

Introduction:

One of the most ludicrous, self-contradictory and reprehensible philosophies of all times is modern humanism. The basis for the philosophy is found in "***The Humanist Manifesto II***", "As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity." While some secular humanists believe in a god of some kind, the most important being to them is the human being. The individual human being's needs and desires are all-important and govern the whole view of the humanist. Consider some of the following tenets of Humanism as explained in "***The Humanist Manifesto II***" written in 1973:

Religion

First: ... We believe, however, that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species... But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities ...

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 ...

Ethics

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

The Individual

Fifth: The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value. Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires. We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize person-ality (*sic*). We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility ...

(<http://www.infidels.org/aha/documents/manifesto2.html>)

These ideas, and others expressed in the ***Humanist Manifesto II***, can be simply summed up. The needs, desires, goals and plans of the individual are all-important. Nothing else truly matters. Lip service is paid to the whole of the human family. However, the real concept is that if every individual is free to act in what he believes is his own best interests, guided by his own feelings of right and wrong and not held accountable by anyone else's standards, then society will be benefited. Humanism is flawed and dangerous. But I haven't brought all this to your attention to open fire on secular humanists. I have brought this up because of a different individual who has been infiltrating churches for years. He began by infiltrating the more liberal of mainstream denominations. He then crept stealthily into more conservative churches. And of late, I am convinced he has made his way even into what we would call sound churches. This man is the "Christian Humanist." That is, he is the man who, while claiming to be Christian, is actually guided by the tenets of humanism more so than the doctrine of Christ, perhaps without even realizing it. As all false teachers can be known, so can these be known by their fruit (**Matthew 7:16**). There are three marks of the Christian Humanist. Depending on how entrenched in the humanistic philosophy he is, the Christian Humanist will display any or all of these traits.

Discussion:

- I. "There is no real standard for faith and conduct"
 - A. The basis for secular humanism is that no standard giver exists, therefore, no objective standard exists. Thus, we are all free to do what we want.

- B. The Christian Humanist believes in a standard giver. He even believes God has given a standard. The problem is the Christian Humanist views the standard in such a way as to make it useless for governing our lives.
 1. Some suggest that because God is love (**I John 4:8**), He would never condemn someone to an eternity in hell. So the specifics of the standard really don't matter.
 2. Some cast doubt on the accuracy of the things revealed in scripture. For instance, I once heard someone say, "Don't trust the words of Paul, trust the actions of Jesus." The suggestion was that the mood of the authors affected the message so we can't really trust what they wrote.
 3. Some suggest the Word has been revealed in such a confusing way that many things are just left in doubt. How often have we heard someone suggest that words used in clear passages like **John 3:5** or **Acts 2:38** have more than one meaning, so we cannot be dogmatic about any position on water baptism?
 4. Some suggest that as long as Jesus is our Lord, the specifics of the standard don't matter.
 5. A subtle form of this comes from those who believe there is continuing revelation. When we understand the truth from **I Corinthians 13** that we have all the will of God and there is no more continuing revelation, we clearly see supposed modern revelation springs forth only from the desires of the "prophet's" heart. For this person there is no real objective standard.
 - C. The Christian Humanist forgets that God has commanded us to understand His will (**Ephesians 5:17**). Jesus taught that His word would judge us (**John 12:48**). They have neglected that the kindness of God does not take away from His severity against those who do not obey His standard (**Romans 11:22**). The Christian Humanist is correct that some aspects of the scripture are difficult (**II Peter 3:15-16**). But understanding the scripture is not impossible. Instead of indefinitely hiding behind our own lack of understanding, the Christian Humanist needs to realize his duty to understand it and start studying. There is no doubt that Christianity is a growth process and my lack of understanding of something today does not of necessity mean I will go to hell if I died today. The Christian Humanist, however, makes a leap using this concept of growth to allow himself and others to continue in ignorance indefinitely.
- II. "I can believe and practice whatever I want."
- A. The secular humanist, believing there is no standard-giver and no standard by which to live our lives, believes each individual is allowed to do whatever he wants.
 - B. The Christian Humanist, while giving lip-service to the standard-giver and His revealed standard, has made the word of no effect in their own lives. Like the Pharisees of **Mark 7:13**, they invalidate the word of God with their own personal "traditions." Some Christian Humanists divide these two things apart saying I can believe whatever I want as long as I don't practice sin. For example, I can believe whatever I want about divorce as long as I don't actually get one. But in the end, if I can believe whatever I want, I can practice whatever I want.
 - C. We see this aspect of Christian Humanism defended in several ways.
 1. Some defend their beliefs and practices by claiming we can't really understand the scripture. Therefore, we get to choose between the many possibilities that are presented by the scripture. "If you want to get baptized based on **Acts 2:38**, that is fine. However, I don't want to, I prefer to follow **John 3:16** and just believe." They make the scripture seem contradictory and confused.
 2. Some have the idea that my personal happiness is God's ultimate goal for my life. That is, God wants me to have happiness based on my determination of what happiness is. Thus, my case is always an exception to the standard of scripture because I won't be happy if I do what the Bible says. The Bible tells most others what to practice, but my circumstances are an exception and I can do what I want.
 3. The Christian Humanist has misunderstood the concept of studying for one's self. Because our responsibility is to study the word of God for ourselves and not just rely on what others say, they translate that to mean I am allowed to believe and practice whatever I want. Having the responsibility to study for myself does not mean I get to believe and practice whatever I want. It means I must have personal understanding of the truth not just a

dependence upon the study of others. I am still required to believe and practice what God has revealed and demanded.

- D. The Christian Humanist must remember the words of Paul in **Romans 2:5-8**. God will judge us according to our deeds. Thus, the idea that I am allowed to do whatever I want falls short. I recognize that you don't have to believe what I teach. I might be wrong. On the other hand, if I am right and you don't listen, when you stand before God on judgment all the posturing and rhetoric about the difficulty of understanding the word or whatever else you might choose to say will not provide justification for you. We are not allowed to believe and practice

III. "Nobody can say anything to me about what I believe and practice."

- A. The secular humanist is adamant that he is his own god. He gets to do whatever he wants and you cannot say anything about it. After all, you are not my judge, I am.
- B. The Christian Humanist typically believes all the other aspects of this humanism in order to get to this point. "I don't want you, your church or your god saying anything about how I live my life and serve my god." We also see this aspect of Christian Humanism in different ways.
1. At this point, the Christian Humanist also uses the standard defense, "You're judging me. Jesus said don't judge." Of course, that is a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching against hypocritical and hypercritical judgment in **Matthew 7:1**. Amazingly enough, the Christian Humanist gets into a contradictory position here. After all, if judging others is not allowed, how can we judge against them for judging?
 2. Many Christian Humanists continue a false understanding of **Romans 14** that whenever we have a difference of opinion on doctrine, belief and practice that we must accept each other, even when we are convinced the other is sinning. **Romans 14** does not teach if I am convicted that something is a sin, I must keep that to myself and allow you to go on in sin. What it teaches is if I am in doubt about something, I should not participate in it, but I should accept you even though you may involve yourself in it. Additionally, you must not try to get me to go against my conscience.
 3. Other Christian Humanists try to sound pragmatic and say they are just trying to keep the church from splintering. That is, we have no right to hold others accountable to God's word when their opinion contradicts the Bible because they "may not get it" and then we will splinter the church. The fact that some will not listen to the truth but try to continue to claim they are Christian was prophesied by Paul in **II Timothy 4:2-4**. However, it didn't change the fact that Timothy was supposed to preach the word without compromise. If some didn't want to accept it and splintered off, then so be it.
 4. Some Christian Humanists hide behind congregational autonomy. "You are not allowed to say anything to me because our congregations are autonomous." But note that the autonomy of churches did not stop Antioch from sending Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to get to the bottom of the error being taught and practiced (**Acts 15**).
 5. Some Christian Humanists won't offer any defense for this. They will just bully you into leaving them alone, blowing up whenever you try to hold them accountable.
- C. The Christian Humanist needs to remember that it is every Christian's responsibility when they see their brother in sin to restore him to the truth (**Galatians 6:1**). Jesus gave specific instructions for dealing with a brother who sins in **Luke 17:3**. If he sins, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. In reality, I am accountable to my brethren and they are allowed, even commanded by God, to say something to me when they believe I am sinning.

IV. Progressiveness of Christian Humanism

- A. Interestingly, I have presented these points in their order of foundational importance. However, in the lives of individual Christians, the progression into Christian Humanism actually follows a different order.
- B. Typically, among Christians, the first step to Christian Humanism is the belief that no one can say anything to me about what I believe, practice or teach. Sometimes it is demonstrated by the idea that we should not say anything about the false doctrine in the world around us. In order to be consistent, the Christian has to begin to teach that what we do or say does not matter.

Finally, to continue in consistency, they finally have to attack the very standard they know we are supposed to live by.

Conclusion:

More and more in speaking with Christians I see this Christian Humanism working its way into the church. We must stand strong not to allow this Humanism into our midst as a congregation or into our own personal lives. As Jesus said, we are either for Him or against Him (**Matthew 12:30**). We cannot ride the fence of Christian Humanism, paying lip service to God's law but suggesting that it doesn't really have to be followed. The place we start is by maintaining a constant stance on how to enter in the kingdom of Christ. Despite the confusion that many for years have tried to stir up about the Bible doctrine of salvation (and, yes, some of the Christian Humanists in the church are stirring up confusion about this as well), it is very simple. **Romans 10:9-10** demonstrates that we must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and confess that faith if we would be saved. **Acts 2:38** says we must repent and be baptized for the remission of our sins. It is really quite simple. No amount of rhetoric will change the simple message of God's gospel. Have you obeyed it?