

# HUMANISM

## *BELIEFS AND AGENDA*

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ifty-three years ago, Harry Blamires wrote in *The Christian Mind* (London, SPCK, 1963) that Christians no longer thought in a Christian way. Not only had society in general been secularised, but so had Christians themselves. He predicted that in the following half century British culture would grow more consciously and outspokenly secular, like the Soviet Union, and that Christians would react by becoming more consciously Christian and aware of their difference from society at large. The worst case scenario that he envisaged was that Christians would withdraw from society to cultivate their personal morality and spirituality, without challenging the godless materialism around them.

Blamires, who celebrates his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this month (November 2016), must be heart-broken to see how differently things have turned out from his prediction. As he expected, secular humanism is now the dominant influence in British society and also in many other Western societies. Where previously these societies had rested on a Christian foundation and Biblical principles, now a new civic religion with its own theology, ideology and morality has gradually eroded not only faith but also the Christian moral basis of society. However, contrary to Blamires' expectations, the Church has **not** been strengthened by facing this challenge. Rather, the Church has all but succumbed as it follows society's lead. Christians are neither challenging the secular system around them, nor withdrawing from it, but seem to have surrendered to it, leading lives that are barely distinguishable from those of humanists.

The collapse of Christian morality in society has been orchestrated and intentional, subtle yet aggressively effective. Humanists have deliberately sought to cleanse society from all religious influence, especially Christianity.

### THE CORE BELIEFS OF HUMANISM

#### ATHEISM

Humanists do not believe in God. They feel that religions or any belief in a god are dangerous to society and hinder the development of humans as a species.

#### NATURALISM

Humanists believe that the natural world is all that exists. They do not believe in God, the supernatural, an afterlife, heaven or hell.

#### EVOLUTION

Humanists do not believe that there is a creator. Instead they believe that all life was started by a natural event without the influence of a god. Organisms, including humans, have evolved over millions of years. Humans, the pinnacle of this evolutionary process, are merely biological and do not have a soul or any spiritual component.

## **ETHICAL RELATIVISM**

Humanists do not believe that there are any moral absolutes or ethical standards. Morality depends on situations, and each individual can and should decide what is right and wrong for them. People should not rely on any religious instruction or values.

## **CELEBRATION OF HUMANKIND**

Humankind is celebrated as the highest being in existence. As God does not exist, humans should not call upon Him to intervene in the world or in the lives of individuals. Seeking salvation is seen as a waste of energy and a distraction from attempting to solve the problems of the world. Humanists argue that the survival of the human race is the responsibility of humans and it is up to each individual to do something as there are no messiahs or saviours in this world or the next.

## **UTOPIA**

Humanists are striving for a perfect world which is not divided by borders. They aim for new world order, which should be socialist, where resources are shared equally, capitalism is eradicated and there are no travel restrictions.

## **THE HUMANIST AGENDA**

To an uninformed observer, humanism may appear quite harmless, but the effects it has had on society have been dramatic. It is actively promoting a society where morality is negotiable and Christian values are questioned, challenged, or even rejected.

Individuals pursue pleasure rather than righteousness. Behaviours that are contrary to God's guidelines and to Christian values are at first permitted, and then celebrated. Some, such as support for gay and lesbian behaviour, are even enforced by governments on their societies or, through economic pressure, on other countries. We are now seeing the destruction of the divine image in humans, as the transgender movement seeks to remove distinctions that God has created - to the point where some describe themselves as "non-binary" i.e. not exclusively male or female. The process in which Western countries seek to impose their new ethical values on the rest of the world can be viewed as "ideological colonisation".

All this can have damaging consequences. Families are broken. Substance abuse, depression and suicide are rife. People are isolated from each other, and communities are breaking down. Humanism has become so firmly embedded into society that people do not have to be followers of humanism or even know what it is to have been influenced by it.

Humanism supposedly promotes freedom. Yet many freedoms, especially religious freedom, are being removed from society. In countries where humanism is strong, people trying to live out a Christian life according to the law of God are increasingly being marginalised, harassed or even persecuted. Christian groups have been sued or had criminal proceedings initiated against them for practising and promoting Christian values.

The humanist agenda is laid out clearly in various manifestos, declarations and organisational constitutions. The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) strives for a humanist and secular world, in which human rights are respected and everyone is able to live a life of dignity. Its long-term strategic aims are to:

- promote humanism as a non-theistic life stance throughout the world
- represent humanists within the international community
- defend human rights and the rights of humanists
- develop organised humanism in every part of the world
- build a strong and effective global organisation

The IHEU is an international organisation that represents the global humanist movement with 116 member organisations from over 50 countries, both in the West and elsewhere. One national organisation is the American Humanist Association Strategic, which states in its 2007 Plan: The American Humanist Association seeks to foster a profound change in American culture, promoting a society more strongly aligned with Humanist values and displacing the influence of religious fundamentalism and dogma.

### STAGES OF HUMANISM EXPANSION

Humanists use well established and successful methods to advance humanism in society. For example:

**STAGE 1: Tolerance** Humanists first urge society to tolerate or accept a humanist idea, value, belief, ideology or behaviour that would be largely seen as contrary to cultural norms, values or religious beliefs, especially those of Christianity. This is done through popular media, advocacy, legal action, media campaigns, demonstrations and appeals to governments and international bodies.

**STAGE 2: Equality** Humanists then put pressure on authorities and society to recognise these humanist beliefs or behaviours and place them on an equal level with those of the current society or Christianity.

**STAGE 3: Reversal of norms** Humanists then work to make the previous norms and values of society and Christianity seem abnormal, silly, backward, evil or a threat to human progress. Humanists would argue that previous norms and values are restrictive and against human rights. Christians are often labelled as irrational, bigoted, prejudiced fundamentalists for holding on to their beliefs and values.

**STAGE 4: Aggressive action** The final stage is an effort to make the previous norms and Christian values illegal by bringing legal action against groups who uphold these values and beliefs. Christian groups have found themselves having to defend values and beliefs that were previously widely accepted or even celebrated within society.

### CONCLUSION

The humanist, civic religion has permeated many societies, not just in the West but in many other contexts, and has become firmly entrenched in modern culture, even in the Church. Christianity is in danger and in a state of moral crisis.

God is very clear that He will judge a society which has turned morality on its head.

*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.  
(Isaiah 5:20)*

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For more information, read *The New Civic Religion: Humanism and the Future of Christianity* by Patrick Sookhdeo (Isaac Publishing) 2nd edition, September 2016. In this study guide, Dr Sookhdeo uncovers the agenda behind the humanist movement.

“... a challenging, even prophetic work” - Dr Gordon Wenham

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