong and yours is right? We should not condemn each other’s views. We should allow each other to hold different views.” We live in a “pluralistic” society. “Pluralism” simply means that various differing, even conflicting, views are permitted to coexist. This attitude is quite prevalent in today’s world. Television talk shows constantly stress that there are no absolutes. Truth is subjective and relative to many people. They insist that there are very few, if any, definites—very little black and white, but a lot of gray. The matter is muddled further by the fact that on any religious or moral question, there are knowledgeable, sincere authorities on both sides of the issue. The general posture of the American mind-set is that since truth is so elusive, no one should be judgmental of anyone else; no one should be so arrogant or dogmatic as to insist that a certain viewpoint is the only right viewpoint. Without even examining God’s Word, we ought to be able to see that this attitude, and this position, is self-contradictory and unacceptable. Why? Because those who espouse it insist that they are correct. They are dogmatic in their insistence that no one should be dogmatic. They hold as absolute and certain truth the fact that there are no absolute truths. Therefore,

they have to deny their viewpoint in order to hold their viewpoint!¹⁸

The Humanists' claim that there is no absolute truth is self-defeating. How can they claim "there is no absolute truth" without a basis of truth? It is as if they are saying, "Based on known truth (as we define it), there is no truth." Such is utter nonsense! Our question to such false proponents would be this: "What makes you the standard of truth?" You say, "There is not truth," but we ask, "Based on what—on *your* word?" "Who are you to make such a statement?" "Upon what 'standard' do you even propose to make such 'law' upon others?" The crux of the matter is this, without a standard nothing can truly be considered right or wrong. For morality to exist, a standard must exist. For a standard to exist, there must be something or someone great enough to demand that the standard be followed. Mere mortal human philosophers who burst on the scene today and leave in a pine box tomorrow hardly qualify as being "great enough" to demand the respect for any standard they might wish to impose. On the other hand, God is. Creation begs for His existence. He is the One Who gives meaning to mankind in life and hope in death. He is the One Who explains guilt and sin, and "how" one may be forgiven of his sin. He is the One Who has given the ultimate standard, *the Bible*, wherein every issue has been addressed through example, statement or implication (and principle). God is a standard for right and wrong and He is the source of absolute truth.

Humanism with all of its hopeless principles offers no hope. Instead, it brings despair, depression, heartache and sorrow. It degrades families by encouraging divorce, self-gratification and indulgence in sin. It promotes the immorality that erodes the very fabric of a decent society. It leaves children destitute of their parents who are busy seeking other pleasures. It leaves parents with no obligation or reason to fulfill their responsibilities. If the philosophy of Humanism is followed to its ultimate conclusion, words like "responsibility," "accountability," "ought," "should," "must," "need to," "right," "wrong," "absolute," "correct," "incorrect," "true," "false," *et cetera* will have no meaning. That being the case, consider the kind of a society Humanism will produce.

Adding still more to the argument, another sound scholar properly writes:

Some religionists are opposed to "using logic" or "reason" concerning spiritual things. We are informed, by these guardians of rational thought, that the use of logic is the reason for much of the division in the church today. This position is perplexing, for those who reject the use of "reason," *reason* that binding "our conclusions" produces much of the religious division today. We are supposed to be bound, therefore, to the position that logical conclusions cannot be bound. Listen to the words of Paul, the inspired logician: "For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20 ESV). First, notice the paradox in Paul's inspired statement. We can perceive the invisible. The order of the universe, the design of the created order, and the sense of moral obligation of mankind — these components of the created world — all testify to the Cause that is eternal, intelligent, powerful, and divine. And although we cannot see God himself, we can know that he exists with absolute certainty. Dr. E.A. Maness stated the matter correctly: "If the word 'God' were written upon every blowing leaf, embossed on every passing cloud, engraved on every granite rock, the inductive evidence of God in the world would be no stronger than it is" (The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe, 12). We cannot see the divine nature. No man ever has (Jn. 1:18). But seeing the effect of divine power necessarily implies the Divine Cause. Second, consider the principle. Paul affirms that we can see the unseen by reasoning from the facts of creation. This, the apostle calls, a "clear perception." The word translated "perceived" means "to perceive with the mind" (W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 855). It is related to the word *nous*—mind. Paul says we must use our *minds*. We must consider the evidence of creation, and we must draw the only logical conclusion warranted by the evidence. Those who think otherwise are in an indefensible position (i.e., are without excuse). Jack Cottrell observes, "On a common-sense level, when we view the wonders of nature we just intrinsically infer a powerful Creator as their source" (*Commentary on Romans*, 1.142) ... the principle of biblical reasoning is illustrated throughout the Scriptures.¹⁹

Contrary to the ideas of some (including Humanists and Denominationalists), logic and the Bible, and logic and true science go hand-in-hand. The Bible knows nothing of "blind leaps in the dark" or

“faith without evidence.” No, not at all! The Bible is based on evidence. God expects, yea demands, humanity to properly think and reason (Isa. 1:18). The ignorance of false religionists who claim such nonsense as “blind faith” only propel the ignorance of the Humanist movement. We are to properly reason. We are to draw proper conclusions, conclusions based on adequate evidence. The law of rationality is: Draw only those conclusions that are warranted by adequate evidence (1 Thess. 5:21).

**GOD SAYS, “TRUTH DOES NOT CHANGE
AND MAY BE KNOWABLE”**

Exposing how Humanists think regarding truth, one researcher quotes:

Absolute truth belongs only to one class of humans ... the class of absolute fools” (Montagu, 1981, p. 4-C). These are the piercing words of Ashley Montagu, famous Evolutionist/ Humanist from Princeton University. Dr. Montagu wanted to make it clearly understood that truth is at best relative and that anyone who states differently is categorized as a fool!

Others have, of course, joined Dr. Montagu in this kind of thinking. Consider, for example, Sir Julian Huxley’s comments: “We must now be prepared to abandon the god hypothesis and its corollaries like divine revelation or unchanging truths ...”²⁰

To those who respect and believe the Bible, the idea of “changeless truth” and “knowable truth” are self-evident. Further, reasonable people realize that there cannot be truth without a standard of truth. As New Testament Christians, we believe that standard is the Bible (specifically the New Testament). Jesus could not be plainer. He said: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32). In John 18:37, Jesus declared: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.” In John 17:17 Jesus told us that “truth” is found in God’s Word. In prayer to God the Father, Christ prayed: “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” In John 14:6, Christ uttered of Himself: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Jesus said He is “the truth,” and that His presence on earth bore testimony to the fact that truth *does* exist. He made it plain that truth is available in God’s Word. Obviously, Jesus was not a Humanist!

Paul believed in and proclaimed the fact that truth is not only absolute, it is attainable (understandable) He wrote:

How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:3-5).

He also penned: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). Furthermore, Paul said: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37). In 2 Thessalonians 2:10, Paul explains that people must have a "love of the truth, that they might be saved." Otherwise, they will "be damned" because they "believed not the truth" (2 Thess. 2:12). Guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul exhorted: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Obviously Paul was not a Humanist, either.

John 16:13 lays it on the line. To His apostles, Jesus said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." Notice the words "all truth." Clearly Jesus claimed that "all truth" derives from Him, *via* the Holy Spirit, revealed to us through the inspired writings of the apostles (Jn. 16:7, 13; 17:20). Regarding the Word of Truth, we are to: read it (1 Tim. 4:13), meditate upon it (Ps. 1:2), study and rightly divide it (2 Tim. 2:15), strongly desire it (1 Pet. 2:2), and grow in it (2 Pet. 3:18). On the other hand, regarding God's Word, we must not: handle it deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2), add to or take away from it (2 Jn. 9; Rev. 22:18-19). Rather, we must always strive to faithfully follow it and remain steady on the mountaintop of Divine and changeless truth. Just as we are able to interpret things in everyday life, we are able to read and understand (and know) what the Bible teaches.

Along this line, Dave Miller writes:

For example, when we go to the doctor because we are not feeling well, we communicate to him our symptoms and expect him to understand us. We expect him to gather all the relevant evidence (the verbal information we give, as well as the signs our bodies manifest) and then properly interpret that evidence to

draw the right conclusions concerning our ailment and proper treatment. He then writes out a prescription that we take to the pharmacist and, once again, we expect the pharmacist to interpret properly the doctor's instructions. We take the prescription home and read the label, fully expecting to understand the directions. The fact that doctors and pharmacists can make mistakes by drawing unwarranted conclusions about our condition does not change the fact that if they gather sufficient evidence and reason properly about the information, they can know the truth about our situation. Every single day that we live, we interpret thousands of messages accurately. We read the newspaper, fully expecting to understand what we are reading. We read novels with the same expectation. We watch the news on television. We go to the mailbox, get our mail, and browse through it, fully expecting to interpret properly the messages being conveyed. The fact that misunderstanding sometimes occurs does not negate the fact that more information can be examined in order to draw the right conclusions and arrive at correct interpretations. We go through this process constantly—every waking hour of the day, day in and day out, year after year. We give ourselves credit for having the ability to operate sensibly and communicate with one another intelligibly. Yet we turn right around and imply that the God of heaven, the One Who created our minds and our thinking capacity, the One Who is infinitely wiser and more capable than humans, is incapable of making His will known to humanity in a clear and understandable fashion! When we come to the Bible, we suddenly do an about-face and insist that we can't be sure what God's will is, we can't be dogmatic on doctrine, and we must allow differing opinions on what is spiritually right or wrong! Many people who claim to embrace Christianity ridicule and denounce logic, debate, argumentation, and emphasis upon being rational and reasonable. The practical effect of such propaganda is the upsurge of subjectivity, emotions, and personal taste as authoritative standards in religious practice. The Bible as the comprehensible and unchanging source of religious authority is thereby supplanted, and the Satanic severance of human culture from the God of heaven is complete. The term "logic" refers to nothing more than correct reasoning. A person is logical when he/she reasons correctly. Being "illogical" amounts to engaging in incorrect reasoning. Does the Bible reflect affinity with the laws of thought and logic? Did Jesus, Paul, and other inspired

speakers and writers argue their cases, prove their positions, and engage in rational, reasonable discourse?²¹

Of course, the answer to Miller's final questions is "Yes!" Yes, the Bible reflects "affinity with the laws of thought and logic." Yes, "Jesus, Paul and other inspired speakers and writers argue their cases, prove their positions, and engage in rational, reasonable discourse." Again, God (the Creator of the mind) expects/demands that we properly think/reason both about Scripture and with Scripture!

Regarding the contrast between "blind faith" and "reasoned belief," Miller concludes:

A common misconception among atheists, humanists, and evolutionists is that those who reject evolution in order to hold to a fundamental, literal understanding of the biblical documents are guided by "blind faith." Robinson articulated this position quite emphatically when he accused Christians of abandoning rationality and evidence in exchange for intellectual dishonesty and ignorance of the truth (1976, pp. 115-124). Many within the scientific community labor under the delusion that their "facts" and "evidence" are supportive of evolution and opposed to a normal, face-value understanding of the biblical text. They scoff at those who disagree with them, as if they alone have a corner on truth. The fact of the matter is that while most of the religious world deserves the epithets hurled by the "informed" academicians, those who espouse pure, New Testament Christianity do not. New Testament Christians embrace the biblical definition of faith, in contrast to the commonly conceived understanding of faith that is promulgated by the vast majority of people in the denominational world. The faith spoken of in the Bible is a faith that is preceded by knowledge. One cannot possess biblical faith in God until he or she comes to the knowledge of God. Thus, faith is not accepting what one cannot prove. Faith cannot outrun knowledge—for it is dependent upon knowledge (Romans 10:17). Abraham was said to have had faith only after he came to the knowledge of God's promises and was fully persuaded (Romans 4:20-21). His faith, therefore, was seen in his trust and submission to what he knew to be the will of God. Biblical faith is attained only after an examination of the evidence, coupled with correct reasoning about the evidence. The God of the Bible is a God of truth. Throughout biblical history, He has stressed the need for the acceptance of truth—in contrast with error and falsehood. Those who, in fact, fail to seek the truth are considered by God to be wicked (Jeremiah 5:1). The wise man urged:

“Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Proverbs 23:23). Paul, himself an accomplished logician, exhorted people to love the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). He stated the necessity of giving diligence to the task of dealing with the truth properly (2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus declared that only by knowing the truth is one made free (John 8:32). Luke ascribed nobility to those who were willing to search for and examine the evidence, rather than being content to simply take someone’s word for the truth (Acts 17:11). Peter admonished Christians to be prepared to give a defense (1 Peter 3:15), which stands in stark contrast to those who, when questioned about proof of God, or the credibility and comprehensibility of the Bible, triumphantly reply, “I don’t know—I accept it by faith!” Thus, the notion of “blind faith” is completely foreign to the Bible. People are called upon to have faith only after they receive adequate knowledge. In fact, the Bible demands that the thinker be rational in gathering information, examining the evidence, and reasoning properly about the evidence, thereby drawing only warranted conclusions. That, in fact, is the essentiality of what is known in philosophical circles as the basic law of rationality: one should draw only such conclusions as are justified by the evidence. Paul articulated exactly this concept when he wrote: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). John echoed the same thought when he said to “test the spirits” (1 John 4:1). These passages show that the New Testament Christian is one who stands ready to examine the issues. God expects every individual to put to the test various doctrines and beliefs, and then to reach only such conclusions as are warranted by adequate evidence. Man must not rely upon papal authorities, church traditions, or the claims of science. Rather, all people are obligated to rely upon the properly studied written directives of God (2 Timothy 2:15; John 12:48; 2 Peter 3:16). Biblical religion and modern science clash only because the majority of those within the scientific community have abandoned sound biblical hermeneutics and insist upon drawing unwarranted, erroneous conclusions from the relevant scientific evidence. The Bible insists that evidence is abundantly available for those who will engage in unprejudiced, rational inquiry. The resurrection claim, for example, was substantiated by “many infallible proofs,” including verification through the observation of more than five hundred persons at once (Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8). Many proofs were made available in order to pave the way for faith (John 20:30-31). Peter offered at least four lines of

evidence to those gathered in Jerusalem before he concluded his argument with "therefore ..." (Acts 2:14-36). The acquisition of knowledge through empirical evidence was undeniable, for Peter concluded, "as you yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22, emp. added). John referred to the auditory, visual, and tactile evidences that provided further empirical verification (1 John 1:1-2). Christ offered "works" to corroborate His claims, so that even His enemies did not have to rely merely on His words—if they would but honestly reason to the only logical conclusion (John 10:24-25,38). The proof was of such magnitude that one Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, even admitted: "[W]e know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). Nevertheless, there are always those who, for one reason or another, refuse to accept the law of rationality, and who avoid the warranted conclusions—just like those who side-stepped the proof that Christ presented, and attributed it to Satan (Matthew 12:24). Christ countered such an erroneous conclusion by pointing out their faulty reasoning and the false implications of their argument (Matthew 12:25-27). The proof that the apostles presented was equally conclusive, though unacceptable to many (Acts 4:16). The proof in our day is no less conclusive, nor is it any less compelling. While it is not within the purview of this brief article to prove such (see Warren and Flew, 1977; Warren and Matson, 1978), the following tenets are provable: (1) we can know (not merely think, hope, or wish) that God exists (Romans 1:19-20); (2) we can know that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, and intended to be comprehended in much the same way that any written human communication is to be understood; (3) we can know that one day we will stand before God in judgment and give account for whether we have studied the Bible, learned what to do to be saved, and obeyed those instructions; and (4) we can know that we know (1 John 2:3).²²

CONCLUSION

When comparing Humanism with God and the Bible, there is a big difference between what "they say" and what "God says." Reason demands that absolute truth is a reality. If it were not so terribly tragic, it would be laughable that men and women spend much time, energy and money to propagate the errors of Humanism. After all, what is the point, if there is no eternity? Why would one exhaust himself in the advancement of a hopeless end? Why would one give his blood, sweat and tears to push a doctrine that has no hope but a shut coffin? Why

would one write papers and maintain websites regarding “the fact?” that there are no facts? The philosophy of Humanism is not only absurd, it is silly.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, ed., Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1979), 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

⁶ Garry Brantley, “What has happened to truth?”
<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/234>>

⁷ Wayne Jackson, “False Doctrines About Human Conduct,”
<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/rr/reprints/False-Doctrines-about-Human.pdf>>

⁸ American Humanist Association,
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_the_AHA>

⁹ Progressive Living, <<http://progressiveliving.org/humanism.htm>>

¹⁰ Council for Secular Humanism,
<<http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?page=what§ion=main>>

¹¹ Kris Hartung, *Faith, the rational-empirical approach, and objective truth, parts I and II*, <<http://www.examiner.com/x-13669-Boise-Secular-Humanist-Examiner~y2009m6d23-Faith-the-rationalempirical-approach-and-objective-truth-Part-I>>

¹² Boulder International Humanist Institute, “What are the Components of Humanism?” <<http://www.bihi.info/>>

¹³ American Humanist Association,
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III>

¹⁴ Thomas Warren, “The Truth—And Only The Truth—Shall Make You Free” *Rightly Dividing The Word: Volume II—Special Hermeneutics*, ed. Terry Hightower (Pensacola, FL: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1991), 474.

¹⁵ Dick Sztanyo, “Faith and Reason”
<http://www.apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books_pdf/far.pdf>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Garry Brantley, “What has happened to truth?”

<http://www.apologeticspress.org/pdfs/e-books_pdf/far.pdf>

¹⁸ David Miller, "Christianity is Rational,"

<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1975>>

¹⁹ Wayne Jackson, "Are Logic And Scripture Compatible?"

<<http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1173-are-logic-and-scripture-compatible>>

²⁰ Bert Thompson, "The Christian's Response To Humanism,"

<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/rr/reprints/Christians-Response-to-Humanism.pdf>>

²¹ Miller, "Christianity is Rational,"

<<http://www.apologeticspress.org/rr/reprints/Christians-Response-to-Humanism.pdf>>

²² Miller, "Blind Faith," <<http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/1963>>

THEY SAY, “SEX EDUCATION IS A MUST IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS”

Brock Hartwigsen



Brock Hartwigsen was born in Jersey City, New Jersey and is married to the former Kathryn Foshee. They are parents to three children. Hartwigsen attended the School of Practical Evangelism, and has preached for over forty years. He has worked with congregations in Oklahoma, New York, North Carolina, Germany, and for the last three years, with the church in Stanton, Kentucky. Hartwigsen has written and published fourteen books and has had numerous articles published in various brotherhood publications.

INTRODUCTION¹

Three things we will cover in this lesson are: 1) Who are *they* that say, “Sex education is a must in public schools?” 2) Why do they say that “Sex education is a must in public schools?” and 3) What does *God* say regarding this matter? To accomplish our goals we will divide the lesson into these three parts: 1) The history of sex education in public schools, 2) The current situation of sex education in public schools, and 3) What God says Christians should do about sex education.

THE HISTORY OF SEX EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In this section we shall answer the questions: “Who said we needed sex education in public schools?” and “Why did they say we needed sex education in public schools?” To do that we will begin with a brief look at the history of public education in America.

Let us start in Olcott, New York. Olcott is a very pretty, sleepy little town on the banks of Lake Ontario. In a small downtown park they have a war memorial. It is a statue of a soldier. On the base of the statue are the names of all the men from that community who died in the Civil War. They also have engraved on that statue this quote: “Whatever we wish to see introduced into the life of a nation must first be introduced into our schools.” This quote is from Friedrich Wilhelm Christian Karl Ferdinand von Humboldt (1767-1835). He was the founder of Humboldt University in Berlin. He is widely recognized as

having been the architect of the Prussian education system, which was used as a model for the public education system in America.

Another famous (or infamous) German who understood that he who controls the schools controls the future was Adolf Hitler (1889-1945). Hitler is reported to have said: "Let me control the textbooks, and I will control the state."² During a speech he delivered on November 6, 1939, Hitler stated:

When an opponent declares, "I will not come over to your side," calmly say, "Your child belongs to us already. What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community."³

Brother Brad Harrub, in an article entitled *Homosexuals–Nazis–Schools*, wrote about a conversation he had a number of years ago with "a homosexual activist." He wrote how the activist:

... revealed a wicked and terrifying undercurrent below the surface of our society. He commented that many homosexuals are no longer battling for same-sex marriage in the courtrooms or at the polls, because they know it will be a "non-issue" in ten years. When I asked what he meant, he informed me that rather than fighting to have laws changed, activists have changed tactics, and are now focusing the battle in the public school classroom. He noted that if they could teach tolerance and acceptance in the schoolroom, then it would be a piece of cake to have the laws overturned in a decade or so, once those students were of voting age.⁴

John Dewey (1859-1952) understood that he who controls education controls the future. "He had a profound impact on progressive education and was regarded as the foremost educator of his day. He lectured all over the world and prepared educational surveys for Turkey, Mexico, and the Soviet Union."⁵ Dewey has been called the "Father Of Modern Education."

Dewey was a signer of *The Humanist Manifesto I*. He has even been given credit for writing most of it. About Humanism and Dewey's urge of it, David Barton notes:

Humanism would have men be their own gods. Humanism would make everything relative to what the individual perceives as improvement or detriment. Humanism denies the Salvation of God and replaces it with salvation by men.

John Dewey promoted humanism as a national way of life. Humanists in their zeal believe they are doing your children a favor to make them more happy by seeking to erode any faith in God and replacing it with a hope in their own efforts.⁶

Dewey also wrote *Faith in Education* and *Democracy and Education*. In them he told how he planned to accomplish the goals laid out in *The Humanist Manifesto I* through America's public school system. He developed ideas of evolutionary democracy, evolutionary education and evolutionary law. His theories of education and democracy were based on Darwin's Theory of Evolution.

The education theories of Dewey would not have been so acceptable to people had it not been for the previous acceptance of Darwin's Theory of Evolution. That theory was widely received around the world. Evolution praises change and declares the highest good is a positive change. Darwin's theory helped strengthen the ideas of relativism and positivism which had been around for ages but were reinforced by John Dewey.⁷

Dewey believed and taught that the only way America could be changed was through the educational system. If the American educational system turned out Humanists, then America could be changed. He was right, and we can see in America today the fruits of this approach. To achieve that end he mustered many forces and changed America's educational program from small, locally run schools to large state and eventually federally financed, run and controlled schools.

His advocacy of the use of the American public school system to bring about the social change which he wanted has been very successful. The modern American educational system was not set up for the education of America's children, but for their indoctrination. Many prominent leaders and organizations still have this agenda. That is why, back in the 1980s, the National Parent Teacher Association declared home schooling the greatest threat facing the American educational system.

Why should that be since every study shows that on the average home schooled children do better academically and socially than their peers in public schools? The answer is two-fold. One, it is considered a threat, not to the quality of a child's education, but because home-schooling removes children out of the mind control and social change agenda of the leadership of such organizations as the National Education Association, the National Association of PTAs, Planned

Parenthood and other such minded agencies. Secondly, homeschooling hinders the Humanists' agenda of discrediting and doing away with Christian morals and the Christian religion.

Let us briefly note the history of sex education in the public schools. Here, I will freely borrow information from Mr. Charles Donovan's talk, entitled "*The History of Sex Education in the U.S.*"⁸

There is no history of organized sex education in America prior to the 1920s. Yet, the population prospered and grew and children learned about sex without the help of the public schools. The sexual problems that destroy families and lives—that sex educators feel compelled to give instruction about in our public schools today—were practically nonexistent back then or, at least percentage-wise, a lot smaller. Sex education exists today because of an agenda, not a *bona fide* need.

The Library of Congress has a dozen or so books printed before 1910 that dealt with sex education. None of them dealt with sex education in public schools. They all deal with sex education given in the privacy of the home, and given by a child's parents.

One was written by R.C. Bowl. It is like all the others books. It is nothing like our modern-day sex education text books. It is a book about the dangers of bad companions. The purpose of the book was to encourage young people to keep on the straight and narrow. Bowl did not approach the subject simply as a biological topic or from an amoral position.

Margaret Sanger (1879-1966) wrote *What Every Boy And Girl Should Know*. It was published in 1915. In many ways it was not a major departure from the approach of other texts in that day and age. However, there were a few significant changes. It was very explicit when it came to human biology. Sanger also included a postscript which introduced her ideas about negative *eugenics*. The postscript is entitled, "Breeding Out The Unfit." In this section, she explained that minorities and the poor should not be allowed to reproduce and thus be bred out of existence. The book also contained a section about "how moral values were changing." In this section, Sanger predicted that "the next generation of young people, leading up to the Roaring 20s, [will] direct their sexual behavior not out of fear and morality ... they are going to be replaced by logic and reason; scientific guides would determine what the moral standards of that generation would be."⁹

Sanger is probably the one person who had the most influence in changing America's approach to sex education. She was the founder of

Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is the largest promoter of abortion in the United States, and in the world it is a major player in the field of sex education. In 1931, H.G. Wells, writing about Sanger, stated: “The movement she started will grow to be, a hundred years from now, the most influential of all time. When the history of our civilization is written, it will be a biological history, and Margaret Sanger will be its heroine.”¹⁰ In 1922, Sanger, in her book, *The Pivot of Civilization* wrote: “Sex can be rendered effective and valuable only as it meets and satisfies the interests and demands of the pupil himself.”¹¹ Simply put, she was advocating today’s selfish and self-centered amoral approach to sex.

Planned Parenthood’s role in the development and implementation of sex education is very important. Sanger’s organization, Planned Parenthood, developed its programs in the 1920s. It began to provide what they erroneously called “clinical services.” At this early stage, Planned Parenthood was not yet involved with adolescents, much less educating them about sex. It would have been very unpopular in that day and age in American society to even begin to suggest the idea of providing contraceptives to teenagers or that anyone other than a child’s parents should play any role in the sexual education of minors.

But, Planned Parenthood knew that things were changing in Europe. This was especially true in Sweden where the first national sex education program was developed. In 1933, The National League for Sex Education was founded in Sweden with Eliesse Addison Jensen as president. In 1950, Jensen became president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. Sweden moved quickly to establish National Mandatory Sex Education. In 1941, The Swedish League held its first Summer Institute for sex educators and invited social workers, teachers, *et cetera* to attend.

In 1946, Planned Parenthood sent a delegation to Sweden to attend a conference sponsored by the Swedish League. At that conference, the Swedish League adopted a resolution favoring the imposition of mandatory sex education for Sweden. The Planned Parenthood delegation whole heartily endorsed such a resolution. Planned Parenthood modified the Swedish resolution and came out with their own, their first formal statement on sex education. It proclaimed “the right of every young person to receive sex education.”¹² They did not go as far as the Swedish League did and call for a government mandated sex education program. Planned Parenthood leadership understood that the

American public, and thus its politicians, would not be in favor of mandated sex education for children.

The Kinsey Report was the proverbial camel that poked its nose under the side of the tent and enabled sex education to get its start in America. The Kinsey Report is actually two books on human sexual behavior, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953). These were compiled and written by Dr. Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy and others. Kinsey was a zoologist at Indiana University and the founder of the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction.

Their published research astounded the general public and it was immediately controversial and sensational. The findings caused shock and outrage because they challenged conventional beliefs about sexuality and because they discussed subjects that had previously been taboo. Most of the Kinsey Report is rejected today because a major part of their research was done with prisoners, which skewed the findings. Critics have pointed out that some of the data in the reports could not have been obtained without observation or participation in child sexual abuse, or through collaborations with child molesters.¹³ The Kinsey Institute denies this charge, though it acknowledges that Kinsey interviewed men who had sexual experiences with children,¹⁴ and some former and current directors of the Institute described those men as "pedophiles."¹⁵ However, at the time of the release of the Kinsey Report, these facts were not known.

In 1953, Dr. Leena Levine, president of Planned Parenthood, wrote that there are but two basic alternatives that society is faced with "when it is dealing with the sexuality of the unwed."¹⁶ One: To explain to young people that sexual happiness and sexual harmony are key to marriage in the home, and, therefore, all efforts should be spent by organizations and by society to encourage young people to save themselves sexually for marriage. Two: An alternate solution would be for educators and parents to help young people obtain sexual satisfaction before marriage. She explained that sanctioning sex before marriage would prevent fear and guilt. It would relieve those who have them of their fears and guilty feelings. Also, she went on to say, we must do more than that, we also had to provide contraceptives. Though she did not mention abortion, it was the acceptance of the use of contraceptives that led the way to the acceptance of abortion.

Sex education in the 1950s was known as “the birds and the bees.” Instead of pictures of the human form, diagrams of the sexual organs of plants and fertilization involved pollen rather than bodily fluids. The birth control pill did not come into existence until the late 1950s, and the female diaphragm was cumbersome and hard to come by for non-married girls. Teenage pregnancies were greeted with disapproval and often resulted in “shotgun marriages.” Sex education in the 1950s was aimed mostly at girls with the goal of promoting domestic bliss.

But things were changing in the American society which resulted in changes in sex education. The Broadway musical and movie *Grease*, which was set in the 1950s reflected a lot of these changes. Mary Bowers, in an article entitled *Grease and Sex Ed in the 1950s*, in Broadway Magazine explained:

Sex in the 1950s has long been overshadowed by its seemingly more daring younger sister, the swinging sixties. But there was much going on behind closed (car) doors, as the Rydell High’s favorite drive-in can testify in the Broadway ... musical *Grease*.

Sex education took on a new tone in the *Grease* era. The threat of mortality posed by the Second World War created a hotbed for semi-condoned promiscuity. A moral and medical panic ensued. Suddenly, women were gaining confidence outside the home doing men’s jobs; husbands were away from the household and people began to seize more than just the day. A spate of unplanned pregnancies was accompanied by a sharp increase in the number of cases of sexually transmitted diseases, including gonorrhea and syphilis. The hormones pumping through young people’s veins were no longer only to be controlled, they were to be educated.¹⁷

Dr. Mary Calderone (1904-1988) was Director of the National Medical Committee of Planned Parenthood.

Dr. Calderone ... pleaded for years with the American Medical Association (AMA) to establish a Task Force Report and Resolution dealing with the responsibility of physicians to provide sex information and to be a source of population control. She was rebuffed time and time again. Finally in 1962 she persuaded the Board of Trustees of the AMA to establish an eight-member committee of which she was a member and she got at least one other easily-identified Planned Parenthood physician involved with it. They issued a Task Force Report which said that the physician’s role in handing out information

about sexual matters and in population control should be primary.¹⁸

In 1964, Calderone left Planned Parenthood and became Executive Director of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), which she helped to set up.

In 1966, the National Education Association (NEA) passed its first resolution endorsing sex education. Also in 1966, Wilbur Cohen (1913-1987), Under Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW): "Wrote a report entitled *Family Planning; One Aspect: A Freedom to Choose*. It was about sex education ... Cohen said that the need for sex education, as an integral part of the school curriculum, must begin at the earliest grades."¹⁹

Before Cohen's paper, the federal government had not been involved in sex education and it tended to allow local communities to set their own agenda when it came to sex education. As a result of Cohen paper:

... the HEW supplied SIECUS with federal funds to give a conference. SIECUS also received federal funds to develop the first Teacher Training Manual. [Since then] ...whenever these organizations ... wanted to extend their influence they ... looked to the federal treasury to help them do it. The funding granted for the Teacher Training Manual put SIECUS on the map as a federally-approved national organization. SIECUS was more aggressive than PP [Planned Parenthood] in the sex education field.²⁰

Now the change agents had introduced and had control of the sexual education of America's youth, and we have been on a slippery slope to hell ever since. Dewey's desire for a government controlled school system that would turn out good little Humanists was achieved when it came to sexual morals.

As Hitler said about those who were in opposition to him: "When an opponent declares, 'I will not come over to your side,' calmly say, 'Your child belongs to us already. What are you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community.'"

CURRENT SITUATION OF SEX EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The powers that dictate the curriculum for sex education in public schools walk the corridors of the capital in Washington and in the state

capitals. These people are the elected government officials and entrenched bureaucrats. They mandate through law what must be taught and what cannot be taught. This was demonstrated when President Obama's first federal budget eliminated all funding for "Abstinence-Only" education.

The powers that dictate the curriculum for sex education in public schools also walk the halls of academia. These people are the deans, department heads and tenured professors of our universities. They brainwash each new generation of teachers. You also have the local school boards who rubberstamp all of the government mandates for public schools because they are addicted to the almighty federal dollar.

Who are these government, academia and school board people? They are the baby boomer generation. The baby boomers were the first generation of Americans who went through our modern public sex education classes. They are the generation that rebelled against all authority. They are the generation who violently opposed the war in Viet Nam, spat upon our returning soldiers, burnt their draft cards, and called for free sex and drugs, *et cetera*. This anti-authority generation is now the authority and the only authority they can now oppose is God's authority. One way they are successfully doing this is through perverted sex education classes that undermine any Biblical instruction the children of America might be receiving.

Within the baby boomer generation there are two prominent groups that control sex education. One group is the Sodomites. These are the sexual perverts who, as God says, "dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Rom. 1:24). They, because of their "vile affections," have "change[d] the natural use into that which is against nature" (Rom. 1:26). They are not content with damning themselves, but are determined to corrupt and drag as many others as they can with them down into hell. It is because of them that our children are taught that not only is sodomy not sinful, but that all children should experiment with all forms of sexual perversion until they find the one that pleases them the most.

The other group is the Pro-death lobby. This group likes to be called the "Pro-choice" lobby, but they deny the baby's right to choose and encourage a woman to force her choice on the poor defenseless infant in her womb. It is because of them that children are taught that abortion is simply another means of birth control. This group, like the sodomites, view sex as nothing more than a recreation to be enjoyed.

If a child is conceived, it is no big deal. Just kill it and go on enjoying your life.

The sex education community is controlled by either outright atheists or practical atheists. In Psalms 10, describing the troublemakers in his day, David paints an excellent picture of the movers and shakers in our sex education community. He identifies atheists in verse 4, saying: "God is not in all his thoughts." The American Standard Version (1901) reads: "All his thoughts are, There is no God." He identifies practical atheists in verses 11 and 13, saying: "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it ... the wicked condemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it."

What David wrote about those people is an excellent description of the leaders in the sex education community. They are wicked in their pride (v. 3). They boast of their hearts desires (v. 4). Their ways are always grievous (v. 5). Their mouths are always full of cursing, deceit and fraud (v. 7). They murder the innocent (v. 8). They lay in secret like a lion so that they can catch the innocent (vv. 9-10). Their only interest or concern in God's standards is encouraging and teaching the youth of America that God can and should be ignored.

What can we do about it? Regrettably, we cannot do much when it comes to the leaders in the sex education community. Jesus' description of some of the Israelites in His day is an excellent description of the leaders in the sex education community today. He said:

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Mt. 13:15).

Jesus' scathing denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 did not change them. They were deaf to what Jesus said and He knew it. His motivation was to hopefully teach and warn the others who were standing there and hearing Him.

We need to follow Jesus' example and bluntly, *with no holds barred*, speak out against the sex education community. We need to stand up and speak out against these debauchers and the condoning of sin that is taught in modern sex education classes in every public venue possible. We need to stand up and speak out at school board meetings,

at PTA meetings, at political rallies, in town hall meetings, in the editorial pages of our local papers, and any other venue we can find.

We also need to understand the costs of speaking out! When Steven's audience in Acts 8 could not refute the logic of his arguments, they put their fingers in their ears, shouted out loud so that they could not hear him any more. Then, they stoned him to death. Speaking out publicly and loudly the truth about the condition of our modern sex education system will similarly bring hostile reprisals. They may not physically put their fingers in their ears, but they will do what they can so as to not to hear you anymore. They will try to shout you down. They may not physically stone you, but they will throw verbal stones and insults in an attempt to stop you and destroy your reputation.

When you speak out and are attacked in return, you need to remember Jesus' words:

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Mt. 5:11-12).

Christians need to stand up and speak out. After all, if we do not, who will? Surely, what Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16 applies to us and to the efforts we should be making in regard to the darkness of modern public sex education!

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

WHAT GOD SAYS CHRISTIANS SHOULD DO ABOUT SEX EDUCATION

Sex education in public schools is not mentioned specifically in the Bible. However, we want to look at just two passages that encompass more than sex education, but, for our purposes here, we want to limit them just to that.

The first is Proverbs 22:6. It stresses: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The New English Bible reads: "Start a boy on the right road, and even in old age he will not leave it ." The Anchor translation instructs: "Give a lad the

training he needs for life, Even when he is old it will stay with him." And, the Berkeley translation says: "Educate a child according to his life requirements; even when he is old, he will not veer from it."

Many argue that Proverbs 22:6 is a generalization, not a concrete truth. They argue that the proverbs are rules, not laws and that there is an exception to every rule. I personally do not agree with that, but even if it is true, surely all Christian parents want their children to put Christ on in baptism and to walk faithfully in the straight and narrow all their lives. Surely all Christian parents want their children to know, to understand and to obey God's teaching about proper and improper sexual behavior. Just because there might be exceptions to Proverbs 22:6, does that mean Christian parents should just throw up their hands and not even try to train their children so that when they grow old they will not depart from God standards?

The reason Proverbs 22:6 seems to fail is not because we cannot trust God's promise, but because most American parents do not *train*. They *raise* and that is why they fail. Webster defines the word "raise" as, "to bring up a child, to breed and bring up to maturity an animal."²¹ The word "train" is defined by Webster as, "to direct the growth of, to form by instruction."²² *Train* does not equal *raise*.

Sadly, a lot of parents, even many in the Lord's church, do not even raise their children. They simply provide them with food, shelter and clothing. When it comes to the raising and training, they turn that over to others. They send their infants to daycare when they are but a few months old and some when they are only weeks old. Then, it is on to preschool when they are too old for daycare, but not old enough for public schools. And finally, their children are in the public schools until they are old enough to be own their own.

It is not that the training fails! It is that most Christian parents fail to train. They turn the training over to others who will not, "Train up a child in the way he should go," God's way. These others train up a child in the way the government and society wants, i.e., to reject God's moral standards regarding sexual activity.

It is not that the training fails! It is that most Christian parents live inconsistent lives, lives which train their children to reject God's moral values when it comes to sexual activity. The inconstant lives of parents cause problems with what little training they might give their children. They teach their children that certain sexual activities are wrong and sinful. Yet, they take vicarious pleasure and enjoyment in sinful sexual

activities as if they are acceptable. Parents watch television shows and movies where sexual immorality is the norm and, thinking nothing of it, take pleasure from it. They have family members and friends who engage in all sorts of sexual immorality and condone it by acting as if nothing is wrong. They maintain spiritual fellowship with adulterers, i.e. unscripturally divorced and remarried Christians, ignoring the plain teaching in Scripture that such is sinful. Their actions and attitudes do more training than their mouths. It is not that their training failed, it is that the training they give by their inconsistent lives works!

“Train” is translated from the Hebrew word *chanak*, which means “to press in, to dedicate.” It is used five times in Scripture, but only once is it translated “train up.” The most common translation is “dedicated.” 1 Kings 8:63 and 2 Chronicles 7:5 mention the dedication, *chanak*, of the temple. Webster defines “dedicate” as “to set apart to a definite use, to be committed to.”²³

Christian parents should dedicate their children to God—not to be the most popular student in school, or the best athlete, or the smartest student, or the prettiest, or a doctor, lawyer or candlestick maker. Christian parents should dedicate their children to being faithful servants of the Lord. They should not just make sure their children are physically clean; it is more important that they are spiritually clean. Parents should not just make sure that their children do well in public school; they should make sure that their children faithfully attend and do well in Bible class. Parents should not just make sure that their children get their school work done; they should make sure that their children get their Bible school work done. Parents should not just make sure that their children’s English is grammatically correct; they should make sure that their children’s speech is clean and wholesome. Parents should not just make sure that they have “safe sex” as taught in public school sex education classes; they should make sure that their children abstain from sex until marriage—which is the only “safe sex,” Scripturally speaking. Christian parents should uphold the Bible priorities that will enable their children to grow up as dedicated Christians.

God gave instructions to the Israelite parents as to how they were to go about the training of their children. For example, in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 they were told:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 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.

Let us compare the ancient Jewish community to 21st Century America. Children back then did not receive counterproductive training as they do today. In those days, most Israelites lived in small cloistered communities. Their children were not constantly being taught counterproductive ideas and standards. They had no televisions, radios, movies and public schools teaching different standards as we do today. Their community standards were God's standards. Their children played and associated with children who were raised by the same standards as they were. None of this is true today and that makes training even more difficult. Yet, Israelite parents back then were commanded to teach God's standards "*diligently* unto thy children" (Deut. 6:7, emphasis added). In that same verse they were told: "[T]alk 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" (emphasis added). If that much time, attention and effort was needed back then, what about today?

Today, parents and children have a major *distraction* problem. You cannot effectively train a dog if there is a pack of wild dogs constantly running around and distracting it. Television, radio, movies, public school, and peers are constant distractions that hinder training. These distractions can be overcome, but it will take even more time, effort and work.

Today, parents and children have a major *time* problem. In Old Testament times, most men had jobs that kept them home or allowed them to include their children in their lives, but that is not so today. Mothers back then stayed at home with their children, and that is not so today either. The average modern American father spends less than ten minutes a day with his children. Modern American children spend over seven hours a day in school and traveling to and from school. The modern child spends four to eight hours a day watching television, sitting in front of a computer or playing video games.

What should Christian parents do? They need to *diligently train* their children. They need to heed what God told the Israelite parents. They need to train their children when they *sit* with them each and every day in their homes (meal times, daily devotionals, *et cetera*). Instead of sitting down and watching TV with their children, they need

to talk to them, teach them, train them. They need to take time everyday to go for *walks* with their children and teach and train while they do. They need to teach and train their children whenever they go somewhere in the car together. They need to teach and train their children when they *lay* them down to sleep at night and for naps. They need to teach and train their children every morning when they wake them up.

To do this amount of teaching and training Christian parents must “turn off” the televisions, radios, computers, electronic games, *et cetera*, in their homes. Fathers and mothers must make their children’s spiritual well being their paramount purpose in life! To do this, every father must realize that his job outside the home is not who or what he is, and that in reality it is the result of a curse from God (Gen. 3:17-19). Fathers must understand that they work for their families, and that when the demands of their jobs conflict with the well being of the family, their families come first. Fathers can change jobs, but they cannot change families. If it is at all possible for them to do so, fathers need to quit their second jobs, quit accepting overtime, quit spending all of their time advancing in their careers and spend more time, a lot of time, each and every day with their children.

Mothers must realize and accept the fact that managing the home and motherhood is their God-assigned career (Tit. 2:5; Gen. 3:16), not some job outside the home. If mothers have jobs outside the home, and if their jobs conflict with the well being of the families, their families must come first.

Before anybody pleads poverty and says that they cannot make ends meet without the wife’s check and/or the husband’s overtime income, understand this, it is not true! Our parents and grandparents survived without a lot of the things that society has taught us is necessary today. If Christian parents will cut back and live like their parents or grandparents lived, they will not starve or die. And maybe, just maybe, the additional time they have to train their children will prove more valuable in the long run than all the things they sacrificed for their children’s training!

Christian parents should pull their children out of most, if not all, of the sports and recreational activities that keep their children too busy to be trained. Until the public schools are under local control and are no longer teaching things that conflict with God’s standards, Christian parents should get their children out of government schools, which are training them to not believe in God, to laugh at the Bible and to engage

in sinful sexual practices. How can Christian parents do this? They can band together with other like-minded parents and form private schools, which accept no government money and therefore can set their own curriculum and agendas. Or, they can home school their children. Studies show that home schooled children do better, academically and socially than their peers in public school.

CONCLUSION

Which is better? Is it better to have a son who is a day laborer or a daughter married to a day laborer living in a shack with a good marriage and a mansion waiting for him or her in heaven, or a son or daughter who is a doctor or lawyer, *et cetera*, living in a plush mansion with a failed marriage and a fiery pit in hell with his or her name on it?

Let us end this chapter by paraphrasing two quotes. The first is Hitler's: "When Christian parents declare to modern society, 'I will never accept your immoral sexual standards,' modern society calmly says, 'Your child belongs to us already. What are you? You will pass on. Your children, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing else but this new community.'" The second is a paraphrase of Jesus' admonition: "Parents seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness for your children, then worry about those other things" (Mt. 6:33).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Brad Harrub, "Homosexuals - Nazis - Schools," bulletin article.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*, s.v. "John Dewey."

⁶ David Barton, <Wallbuilders.com>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Charles Donovan, Senior Policy Advisor for the Family Research Council (FRC); Editor of Washington Watch, FRC's Monthly Newsletter; co-author of *Blessed Are The Barren: The Social Policy of Planned Parenthood*; has been Deputy Director of Presidential Correspondents at the White House; has appeared in ABC's Nightline, CNN, CBN, USA Radio Network, etc. Has written in *USA Today*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Times*, etc.

This section is based upon the “notes, transcribed in 1996 by Mr. Iván Ortiz, an Human Life International (HLI) collaborator, of a taped lecture given by Mr. Charles Donovan, Executive Director of the Family Research Council, a major public policy education and research group in Washington, D.C. Mr. Donovan gave his talk at HLI’s National Sex Education Conference in St. Louis, MO, 21-23 October 1994. The notes are not a verbatim transcript of Mr. Donovan’s lecture, but they do express the essence of his thoughts on the matter. Furthermore, the notes have been edited and their accuracy confirmed by Adolfo J. Castañeda, Director of Educational Programs for Vida Humana Internacional, HLI’s Hispanic Division. Mr. Castañeda consulted for this purpose a book on this subject that Mr. Donovan co-authored with Mr. Robert Marshall, Director of Congressional Affairs for the American Life Lobby, Inc., in Stafford, Virginia. The book is titled *Blessed Are the Barren: The Social Policy of Planned Parenthood*, and was published by Ignatius Press, in San Francisco, CA, in 1991. <<http://www.vidahumana.org/english/family/sexed-history.html>>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Judith Reisman, “A Personal Odyssey To The Truth”, <<http://www.special-guests.com/reisman4.html>> (7 January 2008); Anna C. Salter, Ph.D., (1988). *Treating Child Sex Offenders and Victims: A Practical Guide*. Sage Publications Inc. 22–24. ISBN 0803931824.

¹⁴ <<http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/about/controversy%202.htm>> Kinsey Institute statement denies child abuse in study.

¹⁵ Andrew Welsh-Huggins, “Conservative group attacks Kinsey data on children,” *Herald-Times* on the web, 6 September 1995. <heraldtimesonline.com/stories/1995/09/06/archive.19950906.b0c15bb.sto> “‘There couldn’t have been any research if we turned them in,’ he said. ‘Of course we knew when we interviewed pedophiles that they would continue the activity, but we didn’t do anything about that.’ Providing such absolute assurances of anonymity was the only way to guarantee honest answers on such taboo subjects, said Gebhard.”

¹⁶ Donovan.

¹⁷ Mary Bowers, “Grease and Sex Ed in the 1950s”, *Broadway Magazine*, <www.broadway.tv/broadway-features-reviews/grease-and-sex-ed>

¹⁸ Donovan.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 11th ed., s.v. "raise."

²² *Ibid.*, s.v. "train."

²³ *Ibid.*, s.v. "dedicate."

THEY SAY, “PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE BIBLE”

Steve Lloyd



Steve Lloyd is a native of San Diego, California. He is married to the former Valerie Ann Roach. They have one son, and one daughter, and six grandchildren. Lloyd attended Sacramento Community College, Cypress College, graduated from the Southern California School of Evangelism, earned a D.Min. degree from Theological University, and is working on his M.A. degree at Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver, Colorado. He preaches for the Chino, California congregation..

INTRODUCTION¹

Bernard Cornwell wrote a highly imaginative and engaging trilogy on the very historically illusive King Arthur. Something that stands out in his story is the stark contrast he draws between Christians and the ancient vanishing religion of the Druids.² Druids are anti-Christian pagans. The conflict between the two makes for interesting reading.

I see a parallel between the religious conflict portrayed in Cornwell’s trilogy and our day. The divide could not be wider between what the Bible sets forth as truth and what Secular Humanists set forth in their formal documents as truth. The conflicts, though fought on a different plane than in the novels, are a very present reality with important consequences.

This chapter addresses a statement found in the *Humanist Manifesto II* that identifies one of the many fronts on which we find ourselves at odds with Humanism, i.e., that people are more important than the Bible. Here is how I will approach this subject. First, I will present specific statements that pit the needs of people and the teachings of the Bible against one another. Second, I will consider whether the Bible is really opposed to what is good for man, and how we determine what is good. Third, I will deal with the irony of this conflict.

HUMANIST MANIFESTOS I AND II

Much of what we are examining this week are affirmations made in the *Humanist Manifestos I and II*.³ Paul Kurtz compiled a booklet

containing both manifestos. He explains: "Humanism is a philosophical, religious, and moral point of view as old as human civilization itself."⁴ The first manifesto was written in 1933 and represents the thinking of "thirty-four liberal humanists in the United States."⁵

It was concerned with expressing a general religious and philosophical outlook that rejected orthodox and dogmatic positions and provided meaning and direction, unity and purpose to human life. It was committed to reason, science, and democracy.⁶

Kurtz admits that the first manifesto "has since been superseded by events; though significant, it did not go far enough. It did not and could not address itself to future problems and needs."⁷

In the Preface to the *Humanist Manifesto II*, Paul Kurtz states:

Events since then make the earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of Peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook.⁸

So, a second manifesto was written.

There is a significant amount of continuity between *Humanist Manifesto I* and *Humanist Manifesto II*. In particular, there are statements in both about the outmoded faith of Christians.

... humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love 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.⁹

Humanist Manifestos I And II On The Bible

The Preface to *Humanist Manifesto I* spells out the co-signers outlook:

It was concerned with expressing a general religious and philosophical outlook that rejected orthodox and dogmatic

positions and provided meaning and direction, unity and purpose to human life. It was committed to reason, science, and democracy.¹⁰

To say the co-signers are expressing a philosophical outlook means they are expressing an outlook independent of dogma. It is what they can surmise on their own power. Their philosophical outlook rejects “orthodox and dogmatic positions.” “Orthodox” means strait words or opinions. Where the teachings of the Bible are concerned, we could even compare the term with the word “sound,” which means healthy.¹¹

“Dogma,” unlike the pejorative use of the term in casual speech today, refers to a teaching that is considered true because God said it, which is very different from declarations of truth based solely on what we can derive on our own steam.¹² Generally speaking, truth known by means of dogma or revelation from God and truth known by means of reason, science and democracy are by no means given the same level of respect today. In fact, the former is many times rejected all together as mere opinion.

The first principle stated in *Humanist Manifesto II* reads: “We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.”¹³ Shortly thereafter, their reason for rejecting revelation is stated:

We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.¹⁴

Revelation from God to man is caricatured as not taking human needs into consideration and doing a disservice to the human species. We either rely on revelation from God or on our own human needs, as if divine revelation and human needs represent two very different concerns.

Do you see the unnecessary either/or proposition they have created for themselves? It is a false either/or proposition,¹⁵ and one I hope to set straight later.

Let us look at another statement found in the second Manifesto on the same point. This is the eighth proposition found under a section titled, “Democratic Society.” The second half of the proposition summarizes the point:

All persons should have a voice in developing the values and goals that determine their lives. Institutions should be responsive to expressed desires and needs. The conditions of work, education, devotion, and play should be humanized. Alienating forces should be modified or eradicated or bureaucratic structures should be held to a minimum. *People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations* (emphasis added).¹⁶

Perhaps, much of what is expressed here would sound very good to most Americans, with our emphasis on freedom and liberty—two things that are good in life. However, when coupled with the earlier statements, this would include God's Word because it includes rules, proscriptions, and regulations in part.

Let me summarize the propositions from the *Humanist Manifestos I and II* that relate to our topic:

- Orthodox and dogmatic positions provide no meaning or direction to life.
- Theism is an outmoded faith.
- Heaven is a false hope.
- Theism is unreasonable: "Reasonable minds look to other means for survival."
- If one is committed to dogmatic positions then he or she is irrational. If you are committed to reason, science and democracy you are rational.
- Revelation from God is opposed to human needs and does a disservice to the human species.
- There is insufficient evidence for belief in the supernatural.
- People are more important than decalogues, *et cetera*.

In essence, there is a great divide between the sacred and the secular. An all out war is declared on anything authoritarian or dogmatic. Evidence of this warfare is everywhere from the *Humanist Manifestos I and II* to young adult fantasy novels like Philip Pullman's *The Dark Materials Trilogy*. It is typically considered the default mindset or worldview for many in our society. It is explicitly stated and defended by men now styled "The New Atheists," like Christopher Hitchens in his book, *God is Not Great*, and Sam Harris in his book, *The End of Faith*.

The Enlightenment: An Historical Consideration

I want to make a connection between a philosophical movement in the 18th Century, known as The Enlightenment, and the two *Humanist Manifestos* of the 20th Century. I hope this will help to contextualize what we are considering in this entire series.

This 18th Century movement originated with the work of people like John Locke and David Hume in England, Voltaire and Rousseau in France, Immanuel Kant in Germany—works that influenced Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Paine in the United States.

Wikipedia accurately describes the Age of Enlightenment as “a time in Western philosophy and cultural life centered upon the eighteenth century, in which reason was advocated as the primary source and legitimacy for authority. It was a movement away from dogma and authoritarian religion.”¹⁷ One writer has noted that in some respects it was “a thoroughly Protestant movement, getting rid of authoritarian religion and asking demystifying, rational, historical questions.”¹⁸ It was a movement whose emphasis was on reason. But the pendulum of some in the movement swung to reason alone, or reason separated from divine revelation and history.

Peter Gay writes that Enlightenment thinkers dignified their polemics by characterizing them as “an age-old struggle between reason and unreason, a struggle that had been fought and lost in the ancient world and was now being fought again, this time with good prospects of success.”¹⁹ That the struggle for the proponents of these ideas has good prospects of success is the primary plot line of Philip Pullman’s fantasy trilogy, *The Dark Materials*.

Johann Georg Hamann was a counter-enlightenment philosopher and contemporary with the lights (?) of *The Enlightenment*, who, according to a volume written by John R. Betz, predicted many of the outcomes of a “reason only” approach to knowledge and truth. I wrote to Mr. Betz asking him if I was barking up the wrong tree in suggesting that the *Humanist Manifestos I and II* could be considered fruits of *The Enlightenment*. He kindly wrote back affirming the connection. In fact, he argues that it traces back further to the Humanism of the Renaissance.²⁰

On the disconnect between reason and revelation Mr. Betz adds:

Reason alone, unaided by the light of revelation, has over time proven unable to establish or convincingly demonstrate the

dignity of the human person (hence the bloodbaths of modern secularism; hence the Holocaust; hence the sterilization programs; hence the "pro-choice" movement, etc.). Moreover, as the fate of modern philosophy itself shows, reason apart from revelation cannot even sustain its own dignity. Indeed, without the light of faith even the light of reason, turned in upon itself, grows dim—until it is finally extinguished. At which point reason itself (or what is left of it) becomes a victim of popular opinion, which is the only authority left.²¹

The error in the thinking of many in our society today is in restricting truth only to that which can be ascertained by reason alone. It is not that some truth cannot be derived by reason. You cannot come to a knowledge of the truth without reasoning correctly. The problem is in rejecting the light of Scripture, which leaves reason without any support.

TWO QUESTIONS

Much of what we have been circling around is the question of what is good for man. *Humanist Manifestos I* and *II* would have us believe that the Bible opposes what is good for man—that it needs to be “modified or eradicated.” Is the Bible opposed to what is good for man? And who determines what is good? Let us consider the second question first.

What Is Good?

In Solomon’s search for what is worthwhile in life (cf. Ecc. 2:3), he asks, “For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?” (Ecc. 6:12). Whatever is good for man in the few days of his vain life is connected to knowing the future. It is as if Solomon is saying that unless you know the future, you cannot know what is good. Sometimes the best place to begin is at the end.

The writers of Scripture affirm that man does not know. Ironically, so do the co-signers of the second manifesto. They acknowledge:

Events since then (the writing of the *Humanist Manifesto I* in 1933, SL) make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can

be made in the name of Peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook.²²

Take a look at the second question Solomon asks: “For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?” (v. 12). If you cannot answer that question, then you cannot know what is good for man. Man cannot know all he needs to know on his own steam because he does not know the future, and he cannot know the future without revelation from God.

To make matters worse, we are often corrupted by wrong desires. Twice in Proverbs we read the caution: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Pro. 14:12; 16:25). Jeremiah affirms: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick” and then asks, “who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). Our own experience proves the truth of these two statements. Eve is not alone in having been beguiled by the devil.

None of these passages militate against the idea that man lacks the innate mental faculty to think straight. Otherwise, the admonitions to think straight would be wasted (cf. Isa. 1:18; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:20; 1 Jn. 4:1).

The end of Solomon’s quest is profound: “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14). This is very different from the conclusion that the two manifestos offer. In fact, it would be difficult to find two more opposing views.

Who Knows What Is Good?

A thing is good when it functions according to the purpose for which it was made.²³ A steak knife is good only if it cuts steak. It should not be judged by how well it cuts through the bars of a jail cell. A vaccine is good only if it protects you from the disease for which the vaccine was produced.

Let us apply this same line of reasoning to man. If we can determine the purpose, if there is such a thing, for which man exists, then knowledge of that purpose will go a long way toward helping us to see what is good.

The best the pagan philosopher Aristotle could come up with is that man's ultimate good is to be happy. It is the one thing pursued for its own sake.²⁴

In Scripture, there are several texts that have the ring of being a summarizing statement. For example, as Israel faced life in the Promised Land with pagan neighbors to influence them, Joshua says: "[C]hoose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Or how about Solomon's conclusion: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecc. 12:13). Micah seems to know: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8). Jesus' statement in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount must certainly be in the running: "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Mt. 6:33). And to be added to the mix is Jesus' answer to the question about what constituted the greatest commandment:

And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 22:37-40).

Consider this: all of the above "ultimate" statements serve as means to another end—God is glorified. If we did everything urged upon us in those statements, we would magnify God by our lives.

If man was created by God to glorify Him, then whatever glorifies God is good. The means by which we learn what pleases God is His Word. When we live a life that magnifies God, He blesses us with the capacity to enjoy life. Solomon writes: "[A]part from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment" (Ecc. 2:25), and "that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man" (Ecc. 3:13). Similar statements can be found in Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; 3:12-15.

Contrary to the *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, God's will for man does not make God out to be a cosmic killjoy. To the contrary, the Psalmist writes: "You make known to me the path of life; in your

presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11).

Who knows what is good for man? The Lord knows because He knows the future.

THE GRAND IRONY

The grand irony is that *The Enlightenment*, as it has in part worked its way into the declarations found in the *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, is no enlightenment at all. Enlightenment thinkers who place all their marbles in the bag of reason alone have really pulled the wool over man’s eyes.

I am not suggesting that nothing good came out of *The Enlightenment*, but I am saying that the extent to which some have taken it is disastrous—the extent to which revelation from God is dismissed as a means of knowing anything. Reason “alone” is not the means by which man obtains knowledge.

It is God’s Word that brings enlightenment. When John chronicles the appearance of grace and truth through Jesus Christ, he expresses:

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world (Jn. 1:4-9).

Of Himself, Jesus declared: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (Jn. 8:12).

The Bible And Man

The manifestos we have been considering pit faith and knowledge against one another. More specifically, they characterize the Bible as something that leads men astray. Ironically, it is the *Humanist Manifestos* that lead men astray, in particular where the Bible is concerned.

The teaching of the Bible affects man in at least two ways. It informs and it transforms. Of what does it inform?

- It tells the story of mankind and history from heaven’s vantage point.

- It teaches us how to think about the true and living God.
- It teaches us how to think about ourselves.
- It informs us of our condition and how we got into the mess we are in.
- It tells us how to get out of the mess we are in.
- It reveals the way we should think about reality.

How does it transform?

- By keeping the commands of our Lord, we learn how to flourish in life.
- In some ways, we are being transformed from the outside in. In other ways, we are being transformed from the inside out.
- We discover what we should desire and what we should avoid.
- This transformation is equated with the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:17-24).

Paul characterizes the Word of God as "the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). He also informs us that "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" are hid in Christ (Col. 2:3).

And the Humanists want me to turn my back on all of this? God forbid! They say the Bible is the problem. The regulations found in the Bible are there to protect us from trouble and to lead us to the abundant life.

Consider this account from Mark:

One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? And he said to them, Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him? And he said to them, The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath (Mk. 2:23-28).

David and his men did something unlawful. Yet, it is an incident the Pharisees, no doubt, excused David for doing because he and his men

were hungry.²⁵ Jesus then says: “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” In principle, is this not the same as saying something like: “Food was made for man, not man for food,” or “Light was made for man, not man for light,” *ad infinitum*?

Does the story in Mark sound anything like what the *Humanist Manifestos I* and *II* say in their characterization of the Bible and its “decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations.” Does it appear to you as if God’s will, as revealed in the Bible, is contrary to what is good for man? May it never be!

God’s Word delights the soul of those who love it (Ps. 1). It is a light in a dark place (Ps. 18:28). It makes men wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). It is not burdensome (1 Jn. 5:3). It is anything but outmoded, irrational, or opposed to human needs. To say people are more important than the Bible is to miss the point and purpose of the Bible.

The Bible And Science

Some fear that adherence to the Bible will set us back—that it will hinder “progress” and science. You know, “You cannot turn back the clock.”

C.S. Lewis devoted a significant amount of his apologetic writings to address the mind-set of our day. As to turning back the clock, he writes:

Would you think I was joking if I said that you can put a clock back, and that if the clock is wrong it is often a very sensible thing to do? But I would rather get away from that whole idea of clocks. We all want progress. But progress means getting near to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man. We have all seen this when doing arithmetic. When I have started a sum the wrong way, the sooner I admit this and go back and start again, the faster I shall get on. There is nothing progressive about being pigheaded and refusing to admit a mistake. And I think if you look at the present state of the world, it is pretty plain that humanity has been making some big mistake. We are on the wrong road. And if that is so, we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on.²⁶

Lewis was invited to answer some questions at a "One Man Brains Trust" in 1944. Question Nine was: "Would the application of Christian standards bring to an end or greatly reduce scientific and material progress?" Responding, Lewis said:

It is easiest to think of a simplified example. How would the application of Christianity affect anyone on a desert island? Would he be less likely to build a comfortable hut? The answer is "no." There might come a particular moment, of course, when Christianity would tell him to bother less about the hut, i.e., if he were in danger of coming to think that the hut was the most important thing in the universe. But there is no evidence that Christianity would prevent him from building it.²⁷

The Bible poses no threat or hindrance to man or science.

CONCLUSION

My responsibility in this chapter has been to critique the Humanists' concept: "People are more important than the Bible." A significant amount of space has been devoted to demonstrate that we are not constructing a straw man with which to spar. The Enlightenment of the 18th Century places the two Manifestos of the 20th Century in their historical context. These documents are the fruit of 200 years of a "reason alone" philosophy.

We considered several passages to show how the writers of Scripture characterize the Bible. By reworking Mark 2:27 a bit, without intending to do any harm to the text or distort its meaning, perhaps we can extract this principle: "Man was not made for the Bible, but the Bible for man."

EPILOGUE

There are several battle scenes in Bernard Cornwell's King Arthur trilogy. The Druids are the first to make a move. The author's description of one such pagan priest is representative of them all: "A Saxon wizard, his hair dinged into spikes and his naked body barely hidden by the tattered scraps of wolfskin hanging from a band at his neck, whirled in a dance ..." ²⁸ All the while they are whirling around in their tattered clothes and dung spiked hair, they are hurling curses at the opposing army. Their purpose is to intimidate the enemy prior to a fight.

Goliath did the same thing to the armies of Israel when he taunted: "I defy the ranks of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight

together” (1 Sam. 17:10). Young David saw Goliath’s unmet challenge as a reproach to Israel (1 Sam. 17:26). When he faced the giant with a sling and five stones, David said:

You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give you into our hand (1 Sam. 17:45-47).

Paul writes:

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete (2 Cor. 10:4-6).

The “reason only” opponents of the faith do not have their hair spiked with dung, nor do they spin-dance all-but-naked before the fight. Some of them are respected philosophers, university professors, doctors and nurses, psychiatrists and counselors, and grade-school teachers. They should be taken seriously. Some of them have experienced a change of heart when they heard the other side. We should love them, pray for them, and kindly discuss our differences.

Some have tried to intimidate us by accusing us of being irrational, or naïve, and characterizing our faith as outmoded. The Scriptures are replete with the admonition not to fear or to be dismayed. Live your life with confidence in Him and in His Word and you will not be put to shame.

Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced (Isa. 54:4).

Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame (Rom. 9:33).

And how should we behave toward those who oppose themselves?

[T]he Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

² The Christianity depicted in the story is already historically becoming very Catholic while still retaining a number of distinctly Christian beliefs. Arthur was an early 6th Century figure.

³ *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), 3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹¹ As used in passages like 1 Timothy 1:10, "sound doctrine"; 2 Timothy 1:7, "sound mind"; Titus 1:13, "sound in the faith."

¹² When someone today is accused of being dogmatic, we usually mean they are rigid in their opinions and not open to reason or discussion. This is not how the word has been used in the past.

¹³ *Humanist Manifesto*, 15, 16.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Jack Cottrell refers to these false-either/or propositions as "ubiquitous theological demons." personal email.

¹⁶ *Humanist Manifesto*, 19.

¹⁷ Wikipedia contributors, "Age of Enlightenment," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Age_of_Enlightenment&oldid=296005866> (12 June 2009).

¹⁸ N.T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision*. (London, UK: SPCK, 2009), 20.

¹⁹ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism*. (New York, N.Y.: Knopf, 1966), 32.

²⁰ John R. Betz, 2009. personal email.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *Humanist Manifesto*, 13.

²³ C.S. Lewis makes this very point at the beginning of his book, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. “The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know *what* it is—what it was intended to do and how it is meant to be used. After that has been discovered the temperance reformer may decide that the corkscrew was made for a bad purpose, and the communist may think the same about the cathedral. But such questions come later. The first thing is to understand the object before you: as long as you think the corkscrew was meant for opening tins or the cathedral for entertaining tourists you can say nothing to the purpose about them. The first thing the reader needs to know about *Paradise Lost* is what Milton meant it to be.” (p. 1).

²⁴ Aristotle’s quest for the one thing we desire for its own sake permeates all of Book One in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Of that one thing, he writes, “Will not knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, like archers who have a mark to aim at, be more likely to hit upon what is right? If so, we must try, in outline at least, to determine what it is ...” Hutchins, Robert Maynard., ed. *The Great Books of the Western World*. Vol. 9, *Nicomachean Ethics*, by Aristotle, 339.

²⁵ This should not be confused with the situation ethics of Joseph Fletcher.

²⁶ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*. (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins,2001). 28-29.

²⁷ C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns. 1970).

²⁸ Bernard Cornwell, *The Enemy of God*. (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press,1996), 159.

THEY SAY, “THE RIGHT TO DIVORCE SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED”

Wade Webster



Wade Webster and his wife, the former Jennifer Talley, are the parents of one son and three daughters. He graduated from the Memphis School of Preaching, Jacksonville State University, and worked as an adjunct professor for Jacksonville State University & Faulkner University in Alabama. Webster has been a full-time preacher for nineteen years and worked with the Lord's church in Tennessee, Alabama, and is now preaching for the Southaven Church of Christ in Southaven, Mississippi.

INTRODUCTION¹

Protagoras, an agnostic Greek philosopher who lived between 490 and 420 B.C., once declared: “Man is the measure of all things: of things which are, that they are, and of things which are not, that they are not.”² Although his statement created a stir at the time that he said it, it would not cause a ripple on the calmest lake today. The relativistic and Humanistic world in which we live believes that man is the ultimate measure of what is right and wrong.

It should be noted that our generation is not the only generation to ever get too big for its britches. You may recall that Jeremiah spoke of a generation which acted as if they were God. We read: “O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?” (Jer. 2:31). Jeremiah's people got up one day and decided that they were God. They decided that they did not need to come to Jehovah any more. They thought that they could manage things on their own. I am reminded of the words of poet William Ernest Henley in *Invictus*, where he wrote, “I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.”³ Jeremiah's people had taken the helm and they were headed for the rocks. Men today are doing the same. They are acting like lords. However, the day is coming when they will meet the Lord of lords. On that day, “every knee” will bow to the authority

of Jesus and “every tongue” will confess “that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:10-11).

Like Jeremiah, David spoke of a time when the godly man ceased and the faithful failed “from among the children of men” (Ps. 12:1). He recorded those of his day as declaring: “With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?” (Ps. 12:4; cf. Job 21:14-15). Those of David’s day thought of themselves as lords of their own lips. They would say what they wanted to say. Of course, we know that they would have to answer to God for what they said. Jesus declared: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Mt. 12:36). The argument of those of David’s day, that their lips were their own, reminds us of one of the arguments made by today’s advocates of abortion. Likely, you have heard these individuals argue, “It is my body. It is my choice.” It is the same basic argument that was being made in David’s day. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun (Ecc. 1:9).

The very first lie that the devil told man was about his being like God. Moses records: “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5). The thought of being as god was a strong temptation for mother Eve. In fact, it was at the heart of why she fell (Gen. 3:6). Sadly, the subtle serpent is still tempting men with the same thought today (Jn. 8:44). Like the “man of sin” that Paul warned the saints at Thessalonica about, men continue to exalt themselves above “all that is called God, or that is worshipped” (2 Thess. 2:4).

In the long ago, the psalmist recorded the future of nations that forget God. He wrote: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Ps. 9:17). As you may recall, when God through Moses told Pharaoh, “Let my people go” (Ex. 5:1), Pharaoh responded, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?” (Ex. 5:2). Of course, before it was all done, Pharaoh would know the Lord and why he should have obeyed Him. In like manner, Nebuchadnezzar forgot God. He took full credit for the building of Babylon (Dan. 4:29-30). However, he would learn that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:17). Sadly, our nation may have to be reminded of the same. We hear a great deal about how great our nation is, but little or nothing

about who made her great. In our pride and prosperity, we are denying God (Deut. 8:10-14; Ps. 10:4; Pro. 30:9; Hos. 13:6; 1 Cor. 4:8). America is great because God shed His grace on her. If God removes His grace, we will go the way of all nations. In my opinion, we are well on our way there now.

Someone has observed that a subject well-introduced is half-taught. I think that this observation is generally true. Perhaps, it is even more the case with a subject like Humanism, about which most people know very little. Therefore, we are going to spend a fair amount of time and space defining Humanism and discussing its basic tenets. Then, when we get to the matter of divorce, we will understand how the Humanist thinks and be able to compare what he thinks with what the Word of God says.

Humanists have published two manifestos which state their basic beliefs. Rather than quoting extensively from these documents to define Humanism, I am going to appeal to an English dictionary instead. I believe that the definition that I have chosen accurately sums up Humanism. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines "Humanism" as:

A doctrine, attitude, or way of life centered on human interests or values; esp: a philosophy that asserts the dignity and worth of man and his capacity for self-realization through reason and that rejects supernaturalism.⁴

Let us examine this definition more closely:

- First, please note that Humanism is "a doctrine." Doctrine means "teaching" or "instruction." The word refers to "something that is taught." It is a "system of belief" or "dogma."⁵ The word "dogma" is especially revealing. "Dogma" refers to "a doctrine or body of doctrines concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed by a church."⁶ Hopefully, this long string of definitions has made clear that Humanism is a religion; albeit, a false one. Especially note that Humanism teaches doctrines concerning faith and morals. Humanism teaches faith in man (pride) and freedom in morality (immorality).
- Second, please note that Humanism is "a principle accepted as valid and authoritative." Our world largely accepts the notion that man is the measure or standard by which all things are

judged. In other words, our world as a whole believes that man determines what is right and what is wrong.

- Third, please note that Humanism is “a way of life centered on human interests or values.” It is human interests and values and not divine interests and values that are at the heart of Humanism. How contrary this is to the attitude of our Lord. As you recall, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, “[N]evertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Mt. 26:39; cf. Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; Heb. 10:7-9). Jesus’ attitude was not “my will be done.” Jesus did always those things which pleased the Father (Jn. 8:29; cf. 14:31; 15:10; 17:4). Of course, He taught us to pray and to practice the same (Mt. 6:10; 7:21). Not only is Humanism concerned with human interests, it is based on human values. In other words, man lives his life by what he decides is right, rather than what God has decreed is right. This was the very philosophy that was at work in the days of the Judges. We read, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Jgs. 21:25; cf. 17:6; Deut. 12:8; Pro. 16:2). Solomon, learned the hard way that the way that seems right unto a man leads to death (Pro. 14:12). At the end of his life, he concluded: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecc. 12:13-14).
- Fourth, please note that Humanism is “a philosophy that asserts the dignity and worth of man.” While we as Christians agree that man has worth, we understand that what separates man from the animals is that he was created in the image of God and possesses an immortal soul worth more than the world (Gen. 1:26-27; Mt. 16:26). Furthermore, we understand man’s worth by the price that God was willing to pay for his redemption (Jn. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Obviously, the worth assigned to man by Humanists is not based on any of these things. They see man as a product of evolution (not God), deny future existence (no heaven or hell), and dismiss any notion of sin (therefore, no need for redemption). Truly, the Humanist has his feet firmly planted in mid-air.
- Fifth, please note that Humanism asserts man’s “capacity for self-realization through reason.” The Bible teaches that man

cannot direct his steps (Jer. 10:23). The way that seems right to man, leads to death (Pro. 14:12). Solomon declared, "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Pro. 20:24). It is interesting in the context that Solomon was discussing the fact that a "false balance" is not good. Yet, if man determines what is right or wrong and can find "self-realization" through reason, then why could not a man reason that by cheating other men he could reach his potential (material prosperity). Is this not what Enron and others companies have done? If Humanism is true, then such behavior certainly follows. However, we know that man's way is established by following the instructions of the Lord. The Psalmist declared: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way" (Ps. 37:23).

- Finally, please note that Humanism "rejects supernaturalism." Humanists deny the supernatural. They argue that man is the result of mindless evolution rather than intelligent design. The Humanist realizes that if God exists, and created man, then man has certain responsibilities to Him as creator. However, if we made ourselves, then we can determine right or wrong for ourselves. It should be clear that we did not make ourselves. Some of us cannot even make a good peanut butter sandwich. The Psalmist declared: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Ps. 100:3). Furthermore, the Psalmist understood a connection between being created by God and having to submit to His commandments. We read: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments" (Ps. 119:73; cf. 96:5; Ecc. 12:1, 13).

Obviously, much more could be said to define or describe Humanism. However, this is sufficient to our purposes in this study.

As we turn our attention to the matter of divorce, we want to begin by noticing a statement from *Humanist Manifesto II*. We read:

In the area of sexuality 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. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we

wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered 'evil.' Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire. We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged. Moral education for children and adults is an important way of developing awareness and sexual maturity.⁷

Please note how Humanism connects intolerant attitudes with conservative religions and cultures. Conservatives and religious people, or the "radical right" as they are referred to by liberals in our country, are seen as cultivating or breeding hate. You see, the world would be so much better if those who believe in absolutes would just go away. It is interesting how often the Puritans get brought up in our culture. Amazingly, they have not been around since the seventeenth century. As an English major in college, I remember hearing about how the Puritans put skirts on the curved legs of tables to keep them from inciting lust. I also remember hearing that a book by a male author and a book by a female author could not be beside each other on the shelf. Then, there is the scarlet letter "A" for adultery buttoned on the breast of Hester Prynne's gown. Do you see the characterization that Humanists are trying to make of religious conservatives? Humanists want to present religious conservatives as extremists that are four hundred or more years behind the times.

Religious conservatives are described as "unduly repressing sexual conduct" by not recognizing the right to "birth control, abortion, and divorce."⁸ First, let us tackle the matter of birth control. While there are some religious groups, like Roman Catholics, who are opposed to all forms of birth control, most religious groups are not so restrictive. However, there are some forms of birth control that are abortive in nature. For example, morning after pills such as Preven and Plan B, are abortive drugs that Humanists would include within the category of birth control. Planned Parenthood calls the morning after pill an "emergency contraception" and suggests that the drug can be used up

to five days after "unprotected sex" (fornication).⁹ Religious conservatives would clearly oppose this "birth control" on the same basis that they oppose all abortion. Abortion is murder. It is the taking of innocent life (Pro. 6:16-18; cf. Deut. 19:10, 13; Ps. 106:38). According to Humanism, opposing abortion is "unduly repressing sexual conduct."¹⁰ Abortion gives individuals the sexual freedom to do as they want to do without worrying about a baby slowing them down. In addition to birth control and abortion, religious conservatives are described as "unduly repressing sexual conduct" by opposing the right to divorce.¹¹ Humanism would allow individuals to get divorced and remarried as many times as they want, for as many reasons as they want. In fact, if each individual determines his own truth, then there would potentially be as many reasons as there are people. Yet, the Bible clearly gives only one reason—fornication. Jesus declared: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Mt. 19:9; cf. Rom. 7:2-3). It is important to note that Jesus gave this answer in response to the question of the Pharisees concerning whether or not it was lawful for a man to "put away his wife for every cause?" (Mt. 19:3). "Every cause" would succinctly sum up the teaching of Humanism relative to divorce. However, Jesus did not give His stamp of approval to the assertion of divorce for every cause. He made it clear that man is not to put asunder that which God has joined together (Mt. 19:6). From the beginning, God intended for marriage to be for life (Rom. 7:2-3). When asked why Moses gave their forefathers a writing of divorcement, Jesus explained that He suffered them to do so because of the "hardness" of their hearts. However, He went on to explain that "from the beginning it was not so" (Mt. 19:8). God hated putting away then (Mal. 2:16), and He hates it today. He hates what it does to couples, children, communities, countries, and congregations. Of course, we must feel the same way about divorce that God does (Phil. 2:5). God hates it and so must we. God gives only one exception, and we must not give more.

Please note that the big idea in Humanism's "manifesto" is that of tolerance. We read: "Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one."¹² Commenting on the tolerance of our times, Dorothy Sayers wrote: "In the world it is called Tolerance, but in hell it is called Despair ... the sin that believes in nothing, cares for nothing, seeks to know nothing,

interferes with nothing, enjoys nothing, hates nothing, finds purpose in nothing, lives for nothing, and remains alive because there is nothing for which it will die.”¹³ Let us take a look at this description more closely:

- Please note her description—“believes in nothing.” In Humanism, there is nothing concrete. There are no absolutes. Everything is relative and subjective. As Christians, we must continue to proclaim that God’s Word is truth and that men will be judged by it (Jn. 17:17; 12:48).
- Please note her description—“interferes with nothing.” In Humanism, every man is to be left alone to do what he determines is right or wrong. He is to be left alone to determine what is best for him. As Christians, we cannot merely leave others alone. We must do our best to “instruct” those who oppose themselves (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Not only must we not have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, we must reprove them (Eph. 5:11).
- Please note her description—“hates nothing.” Nothing is to be condemned under Humanism; except of course God, His word, and those that believe in Him and follow His word. There are things which we who are Christians must hate. For example, we must “hate evil” (Ps. 97:10), the work of them that turn aside (Ps. 101:3), “every false way” (Ps. 119:104, 128), “lying” (Ps. 119:163) and them that hate God (Ps. 139:21-22).
- Please note her description—“nothing for which it will die.” If there are no absolutes, then men are rightfully reluctant to give their lives. Why would a person give his life for nothing? Why would a man give his life for that which is open to interpretation? In contrast, those who believe in absolutes are willing to die to defend them. The early Christians died because they believed that Christ was the Son of God and that God had raised Him from the dead (Rev. 2:10, 13).

While it is true that there has been some intolerance in religion (the Crusades and Salem Witch Trials are often cited as an example), intolerance has not been limited to the realm of what is generally called religion. Obviously, atheism and Humanism are also religions. While I cannot speak for religion as a whole, I can point out that the Bible teaches the Christian to “be patient toward all men” (1 Thess. 5:14;

2 Tim. 2:24). The truth is to be presented in "love" (Eph. 4:15), "In meekness" (2 Tim. 2:25), and with "longsuffering" (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus was longsuffering with the Samaritan woman and with the woman taken in the act of adultery. However, He did not overlook or condone their sins (Jn. 4:16-18; 8:11; cf. Gal. 2:14-15). We must follow in His footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Jn. 2:6).

Unlike Christianity, Humanism is very tolerant of sin. As noted above, the *Humanist Manifesto* clearly declares that they do not "wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults."¹⁴ We are told that individuals "should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire."¹⁵ As long as it is between consenting adults, sexual activity is deemed right by Humanists. Thus, adultery and homosexuality, meet with no disapproval from them. In fact, these sins and others are applauded by them. However, they are not approved by God or His people (Ex. 20:14; Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27; Ju. 7). The flood (Gen. 6), Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), and other Biblical events should make it forever clear how God feels about those sins and others between consenting adults. Under the Old Testament, those guilty of adultery, even though they were consenting adults, were to be put to death (Lev. 20:10).

It is amazing that Humanists speak of not approving of "exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression."¹⁶ It is astounding that they claim to want "to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged."¹⁷ Yet, within the same statement concerning sexuality, they argue that individuals ought to "be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire."¹⁸ They want to have it both ways. They want unchecked freedom without irresponsible and destructive behavior. They want to have their cake and eat it too. They, by their own admission, do not prohibit in any way sexual behavior between consenting adults. Obviously, in such an arrangement, individuals get exploited. By definition, "exploitation" is "coaction between organisms in which one is benefitted at the expense of the other."¹⁹ Just because adults are consenting, does not mean that they are not being exploited. Are individuals not exploited in pornography and prostitution? There is consent in both of these situations, but exploitation still takes place. Contrary to Humanism's claim, humans

are “exploited as sexual objects.”²⁰ Individuals are harmed mentally, physically, and spiritually through unchecked sexual behavior. Do not homosexuality, fornication, adultery, and other sexual sins denigrate or cast aspersions on the proper sexual expression within the bounds of matrimony (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:15-16)? Does not the sexual activity of unmarried individuals hamper rather than foster “intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty”²¹ in marriage? Do they not harm others? Clearly, they do. Is this not what happened during the days of the Judges when every man did that which was right in his own eyes (Jgs. 21:25)? Do you not remember what happened to the Levite’s concubine (Jgs. 19:22-25)? Was this exploitive and denigrating? Clearly, this story is Humanism, doing what is right in one’s own eyes, lived out.

CONCLUSION

Please note that the *Humanist Manifesto* further argues that “the many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered ‘evil.’”²² Obviously, Humanism has great difficulty with the word “evil.” After all, each man must determine for himself what is good and what is evil. Under Humanism, what is good for one man might be evil for another man, and what is evil for one man might be good for another. Although Humanism has difficulty calling the many varieties of sexual exploration “evil,” God does not (Lev. 18:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). For example, in reference to the brother at Corinth who had taken his father’s wife, Paul wrote: “Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5:13). Clearly, God does not leave us in doubt as to this man’s actions. However, Humanism is not nearly as clear. Good is called evil, and evil is called good. As you likely know, Isaiah pronounced a woe upon those who take this approach. He wrote: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Dick Sztanyo, “Humanism: History, Definition, And Doctrines.” *The Spiritual Sword* 13.2 (January 1982): 3.

³ <<http://www.bartleby.com/103/7.html>>

⁴ *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1973), s.v. “humanism.”

⁵ Ibid., s.v. "doctrine."

⁶ Ibid., s.v. "dogma."

⁷ Jackie M. Stearsman, "Humanism—The Void It Involves." *The Spiritual Sword* 13.2 (January 1982): 30.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/emergency-contraception-morning-after-pill-4363.htm>>

¹⁰ Stearsman, 30.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Charles Colson and Ellen Santilli Vaughn. *Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages*. (Ann Arbor, MI.: Servant Books, 1989), 93.

¹⁴ Stearsman, 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Webster, s.v. "exploitation."

²⁰ Stearsman, 30.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

THEY SAY, “GOD IS JUST A DELUSION”

Dick Sztanyo



Dick Sztanyo is a native of Saginaw, Michigan. He is married to the former Sheila Brogan. They have three children, Timmy, Tracy, and Shannon. Sztanyo was educated at Central Michigan University, Harding College, Harding Graduate School of Religion, where he earned an M.A. degree, Andrews University, Rice University, University of Dallas, and the International Academy of Philosophy. He now works with the Pelham church of Christ in Pelham, Alabama.

INTRODUCTION¹

Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens are the most recognizable names of a movement that has become known as the “new atheism.” They are variously described as “The Four Horsemen” or “The Four Musketeers” (Dawkins’ description of the four), but what most characterizes them is a militancy unknown in previous generations. The old Secular Humanism (represented by the *Humanist Manifestos I and II* and *A Secular Humanist Declaration*) gave way to a progressive Secularism in our society, and now, to this “new atheism.” They are Humanists and atheists to be sure; but they are rather evangelistic about it, and are out to convert the rest of us to their godless ideology! Collectively, these four men (who have taken the spotlight in the movement) have sold well over two million books, with Dawkins boasting of over one and a half million sales himself. Three of the four were educated in more liberal and skeptical Europe. Apparently, they are convinced that America’s religious roots must be destroyed for any real progress to be made in our country. Dawkins, professor of Evolutionary Biology and Ethnology at Oxford University, is the most aggressive in his opposition to Judeo-Christian theism. Hitchens, a journalist by training, is the most polemical of the four. He has probably debated more frequently than all the others combined, and is an excellent wordsmith. His bombastic, caustic, and vigorous attacks upon his opponents are masterful *ad hominem* displays. His writings, though marvelously flowery in style, betray an incredible lack of focused argumentation. They are mostly disjointed

clauses, phrases, and sentences, often having little connection with one another, being drawn from a wide range of differing subject areas. Evidently, the expectation is that the readers will be familiar with all of the contexts from which these disjointed thoughts are taken. Neither Dennett nor Harris, both professional philosophers, are as verbose or vicious as Dawkins and Hitchens. Nevertheless, all four basically agree with one another, and approvingly cite one another in their books.

David Aikman summarizes their approach into seven distinct areas as follows:

1. It is very improbable that God exists, and science can explain people's religious impulses.
2. Religions are bad because they cause people to do bad things, and most religious figures throughout history have been bad people.
3. If the God of Jewish and Christian Scriptures existed, He would be a very bad person.
4. Science is everywhere and at all times opposed to religious belief.
5. Atheism (almost) never causes people to do bad things.
6. Most of America's Founding Fathers were deist, agnostic, or secular, and it is their Enlightenment understanding of society that forms the foundation of America's enduring freedom.
7. There is a dire civilizational need for atheism to prevail.²

I would take exception with every one of these propositions. For example, proposition number 4 suggests that "science is everywhere and at all times opposed to religious belief." As I shall argue a little later in this discussion, there are two very different philosophical worldviews in conflict rather than science and religion as such! Furthermore, proposition number 5 says "atheism (almost) never causes people to do bad things." To be sure, atheists are not necessarily bad citizens or even bad people, but their good behavior can never be justified on atheistic grounds. Moreover, our writers seem to have developed historical amnesia, because they have completely overlooked Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse Tung, Adolph Hitler, Pol Pot, and a host of other very influential atheists who were certainly far from being good people. The things they did are notoriously evil! What about the various Roman Emperors? They were not religious men at all, but

rather, idolaters who often attempted to deify themselves. Finally, as Dave Miller's excellent series on *The Silencing of God* proves, beyond any possible attempt at refutation, proposition number 6 is completely false!

I want to focus, however, on proposition number 1—"It is very improbable that God exists, and science can explain people's religious impulses." The general approach used by these writers is to attack the Bible as God's Word, rather than positively disproving God's existence. There is an important distinction here, for while I hold that God's existence and God's Word cannot be ultimately separated, they are somewhat separate issues. It is entirely possible that God exists, whether or not the Bible proves to be His Word (although I am convinced that it is)! Thus, attacking the one does not necessarily dispense with the other. Furthermore, there is an almost abysmal ignorance of the sophisticated arguments presented by philosophers who have a strong religious bent. They prefer instead to attack straw men and to present simple-minded journalistic caricatures of religious belief. Philosopher Quentin Smith bemoans the appalling lack of knowledge so many of his fellow Secularist thinkers manifest when attempting to criticize religious belief. Smith is a serious thinker who attempts to grapple with the best that theists can offer, but that is not the case with his colleagues. He states that "the great majority of Naturalist philosophers have an unjustified belief that Naturalism is true and an unjustified belief that theism (or supernaturalism) is false."³

Dawkins offers a very passionate critique of God in the following:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction; jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.⁴

He goes on to say: "It is unfair to attack such an easy target."⁵ But, since Dawkins makes it clear that he rejects all ethical absolutes, one wonders whether this is "absolutely" unfair, or only "relatively" so?⁶ If only "relatively" so, then it is either just the subjective whim of Richard Dawkins that makes this attack "unfair," or perhaps the feelings of a selected group of people. But, there is simply no way to pronounce anything really, absolutely unfair, given his atheistic position. Still further, a colorful arrangement of adjectives hardly

proves that the God of the Bible does not exist. It simply shows that Dawkins does not like Him at all! Whenever there is an attempt to comment on a particular passage, once again we are treated to more ridicule than real substantive grappling with the meaning of the text. But, just so that we do not misunderstand his intentions Dawkins says: "I am not attacking any particular version of God or gods. I am attacking God, all gods, anything and everything supernatural, wherever and whenever they have been or will be invented."⁷ I will critique the philosophy of Naturalism a little later in this treatise as well.

By way of contrast to Dawkins, Dennett refrains from the bombastic tirades so characteristic of his fellow "musketees." He says: "Part of what makes Jehovah such a fascinating participant in stories of the Old Testament is His kinglike jealousy and pride, and His great appetite for praise and sacrifices."⁸ Most believers would have little difficulty with a statement like this. He does seem to be more congenial and fair-minded, although he shows a hatred of God equal to the other three. Now, theists are also dualists, in that they (as I) believe the "mind" is separate from the "brain." There is, then, a "separable soul" in human beings that survives physical death. Atheists deny this, and are committed to a form of "materialism" which I shall critique below. Dennett has done more research and writing in this area than the others. He claims that all dualists today are "on the defensive." He continues:

The prevailing wisdom, variously expressed and argued for is *materialism* (Dennett's emphasis). There is only one sort of stuff, namely matter—the physical stuff of physics, chemistry, and physiology—and the mind is somehow nothing but a physical phenomenon. In short, the mind is the brain.⁹

The remainder of the book from which this quotation comes, is Dennett's extensive argument for a purely materialistic view of the mind.

Sam Harris, like Dawkins, attacks the Old Testament. He says: "The idea that the Bible is a perfect guide to morality is simply astounding, given the contents of the book."¹⁰ He then devotes considerable space to an excerpt from Deuteronomy 13 which discusses the necessity of the death penalty for those who seek to convince the Israelites to worship a foreign god. But, Harris says that it gets worse.

Many Christians believe that Jesus did away with all this barbarism in the clearest terms imaginable and delivered a

doctrine of pure love and toleration. He didn't. In fact, at several points in the New Testament, Jesus can be read to endorse the entirety of Old Testament law.¹¹

Harris then cites Matthew 5:18-20 which, to him, proves his point. He should also have cited the previous verse (v. 17) which places the argument into its context. Jesus came to "fulfill" the Law and the Prophets, thus finalizing and perfecting God's scheme of redemption.

Christopher Hitchens takes an entirely different approach. He says that none of these "barbarisms" ever took place, because none of them are historical fact. "It goes without saying," Hitchens writes, "that none of the gruesome, disordered events described in Exodus ever took place."¹² In characteristic Hitchens' style, he, with a "wave of the hand" dismisses it all, saying:

Israeli archaeologists are among the most professional in the world, even if their scholarship has sometimes been inflected with a wish to prove that the "covenant" between god and Moses was founded on some basis in fact. No group of diggers and scholars has ever worked harder, or with greater expectations, than the Israelis who sifted through the sands of Sinai and Canaan ... There was no flight from Egypt, no wandering in the desert (let alone for the incredible four-decade length of time mentioned in the Pentateuch), and no dramatic conquest of the Promised Land. It was all, quite simply and very ineptly, made up at a much later date.¹³

He says of the Bible, "[W]e are not bound by any of it because it was put together by crude, uncultured human mammals."¹⁴

But Hitchens, unlike Dawkins who viciously attacks the Old Testament, thinks that the New Testament is actually worse than the Old. One full chapter of his book is entitled, "The 'New' Testament Exceeds the Evil of the 'Old' One." He claims that, "just like the Old Testament, the 'New' one is also a work of crude carpentry, hammered together long after its purported events, and full of improvised attempts to make things come out right."¹⁵ For an example of Hitchens' ability to write, he says:

In 2004, a soap-opera film about the death of Jesus was produced by an Australian fascist and ham actor named Mel Gibson. Mr. Gibson adheres to a crackpot and schismatic Catholic sect consisting mainly of himself and of his even more thuggish father, and has stated that it is a pity that his own dear wife is going to hell because she does not accept the correct sacraments

... At one of the ecumenical prepublicity events which he sponsored, Mr. Gibson defended his filmic farrago—which is also an exercise in sadomasochistic homoeroticism starring a talentless lead actor who was apparently born in Iceland or Minnesota—as being based on the reports of “eyewitnesses.” At the time, I thought it extraordinary that a multimillion-dollar hit could be openly based on such a patently fraudulent claim, but nobody seemed to turn a hair.¹⁶

There is little doubt that Hitchens is clever with words, but, like his three colleagues, he thinks the way to persuade people away from the God of the Bible is to employ the tactics of ridicule! Never mind the contexts from which passages are taken. Do not pay attention to plausible explanations of difficult passages. Simply dismiss all of this as either purely mythical (Hitchens) or examples of horrible barbaric cruelty and evil (Dawkins, Harris, and to a lesser extent, Dennett).

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MILITANT ATHEISM

Many (certainly not all) well-known atheists grew up in a religious environment, and specifically rejected that upbringing. There is an underlying psychology in all of this that is far too extensive to cover in a short essay like this, so, I would recommend as a start an excellent little book by R.C. Sproul.¹⁷ Karl Marx was born in Germany into a Jewish family, but converted to Lutheranism in his early years. He was heavily influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach for his early march to atheism and later by a group of atheistic Hegelians who seemingly convinced him of the “dialectical method,” which he then applied to a social and historical context. It is well-known that Antony Flew, once called the most notorious atheist in the world, is the son of a Methodist minister. Dan Barker, affiliated with the Freedom From Religion Foundation in Madison, Wisconsin, was a Charismatic and Evangelical preacher before his “conversion” to atheism. Barker names a number of other people who have left organized religion in favor of the non-theistic worldview.¹⁸ John W. Loftus was an evangelical who studied Apologetics under William Lane Craig before his change to atheism. Farrell Till considered himself a member of churches of Christ until he left us in 1963 to pursue life as an atheist. Richard Dawkins was brought up in the Anglican Church, but began having doubts at about nine years of age. Christopher Hitchens documents the early influence of a Mrs. Watts, his primary school teacher, who constantly brought God and nature together in her lessons. Daniel Dennett was brought up in the

Congregationalism of New England. Only Sam Harris, it turns out, was not influenced by a “Christian” type of upbringing. Combined with massive drug use, and Eastern thought experiments, it was finally revealed that Harris is a Buddhist. Buddhism, as all know who have studied it, is an atheistic religion! It would prove to be a fascinating study as to why these changes have taken place. We all know many who have left formal religion to become “practical atheists” (those who believe in God but live as if He does not exist), but what about those who have taken the very short step beyond this to “practicing atheism?”

There are some other reasons why the “new atheists” are making such inroads in society. *First*, there is little question that our society, as a whole, has shifted somewhat toward the “left.” This being the case, we are hearing much more criticism of Christianity than was true just fifty years ago. The Internet and 24-hour cable news channels make these things much more available to the public as well.

Second, we all know that Christendom is hopelessly divided. When these writers make reference to a divided, inconsistent, and morally ambivalent Christendom, they have legitimate grievances. I would tend to agree with their complaints, precisely because Jesus informed us that this would produce unbelief. Our Lord said:

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me (Jn. 17:20-21).

The clear implication of a divided Christendom is the fact that the world will not believe! There is yet another charge often made against those who claim to be Christians, and that is a charge of inconsistency. Peter makes reference to the kind of opposition that Christians might expect, in the following:

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1 Pet. 4:13-17).

It is certainly possible that Christians will be opposed because they are living inconsistently with what the Bible teaches. For instance, the Bible teaches us not to mistreat our fellow human beings, which is rooted in the "second" greatest commandment, "love your neighbor as yourself" (cf. Mk. 12:29-31). The Spanish Inquisition was a classic example of behavior that could never be defended in the name of Biblical teaching. The Crusades are yet another example of the same unholy conduct, done in the name of a holy war. Atheists are quick to point out the inconsistencies of this behavior, and we would agree with them! No Christian can defend being opposed if he is a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a troublesome meddler, to use Peter's terminology. On the other hand, when they refer to God's restrictions on many sexual matters, then they do not have the same sort of legitimacy to their complaints. Scripture soundly condemns sexual activity of all sorts outside the marriage union (cf. Heb. 13:4; Rom. 1:19ff; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; *et cetera*). This includes homosexual behavior, bestiality, fornication of all types, lesbian activity, *et cetera*. They may wish to deny anyone's right to limit such behavior, but then they place themselves squarely outside the purview of Biblical teaching, and we would not agree with them! But, in either case, atheists oppose such behavior by appealing to the very absolutes in morality that they deny. One cannot be against behavior that they find inconsistent without appealing to a standard that they expect everyone to accept. Without such standards there is no sense in talking about good, better and best, or bad, worse and worst. Behavior can neither be approved nor condemned without such standards of conduct!

Third, this brings us to another ethical motivation for denying God. Abraham Maslow, one of the most famous of the Humanistic Psychologists, bluntly stated:

Humanists for thousands of years have attempted to construct a naturalistic, psychological value system that could be derived from man's own nature, without the necessity of recourse to authority outside the human being himself ... Today ... we think that a scientific ethic may be possible, and we think we know how to go about constructing it.¹⁹

A "naturalistic, psychological value system" would have absolutely nothing to do with "authority outside the human being himself" (such as God), but would rather be a form of ethical subjectivism. Based upon man as a "biological organism" (i.e., a production of evolution), this

ethical viewpoint would be based primarily upon biological *need fulfillment*. His famous “hierarchy of needs” (which has, amazingly, influenced hundreds of Christians leaders who ought to know better) is an attempt to structure the needs of the biological organism according to their importance. But, this is done on the assumption that man is merely an “evolved” animal, with basic needs and characteristics like any other animal. So, Maslow holds that these needs are primarily sensual (or, physical) and not spiritual (after all, animals do not have souls, and, if man is merely the highest of the beast kingdom, then neither is there a soul in man). Still further, many of these “needs” are instinctive and, therefore, beyond censure. You do not blame wolves, after all, for hunting sheep. It is their nature to be predators! When this is played out, some writers actually make startling admissions. For instance, consider the following from Aldous Huxley, grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, who called himself “Darwin’s Bulldog.”

I had motives for not wanting the world to have meaning, consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption ... 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 system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom.²⁰

Fourth, many Naturalists seriously hope that there is no God, because if there is, then they are certainly accountable to Him. For instance, philosopher Thomas Nagel writes:

I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God and, naturally, hope that I’m right in my belief. It’s that I hope there is no God! I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that. My guess is that this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition and that it is responsible for much of the scientism and reductionism of our time. One of the tendencies it supports is the ludicrous overuse of evolutionary biology to explain everything about human life, including everything about the human mind.²¹

“Scientism” refers to the position that science explains everything, and that no knowledge exists outside of scientific inquiry. “Reductionism”

means reducing one thing to another in "nothing but" formulations. For instance, "mind" (to Naturalists) is nothing but chemical and electrical stimulations of the brain. "Thought" is nothing but a function of purely natural and material processes! Reductionism, at least as it is being used here, is an attempt to explain everything in Naturalistic terms, without any reference to a supernaturalistic explanation at all.

Fifth, there is the very strong reluctance to leave any room whatever for the supernatural. Consider the following from biologist Richard Lewontin:

Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural ... It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door.²²

So, let us make sure that we understand all of this. Our society as a whole is slanting toward the left, thus, making such challenges easier. Christendom is hopelessly divided and manifesting a lack of love from within. This, per Jesus, opens Christendom to attack. A Naturalistic ethic, constructed on purely scientific grounds, makes the satisfaction of any "need" all right, including any "sexual need." Many really hope that there is no God, because His actual existence would make them accountable to Him. And, we simply must not allow a "divine foot in the door." As I mentioned earlier, it would be a fascinating psychological study to examine the motives behind this seething hatred for God, especially the God of Judeo-Christian theism.

WORLDVIEWS IN COLLISION

Our modern "new" atheists (Dawkins, Dennett, Harris and Hitchens, the most recognized of this new group) are seeking to convince the rest of us that the supposed conflict between science and religion is now over! And, to their way of thinking, science has won and religion has lost. In point of fact, there never has been a real conflict between science and religion, but rather, a conflict between two very different philosophical worldviews. The first, a *teleological*, or

end-goal directed worldview, sees purpose or goal-directedness as just as much an inherent feature of the material world as is matter and energy. This view is the classical position held by Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and myself, among others. Given this worldview, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the traditional natural-law conception of morality, is *rationally unavoidable*. The second, a *mechanistic* worldview, defines the universe as nothing more than purposeless, meaningless, particles in motion. This is the view which was held by Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and more recently, by Richard Dawkins, as expressed in his book, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*. It is not surprising that non-theists adopt the *mechanistic* worldview, because to do otherwise is, at the very least, to admit the possibility of a God. This is something they are completely unwilling to do.

It should be mentioned that the *mechanistic* worldview has never been proved, in spite of its overwhelming popularity with modern scientists. Modern Secularism depends on the false assumption that the mechanistic philosophy has somehow been established by science. Instead of being established by modern science, the mechanistic worldview is, in fact, *demonstrably false*, and is utterly incompatible with the very existence of morality, rationality, and science itself. Science has to do with seeking to understand the environment in which we live. Such investigations and processes were put in place by God at the creation.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen. 1:26-28).

[W]hat is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also

the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas (Ps. 8:4-8).

Man was to exercise dominion over his environment, which made scientific exploration not only possible, but also necessary. How else could we rule and subdue the environment, without first understanding it? So, far from being at odds with theistic belief, science is actually part of such a conviction. Indeed, our world does have a purpose.

Furthermore, given a *Naturalistic worldview*, there is no spiritual reality at all, including the spiritual realities we identify as "mind." Most Naturalists still try to convince the rest of us, but convincing someone implies the use of *thinking*, and *emotions*, and *decision-making powers*, all of which are grossly inconsistent with materialistic presuppositions! What we call thinking is really only electrical stimulation of neurons within our brains. *Humanist Manifesto II*, authored by Paul Kurtz, contains this explanatory paragraph:

Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the "ghost in the machine" and the "separable soul." Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces. As far as we know, the total personality is a function of the biological organism transacting in a social and cultural context. There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture.²³

The position stated here is that there is no spiritual reality, and that human personality is really only a function of our physical (or, "material") selves. As John Searle (who is no friend of theistic belief) argues, every form of materialism implicitly denies the existence of the mind, whether or not that was the intention.²⁴

Paul and Patricia Churchland are two philosophy professors from the University of California at San Diego. Their claim to fame is their theory that beliefs, desires, and other mental activities do not really exist and ought to be eliminated from our description of human nature, being replaced by concepts derived from neuroscience. Apparently, their colleagues have not yet caught on to this "truth." Our atheistic opponents continue to express themselves as if there are spiritual realities, such as "feelings," acts of decision-making, "thinking," "moods," "remembering," "reasoning," and the like. All of this, however, is simply mistaken. The Churchlands "believe" (oops, I just slipped that term in there) that we should all "learn" (how is this

possible?) to express ourselves in materialistic terms. For instance, suppose you were sitting around a campfire with some family members. Some time later you explain to some friends what you were doing. You were “warming yourself next to it (the fire, D.S.) and were gazing at the flickering flames.” This, the Churchlands inform us, is mere unscientific mumbo jumbo. The truth is that “they absorb some EM energy in the m range by the highly exothermic oxidation reaction, and observe the turbulences in the thermally incandescent river of molecules forced upwards by the denser atmospheric surrounding.”²⁵ When you get off a roller coaster (or another type of ride in an amusement park), you should not complain of a “feeling of dizziness.” Instead, you should make reference to “a residual circulation of the inertial fluid in the semicircular canals of the inner ear.”²⁶ And, you should not expect the Churchlands to “feel” your “pain,” because according to science there is really no such thing as pain. There are only “sundry modes of stimulation in our A-delta fibres and/or C-fibres (peripherally), or in our thalamus and/or reticular formation (centrally).”²⁷ If you are completely perplexed by the language of these materialists, I really do “feel your pain.” But, given the view that there actually is no spiritual reality, but rather, only biological and chemical interactions of neurons within our brains, this is much more accurate than attempts to convince us that *we* are the ones who are irrational. Now, Dawkins, Dennett, Harris, and Hitchens (with others) are not going to immediately accept the implications of materialism. Nevertheless, they are really saddled with the following conclusions, like it or not!

There are a number of problems with a materialistic view of reality. *First*, materialism is *guilty of reductionism*. The view that we are really “nothing but” material beings makes us really no different ultimately than a rock. Neither men nor rocks possess a “mind” or a “soul.” Both are simply a collection of atoms. If this is so, then materialists should easily be able to explain why rocks do not think, feel or make decisions. And, they should especially be able to explain why rocks do not try to convince us to change our viewpoints, since our viewpoints are merely a product of our biological and chemical processes and are no more subject to our choice than those of our opponents. Materialists have yet to explain how it is that humans do what rocks (and, also plants and animals) cannot do!

Second, materialism cannot *adequately explain human beings*. Materialism never has been able to explain the “self,” nor has it ever

successfully refuted the truth of "self." To doubt that there is an immaterial "self" or to deny it, presupposes the "self" and actually proves it. This is because in order to formulate a doubt, there must be someone who does the doubting. In order to deny the existence of "self," one must exist in order to make the denial. The "I" who performs all conscious activity (whether willing, feeling, thinking, remembering, *et cetera*) is literally known intuitively and with absolute certainty, and any attempt to deny it actually proves it!

Furthermore, materialism has never developed an understandable theory for the origin of or survival of man's moral nature, aesthetic appreciation, religious drive, rationality, personality, sense of responsibility, or self-awareness. Do rocks, flowers, and dogs appreciate the beauties of art or of this world? Are they able to enjoy good music or a beautiful sunrise? Given the materialistic premise of the survival of the fittest, these things should have been bred out of humanity long ages ago. The same is true with ethics and reason. These things should not exist at all, if materialism is true.

Materialism fails to deal with the evidence that reason transcends neurology, morality transcends stimulus, memory transcends time, and freedom transcends causality. In fact, by assuming their theory is true, materialists refuse to reduce it to a "secretion" born out of the random motion of nonrational atoms. They assume their reason transcends neurology.

If stimulus is source of morality, then the self-gratification of the pleasure zones of the brain would be the basis of ethics. But ethics is based on universal principles which call upon man to deny self-gratification for the good of others. Hence, morality transcends stimulus.

The fact that man remembers the past, perceives the present, and anticipates the future reveals that he is a transcendent self as well as a body ... Seeing that the past no longer exists and the future has not arrived, if thoughts are the result of the present motions of nonrational atoms, how and why does man remember the past and anticipate the future? Since there is no "past" or "future" stimulating the brain, from whence does memory or anticipation come?²⁸

Third, materialists *identify the mind of man with his brain*, which does not square with modern brain research! Materialists assume that the "mind" is just a descriptive way of telling us how the brain works. Consequently, the mind does not exist in any nonmaterial way. Instead,

it is the result of the random motion of nonrational atoms in the brain. The mind and the brain are one. What one does, the other does! Modern researchers, like Karl Popper and Sir John Eccles as well as Wilder Penfield, have shown that the mind of man is related to the brain much as a computer programmer is related to a computer, or as a viewer is related to the TV he is watching. Man has both a mind and a brain, and they are not the same! But, to discuss this further at this point would take us far afield from our subject.

Fourth, materialists *cannot live what they believe*. For example, materialists cannot avoid using “mind” terminology when they speak or write. They do not describe the physical processes as did the Churchlands. Although they believe that man is a random swarm of nonrational atoms no different ultimately from a grain of sand, they still value people and form relationships. They do not treat their children or their mates as nonrational masses of atoms. They fall in love, marry and have children like the rest of us. But, this makes absolutely no sense at all on materialistic presuppositions. We do not think that grains of sand are worth living for, but we value life differently than this. It makes no sense for random masses of chemical material to sacrifice itself for the sake of others. Yet, we see human beings frequently doing this very thing. Dr. Will Provine, Professor of the History of Biology at Cambridge University says that the view that

No gods, no life after death, no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning for life, no human free will are all deeply connected to an evolutionary perspective. You’re here today and you’re gone tomorrow. And, that’s all there is to it.²⁹

Of course, he is absolutely right if the “new atheists” have the proper outlook on life. But, it is especially difficult to put a happy face on this philosophy, would you not agree?

RESPONDING TO MILITANT ATHEISTS

Atheists claim to find logical incompatibility in theistic arguments. They suggest that theists are incoherent, inconsistent, and even, imbeciles. For instance, Bill Maher argued that Christians have a neurological disorder:

We are a nation that is unenlightened because of religion. I do believe that. I think that religion stops people from thinking. I think it justifies crazies. I think flying planes into a building was a faith-based initiative. I think religion is a neurological disorder.

If you look at it logically, it's something that was drilled into your head when you were a small child. It certainly was drilled into mine at that age. And you really can't be responsible when you are a kid for what adults put into your head.³⁰

But, in point of fact, it is the atheists who fail the test of logical consistency. Beginning with the assumption that there is no God, it follows that there are no absolutes. Relativism (the opposite of absolutism) has to be true when absolutism is denied. Now, it is certainly clear that many atheists neither recognize nor accept their inconsistencies. Nonetheless, they are easy to document as the following will demonstrate:

Premise: Since there is no God,

Conclusion: It follows that there are no absolutes!

Premise: Since there are no absolutes,

Conclusion: Then, everything is relative.

The *first* area to be affected by relativism was ethics. If there is no God, then there are no moral absolutes. Morality, therefore, became a function of human invention, and was defined either in terms of the individual (and so, a form of ethical subjectivism) or the group (consequently, a form of relative objectivism). Atheist Joseph Lewis wrote in 1926: "There is in reality no absolute standard by which we judge ... In the final analysis our guide in moral affairs would be that which gives to the individual the greatest possible happiness."³¹ One wonders just how we would objectively define the "greatest possible happiness," since such a definition seems impossible on the ground marked out by our opponents. There has never been a group consensus on what makes for happiness (consider, for example, how Stalin would have defined happiness as over against "Mother" Theresa). Since there is no group consensus on what happiness is at all, it must be subjectively determined, as in "I have a personal preference for Swiss Chard over Fried Okra." In his debate with Frederick Copleston, the great agnostic Bertrand Russell was asked: "[O]n what grounds would you condemn the acts of Hitler?" He responded that Hitler was wrong because "most people agree with me."³² The great logician committed the fallacy called *argumentum ad populum*, in which something is held to be true because many people agree to it. This is nothing other than what I call "Gallup Poll morality!" In this discussion, Russell was pressed to tell how he could possibly distinguish between good and

evil. He said, “[B]y my own feelings.”³³ It is difficult to accept the notion that morality depends upon one’s feelings, because Hitler obviously “felt” that systematic extermination of the Jews was a good thing, whereas the Allies (including Bertrand Russell) “felt” that Hitler and his associates were evil. Therefore, on ground marked out by atheists it becomes impossible to say that some things are absolutely wrong while some other things are absolutely right! Once God is denied, one is committed to ethical relativism. Dan Barker said, when dealing with the question of ethics:

“How does an atheist account for the existence of objective moral values?” is a question I often hear. “If you don’t believe in God, then what is your basis for morality?” To me, the answer is obvious: we atheists find our basis for morality in nature. Where else would we look?³⁴

Indeed! Where else would one look except to explain ethics purely in Naturalistic terms, since, to atheists, there is no supernatural Being? Since ethics ultimately were created by man, one would have to look either to an individual for his ethical standards (thus, *relative subjectivism*) or he would have to look to a group for his ethical standards (so, *relative objectivism*). There is no other place to look!

A *second* area affected by the denial of absolutes is history. If one denies absolutes, then historical interpretation is relative too. There can be no real knowledge, consequently, of our past that is not subject to the interpretation of the historian. Briefly put, no one can really know the truth concerning historical propositions. It looks like the following:

Premise: Since there is no God,
Conclusion: It follows that there are no absolutes.

Premise: Since there are no absolutes,
Conclusion: Then, everything is relative.

Premise: Since everything is relative,
Conclusion: Then, history is relative!

There could be an apparent objectivity in historical matters if enough historians came to the same conclusions. Otherwise, history is reduced to sheer subjectivity, and historical revisionism becomes the main task of those who study the subject.

The *third* area to be affected by the denial of God is science. Now, the very nature of scientific investigation renders all scientific conclusions only highly probable at best. This is the inevitable result of using

the Scientific Method. Nevertheless, there are some things that we regard as objectively sound conclusions of science (as, for instance, the "laws" of gravity, thermodynamics, *et cetera*). The assumption of Western science was originally that God created a universe that operates according to laws that He placed within it at the creation. But, with modern thinkers, these earlier assumptions have to be discarded.

Premise: Since there is no God,

Conclusion: It follows that there are no absolutes.

Premise: Since there are no absolutes,

Conclusion: Then, everything is relative.

Premise: Since everything is relative,

Conclusion: Then, science is relative.

One atheist says bluntly:

The (scientific) patterns do not exist in nature; they exist inside our heads ... A so-called law of nature is really a human generalization about nature, which we then consciously, or unconsciously, project into an essentially ambiguous universe.³⁵

Mathematics, geometry, and physics have not escaped from a relativistic interpretation either. Since there are no absolutes, then it follows that there is no such thing as eternal and necessary truths in mathematics, *et cetera*. Mathematical propositions and geometrical theorems are really only human inventions. We use these formulas, not because they are necessarily true, but because they work! Few atheists will really face up to the implications just discussed regarding science, and the various tools used in scientific investigation (mathematical formulas, *et cetera*).

A *fourth* area affected by the denial of God is logic. Since absolutes are denied, logic suffers from the same problem of relativism as all other truths. Modern atheists become absolutely paranoid at this point, because they are always seeking to point out the logical inconsistencies of theistic argumentation.

Premise: Since there is no God,

Conclusion: It follows that there are no absolutes.

Premise: Since there are no absolutes,

Conclusion: Then, everything is relative.

Premise: Since everything is relative,

Conclusion: Then, logic is relative.

Our atheistic opponents never seem to understand that, if there are no absolutes, then they cannot say that theism is *absolutely* wrong! For, how could history, science, or logic refute Christianity, if they are all relative. If everything is relative, then theism is historically, scientifically, and logically true to those who want it to be true (if subjectively considered)! Or, if there are enough people who agree with theistic conclusions, then theism would be considered relatively and objectively true. Therefore, atheists cannot say that theism is absolutely false, because they deny absolutes!

If everything is relative, then all of the arguments ever devised against the theistic proofs are invalid because they all try to show that theistic proofs are logically false. But if, as atheists claim, there are no absolute truths, then there are no absolute non-truths either! Of course, even if someone argues that there are no absolutes, *that philosophy is unlivable*. This is so, because he must pay the proper amount at the check-out counter, for example. Imagine a man who denies absolutes trying to convince the retailer that “everything is relative,” and, since this is so, he will give him one dollar for an item marked 12 dollars, and then he will demand 100 dollars in change! No one can possibly live such an absurd philosophy. In the same way, our atheist friend will not jump off a 25-story building because he thinks that the “law” of gravity is only relative. Unless one is going to commit suicide, he will stay away from the edge of the building just like the rest of us. To do otherwise is not safe!

Furthermore, the idea that “everything is relative” is not only unlivable, *it is also self-refuting*. This is so, because the statement is also given as an absolute. In other words, this philosophical position should really be stated as follows: “It is absolutely true that everything is relative.” It is erroneous to build one’s philosophy on self-contradictory propositions. The following examples are all from atheist literature or debates. *Only empirically verifiable or falsifiable statements have any meaning*. This statement is itself incapable of either verification or falsification. *There are no absolutes*. This statement is an absolute. *Everything is relative*. But, this statement is meant to be taken as an absolute. *We cannot know anything with certainty*. Yet, we are supposed to know this statement with certainty. *There is no truth*, except, of course, the truth just given. *What a person believes is the result of irrational forces*. Consequently, this statement itself is also the result of irrational forces. If so, then why should anyone believe it? *No*

one can know anything about God, for He is unknowable. This statement requires a great deal of knowledge about God.

MAKING THE CASE FOR GOD

How do we explain the *origins* of things? By "origins," I have in mind the origin of the universe, the origin of first life, and finally, the origin of complex life forms (like human beings). The study of origins is not, strictly speaking, a scientific study. Science deals with things that already exist in an effort to explain and/or understand how they work. Science definitely does not deal with *how* these things came to exist in the first place! In science, one deals with what is (1) observable, (2) repeatable, and (3) testable. The origins of things is not (and never has been) observable. Such things are certainly not repeatable! And, therefore, they cannot be tested in the laboratory. Does this then mean that we cannot study the origins of things at all? Certainly not. It just does not get done in the science classroom, or in scientific writings. We make our case by means of *metaphysical deduction*, by which I mean an inference from the world of factual data to the ultimate explanation (sometimes called, "metaphysical ground") of those facts. Paul speaks of this very process in Rom. 1:19-22:

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:19-22).

I am particularly interested in verse 20. How can one's invisible attributes be clearly perceived (most translations say, "clearly seen")? Paul's answer is "in the things that have been made." The author of Hebrews makes a similar claim in Hebrews 3:4—"For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God." No one is so foolish as to argue that a house just appeared one day, out of thin air. Time will not help us here either! No one suggests that the house just evolved over long eons of time from lower, less organized and structured materials. We all know that it was built by someone. Suppose that this "someone" is never observed by the ones who observe the house. Would that lessen their knowledge that "someone"

built it? Of course not! We all reason from the *effects* (in this case, a house) to the *cause* (“someone”). The author of Hebrews tells us that this is precisely the same move one makes in arguing the case for God.

The fact that scientists are not equipped, as scientists, to discuss the case for God does not prevent them from trying their hand at the issue of origins. Ben Stein was urged to watch a documentary on the origin of life that would explain the “spontaneous generation” of first life from non-living materials.³⁶ The documentary said that “whatever it was” we now have life on earth! How is that for a real strong answer? The suggestion was that the various chemicals needed for life (carbon, oxygen, *et cetera*) were possibly energized by lightning, but such was only a suggested possibility. They really do not know.

When it was discovered, after many, many years of observation, that there are no transitional forms between species (and we are not really completely sure what a species happens to be, either) which would be needed for Darwinism to be true, Richard Goldschmidt, Niles Eldridge and Stephen Jay Gould came up with their theory of “punctuated equilibria” to explain that there were sudden leaps from one species to another *without any transitional forms!* So, they confirmed the exact thing that Creationists have always said, and that is that the species are separate and that there are *no* transitional forms as would be needed for Darwinian Evolution to be true.

When asked how life originated, Michael Ruse told Ben Stein that life originated “on the backs of crystals.”³⁷ Ruse actually became quite irritated when Stein expressed some surprise at that answer and when he pressed him to insure that he had correctly heard Ruse.

The movie also mentioned the “Directed Panspermia” theory first propagated by Nobel Prize winning Geneticist Frances Crick, and later popularized somewhat by Sir Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe.³⁸ The theory is necessitated because it has been shown conclusively that life could not have been spontaneously generated on the earth. So, what is the answer? Aliens from some other planet evolved (presumably by Darwinian Evolutionary means) and seeded the raw materials needed for macro-evolution on the earth! Dawkins even suggested that this might actually be a way for the theory of “Intelligent Design” to be true!

There are other equally silly attempts to explain origins from these people. You might be asking at this point: “Why do these men go to such extreme lengths to avoid the obvious strength of the evidence?”

Remember, we simply cannot and must not "allow a divine foot in the door!"

At this point, let me offer an illustration that might be of some help as we begin to discuss solutions to the question of origins. Richard Taylor wrote:

Suppose you were strolling in the woods and, in addition to the sticks, stones, and other accustomed litter of the forest floor, you one day came upon some quite unaccustomed object, something not quite like what you had ever seen before and would never expect to find in such a place. Suppose, for example, that it is a large ball, about your own height, perfectly smooth and translucent. You would deem this puzzling and mysterious, certainly, but if one considers the matter, it is no more inherently mysterious that such a thing should exist than that anything else should exist ... Now whatever else you might wonder about it, there is one thing you would hardly question; namely, that it did not appear there all by itself, that it owes its existence to something.

Consider again the strange ball that we imagine has been found in the forest. Now we can hardly doubt that there must be an explanation for the existence of such a thing, though we may have no notion what that explanation is. It is not, moreover, the fact of its having been found in the forest rather than elsewhere that renders an explanation necessary. It matters not in the least where it happens to be, for our question is not how it happens to be there but how it happens to exist at all. If we in our imagination annihilate the forest, leaving only this ball in an open field, our conviction that it is a contingent thing and owes its existence to something other than itself is not reduced in the least. If we now imagine the field to be annihilated, and in fact everything else to vanish into nothingness, leaving only the ball to constitute the entire physical universe, then we cannot for a moment suppose that its existence has thereby been explained, or the need of any explanation eliminated, or that its existence is suddenly rendered self-explanatory. If we now carry this thought one step further and suppose that no other reality ever has existed or ever will exist, that this ball forever constitutes the entire physical universe, then we must still insist on there being some reason independent of itself why it should exist rather than not.³⁹

No one would fail to ask for an explanation as to why that large ball happened to exist at all. With this in mind, let me advance several

classical argument forms for the existence of God (with my own modifications, of course).

First, we have what is generally called the *cosmological argument*. It is an argument that searches for causal explanations, and is framed as follows:

1. If anything exists contingently, then God (a non-contingent Being) exists!
2. I exist contingently.
3. Therefore, God (a non-contingent Being) exists!

Obviously, the second premise is the most important in this argument. Several sub-propositions would be used to defend this argument. I will simply list them here, because we are merely illustrating how one makes a case for God.

1. A Contingent Being Exists.
2. This Contingent Being Depends on Something Else for its Existence.
3. That Which Causes (Explains) the Existence of a (or, any) Contingent Being is Either (1) Another Contingent Being or (2) a Non-Contingent Being.
4. That Which Causes (Explains) the Existence of a (or, any) Contingent Being is (3) Either an Infinite Series of Contingent Beings (Either a Transitive or an Intransitive Series) or (2) a Non-Contingent Being.
5. But, it is False that that Which Causes (Explains) the Existence of a (or, any) Contingent Being is an Infinite Series of Contingent Beings (Either a Transitive or an Intransitive Series).
6. Therefore, that Which Causes (Explains) the Existence of a (or, any) Contingent Being is a Non-Contingent Being.

A Non-Contingent Being is what theists mean when they use the term “God,” for a Non-Contingent Being is not dependent upon anyone or anything else for its existence. It is self-existent, and explains the origins of the universe (Gen. 1:1), first life and all complex living forms (Gen. 1:11-28).

Second, we have the *Teleological Argument*. This is often termed the “Design Argument” and is, far and away the most popularly used argument for God, being employed by the proverbial “man on the

street" all the way up to the most sophisticated philosophers. One needs to avoid some of the common mistakes that have been made by those using this argument form. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate way to present the case for God (cf. Acts 14:17; 17:28-29). The argument form is as follows:

1. If some things exist that bear the unmistakable marks of intelligent design, then an Intelligent Designer exists!
2. Some things exist that bear the unmistakable marks of intelligent design.
3. Therefore, an Intelligent Designer exists!

Numerous things can be explained without the immediate necessity of God. For instance, the beautiful limestone stalagmites and stalactites found in caves such as the Carlsbad Caverns or the Mammoth Cave can be explained by the water and lime deposits over time. God would be the ultimate explanation, since all things were ultimately begun by Him, and that includes things that develop by natural law. But, one does not need to explain those things by referring to God. On the other hand, no one would seek to explain the carvings on Stone Mountain in Atlanta, or on Mount Rushmore in this way. They bear the unmistakable marks of intelligent design. Snowflakes exhibit beautifully symmetrical designs that are explained by the science of ice crystallization. We do not need to refer to God to explain this design. But, ice sculptures are not explained apart from intelligent intervention. In a similar way, certain things in nature can be explained apart from God (initially, at least), but the complex information packets contained in DNA literally cannot be explained that way! Information requires an Informer. Intelligent design presupposes an Intelligent Designer! And, this is what theists call "God."

Third, there is the *Moral Argument*. This argument is made from moral experience to God. All moral norms are *personal*, and make sense only with reference to personal beings. We do not attribute morals to flowers and fauna. Neither do we attribute morals to rabbits or skunks. Ethical norms and moral experience make sense only with reference to human beings. Since atheists deny absolutes in ethics, because to accept ethical absolutes is to accept God, I shall argue that moral norms are absolutes and objective. The argument is as follows:

1. If ethical obligations and moral norms are absolute and objective, then a Moral Lawgiver exists!

2. Ethical obligations and moral norms are absolute.
3. Therefore, a Moral Lawgiver exists!

Naturally, one needs to distinguish between ethics and morality in order to make this argument work. Furthermore, it is not necessary that all ethical obligations and moral norms be absolute, for *if any are*, then God (the Moral Lawgiver) exists!

Fourth, there is the *Bibliological Argument*. This is an argument from Scripture to the existence of God. Now, we have to be very careful here, because one could easily lapse off into circular reasoning. For instance, suppose one says that God exists, and I ask how he knows that this is so? He answers: "Because the Bible says so, and it is His Word." I then say, how do you know that the Bible is God's Word? He responds: "Because God exists, and gave the Bible to us." If I ask him how he knows that God exists, and gave the Bible to us, he responds again: "Because the Bible says so, and it is His Word." This is *begging the question*; it is assuming what is to be proved, and is a logical fallacy. Thus, we must not lapse off into such circularity. However, there is a way in which one can argue the case for God from Scripture. Now, it is clear that the Bible claims to be the Word of God. The only question that remains is whether or not such a claim is true. The argument is two-fold, and is as follows:

1. If the Bible contains such characteristics as make it clear that the Bible is beyond mere human production and incapable of being produced only by humans, then the Bible is the Word of God!
2. The Bible contains such characteristics as make it clear that the Bible is beyond mere human production and incapable of being produced only by humans.
3. Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God!

Now, we can finalize this argument as follows:

1. If the Bible is the Word of God, then God exists!
2. The Bible is the Word of God.
3. Therefore, God exists!

This is the type of argumentation one must follow in order to prove that God exists from Scripture.

Fifth, there is the *Christological Argument*. This argument is similar to the last one examined, in that one can easily lapse off again into circularity here. There are, to be sure, those who deny that Christ ever lived at all. But, given the reality of His existence (which, of course, must be shown), we still cannot simply assert that God exists merely because Jesus did, and He claimed such. It must be carefully argued as well as follows:

1. If Jesus the Christ possesses such characteristics as make it clear that He is beyond (and incapable of) mere human invention, then Jesus the Christ is the Son of God!
2. Jesus the Christ possesses such characteristics as make it clear that He is beyond (and incapable of) mere human invention.
3. Therefore, Jesus the Christ is the Son of God!

Once again, there must be an additional argument to complete the process:

1. If Jesus the Christ is the Son of God, then God exists!
2. Jesus the Christ is the Son of God.
3. Therefore, God exists!

This is how one would go about arguing the case for God from the reality of and teachings of Jesus the Christ. Again, we must not assume what is to be proved.

There are additional arguments we could offer, but these are sufficient to demonstrate just how one would go about making the case for God. Atheists might employ all sorts of theoretical gymnastics in their vain effort to prevent the "divine foot in the door." But, as theists, we have no such fear and we will not resort to such fanciful fictions to explain origins as "Directed Panspermia," or to suggest that life began "on the backs of crystals." The real delusion should not be laid at the feet of theists, but rather, at the feet of our atheistic opponents.

CONCLUSION

I have for many years referred to the atheistic theories of origins as the "black box" philosophy. The "black box" refers to the reality of the universe! If one assumes that *only the black box exists*, and *nothing outside* the black box is real, then one must search for God within the box if He is to be found at all. Since *God is not within the black box*, the atheist can proudly proclaim, "You see, there is no God within my

black box. Since men believe in a God, they (men) must have created Him instead of the other way around. Therefore, all religions are man-made, and are, as a result, just fanciful fairy tales!” They have simply forgotten one important question: “Where did the “black box” originate?” If it cannot explain itself (and it cannot), then, if we want to understand the truth, we are going to have to search for the answer. The only answer that has ever made any sense at all is: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

This has been an attempt on my part to give the readers a short introduction to the “new atheism” and to their militant opposition to all religions, especially Christianity. It has also been my attempt to dismantle their opposition, and to present an alternative case for God.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

² David Aikman, *The Delusion of Disbelief* (Carol Stream, IL: Saltriver, 2008), 35.

³ Quentin Smith, “The Metaphilosophy of Naturalism,” *Philo: A Journal of Philosophy* (Fall-Winter 2001).

⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006), 31.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 232, 286-88, 293-94, for examples of his rejection of ethical absolutes.

⁷ Ibid., 36.

⁸ Daniel C. Dennett, *Breaking the Spell* (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2006), 265.

⁹ Daniel C. Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (New York, NY: Little, Brown, and Company, 1991), 33.

¹⁰ Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 8-9.

¹¹ Ibid., 10.

¹² Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York, NY: Twelve, 2007), 102.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 110.

¹⁶ Ibid., 110-11.

¹⁷ R.C. Sproul, *If There is a God, Why are There Atheists: A Surprising Look at the Psychology of Atheism* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Books, 1978), *passim*.

¹⁸ Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press, 2008), 320-36.

¹⁹ Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Von Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1968), 149.

²⁰ Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means: An Inquiry into the Nature of Ideas and into the Methods Employed for their Realization* (New York, NY: Harper, 1937), 312, 316.

²¹ Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 130-31.

²² This is from a piece in the *New York Review of Books* (January 9 1997), quoted by J. Budziszewski in "The Second Tablet Project," *First Things* (June/July 2002).

²³ *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), 16-17.

²⁴ John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), chapter 2.

²⁵ Paul M. Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Robert A. Morey, *The New Atheism and the Erosion of Freedom* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1986), 101-102.

²⁹ *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* (Premise Media Corporation, 2008).

³⁰ Bill Maher, to host Joe Scarborough, on *Scarborough Country*, posted online (18 February 2005).

³¹ Joseph Lewis, *The Bible Unmasked* (New York, NY: Freethought Publishing Co., 1926), 15.

³² Bertrand Russell and F. C. Copleston, "A Debate on the Existence of God," in *The Existence of God*, 13th ed., ed. John Hick (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 185.

³³ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁴ Barker, 213.

³⁵ Lee Carter, *Lucifer's Handbook* (Van Nuys, CA: Academic Associates, 1977), 86.

³⁶ *Expelled*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* Sir Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Evolution from Space: A Theory of Cosmic Creationism*. The authors are agnostic toward God, but due to their convincing argumentation that life could not have been spontaneously generated on the earth, they were forced (in their own way of thinking) to search outer space for their answers. They actually agree about the impossibility of non-living matter giving rise to life on earth, with Charles B. Thaxton, Walter L. Bradley, and Roger L. Olsen. *The Mystery of Life's Origin: Reassessing Current Theories*. (Philosophical Library, January 19, 1984). There is a fascinating Foreword to this book by Dean Kenyon, former evolutionist and Professor Emeritus of Biology from San Francisco State University.

³⁹ Richard Taylor, *Metaphysics*, 2nd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), 105-106.

THEY SAY, “RELIGION IS THE CURSE OF THE WORLD”

Gabriel Rodriguez



Gabriel Rodriguez was born in Dallas, Texas. He is married to the former Isela Vasquez, and they are the parents of three girls. Rodriguez graduated from Southwest School of Bible Studies. He earned an A.A. Degree in Psychology from College of the Mainland, and a B.A. Degree in Theology from Heritage Christian University. Rodriguez preaches for the Shenandoah Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas. He is the director of the annual Shenandoah Lectureship.

INTRODUCTION¹

Is religion a blessing or a curse to mankind? A large consensus of people believe that religion is the main cause for most of the world's problems. They think religion is responsible for racism and bigotry, oppression of the poor, polygamy, wars, hatred, greed, extortion, deception, and many other human vices. Many clamor that organized religious bodies are global threats and usher no real blessings to humanity. As we analyze these claims, we want to render the line of demarcation between God and mankind. In other words, is God or mankind to be blamed for the way people view religion?

Disappointed with the inane actions of organized religious bodies, a popular philosophy has burgeoned among humanity. Given rise in Genesis 3:1-7, and headlined during the classical middle ages, the philosophy of *Humanism* has permeated society. But what is Humanism? Humanism is a progressive philosophy which states that man is capable of directing his/her life without the aid of God, or any other supernatural belief. In other words, man can lead his life to personal fulfillment without the aid of religion and its adherents. Because Humanists say religious organizations have failed to foster a better life for humanity, instead of searching for the true reason why religious organizations have defaulted, they have decided to trust in themselves for direction and guidance. So the lingering question still remains: “Is God and His will be blamed for the religious meltdown in our society or does mankind shoulder responsibility?”

IN THE BEGINNING

Since many have blamed religious institutions for many, if not most of the world's problems, let us notice how things began. The etymological meaning of the word "religion" speaks of man's innate desire to serve and worship his Creator. This is clearly seen in the creation of Adam and Eve. Each was created with an innate desire to serve and worship God (cf. Gen. 1:26; Ex. 20:2-4). Thus, Adam and Eve paid continual praise unto the true and living God, pondering upon Him daily, enacting His divine wisdom and dictums in their lives (cf. Gen. 2:16-17; 3:8). One then can conclude that man was made for the sole purpose of religion—to serve and worship God, committing himself to all of His commandments on earth (cf. Eph. 2:10).

But as the ages of men advanced into their posterity, the true and initial concept of religion has been skewed. Rather than signifying an innate internal devotion to God and His Word, religion became *individualized* and *sensual*. This transformation can be traced back to the induction of sin by the crafty serpent (cf. Gen. 3). Satan had persuaded Eve that her thoughts and actions were on a par with God's authority. Consequentially, Eve was deceived and man's religion was no longer based upon God and His Word, which provided direction, peace, and tranquility. Instead, it shifted to an individualistic autocracy where man's thoughts and ways became his wake in life (cf. Gen. 3:6; Jas. 1:14). This malevolent ideology had grave and deadly repercussions leading to evil practices: murder (Gen. 4:8-11), polygamy (Gen. 4:19), violence (Gen. 4:23), marauding gangs (Gen. 6:4), sodomy (Gen. 9:22), and many more deleterious actions. In the beginning, man was set for true religion, but after Satan convoluted the nature of religion, true religion regressed to vain religion, resulting in self-worship rather than Godly worship (cf. Rom. 1:25). Once sin imbued the mental faculties of man, man was convinced that he could live his own life according to his ways and standards (Pro. 14:12). This prevarication set the stage for an assault on God's scheme of redemption.

THEY HISS AND WAG THEIR HEADS!

As the nation of Israel was reared to be a beacon of virtue among all the families of the earth through example (cf. Amos 3:2; Deut. 4:6-9; Jon. 3:1-9), what God truly desired of them ultimately resulted in Israel's regression into apostasy. This was largely based upon unconquered pagan (i.e., worldly) influences that God had commanded Israel

to completely obliterate as they conquered the land of Canaan (cf. Deut. 7:1-6; Josh. 23; Isa. 1:4). The remnant of paganism led to a spirit of rebelliousness which eventually grew and prevailed among Israel, resulting in catastrophic actions: rape (Jgs. 19-20), unauthorized killings (Ezek. 34:1-3; Mic. 3:2-3; 7:12), extortion (Ezek. 22:13), human sacrifice (Jer. 19:5), covetousness and avarice (Isa. 56:9-11; Mic. 2:2), drug use resulting in malevolent behavior (Lev. 10:2-10; Isa. 28:7-9; 56:12), bribery and deception (Isa. 1:23), inadequate care of orphans and widows (Isa. 1:23), household friction (Mic. 7:6), and oppression of the poor (Mic. 2:2). Actions perpetuated solely by pagan nations had evolved within the walls of sanctified Israel.

Consequentially, the wisdom of "righteous" Israel was rejected by their pagan neighbors because their sinful actions belied their holy message (cf. Deut. 4:6-8; Rom. 2:1-3, 21-23). If Jehovah was the only true and living God who directs all men with His Holy will, then why was it that those who had been chosen to proclaim His Holy message did not follow it themselves? This culminated in the pagans' disenchantment with God, His will, and His people—"All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call The perfection of beauty, The joy of the whole earth?" (Lam. 2:15). Since Israel failed in representing God, their godly efforts were stifled, and their cause for righteousness became a relic in the history of men. Israel's religion, which had initially been based upon adhering faithfully to God and His will, had become irrelevant in the eyes of men (cf. Ex. 19:5-7; Deut. 30:15-20).

But, has anything changed in the 21st century? Have the examples of Israel been relived among God's people today? Has our comportment made the system of Christianity relevant or irrelevant in today's society?

VACUOUS RELIGION

Israel's examples of impropriety were secured for the purpose of teaching citizens of Christ's kingdom the dangers of making void their religion. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10, commented on Israel's inveterate complaining and murmuring in the wilderness, as well as their penchant for idolatry. In verse 11, Paul concluded: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (cf. Rom.

15:4; Heb. 3:7-14). The past served to teach the present of pitfalls to avoid and overcome. Unfortunately, the message fell on deaf ears. Instead of learning from Israel's mistakes, the citizens of Christ's kingdom followed suit. Sin had once again taken captive a people who had the responsibility of being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Mt. 5:13-14). These sins included: murmuring and complaining (Phil. 2:14), division (1 Cor. 1:10-16; 11:18-22; 12:24-26), carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-3), arrogance/pride (1 Cor. 4:6; 3 Jn. 9-10), fornication (1 Cor. 5:1-2; 6:9-10), law suits against each other (1 Cor. 6:1-7), idolatry (1 Cor. 8:1-5; 1 Jn. 5:21), murder (Jas. 5:1-5; 1 Jn. 3:11-17), a paucity of love for each other (1 Cor. 13:1-7), and congregational disruption and chaos (1 Cor. 14). "Old Israel" had resurfaced in "New Israel" (cf. Rom. 11:25-12:21). The recurring message voiced by Jesus and the apostles was that of being "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22; cf. Mt. 12:33-34).

As a result of sinful and feckless lives, the system of religion was seen as vacuous. Because Christians did not purport a true spiritual life, Christianity, for the most part, became a dead religion. Thus, the reason James voiced: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this ... to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). Christians' improprieties dealt a vicious blow to the cause of God and His will. If the system of Christianity was going to be relevant in society, the actions of God's people had to be spiritually maintained and pristine. For it was Jesus who said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16). The apostle Peter followed suit by saying: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12; cf. 2:15; 3:16). Along the same vein, Paul said: "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Cor. 3:2). Donning Christ in character means much more than orally voicing His message of love and salvation; it means to live as Christ lived (cf. 1 Jn. 2:6).

WHO IS TO BLAME FOR RELIGIOUS DISGUST?

So, why has the majority of mankind revolted against the idea of religion? Is God or His Word to be blamed? Has the Bible produced caustic and gratuitous behavior among society? Nay! The lack of honor

and respect seen in our world for religious organizations, their doctrines and practices, has nothing to do with God or His law. This is the oxymoron. The true blame for religious disgust falls squarely upon the actions of men who in essence have led their lives by the philosophy of Humanism. In truth, Humanism has been the generating cause for much of society's deterioration. When men lead themselves by their own thoughts apart from the wisdom of God, their actions become filled with hubris and selfishness. Such conduct has spawned wicked vicissitudes of life.

Contrast this with the message of the Bible which speaks of God as Holy and Righteous (Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:5-16), pure in all things (Pro. 15:26; Hab. 1:13), where no darkness exists (1 Jn. 1:5), a hater of all evil and wickedness (Ps. 5:4), and a lover of truth (Ps. 86:15; 89:14). God's product, His Word, is described as "perfect ... right, rejoicing the heart ... pure ... true ... righteous" (Ps. 19:7-9), and "profitable" making all men "perfect," furnishing him with all "good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, the Word of God teaches us to be humble (Mt. 5:3; Jas. 4:10), peacemakers (Mt. 5:9; Rom. 12:18), merciful (Mt. 5:7; 6:12; 18:21-34), to love our neighbors and enemies (Mt. 5:43-44; 22:39; Jn. 13:34; Jas. 2:8-9), to speak words of kindness to all men (Col. 4:6; Eph 4:15, 32; Pro. 15:1), to harbor no prejudice against any (Gal. 3:28), to be hospitable, benevolent, and generous (Mt. 25:34-46; Acts 2:44-45; Rom. 12:13; Gal. 6:10), to show no respect of persons (Jas. 2:9), to put away anger, clamor, and evil speaking (Eph. 4:31; 5:3-5), to be self controlled, long suffering, patient, and gentle (Gal. 5:21-22), to be hard workers (Col. 3:22-23; 2 Thess. 3:10), to work quietly and mind our own business (1 Thess. 4:11), and to respect and honor the governments of this world (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-3; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:17).

In other words, the Word of God produces citizens that are respectable, honorable, trustworthy, righteous, and holy. These types of citizens are a blessing to any nation (Pro. 14:34). Contrast this with those who wish to direct their own paths in life. When people have no direction in life and do what is right in their own eyes, all manners of evil are perpetuated in society (cf. Jgs. 2:10-23; 19-20; 21:25). The results of such conduct are disastrous. When man applies Humanism to his wake, problems quickly ensue—"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Pro. 14:12). This is why the prophet Jeremiah instructed: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to

direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). In concert, the Psalmist uttered: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). God has taught us the way of wisdom and has led us in the right paths (Pro. 4:11). The lies of Satan, who has convinced many to abandon reason and the Scriptures, have led to the demise of religion.

IN THE NAME OF RELIGION

Because God and His will have been replaced by wicked and Humanistic thoughts and philosophies of men, pernicious actions have sullied the name of God and religion (cf. Col. 2:8). Throughout history men have distorted the Scriptures to feed their own bellies. Peter said of Paul’s epistles, “... some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pet. 3:16). Paul said: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Paul further stated: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14).

In the name of religion, men have twisted, obfuscated, and distorted the Scriptures to fit *their* agenda, not *God’s*. Thus, “religious” men and organizations have committed murder, coveted, made war, and defiled marriages—all in the name of God and religion. Actions that God condemned, “religious” men and organizations have blatantly and flagrantly committed. When sin is practiced long enough, the danger that entrenches men is self-deception. Men convince themselves they are doing the will of God, but in actuality they have become servants of sin (cf. Jn. 16:2; Rom. 6:13-17; Rev. 3:9,17).

Therefore, it is not God, His will, nor is it the true nature of religion that has caused the world’s problems, but rather men who have rejected the wisdom of God, choosing to lead themselves by themselves, which has been the flaw of society. Thus, the undirected and ungodly actions of men have rendered God and His cause insignificant in the eyes of many. It must be questioned: “What can we do to reverse this unfortunate trend?” “Where can we start in reestablishing religion as it used to be?” “What can be done to propel religion as the paragon for today’s

society?" To answer these queries, let us begin by asking, "Where have we gone awry?"

WHERE HAVE WE GONE AWRY?

Lack Of Study

The Israelites were responsible in memorizing the Word of God since the Old Testament was not readily available to them (cf. Deut. 6:6-9; Ezra 7:10; Ps. 119:11). Once the Word of God was fastened to their mental synapses, they were able to meditate upon it day and night (Ps. 1:2-3). To have the Word of God constant in their minds would result in a life befitting godliness (Pro. 4:23). The Word of God would lead and guide them from their laborious affairs of youth to their resting years of life (Ps. 119:9; Ecc. 12:13). The Word of God would help them to avoid and traverse macabre paths of life (Ps. 119:97-104). The Word of God would serve them as light in a dark world (Ps. 119:105). But, instead of taking heed to the salubrious benefits of God's Word, the Israelites rejected God's knowledge (Hos. 4:6; Jer. 18:15; Mal. 2:6-8). And, this rejection of knowledge resulted in a lifestyle that was an affront to God's holiness and purity.

In like manner, Christians are responsible in studying and memorizing God's Word (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-16). Every moral decision that we will have to make, every character development that we will undergo, will only be successful if we allow them to be guided through Holy Scriptures (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3). The Word of God was given so that every temptation of life may be dealt with and conquered (cf. Mt. 4:4-8; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 2:11; 2 Pet. 1:4). The Word of God was given so that our lives may produce good works unto God, works that seek to bring honor and glory to God, His Son, and His church (cf. Mt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:17; Tit. 3:1,14).

Lack Of Discipline

Equally important as the induction of God's knowledge into our minds is the volition of man (i.e., will power). Without self-discipline, knowledge becomes useless. If we know what we ought to do, but doeth it not, James says it is sin (Jas. 4:17). The thrust of the Shema recorded in Deuteronomy 6:5 reveals that loving the Lord must be evinced through our heart, soul, and might. Interestingly, these words have reference to the psychology of man. The word "might" has reference to the will and vitality of man. In the New Testament, "might" is translated "strength," and is connected with the word "mind"

(cf. Lk. 10:27). In essence, might speaks of strength of mind. We must possess a dogged determination to complete the injunctions God has given us. This is seen in the example of Joseph, who when confronted with a solicitation of adultery in a private setting, recalled the marriage law of God, summoned his strength of mind, rejected the invitation of sin, and voiced: “[H]ow then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ... he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out” (Gen. 39:9, 12).

Likewise, Christians need to possess strength of mind if the message of Christianity is to be the power of influence in our world. Paul said: “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5). Christians are to destroy imaginations (reason, thoughts) and every high thing (hubris, pride) that exalts itself against God’s knowledge. In other words, we are to take vile thoughts augmented by pride and subjugate them to the knowledge that we possess in Christ’s Word. We are to replace impious thoughts with the sacred Word of God. Implied in this verse is our strength to wrestle thoughts of this world and make them subservient to Christ. This is what is meant when Paul said Christians were to renew their minds in the knowledge of Christ (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10). Each day, our thoughts must go through a cycle. As baneful thoughts come in, they are quickly cycled and replaced with the power of God’s Word. The key is to quickly deal with our enemy, rather than allowing him to fester causing us to act upon morbid and sinful thoughts. Each day we are to “... cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor 7:1).

The choice of not imbuing the mind with God’s Word because of our lack of discipline to read, study, and meditate will ultimately render feckless lives. Hence, Christianity, a source for good and holiness in this world, has become the laughing stock of society. We who claim to follow Christ disown Him through the lives that we bear. Should we then be surprised that religion is seen as the curse of the world?

THE LAUGHING STOCK OF SOCIETY

The impotency of Christianity is due largely to those who claimed themselves to be Christians. Instead of remaining solid and steadfast in the faith, many default on their integrity of Scripture and have wildly embraced emotions, worldly passions, and weakened spirits (cf. 1 Cor.

4:6). This has resulted in a series of aberrations. What Christ established 2,000 years ago (one body, one head, one organizational structure, one system of belief, one hope, one baptism, and one God), has been replaced with innumerable religious divisions and doctrines (cf. Jn. 17:20-21; 1 Cor. 1:10). These divisions have given rise to motley organizations, systems and practices of beliefs, and church nomenclatures. Today, there are just a few congregations which have a semblance of Christ's church built in the long ago. It is no wonder then that the light of religion in the 21st century has waned. The church, responsible for maintaining and reflecting God's light into the world (Phil. 2:16), has become acclimated to society attenuating its power among men.

As men become benighted of God's Word, carnality reigns in its stead. Thus, leaders of impotent "Christian" churches have gone beyond the Word of God and have perpetuated "religious dogmas" which have sullied the very essence of religion. Religion, by its very nature, seeks to please God and help all mankind, yet man's ways have led to ravaging of the poor by robbing them of their wealth through the sale of indulgences and religious artifacts, massacring thousands of innocent folks for the procurement of land and wealth, and inciting riot and capital punishment when the upper echelon's doctrines are not met. Straw men of God, guided by their own reason and bellies, such as the prophet Balaam, have caused many to look at Christianity as the laughing stock of society.

CONCLUSION

The rise of Humanism in our society is due largely to our failures as God's people. It is no wonder that religion is seen as the curse of the world—for those who voice righteousness and holiness in this world are guilty of sin and shame. How then will the world react to the only hope that men have in society (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7)? If we are unable to conquer sin in our lives, if we cannot master maturity in the will of God, if we fail to meet the standards for righteous living, then who will do it? Will those who guide themselves through Humanistic ways and philosophies fulfill the demands that God has set? Clearly not! Humanism is not the solution, rather it is the problem.

The Word of God was written to guide all men and help them through their affairs of life. Peter said, concerning God and His powerful Word: "[H]is divine power hath given unto us all things that

pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). Ultimately, the Word of God was given so that it might produce in all men virtue. Virtue is defined as moral excellence. When we are morally excellent, this benefits all humanity. We will be kind to another, we will respect one another, we will be benevolent to another, we will cherish one another, and we will aid one another regardless of color, race, culture, and ethnicity. The bounty of God’s Word flourishes throughout life with beauty, wonder, grace, and mercy. If only people would seek its worth, as they do with treasures of life, religion would become more attractive to the masses of the world.

For who would not want to live in a society where mutual respect and honor are commonplace? Who would not want to reside in a community where love and peace reign? When the Scriptures are replaced with man’s thoughts and philosophies, it renders a society teeming with sin and violence. The more we depart from God and His Word, the more we embrace cultures which seek to destroy each other. The deception of Satan has been to convince folks that we do not need God and His Word, and that we can live unto ourselves. This simply is not the case. For when we do, all types and manners of ill behavior rise to prominence.

It is time that we take back our lives from the deceit of Satan and begin conducting ourselves in a manner befitting sound doctrine (2 Tim. 1:13). Those claiming to be of Christ must possess the seal of God—“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19). The seal of God is departing from all sin and iniquity. If we would submit to this injunction each and every day, then religion would be seen as a positive, not a negative. People of society will have a greater respect for us. They will say: “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day” (Deut. 4:6-8).

Indeed, God’s law is truly profitable. Man, apart from God, is destined for ruin and disgrace. It is up to God’s people to show humanity the wonderful blessings of living by God’s standards (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1-2). When we live as we have been called to, we will then be

unto this world "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Our religion then becomes relevant in a society damaged by sin. Let us ultimately defeat Satan who has robbed this society of its true desire and love for the Almighty God. May God be praised!

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

THEY SAY, “THEY KNOW WHAT GIVES TRUE MEANING TO LIFE”

Mel Hutzler



Mel Hutzler was born in San Antonio, Texas and is married to the former Melanie Reeves. They have two sons and are expecting another child in February. Hutzler received his education from San Antonio College, Abilene Christian University, Southwest School of Bible Studies and earned a B.S. degree from Southern Christian University. He has worked with congregations, all in Texas, at Marshall, Buna, Boyd, and is now with the Northern Oaks Church of Christ in San Antonio.

INTRODUCTION¹

The quest for the true meaning of life has long beleaguered man. Philosophers and poets have attempted in vain to discover the “true meaning” for their lives. Their empty conclusions have been the lot of millions who have tried to explain life’s true purpose apart from God’s existence. The 1960s radical movement brought this into the spotlight. Numerous “encounters” were suggested to a gullible generation as methods to establish true meaning and purpose in life. Others retreated to groups or subcultures (for examples, the “beatniks” and “hippies”) who attempted to explain “true meaning” in absurd terms. Others tried psychedelia only to find a greater emptiness in their existence. These futile efforts illustrate another tragic failure of Humanism—an existence with no purpose or meaning!

Humanism cannot tell us what the true meaning of life is; for it has rejected God, who alone gives true meaning to life. In the end, Humanism offers a view of life which results in monotony, tediousness, and vanity! Common sense dictates the emptiness of Humanism. On the other hand, the Bible shows that because there is a God in Heaven, a man’s life can have true meaning. Let us consider these two views as we study the true meaning of life.

THE HUMANISTIC VIEW OF LIFE

Robert L. Waggoner states:

Humanism is the primary modern philosophical enemy of Christianity. Even so, most Christians know little, if anything

about it—what it is, or how it functions. The term “humanism” has been around since the Renaissance, although only recently has the man on the street begun to use it. Many who do use the term do not sufficiently understand its ideals and concepts.²

Since Humanism arrays itself against Christianity, and since so many of God’s people know so little on the subject, it is important that we know the Humanists’ view of life. We want to begin by noticing that they say they know what gives true meaning to life, but:

Their Beliefs In Life Are Assertions

Even though many Humanists deny that Humanism is a religion, they do have definite beliefs: The website www.infidels.org³ contains a copy of the Humanist Manifesto, and among their beliefs are the following assertions:

1. The universe is self-existing, and not created, and man is a product of evolution.
2. They reject the concept of a personal God and regard humans as supreme. The Humanist Manifesto declares: “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”⁴ It is worthy to note that what they claim they cannot discover, God says is clear to all (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 19:1-2).
3. They reject divinely inspired ethical and moral codes in favor of codes derived by reason from the human condition.
4. They feel that religious groups’ “*promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.*”⁵

Their Goal In Life Is The Deification Of Man

When *Humanist Manifesto II* was written in 1973, it declared: “No deity will save us,” and “we must save ourselves.” They were echoing only what Satan told Eve in the Garden, i.e., “you will be like God” (Gen. 3:5). Schlossberg called Eve the first Humanist, and noted that Satan used a *religious argument* to persuade Eve. Schlossberg remarks: “She could be like God, having knowledge and power. She could be wise *apart* from God. The physical attraction of the fruit clearly was intended to be ancillary. What was to be fed was her pride, and what would grow was her appetite for self-worship.”⁶ A number of Biblical

passages expose the folly of human pride's desire for self-worship. The builders of the Tower of Babel desired to "make a name" for themselves (Gen. 11:4). Habakkuk wrote of guilty men whose own might is their god (Hab. 1:11). The king of Tyre was judged, because his heart was proud, and he said, "I am a god" (Ezek. 28:2). In fact, Arnold Toynbee concluded that, "self-worship was the paramount religion of mankind, although its disguises are numerous."⁷ Schlossberg rightly observes, "that we do not hear people saying 'I am God', rather what we hear is people ascribing the attributes of deity to man, such as sovereignty (or autonomy), complete rationality, and moral perfection."⁸ Thus, in 1973, here is what the Humanists looked for in the future:

The next century can and should be the humanistic century. We have virtually conquered the planet; overcome the natural limits of travel and communication. Using technology wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our life span, significantly modify our behavior, alter the course of human evolution, unlock vast new powers.⁹

New York painter Willem de Kooning went so far as to say: "The past does not influence me; I influence it."¹⁰

Their Ethics In Life Are Hostile

Humanists are hostile to any notion of law that is external to man. This is one reason why they are so antagonistic to Christianity. The website religioustolerance.org proclaims that Humanists believe that an excellent code of ethics can be created through reason. Of course the ethics that they have created include:

1. Abortion on demand and euthanasia.
2. Homosexuality and homosexual marriage.
3. The sexual revolution of the 1960s that produced the "Era of No-shame."
4. The presence of "political correctness."
5. The attack on personal responsibility and accountability for one's behavior, treating even the worst criminals as victims.
6. In fact, it would be accurate to say that the moral decay that has taken place in this nation is the direct result of man attempting to create his own values apart from God. Yet our society is not the first to try and fail at this experiment (Rom. 1:20ff).

Their Value In Life Is Vanity

While Humanists talk a lot about "facts" and "reason," the real foundation of their moral code is neither. Joseph Fletcher, the father of situation ethics, claimed: "Nothing is inherently good or evil, except love."¹¹ Yet, Fletcher did not mean "love" as defined in Scripture, which is always operating within the framework of divine truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Once a person rejects any absolute truth or final standard, then "love" becomes nothing more than "sentiment," "feelings," or how you feel at the moment. Schlossberg notes: "Humanism raises sentiment to a level of command; it stresses feeling rather than thought. That is what makes sentimentality so vicious. People can get good feelings from almost anything."¹² The American Humanist Association wrote: "We base our ethical decisions and ideals upon human needs and concerns."¹³ Yet without any objective standard of truth, and each man being his own moral lawgiver, a human "need" could be murder, adultery, genocide, *et cetera*. Thus, Fletcher came to the conclusion: "In some situations unmarried love could be infinitely more moral than married love. Lying could be more Christian than telling the truth. Stealing could be better than respecting private property."¹⁴ Of course, one glaring contradiction here is what about the concern and needs of the person to whom you lied, or cheated? In Eric Goldman's book we find the following:

J. Allen Smith of the University of Washington, one of the many crusaders against the old morality, used to worry about where it would all lead. "The real trouble with us reformers," he said, "is that we made reform a crusade against standards. Well, we smashed them all, now neither we nor anybody else have anything left."¹⁵

Once a person had removed all external laws and the idea of absolute truth, then love without law is nothing more than human sentiment and it is *always self-serving*. When a person really wants to do something, there will be no action so evil that it cannot and will not be said to be motivated by love. Thus, Humanism is the classic example of "lawlessness" (1 Jn. 3:4; Mt. 7:22-23; 2 Tim. 3:2-5).

Their Life Is Filled With Contradictions

1. Humanism starts out by claiming that man is the measure of things, but in the end, it pours hatred and contempt upon the human race. The reason for this is that the creature cannot act

like the Creator, and people who expect men not to act like a sinner (Rom. 3:23) end up disillusioned. Humanists have a hard time reconciling their faith in the absolute goodness of man and, at the same time, their fear, distrust and contempt for the common man. Schlossberg explains: “The better educated he is, the more likely the humanist is to believe that people are like machines and need to be programmed, and the more likely he is to believe that he should be one of the programmers.”¹⁶ Humanists, who do not believe in any divine rules, end up believing that “autonomous man” needs a lot of rules, which are given by a powerful elite.

2. Humanists claim to believe in the dignity of man; yet, there is no proof of human dignity if one rejects the teachings of Scripture. Where is the proof of human dignity outside of divine revelation? And, does not the practice of abortion contradict the claim of human dignity and value?
3. The faith that is willing to exalt human beings to a divine status is nevertheless the willing to kill them for personal gain. Schlossberg says: “While stressing the special worth of human beings; it says they must not be kept alive if that would cost too much (or be an inconvenience for someone else).”¹⁷
4. They claim to only believe what they can observe and see, and yet Humanism has spawned pop psychologies that encourage sentimental introspection. Schlossberg affirms: “Therapy is the attempt to manipulate a sense of well-being rather than seeking it in convictions about truth and reality.”¹⁸
5. Humanism claims to be able to bring a higher morality, yet what it brings is just more of the old immorality. Who would have ever thought that people would one day claim that it is both rational and moral to be a homosexual (Rom. 1:25ff; Isa. 5:20)?

Their View On Life Is Hanging In Midair

To this day, many people still believe in marriage, genuine love, respect for other people, respect for the law, the work ethic, and other virtues rooted in Biblical revelation. Many of these values still remain, but increasingly, in our culture, they are now cut off from the Biblical foundation, and gradually these values are seen as hanging in midair. Many people still believe in such things, but they no longer know why,

and they no longer believe in anything that would prohibit the complete opposite. So, let us not only remind people of the "why" but, equally demonstrate by our example, how joyfully abundant life can be when divine virtues are embraced and understood.

WHAT IF THEY ARE RIGHT?

If Humanists are right (and there is no God and man is to be deified), then it really does not amount to much. First, we are told to change our attitudes, and meaning will be found in life! The old cliché orders: "If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade!" This is the prescription offered by Humanism. It suggests that our thought processes can change everything that is uncomfortable in life. We are told that our inner vision can lift us above life's petty ills. A big problem exists in this counsel—changing our attitudes does not erase the haunting question: "Why are we here?" A change of attitude does not replace aimless existence with a defined agenda for living. The monotony and pointlessness of life remain, no matter how successful we become at ignoring this real question! Man needs more than an adjusted attitude to make life meaningful. We need more than a change in scenery to tranquilize our cancerous boredom!

Second, it is suggested that we should avoid questioning life's meaning. This approach encourages us to ignore the issue. Humanism claims that "true meaning" in life is subjective and cannot be measured with objectivity. How, then, can Humanists contend that some lives are not "worth" living (i.e., those born impaired, the aged, the incurable, or others whom they select as subjects for euthanasia)? How can Humanism contend that some lives are "worth" living while other lives are "worthless" if we cannot ask for meaning? Again, ignoring this issue does not give life true meaning or value. Ignoring the question requires humans to live as unthinking robots. Voltaire revealed the absurdity of trying to ignore the question of life's meaning when he said: "Man is a stranger to his own research. He knows not whence he comes, nor whither he goes. Tormented atoms in a bed of mud, devoured by death, a mockery of fate."¹⁹ Trying to answer the question of life's true meaning by ignoring it only brings great despair!

Third, pursuing pleasure is thought to give true meaning to life. We are told that the cure of all trials, futility, tediousness, and frustration is pleasure, but this answer fails to bring satisfaction. Some "party" through life, only to find compounded emptiness. Pleasure alone cannot

free us from the agony of meaningless existence. Our society has access to all that should make life pleasurable—labors are lightened, medical advances are astonishing, and entertainment is abundant. Modern man is freed from the thousands of tyrannies that once spoiled happiness. We might think that those living in our age would be the most contented of all civilizations; yet, even with access to these wonderful advancements, we find paralyzing apathy, terrifying fears, and agonizing emptiness. The chains of meaningless existence have not been broken! Why? “When the pleasure button is repeatedly pressed and can no longer deliver or sustain, the emptiness that results is terrifying.”²⁰ While Humanism advises us that when we find pleasure we will find meaning, the tragic reality is that true meaningful existence is never found in the pursuit of sordid pleasures.

Fourth, we are told that success in life brings true meaning. It is suggested that once we have “made it,” life will have meaning. This is but another of Humanism’s lies. Millions of lives testify to the fact that success in business, riches, fame, and glory do not bring true meaning to life.

Wall Street and Hollywood are filled with illustrations showing that success does not bring meaning to life. Again, Humanism fails to answer the pressing issue. Humanism tells us that life’s meaning can be found in an attitude change, in pleasure, in success, or in creativity. On the contrary, these things only bring feelings of greater futility! True meaning and purpose in life cannot be found in these phantoms of hope. Our society is wandering aimlessly. It is drowning in despair because it has followed the channels of Humanism.

SOLOMON’S SURVEY OF LIFE

We should be thankful that we are not left with the vanity of Humanism to explain life’s true meaning. Faith in God is able to offer meaning and purpose to life. The Book of Ecclesiastes holds the explanation to the pressing question of life’s meaning.

Ecclesiastes is a book written by a man who searched for the true meaning of life. Solomon, the author, discussed all aspects of life in an effort to explain the purpose and meaning for living. Throughout this marvelous book we find discussions about life’s frustrations, pseudo-success, sexuality, jobs, justice, friends, religion, joy, suffering, and emptiness. We are told that some people will find life void of meaning—they become cynical. Others will view life as refreshing and

fulfilling. What is the difference between these two groups? How can people see the same existence in such diverse ways? The difference is in their view of God. Those who trust in God are drastically different from those who reject God's existence. This difference is especially visible as the two groups look at life's true meaning.

Those who reject God find life empty. They live selfishly and never find satisfaction. Solomon portrayed this group in tragic terms in Ecclesiastes. (1) They utter a groan of hopeless futility: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Ecc. 1:2). They find no meaning, only despair. (2) They are unable to find true meaning for their lives in success. In Ecclesiastes 2:1-11, Solomon described success as impotent. He had everything: "Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure" (Ecc. 2:10). After he had immersed himself in desires—after his success had brought him to the pinnacle of fame—he said: "I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun" (Ecc. 2:11). (3) Those who reject God rest upon knowledge and wisdom to bring meaning, but it fails them (Ecc. 2:12–17). After Solomon experienced the emptiness of materialism, he sought to find meaning through wisdom (Ecc. 2:12). That, too, failed. "Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me, for all is vanity and grasping for the wind" (Ecc. 2:17). (4) The utter ruin of a meaningless existence awaits those who reject God. "Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun" (Ecc. 2:20; cf. 5:15).

This is how Ecclesiastes depicts those who live by Humanism's tenets. They will find no joy in life and have no hope in death. Their existence will be pointless. No wonder Solomon emphatically pronounced it "vanity"!

Ecclesiastes asserts that life does have true meaning, but true meaning is only possible when we believe in God. This joyful news is announced in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all." "Duty" has been added to the KJV to complete the sentence. Literally, the verse reads, "This is every man" or "This is the whole of man." Thus, Solomon was saying that fearing God and obeying the Sovereign's will "is that which makes man whole, complete, or full."

No one is complete without a proper relationship with God. This relationship comes only by fearing God and keeping His commands.

According to Ecclesiastes, if you live without God, then life is not worth living! Life without God is filled with monotony, vain wisdom, future wrath, and certain death! Those who live life with God find a very different end. Living in fear and obedience to God makes earthly existence valuable and rich (cf. Ecc. 2:24, 25; 3:12, 13, 22; 5:18-19; 8:15; 9:7-9; 11:9). The key to finding true meaning and purpose in life is to “Fear God and keep His commandments” (Ecc. 12:13). Solomon’s investigation revealed this to be “the conclusion.” There is no other answer.

A most interesting fact emerges from Ecclesiastes. Everything that increases the emptiness of Humanism’s philosophy adds joy to those who believe and obey God. We are told by Humanists to change our attitudes to find true meaning in life, but when God is factored into the question, our attitudes will change about everything from birth to death and life in between. The differences in how we deal with life will bring great joy (cf. Ecc. 7:16-17, 21; 11:5, 8). We are told by Humanism to ignore the question of life’s meaning, only to discover that it cannot be ignored. When God is included, we discover that life’s true meaning can be found: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all” (Ecc. 12:13). We are told by Humanism that pleasure pursued will bring meaning. However, we discover that pleasure pursued brings emptiness. When God is factored into the issue, pleasure enhances earthly joy (Ecc. 9:7-9). Humanism tells us that success will bring meaning to life, yet success brings only grief and despair. Only when God is included in our lives can success compound joy and purpose (Ecc. 11:1).

CHRIST’S VIEW OF LIFE—CHRISTIANITY

In contrast to Humanism there is Christianity—Christ’s teachings on the true meaning of life. The character of a man’s teaching is measured by the lives of his pupils. Do you want to see the kind of teacher Jesus was? Look at His pupils! They went out to give their lives away for the Gospel and Christ. It was said of them that they “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6). They had not only learned the great lessons of life from Jesus, but they had caught His spirit. Jesus is still teaching! He tells us how to live successful and triumphant lives that have true meaning.

Internal Values Are Greater Than External Blessings

The majority of people believe that the chief aim in life is to gain external possessions. They spend their money, time, and talent to gain material "things." A man wants a good home, two cars, two televisions, and security in his old age. A desire for comforts and conveniences is not necessarily evil. However, it is sinful and sad when a man gives up the best in life in order to gain such things of much less value.

Think of a man all wrapped up in his business. He gives it his very best. That is all right, if his business does not keep him from serving God. Here is a woman who has a beautiful home. She wants to keep it spotless and comfortable. That is all right, if she does not become a slave to that home. A young man wants to get an education. It is perfectly all right for one to prepare himself for his life's work. But it is wrong if he allows his education to stifle his spiritual life. Many people are doing what is all right in itself, but it is not the best. God wants you to enjoy life, but your spiritual responsibility comes first. Anything that comes between you and God is wrong.

Peace with God is so important (Rom. 5:1). Is it not better to have peace than material possessions? Is there anything better than knowing that your sins have been forgiven and you have the right relationship with God? Jesus says: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Lk. 12:15). He also said: "[S]eek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt. 6:33).

Happiness Comes From Service, Not Selfishness

Jesus said:

You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the

evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust (Mt. 5:38-45).

If more of us would render more unselfish service, our lives would count more for Him. Jesus says: "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it" (Mt. 10:39). The way of real happiness is the way of service to others in the name of Christ.

The Praise Of God Is Sweeter Than The Praise Of Man

Do you hold some position in the work of Christ? Are you working for the glory of God or for the praise of men? Some workers are very faithful and active as long as they have praise, but they quit cold turkey when the shouting dies.

Jesus set a good example for us in this respect. When people said good things about Him, it did not turn His head. When they said evil things about Him, it did not deter Him. He was listening for another voice and one day it came when God said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17). The praise that comes from above is sweeter than the entire world. Work for that praise and let nothing turn you aside from it.

Cleave To The Eternal, Not The Temporal

Jesus tells us to give more time, thought, and money to the eternal and less time and thought to the fleeting things which die with the setting sun. Many members of the church think that the greatest reward of life is to rise high in worldly circles. They are giving their lives to the things which do not count for God, and for which there is no reward in Heaven. If Jesus were here, He would surely say: "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Let us loosen our hold upon the world and take a sure and firm grip upon the things of God! How can we identify ourselves? How can we prove to the world that we are Christians? We can do so simply by reflecting His teaching in our lives.

The Great Teacher stands before us and teaches us the finest lessons of life. Are you willing to learn the lessons? Are you willing to put them into practice? If you follow the Great Teacher, someday you will graduate. On that commencement day you will meet Him and hear Him say: "You have fought a good fight, you have been faithful to me. Well done. Enter into the joys of your Lord." Oh, what a day that will be!

CONCLUSION

We see two ethical standards. One, Christianity, offers logic, meaning, purpose, and practicality. It holds hope for society's longevity. Humanism offers that which is intolerable and unlivable. It portrays no hope, no meaning, and only selfish practices. It dissolves society's foundation. The only abiding "Code of Oughtness" that gives true meaning to life is God's Word, the Holy Bible!

What makes human existence meaningful? According to William Glasser: "There are two qualities which add meaning to life: the need to love and be loved, and the need to feel that we are worthwhile to ourselves and others."²¹ Solomon implied this long ago in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. God loves us, and our true purpose in life is to love and serve Him!

A life that has true meaning possesses great value. This is possible because of the following truths. First, a fear of God brings us into a proper relationship with Him. This "fear" is awe and reverence. This "fear" puts God in His proper place of authority for guiding earthly life. Second, keeping His commands affords a consistent lifestyle and assures us of great joy (cf. Ps. 119:97). Third, living obediently will prepare us for God's judgment. Every deed will be judged by the Holy Father. This reveals that God is concerned enough about us to inspect our lives. His concern about every aspect of our lives underscores the fact that our lives have meaning and value!

Those who ignore and reject God will face earthly existence with a fear that life holds neither value nor meaning. Honesty compels them to view themselves as "tormented atoms in a bed of mud, devoured by death, a mockery of fate."²² Humanists must face "the conclusion" of Ecclesiastes 12:13. The choice for all is clear—it is either Ecclesiastes 1:2 or 12:13. What is your purpose for your earthly existence?

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² Robert L. Waggoner, *Insights into Humanism*.
<http://www.thebible1.net/biblicaltheism/insighthuman.htm#_ftn13>

³ For more information on what Humanists believe please view the following website: <<http://www.americanhumanist.org>>

⁴ Paul Kurtz, *Humanist Manifestos I and II* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), 13.

⁵ Kurtz, 16.

⁶ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction: Christian Faith and Its Confrontation with American Society* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 39.

⁷ Arnold Toynbee, *Reconsiderations, vol. 12 of A Study of History* (Oxford, GB: Oxford University Press, 1946), 488.

⁸ Schlossberg, 40.

⁹ Humanist Manifesto II, 5.

¹⁰ John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 67.

¹¹ Joseph Fletcher, *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1967), 38.

¹² Schlossberg, 46.

¹³ The Humanist 44:1, January-February 1984, 18-19.

<http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/fred_edwards/perspective.html>

¹⁴ Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1966), 34.

¹⁵ Eric Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R., Dee, 2001), 240.

¹⁶ Schlossberg, 87.

¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Voltaire, quoted in Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt Publishers, 1990), 81.

²⁰ Ibid., 86.

²¹ William Glasser, *Reality Therapy* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1965), 9.

²² Zacharias.

THEY SAY, “THEY ADVOCATE A SHARED LIFE IN A SHARED WORLD”

Randy Mabe



Randy Mabe was born in Nashville, Tennessee. He and his wife, the former Sharon Rebmann, have two children and two grandchildren. Mabe received his formal training from Madisonville College of the Bible, Alabama Christian School of Religion, and is now working on a Masters Program at the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver, Colorado. He is the pulpit minister for the Oakey Boulevard congregation in Las Vegas, Nevada. Mabe teaches courses in Hermeneutics and Church History for OABS.

INTRODUCTION¹

An understanding of philosophical eras will help in more clearly seeing the path of travel society is taking today. A lack of understanding in philosophical eras leaves rational thinkers perplexed and confused. Rational thinkers rely upon proper evidence and proper reasoning, logic, by which they make assessments and arrive at conclusions. We will briefly look at the Pre-Modern, Modern and Post-Modern philosophical eras and their working parameters.

PRE-MODERN, MODERN AND POST-MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL ERAS

The Pre-Modern Era includes the ancient times, through the Dark Ages, before transitioning into the Modern Era in the Age of Enlightenment or the Renaissance Period. This era was characterized by religion and superstition. The most important events of this period were the gifts of the inspired Word of God, the Bible, and the institution of the Lord's one church. These will remain constant and true as long as the earth remains and cause tremendous difficulty to all who exalt mankind as the pinnacle of thought and practice. Man received from God, through His Word, the proper basis of thinking in this period. In the Pre-Modern period, evidence was necessary for proper, logical conclusions derived from an inductive method of reasoning. The Bible was looked upon as prime evidence in the process of enquiry due to its

origin, and because it had been time-tested and proven to be true. I do not mean that no other method of reasoning was used, or that all philosophy looked to the Bible with the same intensity, but that the long-standing conclusions of this period were thusly characterized.

The Modern Era of philosophy made a transition in philosophical thought. This era started with the Renaissance and could not escape the leaps in improvements in most areas of life, though viewed solely as accomplishments of mankind alone. In essence, they were viewing the trees and not able to discern the larger picture of the forest. They saw themselves, but not God. Thus, philosophical reasoning of this era still demanded evidence, but the Bible was not to be the origin of proper evidence. The Bible was accused of being like the superstitions of man, thus contrary to reason. The thoughts of mankind were desired as the pinnacle of material to be used as evidence. The thinking of mankind was exalted above the thoughts of God. Isaiah, an inspired, faithful prophet of God said otherwise:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith 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 (Isa. 55:8-9).

We live in the Post-Modern Era today, and have been since the 1960s. It was in that decade of rebellion that God was pronounced and heralded as dead. The transition of philosophical thought has now moved into a new arena where evidence is not required and there are multiple “truths.” It is permissible today to have multiple “truths” that completely contradict each other and supposedly still remain “true.” In essence, there is no “truth.” All thoughts of mankind become supreme with this manner of reasoning. It is no wonder that sects of people openly advocate the removal of the name of God from government buildings and works, the idea of God from the classroom and the exercise of God from daily life. Those who believe in God and accept the Bible as His Word are looked upon with pity and disgust as ignorant, weak fools. Attempts are made to marginalize them in society. It is in this era of philosophical thought that we investigate our topic, “They Advocate a Shared Life in a Shared World.”

THE RELATIONSHIP OF TERMS

There are other words and relationships that have a great bearing on our understanding of the ideologies behind the topic being consid-

ered. The terms “Humanism,” “Progressivism,” and “Rationalism” should be considered for our study. Different philosophies drive the languages of different topics. A distinction needs to be made in these discussions so that a clear understanding is achieved. This principle is followed by good debaters as they define the terms of their proposition at the outset of a debate in order that a proper discussion can lead to a certain conclusion. Good Bible teachers follow the same concept when discussing Biblical themes like “grace,” which can mean different things to different people. A relationship of these terms—“Humanism,” “Progressivism,” and “Rationalism”—is set forward by advocates of the ideology of “A Shared Life in a Shared World.”

As we note in the preamble to this site, we regard everything that concerns politics in the perspective of the political philosophy known as Progressivism. That choice isn’t accidental; it is, rather, driven by the logic of the even more fundamental philosophy known as Humanism.²

And again,

To be more specific, when we discuss politics and civic responsibility, our point of view will be rooted in what is usually called Progressivism; and when the issues are more philosophical, our point of view will reflect the value system known as Humanism.³

Political and civic responsibility discussions include the ways a government governs its people. Philosophical discussions consider the fundamental nature of knowledge or belief systems. Progressivism drives discussions regarding the manner in which a government operates. Humanism drives discussions relative to what and how we may know things. In a great general sense, Humanism drives progressive thought as it is the fundamental position of what we know. Humanism operates in a system of Rationalism.

“Rationalism” is the view that reason aided by observation should serve preeminently as the ground of all of our convictions. Outside of the context of philosophy, rationalism is sometimes said to stand in opposition to romanticism, with its preference for emotion over reason, and also in opposition to the notion of “revelation” as an adequate ground for (usually religious) beliefs. However, perhaps most of all, and most justly, rationalism stands in contrast to authoritarianism, the view that convictions should be grounded in respect for the views of the powerful, influential, or charismatic.⁴

It is obvious in these definitions that the Bible is not an option for the origin of evidence. Science and the scientific method are the choice of secular progressives for their evidence. It is provable that *true* science and *true* Bible knowledge are always in agreement. For instance we know the earth has a round like shape and is not flat, though many people have believed in the flat earth doctrine. The Bible stated this truth about the earth some seven hundred fifty years before the birth of Jesus. It was back then that Isaiah revealed: "It is he [God] that sitteth upon the *circle of the earth*, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers" (Isa. 40:22, emphasis added). Therefore, the science that secular progressives utilize must be different in some way. That which is primarily held as "science" today is based upon hypotheses and theories, no observable or demonstrable facts. Because of this, following the Post-Modern pattern of thinking leads one to the concept that there is a variety of "truths." *True* science is viewed as being impotent in the matter of discovering the origin of the universe while, at the same time, the Big Bang Theory is held as "scientific fact." This "fact," in yoke with the Evolutionary Theory (also held as "scientific fact"), will be used to drive perceived solutions to global problems by secular progressives. Progressive "truths" constantly change and their solutions fail, but genuine truth is fundamental, static and dependable. God's Word is Truth (Jn. 17:17). God does not change (Jas. 1:17). Therefore, His principles do not change, and they are dependable (Ps. 119:89-91).

BASIS AND GOALS

John Dewey and a group of Unitarian ministers wrote and signed a document, in 1933, that listed 15 points of belief in which is found the idea of "A Shared Life in a Shared World." This document is *The Humanist Manifesto I*. In this document, we see the transition of thought directed away from the supposedly outdated idea of God and religion toward the scientific method. Therefore, our public school systems, under the same architect, John Dewey, have been the bully pulpits for this ideology. In a short seventy-five years the ideas of Humanism are in the minds of the majority.

The Fourteenth belief listed in *Humanist Manifesto I* reads:

FOURTEENTH: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls,

and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. *Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world* (emphasis added).⁵

Humanist Manifesto I was set forth as the beliefs of people who exalted man's thinking above God's thinking, and it serves as the theses of religious Humanism. Decades later, *Humanist Manifesto II* was written to remove the language and even an implication that shows Humanism is a religion. But removing the words does not change the characteristic. Notice that this fourteenth belief is established upon a conviction. Secular Progressives deny authoritarianism as an adequate foundation for evidence in their system of Rationalism. Thus, the inconsistencies can be easily seen. Radical change is called for, and that only comes by radical methods. To make these radical changes, Progressivism desires to move in long, slow, deliberate steps over a long period of time and thereby be permitted to sidestep any resistance that should arise. Failure is common when their changes are sought quickly. Health reform in our own country would be an illustration of this principle. Cooperation is a necessity and it is sought either by rhetoric or by force through lack of a good choice. The goal starts to emerge in the thought of economic distribution. This ideology is couched in the words of noble aspiration, "for the common good." We hear the descriptive phrase today of "redistribution of wealth." The last statement ought to rattle the teeth through which these words escape. This started not as a mere goal, but an outright demand—"A Shared Life in a Shared World." This is the belief of the Secular Humanists in politics and civic responsibility. Remember, it is driven by Progressivism.

Belief fifteen continues the thought:

FIFTEENTH AND LAST: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.⁶

Contrary to this assertion by Humanists, we know by experience and observation that not everyone will equally work and achieve. Some will not produce at all—some because they do not possess the physical ability to do so and some by choice. This idea of the Secular Humanists covers every person. It communicates that the wealth and possessions of the worker will be redistributed to the person who has chosen not to produce. Never Never Land fantasy seeking Humanists are looking to achieve a fairyland society, some kind of a Utopia for all mankind, but none exists and never will.

ONE WORLD GOVERNMENT

The elusive Utopia sought through the dictums of *Humanist Manifesto I*, *Humanist Manifesto II* and the more recent Humanist pronouncements necessitate a totalitarian state that socializes society with a forced cooperation for the “common good.” A society where people work for their own good and are philanthropic is not the society sought by Humanist adherents. Today, we hear statements from our own president affirming that no one nation can meet the present-day problems facing mankind. We are told that all nations must come together in one body to be successful in meeting these global challenges. As we consider the *Humanist Manifestos*, it will be plain to see that Humanists are advocating a one world government.

Humanist Manifesto II is more aggressive than *Humanist Manifesto I* in that the movement toward a one world utopian government has become a driven ideology and not just a product of the evolution of mankind. There are seventeen propositions in *Humanist Manifesto II*. A look at propositions twelve through fourteen will demonstrate their views on a one world government. They say:

Twelfth: We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government. This would appreciate cultural pluralism and diversity. It would not exclude pride in national origins and accomplishments nor the handling of regional problems on a regional basis. Human progress, however, can no longer be achieved by focusing on one section of the world, Western or Eastern, developed or

underdeveloped. For the first time in human history, no part of humankind can be isolated from any other. Each person's future is in some way linked to all. We thus reaffirm a commitment to the building of world community, at the same time recognizing that this commits us to some hard choices.⁷

The best option has been set forth as removing national sovereignty and forming a one world community. Who is it that has made this determination? People who adhere to these manifestos set them forth to battle the wealthy elite. But, are those cultural elitists better qualified to make and set forth such decisions for all the rest of us? This statement is their goal, not necessarily the "best option."

According to the Humanists, pride in national origins will not be discouraged. However, under their plan it would not be long before people cease to have pride in their national origin. This is so because there would be no nations (plural); there would be only one. Can you bring yourself to think or speak of the Region of America? Do we not see the results of our wide-open borders to the South? Our cities, even through the mid-sections of our country, are having major demographic shifts because of those who are illegally entering our country. Yet, our government refuses to even use the term "illegal" in describing them but instead uses terms such as "undocumented immigrants." This has had a devastating effect on our economy, especially in times of recession. It is destructive. The truth is spoken in proposition number twelve that this option, if taken, will commit "us to some hard choices."

Even so, the Humanists continue:

Thirteenth: This world community must renounce the resort to violence and force as a method of solving international disputes. We believe in the peaceful adjudication of differences by international courts and by the development of the arts of negotiation and compromise. War is obsolete. So is the use of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. It is a planetary imperative to reduce the level of military expenditures and turn these savings to peaceful and people-oriented uses.⁸

"War is obsolete." This statement is parallel to the idea that we will eradicate poverty on earth! It should be recalled that Jesus said: "For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always" (Mk. 14:7). Yet, the multiple detrimental effects of this kind of thinking on the part of Humanists are monumental. And, you can see which of our leaders adhere to this

principle by their drawdown of our own military and its equipment. When one leader draws down our military resources, the next one has to rebuild at a heavy cost in dollars. If we are attacked, and if we are caught unprepared, the costs—in more ways than one—will be disastrous! Today, our president speaks of unilateral talks with anyone and everyone. Do you really think the nations adhering to Islam would be satisfied with a one world government, one where they would just be participants? Do you really think that you would be better off with a one world government where the Islamic adherents are in charge? The military might of our country has been the salt of the earth in keeping world domination by unscrupulous nations at bay. Someone will have the power, because not everyone will lay down their arms. In that sense, what we spend on our military is for “peaceful and people-oriented uses.”

Incorporating the “fear factor” into the equation, Humanists insist:

Fourteenth: The world community must engage in cooperative planning concerning the use of rapidly depleting resources. The planet earth must be considered a single ecosystem. Ecological damage, resource depletion, and excessive population growth must be checked by international concord. The cultivation and conservation of nature is a moral value, we should perceive ourselves as integral to the sources of our being in nature. We must free our world from needless pollution and waste, responsibly guarding and creating wealth, both natural and human. Exploitation of natural resources, uncurbed by social conscience, must end.⁹

Have you linked the terms “cooperative planning” and “excessive population growth” in this proposition? While the Humanists start out stating that they are in favor of life, they here advocate abortion, which is the taking of life. China has been open about their policies of limiting families to a certain number of children. Have you considered the penalties enforced when these laws are violated? God hates and forbids the shedding of innocent blood, which definitely includes the shedding of the blood of the innocents (Pro. 6:16-19)!

There is language in this fourteenth proposition that should bring to memory the campaign rhetoric of our own recent presidential race. It was repeatedly stated that our country uses 25 percent of the world’s resources while we only constitute 6 percent of the world’s population. This thought communicates the idea that we are guilty of being

materially and socially irresponsible and that we should pay a penalty for our humanitarian violation. This penalty will be in the form of higher taxes and a stifling of our use of resources, which in turn will cause reduced productivity. While some stand and applaud this result, may we ask: "Who will provide the food and financial handouts to the impoverished of the world when our productivity is stifled?"

It is a false idea to think that we expend all of our financial success (due to our productivity and use of resource) only on ourselves. We would have no national debt if we used the profits gained by our productivity only on ourselves. Other nations might be better off as well. Corruption abounds in many of the nations where we send our financial aid. Most of our aid goes into the coffers of the corrupt affluent in some of these nations. There is less incentive to provide for yourself when someone else is providing for you. When the necessity to provide for yourself becomes real, your desire to be productive increases. I am not advocating that we help no one as a nation. We have no objection to helping those who cannot help themselves. These thoughts are presented to help us clearly see some of the dangers posed by these Humanist propositions.

We should also take note of the present attempts to look to international law for remedies in the court cases of our own sovereign country. This is even being done by some United States Supreme Court justices. Many have questioned what the International Court of Justice has to do with deciding matters within the borders of the United States of America. It is the drive of adherents to the principles of these manifestos that is taking us down this path. Israel fully became a nation when she received her national law at Sinai. We will cease to be a nation when we relinquish our sovereignty by assenting to international law in place of the United States Constitution. We will simply be the American Region, i.e., that section of geography under the authority of the one world government.

Corliss Lamont, a Humanist, offers the best summation of this section, stating:

Humanism stands firm in its vision of the social good as including the entire human race. As my fifth point in the Humanist program phrases it, this philosophy "holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress—economic, cultural, and ethical—of all humankind, respective of nation, race or religion." While the sincere Human-

ists strive to the best of their ability to further the good of their family, their local community—city, town or village—their state and their nation, they are continually looking beyond their native land to the world at large and thinking about the well-being of all the peoples of the earth. According to Plutarch, Socrates said that he was “not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world.” In the days of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine stated: “All mankind are my brethren; to do good is my religion.” Later, in the Civil War era, William Lloyd Garrison declared: “My country is the world; my countrymen are mankind.” These are all statements in the true Humanist spirit.¹⁰

UNIVERSAL CONTROL OVER ECONOMIC MATTERS

Adherents to the philosophy expressed in the *Humanist Manifestos* have a desire broader than our own country. The realm of their perceived utopia is the world. No doubt, many times you may have heard the descriptions of how rich we are in America compared to the poverty of the world. It is often said that the average standard of living in the world of all human beings consists of a small shack with a dirt floor, and that the average family wage is less than one thousand dollars per year. I do not know if that is factually accurate, but I do know that the standard of living in America is far above most other countries. A redistribution of the wealth of the world—so that everyone has essentially equal care and wealth—will definitely call for “hard decisions,” and burdens to be borne, by the citizens of this country. Let us look at proposition fifteen of the *Humanist Manifesto II* for a glimpse of the economic requirements which will be necessary to bring about its desire. It stresses:

Fifteenth: The problems of economic growth and development can no longer be resolved by one nation alone; they are worldwide in scope. It is the moral obligation of the developed nations to provide—through an international authority that safeguards human rights—massive technical, agricultural, medical, and economic assistance, including birth control techniques, to the developing portions of the globe. World poverty must cease. Hence extreme disproportions in wealth, income, and economic growth should be reduced on a worldwide basis.¹¹

The United Nations is promoted by these manifestos as the international authority through which “extreme disproportions in wealth, income and economic growth should be reduced.”

World planning for the welfare of all humankind is the highest and broadest level of all. It becomes possible only with a tremendous extension of international organization. A successfully functioning United Nations, with its many specialized agencies, such as the Economic and Social Council, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, and UNESCO, obviously entails some degree of global planning and could lay the foundation for an integrated world economy and political federation.¹²

That statement should cause great concern. What grand scale, truly beneficial accomplishments can you note that should be credited to the United Nations? The United States houses it and financially supports it, but what benefit do we derive from it? Yet, under the Humanists' dictums, the United Nations will have the authority to greatly reduce our wealth, income and economic growth. One thing is certain, by this design our economy will only greatly decline.

A valid argument is being set forth in our country that the federal government is not capable of running corporations for a profit. This is evidenced by the waste, cost inflation, ineffectiveness, poor results, lack of productivity and corruption in government run programs. It is always tempting to add more to a program than it was originally designed and approved to accomplish. Then, it flounders for want of funds to keep it going. Funds initially set aside for a particular program may be looted to pay for another governmental need. When this happens, cries are heard that the former program is on the verge of bankruptcy. Our Social Security program grandly illustrates this. It lacks funding today to last another decade, and our president is telling us that our country is out of money *now* (2009). With all of this in mind, expand the argument to include a world setting that makes the United Nations the authority and arbiter of your wealth in the face of all the world.

In this one proposition alone, you are attacked on two different fronts with both having the same result—a loss of wealth and a lower standard of living. First, you have the exportation of all resources that the world lacks, i.e., "massive technical, agricultural, medical, and economic assistance" that developing nations need. You might as well throw in health care and education because they are necessary for anyone to have a higher standard of living. Next, include the "reduction of wealth, income and economic growth" to the equation. Inflation and disaster are on the horizon when the government spends excessively

and supplies its own funds simply by printing more money. It has been rightly said by many that you cannot spend your way to prosperity. The same is true regarding nations. When debt is accumulated, it takes money out of the private sector. It is the private sector that produces the jobs and goods which become our gross national product. Can you not determine our economic future if we export our resources and wealth to needy nations while, at the same time, we are reducing our economic growth? It is not a desirable, much less pretty, picture.

More of the progressives' economic thinking is found in the statement:

Fourth, there is *economic democracy*, the right of every adult to a useful job at a decent wage or salary, to general economic security and opportunity, to an equitable share in the material goods of this life, and to a proportionate voice in the conduct of economic affairs. Economic democracy, as I define it, goes far beyond freedom from want, since it does not mean merely material security. Such security can be established on a rather restricted minimum basis. Full economic democracy, however, implies a higher and higher standard of living for the whole population as the over-all wealth of a nation increases. While not entailing equality of income, it does imply some surplus above minimum security, so that individuals and families can enjoy the cultural amenities and have an adequate chance for rest, recreation, and travel.¹³

Can you imagine this being successful in America? Is it possible to give every adult in America a useful job at a decent wage? What about those who adamantly refuse to work? There are more excuses why some people cannot (will not) work than there are jobs. Are they going to be forced to cooperate (work), or just be borne at a higher economic level by others while not working themselves? Is it possible to give every adult general economic security and opportunity? It is, if we provide cradle-to-grave social programs for all people, including those who will not work. Of course, the standard of living will be so low that a lot of economic security and opportunity will not be needed. Is it possible to provide an equitable share in material goods to every adult? Do you know what has caused our economic distress today? Yes, it was the idea pushed by our governmental agencies and financial institutions to extend loans to people so they could buy expensive houses—houses they could not afford and could not pay for. Their thinking and policies failed to make any advancement toward the utopian idea of everyone

owning a good house in America. Seeing the disastrous failure in the housing market, the question arises: "Where is that utopia wherein every adult has a surplus above the minimum economic security that affords enjoyment of cultural amenities and rest, recreation and travel?" Someone will have to "go without" in order to provide a higher standard of living for others. Will they *cooperate*?

Think of these same platitudes on a world stage. But, you say that the former point was not looking at the world stage, only the national. Well then, let us look at another statement:

Today, however, with our scientific techniques and machine civilization, there is little excuse for not adequately controlling Nature and making available to everyone a high standard of living. In the tremendous potentialities of a modern technology utilized on behalf of all humanity, Humanists can glimpse the actualization of their forward-looking social program.¹⁴

Do not be confused, *all humanity* is the goal, and the Humanists' "forward looking" social agenda is the vehicle by which they intend to attain that goal. Now, consider one more time the degree to which your standard of living will have to be depressed in order to raise the standard of living for the multitudes of the poor. At the same time, keep in mind that Jesus said that the poor will always be with us (Jn. 12:8).

The following two economic statements are true, clear and to the point:

You cannot legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the wealthy out of freedom. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving. The government cannot give to anybody anything that the government does not first take from somebody else. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that my dear friend, is about the end of any nation. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it.¹⁵

The second statement is:

Let me say a word here that may sound political. I hope not, because I believe it's moral and biblical. You cannot legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the industrious out of it. You don't multiply wealth by dividing it. Government cannot give

anything to anybody that it doesn't first take from somebody else.

Whenever somebody receives something without working for it, somebody else has to work for it without receiving. The worst thing that can happen to a nation is for half of the people to get the idea they don't have to work because somebody else will work for them, and the other half to get the idea that it does no good to work because they don't get to enjoy the fruit of their labor.¹⁶

Failure is the only descriptive term that is true when thinking of a one world government and an economy which are supposed to care for every human and provide him with a higher standard of living.

GOD AND GOVERNMENT

Due to a series of lessons I taught during the election cycle titled "God and Government," the year of 2009 has been very troublesome for me personally. I was called a *false* teacher simply for teaching lessons that had the words "God" and "Government" in the same sentence. In addition to that, I was called a *racist* by a dear friend and associate. Evidently for some, the historic nature of the presidential race took precedence over the substance of what the democratic candidate espoused for his platform. I was simply teaching on the issues of abortion and homosexuality in an effort to remind brethren to let God accompany them into the voting booth. I continue to be troubled by those agitated by violating their own consciences in that election cycle.

God and government must be mentioned together because God created the institution of government. We speak of God and the church, God and the home, God and His other institutions; therefore, why should we not speak of God and the government? God has told us about government and its role in our lives in the thirteenth chapter of Romans. There, we learn that government prevents chaos by protecting the good while punishing the evil (Rom. 13:3-4). We are told that we are to be "subject" to "the powers that be" (v. 1). Christians should be the best citizens of their government as it governs correctly. Christians are loyal taxpayers because Christ instructed: "Render therefore unto Caesar" what is required (v. 6; Mt. 22:21). God has not given us an exhaustive list of a government's functions, but we know that there are limitations to government's authority over us. We know this because we are "to obey God rather than men" (i.e., government), if government

requires of us that which is contrary to God and/or His will (Acts 5:26-29).

I know that God has placed the responsibility for educating children within the home (Eph. 6:4). He has also given to each of us the individual responsibility to work and take care of our own and others (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10; Mk. 14:7). The church and the government may work in these areas, but the responsibility lies with you and me. The idea that it is the government's responsibility to provide for all our needs from cradle-to-grave is nowhere supported in the Scriptures. Thus, we should neither expect it nor make that the function of government.

Rather we should pray for our leaders that they govern and make decisions that are in keeping with God's will (1 Tim. 2:1-2). We are to support them in all things right, even financially (Rom. 13:6). We are to obey them (Rom. 13:2). We most certainly expect the government to protect us (Acts 21:21-25) and execute the evil (Rom. 13:4).

Having said that about government, we must emphasize that as individuals we have our personal responsibilities. Among other things: 1) We should be wise in self-protection (Lk. 22:36-38), 2) We must work (Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:10), 3) We must care for others (Eph. 4:28; Mk. 14:7), and 4) We must stay out of crippling debt and be wise in our guarantees of loans (Pro. 10:15; 17:18).

God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:25). He allows all manner of men to rule, however, He disallows them when He chooses. God does not elect the right candidate through the voters every time. To study the candidates (their voting records, their proposed policies and agenda) and then to vote for those who are most closely aligned to the principles set forth in the Bible is a responsibility that each of us has.

CONCLUSION

In studying for this presentation, I could not help but remember God's action at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). There was one world government then. Mankind had only one language, and the one governmental power on the earth resisted God. Thinking more highly of themselves than they ought, men in this Bible narrative had the fanciful idea that they were so great that they could build a tower whereby they would just march right up into Heaven. Displeased with their prideful arrogance, God confounded their language and "scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth" (v. 8). Does

anyone seriously think that God would approve of such a thing happening the second time?

The very platform upon which Humanists stand, and proudly present in their various manifestos, shows that they vainly exalt mankind to unachievable heights of glory and accomplishment. And, like those at Babel in Genesis 11:1-9, Humanists would have mankind attempt to do things which we now know God has decreed impossible, such as eradicating poverty from the earth. God does not change. God resisted the people at Babel by confounding their languages so they divided into a variety of kingdoms. It has been that way ever since, without censure from God. He will also successfully resist any such recreation of that event today.

We do share the world with others and all people everywhere should care for our earthly home. God created this world to be home while we are in the flesh, and He will maintain us in it (Acts 17:28) until He gets ready to burn it up. The end will come when God sends forth a shout (Jn. 5:28-29). God will then burn it up when we are through with it (2 Pet. 3:10-12). We are also reminded that this world is not our home. It is only temporary.

We also should share in each other's lives. We must be interested in other people so that we might teach them of God and point them to Heaven by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should be observant and help those who truly need our help, financial and otherwise. We know it is beyond our grasp to eradicate poverty, but we can do what we can to alleviate some suffering while bringing glory to God.

For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying (Mk. 14:7-8).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² "Politics: A Field Guide,"
<http://www.progressiveliving.org/politics_frameset.htm> (26 June 2009).

³ "Why Progressive Living?"
<<http://www.progressiveliving.org/preamble.htm>> (26 June 2009).

⁴ "Rationalism,"
<http://www.progressiveliving.org/rationalism_defined.htm> (26 June 2009).

⁵ *Humanist Manifesto I*, American Humanist Association,
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/who_we_are/about_humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I_II>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Humanist Manifesto II*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy Of Humanism* (New York, NY: Humanist Press, 1997), 280.
<<http://www.corliss-lamont.org/philos8.pdf>> (26 June 2009).

¹¹ *Humanist Manifesto II*.

¹² Lamont, 305.

¹³ Ibid., 292.

¹⁴ Ibid, 279.

¹⁵ Art Carden, "Adrian Rogers On Free Lunches." *The Beacon. The Independent Institute*, 17 November 2008,
<<http://www.independent.org/blog/?p=528> Adrian Rogers> (26 June 2009).

¹⁶ Ibid.

THEY SAY, “CHRISTIAN COUNSELORS ARE OKAY”

Dan Flourney



Dan Flourney and his wife Emily are parents of three children and three grandchildren. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in Bible and Religion. Flourney has served as preacher for congregations in California, Colorado, and Texas. In 2003, he established the *Christian Family Counseling Center*, overseen by the elders of the Handley Church of Christ in Ft. Worth, Texas, where he serves as one of the elders. Flourney speaks in lectureships, Gospel meetings, and made mission trips to Russia and West Africa.

INTRODUCTION¹

The field of Christian counseling is somewhat like the man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. Christian counseling has been hijacked, beaten, abused and robbed. It has been thrown to the roadside and left for dead. In this chapter we want to examine how Christian counseling and counselors have been adversely influenced by the philosophy and vain deceit of men. We intend to examine how some have been led astray through various schools of psychological thought and the modern culture.

We also want to demonstrate that there is a legitimate and needed place for true *Christian* counseling. Christian counselors are able to bring Scripture to bear on the problems of those who seek their aid. On the other hand, the licensed therapist is often restricted from using Scripture by federal and state laws. This writer knows several competent, licensed, Christian counselors who use Christian principles. However, they are open to law suites if they actually quote from the Bible and a client files a complaint with the licensing agency.

Not only has Christian counseling been hijacked, but so has psychology. Even the word “psychology” has been misused. It comes from the Greek word—*pseuchay*, meaning soul, and *ology* which is the study of something. Thus, psychology is in reality “a study of the soul.” Where can one go for legitimate information concerning the most intricate makeup of the individual? Since God is the Creator, it would seem only logical that we should turn to the only true source of

information on the soul, the Bible. However, many in our society and in the church have come to believe in the power of modern psychology.

When a tragedy happens, such as the Virginia Tech massacre (April 16, 2007), in which 32 people were killed, the news media mobilizes a number of psychologists to explain why the poor, unfortunate "perpetrator," Seung-Hui Cho did what he did. The popularity of Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura—television and radio psychologists—demonstrate how many in America now rely on psychology to solve the problems associated with human behavior. The advice columns of Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren are legendary. What has this reliance on psychology brought to our society? To answer this question we briefly examine modern psychology and so-called "Christian counseling."

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

Sigmund Freud, *the father of modern psychoanalysis* has done more to influence the course of psychology than perhaps any other individual. He was an unbelieving Jew who saw man's problems, not as sin, but as sickness. To Freud, there is no such thing as guilt. He considered man's misbehavior in terms of a medical condition. He reasoned that one should not feel guilty for contracting a disease such as chicken pox or malaria, then why should one feel guilty for committing adultery? Freud's concept became known as "the medical model." Since there is no such thing as *guilt* in Freud's thinking, man in reality is simply plagued with a *guilt complex*.

A popular folk song of a past generation, written by Anna Russell and entitled *Jolly Old Sigmund Freud*, captures the essence of Freud's concept in a humorous way. It goes:

I went to my psychiatrist to be psychoanalyzed
 To find out why I killed the cat and blacked my husband's eyes.
 He laid me on a downy couch to see what he could find,
 And here is what he dredged up from my subconscious mind:
 When I was one, my mommy hid my dolly in a trunk,
 And so it follows naturally that I am always drunk.
 When I was two, I saw my father kiss the maid one day,
 And that is why I suffer now from kleptomania.
 At three, I had the feeling of ambivalence toward my brothers,
 And so it follows naturally I poison all my lovers.
 But I am happy now—I've learned the lesson this has taught:
 That everything I do that's wrong is someone else's fault.²

Thus, Freudian psychoanalysis “turns out to be an archaeological expedition back into the past in which a search is made for others on whom to pin the blame for the patient’s behavior. The fundamental idea is to find out how others have wronged him.”³

Other psychologists have added to the Freudian error by suggesting that man is not only sin-less but also good-less and will-less. Such thinking has so permeated our culture that it is difficult to find anyone guilty of anything. Whenever some deranged killer opens fire on a high school or college campus, the media will almost immediately trot out a parade of popular psychologists to explain to the world that the killer was simply a troubled individual who, in reality is the victim of our intolerant, bigoted society. If we could just learn more about his troubled youth, his unfortunate circumstances and how badly he has been mistreated by our society, we could come to understand that he is not really a bad person. We would learn that such killers are simply victims of their environment.

In our current culture, when someone is convicted of some heinous crime, many are still not convinced that they are evil or even sinners. A classic example can be found in the Menendez brothers who were convicted of first-degree murder on March 20, 1996, for the shotgun killings of their parents, Jose and Kitty Menendez. In an interview following the trial, one of the jurors expressed sorrow for the two brothers because “they are now orphaned.”

Without doubt we live in a “no fault” culture. The tendency to “shift the blame” began in the Garden of Eden. When God confronted Adam regarding his violation of the command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam said: “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (Gen. 3:12). Thus, Adam not only blamed the woman, he blamed God as well. When Jehovah asked Eve what she had done, she said: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat” (v. 13). Since that day, “passing the buck” has become the way of life for many. Our current culture has simply refined the practice. We love the cartoon strip *Family Circus*. In one situation, the mother comes into a room where a vase of flowers has been upset and lies in a heap on the floor. When she asked who knocked it over, the room full of children respond with “I don’t know,” “not me,” and “what vase?”

The theory of evolution has so permeated modern thinking, including the field of psychology that some therapists say that man is

not responsible because a mere animal cannot be held accountable for his actions. We do not put a lion in jail for collecting his dinner from the local herd of antelope. The murderer is only an animal following his instinct to survive. We do not assign guilt to the alley cat for having multiple partners, why should we assign guilt to one who sleeps with a different partner every night?

Freud's "medical model" has gone to seed in today's world of psychology. Scientists and social scientists have worked overtime trying to discover some "gene" that causes people to do whatever it is they do. In 1998, a group of scientists reported that they had isolated the gene responsible for alcoholism. The implications of their study suggest that the drunkard is not responsible for his alcoholism. However, a genetic weakness does not cause one to lift the liquor to the lips! Wray Herbert states:

... everything from criminality to addictive disorders to sexual orientation is seen today less as a matter of choice than of genetic destiny ... religiosity, shyness, the tendency to divorce, and even happiness (or the lack of it) are among the traits that may result in part from a gene, according to new research. This cultural shift has political and personal implications. On the personal level, a belief in the power of genes necessarily diminishes the potency of such personal qualities as will, capacity to choose, and sense of responsibility for those choices—if it's in your genes, you're not accountable.³

Thus, modern psychology has become not only Godless, but will-less. The capacity to choose is no longer a part of the equation. Bad behavior is simply a matter of body chemistry run amuck.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

Christians are people who suffer from the same problems of modern living as everyone else. They must deal with anxiety, anger, depression, guilt and loneliness just like others in our society. When a Christian has difficulty handling the problems that come with their job, marriage, child-rearing or interpersonal relationships, to whom should they turn? Those who are not so infatuated with pop-psychology often turn to a "Christian counselor."

Often Christians seek the counsel of their preacher because they believe that secular counselors are all Humanists and are basically godless. Besides, they usually have a good relationship with their preacher and see him as someone in whom they can confide. Likewise,

a counselor who is a Christian should be able to give advice consistent with a Biblical worldview.

Preachers, for the most part, are “people who like people.” They are in the ministry because they want to help people. So far, so good. However, what sometimes happens is that preachers and Christian counselors seek advanced training in the field of psychology and sometimes fall prey to false theories and vain philosophies.

Many members of the Lord’s church have been led to believe that a Christian psychologist is the ideal because they have a perfect blend of psychology and Christianity. The problem is that many so-called “Christian counselors” including some preachers (not all) use the same theories and techniques hatched up by such men as Freud, Jung, Adler, Fromm, Maslow, Rogers, Ellis, Glasser, Harris, and Janov, *et cetera*. They may throw a few Biblical principles into the mix, but their basic approach is taken from the secular rather than the sacred.

Some psychologists claim to be “Christian Humanists.” Evidently, they think this gives certain respectability to their practice. However, the label “Christian Humanist” is somewhat ambiguous.

First, the word “Christian” is used today in a very loose sense. Some use the word “Christian” to refer to a good person. It may be used to refer to any number of denominations who in some way recognize Jesus Christ as the Savior. The list of so-called “Christian Churches” could include Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Eastern Orthodox, Pentecostal, Mormon or any number of Protestant denominations. Thus, one may claim to be a “Christian” counselor, but in reality may bring some denominational bias into his counseling. We have found traces of Calvinism in numerous books and articles on counseling, especially regarding the matter of original sin. In such cases, “let the buyer beware!”

Secondly, the word “Humanist” likewise is used in a wide variety of ways. Most are familiar with “Secular Humanism” which says that “man is the measure of all things.” Today, Humanism has become a “religion” in the sense of being a “system of belief.” *The Humanist Manifesto III* describes the movement as being a *religion*. Notice the first three principles articulated in *The Humanist Manifesto III*:

FIRST: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

SECOND: Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.

THIRD: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.⁵

Psychologists and counselors who subscribe to such a worldview can hardly be trusted to give sound advice regarding maladies whose source is sin. A therapist may use the word "religious" in a completely different sense than is commonly accepted. Even some who come from so-called "Christian Colleges" operated by members of the Lord's church, may hold "an organic view of life," i.e., evolution, either *theistic* or *organic*. If such is the case, how would their view of a person's problem be any different from that of the "Religious Humanist" or the "Christian Humanist"? Simply having the word "Christian" attached to the word "counselor" is no guarantee that the counselor will give genuine, Biblical advice.

In recent years we have observed the digression of a well known preacher, lecturer, preacher training school director and professional therapist who has fallen prey to the secular side of "Christian counseling." He happens to subscribe to the Gestalt school of psychotherapy which has become very popular over the past forty years.

Gestalt therapy is an existential and experiential psychotherapy that focuses on the individual's experience in the present moment, the therapist-client relationship, the environmental and social contexts in which these things take place, and the self-regulating adjustments people make as a result of the overall situation. It emphasizes personal responsibility. Gestalt therapy was co-founded by Fritz Perls, Laura Perls and Paul Goodman in the 1940s-1950s.⁶

While we do not suggest that his practice of this particular school of psychology *caused* this brother's downfall, we do believe that it was certainly a contributing factor. Gestalt therapy is a mixture of Eastern religion, including Yoga, Gestalt psychology and psychoanalysis. Some have suggested that the Gestalt method of psychoanalysis "falls into the category of humanistic psychotherapies."⁷

The humanistic approach has its roots in existentialist thought (see Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre). It is also sometimes understood within the context of the three different forces of psychology; behaviorism, psychoanalysis and humanism. Behaviorism grew out of Ivan Pavlov's work with the conditioned reflex, and laid the foundations for academic psychology in the United States associated with the names of John B. Watson and B.F. Skinner. This school was later called

the science of behavior. Abraham Maslow later gave behaviorism the name “the first force.” The “second force” came out of Freud’s research of psychoanalysis, and the psychologies of Alfred Adler, Erik Erikson, Carl Jung, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, Otto Rank, Melanie Klein, Harry Stack Sullivan, and others. These theorists focused on the depth of the human psyche, which, they stressed, must be combined with those of the conscious mind in order to produce a healthy human personality.⁸

Time and space would fail us to discuss all the ramifications of the various schools of psychology such as the Gestalt method. However, we believe that “a word to the wise is sufficient.” There are many dangers and pitfalls associated with the field of psychological counseling. A counselor may be a “Christian,” but that does not necessarily mean that his counseling is “Christian” counseling. If the counselor subscribes to Humanistic schools of psychological thought, then his attempts to help people with their problems will likely be from a Humanistic point of view. If the counselor has a certain denominational bias, such as Calvinism or Pentecostalism, then his advice may be skewed by his bias to some degree.

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY IS NOT THE ANSWER

One of the significant facts about modern psychology is that it does not have the answer for man’s problems. While many believe modern psychology is the solution, it is often the cause of the problem. Dr. H.J. Eysenck, formerly the director of the University of London’s Department of Psychology, stated: “The success of the Freudian revolution seemed complete. Only one thing went wrong. The patients did not get any better.”⁹ Jay Adams, in his book *Competent to Counsel*, quotes several sources which show the utter failure of psychology in helping people to overcome their problems. For example, he says:

Surveys show that of patients who spend upwards of 350 hours on the psychoanalysts’ couch to get better—two out of three show some improvement over a period of years. The fly in that particular ointment, however, is that the same percentage get better without analysis or under the care of a regular physician. As a matter of fact, the same ratio—two out of three people—get better regardless of what is done to them.¹⁰

Berelson and Steiner, in their book *Human Behavior, An Inventory of Scientific Findings*, state:

Psychotherapy has not yet been proved more effective than general medical counseling in treating neurosis or psychosis. In general, therapy works best with people who are young, well-born, well-educated and not seriously sick.¹¹

We recognize that there are certain organic mental disorders caused by brain injury, food deficiencies or chemical processes within the body. These should have the care of a competent physician. Such mental maladies as schizophrenia, manic-depressive disorder, and clinical depression are best treated by professional therapists.

Where then can one find the answers to the problems plaguing mankind? Shall we turn to the God-less counselors or pop-psychology? After all Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura are only a phone call away! Their books are sold by the millions. However, with the ancient prophet, we ask: "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" (Jer. 8:22). In spite of the problems faced in our stress filled society, there is help from above.

Many of the problems plaguing society today are basically the same as those encountered by our Savior in the first century. Jesus taught about marriage, parent-child relationships, obedience, race relations, and roles of the husband, wife and children in the home. Jesus and the apostles dealt with the issues of sex, anxiety, fear, loneliness, doubt, pride, sin, and discouragement. These are the very issues that bring people in for counseling today.

GOD'S PSYCHOLOGY

Since "psychology" is the "study of the soul," it seems logical that the answers to the problems of the soul are to be found in God's book of psychology, the Bible. The greatest need in our world today is an unwavering faith in God and His inspired Word. Peter said:

[S]eeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in that world by lust (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

Where are the answers to the problems of envy, fear, lust, doubt, disbelief and distrust? How can one learn to overcome discouragement and frustration? May we remember that the Eternal Word is "living,

and active” (Heb. 4:12) and that “his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

There are signs that at least some in the field of psychology are returning to Biblical principles in dealing with problems of human behavior. For example, Paul Southern quotes a highly respected American psychiatrist who declared:

If Christianity were practically applied to our everyday life, it would so purify and vitalize the race that at least one-half of our sickness and sorrow would disappear ... Faith is an actual remedy for those physical ills which result from doubt, depression, and discouragement. I make this statement as a physician and surgeon. Fear is the cause of the worry and nervousness which are responsible for most of the functional diseases.¹²

CONCLUSION

We believe the greatest factor in human well-being is an unwavering faith in God. David said: “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah In the land of the living. Wait for Jehovah: Be strong, And let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for Jehovah” (Ps. 27:13-14). With all the tensions and frustrations of modern society pressing in on us daily, we too would faint unless we believe.

As world events swirl around us and tyrants and their kingdoms rise and fall, we must remember that God is still on His throne (Isa. 6:1). Our only hope is to trust in the Almighty God of heaven and earth who “ruleth in the kingdom of men” (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32). It seems that each day brings some new threat to our safety and well-being. The only hope for peace in a stress filled world is a steadfast faith in the Creator of heaven and earth and the Creator of the soul!

Problems that are caused through spiritual lapses can only be cured through a return to Him who can restore soundness of mind by means of His inspired revelation. The Bible is by far the best textbook on psychology ever produced. As Wayne Jackson observes:

It not only diagnoses the weaknesses of humanity, which if allowed to run full course, can generate multiple unhappy circumstances and rob one of emotional enjoyment, Scripture also sets forth the principles which inoculate against the maladies of the mind.¹³

“They say, ‘Christian Counselors are Okay,’” but this is not always the case. Counselors, whether they be preachers, professional counselors or psychologists, even if they are members of the Lord’s church, are

helpful only if their counsel is in harmony with the Sacred Scripture which is God's psychology.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the American Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Songs from the History of Science*

<http://historyofsciencesongs.blogspot.com/2009_03_01_archive.html>

³ Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 6.

⁴ Wray Herbert, "Politics of Biology," *U.S. News & World Report*, April 21, 1997, pp. 72-73.

⁵ <<http://www.jcn.com/manifestos.html>>

⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gestalt_therapy>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanistic_psychology>

⁹ Adams, 2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

¹¹ Bernard Berelson and Gary Steiner, *Human Behavior, An Inventory of Scientific Findings* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 21.

¹² Paul Southern, *The Bible and Mental Health*, (Austin TX: Sweet Publishing Company, 1970), 3.

¹³ Wayne Jackson, *The Bible and Mental health* (Stockton, CA: Courier Publications, 1998), 9.

THEY SAY, “WE MUST ACCEPT MULTICULTURALISM”

Ted Thrasher



Ted Thrasher was born in Kirksville, Missouri. He is married to the former Julia Campbell, and they have one son and one daughter. Thrasher is a graduate of the Oklahoma College of the Bible and School of Preaching in McLoud, Oklahoma. He has been the local evangelist for the Park Street Church of Christ in Olathe, Kansas since 1991. Thrasher has preached for the Lord's church in Oklahoma, Missouri, and Kansas. He provides technical support and is an instructor for the *Online Academy of Bible Studies*.

INTRODUCTION¹

In Acts 10 we find Peter's vision which was to convince him that the Gentiles were fit subjects to hear and obey the Gospel, the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles, and the account of the conversion of Cornelius' household (cf. Acts 11:14, ESV). In order to appreciate the necessity of Peter's vision, we must keep in mind the attitude of the Jews against the uncircumcised Gentiles. The Jews had separated themselves from the Gentiles to the point where they believed it was a sin to go to the house of the uncircumcised (Acts 10:28; 11:2-3). They had heard Jesus say: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24). When the twelve had been sent on their first mission, Jesus commanded them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:5-6). However, Peter is now shown in a vision that the Gentiles would be accepted, in keeping with Jesus' "Great Commission" (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16). This vision led Peter to conclude: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

A "respecter of persons" determines his reception and/or treatment of others by their outward circumstances—such as their economic status, social position, nationality, race, sex, language, *et cetera*. Clearly, while God is no respecter of a *person* regarding those things, He is a respecter of a person's *character*. Further, as God revealed to

Peter, all men need salvation, and God has only one plan of salvation for all men everywhere. There is only one way to be accepted by God, and that is by fearing Him and obeying His will.

This truth concerning man's salvation is in direct opposition to the Humanists' view of multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. Multiculturalism and cultural pluralism exist in the United States and in many other nations. It is found in various forms of religion, too. In this lesson, we will examine multiculturalism from the viewpoint of three areas: (1) The definition and origin of multiculturalism, (2) The threat of multiculturalism, and (3) A Christian response to multiculturalism.

THE DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF MULTICULTURALISM

A search for the definition of the word "multiculturalism" will yield many and varied definitions and interpretations.² Although there are various definitions of "multiculturalism," there are a couple of predominant factors in many of its definitions. These factors point out that in multiculturalism there is: 1) an abandonment of established traditions, and 2) an abandonment of absolute standards for all.

A simple dictionary definition of multiculturalism is: "Of or relating to a social or educational theory that encourages interest in many cultures within a society rather than in only a mainstream culture."³ Some believe the word "multiculturalism" was coined in 1941 as a result of rethinking the views of "nationalism" surrounding the events of World War II. The term was not found in many dictionaries until the 1960s. By then, it had taken on the more liberal view of abandoning the traditions of American culture in favor of the individual cultures of various nations. The general history and practical definition of multiculturalism is summed up in the following statement.

In the United States, multicultural[ism] led a quiet life until it became a key word in the "culture wars" of the 1980s and 1990s. Liberals began voicing their dream of the United States as a multicultural country, one with diverse peoples and cultures drawn from all over the world, sharing a common belief in freedom and democracy. Instead of seeing the country as a melting pot (1907) cooking up a single American way of life, they celebrated diversity.

They also began to expand the definition of culture beyond ethnicity, race, and religion to include gender and lifestyle, so that multicultural could mean "respect for different ages, sexes,

physical or mental capabilities, and sexual orientations.” At an extreme, respect might even be demanded for the distinct “cultures” of vegetarians, animal rights activists, millenarians, and transvestites. For some conservatives, this was too much. They saw multiculturalism as undermining respect for our unique American ideals and way of life, for the Western Civilization from which these ideals sprang, and for “family values.”⁴

The meaning of “multiculturalism” has changed and expanded through the years. This is so because its very concept promotes diversity and/or a “celebration” of various cultures with all of their differing beliefs, practices, religions and morals. The adoption of multiculturalism has changed the United States. Instead of being the “melting pot” this country once was, i.e., where people of various nationalities and cultures assimilated to “fit in” to be a part of the American tradition and culture, now people from other nations and cultures seek to remain separate and to promote their cultural background. This has had the effect of disuniting America rather than unifying and strengthening our homes, government, society and morals.

Social conservatives have defined “multiculturalism” to be the opposite of “assimilation.” However, some sociologists attempt to blur this line of distinction with the suggestion that the various expressions of multiculturalism, comparing their similarities and differences, should be grouped into four different areas. Oddly enough, they indicate that there are points of agreement between what they term the strongest type of multiculturalism, “recognition-based pluralism,” and the weakest form, “assimilationism.” One paper on this subject states:

Perhaps the major obstacle standing in the way of any such project is that the general idea of multiculturalism—however specifically defined and operationalized—has primarily been understood in stark opposition to assimilation and social unity. Indeed, the most immediate critical response to the topic of multiculturalism has been to raise questions and concerns about the fragmentation of American society. Articulated most famously by Arthur Schlesinger, the rise of multiculturalism is believed to [be] producing the “disuniting of America,” thus prompting the need to re-examine and revalue what we Americans all hold in common, what brings us together as a nation.⁵

It has been suggested by advocates of multiculturalism that since we live in an age of cultural pluralism, we need multiculturalism to

correct the true and real American heritage. Further, it is suggested that the only way our leaders and teachers can function in a culturally pluralistic society is only through multiculturalism. Facts prove such thinking to be wrong. Even though there are differences in our society, multiculturalism will not provide the answers necessary to solving society's problems. In fact, multiculturalism only generates and/or encourages further problems.

One of the best ways to realize the presence of multiculturalism in our society is to examine its effects on this nation. In the political realm, multiculturalism is seen in the form of "illegal immigration" and its almost ignored (by our own government) assault on our physical borders. Multiculturalism's influence is also weakening and may destroy the sovereignty of this nation. In the ethnic realm, multiculturalism is minimizing American culture and heritage, and emphasizing the various cultures of the world as being superior. In racial issues, multiculturalism vilifies white males and seeks to create tension and distrust between those of other races. In relation to sex, multiculturalism seeks to turn women against men, denigrate marriage, and exalt homosexuality and other such perversions. In religion, multiculturalism attempts to dethrone God, promote idolatry, and says that every religious belief and system is right (as long as the "religious community" commends it). In the workplace, multiculturalism is manifested as "diversity," with the emphasis being not on the ability/productivity of the employees, but upon meeting cultural quotas. In our educational system, multiculturalism is evident in the changes of curriculum necessary to teach that all values are to be accepted as equal and right (whether or not they are). Multiculturalism is supposedly tolerant of the conflicting and contradictory teachings and customs of the various nations. At the same time, however, it is intolerant of the foundational principles of our nation and those who uphold them.

THE THREAT OF MULTICULTURALISM

The major threat of multiculturalism to this nation began to pick up momentum following the publishing of *Humanist Manifesto II*, in 1973. It included the concept of multiculturalism under the name of "cultural pluralism." *Humanist Manifesto I*, published in 1933, vaguely hinted at it in Article 4, but it was fully developed in Article 12 of *Humanist Manifesto II*. Under the heading, "World Community," this document advocates the tearing down of national boundaries and the establish-

ment of a federal transnational government to further accomplish cultural pluralism. In a Humanistic society, where God is eliminated and man is exalted, and where boundaries are broken down between nations and cultures, the next logical step is to establish a centralized human government—a “one-world” government—with the power to exercise control over all the nations.

Pluralism is the concept that all the varied views, teachings, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs and morals of all people are equally valid and acceptable. In a pluralistic society there is no absolute right or wrong, good or bad. All that matters are the self-imposed “values” of the various “communities” as they hold their opinions/views about the whole. Thus, the belief that homosexuality is a “good” lifestyle is just as valid as the belief that marriage can only be between a man and woman.

A culturally pluralistic society can have no bounds or barriers regarding anything it decides to teach, believe or practice. In pluralism the only absolute is that there is no absolute. That is why “truth,” according to the philosophy found in this type of a society has to be relative, i.e., “truth” is whatever the group or community decides it to be at any point in time. This is a marked departure from the philosophy that there is an objective, absolute, immutable and attainable body of truth (or absolute law) which is the source of our beliefs and practices. Contrary to that, in a pluralistic society, the community or group becomes the source of the “truth,” and it can change what is “truth” if it decides “truth” needs to be changed to fit the desires of the society.

This constantly changing “truth,” and moral system of cultural pluralism, is here briefly explained:

Under strong visions of multiculturalism, the moral boundaries of the moral order are understood to be emergent. They are produced in a more or less democratic manner through the interaction of groups. As the formations of the groups change, the nature of the macro-culture itself changes. There are always moral boundaries, but that these are always being regenerated, and they may take very different formations at different points in time.⁶

The word “emergent,” in this quote concerning moral boundaries, is particularly chilling when we consider that there are those in the Lord’s church who are advocating the concept of the “emerging church”—the idea that the church must fit into society, rather than society conforming to the teachings of the Bible. Of course, this misguided concept is

in direct opposition to what the Bible teaches concerning evangelism and the work of the church in this world. Religious pluralism has permeated the "theology," and for years has been incorporated into the practices, of the denominational world. However, until recent times, it has been the language of Ashdod in the Lord's church.

In a multicultural world, with its ever-changing moral, religious and national boundaries, a form of transnational government would be needed to establish and maintain "world order." This idea, as set forth by *Humanist Manifesto II*, was the forerunner of the concept of the "globalization of government." Under such a system, the United States will no longer be a sovereign country. Under a transnational government, we will no longer be able to pledge allegiance, "to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Why? If we have one-world government, we will no longer be one nation under God. The multicultural allegiance might have us say: "I pledge allegiance to the flags of all the nations of the world, and to the diversity for which they stand, all nations under idolatry, hopelessly divided, with liberalism and injustice for all." While that is sarcastically stated to make a point, in all seriousness we must wake up, be on guard and work to make sure that nothing like it does happen!

A transnational government would deny the privileges we enjoy in our democratic republic. To be sure, we would have no voice in our government. It would deny rule "by and for the people" as we have known it for over 200 years. This nation would be subject to an international government and its laws—laws enacted according to the will of the world, not necessarily to meet the needs and accommodate the interests of our nation. A transnational government would mean the end of sovereignty for every nation of the world! Imagine having something like the present United Nations with the authority to govern the world. That will give you a glimpse of what a transnational government would be like. Having to give up our freedoms, our resources and our labors, we would live our lives in a socialistic society. Given the present state of affairs in our nation's government, our living in a socialistic society may not be long in coming!

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO MULTICULTURALISM

How should we, as Christians, respond to multiculturalism's attack on our faith, our traditions and our moral values? There are several

principles revealed in the New Testament which will help us to overcome in this culture war, a war which has been thrust upon us.

Fight The Good Fight

Before we engage in this war, we need to put on the whole armor of God, pick up the sword of the Spirit, and prepare for the battle before us. Paul wrote:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:10-17).

We should recognize that we are fighting against the wiles of the devil, and that we will always be outnumbered. From the world's point of view, we may seem small and insignificant as we go up against the principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places. Do not be intimidated. Never forget this, Christians have the advantage because we have the most powerful force in the world, *the Gospel of Christ* (Rom. 1:16-17), and the most powerful weapon in the world, *the sword of the Spirit*, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). Spiritually, we can overcome the threats of Humanism and be victorious in Christ! After all, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 Jn. 5:4).

God Is No Respector Of Persons

In a study of multiculturalism (and why a Christian must war against it), the fact that God is no respecter of persons must be considered. Peter declared: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). Peter had to be convinced that God does not respect (value) one man's soul more than another's. Along with all the other Jews of his day, Peter had

to understand that the barrier between the Jews and the Gentiles had been removed (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14). Ultimately, Peter came to understand (know) that the Gentiles were to enjoy salvation in Christ on equal terms with the Jews (Acts 15:7-11). The Gospel of Christ is for all on equal terms.

The Word of God clearly teaches that God does not respect the person of men. Paul wrote: "Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:9-11). To the masters of slaves, Paul said: "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" (Eph. 6:9). To the Colossians he stressed, "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25). Writing to the Christians of the dispersion, Peter admonished: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Pet. 1:17).

On the one hand, claiming fairness and equality in its exaltation of diversity and division in religion, accepting everything from the idolatry to the polytheism being espoused by the religions of the world, multiculturalism is, on the other hand, showing itself to be a "respector of persons," i.e., the authors and adherents of every false religion. When multiculturalism denies the fact that the Gospel of Christ is God's universal plan—and that it is *the only plan*—for saving the lost souls in "every nation," it can be fair and equitable to neither God nor His children. If multiculturalism were truly fair and equitable, it would be fair in giving every man the opportunity to hear, believe, and obey the Gospel of Christ. Unfortunately, that is not to be because multiculturalism teaches men that they do not need to fear, respect, and obey Jehovah God. Contrary to multiculturalism, Peter taught that it is only he who "feareth God and worketh righteousness" that is accepted of Him.

Christ Is Lord Over All

We should never forget that Jesus Christ is the Sovereign ruler over all, regardless of our cultural differences. Following his understanding that God is no respector of persons, Peter declared: "The word which

God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached” (Acts 10:36-37). Furthermore, Peter realized that the Word of God, which came to the children of Israel (Jews), was also meant for the Gentiles. The message of the Gospel is “peace by Jesus Christ” (through Christ). The Gospel of Christ is able to reconcile all men, Jews and Gentiles, to God. The Gospel of Christ is the Gospel of peace because obedience to it reconciles all men, on equal terms, to God in Christ. All can have peace with God through obedience to the same Gospel and through the same person, Jesus Christ. Of Christ, Paul wrote:

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh (Eph. 2:14-17).

Thus, all men in all nations, from all social and cultural backgrounds, are able to have peace with God by means of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. Because of His accomplishments at Calvary, Jesus is now “Lord of all” (Acts 10:36; 1 Tim. 6:15; Mt. 28:18).

Further, Christ is our preeminent Savior, who is over all men, all powers and all rulers. Paul penned:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence (Col. 1:16-18).

How blessed we are to have such a loving, sacrificing Savior (Jn. 15:13-14).

Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. He was there at the beginning of this world, and He will be there at the end of the world. Of Himself, He declared: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev. 22:13). He is the head of the body,

the church. He is the singular "head" or Lord over the singular "body" or the singular "church." This truth does away with the religious pluralism of many gods, many lords, many bodies or many churches—all being equal and acceptable unto God! Indeed, God "hath put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). We know that there is only "one body" and "one Lord" (Eph. 4:4-5). Christ has one spiritual body, His church. Thus, it is called "the church of Christ" because He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28; cf. Rom. 16:16).

Christ is also the firstborn from the dead. This does not mean that He was the first one to be raised from the dead. It means He was the first one to rise from the dead, never to die again! In that sense, Christ has the preeminence. Relative to the preeminence of Christ, John Gill commented:

...in all things he is the first, and has the precedence and primacy; in sonship, no one is a Son in the sense he is; in election, he was chosen first, and his people in him; in the covenant, he is the surety, Mediator, and messenger of it, he is that itself; in his human nature, he is fairer than the children of men; in redemption, he was alone, and wrought it out himself; in life, he exceeded all others in purity, in doctrine, and miracles; and in dying he conquered death, and rose first from it; in short, he died, revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord both of dead and living; and he ought to have the pre-eminence and first place in the affections of our hearts...⁷

Following His resurrection from the dead, but before His ascension to the Father, Christ told His apostles: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Mt. 28:18). The word "power" in this passage is translated "authority" in the American Standard Version. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ has all authority in both the spiritual and physical realms, the eternal and temporal realms. Christ stands alone as our preeminent Savior, Lord, Head, and King. He is over all and is indeed worthy to wear the title, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16) as the Sovereign Ruler of all in heaven and in earth. Even though those who profess and follow the various gods and vain religions of multiculturalism refuse to accept and acknowledge Him as Lord now, one day they will bow their knees to Him and confess Him

with their tongues when they give account of themselves to God (Rom. 14:11-12).

The Universal Nature Of The Gospel Of Christ

The Gospel of Christ, unlike the changeable doctrines of men, is for all men and all times. Paul, standing on Mar's Hill in Athens, preaching to the philosophers and thinkers there, concluded his sermon with the words:

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:30-31).

The reaction to his sermon on that occasion—"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked" (Acts 17:32)—is, no doubt, indicative of the reaction we receive when we preach to those who believe in and practice multiculturalism and religious pluralism. Thankfully, there were others at Athens who said, "We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts 17:32b). These are the kinds of listeners we must appeal to in an effort to help them to see and obey the truth for the salvation of their souls.

We must constantly remember that the Gospel is for all! Concerning His will, Paul told Timothy, God "... will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). It is the will and desire of God that all men should be saved. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). This verse does not mean all men will be saved, but all men should be saved. God will not save a person against that person's will. Yet, God does not want one person to perish. Peter explained: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

God wants all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Unlike multiculturalism, which teaches that there is no absolute, objective truth, Jesus taught: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). He defined for His apostles exactly what truth is, when He prayed: "Sanctify them through

thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). God's Word, the doctrine of Christ, and the Gospel of Christ are expressions describing the absolute truth revealed in the New Testament—truth we can know and obey unto our salvation (Rom. 1:16-17; Jas. 1:18-22; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 2 Jn. 9).

Christ has placed in our hands the responsibility to go and preach the Gospel of Christ to all men of every nation. Mark records Jesus saying: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:15-16). In Matthew's account, Jesus says: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mt. 28:19-20).

The word "nations," in Matthew's account, is translated from a Greek word that is the origin of our English word "ethnic." Generally, in New Testament use, it refers to the various groups and nations opposed to the Jews. Thus, it was used generally to refer to the Gentiles. It is noteworthy to consider that multicultural's view and promotion of diversity is in direct conflict to what our Lord would have us to do in teaching all nations or ethnic groups. Our Lord would have all nations to hear, believe and obey the Gospel. Besides that, He teaches that He wants unity in His church (Jn. 17:11, 20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3). Multiculturalism encourages the nations to remain in their false beliefs and it fosters spiritual division and chaos in the religious realm.

Multiculturalism may say that there are many gods and many religions in the world, and that they are all equally valid, but God's Word says: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

Multiculturalism may say that homosexuality is just an alternate lifestyle, and same-sex marriage, polygamy, and living together are all acceptable, but God's Word says: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph. 5:31).

Multiculturalism may say that morals and truth are relative; therefore, you are free to express yourself in any way you like, but

God's Word says: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12).

All men, in all nations and in all cultures, have the same Creator and Sustainer—God. All men are going to stand before Him and give an answer for the things they have done in their own bodies (2 Cor. 5:10). It is our work to go to them and show them the truth of the Gospel so that they may be free from the guilt of sin. We must teach them to rely upon the knowledge available to them in God's Word, rather than what is taught in the deceitful philosophies of men.

CONCLUSION

The Gospel of Christ is inclusive in the sense that God wants all men everywhere to accept and obey it—regardless of their race, nationality, sex, language or cultural background. In those matters, the Gospel upholds diversity. However, the Gospel is exclusive in its authority, excluding all religions originated by mere mortal men. Unifying by its very nature, Christ's Gospel brings all the saved together—regardless of their backgrounds and cultures—in spiritual unity with God and each other. All can be one in Christ, as they accept and obey the Gospel. Unity in the Gospel is what all men truly need. Let us ever be faithful in our efforts to preach the whole counsel of God and reach out to those in the world with the power of God unto salvation, the Gospel of Christ.

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² A Google search yields almost 474,000 definitions, s.v. "multiculturalism."

³ <<http://www.answers.com/topic/multicultural>>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Douglas Hartmann and Joseph Gerteis, "Re-mapping Multiculturalism: Visions Of Incorporation, Solidarity, Diversity" 3, Department of Sociology University of Minnesota, January 2003, <http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/6/6/8/p106684_index.html>

⁶ Ibid., 15-16.

⁷ John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, (Rick Meyers, e-Sword, v. 8.0.6), Col. 1:18.

THEY SAY, “MAN DOES NOT HAVE A SPIRIT”

Gary Colley



Gary Colley was born in Vernon, Texas and is married to the former Maggie Witty. They are parents of one son and two daughters, and have six grandchildren. Colley was educated at Freed-Hardeman University. He has preached for the church in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and is now working with the Getwell congregation in Memphis, Tennessee. Colley holds Gospel meetings and lectureships, publishes books and tracts, and speaks for programs on the *Gospel Broadcasting Network*.

PREFACE

We commend the Southside church of Christ in Lubbock, Texas, for continuing their work into this the twelfth year of the Annual Lubbock Lectureship. The theme this year is very timely, as are all the subjects to be discussed. The elders and Tommy Hicks have done an excellent work in preparing for the presentation of these lectures. No doubt, each member of this congregation has felt his or her personal responsibility in contributing to the success of this effort. To all of these, we express our thanks and pray that all may be done to the glory of God.

INTRODUCTION¹

Humanism is a recognized religion, defined by *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933), *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973), and *Humanist Manifesto III* (2002).² It was also rendered so by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Torcaso v. Watkins* case of 1961.³ In that case, Humanism was determined to fall in the category with other unbelievers in God, such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Ethical Culture. Of all the theories and philosophies in the world today, there is no tool in the devil's arsenal more threatening and destructive than Humanism (Col.2:8). While the Bible lifts man and woman to the heights of purity, happiness, modesty, decency, personal worth, and hope, Humanism is used to deceive man and to bring him to the level of a brute beast (1 Pet. 5:8). We are as shocked as Paul was with the Galatians, that some who formerly stood strong for the faith, have shipwrecked their faith, and have acknowl-

edged that they have departed from the Lord's church into rank Secular Humanism! (Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1:19-20).

CHANGES IN THINKING

There are several changes that transpire in the thinking of one who accepts Humanism. He first decides that God, the Bible, and sacred things are man's greatest adversaries. A person often begins his departure into Humanism with what they call "values clarification," which undermines the values learned from the Bible in the home and the church. Hence, one is changed from having faith in God to thinking man is a god himself, and that brings him to trust only in himself. Going through his transformation into Humanism, he now denies the supernatural and only accepts the natural, trades scientific fact for scientific fantasy (such as evolution), and determines his "morality" by his own desires and situation ("situational ethics") instead of the moral absolutes of the Bible. It is interesting to note that the word "moral" comes from a Latin word meaning manner, custom, or habit. What directs our manner, custom, or habit in life is our standard of morality. The generally accepted moral code of the Bible has brought the greatest purity and happiness to the world, along with the promise and hope of eternal life in Heaven (1 Jn. 2:25). But, in so many places, Humanism has caused a deterioration of the morals and the good thinking of both young and old. Where it has taken root, it has affected our schools, our homes, religion in general, and the nation as a whole in an adverse way!

HUMANISM/ATHEISM

This word "Humanism" should never be confused with "humanitarianism," which means to be devoted to human needs and human welfare. Humanism is simply another word for "atheism," which is a denial that God exists. An atheistic religion has never been known to be "devoted to human needs and human welfare." No orphan home, hospital, or rest home has ever been established by the Humanists.

Humanism is also connected to evolution. In their denial of God's existence and His being our Creator, Humanists insist that man evolved from some type of matter in a meager attempt to provide an answer as to man's origin. The first tenant in the *Humanist Manifesto I* states: "Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."⁴ Notice here its claim to be a religion. Further, the *Humanist*

Manifesto teaches that man is his own god, and does not look to a higher Being for his existence or guidance.

IF THERE IS NO GOD

Of course, if there is no God, man could not have been made in His image; therefore, man would not possess an eternal soul (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7). The writer of Hebrews said God is “the Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). Yet, *Humanist Manifesto I* says, “Third: Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.”⁵ This simply means what our title, “They say, ‘Man Does Not Have A Spirit,’” suggests. Further, if, as they say, there is no God, it means the Bible is not inspired of God and that it cannot be accepted as a rule of faith. Thus, Humanists deny that any living mortal has a moral standard by which he is obligated to live correctly! Man is on his own without any guidance or help from a higher Being. It boils down to “the survival of the fittest.” But the Bible, the Word of God, denies these theories on every turn (Ps. 119:105). If Secular Humanism is true, and we have no moral standard or values by which to live, then neither will there be a Judgment Day at the close of life. Yet again, the Bible completely denies this theory (Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10-11). If this theory were true, no one living has an eternal spirit or a soul as Jesus taught (Mt. 16:26), and when he dies his end is only a six-foot hole in the ground! *Who can believe this?* All should reject any theory that blights the hope of man by removing the hope of Heaven. We agree with the Psalmist:

The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt,
they have done abominable works; There is none that doeth good
(Ps. 14:1).

When Paul quoted the Psalmist’s words in Romans 3:10-18, he concluded with the words of Psalms 36:1, “[T]here is no fear of God before his eyes,” and this is certainly true of Secular Humanism. Humanists wish to remove God from His own creation (Rom. 1:20-22).

CHRISTIANITY

Every man has some type of “religion,” or system of worship and practice, by which he lives. Christianity has the Bible as its guide (Ps. 119:10-11). Secular Humanists view Christianity only as make-believe, superstition, “pie in the sky,” and not to be believed any differently than mere mythology. Their own thoughts or philosophy, strained

through their puny thinking, is the definition and explanation of all that exist, removing the real meaning of life, and ignoring what happens to man while he lives and when he dies. They claim to believe in science and man's discoveries, but true science is based on established facts, not supposition (as is evolution and their other theories). They believe in moral *relativism* and *subjectivism* rather than moral *absolutes*. They transfer their faith from having God as its object and instead place it in man and his ways (Isa. 55:8-9). They consider the Word of God—and its teaching of morality and Christ's church being the way of salvation and hope—to be the enemy of man and his freedom. All need to study God's Word, love, honor, and defend the truth, accept its finality, its verbal inspiration, and its pattern of doctrine and morality (Pro. 14:12; Jer. 10:23).

WHAT ABOUT THE SOUL?

The Bible has every right to be heard and considered for man's good here and in the afterlife. When followed, it will thoroughly furnish the man of God unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17). It declares to us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). Jesus asked a question more than two thousand years ago that has never been answered: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). There are certainly sobering implications in the Lord's words. In the beginning, according to the Bible, God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Further, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). According to these verses, God made man full grown and perfect, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Man was given:

1. The ability and power to think, or to have intellect (Pro. 23:12).
2. The power to love, or to have affection (Mt. 22:37).
3. The power to purpose, or to have will (2 Cor. 9:7).
4. The ability to obey (Rom. 6:17-18).

In summary, the soul, the heart, or the spirit of man is able to think, love, purpose, and obey God. With the eminence from God, being made in His image, the inner man is that which man has that is made

in the likeness of God (Col. 3:10). Hence man possesses an eternal, immortal nature.

From the New Testament, we are impressed with the brevity and fragility of physical life here on earth (Jas. 4:13-15). The Lord's words in Matthew 16:26 imply two things:

1. We must give up the world for the sake of the soul.
2. There will be no redemption in Hell, no second chance.

Giving up the world for the sake of the soul is not referring to giving up our appreciation for the beauties of God's creation. Neither does it mean that we must give up mankind, our friends, and relations. But it does refer to the giving up of the worldly aims, ways, principles, and maxims of the worldly (1 Jn. 2:15-17).

The world is largely concerned over material things, and the chance of loss is closely considered! We buy life insurance, auto insurance, and hospitalization insurance, *et cetera*, to cover our various possessions in case of loss. Some have bank boxes for their earthly securities. But, what about the spiritual concern for our soul, and our neighbor's soul? Do we have the proper interest in this area?

IDENTIFYING THE SOUL

What is the soul? If it were not for the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God, we would not know. At times in the Bible the soul is used interchangeably with the heart or spirit of man. At other times only one of these designations is used. Some have suggested that when the word "spirit" is used it simply refers to life, whether human or animal. But when the word "soul" is used, it refers to the eternal part of man that returns to God (Ecc. 12:7). The book of Hebrews declares:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

Three words of special interest in this verse are: "soul" (inner man), "spirit" (earthly life), and "heart" (affections). One thing is for sure, the soul is our most precious possession!

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE SOUL?

We view the value of all things in this life by their costs. Whether it is a piece of jewelry, a house, or a car, we appreciate its value by its cost. Jesus said the soul is worth more than all the world (Mt. 16:26).

That means the soul is worth more than all the worldly wealth, power, glory, and honor heaped up together! Paul by inspiration said the soul is worth more than the body (2 Cor. 4:16). We take good care of our bodies by feeding and clothing them, but what about our care for our souls? The writer of Psalms says: "[Y]our heart shall live for ever" (Ps. 22:26). Hence, we learn that our soul is eternal in duration and divine in origin! And, Jesus states that man is not able to destroy the soul (Mt. 10:28). Your soul is indestructible and it transcends earthly relationships! Of course, this denies Materialism, Humanism, Communism, and Atheism! Though "They say, 'Man Does Not Have A Spirit,'" their saying it does not make it true! Another point that no man can afford to overlook, is that our soul must live eternally—and it will do so in a saved or lost condition (Mt. 25:46). That fact alone should certainly show us the value of the soul!

The value of the soul is further seen in the price paid for its redemption (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Heaven's value of the soul is easily seen in John 3:16! It cost the greatest gift Heaven could give to cover the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29; 1 Jn. 2:2). And yet again, the soul's value is seen in the preparation of Heaven to receive it when this troubled life is finished (Jn. 14:1-6; Job 14:1). We have made a feeble attempt to show the value of the soul. We had as well try to measure the expanse of the universe as to try to measure the value of the soul. This emphasizes that the soul is man's most priceless possession! It should be guarded above all of man's possessions (Pro. 4:23). Though Humanism seeks to teach the idea that man has no more "soul" than a rock, surely anyone who examines the evidence shall see differently. Each of us needs to examine himself or herself to be sure that his or her soul is properly valued (2 Cor. 13:5). We can show this by our speech, by our actions, and by the way we dress. Do we adorn (commend) the Gospel by the way we live? (cf. Tit. 2:10)?—or do we appear to be more influenced by the world? Some leave the impression that their souls are worth very little. Yes, they handle money and valuables with care, but they handle their souls recklessly and apparently without concern!

Also, what value do you place on the souls of your children? Do you consider their education and/or their activities to be more important than preparing them to live correctly here and now on earth and then go to Heaven when they die? Do you insist on them having good grades in public school that they may have a good life on earth, but then spend little time, interest, and money on training them spiritually to the saving

of their souls? Do you help them prepare for their Bible classes? Or, do you teach by action and example that other things—such as ball games, fishing or golf trips—are more important than taking care of and feeding their souls?

THREE WORDS OF INTEREST

The Lord used three words in Matthew 16:26, which are used on a daily basis in the business world. They are: “profit,” “gain,” and “loss.” *Profit* points to what an item is worth. *Gain* indicates its increased worth, and *loss* its decreased worth. How sad it is that most people are only interested in earthly profit, gain, and loss! The greatest tragedy of life is that most people have their eyes and interests only in what this world holds for them. Most values fluctuate, such as in the cases of property, money, bonds, stocks. However, this is not true of the soul! The soul does not decrease in value under any circumstances. Just because a man’s soul is not visible to the naked eye, it does not mean that it has no value or its value is destroyed. Since the soul means life, and not “breath” as some suggest, it is one of the things that is eternal in nature. Paul wrote:

For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

MAN CAN LOSE HIS SOUL

Though Humanism teaches that man does not have a spirit, revelation and common sense teaches that man does have a spirit. Furthermore, according to God’s Word, a man can lose his spirit or soul in Hell. In fact, because they have not entered into the narrow way that leads to life, but have remained in the broad way that leads to eternal destruction, the majority of people in the world are found to be in a lost condition (Mt. 7:13-14; 21-28). Oh, the tragedy of one lost soul! Sin is the destructive power that condemns man and keeps him out of Heaven (1 Jn. 3:4; Jn. 8:21, 24; Rom. 6:23). But each person needs to consider that if he or she is lost, it is neither because he or she does not have a spirit or soul, nor because God wants his or her soul to be lost. To the contrary, any soul that is lost, is lost because that person

decided on his or her own to ignore God and His commands (Jn. 12:42-43; Acts 13:46). The Lord is "longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

THE DANGER OF EXCHANGING THE SOUL

The Lord's question in Matthew 16:26 also suggests and warns that a man can trade or exchange his soul for other things. Some seem to give up interest in their souls without a contest! One man suggested: "Every man has his price." Certainly, this should not be so with our precious souls! There are those who exchange the soul for everyday affairs of life. They think they are *too busy* to read the Bible, *too busy* to attend the worship services, or to see to the needs of others, because they are *too busy* making a living or keeping house. Too many today are like Martha, who, when the Lord came to her house, was "careful and troubled about many things" while her sister Mary sat at Jesus feet to learn His teaching (Lk. 10:38-42). These people have a problem with establishing proper priorities and in making the correct choices (Mt. 6:33).

If we are always with worldly people, we may trade our interest in our souls for evil association. Many start out well in living the Christian life, but then choose companions who lead them away from faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:33; 5:6). Peer pressure is a problem, one which must be dealt with by young and old.

Many in our world exchange their souls for false philosophies and the doctrines and creeds of men. They seem to desire the applause and praise of men more than the praise of God (Jn. 12:42-43). One who is offering worship to Jehovah, while yet in a state of disobedience, must learn that his worship is considered vain, empty, and worthless (Mt. 15:9). Paul was shocked at the Galatian brethren because they were so soon moved away from the *truth* he had preached to them (Gal. 1:6-9; 3:1). Satan's greatest and most successful strategic plan of operation is for religious teachers to mix a lot of error with just a little *truth*. He knows the error will not be approved by God and that it will condemn a man's soul! Satan has even fooled some people into foolishly thinking that a little truth mixed with error is sufficiently acceptable to God.

Amazingly, there are those who exchange their soul for a life of sin. This is a choice to be made by men. Many make the wrong choice, opting for the darkness of sin instead of the light that Jesus brought into

the world (Jn. 3:19). But, like Moses, we can make the right choice of living with the people of God as we walk in truth, rather than enjoying “the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11:24-25). Sin is caused by the middle letter of the word sin—“I” (Jas. 1:13-16).

Others may exchange their soul for a life of ease, pleasure, comfort, and self-indulgence (Mt. 16:24). Evidently, some are just too lazy to go to Heaven! It does take effort to serve God, and many just do not like to be bothered. We are living in a great “Ease Age,” and the course of least resistance has become a main highway. Whatever the exchange was made for, it will be found in the Judgment to be a foolish and costly choice! A life of ease, pleasure, comfort, and self-indulgence cannot provide the soul with its deep and vital need of being at peace with God!

MAN CANNOT HAVE EVERYTHING

The question asked by Jesus, “[W]hat shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt. 16:26), shows with certainty that man cannot have everything! We gain one thing at the loss of something else. Since salvation and damnation are both conditional—salvation being chosen by obeying the Lord, and damnation being chosen by refusing to live in harmony with His will—there is no escape from this conclusion (Mk. 8:37; Ecc. 12:1). There can be no life of sin now and Heaven later (Ps. 1:4-5). There will be no way one can sow to the flesh now and reap eternal life (Gal. 6:7-8). We can have sin now, but it will be at the sacrifice of Heaven. Or, we can have Heaven, but it is at the price of giving up sin! The wise trader gives up all for the kingdom (Mt. 13:45-46).

THE SOUL IS MAN’S GREATEST LOSS

This is made very clear by our Lord’s words recorded in Matthew 16:24-26. Some, like the Rockefellers and Donald Trumps, seem to have gained the “whole world.” But these and others may gain the whole world at the loss of their health, families, lives, and souls. They will find, perhaps too late, that they have traded away their most precious possession, their souls! Though there is great regret in the loss of health and family, the loss of the soul is incomprehensibly worse! It means the loss of Heaven and the agonizing endurance of Hell for eternity (Rev. 21:27). And, it will mean the loss of many blessings in this life.

Those who exchange their souls for lives of worldliness will never know the happiness of being right with God through obedience to the Gospel (Acts 8:39). They forfeit a most beautiful influence for good while living, and in death (Rev. 14:13). These give up the fellowship they could have with Christ and Christians (Acts 2:42; 1 Jn.1:7). Throughout their lives they will never know the privilege of being like Christ (Phil. 1:21). They will finally learn that this earth and all of its material possessions are bound by time and must one day be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10). Then, these will have nothing, but will have left everything behind (1 Tim. 6:7).

CONCLUSION

Humanism vehemently denies that man has a spirit or soul. However, we have sufficient evidence to know that man does indeed have a soul, and that his soul will live eternally in a saved or lost condition. We have learned that the soul is the gift of God to man. We have seen that a soul is of supreme value to God, and that it should be to man, its possessor, as well. It is a precious treasure entrusted to us by God. Hence, it is our solemn and joyful duty to fit our souls for the highest destiny—the destiny prepared for those who will prepare themselves for it—Heaven. One's preparation for this destiny begins when he is obedient in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for the remission of sins (Jn. 5:28-29; 14:1-6). Let us put away the false theories of Humanism and prepare to meet our God!

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² *Humanist Manifesto I, II, III*,
<http://www.americanhumanist.org/Who_We_Are/About_Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto>

³ Curtis Cates, "Humanism - Threat To Humanity," *Power* 1.1 (winter 1990): 13-14.

⁴ *Humanist Manifesto I*, First.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Third.

THEY SAY, “IT’S NEW, BETTER, AND NECESSARY”

B.J. Clarke



B.J. Clarke is a native of Canton, Illinois. He and his wife, the former Tish Hall, have two sons and one daughter. Clarke earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees from Freed-Hardeman University. He worked with the Lord’s church in Etowah, and Knoxville, Tennessee. He also preached for the Southaven, Mississippi congregation. Clarke became a member of the faculty at Memphis School of Preaching in 2006, where he presently serves as an instructor and as the Dean of Admissions.

INTRODUCTION¹

Paul warned the Colossians: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). It would be a mistake to conclude that this Pauline warning marked the first time human philosophy had ever posed a threat to man’s spiritual welfare. It would be equally erroneous to conclude that Paul’s warning is outdated for our day and time.

Satan is still walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). We cannot afford to be ignorant of “his devices” (2 Cor. 2:11). His *modus operandi* is “capsulated” in 1 John 2:15-16, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

Satan’s chief aim is to get us to fall in love with the world, to love the world so much that any love for God is crowded out. This corroborates Paul’s warning to the Colossians to beware of any philosophy that is “after the *tradition of men*, after the *rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8, emphasis added). With Satan, it is all about the world, this world, and nothing but this world.

According to 1 John 2:16, in his effort to saturate our minds with worldly thoughts, Satan employs three main methods: (1) the lust of the flesh—what tastes good; (2) the lust of the eyes—what looks good; and (3) the pride of life—what makes me look good. Examine any worldly

philosophy and you will find one or more of these components lurking beneath the surface.

Satan's approach has always been to suggest that his ways are better than God's ways. He wants us to believe that his way offers us *something new*, something that is better than the old worn out way of living by God's rules. Satan wants us to believe that his way is the pathway to *something better* than what we could ever have by following God's narrow way. Satan wants us to believe that it is *necessary* for us to throw off the shackles of God's confining rules in order to gain real freedom and knowledge.

Should the reader doubt the foregoing to be true, he/she need only read Genesis 3. Therein, we read:

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat (Gen. 3:1-6).

We should not read over Satan's question too quickly and fail to consider his motive for asking it. It is almost as if Satan is asking Eve: "Just how restrictive has God been with you? What is it that God is keeping from you?" Upon hearing Eve's reply, that God had granted them access to every tree in the garden but one, and upon hearing that God had told Adam and Eve that they would surely die if they ate of that tree, Satan does not hesitate to contradict God's revealed will. Point blank, Satan tells them: "Ye shall not surely die" (v. 4).

Satan does not stop there. He quickly fabricates a reason as to why God was barring Adam and Eve from the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the first place. Satan plants the thought into Adam and Eve's mind that God is trying to keep them from attaining an equally godlike status. Essentially, Satan is saying, "Are you not tired of eating from all these old trees? Why not try this *new* tree? The fruit on this tree is

better than any of the fruit you have been eating. Besides, if you want to be as knowledgeable as God, then *it is necessary* that you eat of this fruit. Do you want to keep taking orders from God because you are beneath Him? Or would you rather rise to His level and be in charge of your own affairs? If you will eat of this fruit then you will be on the same level as God, and if you are on the same level, then He will not be able to treat you like one of His inferiors. But if you want this *better* life, *it is necessary* that you break away from the old rules and travel a *new* path instead!”

Regrettably, Satan’s methods worked. According to Genesis 3:6, the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes) and that it was a tree to be desired to make one wise (the pride of life), and so she partook of the fruit, and Adam followed her lead, rather than leading her to follow after God’s lead.

There is no literal Garden of Eden today, nor are we confronted with Satan in the form of a serpent, enticing us to partake of the forbidden fruit of a literal tree. However, this is not to say that Satan is dormant in his attempts to seduce us into sin. The backdrop and props are different today, but his basic approach has not changed. Satan’s bottom line is still the same today as it was in the Garden of Eden—to convince us, by any means and method, to rebel against the will of God and to follow our own will instead. He cloaks his real purpose behind the dress of various worldly philosophies, but once you strip away the outer garments of these philosophies you expose the common denominator in them all—the elevation of man and the denigration of God, or to put it another way, up with man and down with God!

Satan does not speak directly to man today as he did in the Garden, but he is still speaking through men to men. Remember that Paul wrote: “Beware *lest any man* spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after *the tradition of men*, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8, emphasis added). The personalities and proponents of these worldly philosophies have changed throughout history, but their propaganda has not. They all have said/say that the philosophy they espouse is fresh and *new*, and that it is *better* than any other philosophy, especially the philosophy of the Bible. Moreover, they aver that it is *necessary* to embrace their philosophy in order for society to progress to greater heights, because, to hear them tell it, the philosophy of Christianity is old, inferior, defective, and destructive. On the

contrary, we shall counter their claims that their worldly philosophy is new, better and necessary.

THEY SAY, "IT IS NEW"—BUT IT IS NOT!

In the physical realm, we are bombarded by advertisements that promise "new and improved" products. Some products deliver what they promise and some do not, but the thrill of trying something new will cause many to at least try the product. Satan is very much aware of this human attraction to things that are new. Not surprisingly then, he often promotes his worldly philosophies as "new" in an effort to give them "curb appeal." Consider just two worldly philosophies that have adopted this tactic of offering something "new."

Humanism

Some hear the word "Humanism" and equate it with the terms "humane, humanitarian, and the humanities." This is incorrect. Humanism is a philosophical system that asserts there is nothing which exists that is morally superior to man. Whereas Theism worships God as the source of all knowledge and truth, Humanism worships *man* as the source of all knowledge and truth. Put another way, Humanism promotes faith in man instead of faith in God.

Of course, Humanists say that their philosophy is new. John Dunphy, whose article appeared in the January/February 1983 edition of *The Humanist* magazine, authored one of the most chilling articles one could ever read. He entitled his article, *A Religion For A New Age*. Note the emphasis in the following quotations:

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 *the proselytizers of a new faith*: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being ..."

These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level—preschool day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become *an arena of conflict between the old and new—the rotting corpse of Christianity*, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and *the new faith of humanism*, resplendent in its promise of a world

in which the never-realized Christian ideal of ‘love thy neighbor’ will finally be achieved.²

The assertion in these quotations, that Humanism is *a new faith*, is absolutely false! Proponents of this philosophy have been trying openly to remake America for over 75 years, not to mention the world. In 1933, with John Dewey, the father of progressive education, leading the way, thirty-four professors signed a document known as the *Humanist Manifesto I*. In 1973, *Humanist Manifesto II* was authored, with over 200 individuals signing their names to it. Another Humanist Manifesto was published in 2000 (known as *Humanist Manifesto 2000*). It was not regarded as a comprehensive statement of Humanist views and so *Humanist Manifesto III* was published in 2003. The content of these manifestos proves that this philosophy is nothing new. Consider the evidence.

1. *Atheism is not new.* One of the fundamental tenets of Humanism is the denial of God’s existence. “Religious Humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.”³ “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of the supernatural ... As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.”⁴ Denying the existence of God is not exactly a new approach. Psalm 14:1, which affirms, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,” was penned approximately 1,000 years before Christ, and long before anyone coined the term “Humanism.”

2. Relying on self instead of God is not new. In a brochure explaining the membership rules for joining a Humanist organization, Julian Huxley explains:

I use the word “Humanist” to mean someone who believes that man is just as much a natural phenomenon as an animal or plant; that his body, mind and soul were not supernaturally created but are products of evolution, and that he is not under the control or the guidance of any supernatural being or beings, but *has to rely on himself and his own powers.*⁵

Corliss Lamont agrees that man must rely totally upon himself. In his book, *Philosophy Of Humanism*, he wrote: “Humanism assigns to man nothing less than the task of being his own saviour and redeemer.”⁶ *Humanist Manifesto II* declared: “While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save; we must save ourselves.”⁷

A children's book, written by Humanist Chris Brockman, is called *What About Gods?* He wrote: "We no longer need gods to explain how things happen. By careful thinking, measuring and testing we have discovered many of the real causes of things, and we're discovering more all the time. We call this thinking."⁸

The arrogance and smug self-sufficiency on display in the foregoing quotes are nothing new. In the 5th century B.C., Protagoras affirmed that "man is the measure of all things."⁹ The 5th century B.C. does not exactly qualify as "new!" Furthermore, even earlier in history, we read that in the days of the Judges, "there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jgs. 17:6; 21:25).

Solomon warned: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (Pro. 12:15), and declared that the one "that trusteth in his own heart is a fool" (Pro. 28:26). The inspired admonition of the Psalmist—"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes" (Ps. 118:8-9)—offers proof that man's tendency to trust in man is nothing new.

The New Age Movement

Another philosophy, which "they say" is a new way of thinking and living, is the New Age Movement. Despite the name, the New Age Movement is anything but new. Although the roots of the New Age Movement were present much earlier, the growth of the New Age Movement exploded in this country in the mid to late 1980s. However, the thrust of the New Age movement is so old that its roots can be traced back ultimately to the philosophy espoused by Satan in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3).

What is the New Age Movement? Author Elliot Miller explains that it is an extremely large (but loosely structured) network of organizations and individuals bound together by certain common values and a common vision of a coming "new age" of peace and mass enlightenment, i.e., the dawning of the age of Aquarius.¹⁰ A precise definition of the New Age Movement is elusive because the movement is so diverse, and loosely structured.

New Age philosophy is essentially a marriage of the Humanism of the western world with the occultic mysticism of the Eastern religions (primarily Hinduism and Buddhism). Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions. Its adherents teach that there is one God, known as "Brahman," who is said to be an impersonal divine essence. They

further believe that many other gods emanate from the source of the one God, Brahman. Thus, Hindus actually believe in one Supreme Being with a plurality of gods perceived as creations of that one Being. In fact, Hindus are on record as believing in a total of 333 million gods.

Hindus believe that the universe undergoes endless cycles of creation, preservation and dissolution. Hindus believe in *karma*, the law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his own destiny by his thoughts, words and deeds. Hindus believe that the soul reincarnates, evolving through many births until all karmas have been resolved, and *moksha*, spiritual knowledge and liberation from the cycle of rebirth, is attained. They teach that not a single soul will be eternally deprived of this destiny.

Closely related to Hinduism is Buddhism, which was born in India, the home of Hinduism. It is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who wandered through India approximately 2,500 years ago. Gautama became known as Buddha, or “the Enlightened One.” His influence is still being felt. There are over 300 million Buddhists in the world today. Professional golfer, Tiger Woods, is a confessed Buddhist, as is Phil Jackson, the head coach of the Los Angeles Lakers.

On January 18-19, 1987, actress Shirley Maclaine’s book, *Out On A Limb*, came to ABC television in the form of a much publicized five-hour mini-series. The movie documented her journey to the so-called realization of her godhood and alleged reincarnation experiences. Other big-name celebrities quickly followed with their own endorsements of New Age thinking (John Denver, Willie Nelson, Tina Turner, Stephen Spielberg, Dennis Weaver, Sharon Gless (Cagney and Lacey), Levar Burton (“Roots” and “Star Trek: The Next Generation”). New Age views were given frequent airing on three major talk shows: *Oprah Winfrey*, *Geraldo*, and *Phil Donahue*. Oprah Winfrey is a self-professed New Ager.¹¹

Several years ago, the movie, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, created a furor of controversy. The movie was based on Nikos Kazantakis’s 1955 novel, and portrayed a Jesus who doubted His Messiahship, struggled with lustful temptations, and taught the pantheistic doctrine that “Everything’s a part of God.” Furthermore, on the introduction page of the script is this quotation from Kazantakis: “It is not God who will save us—it is us who will save God, by battling, by creating and transmuting matter into spirit.” The novel portrays “a

very Eastern concept of the pathway to godhood and release from the cycle of birth and death into bliss."¹²

New Ager, Benjamin Creme, elaborates:

Every manifested phenomenon is part of God. And the space between these manifested phenomena is God. So, in a very real sense, there isn't anything else. You are God. I am God. This microphone is God. This table is God. All is God. And because all is God, there is no God. God is not someone that you can point to and say "That is God." God is everything that you have ever known or could ever know—and everything beyond your level of knowing.¹³

In her book, *Out On A Limb*, Shirley MacLaine offers several affirmations of the godhood of man. Her New Age guru allegedly told her: "You are God. You know you are Divine. But you must continually remember your Divinity and, most important, act accordingly."¹⁴ After she supposedly discovered her own "godhood," she affirmed: "Each soul is its own God. You must never worship anyone or anything other than self. For you are God. To love self is to love God."¹⁵ Swami Muktananda—a great influence on Werner Erhard, founder of EST and Forum—pulls no pantheistic punches when he says: "Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own being. God dwells within you as You!"¹⁶

As we noted in the introductory material, the teaching that man may become as God/gods is not new! This is the very lie Satan told Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen. 3:6). In response, we remember that the Bible affirms that there is One God (Deut. 6:4). He is in heaven and we are on earth (Ps. 33:13-14). Jeremiah quoted the Lord, saying: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord ... Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jer. 17:5, 7).

The ruler of Tyre was rebuked because in his arrogance he had said: "I am a God" (Ezek. 28:2). He was quickly reminded: "[Y]et thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God" (Ezek. 28:2). When the people shouted out their praises to Herod, claiming that his voice was the voice of a god, and not man, he apparently soaked it all up. Immediately, "the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory" (Acts 12:23). Paul condemned the Gentiles for worshipping and serving the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

The words of Solomon may be applied *in principle* to the claims of the Humanists and the New Agers, that what they are espousing is a new philosophy. “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and *there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us*” (Ecc. 1:9-10, emphasis added). The worldly philosophy and vain deceit associated with Humanism and the New Age movement is not new!

THEY SAY, “IT IS BETTER”—BUT IT IS NOT!

We must revisit the earlier quotation from Dunphy to explore his claim that Humanism is a better philosophy than Christianity.

The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and new—the *rotting corpse of Christianity*, together with *all its adjacent evils and misery*, and the new faith of *humanism*, resplendent in its promise of a world in which *the never-realized Christian ideal of ‘love thy neighbor’ will finally be achieved*. Then perhaps, *we will be able to say with Tom Paine that “the World is my country, all humankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.”*¹⁷

One thing is certain—Dunphy can never be accused of mincing words! He writes that Christianity is a “rotting corpse” and blames it for “adjacent evils and misery.” On the other hand, Dunphy claims that what Christianity could not get done with the “love thy neighbor” principle, will finally be realized by practicing the new faith of Humanism!

Mr. Dunphy needs to do a little research before making such outrageous statements. It is a documented fact that societies have been uplifted wherever a knowledge of God and the Bible have gone. How many hospitals have been built by the atheists, compared to the number built by those who are trying to love their neighbors as taught in the Bible?

It is also fair to ask Mr. Dunphy how long it is going to take until Humanists usher in the promised Utopia? After all, Humanism has been taught in our public schools for decades now, has dominated the airwaves in music, movies, television and other forms of mass media, but our society does not seem to be getting better. In fact, it appears to be getting worse. The truth is that the worldly philosophies of Humanism and New-Ageism cannot make society better. Why is this so?

1. *Because man is robbed of his special place in creation.* The *Journal of American Pediatrics Association* issued the following statement in July of 1983: "We can no longer base our ethics on the idea that human beings are a special form of creation, made in the image of God, singled out from all the other animals and also possessing an immortal soul."¹⁸ It is frightening to think that an organization devoted to taking care of children would adopt such a godless philosophy of ethics. According to this, when a doctor treats a human being it is no different than a veterinarian treating an animal, except that the human would be considered a more highly developed animal. With this type of thinking, it is not hard to figure out why human life has been so devalued, both among the unborn and the elderly.

2. *Because man is left without Divine help.* Consider the following: "As in 1933, humanists still believe that *traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God*, assumed to love 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.*"¹⁹ Humanists ridicule Christians for believing that someone actually listens to their prayers and cares about their trials, but this is the teaching of Holy Scripture (Mt. 7:7-11; Heb. 4:15). How can it be better to believe that no Divine Being cares for us in our time of trial? The Book of Psalms would be pointless to read if God does not exist/hear our petitions. But, He does listen and He does care (Ps. 42; 142; 1 Pet. 5:7).

3. *Because man is left without an objective standard.* According to Humanism, man is not bound by any absolute standard of ethics. Action "X" can be morally right for one person, but action "X" can also be morally wrong for another. In our broad-minded age, the following statements sound like music to the ear of the man who does not want to be governed by any authority.

We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or *authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.*²⁰

We affirm that *moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction.*²¹

We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize personality.²²

If you are wondering just how far Humanists will take the concept of not being under an authoritative standard, consider this: “In the area of sexuality, 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.*”²³ Are we really expected to believe that abortion and divorce have made our world a better place? The practice of abortion has definitely not made the womb a better place for the innocent children. Moreover, think of all the emotional pain associated with those women who are trying to find a way to forgive themselves for deliberately killing a fellow human being.

In the 1980, March/April issue of *Humanist*, Corliss Lamont, urged Humanists to take the lock out of wedlock. He wrote: “The greatest danger in marriage is lack of variety. Most marriage partners need more diversity in sex interplay than they can give each other and should therefore have ample contacts with friends of the opposite sex outside the family circle.”²⁴ Of course, those who have followed this philosophy of marriage are often the very ones who are getting divorced. Think of all the emotional pain and loneliness brought about by divorce. And this has made our world a better place? How can anyone argue such nonsense with a straight face?

Supposedly, for those who are not married, promiscuity is the better way to live, rather than waiting for marriage. Albert Ellis, a signer of *Humanist Manifesto II*, authored a book, called *Sex Without Guilt*, in which he wrote: “Since *premarital sex relations are no longer viewed as morally reprehensible or sinful by most educated and informed individuals*, there need be no intrinsic guilt attached to them.” Ellis went on to say, “Premarital sex relations are fine and *the Bible is hardly a good guide to sane sex conduct.*”²⁵ Can you see the sarcasm dripping from Mr. Ellis’s pen? If you are *pro abstinence before marriage*, then you just are not educated and informed! Why, you are probably one of those insane, Bible thumping radicals!

The permissive attitude toward sexuality is evidenced in The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s *Sex Education Policy Statement*, which states: “At one time *sex education was based ... on innocence, ideals and moral codes ... but ... we are now moving toward*

a more humanistic approach."²⁶ In other words, there are no absolute rights or wrongs for young people when it comes to the subject of human sexuality. As sick as it sounds, some Humanists are even referring to incest as "the last taboo."

Of course, the Bible way is the better way. It still declares: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Some recoil at the very mention of God and His Word as the better way. They do not want to hear it! One cannot help but think of Paul's description of some who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28). At least Aldous Huxley was honest in admitting the truth about *why* many Humanists are so antagonistic against God and His Word. Huxley wrote an article, entitled *Confessions Of A Professed Atheist*, in which he confessed:

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 that 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.²⁷

This heart-breaking quotation admits that a philosophy of liberation is not better—it leads to meaninglessness!

In the New Age world, anything can be true for the individual, but nothing can be true for everyone. Consider the following quotes from Ramtha, the giant warrior who supposedly channels his teachings from beyond this world through a petite blond woman named J.Z. Knight:

I expect you to do only what you *feel* is right.

There is no voice that will *ever* teach you greater than your own.

Never believe in anything. Never! That is convincing yourself of something you have yet to know and understand through experience.

Always trust the wisdom of your feelings.

Truth is a feeling, a knowingness; it is not intellectual. To know what the truth is for you, is to know what you *feel* the truth is.²⁸

Ramtha also affirms that “the splendid thing about God is that he is, indeed, lawless ... Your beloved Father has created no law—save one. And that law is to express your life according to your own sovereign will.”²⁹

How different this advice is from that of Holy Scripture. The writer of Proverbs admonished his readers to trust in the Lord with all of their hearts, and not to lean unto their own understanding (Pro. 3:5). We repeat for emphasis: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro. 14:12; 16:25). The one who trusts in his own heart is not enlightened; according to Scripture, he is a fool (Pro. 28:26). “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

What does the Bible teach about ethics and morality? *Right* and *wrong* is determined by God’s commandments (Ps. 119:172). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). This is certainly the better way!

4. *Because it confines the hope of man to this life.* Humanists reject the idea that man has an immortal soul which resides in his human body. Accordingly, in the words of Corliss Lamont, “... for Humanism the central concern is always the happiness of man in this existence, *not in some fanciful never-never land beyond the grave.*”³⁰ Averring the same position, the Humanist Manifestos repeatedly affirms:

Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that *the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.*³¹

Modern science discredits such historic concepts as ‘the ghost in the machine’ and the ‘separable soul.’³²

There is *no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.*³³

Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears harmful, diverting people with *false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.*³⁴

*Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns.*³⁵

*Humanists live for actions, ideals on this earth in our one and only life. Heaven must be built in this world or not at all... while we're here, let's live in clover, for when we're dead, we're dead all over.*³⁶

All I can say after reading the above quotations is, "How sad!" Imagine how sad the atmosphere must be at the funeral of an Atheist/Humanist! How sad it must be to live with no hope! How can this view possibly be better than the opportunity to live forevermore with God in heaven above?

THEY SAY, "IT IS NECESSARY"—BUT IT IS NOT!

In describing the battle between worldly philosophy and Christianity, Mr. Dunphy concludes: "It will undoubtedly be a long, arduous, painful struggle replete with much sorrow and many tears, but *humanism will emerge triumphant. It must if the family of humankind is to survive.*"³⁷ The last phrase from Dunphy indicates his conviction that, in order for humankind to survive, Humanism must of necessity be followed.

The New Agers teach that it is necessary to embrace their philosophy in order that we may rediscover our divinity. As preposterous as it sounds, they believe that we have forgotten our divinity, and that it is only ignorance that keeps us from realizing our divine reality. Thus, the goal, according to New Age analyst Theodore Roszak, is "to awaken to the god who sleeps at the root of the human being."³⁸

How can we overcome our ignorance of our alleged divinity? The New Age Movement has taken the old-fashioned methods of talking to the dead, tweaked them a bit, and come up with its own brand of spiritism, call "channeling." According to New Agers, all information is contained in what they call the "Akashic Records." To access the information contained within these records, they believe it is necessary to have it channeled from some entity or personality beyond this earth unto another person here on earth. This is called "channeling."

Culturally, America is increasingly receptive to the idea that we can gather information from the dead. From 1973 to 1984, the number of Americans who claimed contact with the dead increased from 27% to 45%. Television personalities, like John Edwards, claim an ability to

speak to the dead. Almost two decades ago, there were only two professed channelers in Los Angeles—today, there are well over 1,000 who claim this ability. One of the reasons the channeling industry has grown so much is that it has become a very lucrative industry. Most channelers charge a minimum of \$100 per hour for their services.

The New Age Movement claims that it is necessary to tap into the Akashic Records, in order to learn what we need to know. Meditation, yoga, chanting and channeling are a few of the ways they claim this can be done. However, because of the message of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *it is not necessary* to tap into the so-called Akashic Records. Again: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: *That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17, emphasis added). As long as we have the Bible, it will be unnecessary to follow the philosophies and vain deceit of men.

Using the Bible as our one and only guide, if there is anything that man needs his consciousness raised about, it is his own sinfulness. Nowhere in Scripture do we see any inspired teacher attempting to persuade his hearers of their divinity. Rather, we see sinners indicted and boldly admonished to recognize their lost and undone condition apart from God (Isa. 59:1-2; Ezek. 18:31-32; Acts 2:23; 3:14-15; Rom. 3:10, 23; 6:23). Man also needs to be conscious of the fact that Jesus Christ is his only hope for salvation (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).

CONCLUSION

As we conclude, it is interesting to observe that *there is something new, there is something better, and there is something necessary*, but it is not worldly philosophy and vain deceit. It is Christianity!

Christianity Is New

God predicted through Jeremiah that He would someday establish “a new covenant” with His people (Jer. 31:31-34). The writer of Hebrews confirmed that this promise of God had been fulfilled and that the new covenant was now operative (Heb. 8:8-13; 9:15-17). Because of the *new birth*, “of water and of the Spirit” (Jn. 3:5), we are made brand *new creatures* in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

Christianity Is Better

The same Book of Hebrews refers to the New Covenant as a “*better covenant*,” established upon “*better promises*” (Heb. 8:6), by a “*better*”

mediator (Heb. 1:4; 8:6), who offered "*better sacrifices*" (Heb. 9:23), so that He might bring us to live with Him someday in a "*better country*" (Heb. 11:16). Christianity is not just better than the Old Covenant—it is better than anything else in the world!

Humanist can make fun of "God-intoxicated" believers all they want—but at least we know exactly where we came from, and we know exactly what we are doing here. While the worldly philosopher stumbles through life, tripping over the consequences of following his own desires, we trust in the Lord with all our hearts instead of leaning to our own understanding (Pro. 3:5-7). We do not glory in our own wisdom, but rather in the infinitely superior wisdom of God (Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 3:18-21).

If we trust in the wisdom of our own hearts we are fools—if we follow the wisdom of God we shall be delivered from "philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. 2:8). The wisdom of this world is foolishness compared to the wisdom of God. Therefore, in deciding what our purpose is here on earth, we reiterate: "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Ps. 118:8).

Christianity offers a dignified answer to the question: "Where did I come from?" I am not the accidental happenstance of ocean slime. I am a member of the human race. As a human being, I am a descendant of the man who was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). As a human being, I (or we) can say of God: "[I]n him we live, and move, and have our being ... For we are also his offspring" (Acts 17:28). As long as I live upon the earth, I have the opportunity to lovingly serve the God Who sent His Son to die for me (Jn. 3:16; Gal. 2:20).

Christianity Is Necessary

Because of the fault within the people (Heb. 8:7), and the inability of the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (10:1-4), it was a must, *it was necessary for Christ to come and suffer* (Mt. 16:21; Lk. 9:22; 24:7, 44; Acts 17:3). *It was necessary for Jesus to die* for the New Testament to come into force (Heb. 9:16). To gain the benefits of His blood, it is necessary for us to possess an obedient faith, "*for he that cometh to God must believe that he is*" (Heb. 11:6, emphasis added). For this faith to be a saving faith, it must lead us to be born again, born of water and of the Spirit (Jn. 3:5). Jesus said it was necessary when He said: "*Ye must be born again*" (Jn. 3:7, emphasis added).

It is necessary for me to be born again because *it is also necessary for me to stand before God in judgment*. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). To prepare for the Judgment Day, I must first, as a penitent, confessing, believer, be buried with my Lord in baptism (Col. 2:11-12). After I have risen with Christ as a new creature, I must maintain an affection for “things which are above ... not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-4; Mt. 6:19-21), for this earth will pass away and the lusts thereof, but if I do the will of God I will abide forever (1 Jn. 2:15-17). Consequently, I will labor, not for the meat which perishes, but for that which endures unto everlasting life (Jn. 6:27).

As a human being I am more than mere flesh. I have a soul that will live on after my body is dead (Mt. 10:28; 22:32). When I die, I will either spend eternity in pleasure or torment (Lk. 16:19-31; Mt. 25:46). My destiny is up to me. I can either accept the grace of God by living according to His will, or I can despise being governed by His authority (Ps. 2:3; 2 Pet. 2:10) and suffer the consequences (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Satan will do everything within his power to deceive you and me with worldly philosophies, but let us, like Mary, choose the good and better part, the teaching of Christ (Lk. 10:42). Let us choose the New Covenant which will lead us to the New Heavens and New Earth above (2 Pet. 3:9-14; Rev. 21:1-27).

ENDNOTES

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

² John Dunphy, “A Religion For A New Age,” *Humanist* (Jan./Feb. 1983): 20.

³ *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, (Amherst, NY: American Humanist Association, 1973), I, First.

⁴ *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

⁵ Julian Huxley, Brochure on Rules for membership in Humanism Organization.

⁶ Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (New York, NY: Frederick Unger Publishing Co, 1977), 30.

⁷ *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

⁸ <<http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-04292009-123129/unrestricted/02chapter2.pdf>> 9.

⁹ <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protagoras> Philosophy.

¹⁰ Elliot Miller, *A Crash Course on The New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 15.

¹¹ Miller, 185.

¹² Russell Chandler, *Understanding The New Age* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1988), 22.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁴ Shirley MacLaine, *Out On A Limb* (New York, NY: Bantam, 1983), 209.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹⁶ Douglas R. Groothuis, *Unmasking The New Age* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986), 21.

¹⁷ Dunphy.

¹⁸ Journal of American Pediatrics Association (July 1983).

¹⁹ *Humanist Manifesto II*, Preface.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, First.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Third.

²² *Ibid.*, Fifth.

²³ *Ibid.*, Sixth.

²⁴ Corlis Lamont, "The Affirmative Ethics of Humanism," *Humanist* 40, no. 2 (March/April 1980).

²⁵ Albert Ellis, *Sex Without Guilt* (New York, NY: Hillman, 1958), 39, 112.

²⁶ North Carolina Dept. of Public Information "Sex Education Policy Statement."

²⁷ *Perspective On The News* 3, (1966): 19.

²⁸ F. LaGard Smith, *Crystal Lies* (Ann Arbor, MI: Vine Books, 1989). 102.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-112.

³⁰ *Humanist Manifesto I*, Third.

³¹ Lamont, "Affirmative Ethics."

³² *Humanist Manifesto II*, Second.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Preface.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Second.

³⁶ Lamont, "Affirmative Ethics."

³⁷ Dunphy.

³⁸ Smith, quoting Theodore Roszak.