

# Secular Humanism

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American society is in decay. Violent crime has grown so much in the last thirty years that many people are afraid to go into our cities after dark. Sexual immorality has exploded in our culture since the 1960s. There was a time only a generation ago when premarital sex was the exception not the rule. Now teenagers are having sex at a younger and younger age. Many are even sexually active in junior high school. Young men and women who desire to maintain their virginity until marriage are considered freaks. In the last thirty years American families have been disintegrating. The divorce rate hovers near fifty percent. It is common knowledge that children from broken homes often have more problems functioning in society than children from traditional two-parent families. Adultery is both common and accepted by many in our land. Premarital sex, drunkenness, drug abuse, theft, murder, abortion, lying, cheating, fraud, homosexuality, rape, cruelty and pornography are now a normal part of the American societal landscape.

There is no question that there has been a very large moral decline in American society since the early 1960s (this decline is a matter of record). This decline cannot be explained in terms of poverty, racism and sexism, for these societal elements have been much worse in the past. We live in a period of great material prosperity compared with almost all of recorded history. Yet African American literacy rates and family solidarity were higher in the 1870s (under horrid social conditions) than today, when people in the ghetto live like princes, compared to their ancestors. There is a reason for the decline of American society: we are experiencing the fruit or results of a worldview change that took place in America during the earlier part of the twentieth century.

The worldview transition took place in America primarily between 1870 and 1930. The old worldview which dominated American culture was basically Christian with some right-wing enlightenment thinking tossed in. The Christian worldview had more or less dominated western civilization since the fall of the Roman Empire. This Christian worldview was replaced by materialistic naturalism (or as it's called today, secular humanism). Secular humanism is the belief that man lives in a closed universe. There is no God who is transcendent above and beyond created reality. The secular humanist presupposes that the Christian God does not and cannot exist—that everything which does exist is merely the product of matter plus time plus chance. The secular humanist presupposes that the only thing which can exist and have importance to mankind is that which is open to empirical verification and observation by man. Therefore, the Christian God and biblical Christianity are ruled out of bounds from the start by the so-called objective materialistic scientist, even before the investigation of reality begins. The essence of secular humanism is that man is the measure of all things. Man, not God, is the determiner of reality, meaning and ethics.

Secular humanism became the dominant worldview of American intellectuals by the 1930s. By this time naturalism, Darwinian evolution and biblical higher criticism (i.e., the position that the Bible is full of mistakes, myths, etc.) had captured all the major universities, the mainline protestant denominations and their seminaries, the large media outlets (e.g., *The New York Times*), and many politicians. The secular-humanistic elite now believed that since most educators and scientists no longer look to the Bible for truth and guidance, mankind was now capable of solving all the world's problems. The majority of Americans found themselves in churches which no longer believed and submitted to the Bible. There was a certain form of godliness and going through the motions but a denial of God's power and authority (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5). The majority of American people now looked toward the civil government, scientists, artists and intellectuals as saviors who would bring mankind into a sort of millennial paradise. If the secular-humanistic worldview was true and the Christian worldview false, one could reasonably assume that the expectations of the social planners would come true. But what if the Christian worldview was true and the secular humanist worldview was false? Would not a wholesale rejection of the God who really does exist (and His revelation to mankind, the Bible) in favor of incoherent, irrational nonsense bring disaster to American society and culture? Is this not just what has happened?

## Meaning or Nihilism?<sup>1</sup>

The secular-humanist intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been the sharpest critics of Bible-believing Christianity. They teach that the Bible is ancient mythology for a bygone era. They believe that society must rid itself of biblical teaching in favor of "science and rationality." The secular elitists even promised that once biblical teaching was removed from the schools and universities in our country, real progress would be made in solving mankind's problems.

Actually, the secular humanists' placing of the Bible against science and reason is a lie. The Christian worldview and the Christian God are the foundation of science and reason. While it is true that Christians oppose absurd theories that are presented dishonestly as fact by many in the scientific community (such as macro-evolution), it is also true that the Bible—not secular humanism—is the true champion of science and reason. In fact, a consistent secular humanism is the death of reason and science.

The secular-materialistic view of reality states that the universe is the product of chance or pure contingency. Everything that is, is an accident. Everything is the product of chaos. In an impersonal, chance universe<sup>2</sup> where chaos, flux and randomness are king, personality, meaning

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<sup>1</sup> Nihilism is the total rejection of the possibility of knowledge, meaning or ethics. As Captain Beefheart said, "If all is matter, nothing matters" (on the record album *Trout Master Replica*).

<sup>2</sup> If the secular humanist tries to escape from the inexorable problems resulting from a chance universe, by asserting a universe of fixed, materialistic, impersonal laws, he then is stuck in an impersonal, pure, materialistic determinism. All the possibility of freedom, meaning, and human dignity is swallowed by impersonal fate. Man himself is a product of impersonal laws beyond his control. Such a view of reality renders personal responsibility impossible. If

and universal laws of logic clearly have no place. If the secular-evolutionary worldview is true, then your life and existence have no meaning whatsoever. You are nothing more than an accumulation of atoms randomly floating in the void. Your thoughts, desires, relationships, love and deepest concerns are merely the illusions of chemical-electronic impulses. You are an impersonal machine. You have no soul, no future and no hope. You and the random universe around you are heading toward extinction. Your life has no more significance than pond scum. These statements are the logical implication of the secular-humanistic worldview. All talk of love, justice, meaning and helping your fellow man are holdovers from the Christian worldview.

The atheistic university professor and socialist politician may speak much of justice, love and brotherhood but they are stealing such ideas from Christianity, because such things are only possible in a God-created and God-controlled personalistic universe.

The secular humanist's appeal to reason as a bulwark against the Christian faith is most amusing. What is necessary for human logic to be useful and even possible? For reason or logic to be of any use to man, it must be unchanging. What do unchanging laws of logic presuppose? They presuppose an ordered universe. They presuppose an all-powerful God who controls all created reality. They presuppose an absolute, unchanging God who stands behind and is the sustainer of all created reality. They presuppose that God created man in His image with a certain non-evolving, fixed nature. Man is not a plastic, evolving being but a created, rational being. The secular-humanistic worldview where everything is in flux, including man, makes unchanging laws of logic an impossibility. The only unchanging law in such a system is that everything is changing.

When the secular humanist uses reason or logic in order to argue against the Christian God, he must steal from the Christian worldview in order to do so. He must presuppose the Christian view of reality and the Christian view of man in order to use logic. Therefore, when the secular humanist argues against the infinite, personal God of the Bible, he is like the little child who must sit on his father's lap in order to slap His face.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, since the "laws of logic" are themselves not open to empirical observation any more than God who is pure Spirit, secular humanists have no more reason, according to their own presuppositions, to believe that logic exists than that God exists; therefore, their arguments against the God who has revealed Himself in the Bible are arbitrary and inconsistent.<sup>4</sup>

The chief argument used by atheists, agnostics and secular humanists against belief in God is that since God by definition is a pure Spirit, He cannot be observed by man; He cannot be known by empirical means. Therefore, whether or not God exists cannot be known by man. It is true that the God of the Bible is a spiritual being and does not have a physical body (Jn. 4:24).

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everything, including man, is the product of impersonal laws, then what you are and what you do are not the result of your "free" choice but merely the outworking of impersonal necessity. In the Christian worldview God does create and control "whatsoever comes to pass," but He does so while preserving man as a valid secondary agent. It is only because man is created and sustained by a personal God (and therefore exists in a personalistic universe), that true meaning, dignity and personal responsibility can exist.

<sup>3</sup> Cornelius Van Til.

<sup>4</sup> This point was argued extensively by Christian philosopher Greg Bahnsen in his debate at U.C.L.A. with atheist apologist Dr. Stein.

But the secular-humanistic argument against the existence of God is fallacious. One cannot prove the existence of the God of the Bible in the same way that one proves the existence of a physical object. If a husband buys his wife a new car and she does not believe him, he can open the garage door and show his wife the car. The existence of God is proved in a more indirect manner. Secular scientists and philosophers who reject belief in God because He cannot be known by empirical means are hypocrites, because they believe in hundreds, even thousands, of things that cannot be observed or studied directly. No philosopher has ever observed a law of logic. No modern historian ever observed the battle of Waterloo. No astronomer has ever seen a black hole. No biologist has ever observed evolution take place. No physicist observed the big bang. Yet all these things are believed in the scientific community. The truth is that if God cannot be known, then knowledge itself is impossible.<sup>5</sup>

The secular humanist rejects belief in the Christian God because he has an ax to grind. He is in covenant rebellion against God and therefore will do anything to push the idea of the God of the Bible out of his conscience. Secular humanists deliberately ignore the fact that the infinite, personal God has revealed himself to man infallibly in the Bible. "Without the infallible and authoritative voice of God, man can hear no voice but his own; he has no course save relativism and nihilism. No law of contradiction and no universal can survive in a world wherein God does not first of all speak with authority. History becomes real only because the Scriptures are true and the God of the Scriptures absolutely governs and predestinates all things. Man lives in a created world of created things and created acts. His life, therefore, is lived in a personalistic universe where he meets God everywhere, because every fact is a God given, God determined and God interpreted fact. His life and history are therefore meaningful and he is rescued from nihilism precisely because God is self-sufficient and sovereign and speaks authoritatively and gives man the meaning and interpretation of life."<sup>6</sup> While the secular humanist proclaims himself the champion of objectivity; he is in fact a slave of his own anti-Christian, anti-God presuppositions. He chooses his "data" and his "facts" according to his naturalistic, atheistic presuppositions. The infinite, personal God of the Bible is *a priori* (i.e., before the facts) ruled out of bounds.

Christianity is not the enemy of science but its nursing mother. The Christian view of the universe as created and controlled by God is what makes science possible. If there is no transcendent God above and beyond the created universe, and if everything is nothing more than matter plus time plus chance, then could not the universe just explode, or implode, or dissipate or turn inside out tomorrow? If it arose by chance, then why not? The fact that God created the universe to be orderly and structured and the fact that God comprehensively controls all aspects of created reality are what makes science possible; they are why modern science arose in the Christian West not the pagan East.

The atheistic scientist must presuppose the Christian view of reality in order to conduct experiments and make logical inferences. In a chance universe, there is no reason why universal

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> R. J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965), pp. 138-39.

laws such as the second law of thermodynamics should be universal. There is no reason or guarantee that tomorrow, or next week or next year, all the various scientific laws will not somehow change and mutate. Just because something has functioned a certain way in the past is no guarantee of its functioning the same way in the future, because the future is not the past. Scientific laws are dependent upon the God of the Bible who absolutely controls every aspect of created reality.

The irony is that the secular humanist must *presuppose* the Christian philosophy of life in order to *criticize* the Christian philosophy of life. The secular-humanistic worldview, if consistent, would declare that knowledge and meaning are unattainable. In such a system it is as though man is made of water in an ocean of water climbing a stairway of water into a sky of water.<sup>7</sup> With no fixed reference point for meaning and knowledge, the secular humanist is left in the void of nihilism.<sup>8</sup>

## Secular Humanism Is Self-contradictory

The secular-humanistic worldview champions rationalism and irrationalism simultaneously. On the one hand the universe is said to be ruled by chance—a chaotic flux of disjointed particles. Such a view rules out any possibility of knowledge or meaning because if everything is changing, then science and its definition of things can only apply to things at a particular instant of time.<sup>9</sup> As time moves on, those things could very well turn into their

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<sup>7</sup> Cornelius Van Til.

<sup>8</sup> When I argue that God is absolutely necessary in order for man to have knowledge, meaning, dignity, ethics, and so on, I am not arguing for any type of a god but specifically the Christian God who has revealed Himself infallibly in the Bible. Only the absolute, triune God (and only the Christian system which He has revealed to man) can account for reality and answer the questions that secular humanism cannot answer. Other forms of theism, such as Islam and Judaism, cannot be offered as viable worldviews against secular humanism, because they, like secular humanism, have embraced human autonomy as a source for truth over biblical revelation. Therefore, non-Christian theistic systems and worldviews are arbitrary, self-contradictory and false. An excellent example of self-contradiction is in the area God's righteousness. Both Orthodox Judaism and Islam believe in absolute ethics which come from an absolute, unchanging God. But both Judaism and Islam reject the atoning, sacrificial death of the God-man Jesus Christ in favor of salvation by merit or works of righteousness. Now if God is ethically perfect and God's law reflects His holy, righteous character, every sin must be punished. Guilt cannot just be *overlooked* by God; it must be *expiated*. Only the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ in the place of His people, as a propitiation for sin, can harmonize the fact that God is infinitely righteous with the reality that God saves sinners and allows them in His presence. God does not set aside His perfect righteousness in order to save sinners. God is both just and the justifier of the ungodly. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Ac. 4:12; note: Scripture quotations are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted). There is no neutrality or fence-sitting in God's universe; either you wholeheartedly embrace the Lord Jesus Christ or you place your trust in finite, sinful man.

<sup>9</sup> The unbeliever has no solution when it comes to real knowledge, meaning and ethics. On the one hand, the universe is said to be in a state of constant flux. The universe is the product of chance, a soup of random chaos. If meaning is sought by saying that the universe is static like a block of ice, then the fixedness of things is posited, but movement and all particulars are lost in static deadness. The biblical Christian does not have this problem, because the God who is, is transcendent (outside the universe), ontological (self-contained, in need of nothing outside Himself) and triune (three Persons, one God). The problem of unity and diversity, the one and the many, is resolved by the triune God of the Bible. God creates reality and controls it. He reveals truth to man through His revelation (the Bible); thus man can have true truth as long as he is dependent on God's revelation. He must think God's

opposites. In a chance universe, why not? In such a scheme of things man is a mutating speck in a universe of mutating specks. The only constant is change itself. This is the worldview of nihilism, absurdity and irrationality.

Yet while holding to such an absurd, irrational view of reality, the secular humanist proclaims himself the champion of rationality and science! Without an absolute, unchanging, ultimate starting point, real knowledge and science are impossible. So what does the secular humanist do? He makes *man* the source of meaning. Man becomes absolute, the unifier of knowledge. But how can man who is both a product of chance and finite be the source for meaning? He cannot. According to the secular-humanistic worldview man does not have a soul or spirit but is solely a material organism. All of man's endeavors and emotions are simply the electro-chemical responses of the brain. "Bertrand Russell has written a much quoted paragraph to the effect that man is the product of causes which had no prevision of his emergence; that his hopes and fears are the accidental collocations of atoms; that no heroism or intensity of thought can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all human labor, inspiration, and genius are destined to extinction and will be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins."<sup>10</sup>

The creed of secular humanism is: out of the chaos of pure chance comes meaning and order; out of atoms floating randomly in the void comes man the giver of meaning. Secular humanism is a *religion* based solely on faith. That it is irrational, self-contradictory and arbitrary does not seem to bother its adherents. It is a blind faith in man.

## Ethical Absolutes or Chaos?

Do you believe that murder is wrong? Do you believe that child molestation and bestiality are wrong? Most people do. The question that must be answered, then, is "Why?" The secular-humanistic worldview presupposes that nothing can exist above and beyond the universe. The idea of an infinite, personal God who is transcendent, who reveals ethical absolutes to man (e.g., "You shall not kill," "You shall not steal," etc.) is anathema to an atheistic naturalist. With no higher power, the secular humanist must derive an ethical system from this world alone.<sup>11</sup>

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thoughts after him. The knowledge that the unbeliever has is stolen from the Christian worldview. "If we are to have coherence in our experience, there must be a correspondence of our experience to the eternally coherent experience of God. Human knowledge ultimately rests upon the internal coherence within the Godhead; our knowledge ultimately rests upon the ontological Trinity as its presupposition" (Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* [1949], p. 22). The secular humanist comes under the Christian roof of truth to get out of the rain and then tells the Christian he is all wet.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon Clark, *The Philosophy of Science and Belief in God*, (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1987 [1964]), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> The fact that most nations and cultures condemn activities such as murder, theft, rape, bestiality, and such is consistent with the biblical worldview and inconsistent with an evolutionary worldview. The Bible teaches that man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). An important aspect of this image was man's original righteousness and the moral law of God written upon his heart (Rom. 2:15). After Adam and Eve sinned and mankind fell into sin, man's nature became corrupted, perverted and depraved; therefore, man's conscience could not be depended upon as a reliable source for ethics, because of sin. But the image of God was not eradicated by the fall. Man is still man; he still has a conscience, he still has moral motions. The moral law of God written upon man's heart at creation explains why men and societies worldwide (and even false religions) condemn many of the same activities. The

But what is the modern view of the universe, of reality? The universe is evolving. It is a product of chance. It is impersonal. It is in a state of flux. Man himself is a product of chance and is in a state of flux. Thus, the secular humanist teaches that ethics are evolving, arbitrary, subjective, relative and changing. There is no “out-there-ness” to ethics; there is no absolute right or wrong.

For the secular humanist, the source of ethics, morality and law is not God but man. The secular humanist says that ethics are whatever man happens to say they are at a given point in time. In such a system moral law is merely opinion, custom, “community standards,” what the state says (or the Supreme Court, or an intellectual elite like hospital ethics boards). *Man* determines what is right and wrong for himself, and if man changes his mind, then what used to be wrong is now permissible—even virtuous.

The secular humanist who seeks to establish ethical norms apart from the triune God of the Bible actually perverts and destroys moral imperatives. Ethics cannot exist and operate in a void. If the universe is a product of chance and impersonal, then people have no real reason not to lie, cheat, murder and steal, other than the coercive power of the state (e.g., the police, prisons, etc.).<sup>12</sup>

Young people are not stupid. Do you really think that young people are going to be honest, chaste and moral because their parents or some celebrity or the state says it’s a good idea? All talk of virtue is utter nonsense. To the Nazi, exterminating Jews was virtuous. Stalin and the communists murdered 20 million farmers for humanity. To the radical feminist, murdering unborn babies is a virtue. To the gang member, torturing and murdering one’s opponent are virtuous. If morality is constantly changing, evolving, and if it is only what man happens to believe at any given moment, then the modern ethical maxim is, “Do whatever you want—just don’t get caught. And if you do get caught, blame it on someone else.”

There was a time when children were told not to lie, cheat, swear, fornicate and steal because such things were against God’s moral law (the Ten Commandments). People were told that such activities offended a holy, righteous God. They were told that good was good because

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Bible also teaches that God restrains the evil in societies through His common grace. God does so because He is kind and compassionate, and for the sake of His elect. The evolutionary worldview which has man arising out of an impersonal chance beginning cannot account for the worldwide sameness of mankind in being and ethics. If evolution were true, moral laws (which, according to their the secular humanists’ own presuppositions, are totally arbitrary) would show radical differences not great similarities. If evolution were true, there would be wide differences between peoples who evolved under different conditions. If evolution really occurred, some human “races” would be vastly superior in intelligence, etc. to other “races.” But we know that this is not true. Wherever you go on earth, man is man. Men are the same everywhere. The evolutionary worldview of secular humanism paved the way for the eugenics movement, the Nazi movement, Marxism, abortion on demand, and so on. All men are men *because they were created by God*. Human life has value because everyone is created in the image of God. If people repent and adopt the biblical view of man, racism, hatred and the Balkanization of America will cease.

<sup>12</sup> “To say that there is or must be an objective standard is not the same as to say what that standard is. And it is the *what* that is all important. Granted that non-Christians who hold to some sort of something, somewhere above man are better than non-Christians who hold nothing whatsoever above man, it remains true that in the main issue the non-Christian objectivists are no less subjective than are the non-Christian subjectivists. There is but one alternative that is basic: it is that between those who obey the God and Christ of Scripture and those who seek to please themselves. Only those who believe in God through Christ seek to obey God; only they have the true principle in ethics” (Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Theistic Ethics* [Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980], p. 32).

God said so in His Word, and likewise bad was bad because God said so. People were warned that a day was coming in which God would judge all men according to their deeds.

Ethical absolutes are transcendent; they come from outside the universe and are revealed to man by an unchanging, all-powerful God. These ethical commands are objective and unchanging; they are backed up by a morally perfect God who will punish every wicked act committed by man. In a personalistic universe where an absolute, infinite, perfect, moral God (who is the creator of meaning, the revealer and enforcer of ethical absolutes and the judge of wickedness) stands behind all created reality, people have a very real reason for self-government and personal responsibility.

In the area of ethics (as in the area of meaning itself) the Christian worldview is coherent, rational and self-consistent, while the supposedly “scientific” secular-humanistic worldview is irrational, arbitrary and absurd. When the secular humanist speaks of compassion, humility, virtue, helping the poor, the evil of murder, and so on, he is stealing concepts from the Christian worldview. It is one thing to assert that murder is wrong and quite another to explain *why* it is wrong. Anyone can assert that something is good or evil, but only the Christian can consistently say why. In the secular-humanistic worldview, chance not God is ultimate; therefore “it is meaningless to speak of imposing the formalizing activity of the universal mind of man, itself a product of chance, on a bottomless and shoreless ocean of chance. The only possible foundation for science and philosophy as well as for theology is the presupposition that God as all-controlling and Christ as actually redeeming does actually exist and is actually known by man. But to hold this position requires us to give up the idea that man himself is the source of unity in human experience. In seeking such unity as only God can have, apostate man cuts himself loose from the possibility of having any unity in experience at all.”<sup>13</sup>

The secular humanist, if honest and consistent, would simply assert that “in the end we’re all dead”; the injustice and evils of life are never resolved. Hitler, Stalin and Mother Teresa all turn to dust. The universe expands to an icy death. In such a system your life and supposed good deeds have no real meaning or lasting significance at all. “If the dead do not rise, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’” (1 Cor. 15:32).

## Does Human Life Have Value?

According to the evolutionary, naturalistic worldview, man is really no more than a sophisticated machine brought into existence by chance. Does man, according to this view, have value? No, not in the ordinary sense that people think of the value of human life. That is because a machine, no matter how sophisticated and unique, is still impersonal; it is still a machine. And even if one thinks of man as a great animal—the pinnacle of evolution—man is still just an animal. Very few secular humanists advocate radical vegetarianism. Very few secular humanists allow insects free reign in their homes and among their crops. It is impossible to attribute a special, real, unique, lasting value to human life, if man is a chance-derived, impersonal machine

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

destined to eternal extinction in the cosmic void. Human life value presupposes an immortal human soul and a personal beginning (i.e., creation by an infinite, personal God). The secular humanist cannot justify attributing human life value to an impersonal, chance-derived machine. In the naturalistic system, not only is man just a sophisticated machine, he is also destined sooner or later to extinction when the universe inevitably expands into an icy death or contracts into a fiery ball. Secular humanists cannot avoid this eschatology of death, of ultimate extinction.

Therefore, in the areas of origins, being and eschatology (man's ultimate future), secular humanism really has nothing to offer except extinction into the cosmic void. Secular humanists rarely admit to such when discussing ultimate concerns (with the exception of Bertrand Russell). *The Humanist Manifesto II*, published in 1973, does make an attempt at future meaning for man when it speaks of man living on through children and culture. But this living on cannot last beyond a supernova; it cannot go beyond the death of the universe. Secular humanists are ignoring the inevitable by focusing on the immediate future instead of the distant, eternal future. If, in the end, everyone who ever lived ceases forever to exist, then life is meaningless. The eternal non-consciousness of the future renders everything that happened on earth totally meaningless, because if man's soul does not live on it will be as if no one ever even existed. The cosmic void of nothingness (non-consciousness) in the future meets the cosmic void of the past. This is the logical implication of secular humanism. Are you beginning to understand why children brought up under this worldview are willing to commit murder over a pair of tennis shoes or a gold chain? Do you understand how Stalin could murder 20 million people with less feeling than one has when swatting a fly? Are you beginning to see how secular humanism leads to eugenics, abortion, euthanasia, labor camps and genocide?

## The Appeal of Secular Humanism

Secular humanism has dominated twentieth-century intellectual thought. College professors, high school teachers, public school teachers, the secular media and the intelligentsia in general are almost monolithic in their commitment to the naturalist worldview. Why is the secular-humanistic worldview (which we have seen to be irrational, incoherent, arbitrary and absurd) so popular?

First, the secular-humanistic worldview fits in perfectly with the world spirit of modernity. It uses the language of science. It boldly proclaims itself to be objective and factual. The media (T.V. and print) presents science as men in white lab coats out there discovering one fact upon another. High school and college textbooks present modern science as truth on the march. People also mistake the advance of technology with theoretical science. Making cars, C.D. players and airplanes is much different than theoretical science. A car designer must design a car to function in God's universe; therefore, he is forced in his work to conform to God's created reality. The theoretical physicist or macro-evolutionist can say whatever he pleases, as long as it looks good on paper and suits the scientific community. People are impressed by advances in medicine, engineering, aeronautics, and so on, and falsely conclude that the secular-

humanistic view of reality is responsible. The truth is that knowledge progresses only as men either submit to God's Word or are inconsistent with their naturalistic presuppositions. "Man neither is nor can be 'objective' and 'impartial.' All his thinking is from some fundamental starting point or presupposition which is *a priori* and is therefore either pure or impure faith. Out of millions of momentary occurrences, he selects certain data as significant or real because his point of view predetermines that they shall be so."<sup>14</sup> That is why the notable historian of science Thomas Kuhn argues that modern science is not really truth moving onward and upward, as public high school textbooks assert, but is actually more like a religion where a conversion or paradigm-change takes place—where the new view that overtakes the old view often totally contradicts the older viewpoint.<sup>15</sup> Modern man's supposedly unbiased scientific approach to reality is a myth. Modern secular scientists are modern mythmakers just like the ancient priests of Isis, Baal and Marduk.

The second and fundamental reason for the popularity of secular humanism in the twentieth century is that people are sinners actively suppressing the truth of God the creator from their consciousness.<sup>16</sup> The best way to suppress the truth of God is to create idols. Men create false gods and myths and place their faith in them rather than acknowledge and serve the true God. The god of secular humanism is humanity. "Man's sin is his desire to be his own god, determining on his own authority what is good and evil. He accordingly suppresses the truth concerning God, himself, and the world in order to buttress himself in his rebellion."<sup>17</sup>

## The Only Way of Salvation

So far this booklet has dealt mainly with ideas. It has been argued that only the biblical worldview (the Christian view of man and the universe) can account for reality—for what is. It

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<sup>14</sup> R. J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1965), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (University of Chicago, 1970 [1962]).

<sup>16</sup> "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 animals 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. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (Rom. 1:18-32).

<sup>17</sup> Rushdoony, p. 12.

has also been noted that secular humanism (or atheistic naturalism) leads to nihilism (total meaninglessness). The secular-humanistic intellectuals are continually stealing ideas and concepts from the Christian system in order to give life and meaning to their bankrupt system.

But what is the root cause of mankind's problems, and what is the solution to those problems? Here is where the rubber meets the road. These issues are not just academic in nature. Ideas have consequences. It is here that the failure of secular humanism is most glaring.

Secular humanism rejects any idea of a transcendent God who speaks with absolute authority regarding ethics and salvation; therefore, the secular humanist looks to mankind for self-salvation. Historically, secular humanists have looked at scientists, intellectuals and social planners as the people who would solve all of man's problems. Because the secular state is the focus of power in society, it has become the god of secular humanism. Secular humanists look to the *state* as man's savior.

The secular humanist looks to the state for primarily two reasons. First, secular humanists are elitists. They believe that the masses are stupid and need to be coerced and controlled by the state for their own good. Second, secular humanists have no concept of original sin or the corrupt, evil nature of man. They believe that man is basically good. Man's problem is not ethical (i.e., sin in the heart and life) but metaphysical. The problem, as they see it, is not about how to eliminate man's sinful heart and sinful record but about how to change man's environment. Secular humanism envisions man evolving out of his limited, puny finiteness into utopian perfection—into godhood. This has been the dream of secular humanism in all its forms: Marxist communism, fascism, socialism and the welfare state.

The modern, secular state which determines arbitrary law and proclaims salvation to the masses through its various educational, health and social programs has not and cannot save man. The state acting as god seeks total jurisdiction over all areas of life. The state becomes man's taskmaster—coercive, oppressive and increasingly irrational. Rejecting the need for an inner, ethical change in man's heart and the need for the transcendent God who is the author of absolute, unchanging law, the modern secular state actually contributes to societal chaos and anarchy. Secular humanism causes societal anarchy (lawlessness), and societal anarchy in turn contributes to government by crisis. Government by crisis in turn leads to more oppressive laws, rules and regulations.

Because the civil government was never intended by God to be man's savior (e.g., solve all ills, provide cradle to grave security, etc.), and because the secular state is founded upon the irrational and nihilistic presuppositions of secular humanism, it cannot save man; it can only contribute to man's destruction. In every country where the Christian worldview has been replaced with secular humanism, there has been the steady erosion of freedom and a rapid decay of the basic institutions of society. Secular humanism became dominant in American culture during the 1930s. But it was only during the 1960s that the leaven of Christian influence on culture was thoroughly cast aside. The level of societal decay, lawlessness and perversion that has occurred since 1965 is utterly astounding. Ideas have consequences; not only does secular humanism totally fail in its feeble attempt to explain reality, but when its philosophy of life is

adopted by the civil government and society itself, the social order falls into rapid decay and crisis.

Secular humanism is destructive of any social order because it destroys any basis, foundation and reason for morality among politicians, teachers and the masses. “Moral anarchy is always the prelude to statist tyranny.”<sup>18</sup> As the social order decays morally—as families fall apart and society experiences a massive rise in crime—the masses demand action by the state. The state offers the people salvation through legislation (law). But because the new laws are not based upon God’s law, they only contribute to the problem rather than solve it. The new, humanistic laws only result in more anarchy leading to more tyranny. Thus begins a vicious cycle of sin leading to more sin; of social degradation leading to more social decline. When people and politicians forsake God and embrace secular humanism, they embark on a pathway toward destruction.

America is presently on this path downward toward destruction and judgment. “To take men and societies out of the world of God’s law is to sentence them to a decline, fall, and death. Instead of liberation, it is execution. Man’s liberty is under God’s law, and God’s law is the life-giving air of men and society, the basic condition of their existence.”<sup>19</sup> The only hope for men and society is to wholeheartedly embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the foundation of all truth, meaning and morality. He alone is the one who saves man by His blood, His life and His power.

The Christian does not look to the “expert”—the bureaucrat or the state—for salvation but to Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures. Christianity recognizes that man’s problem is not metaphysical (one of finiteness or being), or environmental (bad genes, abusive parents or poverty) but ethical. Man is a sinner. Because of Adam’s ethical rebellion against God in time (in history), all his descendants are born with a sinful nature; therefore, all human beings are evil by nature and sinners. Everyone (except Jesus Christ) commits sin in thought, word and deed. This fact is so obvious that only a blind fool would deny it (if you deny this fact, then try to go just one day without thinking a single impure thought).

## Conclusion

How is it possible for sinful man to be restored into fellowship with an ethically-perfect God who hates every form of evil? God is absolutely just; therefore, He cannot overlook sin. “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness” (Hab. 1:13). How is it possible for God, who is perfectly just and righteous, to forgive sinners and still maintain perfect justice? There is only one possible way for God to redeem sinful, undeserving man. God sent his own Son to the earth as the second Adam to live a sinless life and to die a sacrificial death for everyone who believes in him. “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Ac. 4:12).

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<sup>18</sup> R. J. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1984), p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The most significant and loving act in human history is the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the promised Messiah. If you believe in Jesus Christ and what He accomplished in His life, death and resurrection, you will have eternal life. Christ lived a sinless life to provide the perfect righteousness qualifying sinful man to enter heaven. Christ experienced the full brunt of God's curse and wrath against sin on the cross in His own body, so that those who believe in Him will not have to. Only Christ's blood has the power to wash away sin.

Jesus Christ's mission on earth was twofold. First, He had to live a perfect, sinless life. All men are sinners, having utterly failed to obey God's law. But Jesus Christ in His human nature was born without sin. He lived His whole life in perfect obedience to God's law. If you believe in Jesus Christ, His perfect obedience is imputed or credited to you.<sup>20</sup> Though you are a sinner and deserve to go to hell, if you trust in Christ you will be clothed with His perfect righteousness. It is solely on account of Christ's merits—His objective righteousness—that Christians gain entrance into heaven. Your supposed good deeds contribute nothing to your salvation.

Jesus Christ had to die a bloody, sacrificial death for His people (the elect). Because of your sins you are guilty before God, and the wrath of God rests upon you. You are an enemy of God, completely alienated from Him. You are in bondage to Satan, sin and death. But if you believe in Christ, God's righteous wrath and indignation against your sin are appeased and set aside, because Christ bore the full penalty for sin in your stead. The enmity and alienation from God caused by your rebellion against Him are fully resolved by Christ's death. If you believe in Jesus, you and God are no longer enemies but friends. Christ restores our friendship and fellowship with God. He reconciles us with God. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:7-10).

Only the incarnate Son of God could provide the sinless, sacrificial death needed for sin's removal. Only the perfect, sinless life of Christ can provide the imputed righteousness needed so God could be both just and justifier of those who believe in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:26). Jesus Christ rose from the dead victorious over Satan, sin and death. If you believe in Him, His victory becomes your victory. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.... For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed'" (Rom. 10:9, 11 NASB).

Only the Christian God who is absolutely holy and righteous provides ethical absolutes. Only Jesus Christ the God-man can satisfy the just demands of a holy God. When Jesus Christ returns to earth to judge the whole human race, only those whose debt of guilt has been paid in

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<sup>20</sup> "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5).

full by Christ are permitted to enter God's presence and live in paradise. All those who reject Christ and His offer of forgiveness must pay their own penalty of guilt in hell. "The Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord" (2 Th. 1:7-9 NASB).

The most important decision you will ever make is whether or not to believe in Jesus Christ. Are you going to trust in Jesus Christ for your salvation? Will you make Christ Lord over every aspect of your life and serve Him forever? All other religions and philosophies are false. Jesus Christ is your only hope. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (Jn. 3:18).

*This booklet is dedicated to the memory of  
Greg Bahnsen, Ph.D., 1948-1995*

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