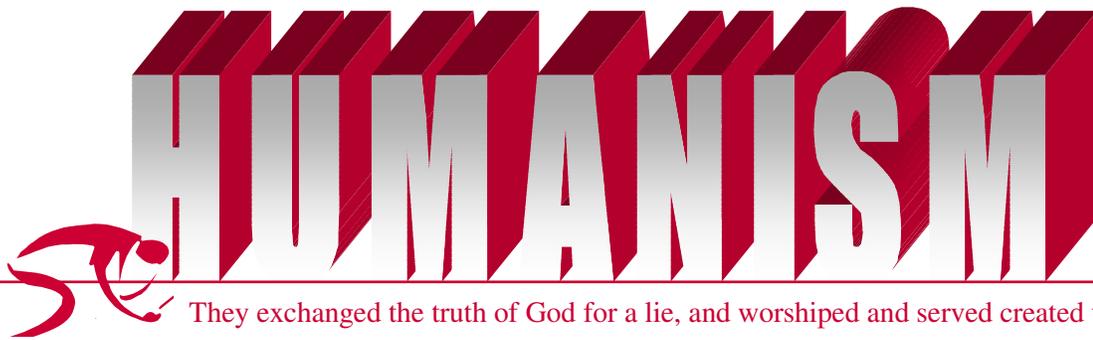


A Brief Analysis of Humanism



They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator

Ricki Lee and Vanita Brooks

A Brief Analysis of the Humanist Movement

Ricki Lee and Vanita Brooks
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WHAT IS HUMANISM?

The only true humanist is the person who correctly understands God's design for the human race. The Creator declared early in His revelation this wonderful truth: "So God created man in His own image: in the image of God He created him: male and female He created them" (The Old Testament Book of Genesis, ch.1, vs.27). Later in history, God's prophet and king, David, said, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth, you who set your glory above the heavens. ...what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of your hand; you have put all things under his feet..." (The Old Testament Book of Psalms, ch.8, vss.1,4-6). Truly man is significant.

Yet, this is not the whole of the story. For he who was created special and significant has sinned. The Bible also tells us this: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19). Why? The answer is not so deep. He who had the best and had it all wanted more. What did he want? He wanted total autonomy over his destiny. He wanted to be God.

This would not be so bad if it were not for something very important—being liberated from a despot is good, being liberated from a perfect and caring and just and holy and all-wise, loving Father, who only wants to help and encourage his children to mature and become all that they can be, is foolish. So, in this liberation from that which is the greatest of all, there came the agony of sin. Man fell. To that created significant was added sinfulness. The trail and travail of history, since then, has been one of tainted pleasure mixed with terrible pain. This would, indeed, be beyond reasonable joy if not for one thing—the Creator was not finished. Immediately following the separation, He promised a reconciliation. To the serpent, the enemy of our souls, God said, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:14,15). The significant child had become a sinner, but redemption and restoration would come. The "Seed" of the woman would be a Savior. In the fullness of time, He came. His name is Jesus.

The Bible clearly teaches God's ultimate design for man is to see His children walk in the fullness of their humanity. In fact, even the whole of creation waits with baited breath for this to occur. The Apostle Paul was moved by the Holy Spirit of God to write, "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (The New Testament Book of Romans 8:19). To truly be human, to really experience what humanity is all about, is to be in relationship with the Creator of humankind. This comes by way of the Savior. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" ((The New Testament Book of John, ch.10, vs.10). The Bible also says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). While the nature of the fall, brought about by sin, is separation from our Creator; the nature of reconciliation, brought about by the Savior, is everlasting fellowship with the Creator. That is true humanism.

Unfortunately, the problem we face with the words "humanist" and "humanism" is not the root, but the suffixes. The "ist" and "ism" are indicative of cultic preoccupation with "self." Even though God has provided a way back, many still refuse. They go on worshipping the created thing rather than the Creator. And, for some, this needs to be justified. Hence, the earth is populated with not a few who have made an "ism" of their own flesh. Their rally cry is simple: "There is no God, but me." The ultimate expression of this sad development is a religion called Humanism.

AN OVERVIEW OF HUMANISM

With this brief introduction in mind notice the foundational concepts outlined in the Humanist Manifesto II (Humanist Manifestos I and II: pp. 15-23):*

Religion:

1. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of

*Humanist Manifestos I and II. Prometheus Books: Buffalo, N.Y.; 1973.

traditional religions do not do so... We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural... As non-theists, we begin with humans not god, nature and not deity... No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

2. 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... ...science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.

Ethics:

3. We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational.

4. Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses... The controlled use of scientific methods...must be extended further in the solution of human problems. But reason must be tempered by humility, since no group has a monopoly of wisdom or virtue.

The Individual:

5. The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value...we reject all religions, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize personality. We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility.

6. In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct.

Democratic Society:

7. To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies. This includes freedom of speech and the press, political democracy, the legal right of opposition to governmental policies, fair judicial process, religious liberty, freedom of association, and artistic, scientific, and cultural freedom. It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.

8. We are committed to an open and democratic society... Decision making must be decentralized to include widespread involvement of people at all levels... People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations.

9. The separation of church and state and the separation of ideology and state are imperatives... It (the state) should not favor any particular religious bodies through the use of public monies, nor espouse a single ideology and function thereby as an instrument of propaganda or oppression...

10. Humane societies should evaluate economic systems not by rhetoric or ideology, but by whether or not they increase economic well-being for all individuals and groups...

11. The principle of moral equality must be furthered through elimination of all discrimination based upon race, religion, sex, age, or national origin.

World Community:

12. 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... Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government...

13. The world community must renounce the resort to violence and force as a method of solving international disputes... War is obsolete... It is a planetary imperative to reduce the level of military expenditures and turn these savings to peaceful and people-oriented uses.

14. The world community must engage in cooperative planning concerning the use of rapidly depleting resources... The cultivation and conservation of nature is a moral value; we should perceive ourselves as integral to the sources of our being in nature.

15. The problems of economic growth and development can no longer be resolved by one nation alone... 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.

16. Technology is a vital key to human progress and development... We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds... Technology must, however, be carefully judged by the consequences of its use; harmful and destructive changes should be avoided...

17. We must expand communications and transportation across frontiers... The world must be open to diverse political, ideological, and moral viewpoints and evolve a worldwide system of television and radio for information and education...

A BRIEF EVALUATION

As one reads through the many tenets of Humanism, he or she can see much that is good. Peace, economic well-being, individual dignity, freedom, and human rights are all valuable goals. Where the Christian parts paths with the Humanist is not on these particulars, but upon the general assumptions underlying the Humanist philosophy (as well as many of the individual tenets within the system: i.e. situational ethics, euthanasia, abortion, suicide, etc.). Why? It's not so difficult: if philosophical presuppositions and methodologies prove false then ultimate success is doomed to failure. The questions we must answer then are these:

- I. What are the basic presuppositions of humanism?
- II. Are the basic presuppositions of humanism reliable?

Well, then, let's address the questions.

I. Basic Presuppositions of Humanism

A. God and Man

Humanism, at best, views God as irrelevant; but more likely as a total non-entity. Man is his own god: able to direct his own course and able to redirect the (supposed) evolution of his world. The Humanist Manifesto II has as a basic premise a lie as old as Eden: "No deity will save us; we must save ourselves" (Humanist Manifestos I and II; p.16). Subscribers to this creed make this the hallmark of their new religion. Absence of religion is not the goal of humanism, but rather the absence of any religion that has as its basis a belief in the "prayer-hearing God" (Humanist Manifestos I and II; p. 13).

B. Source and Authority

The second basic presupposition of humanism seems to be its choice of science as the preferred source of authority. The humanist would have us believe that his is a religion confirmed by science (the assumption being that science is the end-all of the human ability to grasp the nature of the universe). The Humanist Manifesto I stated: "The time has come for widespread recognition of the radical changes in religious beliefs throughout the modern world. The time is past for mere revision of traditional attitudes. Science and economic change have disrupted the old beliefs. Religions the world over are under the necessity of coming to terms with new conditions created by a vastly increased knowledge and experience" (Humanist Manifestos I and II; p. 7).

The Humanist movement extends this confidence in science to a carte blanche acceptance of the evolution hypothesis. To be generous, some humanists recognize evolution as less than science, but nevertheless accept its basic premises. In fact, they make the illogical jump to its acceptance and the rejection of creationism in the name of science. Notice the careful wording of "A Secular Humanist Declaration" (pp. 21,22; by Paul Kurtz: Free Inquiry Magazine, vol. 1, #1, Winter, 1980): "Although the theory of evolution cannot be an infallible principle of science, it is nonetheless supported impressively by the findings of many sciences. There may be some significant differences among scientists concerning the mechanics of evolution; yet the evolution of the species is supported so strongly by the weight of evidence that it is difficult to reject it... We believe that creationists should surely 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 to inflict that doctrine on the scientific curriculum. If

successful, creationists may seriously undermine the credibility of science itself."

The humanist notion has pushed evolution too far. Those who hold to this doctrine desire evolution to fall safely within the confines of science so that they may dethrone God and elevate man. We shall see later that such attempts are intellectually doomed to fail.

II. Reliability of Humanist Presuppositions

A. God and Man

Can the existence of God be disproved? Of course not. At best the humanist must remain agnostic rather than atheistic. However, what of the humanist claim as to the irrelevancy of God even if God should exist? As one humanist author puts it: "If God has failed in his role as cosmic policeman and if Christianity has failed to uphold the dignity of humankind and to protect the inalienable rights of all—and *who can argue with either hypothesis*— (italics added) then a viable alternative to both must be sought. That alternative is humanism."¹

Is it true that man should direct his own path apart from any supernatural intervention? The burden of proof is upon the humanist since it is he who wishes to depart from historical precedence, as well as to gamble on the outcome of death. The history of mankind is replete with an uncanny acceptance of the supernatural; and the discipline of philosophy is far more in favor of a deity than against.

With respect to history, the study of both religion and anthropology demonstrate the high probability of monotheistic (belief in one supreme God) concepts as universal to people everywhere, throughout time. Burrell, in his findings on the people of the Indus Valley, stated: "In the original faith of the Aryans, before they crossed the mountains into India, there was one supreme God, whom they called Diaus, from the root Diu, 'to shine' —the Shining One."² This understanding carried over to the earliest Hindu writings—the Vedas. Burrell quoted Monier Williams' translation of an early Vedic hymn to demonstrate his point:

"What god shall we adore with sacrifice?
Him let us praise, the golden Child that rose
In the beginning, who was born the lord,
The one sole Lord of all that is—who made
The earth and formed the sky, who giveth life...
Whose mighty glance looks round the vast expanse
Of watery vapor—source of energy,
Cause of the sacrifice, the only God
Above the gods."³

Likewise, the earliest Egyptian religion was monotheistic. Sir Flinders Petrie said, "The further back the gods can be traced, the more separate they are. Even the best known family, that of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, dissolves; Isis is a virgin goddess, and Horus is Horus the elder, who is not one with Horus the child. As thus the more remote view is always the simpler in its worships, the few remaining examples of polytheism in the earliest times are probably due to compounding, and we may say that, as a general principle, each tribe was, to begin with, monotheistic."⁴ As well, Ethel R. Nelson demonstrates similar truth among the early inhabitants of what we now call China. In her book, "The Discovery of Genesis—How The Truths of Genesis Were Found Hidden In The Chinese Language," she writes, "Yet, if we take a journey backward in time, passing the first century B.C., when Buddhism was introduced; the fifth century B.C., when Taoism and Confucianism simultaneously blossomed; and continue back 1500 or even 2000 years more, we find a different religious atmosphere. There we find the little-appreciated evidence that these people served one God, had no myths or idols, and kept a strict moral code."⁵ The evidence of religious history, the world over, points to the universal belief in one all-powerful and supreme Creator.

Anthropology also supports this claim from history. Nathaniel Micklem wrote, "Amongst all, or almost all, peoples we find traces at least of a belief in a Supreme Being who has made the world and all things, who is himself good and demands of men that they be good and self-sacrificing and moral."⁶ Geoffrey Parrinder, with reference to Africa, said this, "From the earlier view that Africa was crudely fetishistic, with an idea of God where it existed being an importation, informed opinion has now swung around to the conviction that most, if not all, African peoples have had a belief in a Supreme Being as an integral part of their world view and practiced religion."⁷ With respect to North and South American people groups and oceanic people groups, Raymond VanOver has chronicled a host of tribes who have the concept of one

great God, whom they variously refer to as Father, Creator, Lord, and Protector.⁸ This great God is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, and beneficent, to name but a few of his attributes.

The question we must answer concerning this universal acceptance of a Supreme God throughout history and culture is, "Why?" Why have people always believed in God? The humanist movement would suggest that men have mixed their view of themselves with their fears of nature and created a god of their own making. The Christian, of course, believes that mankind received revelation (both general and special) from God: some preserved it accurately (the Hebrews), while some distorted it (all the rest—Romans 1:18-32). Neither position can be proved or disproved empirically by science.* Instead they must be supported or rejected through historical, philosophical, theological, archeological, and anthropological studies. Contrary to the humanist contention that new knowledge and experience eradicate belief in the supernatural, when these methods are used we may safely say, once again, it is not the Christian who must apologize, but the humanist. Unlike the Bible, the humanist movement makes the absurd attempt of trying to prove the non-being of God. In the field of argument, this cuts their feet from under them, since without God nothing makes sense.

For example, the humanist would assert that if we go back far enough we will eventually come to a point where nothing exists—just after which the evolution of matter erupts. Yet even the existentialist knows better than this. Jean Paul Sartre, no small opponent toward God, maintained that the primary dilemma of knowledge is the fact that something rather than nothing is here. How is the universe explained? Why is there something here? Atheistic Humanism maintains we come from nothing and return to nothing. Whether we talk of one individual or the universe, the humanist says all came from zip and will return to zip. It makes no sense. In fact, this is a philosophical predicament which no amount of time, energy, or dependence upon technology can ever remedy. Let's move, then, from the history of religion and anthropology to philosophy

Francis A. Schaeffer has done us a great service by condensing the philosophic alternatives we have in the consideration of origins. These alternatives are but four in number. They are summarized in his book "Genesis In Space and Time."⁹ Let's look briefly at each of them:

a. Something from absolutely nothing

This is the weakest position of all. Consider the meaning of "absolutely nothing." It would mean no life, no elements, no space, no time, no energy, no "nothing." Now let's ask ourselves "How something could ever erupt without any potential whatsoever for its production?" It could not. Yet, this in essence, is precisely the view being maintained by the modern humanist movement.

b. Something from an eternal dualism

Dualism is also weak since we can push the issue further back until we formulate a unity that either precedes the dualism or maintains it. As Schaeffer, himself, said, "Parallel dualisms (for example, ideas—or ideals—and matter, or brain and mind) either tend to stress one at the expense of the other, or leave the unsatisfied question of how they march on together with no reason for doing so."¹⁰

c. Something from an impersonal creator

Some would argue that if we go back far enough we will eventually come to an "impersonal something." It may be the force of pantheism, or the protoplasmic ooze of scientism, or something else. Whatever it is, it has no direction, no thought pattern, and no purpose.

Some within the humanist movement would support this view since, to them, it corrects the absurdity of a. above, while maintaining their position of "no God or God irrelevant." Thus, the humanist can say something came from something, but also assert that he or she is not accountable to a Creator.

However, an impersonal something leaves us with two glaring problems. The first concerns the fact that the world we witness is ordered. Neither an impersonal force or a protoplasmic ooze can account for the design of the universe. The second concerns the personality of man. To postulate that man—with love and hate and communication—derives from the impersonal makes no sense either. The reasonable person must ask, "How can something without thought, order, meaning,

*Science is limited in its scope since it is the act of observable testing, measuring, and repeating.

purpose, communication, emotion, or volition give rise to a universe and a species that possess all of these?"

d. Something from a personal creator

This alternative is the only alternative with philosophic sense. Before the universe came into being there must have been a personal being. This being, according to the Bible, is God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is a Creator who intrinsically possesses thought, order, meaning, purpose, communication, emotion, and volition. As such, he, and he alone, can account for an ordered and personal universe. The two problems faced by c. above are no longer problems, but conceivable gifts.

However, some then ask, "OK, but then where did this personal something come from?" It did not come from anywhere. It was, is and always shall be. Think about it. All questions of origin must assume time, space and matter—all three have beginnings, all three have potential conclusions. Something beyond these bounds must be eternal (not bound by time), infinite (not bound by space), and spirit (not bound by matter). This by definition is what we call God.

The alternatives are simple. Three are without sense; one is convincing. Hence, as with the history of religion and anthropology, in the discipline of philosophy it is the humanist who must once again stretch the bounds of credibility to support his view. It would seem the humanist movement's thinkers care little for the premise of Occam's Razor, which says, that everything else being equal, the most simple answer is always the best answer. Clearly the humanist movement has not chosen the most simple, but rather the most difficult.

B. Source of Authority

The Humanist Movement suggests that their's is the most reliable of religious systems since they have rejected "dogma and myth" and, instead, have accepted "science" as their source of authority. The question humanist proponents must answer is whether or not they have indeed rejected "dogma and myth" for the authority of science. We would accuse the humanist movement of failure in this endeavor. In fact, the humanist movement is not founded upon science, but scientific suppositions (much to their denial, but ultimately to their demise).* Why must we make this accusation? The answer has to do with the nature of science as opposed to claims made by some using the guise of science as a cloak.

The basic "scientific" premise offered by humanism is evolution (as we have already seen). This concept underlies the entire system. It suggests mankind is on an ever-increasing advance toward perfection. It, therefore, serves as a prime philosophical lackey upon which to support the notion that man alone—because there is no god—controls his destiny, that man alone will win the future for our world. However, the problem the humanist movement faces is this: evolution is not science! It's a philosophical speculation at best.

Observe: true science is very rigorous both as a body of knowledge and as a methodology. For any hypothesis to move from notion to fact, within science, it must be empirically observable, measurable, and repeatable. Apart from these criteria any belief must remain in the realm of possibility, but not confirmed scientific fact. Evolution has never been observed (nor can it be); it has never been measured (nor can it be); and neither has it been tested with scientific manipulation and repetition (nor will it ever be). Evolution is a belief based upon interpretations of collected data. That's it. Now to call this scientific is to reject the very basis of science itself. Evolution is a hypothesis that must be allowed a probability of confirmation based upon methods other than science.

For the humanist movement evolution is more than a premise. It has become their "dogma and myth." This is so true, in fact, that the humanist movement has excluded the possibility of God. This may be appropriate for the popular scientific movement, but it hardly bodes well for real science. Thus the humanist movement's source of authority is nothing more than a straw man.

In an excellent collection of essays, entitled "The Intellectuals Speak Out About God," Professor Henry Margenau, of Yale University, supports our view in an interview entitled "Modern Physics And The Turn To Belief In God." The following are parts of the interview at length:

"...it would be highly unreasonable for someone to reject the notion of a Creator by appealing to science?"

*Scientism is here understood as blind allegiance to certain interpretations propagated by those within the narrower field of true science, regardless of whether or not their findings meet with the requirements of true science.

Oh yes, it is highly unreasonable.

Modern science has definitively shown the non-contradiction of Creation out of nothing?

Yes, it has definitively shown it. This is not widely known.

...but there still is a lot of hostility to religion among certain scientists in the scientific community?

Well, this is a common belief. And, if you ask scientists who have a mild training in science, especially high school teachers and so forth, you do get the impression that there is a conflict between science and religion. But if you ask really good scientists, I mean men who have made contributions, I'm thinking of people here like Eccles, like Wigner, who is a good friend of mine, Heisenberg, whom I personally knew, Schroedinger, who visited me personally at home...Einstein was less explicit about his religious views but he had it. The leading scientists, the people who have made the contributions which has made science grow so vastly in the last fifty years, are, so far as I know, all religious in their beliefs. None of these men had any objection to religion. They didn't write about religion much—Heisenberg did occasionally—but they were certainly not atheists. So what I am saying is that, if you take the top-notch scientists, you find very few atheists among them.

(On another occasion, Professor Margenau added the following.)

It is often said, and widely believed, that scientists on the whole are anti-religious or, at least, are not interested in religion. I believed that for a long time too. But no longer. Perhaps I shouldn't say this, but as I perceive it, the fact is, the scientists, the physicists at least, who have been most active, most successful in developing the quantum theory and further innovation in physics, are very interested in religion. If you consider scientists of the type of high school teachers or grade school teachers or Carl Sagen, you find that, yes, there is a lack of interest. Quite a few of them are anti-religious. But, if you take the outstanding physicists, the ones who have done the most to advance modern physics, especially Heisenberg, Schroedinger, Dirac (a Nobel Prize winner) you find them all interested in religion. All these men were intensely interested in religion."¹¹

Space does not permit a broader survey of such thinking. It should suffice to demonstrate the wide acceptance of Margenau's view by listing a few names of scientists in agreement with him: Robert Jastrow, founder-director of NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies; Chandra Wickramasinghe, who co-authored a publication with Sir Fred Hoyle in which they said their findings demonstrated that "there must be a God;" Paul C. Vitz, author of "Psychology As Religion: The Cult of Self Worship;" and William Alston and Alvin Plantinga, both past presidents of the American Philosophical Association.

We must suggest, then, it is the humanist, not the theist, who faces the uphill struggle of supporting his view. The great burden of proof is upon the humanist movement to give evidence that science does indeed confirm their notions. So far the movement has hidden from this indictment.

AN EXAMPLE OF HUMANISM'S FAILURE

An example of humanism's failure can be seen in the recent historical events surrounding the former U.S.S.R. and her communist block sister nations. For some seventy years, the communist state insisted there was no god. As a result, truth, morals, and ethics became subject to the ruling party. Man—albeit the elitist man—was elevated to the throne of human determination. The outcome of economic endeavor, educational pursuit, social responsibility, medical care, military involvement and every other facet of human existence depended upon the social engineering of the state.

History has once again demonstrated the bankruptcy of such a system. One after another, the humanist, atheistic, and communist governments of these countries are disintegrating from within. Left in their wake is a people without direction. Their economies are fallen. Their hospitals are under-staffed, over-crowded, and woefully out of date. Their educational systems are floundering. Professors and students alike find themselves on shifting sands of doubt. In a few words, these countries are gasping and grasping for renewed hope.

It could not have been otherwise. The out-come was inevitable. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Church of Rome, once said, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even

His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 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 beasts and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen" (The New Testament; Romans 1:18-25).

Now whether or not the collapse of the communist world can be laid directly upon the wrath of God can perhaps be debated. The principle, however, of Paul's words applies. To reject God for the worship of a thing—in this case, man—is foolish. It creates futility in thinking and immorality in practice. These have never produced success in any sense of longevity. The Roman Empire, great eastern empires, Nazi Germany, and many other self-serving, egocentric regimes prove the point. Something the United States of America would do well to consider.

In the social upheaval left behind, the people of these former atheistic countries are turning their hearts back to God. Philip Yancey, upon returning from an official visit to Soviet Union, reported the following words in the Feb. 10th, 1992 issue of "Christianity Today":¹²

"I remember vividly a meeting between our group of North American Christians and the editors of Pravda, formerly the official mouthpiece of the Communist party. Circulation figures at Pravda demonstrate the dramatic story of communism's fall from grace: daily circulation has declined from 11 million to 700,000.

The editors of Pravda seemed earnest, sincere, searching—and shaken to the core. They were so shaken that they were now asking for help from emissaries of a religion their founder had scorned as 'the opiate of the people.' The editors remarked wistfully that Christianity and communism have many of the same ideals: equality, sharing, justice, and racial harmony. Yet they had to admit the Marxist pursuit of the vision had produced the worst nightmares the world has ever seen. Why?"

Later, Yancey writes,

"Classical Marxists preached atheism and fought fiercely against religion for a shrewd reason: in order to motivate workers to rise up violently against their oppressors, Marxists had to kill off any hope in a heavenly life beyond this one and any fear of divine punishment. They had to replace a God-man (read Jesus Christ)* with a man-god. But human beings are fallen creatures, not man-gods. For this reason, no New Socialist Man ever emerged."¹³

Can Yancey's last point be demonstrated? Once again, read a portion of his report:

"The Pravda editors conceded to us that they didn't know how to motivate people to show compassion. The average Soviet citizen would rather spend his money on drink than support needy children. A recent poll had revealed that 70 percent of Soviet parents would not allow their children to have contact with a disabled child; 80 percent would not give money to help; some advocated infanticide. 'How do you reform, change, motivate people?' the editors asked us."¹⁴

Clearly, the answer is not humanism. What the people of the former U.S.S.R. are now discovering is simple. Within the heart of the human being there is a void. It can be filled only with God.

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

The Apostle Peter was led of the Holy Spirit to write, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Every Christian should be ready and willing to give testimony concerning his or her faith in our Lord Jesus. However, it's important to consider the two phrases surrounding the phrase "be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you."

First, Peter said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." The meaning is not too difficult. Christians are to develop and maintain a living and vital fellowship with our Lord that does not depend upon time, circumstances, or

*Parenthetical phrase, mine.

location. The primary focal point of our worship is God. The primary means of this worship is an attitude of thanksgiving, praise, and awe. The primary station for this worship is our "heart" (i.e. the inner man or woman).

This does not mean that we are not to join with other believers. Church meetings and fellowships are necessary. Yet, we must understand that if we cannot or will not communicate with God from within, we're missing the point. The context in which 1 Peter 3:15 is embedded deals with suffering and submission. Christians will, at times, be called upon to suffer. They will need to endure the frustration, the anguish, and even the torment of people grown angry with our love for Christ. At times like these, we cannot be dependent upon one another. We must depend upon our Savior alone. If we have cultivated our relationship with Him, if we have matured our fellowship with Him, if we are truly able to worship from the inner person, then, in difficult times, we will endure.

So, read Peter's words again. Only this time we'll pick up a portion of the context.

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts... (1 Peter 3:13-15a)

Second, Peter added, "with meekness and fear." The meaning here is also not too difficult. When the Christian engages in a defense of the faith, he or she needs to practice humility, kindness, and respect toward people along with awe and worship toward God. Our attempts to share our faith should never be accompanied with anger, hostility, pride, or arrogance. In other words, how we speak the truth is just as important as that we speak the truth.

Now consider how this applies to a Christian response toward Humanism. If we should "always be ready to give a defense to everyone" as they ask for "a reason for the hope" that is within us, we'll need to understand a couple of items.

The word "defense" implies a clarification, an apologetic, a logical and reasonable explanation. We must be able to articulate why Christ Jesus is the answer and why the worship of man (humanism) is the problem. First and foremost, then, is the necessity for every believer to have at his or her disposal the ability to teach the message of salvation.* Second, as a supplement, each Christian should at least be able to point out why Humanism cannot save us.

The word "reason", in 1 Peter 3:15, also implies a logical explanation. Sure people want to know what Christ means to us personally. Yes, they are interested in our experience of salvation. However, our experience cannot be the basis for evangelism. The reason is simple. Many people possess changed lives. One person, through the pure determination of the will, might overcome alcoholism. Another person, through the help of a 12-Step Program, may overcome some other addiction. They both will report great things. And why not, a cleaned up life is marvelous. Yet cleaned up lives can also be misleading. If a person becomes content with his or her physical, earthly circumstances, he or she may fail to see the need for eternal well-being. When we simply compare experiential notes with others, we fail to draw any real distinction between their reason for being changed and our "reason" for being changed. The gospel of Jesus Christ addresses life in both dimensions: here on earth and there in heaven. Our experience is the fruit of Christ's work. Knowledge of our sinfulness, our need for a Savior, who Jesus Christ is, and what He has accomplished are the "reason" why everlasting hope resides within us. These are the facts we must be able to articulate. To do this we must become diligent students of the word of God. The Bible cannot become extracurricular reading. It must be our primary source of knowledge and understanding. It must also be the instrument by which we measure other sources. As Dr. Joe Aldrich of Multnomah School of the Bible so often points out, though we worship the Prince of Peace and not the print on the page, we come to know the Prince of Peace through what He has revealed about Himself on His printed pages.

FINAL REMARKS

The Humanist Movement desires to wage a war for the hearts and minds of people everywhere. Their combat is ostensibly being waged with the weapon of science, but, as we have seen, true science must be an unwilling ally. When we engage the fight, we can dismantle their war-machine at its source. What once appeared as a mighty front begins to crumble as we pick off its major premises and presuppositions.

*Here are two great starters: Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. Macmillan Pub. Co.: 1952; Stott, John R.W. *Basic Christianity*. Inter-Varsity Press: Downers Grove, Illinois; Third Printing 1972 .

However, there is a giant host of people trapped on the battle-field not able to defend themselves against the Humanist advance. These precious souls need to hear the rally cry of our Lord's people. We must rush to their rescue.

The Christian response to humanism must not be "Retreat," but "Charge!" As we divide and conquer their rhetorical war-machine we must leave in our wake the standard of Christ Jesus. This standard can be repeated in His own words: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19,20).

Essentially, then, our response is an evangelistic response. We have a far more reasonable, more intellectual, and more sensible body of knowledge than the Humanist Movement could ever hope to own. More importantly, though, we have the power of God Himself. With the presence of the Holy Spirit, with the love of Jesus Christ, with the sovereignty of the Father, with the fellowship of the Church, and with the resources of prayer and fasting we need not be the weak ones. Love, meekness, kindness, respect, reverence, patience, and hope have never meant weakness.

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14. Yancey, *ibid.* par. 9.

A Brief Analysis of Humanism

Sound Communication

Ricki Lee and Vanita Brooks

A Division of West Sound Community Church

PO Box 4016 Silverdale, WA 98383

soundcommunication.org