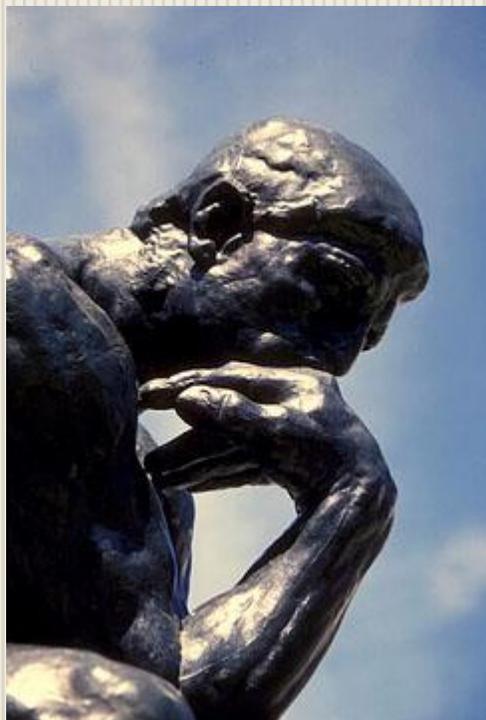


Humanism

“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.” -- Colossians 2:8



By Rev. Tom Stiles

Humanism

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.” -- Psalms 14:1

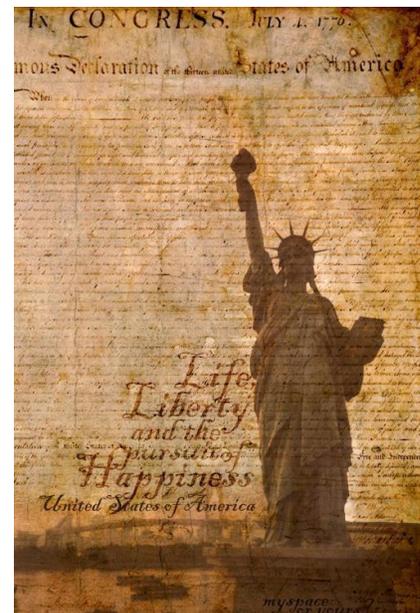
It is said that you if you take a live frog and put him in a pan of hot water, he will immediately jump out; but if you put the same frog in a pan of lukewarm water, and gradually raise the temperature, the frog stay happily swimming around until it cooks to death.

I suppose that you would have to be a junior high boy to actually try the experiment. But it does illustrate a common human experience. Rapid change brings a rapid reaction, but slow and gradual change is often unnoticed until it is too late.

That is what has happened to America.

America was founded upon a biblical foundation. The Founder Fathers gave us a “Statement of Faith” - the Declaration of Independence. In this document they set forth their reasons for breaking off from the mother country and becoming an independent nation. They based their arguments on three great truths:

1. **The Revelation of God** - “the laws of nature and nature’s God”
2. **The Reality of God** ‘ “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.”
3. **The Rule of God** - “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, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States;”



But what was once “truths self-evident” has been rejected by many Americans.

What happened? Well it was a very slow gradual change, led by a group of philosophers and educators called “Humanists.”

I. The Development of Humanism

As an organized movement, Humanism itself is quite recent - born at the University of Chicago in the 1920's and made public in 1933 with the publication of the first Humanist Manifesto. Edwin Wilson, a Humanist notes:

"A Humanist Manifesto" brought to public attention for the first time a movement deeply rooted in the cultural life of the United States of America. This movement has been variously called religious humanism, naturalistic humanism, scientific humanism, and ethical humanism according to the varying backgrounds and emphases of its proponents. --

http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/edwin_wilson/manifesto/ch1.html

The document was signed by 34 leading philosophers and educators., including John Dewey. Approximately one half of these were Unitarians (extreme theological liberals).

The document sets forth fifteen affirmations dealing with cosmology, biological and cultural evolution, human nature, epistemology, ethics, religion, self-fulfillment, and the quest for freedom and social justice. The first affirmation sets the foundation for the rest:

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

-- [http://www.americanhumanist.org/Humanist_Manifesto_I](http://www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_I)

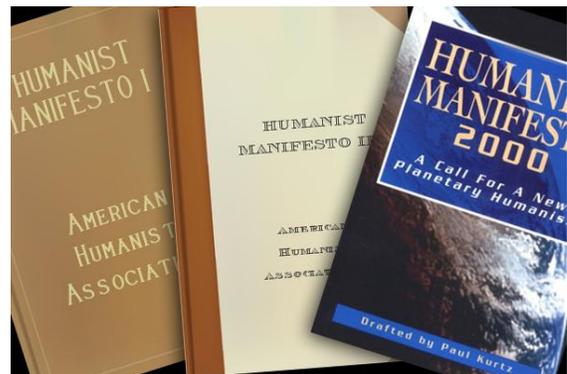
The American Humanist Association was founded in 1941 and **The International Humanist and Ethical Union** was founded in 1952, when a gathering of world Humanists met under the leadership of Sir Julian Huxley.

Although small in number, Humanists have had a tremendous impact on America and the rest of the world. They are not shy about “their work”

Founded in 1941 and located in Washington D.C., the American Humanist Association advocates progressive values and equality for humanists, atheists, freethinkers, and the non-religious. The AHA has over 20,000 members and supporters and over 160 local chapter groups across the country... In addition to traditional media, we engage the public through a heavy online presence, which includes our Rant & Reason blog, profiles on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Tumblr, and channels on YouTube and Vimeo. We also publish the award-winning magazine *The Humanists* a weekly e-newsletter *Humanist Network News* and monthly podcast *The Humanist Hour*.

With our extensive local and national media contacts, our lobbying and coalition efforts on Capitol Hill, and the efforts of our grassroots activists, we ensure that the humanist point of view is represented—the idea that you can be good without a belief in a god.

http://www.americanhumanist.org/What_We_Do



II. The “Doctrines” of Humanism

It may seem strange to think about the “doctrines” of a group that denies God’s existence, but Humanists do have a set of beliefs:

In 2002, the IHEU General Assembly unanimously adopted the Amsterdam Declaration which represents the official defining statement of World Humanism. All member organizations are required to accept the “Minimum Statement on Humanism.”

“Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more human society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic and does not accept supernatural views of reality.”

This is expressed in various ways:

“**Humanism** is a progressive life stance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives capable of adding to the greater good of humanity.”

- *American Humanist Association*

“**Humanism** is, in sum, a philosophy of those in love with life. Humanists take responsibility for their own lives and relish the adventure of being part of new discoveries, seeking new knowledge, exploring new options. Instead of finding solace in prefabricated answers to the great questions of life, humanists enjoy the open-endedness of a quest and the freedom of discovery that this entails.”

- *The Humanist Society of Western New York*

“**Humanism** is a philosophy, world view, or life stance based on naturalism—the conviction that the universe or nature is all that exists or is real. Humanism serves, for many humanists, some of the psychological and social functions of a religion, but without belief in deities, transcendental entities, miracles, life after death, and the supernatural. Humanists seek to understand the universe by using science and its methods of critical inquiry—logical reasoning, empirical evidence, and skeptical evaluation of conjectures and conclusions—to obtain reliable knowledge.”

- *Humanist Steven Schafersman*

Humanists recognize that it is only when people feel free to think for themselves, using reason as their guide, that they are best capable of developing values that succeed in satisfying human needs and serving human interests.

- *ISAAC ASIMOV - scientist and author*

This basic unbelief is stated plainly in all three Humanist Manifestos and the Secularist Humanism Declaration:

Humanist Manifesto 1:

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

SIXTH: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".

Humanist Manifesto 2:

FIRST: 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. 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."



http://www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II

A Secular Humanist Declaration (1980)

6. Religious Skepticism 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.

-- <http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=declaration>

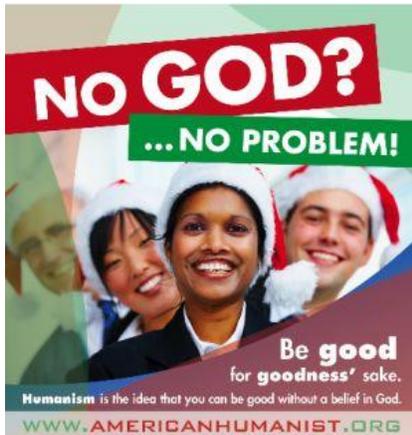
Humanist Manifesto III (2003)

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.

--http://www.americanhumanist.org/humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_III

This means, of course, that Humanism is the opposite of Biblical Christianity. In fact, the *Humanist Manifesto II* states:

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. 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.



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http://www.americanhumanist.org/Humanism/Humanist_Manifesto_II

III. The Distinctives of Humanism

According to the Council for Secular Humanism, within the United States, the term "secular humanism" describes a world view with the following elements and principles:

- **Need to test beliefs** - A conviction that dogmas, ideologies and traditions, whether religious, political or social, must be weighed and tested by each individual and not simply accepted by faith.
- **Reason, evidence, scientific method**- A commitment to the use of critical reason, factual evidence and scientific method of inquiry in seeking solutions to human problems and answers to important human questions.
- **Fulfillment, growth, creativity** - A primary concern with fulfillment, growth and creativity for both the individual and humankind in general.
- **Search for truth** - A constant search for objective truth, with the understanding that new knowledge and experience constantly alter our imperfect perception of it.
- **This life** - A concern for this life (as opposed to an afterlife) and a commitment to making it meaningful through better understanding of ourselves, our history, our intellectual and artistic achievements, and the outlooks of those who differ from us.
- **Ethics**- A search for viable individual, social and political principles of ethical conduct, judging them on their ability to enhance human well-being and individual responsibility.
- **Justice and fairness** - an interest in securing justice and fairness in society and in eliminating discrimination and intolerance.
- **Building a better world** - A conviction that with reason, an open exchange of ideas, good will, and tolerance, progress can be made in building a better world for ourselves and our children.

--<http://www.secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=main&page=what>

Now most of that sounds good, but it totally leaves God out. Man is left to himself, in an uncaring universe.

IV. The Dynamics of Humanism

From its humble beginnings, Secular Humanism has become the dominant philosophy of our public schools. How did that happen?

Basically, there have been three avenues for the advancement of Humanism”

1. Education -

From its beginnings, Humanism has seen the importance of education, particularly public education. Many of the signers of the original Humanist Manifesto were college professors.

One of these was education “reformer” John Dewey (Oct. 20-June 1, 1952), who is regarded as “the father of progressive education.” In a statement of beliefs, he said:



“I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.”

He further stated:

“I believe that education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is the only sure method of social reconstruction.”

“I believe, finally, that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life.”

“I believe that every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth.”

“I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.”

<http://dewey.pragmatism.org/creed.htm>

Other Humanist educators have echoed the same theme:

Humanist Charles F. Potter writes, "Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American school is a school of humanism. What can a theistic Sunday school's meeting for an hour once a week and teaching only a fraction of the children do to stem the tide of the five-day program of humanistic teaching?" (Charles F. Potter, "Humanism: A New Religion," 1930)

Humanist John J. Dunphy, in his award winning essay, *The Humanist* (1983), illustrates this

strategic focus, "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 -- utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to carry humanist values into wherever they teach. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new -- the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism.

2. Evolution

Henry Morris, renowned Christian and Scientist noted in an article in 1988,

“For many years now, courses in practically every discipline in the natural sciences, the social sciences and humanities—even religion courses—have been structured around evolutionistic premises. The very concept of special creation as the true explanation of origins and meanings (or even as a possible alternative explanation) has been effectively banned from public educational institutions at all levels.

“Even though America and its schools were founded on a framework of Christian creationism, evolutionary humanism has now become—at least in the media and in academia—our quasi-official state religion. Our young people have been brainwashed in this system for at least two generations, and its bitter roots are now bearing the bitter fruits of widespread amorality, materialism, the drug culture, abortionism, pornography, social diseases and a host of other ills—not to mention communism and fascism—and the intellectual apologists for all of these practices rationalize them in terms of their evolutionary premises.

Morris: “Is Creation Important in Education”

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v10/n3/education>

Evolution provided the explanation that Humanist needed for man’s existence apart from a Creator. If evolution is true, then man can make his own decisions about right or wrong. This is basic humanism - Man, not God, is the center of the Universe.

3. Edicts

The Courts have played a significant role in advancing Secular Humanism. It started with the ill-fated Scopes Trial in 1925. Clarence Darrow defended a junior high teacher (John Scopes) for violating Tennessee State Law by teaching evolution. William Jennings Bryan faced off with Darrow for the State, and actually won the case. But it was a media circus -Biblical Christianity was mocked.



The changes in the public schools continued, and came to a head in 1962. The New York Board of Regents had required public school students to say a prayer:

"Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee,

*and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents,
our teachers and our country."*

The Humanists objected - How dare the state require students to pray! Their allies in the American Civil Liberties Union sued, and the case made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court ruled:

We think that by using its public school system to encourage recitation of the Regents' prayer, the State of New York has adopted a practice wholly inconsistent with the Establishment Clause. There can, of course, be no doubt that New York's program of daily classroom invocation of God's blessings as prescribed in the Regents' prayer is a religious activity... Under the First Amendment, government cannot...compose officials prayers for any group of American people to recite..." - Engel v. Vitale

Since this case, the courts have continually viewed the First Amendment that was designed to protect "freedom OF religion," as a provision to give us "freedom FROM religion."

For example

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Bible reading in the public school, agreeing with atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hair that *"If portions of the New Testament were read without explanation, they could be and... had been, psychologically harmful to the child."* - *Abington v. Schempp / Murray v. Curlett*

In 1982, the Court ruled that Kentucky could not force the posting of the 10 Commandments in public school classrooms. The Court feared that, *"If the posted copies of the Ten Commandments are to have any effect at all, it will be to induce the schoolchildren to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey, the Commandments."* - *Stone v. Graham*

V. The Difficulties of Humanism

I believe that President Ronald Reagan said it best:



"We establish no religion in this country, nor will we ever. We command no worship. We mandate no belief. But we poison our society when we remove its theological underpinnings. We court corruption when we leave it bereft of belief. All are free to believe or not believe; all are free to practice a faith or not. But those who believe must be free to speak of and act on their belief, to apply moral teaching to public questions...Without God, there is no virtue, because there's no prompting of the conscience. Without God, we're mired in the material, that flat world that tells us only what the senses perceive. Without God, there is a coarsening of the society. And without God, democracy will not and cannot long endure. If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

--Remarks at an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast in Dallas, Texas 1984

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/82384a.htm>.

Humanism answers the basic worldview questions:

1. What is the most fundamental reality (Ultimate reality)?

Humanism's Answer: The only thing that exists is matter which is evolving and eternal.

2. What is the nature of our material reality?

Humanism Answer: Matter is eternal and the universe as it now exists is the result of the eternal operation of natural laws.

3. What is a human being? (Humanity)

Humanism Answer: Human beings are nothing more than complex biological machines. They are the result of the operation of evolutionary processes over billions of years. Mankind is basically the same as any other living creature, only having evolved to a level which has made it possible to be self-aware.

4. What happens to a person at death? (Death)

Humanism Answer: At death, the individual life form simply ceases to exist.

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all? (Knowledge)

Humanism Answer: Knowledge is merely a chance happening because of a high level of evolution of the human brain.

6. How do we know what is right and wrong? (Morality)

Humanism Answer: There is no such thing as morality based on any transcendent explanation. Right and wrong are decided by individuals or social groups as they seek to determine what is best for the survival and comfort of society.

7. What is the meaning of human history? (History)

Humanism Answer: There is no transcendent meaning in history. It is, simply, a linear progression of events moving from the past to the future.

How sad!

By removing God, Humanists are left to themselves and doomed to failure.

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn observed, humanism offers no solution at all to mankind's desperate condition. He puts it this way: "If humanism were right in declaring that man is born to be happy, he would not be born to die. Since his body is doomed to die, his task on earth evidently must be of a more spiritual nature." Indeed. Mankind's task is to seek and find God (Acts 17:26-27; cf. 15:17), our true redeemer who offers us a better than earthly inheritance (Hebrews 6:9; 7:17). Anyone who opens the door to Christ (Revelation 3:20) will inherit that

better country, which God has prepared for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Ephesians 1:11; Romans 8:28; Hebrew 11:16; cf. Matthew 25:32; John 14:2). How much more excellent is this than all the proud and lofty goals contained in secular humanist manifestos?

<http://www.gotquestions.org/secularhumanism.html#ixzz2Ry7t4ACw>

God described ancient Israel in a way that fits America today:

Jeremiah 2:12-13 *“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”*

The answer then, is the answer now:

Malachi 3:7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept *them*. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

