

HUMANISM VS. CHRISTIANITY
The Greatest Battle Of Our Times
Robert L. Waggoner¹

Our entire western civilization, which was built on Christian principles, has been in moral decline. In our lifetimes, the social fabric of American society appears to have been unraveling. Christian homes have not been immune to this process of social and moral deterioration. While Christianity may have appeared to be strong superficially, it has nonetheless been undermined by insidious philosophical, social, cultural, and political forces.

Breakdown of Western Civilization

Many have commented upon the moral deterioration of our civilization. “Western civilization has entered a period of breakdown from which it may never recover.” “. . . The end of the Roman Empire was a minor event compared with what we behold. We are looking at the liquidation of what is known as the modern world!” “Since the time of Christ there has been no period in which there has been the same feeling of . . . spiritual impoverishment.” “Civilization is collapsing before our eyes.” “American society is an impasse similar to that of the Hellenic world at the time of Christ.” “The United States is undergoing a third time of trial, which may be even more severe than those of the Revolution and the Civil War.”² In 1978, the Roper Poll, commissioned by the U. S. Department of Labor, reported that for the first time since that poll was initiated in 1959, “the respondents rated their expectations for the future lower than their assessments of the present.”³

We are living in times comparable to the decline and fall of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. While all may appear prosperous on the surface, as it did in the days of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Israel, there is real danger of national collapse. Jeroboam II’s reign was a time in which Israel extended her borders further than at any period following the days of Solomon. It was a time of ease and prosperity, but at the same time on the horizon was Assyria that would eventually swallow up Israel. When a nation sows immorality, as ours now does, with its excessive fornications, abortions, and other indecencies, it must eventually reap the consequences.⁴

As there were prophets then calling people to repentance, so too must we call people to repent of their sins and turn to God. Although prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah were ultimately unsuccessful in producing national repentance, they may well have lengthened the life of the southern kingdom of Judah. And as the preaching of John Wesley and others is said by historians to have averted a bloody revolution in England, so too perhaps our preaching can help turn our

¹Copyright © by Robert L. Waggoner, 1986. Revised, 2000. Permission is granted to reproduce and distribute this document for non-commercial educational purposes when unaltered provided that copyright and authorship is given.

²Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, 2-3.

³Same source, 3.

⁴Galatians 6:7.

world back to godliness. If our world should repent, as Ninevah did at the preaching of Jonah, then perhaps God will spare it as he did Ninevah.⁵

Many are only now suddenly awakening to the realization that the Christian foundations of our society have drastically eroded. Christians must realize a war is in progress. Christians must resist philosophical enemies. To defeat humanism, Christians must understand it and how it operates. Because Christians have too often failed to understand humanism, Christians have often compromised their beliefs and have therefore suffered defeat in many battles.

The conflict between humanism and Christianity is a war of many battles. This war is about whether a third of our unborn children shall continue to be murdered within their mothers' wombs. It's about whether a fourth of all births in this nation will continue to be outside of wedlock. It's about whether decency or pornography shall prevail. It's about who controls the education of children – parents or civil governments. And it's about many other such things. This document contrasts humanistic and Christian beliefs and their consequences within society, and notes reasons why Christians have been losing this war with humanists.

Contrasting Philosophical Beliefs

The major beliefs of humanism, when considered together, effect our society in very significant ways. These concepts and how they effect society are probably best understood when humanistic and Christian beliefs and their consequences are contrasted. Differences in beliefs between humanists and Christians may be contrasted in five major areas: God, origins and processes, nature of man, morals and values, and judgments.

God

Humanists “find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural.” Humanists believe that the existence of God “is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race.”⁶

On the other hand, Christians believe that God not only exists, but that also he is active in many ways in human affairs. According to the Bible, God is active as creator,⁷ provider,⁸ lawgiver,⁹ savior,¹⁰ and judge,¹¹ to name but a few of the many ways God interacts with mankind.

⁵Jonah 3; Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32.

⁶*Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

⁷Genesis 1:1-3; Psalms 148:3-5; Mark 13:19; Acts 7:49-50; 1 Corinthians 11:12.

⁸Genesis 2:7-9, Cf. also Genesis 2:4-16; Genesis 22:8, Genesis 22:14, Genesis 24:7, Cf. also 24:40-50, Genesis 24: 56; I Samuel 2:6-9; I Chronicles 29:14; Cf. also Psalms 23; Matthew 5:45-46; Matthew 6:31-33; Acts 14:17.

⁹Genesis 1:28-30; Genesis 2:16-17; Exodus 24:12; Psalms 1:1-2; Isaiah 33:22; Romans 7:22, 25; James 4:11-12.

¹⁰Samuel 22:3-4; Psalms 106:21; Isaiah 45:21; Isaiah 43:3, 11; 1 Timothy 1:1; 1 Timothy 2:3; I Timothy 4:10; Titus 1:3; Titus 2:10; Titus 3:4; 1 John 4:4; Jude 25.

¹¹Genesis 3:16-19; Isaiah 33:22; Psalms 94:1-2; Romans 2:4-11; Romans 3:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; I Peter 1:17; Revelation 19:2; Revelation 20:10-15.

Origins and Processes

Humanists “regard the universe as self-existing and not created.”¹² “Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.”¹³ Humanists claim that “man’s religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and his social heritage.”¹⁴ On the other hand, Christians believe that all things were created and are sustained according to their nature by the Eternal God.¹⁵

Nature of Man

Three basic differences about the nature of humanity separate humanists from Christians. First, humanists believe that humanity is only physical. Humanists “find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.”¹⁶ Humanism declares “there is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.”¹⁷ They conclude therefore “that the ethical life can be lived without the illusions of immortality or reincarnation.”¹⁸ On the other hand, Christians believe that humanity is both physical and spiritual, having been made both from “the dust of the ground”¹⁹ and also “in the image of God.”²⁰

Second, humanists “can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.”²¹ Humanists declare that “man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.”²² “Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance.”²³ On the other hand, Christians believe that man is unable to direct himself²⁴ and that humanity is dependent upon God for purpose and guidance in life.²⁵

Third, humanists’ declarations imply their conviction that goodness is as basic to human nature as is humanity’s physical existence. Humanists declare that “promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.”²⁶ They say that “salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false

¹²*Humanist Manifesto I*, First.

¹³*Humanist Manifesto I*, Second.

¹⁴*Humanist Manifesto I*, Fourth.

¹⁵Genesis 1:24-25, 29; Psalms 90:2; Acts 17:28.

¹⁶*Humanist Manifesto I*, Third.

¹⁷*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second.

¹⁸*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 6.

¹⁹Genesis 2:7; Genesis 3:19, Ecclesiastes 3:20.

²⁰Genesis 1:26, 27; Genesis 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7.

²¹*Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

²²*Humanist Manifesto I*, last paragraph.

²³*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, Conclusion.

²⁴Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:11.

²⁵Genesis 2:16, 17; II Samuel 22:21; Psalms 23; Proverbs 3:5-10; Luke 1:79; John 16:13.

²⁶*Humanist Manifesto II*, Second.

hopes of heaven hereafter.”²⁷ On the other hand, Christians believe that by Adam sin entered into the world,²⁸ that everyone sins,²⁹ and that therefore everyone is in need of salvation.³⁰

Morals and Values

Humanists “affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological and ideological sanction.”³¹ “Secularists deny that morality needs to be deduced from religious belief. . . . We are opposed to Absolutists morality. . . .”³² On the other hand, Christians believe that morals and values are absolute, constant, and fixed by God in scripture.³³

Judgment

Humanists reject the concept of God’s judgment, believing, in the words of the ancient Greek Protagoras, that “man is the measure of all things, of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not.” On the other hand, Christians believe that God “will judge the world in righteousness,”³⁴ that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it is good or bad,”³⁵ and that everyone is destined either to heaven or hell, depending upon his or her manner of life on this earth.³⁶

Contrasting Social Effects

These contrasting perspectives of humanists and Christians, although interesting within themselves, become more significant as their consequences upon society are also shown to be in sharp contrasts. Since human beliefs determine human conduct, it is to be expected that a society based upon humanistic beliefs will act differently from a society based upon beliefs of Christians. In their subsequent effects upon society, the differences in beliefs between humanists and Christians may be contrasted in at least four major areas: behavioral standards, value of human life, sexual conduct, and nature of civil governments.

Behavioral Standards

Because humanists believe that God is not relevant to mankind and that human kind is the standard by which all things are to be judged, then it follows that, for humanist, mankind must set all standards of human behavior through science and reason.³⁷ On the other hand

²⁷*Humanist Manifesto II*, Preface.

²⁸Romans 5:12.

²⁹Romans 3:23.

³⁰Romans 1:16, 17; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:1-3; Hebrews 5:9.

³¹*Humanist Manifesto II*, Third.

³²*A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 4.

³³Matthew 6:33; Matthew 7:12; Romans 12:20; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; II Timothy 3:15-17.

³⁴Acts 17:31.

³⁵2 Corinthians 5:10.

³⁶Cf. Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:10-15.

³⁷See *Humanist Manifesto II*, Fourth.

because Christians believe that God made mankind, gives purpose and guidance to humanity, and will one day judge everyone, then it follows that for Christians, only God can set the standard for human behavior.

Because humanists believe that people differ in their perspectives, and that no one person's beliefs are inherently preferable to any others, then it follows that, for humanists, an open society must maintain pluralistic behavioral standards regarding truth, piety, virtue, justice, etc.³⁸ Should any particular standard of behavior dominate a society at any given time, it is not because that standard has any greater inherent value, but it is because that particular society has collectively chosen, for whatever reasons, to live by it.

Because humanists believe that standards of human behavior are derived from within human experience and that the plurality of human beings and their experiences requires pluralistic standards, then it follows that, for humanists, everyone in society must be permissive and tolerant of every other person's standards and behavioral conduct.³⁹ On the other hand, because Christians believe that there is only one standard, and that it is set by God, then it follows that, for Christians, all human behavior within society, to be acceptable to God and godly people, must conform to that single God-given standard.

While it is true that many God fearing persons within our society still seek to abide by God's single standard of behavior, is it not also true that our society, as a whole, is becoming more permissive and tolerant of other people's behavioral conduct? Would you not agree that when assessed by the criterion of behavioral standards, our society is becoming more humanistic?

Value of Human Life

Because humanists believe that human life originates by evolutionary chance, and that people are only physical beings, then it follows that, for humanists, no human life has any inherent value or sacredness. On the other hand, because Christians believe that life originates with God, only God should take human life. Except for capitol punishment,⁴⁰ self-defense, and wars which were specifically authorized by God, mankind is forbidden to take the life of another human being.⁴¹ And because Christians believe that humanity is both physical and spiritual, made in the image of God, then it follows that, for Christians, every human being, from the moment of his conception, has an inherent God given value or sacredness.

Because humanists believe that man is only physical in nature, then it follows that, for humanists, human life should be valued only for its physical desirability and productivity. On the other hand, because Christians believe that mankind is both physical and spiritual in nature, then it follows that, for Christians, human life should be evaluated in both physical and spiritual terms.

³⁸See *A Secular Humanist Declaration*, 2.

³⁹See *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixth.

⁴⁰Genesis 9:6.

⁴¹Exodus 20:13; also Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:21; Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9; James 2:11; 1 Peter 4:15.

Because humanists believe that human life has no value unless it is desired or productive, then it follows that, for humanists, when human life is not desired or productive, it may be destroyed. On the other hand, because Christians believe that human life is God given and also of a spiritual nature, then it follows that, for Christians, human life must be sanctified and preserved.

Because humanists believe that human life has no inherent value, if the will of humankind is thought to be better served by abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or suicide, then that should be encouraged.⁴² On the other hand, because Christians believe that human life originates with God, that it has a spiritual nature, and that it should be preserved, then it follows that, for Christians, every form of eliminating human life, whether through abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, suicide, genocide, or homicide, must be strongly resisted.

Because humanists believe that human life is valued only when it is desired or productive, then it follows that, for humanists, every member of society may seek his own selfish objectives without any sense of responsibility to meet the needs of others. On the other hand, because Christians believe that human life should be preserved at all costs, then it follows that, for Christians, every member of society should work unselfishly and responsibly for the preservation of one another.

While it is true that many God fearing persons within our society are still unselfish and seek to preserve human life, however weak or disabled we may be, is it not also true that our society, as a whole, is becoming more selfish, and irresponsible, so that not only abortion and suicide are prevalent, but also that euthanasia and infanticide seem to be growing as political possibilities? Would you not agree that when assessed by the criterion of value of human life, our society is becoming more humanistic?

Sexual Conduct

Because humanists derive their standards of sexual conduct from human experiences, and since personal pleasure is the primary standard by which most humanists determine their sexual conduct, then it follows that, for humanists, there should be no restraints upon sexual freedoms except as each person prefers.⁴³ If any particular person, in any given situation, determines that fornication, (i.e. adultery, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, lesbianism, or whatever), is right, then in that situation, for the humanists, it is considered all right! And if, to arouse sexual excitement, and to make the experience more pleasurable, hard core pornography is used, then that too, for humanists, is considered all right.

On the other hand, because Christians believe that God gives the standard by which humanity must live, and because that standard says, "You shall not commit adultery,"⁴⁴ and other like statements,⁴⁵ then it follows that, for Christians, illicit sexual thoughts and behavior must be

⁴²See *Humanist Manifesto II*, Seventh.

⁴³See *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixth

⁴⁴Exodus 20:14; Cf. also Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 19:18; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9.

⁴⁵Leviticus 20:10; Matthew 5:27-28; Acts 21:25; I Corinthians 10:8; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; I Thessalonians 4:3.

restrained in order for the Christian to be pure,⁴⁶ and chaste.⁴⁷ Moreover, Christians should not only seek to refrain from sexual impurities, but also to act positively in fulfilling obligations imposed by sexual freedoms within marriage relationships.⁴⁸

Because humanists generally permit total freedom from sexual restraints, at least between consenting adults, it follows that there are many separations, divorces, and much family deterioration in communities dominated by values of humanism. On the other hand, because Christians practice sexual restraints, based on God's standard of moral purity and marital commitment, it follows that there are strong family ties and that society is stable in communities dominated by Christian principles.

While it is true that many God fearing persons within our society still follow the biblical code regarding sexual morality, is it not also true that our society, as a whole, is becoming more sexually permissive? Would you not agree that when assessed by the criterion of sexual conduct, our society is more humanistic than it was fifty years ago?

Nature of Civil Governments

Because humanists believe that man is basically good, and that the best informed and wisest of men should rule over other men, it follows that, for humanists, the rulership of human governments should fall upon a small and select group. Moreover, for humanists, the greatest concentrations of power should be at the federal or centralized levels of civil government, with all local governments subservient to the federal government. This form of government is called statism. It tends to regulate all human activities at every level of society. This is the way America is now governed.

On the other hand, because Christians believe that everyone is a sinner, and because power tends to make people corrupt, it follows that, for Christians, it is very dangerous to place extensive powers for governing society into the hands of one person, or of a small group of people. Because of the reality of sin in human conduct, Christians generally believe that the governing of society should be distributed among people, with the greatest governing powers concentrated at the local levels of society. Should some people govern wickedly, then the extent of their wicked rulership will be limited to a small domain. For this reason, our Constitutional forefathers established a nation with a weak centralized government, where the strongest governing influences were at the local county and township levels.

Because humanists desire strong centralized governments, it follows that, for humanists, patriotism and nationalism must be forfeited for the sake of developing a one-world government, or "globalism."⁴⁹ On the other hand, because Christians are fearful of strong centralized governments, it follows that, for Christians, patriotism and nationalism are logical consequences of national governments. These are produced primarily at local governing levels.

⁴⁶Philippians 4:8; I Timothy 5:22; Titus 1:15.

⁴⁷Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-28.

⁴⁸1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

⁴⁹See *Humanist Manifesto II*, Twelfth

While it is true that many God-fearing persons within our society still govern themselves by the word of God and look first to God for answers to social problems, is it not also true that our society, as a whole, seeks to govern itself more according to the wisdom of men and looks to state and federal governments (not to God) for answers to social problems? Would you not agree that when assessed by the criterion of civil government, our society is becoming more humanistic?

Why Christians Are Losing To Humanists

In the war against humanism, Christians appear to be losing. All who have lived five decades or more can testify that our society has changed radically during this time. While many reasons might be given, here are four that seem self-evident to close observers. First, many theists have generally been unaware that humanistic values have been imposed on society and have therefore not resisted them. Now that such awareness is coming, many theists either mistakenly think they can do nothing to combat humanism, or do not want to put forth the effort. Second, many theists, being generally unaware of humanism, have primarily talked their beliefs and have generally withdrawn from the governing of society whereby values are continually implemented through law. On the other hand, humanists, without much talk about their beliefs, have, by political activism, implemented their beliefs into laws that are now being imposed upon Christians. Third, many theists have generally been unaware of the use humanists have made of compulsory public schools to teach humanistic values and thus by-pass Christian parental values. Fourth, many theists often accommodate themselves to humanistic beliefs such as theistic evolution, errancy of scripture, belief that man is basically good, relying upon human alliances, thinking moral values may be relative, etc.

Conclusion

Make no mistake about the ultimate outcome of this war. God will be victorious.⁵⁰ However, the question remains whether individual Christians will be victorious. If so, then each Christian must first understand the conflict, remove humanistic values from his or her own life, and join in the battle against humanism. Remember what Mordicai told Esther, “If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise . . . from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”⁵¹

⁵⁰Psalm 2:1-5.

⁵¹Esther 4:14, N-KJV.