



The Reflector

THE REFLECTOR

HUMANISM - A Religion

By Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

As a preacher of the gospel, I have always tried to avoid references to political issues in my preaching. In most cases I think that preachers should avoid trying to make political statements. After all, our main concern is to be for the spiritual welfare of others rather than being too concerned with the social, economic, or political affairs of the world. I am a strong believer in this. I also try to avoid too much involvement in these areas in my writing. But I think that something has occurred which merits comment, because it does in a way strike at our spiritual well-being. So please bear with me.

An interesting thing has happened here in the state of Alabama, the ramifications of which affect the whole country. A federal judge in Mobile has handed down what I think to be a very needed ruling. U.S. District Judge William Brevard Hand handed down a ruling on March 4, the results of which was that "36 schoolbooks must be removed from Alabama public schools because they advance the religion of 'secular humanism' in violation of the U.S. Constitution." (*The Anniston Star*, March 5, 1987, p. 1A) This was the lead story in almost every newspaper in the state and on

almost every local TV and radio newscast. Most of the national news outlets also quickly picked up on the story and it is easy to see why. This was a major blow to the humanists who want free access to the schools to preach their religion while they continue their fight to subvert other values being taught to our children. Of course the ACLU and other groups such as the People for the American Way have already vowed to appeal this ruling.

This ruling and the publicity that surrounds it ought to cause Christians to come to some very strong realizations. I think that there are three basic realizations that we must come to:

1. *The realization that secular humanism is a religion.* One of the significant things about this ruling is that here we have a federal judge saying what many of us have said all along. Secular humanism is a religion. Of course, humanists deny this. In response to

sacred in it." (*The Anniston Star*, March 5, 1987, p. 10A) What we need to realize, however, is that humanism does have something "sacred in it". It makes man sacred and elevates humankind as the thing to be worshiped. Just as Satanism promotes Satan as its god and as idolatry promotes idols as its gods, humanism promotes man and humankind as its god. In humanism man glorifies himself and worships himself. Get a copy of the Humanist Manifesto (the humanist's creed book) and read it and see if that's not true. Humanism, therefore, must be dealt with as any other false religion. We must teach and exhort against its evils.

2. *The realization that humanism has invaded our schools.* This ruling would have never been handed down and there would not be so much publicity surrounding it if this were not true. The decision was a result of a lawsuit filed by a group of 600 parents and teachers who had come to a

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the judge's ruling Delos McKown, a humanist counselor at Auburn University and a member of the American Humanist Association board is quoted as saying, "No matter what he (Hand) says, no matter how he traces it back... secular humanism is not a religion because it has nothing

realization of this fact. They had seen the humanist doctrines taught in some of the textbooks that were used in the state of Alabama and asked that these books be removed from the schools. Let me quote something from one of the home economics textbooks that was

banned as a result of this ruling. "Too strict a conscience may make you afraid to try new ventures and meet new people. It may make you feel different and unpopular. None of these things belongs to a healthy personality." ("Today's Teen" by Joan Kelly, Bennett & McKnight Publishing Co., 1981) Are you alarmed by such being in the textbooks that our children are using? I know I am. One who denies that humanism is in our schools is being naive. Take a good look at your children's textbooks sometime. Ignoring humanism will not make it go away.

3. *The realization that we must fight for our children's minds.* Humanists are making an assault on our children's thinking through our public schools. They freely admit this. Just read some of their writings sometime where they reveal their plans. It is well documented. What then are we to do? I think we must do what Christians have always done and what Christians are commanded to do. We need to make sure that we bring up our children "in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) Parents have always had to fight for the minds of their children. Humanism is not the first thing that Satan has used to try to draw away our young people, just the latest. We must not sit around wringing our hands and lamenting, "What are we going to do to protect our children from these humanist educators?" We must do what Christian parents have always done to protect their children

from Satan's devices. We must teach them the Lord's way, the word's which the Lord commands. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." (Deut. 6:7) That is how we win the fight for our children's minds.

Humanism has been in our schools for some time, although many are only now realizing it. The most influential force upon our American educational system are the ideas of John Dewey, an avowed humanist. It has been in the schools for years, although gaining a stronger hold in the past few years. I am a young man and remember that the humanist philosophies were present in my own education. Throughout grade school, humanistic ideas were promoted. Evolution was taught, and efforts were made to influence my values. The influence of humanism became even stronger as I went on to a state institution of higher learning and proceeded through both undergraduate and post-graduate study. I encountered the philosophies that we so readily associate with the false religion of humanism. As far as I can tell, I have not been greatly affected by humanism. I hope that I have not deceived myself in this assessment. I have been bombarded with the idea that man is here by chance, yet still firmly believe that God put us here on the earth for a purpose. I have been told that values are relative, yet still firmly believe that



NONA CALVERT

Our sympathy to the family of our sister Nona Calvert, who passed away September 20



God has given us an absolute standard to live by. Why is this so? I believe that the great part of the credit for that lies at the feet of two godly people, my Mom and Dad. They taught us children that God's way was the right way regardless of what anyone else might say. They warned us of the dangers and threats that there would be to our faith wherever that we might find ourselves in the world. We were made to realize that we must not be deceived by the blatant attempts by the people of the world to sway our thinking or by the subtle attempts on the part of those who claim to be brethren. So whether we were in the wide open arena of state controlled higher learning or in the sheltered confines of a "Christian" school, we had been taught not to believe everything we heard, but to rely upon God and His word as our standard. I realize that holding one's own parents up as an example is risky, but I'll take that chance, because I'm proud of what they have done for me.

So, what I am saying is, don't leave the education of your children up to the world. Teach them the values at home that will help them withstand whatever outside threat they might encounter, even humanism. You can win the battle for your child's mind if you are willing to put forth the effort.

We certainly praise the ruling of Judge Hand, but must not wait for a federal judge to tell us the dangers that lie in front of our young people. We must continue to teach them diligently the way of righteousness.

**GOSPEL
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How to change the WORLD



By Edward O. Bragwell, Jr.

As we look out into the world that we live in, we see many things that are not right. We are distraught over the wicked behavior that we observe around us day to day. (cf. II Pet. 2:8) Because of this it is easy for us to desperately seek some way to change the conditions that we observe to make this world a better place to live in and a better place in which to bring up our children. Therefore, the question that we so many times find ourselves pondering is just how can we go about accomplishing this task? I think in answering this question, however, we need to be careful about the kind of solutions we propose.

Just how does one go about making the world a better place and solving the problems that exist among its people? What kind of steps must we take? How do we change the world?

Not Through Political Reform

Many have the idea that the world's problems can all be solved through political reform and the proper kind of government. We are told that if we just have the right kind of government, then we won't have anything to worry about. I see many of my brethren caught up in this kind of thinking. They get all wrapped up in all kinds of political crusades that are designed to change our society into a more "God-fearing", "moral" society. They seem to think that if you reform the government that it will solve all of the problems of evil and immorality that we see about us.

Indeed it is sad to see the condition that our government is in. But is it really the mission and responsibility of Christians to see that our government acts in a certain way? I hear people talk of the constitution of the United States as a "God-given" document. It is believed therefore that the reason we are in so much trouble is because the country has gotten away from the principles of that document and therefore from the God-fearing nation desired by the founding fathers. Is this really true? I always thought that the constitution was written by men. When I read about many of these men, I find that many of them did not believe in the God I believe in and that some were as immoral and corrupt as any of the politicians today. While the constitution of the United States is a wonderful document, it is not a divine decree and certainly not inspired of God. It is funny how many Christians will get all up in arms when people do not remain true to the constitution or make attacks on it, but will sit by and say little when an attack is made on the Bible, a document that is truly "God-given". (II Tim. 3:16) Now don't get me wrong. I am proud to be an American. I know of no other country that I would rather sojourn in than these United States. I respect the constitution. I don't know another earthly document that I would rather be governed by. However, I will not elevate it to a position that it does not deserve.

Is it the mission of Christians to make sure the government that they live under is "moral" and to do all that they can to change it if it is corrupt? Now I may be missing something somewhere, but when I read the New Testament, I read of Christians living under one of the most corrupt governments that has ever existed on this earth. However, I don't remember ever reading where Christians were

ever instructed by the apostles or any other inspired teacher what they were to do to change that situation. I don't ever remember reading where they were instructed to band together and petition the government for this reform or that reform. I don't remember much said about the government that they lived under except that they were to submit to it. (Rom. 13:1-7; I Pet. 2:13-17) If ever there was a corrupt government that needed reform, it was the Roman government. Yet I see very little said about how the early Christians were to go about reforming it.

Now I am not saying that it is wrong to do what we can to change things through whatever means are available to us, but when we get so caught up in our political crusades that we forget what our real mission is, then something is wrong. Remember, whatever political reform we might be able to instigate, it is only of value in this present age. It might make this world a better place to live in now, but will not matter beyond the grave. Let's remember where our real citizenship is. (Phil. 3:20) It always bothers me to see Christians spending more time and energy trying to convince those about them of the need for supporting some amendment or candidate than trying to convince them of the need for obedience to the gospel of Christ.

Not Through Social Reform

Many also think that the way to really change things in this world is through high power social programs. Therefore, many commit themselves to various social crusades. We hear much today about African relief and world hunger programs. Many devote much time to various social agencies, inner city missions, soup kitchen programs, etc. This is not only true in the secular portion of our society, but much more so in the religious portion. The social

gospel has taken root in almost every denomination in this country. Churches are believed by many to be nothing more than social relief agencies. To many that should be the primary mission of all churches. It is believed that a church is not doing what it is supposed to do if it does not minister to the "whole man".

Now, I certainly believe that we as Christians need to be doing all that we can to help relieve the hunger and sufferings of our fellow man. (Gal. 6:10; James 2:14-16) But if we make that our primary goal, we have missed the boat. We must be more concerned with getting something to the people of the world that they have greater need of -- the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even if we were able to relieve all men of their hunger and suffering and failed to teach them the gospel we would have done them no lasting good. We would have just made things better for them in this present world while they wait for destruction.

Also, as Christians there is nothing wrong with our helping all that we can on an individual basis, but we need to recognize that the general relief of all the needy of the world is not the obligation of the church and it must not assume that work. If the church wishes to do so, we must be ready to produce the authority for us to engage in

such work. While such authority does not exist, many try to justify such actions by saying that since Jesus fed the hungry and healed the sick, then His church certainly can do the same. It is argued that the church ought to carry out the same mission on earth, that Jesus carried out while he was on earth. But think about it. What was Jesus' mission on earth? Was it to feed the hungry? If it was, then he failed. Many still went hungry in His day. If that was His mission then He certainly would have had the power to accomplish it and hunger would have been completely eradicated while He was ministering here on earth. The same thing goes for disease. But that was not His mission when he came to the earth. His mission was to save men from sin. (Matt. 1:21; Luke 19:10) He did accomplish this mission by making salvation available to all men. (John 3:16)

Through Spiritual Reform

So the only way that we can really change the world is by changing the spiritual status of men. We might change one's political or moral status for the better and still not save his soul. We might change one's social or economic status for the better and still not save his soul. What real service have you done anyone, if you do not change his spiritual status? What real service have you done for the world? What real change

have you made?

As we have already said, Jesus changed the world. He made real changes by making salvation available to all men. He did not bring about political or social reforms, but he brought about a significant spiritual reform in the lives of all that accepted Him. Oh, some came to Him at times and tried to use Him as a means of political or social reform, but He refused to be so used. (John 6:15; 18:36)

The apostles and early Christians changed the world. (Acts 17:6) They did so by preaching the gospel and converting sinners. (Acts 8:4; Rom. 1:16) They did it by carrying out the great commission. (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20)

We, too, can really change the world in the same way. Do we spend most of our time and energy in political programs or in taking the gospel to others? Are we more concerned with getting food and other material things to the people of the world or getting the gospel to them? If all men received and followed the gospel of Jesus Christ, there would be no problem with political oppression, social unrest, world hunger, etc. We must realize that we can't change people from the outside in, but from the inside out. Preach the gospel to the world and let it bear its fruit. That is how to really change the world.

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SERVICES

Sundays:

Bible Classes	9:45 A.M.
Worship	10:45 A.M.
Worship	6:00 P.M.

Wednesdays:

Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Bible Classes	7:30 P.M.

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