

**Biblical Christianity vs. Secular Humanism:**

**A Project for the Alum Creek Church of Christ**

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## **Biblical Christianity vs. Secular Humanism:**

### **A Project for the Alum Creek Church of Christ**

In the current age, “Christians too frequently tend to think and act in humanistic ways rather than in harmony with biblical theism.”<sup>1</sup>

Because many Christians have subscribed in one way or another to the philosophy of secular humanism, the student’s project details efforts at the Alum Creek Church of Christ to combat secular humanism. This paper will detail the student’s preaching ministry and will discuss how he upheld a Christian worldview through his preaching.

### **The Student’s Preaching Ministry**

The proclamation of the gospel is an important activity. The activity’s importance is demonstrated by Jesus’ active preaching ministry. After John’s arrest, “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God” (Mk. 1:14).<sup>2</sup> Jesus saw preaching as central to his Incarnation: “Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come” (Mk. 1:38). Matthew also records Jesus’ preaching activity: “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom” (Mt. 9:35).

Paul also frequently preached. Paul and Barnabas “fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news” (Acts 14:6-7). When Paul and Barnabas were in Derbe, “they preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples” (Acts 14:21). Paul additionally valued preaching the gospel; he wrote, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

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<sup>1</sup> Robert L. Waggoner, “Biblical Theism vs. Secular Humanism: A Class to Train Theists to Confront Humanism” (DMin diss., Erskine Theological Seminary, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> NIV. All subsequent biblical quotations will come from the NIV.

The student likewise has an obligation to preach the gospel. On the one hand, he has received that obligation from the eldership where he currently works, for they expect a large percentage of the student's time to be devoted to preparing and delivering sermons.<sup>3</sup> However, his greater obligation comes from the talents given him by God. The student has a knack for public speaking, and realizing that from "everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Lk. 12:48), he decided to preach for a living. At present, God provides the student an opportunity each Sunday to speak to the Alum Creek Church of Christ, and the student has determined to use those opportunities to teach a biblical worldview to the congregation.

The student must uphold a biblical worldview, for truth comes from God and error abounds. John reminded his readers, "They [false prophets] are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood" (1 Jn. 4:5-6). Fitch has well commented on this text:

Nothing could be clearer. The source of truth is God. The origin of error is Satan. The truth is the revelation of God brought to the world by the incarnate Jesus. His apostles, of which John is the last, have passed that revelation of God's grace on to the church. The error of substitute gospels is the work of antichrists. Their alternative teachings are legion to better confound the unwary.<sup>4</sup>

Secular humanism is a substitute "gospel," and the student has no choice but to oppose Satan's work.

That "living and active" Word which is "sharper than any double-edged sword, [and] penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow" (Heb. 4:12) provides the greatest antidote for Satan's error. Preachers have received the charge for proclaiming that Word:

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<sup>3</sup> C. B. Keeney, "Agreement with Justin Imel," Unpublished contract with the Alum Creek Church of Christ, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Alger M. Fitch, *What the Bible Says About Preaching* (Joplin, MO: college Press Publishing Company, 1989), 111.

“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). Because Paul’s charge follows immediately upon his comment about Scripture’s inspiration (3:16-17), the instruction likely grows out of Scripture’s inspiration.<sup>5</sup> In other words, Scripture must be proclaimed precisely because the words originated with God.

Thus, to combat secular humanism, the student must preach the Word of God. Only that Word can penetrate “even to dividing soul and spirit.” Only that Word came from God. Only that Word can be used to “correct, rebuke and encourage” the brethren. Only that Word can inoculate any congregation against the evils of secular humanism.

### **The Project’s Description**

The sermons for this project were presented at the Alum Creek Church of Christ on Sunday nights from October 2, 2005 to January 22, 2006. The Alum Creek congregation averages 135 on Sunday mornings and about 75 on Sunday nights. The congregation largely consists of white, middle-class families. Most members of the congregation have college degrees, many have graduate degrees, and a few have terminal degrees. Those who do not have college degrees are, as a rule, well-read and quite knowledgeable.

Justin Imel used the Sunday night assembly to discuss biblical reaction to humanistic values. The next several pages will detail the student’s project and provide his understanding of the contemporary world.

*Sunday Night October 2, 2005.* The student presented a lesson entitled “What is Secular Humanism?” Justin intended to introduce secular humanism to an audience which was largely ignorant of the term.

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<sup>5</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988).

First, the student presented pejorative quotations concerning humanism. Josh McDowell wrote

One of the most organized, most challenging and most clearly non-Christian philosophies of today is secular humanism. It is ably represented and defended by a core of prominent scientists and philosophers at the forefront of new scientific and philosophical thought. Secular humanism has its own meetings, its own “clergy” of spokesmen, its own “creed” called The Humanist Manifesto, and its own goals toward which it desires all of humanity to work. Because of its cohesive world view and strong threat to biblical Christianity, it needs to be examined.<sup>6</sup>

James C. Dobson and Gary Bauer stated, “Nothing short of a great Civil War of Values rages today throughout North America. Two sides with vastly differing and incompatible worldviews are locked in a bitter conflict that permeates every level of society.”<sup>7</sup> Norman L. Geisler said, “Secular humanism presents one of the greatest threats to the survival of Christianity in the world today. It is for this reason that a Christian should carefully study its basic beliefs and scrutinize their adequacy.”<sup>8</sup>

To encourage the congregation to think concerning the above quotations, Justin posed a couple questions: “Why would these theists speak of secular humanism in this manner? Why is secular humanism so dangerous to the Christian worldview?” The student made clear that over the course of the sermon series the answers to those questions would become obvious.

Justin then turned to defining secular humanism with quotations from prominent humanists. H. J. Blackham said, “Humanism is a concept of man focused upon a programme for humanity”<sup>9</sup>; in other words, humanism focuses on man. Corliss Lamont defined humanism as follows: “To define twentieth-century humanism briefly, I would say that it is a philosophy of

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<sup>6</sup> Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Handbook of Today's Religions* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1983), 259.

<sup>7</sup> James C. Dobson and Gary L. Bauer, *Children at Risk: The Battle for the Hearts and Minds of Our Kids* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), 19, quoted in David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991), 7.

<sup>8</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Is Man the Measure?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> H. J. Blackham, “A Definition of Humanism,” in *The Humanist Alternative: Some Definitions of Humanism*, ed. Paul Kurtz (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1973), 35-37.

joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science, and democracy.”<sup>10</sup> Paul Kurtz said

The key message of humanism is not that humanists are nonbelievers in theistic religion – atheists, agnostics, or skeptics – but that we are believers, for we believe deeply in the potentialities of human beings to achieve the good life. Indeed, we wish to apply the virtues and principles of humanist ethics to enhance the human condition.<sup>11</sup>

Robert Primack and David Aspy gave the following definition of humanism:

Secular humanists believe very simply that the human creature aspect of Christianity should be divorced from its religious beginnings and considered a major aspect of personal and social-political relationships. They suggest that making decisions on the basis of some supernatural force may lead to destructive irrationality. They believe the scientific methods should not only be applied to technology but to the very nature of human relationships. They are strongly committed to the democratic, pluralistic/humanistic, secular society in the tradition of Jefferson. Many are pacifists who, like Jesus, are prepared to turn the other cheek and to eschew all forms of violence. They also believe with Einstein that genuine religiosity does not involve blind faith, fear of life and fear of death, but a search for rational knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

The student then moved to describe the main points of secular humanism from *A Secular Humanist Declaration*.<sup>13</sup> Those main points are: free inquiry, separation of church and state, the ideal of freedom, ethics based on critical intelligence, moral education, religious skepticism, reason, science and technology, evolution, and education.<sup>14</sup>

The student then turned to informing the congregants of scriptural teachings concerning those points. Since Justin would be dealing with each point specifically in the future, he did not spend time refuting humanism point by point. He only commented on what he perceived to be important concepts for the congregation to grasp.

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<sup>10</sup> Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1982), 12.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Kurtz, “When Should We Speak Out? (Secular Humanism and Politics),” *Free Inquiry* 23, no. 3 (2003): 6.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Primack and David Aspy, “The Roots of Humanism,” *Educational Leadership* 38 (1980): 226.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Kurtz, *A Secular Humanist Declaration* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1980).

<sup>14</sup> Since the student will provide critiques of those ten tenets throughout this essay, he will not provide those quotations here. The quotations will appear below.

Secular humanism is “a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world.”<sup>15</sup> However, Scripture teaches that man’s highest goal is to honor God. “Now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 10:12). “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). Man’s whole being is to be centered on honoring God and keeping his commandments, not on himself, and not even on making the world a better place.

The scientific method came about as a result of Christianity; Christianity provided conditions under which scientific investigation could flourish.<sup>16</sup> The first condition was a belief that the physical world exists. Many Eastern religions believe the physical world is merely an illusion. Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that this world really exists; therefore, the world can be studied. Second, Christianity teaches that nature is good but not divine. Many pagan cultures affirm that the physical world is the abode of the gods; therefore, studying the physical world would be greatly irreverent. Christianity teaches that this world is good, for God created the cosmos (Gen. 1:1); the world is not divine, for God is outside the universe. Third, nature is orderly and predictable. No pagan cult considered laws to govern the cosmos. But, Christianity holds that God is a Law-giver, and many early scientists set out to find those divine-appointed laws by which the universe operates.

The student then demonstrated that the ethical system espoused by humanists is anything but godly. Humanists claim ethics developed as a branch of philosophy prior to any claim of divine sanction for ethical behavior. Yet, where is their proof for such a statement? Ethics

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<sup>15</sup> Lamont, *Philosophy of Humanism*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?* With Nancy Pearcey (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999).

cannot be determined by reason – “I know, O LORD, that a man’s life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Ethics flow from God’s character, not man’s reasoning – “Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

The education humanists wish to give children is frightening, to say the least. They do not want children indoctrinated in any religious system, but they are more than willing to indoctrinate children in their belief system through the public schools! Moral education does not belong to the public schools but to parents. “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:6-7).

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). To Timothy Paul wrote, “From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). How could Timothy know the Scriptures from infancy if he was not trained by his mother and grandmother?

Secular humanists desire evolution and not Creation to be taught in schools. If secular humanists value reason and investigation so much, what do they fear if evolution and Creation are taught fairly side by side? The student would be more than willing to put the evidence for Creation up against the evidence for evolution. Scripture teaches that God created man in his own image (Gen. 1:27; Acts 17:26). If individuals hold that man is nothing more than molecules which randomly came together, they have no reason to treat human life as valuable. Why not have abortions? Why condemn Hitler’s atrocities? Why oppose murder? Why oppose euthanasia?

*Sunday Night October 9, 2005.* The student preached a sermon titled “Why Should I Worry about Secular Humanism?”

The student demonstrated the influence secular humanist desire over children. They have repeatedly expressed their wish to control public education. Paul Kurtz said, “In our view, education should be the essential method of building humane, free, and democratic societies.”<sup>17</sup> Later in the same document, Kurtz said, “There is a broader task that all those who believe in democratic secular humanist values will recognize, namely, the need to embark upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment concerning the relevance of the secular outlook to the human condition.”<sup>18</sup> Mel and Norma Gabler provided the following not-so-veiled quote from *The Humanist*

The battle for mankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizer of a new faith; a religion of humanity . . . utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach.<sup>19</sup>

Henry A. Giroux said

What is becoming increasingly clear is that public and higher education may be two of the few sites left in which public values can be learned and experienced, and both should be defended vigorously by broadening the terms of learning to define a new democratic mission for the university.<sup>20</sup>

The student then proceeded to demonstrate how secular humanist currently influence children. The humanists place evolution in popular children’s works. The Berenstain Bears, which the student’s children love, teach secular humanism. In *The Berenstain Bears’ Nature Guide*, the Bear Family invites the reader to go on a nature walk. As readers take the walk with

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<sup>17</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted from *The Humanist* January/February 1983 by Mel and Norma Gabler, “Humanism in Textbooks (Secular Religion in the Classroom),” *Communication Education* 36 (1987): 362.

<sup>20</sup> Giroux, “Passion of the Right”: 316.

the Bears, they come across these words: Nature is “all that IS, or WAS, or EVER WILL BE!”<sup>21</sup> How many children have seen *The Land Before Time* video series?<sup>22</sup> Each video in the series provides a lesson in evolution as seas produce organisms which keep changing until they form dinosaurs.

Secular humanists have also included much of their propaganda into school textbooks and teaching methods. A high school psychology text a few years ago read, “There are exceptions to almost all moral laws, depending on the situation. What is wrong in one instance may be right in another. Most children learn that it’s wrong to lie. But later they may learn that it’s tactless, if not actually wrong, not to lie under certain circumstances.”<sup>23</sup> Such a statement closely resembles what Kurtz once wrote, “It is our moral duty, for example, not to lie, yet to do so on occasion may be morally justifiable. If your aunt labored all day to prepare a dessert you hate, you may believe that sparing her feelings and telling her you like it is a greater obligation than telling her the truth.”<sup>24</sup>

Secular humanists have given children much of their sexual ethic. Obviously, because nothing is absolutely right and wrong in secular humanism, no sexual behavior can be inherently wrong. Humanists have spelled out that view:

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly suppress sexual conduct. . . . While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered “evil.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stan and Jan Berenstain, *The Berenstain Bears’ Nature Guide* (New York: Random, 1984), 11 quoted in Charles Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?* With Nancy Pearcey (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 54.

<sup>22</sup> *The Land Before Time* video series, Universal Pictures (1988) referenced in Charles Colson *How Now Shall We Live?* With Nancy Pearcey (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 69.

<sup>23</sup> Allyn & Bacon, *Inquiries in Sociology*, SE-45, col. 2, par. 1, lines 5-11, ca. 1978 quoted in Jim L. Smith, *One Nation Under – God or Man?* (Lawrenceburg, TN: Smith Publications, 1989), 30. Smith gives additional quotes from textbooks, and other quotes may also be found in Gabler, “Humanism in Textbooks.”

<sup>24</sup> Paul Kurtz, *Forbidden Fruit: The Ethics of Humanism* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), 37.

<sup>25</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixth.

That sexual ethic has been advocated by the Teenage Parent Council of Austin, Texas in their so-called “Green Book,” which publishes information for teens and their parents about services provided to pregnant teens.<sup>26</sup> The Green Book refuses to list the services the Austin Crisis Pregnancy Center provides, for that center promotes abstinence and favors life. The Green Book tells the teens of Austin

Parents, church leaders, and other teen friends may be urging you to wait until you are older and more mature, or married, before deciding to have a sexual intercourse relationship with someone. . . . About the only thing you can rely on is your personal feeling about what makes sense to you. The personal sense of what seems right is an important tool we have available to protect ourselves.<sup>27</sup>

After detailing how secular humanism impacts children, the student briefly explored how humanism impacts the whole of society. Because of secular humanism society has experienced “divorce, abortion, suicide, drug abuse, sexual permissiveness, homosexuality, pornography, wife battering, child abuse, etc.”<sup>28</sup> Secular humanists pride themselves on impacting American culture; Kurtz has said,

There is today a more tolerant attitude toward sexual freedom and a demand that laws against abortion, birth control, and voluntary sterilization be repealed. There is a change in public attitudes toward pornography and obscenity, an increased acceptance of nudity on stage and in the cinema – especially where artistic values are involved – and a conviction that society should not impose narrow standards of censorship.<sup>29</sup>

The student offered two suggestions about what Christians can do to combat humanism. First, because children have been given to their parents care by God (Gen. 33:5; Ps. 127:3-5), they must be trained in righteousness. “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6). “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

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<sup>26</sup> Waggoner, “Theism v. Humanism.”

<sup>27</sup> *The Green Book*, Teenage Parent Council of Austin, 1987, 3 quoted in Waggoner, “Theism v. Humanism,” 113.

<sup>28</sup> Robert L. Waggoner, “Why All Preachers Should Be Concerned About Humanism,” *Biblical Theism*, [http://www.biblicaltheism.com/Why\\_Preachers\\_Should\\_Be\\_Concerned.pdf](http://www.biblicaltheism.com/Why_Preachers_Should_Be_Concerned.pdf) (accessed October 1, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> Paul Kurtz, *In Defense of Humanism* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1983) 35.

In order to protect their children, parents must know what their children watch on television, to what music they listen, and with what friends they associate. Children need to be taught what is involved in Christianity – parents need to take time to read and explain the Scriptures to their children as well as look for opportunities to teach about God. Parents need to be cognizant of what their children are being taught in school by monitoring their children’s textbooks.

Christians also need to make a stand in their community. Former saints made such a stand. When Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden statue, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship the image, even though their rebellion meant being thrown into the fiery furnace (Dan. 3). When the Sanhedrin told the apostles to be quiet about Christ’s claims, they refused, but continued to preach Jesus’ name. When the apostles were again called before the Sanhedrin, the high priest told them, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name. Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching” (Acts 5:28). The apostles famously replied, “We must obey God rather than men!” (Acts 5:29). Christians can take a stand in their community by demonstrating Christian morality; “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16). Christians can also vocalize their opposition to immorality through letters to the editor; through phone calls to radio talk shows; through activism in causes against abortion, gambling, pornography, and the like; and through voting.

*Sunday Night October 16, 2005.* The Alum Creek congregation hosted a gospel meeting the week of October 16, 2005. Bill Bagents, Vice President of Academic Affairs for Heritage Christian University, conducted the meeting and spoke about commitment to Christ.

*Sunday Night October 23, 2005.* The student presented a lesson concerning free inquiry from the viewpoint of secular humanism. The student provided several quotations from humanists concerning free inquiry. Kurtz wrote,

The first principle of democratic secular humanism is its commitment to free inquiry. We oppose any tyranny over the mind of man, any efforts by ecclesiastical, political, ideological, or social institutions to shackle free thought. In the past, such tyrannies have been directed by churches and states attempting to enforce the edicts of religious bigots. In the long struggle in the history of ideas, established institutions, both public and private, have attempted to censor inquiry, to impose orthodoxy on beliefs and values, and to excommunicate heretics and extirpate unbelievers. . . .

Free inquiry entails recognition of civil liberties as integral to its pursuit, that is, a free press, freedom of communication, the right to organize opposition parties and to join voluntary associations, and freedom to cultivate and publish the fruits of scientific, philosophical, artistic, literary, moral and religious freedom. Free inquiry requires that we tolerate diversity of opinion and that we respect the right of individuals to express their beliefs, however unpopular they may be, without social or legal prohibition or fear of sanctions.<sup>30</sup>

Again, Kurtz wrote

We are committed to free inquiry, the free mind, freedom of research, respect for civil liberties, and the open democratic society. This entails the right to believe, nor not believe, in prevailing religious or ideological doctrines. We object to any effort to censor or prohibit dissent and restrict liberty.<sup>31</sup>

The Academy of Humanism issued a statement which reads, in part,

We believe that the problems and issues of contemporary life are inescapable; evasion and ignorance are not avenues to solutions. We do not believe that any one group has the answers to these or related problems. By questioning, seeking alternatives, and encouraging free inquiry, we have a far better chance of success than by limiting the coming generation to the narrow fields of study recommended by the critics of secular humanism.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 10-11.

<sup>31</sup> Kurtz, "When Should we Speak Out?": 64

<sup>32</sup> Academy of Humanism, "Education and Free Inquiry: A Statement from the Academy of Humanism," *Contemporary Education* (1986) 58: 41.

Kurtz wrote in *Eupraxophy*, “The first principle of humanism is a commitment to free inquiry in every field of human endeavor. This means that any effort to prevent the free mind from exercising its right to pose questions and initiate inquiry is unwarranted.”<sup>33</sup>

The student first showed these statements’ limited appropriateness. The statements are appropriate, for God created men free to make their own decisions about what to believe and how to act.<sup>34</sup> Because God allows individuals free choice, they are not forced to believe the truth or act in appropriate ways. The statements are also correct, for some in Christendom have attempted to force their beliefs on others, such as occurred with the Spanish Inquisition. Secular humanists are also right to encourage investigation. Luke investigated his Gospel carefully; he wrote,

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Lk. 1:1-4).

Luke praised the Bereans because “they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true” (Acts 17:11). Truthful investigation should cause Christians no alarm. Sir William Ramsey set out to prove the Book of Acts false, but as he followed Paul’s travels, Ramsey came to believe Christian truth.<sup>35</sup> Lee Strobel began a nine month investigation into the claims of Christianity after his wife began attending a denominational church.<sup>36</sup> After Strobel finished his investigation, he came home from a church

<sup>33</sup> Paul Kurtz, *Eupraxophy: Living Without Religion* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1989), 26.

<sup>34</sup> Moses told the children of Israel, “This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deut. 30:19); Joshua told the children of Israel, “If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living” (Josh. 24:15).

<sup>35</sup> Lon Solomon, “The Reliability of the Bible,” McLean Bible Church, [http://www.mcleanbible.org/uploads/Bible\\_Reliable\\_Pt\\_2\\_Spir\\_Btcp\\_092402.pdf](http://www.mcleanbible.org/uploads/Bible_Reliable_Pt_2_Spir_Btcp_092402.pdf) (accessed October 3, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Lydia P. Boyle, “Lee Strobel: An Inquiring Mind Led Him to Christ,” Hour of Power, [http://www.hourofpower.org/interviews/lee\\_strobel.html](http://www.hourofpower.org/interviews/lee_strobel.html) (accessed October 4, 2005).

service, locked himself in his study, and listed the evidence for Christ's deity on a legal pad.<sup>37</sup>

About summarizing the evidence for Jesus' divinity, Strobel wrote,

I'll admit it: I was ambushed by the amount and quality of the evidence that Jesus is the unique Son of God. As I sat at my desk that Sunday afternoon, I shook my head in amazement. I had seen defendants carted off to the death chamber on much less convincing proof! The cumulative facts and data pointed unmistakably toward a conclusion that I wasn't entirely comfortable in reaching.

In light of the convincing facts I had learned during my investigation, in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this: It would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth!<sup>38</sup>

After exploring the positive effects of free inquiry, the student showed the dangers lurking in the humanists' understanding of free inquiry. First, just because individuals are free to choose for themselves what to believe and how to act does not mean they will choose appropriately. Second, humanists largely deny that any absolute truth exists. Farmer said, "The vast majority of secular humanists assume that one should be ever skeptical and that knowledge is human-made and comes not from some infallible source. Secular humanists eschew supposed absolutes for statements of probability."<sup>39</sup> Cherry and Matsumura also said, "Secular humanists don't believe the one, final absolute truth has been revealed to them. On the contrary, we believe that all beliefs are fallible and provisional, and that diversity and dialogue are essential to the process of learning and developing."<sup>40</sup> From Scripture, however, absolute truth not only exists but has been revealed. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14); "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father

<sup>37</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 264-265.

<sup>39</sup> Rod Farmer, "Toward a Definition of Secular Humanism," *Contemporary Education* 58 (1987): 127.

<sup>40</sup> Matt Cherry and Mollen Matsumura, "10 Myths About Secular Humanism," *Free Inquiry* 18 (1997), [http://find.galegroup.com/itx/infomark.do?&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodID=Eaim&docId=A20582810&source=gale&srcprod=EAIM&userGroupName\\_avl\\_uah&version=1.0](http://find.galegroup.com/itx/infomark.do?&type=retrieve&tabID=T003&prodID=Eaim&docId=A20582810&source=gale&srcprod=EAIM&userGroupName_avl_uah&version=1.0) (accessed September 15, 2005).

except through me” (Jn. 14:6); ““You are a king, then!’ said Pilate. Jesus answered, ‘You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (Jn. 18:37).

The very idea of absolutes has become unpopular in modern society. Concerning morality, Kurtz said,

It is one thing, however, to lay down the rules of conduct by law and to enforce them by sanction, leaving opportunities for them to be modified and revised in democratic societies. It is quite another to uphold unchanging orthodoxy of belief in the sciences, philosophy, literature, the arts, politics, morality, or religion and to seek to legislate acceptable modes of personal behavior. Here the appeal to authority is illegitimate, for it substitutes a conformist faith for intelligently grounded knowledge.<sup>41</sup>

In the above quote, Kurtz makes two important claims. First, he claims neither morality nor religion are unchangeable. Second, he denies one can appeal to God, for Kurtz could not arrive at theism from “intelligently grounded knowledge.”<sup>42</sup> To deal with the quote, the student noted that ignoring truth does not negate truth. If the student goes for his yearly physical, for example, and the physician finds a mass in his abdomen, Justin could choose to ignore that truth, but ignoring the truth does not make the danger disappear.

Additionally, uniformity of thought is important. The student reminded the congregation of the following quote from Kurtz: “In the long struggle in the history of ideas, established institutions, both public and private, have attempted to censor inquiry, to impose orthodoxy on beliefs and values, and to excommunicate heretics.”<sup>43</sup> Additionally, Cherry and Matsumura said, “We value tolerance, pluralism, and open-mindedness as positive and beneficial qualities in society.”<sup>44</sup> Christians are free to come to different conclusions on some matters. Paul, for example, said, “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable

<sup>41</sup> Kurtz, *Eupraxophy*, 24-25.

<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, the psalmist took the opposite position and said, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God” (Ps. 14:1).

<sup>43</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Cherry and Matsumura, “10 Myths About Secular Humanism.”

matters. One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables" (Rom. 14:1-2). In another place, Paul wrote, "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day" (Col. 2:16). The student noted that on certain matters, Christians must allow their brethren to reach different opinions. To illustrate, some Christians wish to celebrate Christmas as a family time and a time for exchanging gifts, and other choose not to do so as a matter of conscience.

In essentials, however, Christians must have uniformity of thought. "I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor. 1:10). Again, to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

Next, the student turned attention to Kurtz's decrying the efforts of churches "to excommunicate heretics and extirpate unbelievers."<sup>45</sup> Such obviously goes against the humanists' concept of free inquiry; if one must believe a certain truth, he cannot arrive at his own truth. However, the church has a serious obligation to defend truth. Timothy was to charge individuals in Ephesus "not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies" (1 Tim. 1:3-4). Titus was also to appoint elders in Crete because "there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach" (Tit. 1:10-11).

*Sunday Night October 30, 2005.* The church had a prayer and singing service.

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<sup>45</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 11.

*Sunday Night November 6, 2005.* The student's fourth lesson in the series concerned secular humanism and the separation of church and state.

Secular humanists believe strongly in the separation of church and state. *A Secular Humanist Declaration* says

Because of their commitment to freedom, secular humanists believe in the principle of the separation of church and state. . . . Any effort to impose an exclusive conception of Truth, Piety, Virtue, or Justice upon the whole of society is a violation of free inquiry. Clerical authorities should not be permitted to legislate their own parochial views – whether moral, philosophic, political, education, or social – for the rest of society. Nor should tax revenues be exacted for the benefit or support of sectarian religious institutions. Individuals and voluntary associations should be free to accept or not to accept any belief and to suppose these convictions with whatever resources they may have, without being compelled by taxation to contribute to those religious faiths with which they do not agree. Similarly, church properties should share in the burden of public revenues and should not be exempt from taxation.<sup>46</sup>

*A Statement in Defense of Secularism* declares,

American democracy draws its special vitality from the First Amendment, which incorporates the principle of a separation of church and state. In essence, the United States is a secular republic; this means that the government cannot establish a religion. It cannot favor religion over non-religion.<sup>47</sup>

The American Founders are often credited with creating a separation of church and state. The First Amendment reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."<sup>48</sup> Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association which gave Jefferson's interpretation of the First Amendment.<sup>49</sup> In that letter, the third President of the United States wrote,

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> *In Defense of Secularism*.

<sup>48</sup> Constitution of the United States, Amendment I.

<sup>49</sup> Steve Mount, "Jefferson's Wall of Separation Letter," The U. S. Constitution Online, <http://www.usconstitution.net/jeffwall.html> (accessed October 7, 2005).

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man & his god [*sic*], that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reference that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state.<sup>50</sup>

The student first noted why secular humanists desire a separation of church and state. First, they favor such separation, for they do not believe in Deity. They have said, “We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of new thought.”<sup>51</sup> In *Humanist Manifesto II*, they wrote

As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.<sup>52</sup>

Adolf Grunbaum, a secular humanist and the Andrew Mellon Professor of Philosophy of Science, Research Professor of Psychiatry, and chair of the center for Philosophy of Science at the University of Pittsburg said, “I have remained a lifelong atheist for two reasons: I do not know of any cogent argument for the existence of God, and I think there is telling evidence against it.”<sup>53</sup> Second, since they do not believe in the Divine, secular humanists want to be fully free from any divine obligations. “Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.”<sup>54</sup>

We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common. But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but, as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full

<sup>50</sup> Thom Jefferson, “Letter to the Danbury Baptist Association.” January 1, 1802. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>51</sup> *Humanist Manifesto I*, Sixth.

<sup>52</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

<sup>53</sup> Adolf Grunbaum, “My Exodus to Secular Humanism. (Brief Article),” *Free Inquiry* 19 (1999): 25.

<sup>54</sup> *Humanist Manifesto I*, Sixth.

potentialities. Such institutions, creeds, and rituals often impede the will to serve others. Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage.<sup>55</sup>

*In Defense of Secularism* declares

We regret Clinton’s repeated statements that “freedom of religion doesn’t mean freedom from religion,” which seem to defend the propriety of treating the non-religious as second-class citizens. We question his stated preference for spiritual leap-taking in place of “some purely rational solution of a problem.” On the contrary, we submit that if America discards rationality we are truly rudderless, helpless against sectarian strife when differing groups may seek to impose their peculiar spiritual visions on American life.<sup>56</sup>

Third, humanists remind their readers of the disaster wrought in the name of religion. For example, “The lessons of history are clear: wherever one religion or ideology is established and given a dominant position in the state, minority opinions are in jeopardy.”<sup>57</sup>

In turning to a Christian response, the student emphasized that God, not man, establishes government. When Nebuchadnezzar was filled with pride, a voice from heaven told him, “You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes” (Dan. 4:32). Paul told the Roman congregation, “Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God” (Rom. 13:1). Such biblical statements stand in sharp contrast to the American heritage.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, *deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed*.<sup>58</sup>

The Preamble of the United States Constitution reads,

<sup>55</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

<sup>56</sup> *In Defense of Secularism*.

<sup>57</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Declaration of Independence. Emphasis added.

We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.<sup>59</sup>

The student then turned attention to the purpose of God ordained civil authorities.<sup>60</sup>

God expects governments to punish wrongdoers. Speaking of governmental authorities, Paul wrote, “He is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4). Peter exhorted his readers: “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right” (1 Pet. 2:13-14).

How should governments punish wrongdoers? First, governments need to base laws upon God’s standards. On this point, the wall of separation between church and state as popularly defined becomes quite problematic, for humanists do not want any religious basis for law; for example, they do not want abortion to be wrong because God values human life, they do not want homosexual marriage to be wrong because God says homosexuality is wrong, they do not want gambling to be wrong because of what God has said about greed. However, both Peter and Paul both speak of government’s punishing those who do wrong. How shall “wrong” be defined? Since “wrong” is used in the context of Scripture, should “wrong” not be defined by God’s standards?

Second, governments need to execute the death penalty. Such an ultimate price, according to many, denies dignity to condemned individuals. However, that penalty upholds the

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<sup>59</sup> Preamble of the United States Constitution. Emphasis added.

<sup>60</sup> important in the formulation of the student’s thinking are two works: Robert L. Waggoner, “Theism v. Secularism,” 48-63; and Dennis Woods, *Discipling the Nations* (Franklin, TN: Legacy Communications, 1996), 121-179.

dignity of man made in God's image. After the Deluge, God told Noah, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man" (Gen. 9:6). Governmental authorities do "not bear the sword for nothing" (Rom. 13:4). When Pilate reminded Jesus that he had power to crucify or release him, Jesus told Pilate, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (Jn. 19:11); Jesus, although he had committed no crime, recognized the state's right to put to death.

Third, governments need to require restitution, for such is a biblical principle. "If the stolen animal is found alive in his possession – whether ox or donkey or sheep – he must pay back double" (Ex. 22:4). "If men quarrel and one hits the other with a stone or with his fist and he does not die but is confined to bed, the one who struck the blow will not be held responsible if the other gets up and walks around outside with his staff; however, he must pay the injured man for the loss of his time and see that he is completely healed" (Ex. 21:19). After Jesus' entered his house, Zacchaeus said, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Lk. 19:8). The principle can also be seen from what Paul said concerning thieves: "He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need" (Eph. 4:28).

Governments not only exist to punish the wicked, but they are also to reward the righteous. "Rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you" (Rom. 13:3). Governors are sent by the king "to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Pet. 2:14).

Governments need to reward the righteous through keeping law and order. Paul urged Christians to pray “for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Tim. 2:2). In order to provide believers the opportunity to live “peaceful and quiet lives,” governments need to provide an active, well-trained police force and provide for the national defense.

Governments also need to reward the righteous through fair taxation. Christians must pay their appropriate share of taxes; Jesus said, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s” (Mt. 22:21). However, taxes must not be used for activities which Scripture has not authorized. God has only authorized government to punish wrongdoing and reward the righteous; in other words, the administration of justice is the only God-ordained function of civil government. Therefore, Christians’ taxes should only go to the administration of justice, not welfare, government subsidies, and the like.

*Sunday Night November 13, 2005.* The student’s fifth lesson dealt with the idea of freedom as espoused by secular humanists. He demonstrated freedom’s importance to humanists with three quotes. The first two quotes came from *Humanist Manifesto II*:

To enhance freedom and dignity the individual must experience a full range of *civil liberties* in all societies. This includes freedom of speech and the press, political democracy, the legal right of opposition to governmental policies, fair judicial process, religious liberty, freedom of association, and artistic, scientific and cultural freedom. It also includes a recognition of an individual’s right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide. We oppose the increasing invasion of privacy, by whatever means, in both totalitarian and democratic societies.<sup>61</sup>

Again, the document reads

We are committed to an open and democratic society. We must extend *participatory democracy* in its true sense to the economy, the school, the family, the workplace, and voluntary associations. Decision-making must be decentralized to include wide-spread involvement of people at all levels – social, political, and economic. All persons should have a voice in developing the values and goals that determine their lives. Institutions

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<sup>61</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Seventh.

should be responsive to expressed desires and needs. The conditions of work, education, devotion, and play should be humanized. Alienating forces should be modified or eradicated and bureaucratic structures should be held to a minimum. People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations.<sup>62</sup>

Kurtz wrote in *A Secular Humanist Declaration*,

As democratic secularists, we consistently defend the ideal of freedom, not only freedom of conscience and belief from those ecclesiastical, political, and economic interests that seek to repress them, but genuine political liberty, democratic decision-making based upon majority rule, and respect for minority rights and the rule of law.<sup>63</sup>

Freedom is a biblical concept. God gave man free will by allowing man to choose for himself how he could act. Civil liberty is also a biblical idea. The Israelites were to “consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants” (Lev. 25:10). During the Year of Jubilee, indentured servants were to be freed (Lev. 25:39-43). Paul also wrote to the Corinthians, “Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you – although if you can gain your freedom, do so” (1 Cor. 7:21).

Because God has given man free will, Christians dare not impose their beliefs on others. They cannot impose their beliefs, for God himself was not willing to impose his standard of right and wrong on humanity. But, because Christians should not impose their beliefs on others does not mean that they should do nothing. God’s children have a God-given responsibility to speak out about moral issues. Christians should be more than willing to engage individuals in dialogue and seek to persuade them of the truthfulness of Christianity, but not coerce them into accepting truth.

The aims of their humanist freedom are misguided. According to *Humanist Manifesto II*, freedom includes “a recognition of an individual’s right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.”<sup>64</sup> The secular humanists’ support of euthanasia can be seen in a recent press

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Eighth.

<sup>63</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 13.

<sup>64</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Seventh.

release dealing with the Oregon right-do-die law before the United States Supreme Court. The statement read

Aggressively challenged by the Bush Administration, the Oregon law, by aiming to provide comfort to the terminally ill, and by giving doctors latitude in making the dying process as comfortable as possible for their patients, makes death with dignity a reality. “This is not an issue of the ‘right to die,’ it is about comfort through the living years and providing the right to reasonable self-determination to those in unyielding pain during the last stages of their life,” said Roy Seckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association.<sup>65</sup>

Because the student had dealt with euthanasia following Terri Schiavo’s death, he saw no reason to deal specifically with the issue at this point in the lesson.

The root problem seems to be that the humanists want to throw off ethical constraints and say, “Whatever I have the freedom to do is the right thing to do.” That, however, is a gross misuse of freedom. Individuals legally have the right to engage in many activities: adultery, alcohol abuse, pornography, and the like. However, legal freedom – even free will as given by God – does not make an activity right. Paul told the Galatians, “You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the [flesh]; rather, serve one another in love” (Gal. 5:13). The student realizes Paul spoke of religious freedom, namely, freedom from the Law of Moses. However, the principle is that individuals need to use freedom responsibly.

The desire for democratic decision-making undermines God-given authority. The student reminded the congregation of the statements given above from *Humanist Manifesto II* and *A Secular Humanist Declaration* concerning democratic decision-making. “In a democracy the will of the people is supreme.”<sup>66</sup> Scripture does not endorse the idea of a democracy but a republic. In a republic, the people choose representatives who then make law.<sup>67</sup> When Moses appointed judges over the people, he told the people, “Choose some wise, understanding and

<sup>65</sup> American Humanist Association, “Religious Freedom at Risk in Death with Dignity Case,” American Humanist Association, <http://www.americanhumanist.org/press/DeathWithDignity.SC.php> (accessed October 8, 2005).

<sup>66</sup> Woods, *Disciplining*, 11.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you” (Deut. 1:13). When the Grecian Jews were complaining that their widows were being neglected, the Twelve told the church, “Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them” (Acts 6:3).

Secular humanists want to extend democratic rule far too much; “We must extend *participatory democracy* in its true sense to the economy, the school, the family, the workplace, and voluntary associations.”<sup>68</sup> Schools cannot function with participatory democracy. Are teachers to take a vote among their students as to whether or not homework should be done? Should teachers take a vote among their students as to whether 2 plus 2 equals 4 or 5? Families cannot function with participatory democracy. Would the children have an equal vote with their parents?<sup>69</sup> Should parents take a vote to see what moral values are held in their home? Should parents take a vote to see whether kids should get to play unsupervised next to a busy highway? Humanists also want participatory democracy in “voluntary associations.” Would they include the church as a voluntary association needing participatory democracy? Would congregations take votes as to whether or not they needed to immerse or sprinkle for baptism? Would congregations take votes as to whether to continue the practice of a cappella singing or to introduce instrumental music?

Secular humanists also desire freedom through making the autonomous individual the fundamental unity in society. They have written

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 personality. We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility. Although science can account for the

<sup>68</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Eighth.

<sup>69</sup> Humanists “would give children authority equal to that of their parents in all family matters,” Robert L. Waggoner, “Sound the Alarm: The Goals of Humanism,” <http://biblicaltheism.com/goals.htm> (accessed October 9, 2005).

causes of behavior, the possibilities of individual freedom of choice exist in human life and should be increased.<sup>70</sup>

Freedom through individual autonomy destroys the family as society's basic unit.<sup>71</sup> Because individual freedom involves pursuing one's own sexual interests, families are becoming dramatically different; for example, many people today live together without marriage, many people live together as homosexuals, and many seek their sexual fulfillment outside of marriage. Through individual freedom, husbands would no longer be the heads of their families, nor would wives be subject to their husbands. Through individual freedom, parents would not have authority over their children.

Individual freedom is not the highest achievement one can attain. The church includes individuals who have chosen to give up their autonomy and bind themselves together. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Paul's statement sounds drastically different than any idea of autonomous individuals; individuals cannot do whatever they choose, but they must consider how their behavior will affect others. Paul made that point in Romans 14:13-18:

Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

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<sup>70</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Fifth.

<sup>71</sup> Waggoner, "Sound the Alarm."

According to secular humanists, “People are more important than decalogues, rules, proscriptions, or regulations.”<sup>72</sup> Christians, however, recognize that God’s laws are not given arbitrarily, but that they serve an important role for man. About the Sabbath commandment, Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mk. 2:27). In other words, God did not arbitrarily decide to give a Sabbath commandment, but he knew man needed rest. Speaking of the Old Testament, Paul said, “I would not have known what sin was except through the law” (Rom. 7:7). Although Paul speaks specifically of the Old Testament law, an important principle is at work here: God’s law serves to inform man of God’s moral standards. The law, then, allows man to know what is right and wrong and what he needs to do to have fellowship with God. Concerning law, Paul told Timothy

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and lairs and perjurers – and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me (1 Tim. 1:8-11).

Law serves to restrain the actions of the ungodly. Again, an important principle is at work from the Old Testament law: the laws of this nation and state serve to some extent to restrain ungodly behavior. Therefore, laws have been enacted against murder, embezzlement, thievery, and the like.

*Sunday Night November 20, 2005.* The student dealt with ethics as advocated by secular humanists. *A Declaration of Secular Humanism* stated, “Ethics was developed as a branch of human knowledge long before religionists proclaimed their moral systems based upon divine authority.”<sup>73</sup> Again, the document declares

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<sup>72</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Eighth.

<sup>73</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 14.

For secular humanists, ethical conduct is, or should be, judged by critical reason, and their goal is to develop autonomous and responsible individuals, capable of making their own choices in life, based upon an understanding of human behavior. Morality that is not God-based need not be antisocial, subjective, or promiscuous, nor need it lead to the breakdown of moral standards. Although we believe in tolerating diverse lifestyles and social manners, we do not think they are immune to criticism. Nor do we believe that any one church should impose its views of moral virtue and sin, sexual conduct, marriage, divorce, birth control, or abortion, or legislate them for the rest of society.

As secular humanists we believe in the central importance of the value of human happiness here and now. We are opposed to Absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered, in the course of ethical deliberation.<sup>74</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto II* states

We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is [*sic*] *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems [*sic*] from human needs and interests. 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.<sup>75</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto III* states

Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience. Humanists ground values in human welfare shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns and extended to the global ecosystem and beyond. We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.<sup>76</sup>

Kurtz has written

Humanists have confidence in human beings, and they believe that the only bases for morality are human experience and human needs. Humanists are opposed to all forms of supernaturalistic and authoritarian religion. Many humanists believe that scientific intelligence and critical reason can assist in reconstructing our moral values. Finally, humanism is humanitarian, in that it is concerned with the good life and social justice as moral ideals.<sup>77</sup>

Corliss Lamont declared

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>75</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Third.

<sup>76</sup> *Humanist Manifesto III*.

<sup>77</sup> Kurtz, *In Defense*, 33.

Humanist ethics is opposed to the puritanical prejudice against pleasure and desire that marks the Western tradition of morality. Men and women have profound wants and needs of an emotional and physical character, the fulfillment of which is an essential ingredient in the good life. Contempt for or suppression of normal desires may result in their discharge in surreptitious, coarse, or abnormal ways. While it is true that uncontrolled human desires are a prime cause of evil in the world, it is equally true that human desires directed by reason toward socially useful goals are a prime foundation of the good.<sup>78</sup>

*A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics* affirmed

Moral codes that prevail today are often rooted in ancient parochial and tribal loyalties. Absolutistic moral systems emerged from the values of the rural and nomadic societies of the past; they provide little useful guidance for our post-modern world. We need to draw on the best moral wisdom of the past, but we also need to develop a new, reversionary ethics that employs rational methods of inquiry appropriate to the world of the future, an ethics that respects the dignity and freedom of each person but that also expresses a larger concern for humanity as a whole.<sup>79</sup>

What evidence do the humanists have that ethics developed as a branch of philosophy prior to the claim of divine authority? Before woman was formed, God told Adam, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Gen. 3:16-17). God was the first Being to assert ethical principles.

The student next explored the humanist desire to have ethics based on critical reason. God gave reason;<sup>80</sup> therefore, reason has a place. However, humans dare not elevate human reason above what it can accomplish. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (Prov. 14:12). “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor. 1:20). “The foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” (1 Cor. 1:25).

<sup>78</sup> Lamont, *Philosophy of Humanism*, 229-30; quoted in David A Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1991).

<sup>79</sup> *A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*, Part IV, Paragraph 1.

<sup>80</sup> Prov. 2:1-11; “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. though it cost all you have, get understanding” (Prov. 4:7).

How many individuals have reasoned and made some of the most foolish decisions imaginable? In 1980, Bill Gates offered to license an operating system to IBM 48 hours before he actually had an operating system.<sup>81</sup> Within 48 hours, Gates had obtained the rights to QDOS for \$50,000, but Gates failed to inform QDOS's owner that he planned to resell the system. Gates renamed the system DOS and sold it to IBM for \$80,000, but he retained the rights to sell the system to other companies. No one could conceive of someone wanting an IBM computer made by someone other than IBM, but within a year, the company could not sell enough computers and Gates had sold MS-DOS to some 50 additional companies.

What would have occurred if the managers at IBM could have seen where things would have ended? Would they really have allowed Gates the right to sell MS-DOS to other companies? Would the term "IBM compatible" ever been introduced to the English language? God knows what is ahead; he knows what is in man's best interest. Thus, he has informed us of the way man needs to act.

Humanists, however, claim that morality needs to divine sanction. Kurtz, for example, wrote

*Ethical principles cannot be deduced from the concept of God.* First, the existence of God is questionable. Second, not all men and women of different cultures share the same religious beliefs. Third, granting the fatherhood of God is no guarantee that uniform moral codes will emerge. Theists have "deduced" any number of moral codes at variance with those held by other believers. For instance, witness the sharp differences of opinion held by Jews, Christians, and Muslims regarding marriage and divorce.<sup>82</sup>

Humanists, however fail to recognize that human morality flows from God's character; actions are right or wrong based on who God is. Francis Schaffer said

One of the distinctions of the Judeo-Christian God is that not all things are the same to Him. That at first may sound rather trivial, but in reality it is one of the most profound

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<sup>81</sup> This illustration comes from Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

<sup>82</sup> Kurtz, *Forbidden Fruit*, 72.

things one can say about the Judeo-Christian God. He exists; He has a character; and not all things are the same to Him. Some things conform to His character, and some are opposed to His character.<sup>83</sup>

Scripture concurs with Schaffer's assessment. "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:1-2); in other words, Christians are to think on heavenly things, for God dwells there. "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

God has told man what is right and wrong. Several passages of Scripture detail activities which do not conform to God's character. "They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents: they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless" (Rom. 1:29-31). "The acts of the [flesh] are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). No matter how much humanists claim that ethics need no divine sanction, God has spelled out quite clearly what he desires.

Secular humanists base ethics upon the individual. "We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is [*sic*] *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems [*sic*] from human needs and interests. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life."<sup>84</sup> "Humanists have confidence in human beings, and they

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<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 238.

<sup>84</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Third.

believe that the only bases for morality are human experience and human needs. Humanists are opposed to all forms of supernaturalistic and authoritarian religion.”<sup>85</sup>

What the humanists advocate is antinomianism, i.e., each person doing his or her own thing. That philosophy has been tried before – “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (Judg. 21:25). If ethics are autonomous and situational, how can we have any system of law? If there is no absolute right and wrong, how can the state condemn one for any behavior? How could they charge me with murder if I commit murder in my own best interests? How could they charge me with embezzlement if that embezzlement is in my own best interests?

Humanists claim that objective moral standards come through moral reasoning. “We are opposed to Absolutist morality, yet we maintain that objective standards emerge, and ethical values and principles may be discovered, in the course of ethical deliberation.”<sup>86</sup> There are a couple problems with that view. First, if “objective standards emerge,” can ethics really be autonomous and situational? Second, what if what one individual believes is an objective moral standard conflicts with what another believes is an objective moral standard? Whose reasoning shall determine who is right?

Humanist ethics seek for individuals to have a good life at present. “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.”<sup>87</sup> “Humanism is humanitarian, in that it is concerned with the good life and social justice as moral ideals.”<sup>88</sup>

Life has nothing to do with striving “for the good life, here and now.” Joshua told the children of Israel in his farewell address, “Now fear the LORD and serve him with all

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<sup>85</sup> Kurtz, *In Defense*, 33.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>87</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Third.

<sup>88</sup> Kurtz, *In Defense*, 33.

faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:14). “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). Some might think saying life is solely about honoring God would make life too restrictive and unfair, yet God made man for his glory and honor.

Life is far more than the here and now. To those who served the Lord, Jesus said, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” (Mt. 25:34). This life does not compare with the glory to be given the children of God – “Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Cor. 4:17). There is also a place of eternal torment for those who have not served God. “This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 13:49-50). For those who refused to give to the needy, the King said, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41).

*Sunday Night November 27, 2005.* The Alum Creek Church of Christ had a singing and prayer service.

*Sunday Night December 4, 2005.* The student preached a lesson entitled “The Secular Humanist Concept of Moral Education.” The student began by demonstrating the desire by secular humanist to teach morality in the classroom. Kurtz declared

We believe that moral development should be cultivated in children and young adults. We do not believe that any particular sect can claim important values as their exclusive property; hence it is the duty of public education to deal with these values. Accordingly, we support moral education in the schools that is designed to develop an appreciation for moral virtues, intelligence, and the building of character. We wish to encourage wherever possible the growth of moral awareness and the capacity for free choice and an

understanding of the consequences thereof. We do not think it is moral to baptize infants, to confirm adolescents, or to impose a religious creed on young people before they are able to consent. Although children should learn about the history of religious moral practices, these young minds should not be indoctrinated in a faith before they are mature enough to evaluate the merits for themselves. It should be noted that secular humanism is not so much a specific morality as it is a method for the explanation and discovery of rational moral principles.<sup>89</sup>

A journal article on secular humanism in public education stated, “Contemporary language arts, social studies and health education often stress the use of human reasoning in the study of values. Students are encouraged to create, clarify and support their own values.”<sup>90</sup> Kurtz has written

Ethical education should be taught in the public schools as well; but often this kind of education is threatened by sectarian religionists, particularly in pluralistic societies where what is to be taught is open to incessant controversy. Conservatives maintain that we should teach our children reading, writing, and arithmetic. But why not the moral decencies as well? Surely, no matter what our religious affiliations, we share a common core of moral principles. . . . Some parents fear autonomy of choice or independent thinking in their children. They wish their children to follow their guidelines and not stray from the faith of their fathers. They fear that their children may reject their views on sexual morality, abortion, or euthanasia. . . . The humanist replies that children have a right to know and a right to develop their own conceptions of a good life, even if their parents might disagree.<sup>91</sup>

The student began his refutation of this tenet by showing that no group can claim values as their exclusive property, for truth belongs to God, not man. “Guide me in *your truth* and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (Ps. 25:5).<sup>92</sup> The psalmist referred to God as the God of truth – “Redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth” (Ps. 31:5). “Your righteousness is everlasting and your law is true” (Ps. 119:142).

Because truth comes from God, the Son of God possesses great truth. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and

<sup>89</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 16-17.

<sup>90</sup> Rodney B. Farmer, “Secular Humanism: The Newest Controversy in Education,” *College Student Journal* 16 (1982): 160.

<sup>91</sup> Kurtz, *Eupraxophy*, 141.

<sup>92</sup> Emphasis added.

Only, who came from the Father full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). Jesus told Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life” (Jn. 14:6). Paul told the Ephesians, “Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:21).

God has, however, placed that truth into men’s hands. Speaking about his apostleship, Paul wrote, “We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the light of God” (2 Cor. 4:2). Christians are to be speaking the truth – “Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ” (Eph. 4:15).

Christians have an obligation to speak the truth of God in sharing their faith with others. Jesus told the disciples, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:18-19). In another account of the so-called Great Commission, Jesus said to the apostles, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus intended the apostles to be eye-witnesses and to offer personal testimony of what he taught and did. While modern Christians cannot witness in the same sense as the apostles, they can proclaim the truthfulness of the apostles’ testimony.

Some individuals will not like truth’s proclamation. “The time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). The old cliché states, “The truth hurts,” and biblical truth greatly undermines secular humanist tenets. Biblical truth says that individuals are free to believe whatever they choose, but that not everything they choose to

believe is true. Biblical truth says ethics are based upon God's standards, not critical intelligence.

Saints of old spoke truth in spite of opposition. When the Sanhedrin told Peter and John not to proclaim the name of Jesus, the apostles replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20). The Apostle John was exiled on Patmos for his testimony to truth – "I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 1:9).

The student then explored whether or not public education was the proper medium to teach values. One way or another, values will be taught in school.

Participants on all sides of the debate, as well as courts and legal scholars, agree that a "valueless" education is not possible. In fact, the very nature of the public school environment makes it impossible *not* to convey values, whether consciously or unconsciously. Purpel and Ryan, authors of several books on the subject of moral education, note that the sheer number of hours a child spends in the classroom is a significant argument: "It is inconceivable for the schools to take [a] child for six or seven hours a day, for 180 days a year, from the time he is six to the time he is eighteen, and not affect the way he thinks about moral issues."<sup>93</sup>

Although public education will deal with values, the public schools are the proper medium for teaching appropriate values. As demonstrated above, proper ethics come from God's character; however, God has been removed from public education. In 1962, the United States Supreme Court in *Engel v. Vitale* ruled school prayer to be unconstitutional.<sup>94</sup> The following year, the Supreme Court ruled in *Abington School District v. Schempp* that Bible

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<sup>93</sup> Barbara B. Gaddy, T. William Hall, and Robert J. Marzano, *School Wars: Resolving Our Conflicts over Religion and Values* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996), 207-208.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer were unconstitutional.<sup>95</sup> In 1980, the court ruled in *Stone v. Graham* that the Ten Commandments could not be posted in public schools.<sup>96</sup>

Do Christian parents really want values education in the public schools? Do Christian parents want their children taught, as secular humanists teach, that individuals must use their own reasoning to decide what makes sense to them? Do Christian parents want their children to learn that homosexuality is the same morally as heterosexuality and that whether or not to engage in pre-marital sex is a decision that they themselves should make? Do Christian parents really want their children to learn that one should tell the truth, but he may lie under certain circumstances?

The student turned attention to the claim of the immorality of teaching children religion. Humanists really talk out of both sides of their mouths when they claim parents should not train their children in religion. On the one hand, they claim that parents need to send their children to school and allow the schools to teach the children values. On the other hand, humanists claim that parents have a moral obligation not to teach their children religious ideas. What the humanists really are saying is: "Don't you teach your children values. You send them to the public schools and allow the public schools to teach them our values." What blatant hypocrisy!

In concluding the lesson, the student turned to look at one commendable statement from the humanists in regard to moral education. There is great good in the ideal of values "clarification." Values need to be clarified and supported. If Christians do not know what they believe nor why they believe such, they will find great difficulty in attempting to do the right thing. Scripture teaches Christians to understand why they believe what they believe. "In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Robert L. Waggoner, "The Humanization of America in Culture, Education, and Law." <http://www.biblicaltheism.com/humanameri.htm> (accessed on October 28, 2005).

to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness, and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15). Unless Christians know what they believe and why they believe as they do, they cannot hope to give reason for the hope within them.

*Sunday Night December 11, 2005.* The student delivered a lesson entitled “The Secular Humanist Concept of Religious Skepticism.” Concerning religious skepticism, Kurtz declared

As secular humanists, we are generally skeptical about supernatural claims. We recognize the importance of religious experience: that experience that redirects and gives meaning to the lives of human beings. We deny, however, that such experiences have anything to do with the supernatural. We are doubtful of traditional views of God and divinity. . . . We find that traditional views of the existence of God either are meaningless, have not yet been demonstrated to be true, or are tyrannically exploitative. . . . [Secular humanists] reject the idea that God has intervened miraculously in history or revealed himself to a chosen few, or that he can save or redeem sinners. They believe that men and women are free and are responsible for their own destinies and that they cannot look toward some transcendent Being for salvation. We reject the divinity of Jesus, the divine mission of Moses, Mohammed, and other latter-day prophets and saints of the various sects and denominations. We do not accept as true the literal interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, the Koran, or other allegedly sacred religious documents, however important they may be as literature. . . . In spite of the fact that human beings have found religions to be uplifting and a source of solace, we do not find their theological claims to be true. Religions have made negative as well as positive contributions toward the development of human civilization. Although they have helped to build hospitals and schools and, at their best, have encouraged the spirit of love and charity, many have also caused human suffering by being intolerant of those who did not accept their dogmas or creeds. Some religions have been fanatical and repressive, narrowing human hopes, limiting aspirations, and precipitating religious wars and violence. While religions have no doubt offered comfort to the bereaved and dying by holding forth the promise of an immortal life, they have also aroused morbid fear and dread. We have found no convincing evidence that there is a separable “soul” or that it exists before birth or survives death.<sup>97</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto I* declares, “Humanism recognizes 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 with his social heritage.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 17-19.

<sup>98</sup> *Humanist Manifesto I*, Fourth.

Again, that document declares, “We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of ‘new thought.’”<sup>99</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II* says

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. Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so. . . . We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.

We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common. But we reject those features of traditional religious morality that deny humans a full appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities. Traditional religions often offer solace to humans, but as often, they inhibit humans from helping themselves or experiencing their full potentialities. Such institutions, creeds, and rituals often impede the will to serve others. Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than independence, obedience rather than affirmation, fear rather than courage.<sup>100</sup>

The *Humanist Manifesto II* again states,

Promises of immoral 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. Modern science discredits such historic concepts as the ‘ghost in the machine’ and the ‘separable soul.’ Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.<sup>101</sup>

The student began a critique of religious skepticism by exploring the philosophical problems inherent in the view. The student first dealt with the claim that religions have done a great disservice to mankind. Granted, many religious movements have greatly harmed mankind. Because of the beliefs of some Islamic fanatics, some 3,000 American citizens were killed on September 11, 2001. Because of the beliefs of some Islamic and Christian fanatics, the Crusades cost many lives. Because of the beliefs of some, the Spanish Inquisition sought to impose beliefs by force.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Sixth.

<sup>100</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., Second.

However, neither secular humanists nor the fanatics mentioned above properly understood Scripture. Jesus never advocated violence. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said,

You have heard that it was said, “Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.” But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5:43-48).

Jesus practiced those words when his own life was in jeopardy. When Peter cut off Malchus’ ear, Jesus said, “Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” (Mt. 26:52-53). Jesus could have stopped his crucifixion by force, but he chose not to do so, and he even healed one of those who had come to arrest him.

New Testament writers also taught that one should not take matters into his own hands. “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath” (Rom. 12:17-19). The author of Hebrews exhorted his readers: “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy” (Heb. 12:14).

Just because some have used religion to create an atmosphere of strife does not negate Jesus’ teachings. The truthfulness of what Jesus taught does not depend on how well one obeys his teachings. What Jesus taught is true whether or not individuals obey.

Next, the student discussed the claim that placing divine law above human needs and interest does a disservice to mankind. Clearly, if one wants to do whatever he pleases, divine laws which instruct him how to live and think are going to do him a great disservice. However, divine law serves a great purpose. Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the

Sabbath” (Mk. 2:27); God understood that man needed rest, and thus he created the Sabbath, not to restrict man but for man’s own good. Law also teaches right from wrong: “I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have know what coveting really was if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet’” (Rom. 7:7). Divine commands are also necessary to restrain the actions of the evil: “We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers” (1 Tim. 1:9).

The student then focused on the claim that the existence of the supernatural “is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race.”<sup>102</sup> Claiming that God is irrelevant allows individuals to ignore what God has said. However, Scripture does have all the answers for this life. “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be *thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).<sup>103</sup> “His divine power has given us *everything we need for life and godliness* through our knowledge of him who called us” (2 Pet. 1:3).<sup>104</sup> Just how relevant is Scripture? What if a neighbor wrongs a believer? Scripture tells the believer what action to take (e.g., Mt. 18:15-17). How should a believer treat his or her spouse? Scripture provides guidelines (Eph. 5:22-33). Should the believer do 75 in a 65 zone? Scripture gives the answer (Rom. 13:1).

The student then focused on the claim that, “Nature may indeed be broader and deeper than we now know; any new discoveries, however, will but enlarge our knowledge of the natural.”<sup>105</sup> That statement is terribly egotistical. What the humanists say is “We don’t have all knowledge, but we’re intelligent enough to know that there is no God. Whatever else we learn,

<sup>102</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

<sup>103</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>104</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>105</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, First.

we will not find God.” How can the humanists be so certain? The only way secular humanists could be certain there is no God was if they had all knowledge, something they themselves admit they lack.

The student turned attention to evidence for God’s existence. He began the discussion of God’s existence by speaking of man’s moral capacity.<sup>106</sup> Although some deny the existence of absolute morality, nearly every society has some moral standards which are considered unchangeable. For example, most all societies would consider murder morally wrong, at least murder contrasted with killing in war, execution, and the like. But, why should societies consider murder wrong if there is not a moral absolute which makes the taking of life wrong? Cats think nothing of killing a snake or a bird or a mouse. Why should the taking of human life be viewed any differently if humans have not been endowed with a moral compass?

The student then discussed the beginning of the universe.<sup>107</sup> One is confronted with only two options for the universe’s existence: the universe began at a set point in time, or the universe is eternal. But, the universe had to have a beginning. The amount of hydrogen in the cosmos requires a beginning.<sup>108</sup> Stars, including the sun, burn hydrogen. The earth’s sun is only about halfway through a star’s lifecycle. Stars cannot burn hydrogen forever, yet hydrogen abounds in the universe. Thus, the universe could have not existed forever, or hydrogen would have been depleted.

The second law of thermodynamics also requires a beginning.<sup>109</sup> The second law of thermodynamics says that in a closed system, things go from an orderly state to a disorderedly state. In other words, things run down. If an individual buys a brand new car, all shiny and

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<sup>106</sup> William C. Davis, “Theistic Arguments,” in *Reason for the Hope Within* ed by Michael J. Murray (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 20-46.

<sup>107</sup> See William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994) for a discussion of the cosmological argument.

<sup>108</sup> John Clayton, *The Source* With Nils Jansma (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 2001).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

perfect, what will that car look like in ten years? The car is not going to run as well, the car is going to rust, and the car is going to deteriorate. However, a car is not a closed system – gas is put into the vehicle, the oil is changed, and new tires are added. From an atheistic standpoint, the universe is a closed system (i.e., there is nothing outside the cosmos to act upon it). If that is the case and the universe has existed forever, the universe should be totally dark, cold, and devoid of all energy. Yet that is not the case (although the universe is slowing down). From a Christian standpoint, of course, the universe is not a closed system – God is both outside and above the universe.

The Big Bang also requires a beginning.<sup>110</sup> In 1929, Edwin Hubble discovered that light from distant galaxies appeared redder than the light should have appeared; Hubble concluded that the light appeared redder, for the galaxies were moving away from earth.<sup>111</sup> Hubble continued his investigation and discovered that not only is the universe expanding, but the cosmos is expanding the same in all directions. The logical conclusion is that if one goes back far enough in time – probably about 15 billion years – he comes to a point where absolutely nothing exists.

But, could the Big Bang have been the result of forces which have nothing to do with God? In other words, could the Big Bang have just occurred? Obviously, the atheist has no other alternative, and there are many who take that route. Yet when one examines the universe, he has difficulty in arriving at a conclusion other than that the universe was designed for the purpose of man's existence. The solar system is just the right position in the Milky Way for life to exist.<sup>112</sup> The earth's solar system is outside the central bulge of the galaxy; however, if the

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Craig, *Reasonable Faith*.

<sup>112</sup> Clayton, *The Source*.

earth were closer to the galaxy's center, the gravitational forces would be far too great for the solar system to exist.

The earth's distance from the sun is absolutely crucial to life's existence.<sup>113</sup> The planet Venus is much like the Earth; however, Venus is closer to the sun and has a slow, backward rotation. The planet's proximity to the sun and her rotation have resulted in a layer of sulfuric acid hovering over the planet and ground temperatures near 900 degrees Fahrenheit. Water is extremely crucial for the survival of life. Yet, if the Earth were any closer to the sun, all water would be vapor. If the Earth were any further from the sun, all water would be ice. In either case, life would be impossible.

The earth's tilt is also absolutely crucial to life's existence.<sup>114</sup> The Northern Hemisphere is tilted toward the sun when the Earth is furthest from the sun (the Northern Hemisphere's summer) and tilted away from the sun when the Earth is closest to the sun (the Northern Hemisphere's winter). Why is that significant? Most of the landmass on Earth is in the Northern Hemisphere, and the Southern Hemisphere is largely covered by water. Water absorbs and releases heat more slowly than land. Thus, as the earth is closest to the sun, most of the Earth's water reflects the heat, and what is not reflected is transported to the colder Northern Hemisphere by way of the ocean currents. If this were not the case, winters would be much colder and summers much hotter.

The electron's electric charge is also absolutely crucial to life's existence.<sup>115</sup> If the electron's electric charge were only slightly different, stars would have been unable to burn hydrogen and helium, or the stars would have exploded. About the electron's electric charge, Stephen Hawking, one of the foremost theoretical physicists of the current age, said, "One can

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Stephen Hawking, *The Illustrated A Brief History of Time Updated and Expanded* ed. (New York, Bantam Books, 1996).

take this either as evidence of a divine purpose in Creation and the choice of the laws of science or as support for the strong anthropic principle.”<sup>116</sup>

*Sunday Night December 18, 2005.* The student presented a lesson entitled “The Secular Humanist Concept of Reason.” Concerning reason, *A Secular Humanist Declaration* says

We view with concern the current attack by nonsecularists on reason and science. We are committed to the uses of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence in developing knowledge and testing claims to truth. Since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing inquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction. Although not so naïve as to believe that reason and science can easily solve all human problems, we nonetheless contend that they can make a major contribution to human knowledge and can be of benefit to humankind. We know of no better substitute for the cultivation of human intelligence.<sup>117</sup>

*A Statement in Defense of Secularism* declared, “Secular humanists are committed to the use of reason, compassion, and science to enhance the human condition in this life.”<sup>118</sup> *Humanist*

*Manifesto II* says

Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself. The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social science since the renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems. But reason must be tempered by humility, since no group has a monopoly of wisdom or virtue. Yet critical intelligence, infused by a sense of human caring, is the best method that humanity has for resolving problems. Reason should be balanced with compassion and empathy and the whole person fulfilled.<sup>119</sup>

The humanists seem to imply that Christianity and reason are opposed to one another. *A Secular Humanist Declaration* says, “We view with concern the current attack by nonsecularists on reason and science.”<sup>120</sup> Again they say, “Reason and intelligence are the most effective

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 160-161.

<sup>117</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 19-20.

<sup>118</sup> *A Statement In Defense of Secularism*.

<sup>119</sup> *Humanist Manifest II*, Fourth.

<sup>120</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 19.

instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself.”<sup>121</sup>

Contrary to secular humanist claims, reason and Christianity are not antithetical. God made man in his own image (Gen. 1:27). Certainly creation in God’s image involves reasoning ability. God has great knowledge and rationality. Isaiah queried, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and *his understanding no one can fathom*” (Is. 40:28).<sup>122</sup> God gave reasoning ability to man at the Creation. No other creature on Earth has reasoning comparable to man’s ability.

God has used man’s reasoning ability to further his purpose. Through Isaiah, God said, “‘Come now, let us reason together,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool’” (Is. 1:18). Since God appealed to reasoning, reasoning cannot be evil.

Certain passages of Scripture which place reasoning in a pejorative context. “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate” (1 Cor. 1:19). “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ” (Col. 2:8). If God created reasoning, why do these texts speak of reasoning in such a negative light? Simply because the reasoning of which Paul spoke was based upon human reasoning devoid of divine guidance.

There are numerous problems of the humanist concept of reason. First, the humanists place far too much emphasis on reason. Jeremiah declared, “I know, O LORD, that a man’s life

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<sup>121</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Fourth.

<sup>122</sup> Emphasis added

is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23). Humans may not realize their actual condition; Jesus said to the church at Laodicea, “You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17).

Several biblical characters did what made sense with their human faculties, but those decisions resulted in disaster. Solomon, for example, married Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Ki. 7:8). Solomon apparently made a politically expedient move in the marriage, for he made an alliance with a powerful nation. But, Solomon’s marriage resulted in disaster. Before the Israelites entered Canaan, Moses told God’s people, “Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods” (Deut. 7:3-4). Solomon’s case ended like Moses said it would: “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God” (1 Ki. 11:4).

Peter made a promise that made perfect sense; he told Jesus, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Mt. 26:33). Peter, of course, ended up denying the Lord and he even swore that he had no clue who the Nazarene fellow was. Peter’s problem was that he could see neither what the future held nor how weak he himself would prove to be.

Because human reasoning is not a sufficient guide, God has provided Scripture. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Ps. 119:105). “We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19).

Many individuals have relied on divine revelation rather than human reasoning to guide their behavior. When Abraham offered Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19), his act was anything but based on

human reason. From a human standpoint, Abraham's action made little sense. Isaac was Abraham's only son, the son whom he loved (Gen. 22:2). What would Abraham have told Sarah when he returned without Isaac? What would Abraham have told his neighbors when they asked what had happened with Isaac? What would Abraham's neighbors have thought of this religious fanatic? However, with divine revelation, Abraham's action makes perfect sense – he was willingly obeying the Lord of the universe.

Gideon made an extremely foolish decisions based on human reasoning (Judg. 7). Gideon had an army of 32,000 men (Judg. 7:3), but God had him narrow his army down to 300 (Judg. 7:7). Yet, with those 300 men, God through Gideon overtook the Midianites (Judg. 7:22-25). No earthly ruler would have made such a reasoned choice. But, Gideon acted as he did because of divine revelation.

Do modern Christians not act in many ways that make little sense to the world? Does the absence of instrumental music from the assembly really make sense apart from divine revelation? Does not having a woman preacher really make sense apart from divine revelation? Does Christian opposition to abortion, euthanasia, and other practices really make sense apart from divine revelation?

Because human reasoning is not a sufficient guide, not all truth can be known through human reasoning. The humanists certainly imply that anything which is true can be known through reason. “We are committed to the uses of the rational methods of inquiry, logic, and evidence in developing knowledge and testing claims to truth.”<sup>123</sup> “Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 19.

<sup>124</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Fourth.

However, human reasoning cannot provide all truth. Would Christians know that God is One yet is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by reason? Would Christians know that God is a God of love by human reason? Would Christians know that God is a holy God by human reason? Just because human faculties are unable to ascertain all truth does not mean inaccessible truth does not exist.

The humanists are somewhat in a bind in what they say concerning reason. Paul Kurtz said, “Since human beings are prone to err, we are open to the modification of all principles, including those governing inquiry, believing that they may be in need of constant correction.”<sup>125</sup> Since Kurtz admits that human beings are prone to error, how can he be so certain that the principles governing inquiry are not all in error? How does he know that everything he knows is not wrong?

*Humanist Manifesto II* calls for “the controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance,” to “be extended further in the solution of human problems.” Do people really want scientific methods influencing human problems? Francis Crick, for example said

We’ve just seen that the discussion as to how many people there should be in the world has now, as it were, become quite acceptable. It is not acceptable, at the moment, to discuss who should be the parents of the next generation, who should be born, and who should have children. There’s a general feeling that if we are all nice to each other and if everybody has 2.3 children, everything will pan out. I don’t think that is true. For good genetic reasons, even though you have more medical care, transplantation of organs, and all these things, it would be an unhealthy biological situation. Some group of people should decide that some people should have more children and some should have fewer. . . . You have to decide who is to be born.<sup>126</sup>

José M. Delgado of Yale University has been using sensors in the brains of monkeys and human epileptics to control their behavior. Delgado says that future society will be controlled by

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<sup>125</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 19-20

<sup>126</sup> Quoted in Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* Labret 50th Anniversary ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 234.

electrical stimulation in the brain.<sup>127</sup> Is that really the type of society that should be considered? Physicist J. D. Bernal predicted that after the rise of the proletariat and the rise of the classless society, humanity still had to go through one more stage before humans would truly reach utopia.<sup>128</sup> That stage? An aristocracy of scientific intelligence. Bernal even believes that scientists will evolve into a superior human species and leave humans behind. Is that truly progress?

*Sunday Night December 25, 2005.* The Alum Creek Church of Christ held a singing and prayer service on December 25, 2005.

*Sunday Night January 1, 2006.* The student presented a lesson entitled “The Secular Humanist Concept of Science and Technology.” *A Secular Humanist Declaration* says

We believe the scientific method, though imperfect, is still the most reliable way of understanding the world. Hence, we look to the natural, biological, social, and behavioral science for knowledge of the universe and man’s place within it. Modern astronomy and physics have opened up exciting new dimensions of the universe: they have enabled humankind to explore the universe by means of space travel. Biology and the social and behavioral science have expanded our understanding of human behavior. We are thus opposed in principle to any efforts to censor or limit scientific research without an overriding reason to do so.

While we are aware of, and oppose, the abuses of misapplied technology and its possible harmful consequences for the natural ecology of the human environment, we urge resistance to unthinking efforts to limit technological or scientific advances. We appreciate the great benefits that science and technology (especially basic and applied research) can bring to humankind, but we also recognize the need to balance scientific and technological advances with cultural explorations in art, music, and literature.<sup>129</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto II* says

Technology is a vital key to human progress and development. We deplore any neo-romantic efforts to condemn indiscriminately all technology and science or to counsel retreat from its further extension and use for the good of humankind. We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds. Technology must, however, be carefully judged by the consequences of its use; harmful

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Charles Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?* With Nancy Pearcey (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999).

<sup>129</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 20-21.

and destructive changes should be avoided. We are particularly disturbed when technology and bureaucracy control, manipulate, or modify human beings without their consent. Technological feasibility does not imply social or cultural desirability.<sup>130</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto III* declares, “Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis. Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies.”<sup>131</sup>

The student began his critique of the humanist concept of science and technology by asking, “Should we be afraid of science?” The above quotes certainly imply that Christians have every reason to fear science, for science and faith are incompatible. But, Christians have no reason whatsoever to fear science. God created the cosmos (Gen. 1:1); therefore, what do Christians have to fear from an honest investigation of the physical world?

Many amazing scientific discoveries were made by theists.<sup>132</sup> Louis Agassiz, “the father of glacial science,”<sup>133</sup> is remembered as the one who discovered the ice ages. However, his greatest contribution to science was probably as a zoologist and geologist who helped establish the field of paleontology; Agassiz referred to each species of animal or plant as a “thought of God.”<sup>134</sup> Francis Bacon is known as the “father of the scientific method”<sup>135</sup> of observation, hypothesis and experimentation. Bacon wrote, “No one should maintain that a man can search too far, or be too well studied in the book of God’s word or in the book of God’s works; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficiency in both.”<sup>136</sup> Isaac

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<sup>130</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixteenth.

<sup>131</sup> *Humanist Manifesto III*.

<sup>132</sup> Fred Heeren, *Show Me God: What the Message from Space is Telling Us About God* rev. ed. (Wheeling, IL: Day Star Publications, 1997). Heeren mentions 50 theists who were on the cutting edge of science.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

Newton is remembered as the one who discovered the universal law of gravitation.<sup>137</sup> In writing about the orbits of the planets, Newton said, “This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets and Comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”<sup>138</sup>

Technology certainly has served a useful place in our society. The humanists assert such. “We appreciate the great benefits that science and technology (especially basic and applied research) can bring to humankind.”<sup>139</sup> “Technology is a vital key to human progress and development.”<sup>140</sup>

Medical technology has eased human suffering. Through medical technology, man has eradicated numerous diseases such as polio and smallpox. Through medical research, man knows something as basic as washing hands can help curtail the spread of communicable diseases. Through medical technology, physicians can perform amazing surgeries from heart bypass to transplantation to cancer surgeries

Does not modern technology come indirectly from God? Man bears God’s image (Gen. 1:27). God is an intelligent, rational Being. God, in creating man in his own image, instilled man with intelligence and rationality. In using intelligence and rationality to understand the world around them, men are using the faculties with which God endowed them. Additionally, using technology is part of the command given to Adam. God told the first man, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen. 1:28). God intended man to subdue the earth and through appropriate use of technology, man is able to do precisely that.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 352.

<sup>139</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 20-21.

<sup>140</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixteenth.

Humanists give science far too much prominence. Kurtz has stated, “We look to the natural, biological, social, and behavioral sciences for knowledge of the universe and man’s place within it. Modern astronomy and physics have opened up exciting new dimensions of the universe; they have enabled humankind to explore the universe by means of space travel. Biology and the social and behavioral sciences have expanded our understanding of human behavior.”<sup>141</sup>

The humanists look to science, rather than Scripture, for man’s place in the universe. Scripture alone can provide that guidance. “The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes” (Ps. 19:8). “We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19). Scripture is the light which tells man his place within the universe. Only the light of Scripture will suffice – “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Scripture will “thoroughly” equip God’s servant for all good works – he does not need any other revelation (be it science, opinions, or whatever) to understand his place in the universe.

In regard to human behavior, the humanists look to biology and the social sciences. When individuals look at human behavior in scientific terms, they overlook man’s real possibility to sin. Glen Tinder correctly wrote, “Much of the tragic folly of our times, not only on the part of extremists such as Lenin but also on the part of middle-of-the-road liberals and conservatives, would never have arisen had we not, in our technological and ideological pride,

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<sup>141</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 20.

forgotten . . . sin.”<sup>142</sup> Sigmund Freud, for example, developed an evolutionary solution to human behavior.<sup>143</sup> According to Freud, humans’ more primitive impulses (the id) come from the brain’s animal part, and the rational mind (the ego) evolved later. Thus, what society views as bad really is simply the animal part of man’s brain coming through. Bad behaviors result from evolution, not poor use of moral responsibility. Ivan Pavlov, famous for his experiments on salivating dogs, stated that all mental life could be explained “in entirely mechanical terms of stimulus and response.”<sup>144</sup> Thus, what individuals do is just the response to stimuli, not because they choose to act in a certain way. J. B. Watson, behaviorism’s founder, said, “Give me the baby . . . the possibility of shaping in any direction is almost endless.”<sup>145</sup> This nation has headed down this path, but is this a path on which this nation really wants to continue?

The student’s biggest problem with the humanist concept of science is the desire to purge science of moral responsibility. “While we are aware of, and oppose, the abuses of misapplied technology and its possible harmful consequences for the natural ecology of the human environment, we urge resistance to unthinking efforts to limit technological or scientific advances.”<sup>146</sup> “We deplore any neo-romantic efforts to condemn indiscriminately all technology and science or to counsel retreat from its further extension and use for the good of humankind. We would resist any moves to censor basic scientific research on moral, political, or social grounds. Technology must, however, be carefully judged by the consequences of its use; harmful and destructive changes should be avoided.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Glenn Tinder, “Birth of a Troubled Conscience,” *Christianity Today* (April 26, 1999): 37; quoted in Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?*, 165.

<sup>143</sup> Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>145</sup> J. B. Watson, *The Way of Behaviorism* (New York: Harper, 1928), 35; quoted in Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?*

<sup>146</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 20.

<sup>147</sup> *Humanist Manifesto II*, Sixteenth.

C. S. Lewis, the well-known Christian apologist, said that the rise of scientific naturalism would lead to “the abolition of man,” for such science “denies the reality of those things central to our humanity; our sense of right and wrong, of purpose, of beauty, of God.”<sup>148</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer aptly said, “Modern man has no real boundary condition for what he *should* do; he is left only with what he *can* do.”<sup>149</sup>

Much modern scientific or technological practices are morally objectionable. There is, for example, great potential in stem cell research. Each embryonic stem cell has the capacity to develop into all 210 different kinds of tissue in the human body.<sup>150</sup> Thus, embryonic stem cell research could conceivably lead to cures for paralysis, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and other ailments. The problem, however, is that embryonic stem cells are harvested for research by puncturing and killing the embryo.<sup>151</sup> Human cloning also raises ethical problems. In 1997, Ian Wilmut produced a cloned sheep from the mammary cell of an adult ewe.<sup>152</sup> Dr. Wilmut and his colleagues fused 277 eggs with udder cells, and produced only 29 embryos, and only the sheep famously known as Dolly survived more than six days.

Why should Christians be concerned about the ethical implications of stem cell research and cloning? These practices result in the destruction of human life. Scripture teaches that even the child in the womb is fully human. David wrote

For you created my inmost being;  
     you knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
     your works are wonderful, I know that full well.  
 My frame was not hidden from you  
     when I was made in the secret place.  
 When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,

<sup>148</sup> Colson, *How Now Shall We Live?*, 404.

<sup>149</sup> Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, 237.

<sup>150</sup> J. Kerby Anderson, “Cloning, Stem-Cell Research, and the Bible,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* (2002) 159: 462-472.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> Bert Thompson, *The Christian and Medical Ethics* Scripture and Science Series, rev. ed. (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1999).

your eyes saw my unformed body.  
 All the days ordained for me  
 were written in your book  
 before one of them came to be (Ps. 139:13-16).

Scripture presents God as active in conception; Rachel bore Joseph through the Lord's intervention (Gen. 30:22). Elizabeth regarded John the Baptist as a person before he was born. She told Mary, "As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy" (Lk. 1:44). The word for "baby" is used in the New Testament for a child both inside and outside the womb.<sup>153</sup>

What should Christians take from the biblical teaching? Christians cannot view the destruction of innocent human life as acceptable – period. Whether in the form of abortion, infanticide, murder, cloning, or stem cell research, the taking of innocent human life is unacceptable. What about the possible benefits from cloning and stem cell research? Stem cells can be harvested from placentas and umbilical cords and from some adult tissues such as bone marrow and the nervous system.<sup>154</sup> If humanity can be benefited from research on stem cells other than embryonic stem cells, let the scientists research! If humans can benefit from the cloning of animals, let humans clone them! The animals do not bear the likeness and image of God as humans do.

*Sunday Night January 8, 2006.* The student was in Montgomery, Alabama for the first dissertation module at Southern Christian University.

*Sunday Night January 15, 2006.* The student preached "The Secular Humanist Concept of Evolution." The student demonstrated the value placed in evolution by the secular humanists.

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<sup>153</sup> Anderson, "Cloning, Stem-Cell Research, and the Bible."

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

“Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.”<sup>155</sup> *A Secular Humanist Declaration* states

Today the theory of evolution is again under heavy attack by religious fundamentalists. Although the theory of evolution cannot be said to have reached its final formulation, or to be an infallible principle of science, it is nonetheless supported impressively by the findings of many sciences. There may be some significant differences among scientists concerning the mechanics of evolution; yet the evolution of the species is supported so strongly by the weight of evidence that it is difficult to reject it. Accordingly, we deplore the efforts by fundamentalists (especially in the United States) to invade the science classrooms, requiring that creationist theory be taught to students and requiring that it be included in biology textbooks. This is a serious threat both to academic freedom and to the integrity of the educational process. We believe that creationists surely have the freedom to express their viewpoint in society. Moreover, we do not deny the value of examining theories of creation in educational courses on religion and the history of ideas; but it is a sham to mask an article of religious faith as a scientific truth and to inflict that doctrine on the scientific curriculum. If successful, creationists may seriously undermine the credibility of science itself.<sup>156</sup>

Again, Kurtz declared

The scientific evidence points to the fact that the human species, like other forms of life on this planet, is a product of evolutionary processes. It has persisted as a result of adaptation; however, it has also benefited from Lady Luck. Survival is due to mutations, adaptations, and selective reproduction, which enables individuals to transmit their genes to their offspring and thus influence the course of evolution.<sup>157</sup>

*Humanist Manifesto III* said, “Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change. Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough, distinguish things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be.”<sup>158</sup>

Scripture declares that God created man. “God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:4-5). “From one man he

<sup>155</sup> *Humanist Manifest I*, Second.

<sup>156</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 21-22.

<sup>157</sup> Paul Kurtz, *The Courage to Become: The Virtues of Humanism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 9.

<sup>158</sup> *Humanist Manifesto III*.

made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live” (Acts 17:26).

In refuting evolution, the student believed he had to demonstrate the importance of faith in the Creation; when evolution is accepted, great value has been removed from human life.

Ernst Haeckel, the well-known zoologist at the end of the nineteenth century declared

Though the great differences in the mental life and the civilization of the higher and lower races of men are generally known, they are, as a rule, undervalued, and so the value of life at different levels is falsely estimated. . . . [The] lower races (such as the Veddahs or Australian Negroes) are psychologically nearer to the mammals (apes and dogs) than to civilized Europeans; we must, therefore, assign a totally different value to their lives. . . . The gulf between [the] thoughtful mind of civilized man and the thoughtless animal soul of the savage is enormous – greater than the gulf that separates the latter from the soul of the dog.<sup>159</sup>

Haeckel said, in essence, “Those who are not White Europeans aren’t as valuable as those who are White Europeans.” Haeckel also said, “What good does it do to humanity to maintain artificially and rear the thousands of cripples, deaf-mutes, idiots, etc., who are born every year with an hereditary burden of incurable disease?”<sup>160</sup> Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, advocated birth control, not just for family planning, but also to make sure that the human species continued to evolve. Through birth control, she argued, the human species would be helped through “survival of the fittest.” She wrote

In the early history of the race, so called “natural law” [i.e., natural selection] reigned undisturbed. Under its pitiless and unsympathetic iron rule, only the strongest, most courageous could live and become progenitors of the race. The weak died early or were killed. Today, however, civilization has brought sympathy, pity, tenderness and other lofty and worthy sentiments, which interfere with the law of natural selection. We are now in a state where our charities, our compensation acts, our pensions, hospitals, and even our drainage and sanitary equipment all tend to keep alive the sickly and the weak, who are allowed to propagate and in turn produce a race of degenerates.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Ernst Haeckel, *The Wonders of Life: A Popular Study of biological Philosophy*, trans. Joseph McCabe (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1905), 390-91; quoted in Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became hedonists* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 257.

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 260.

<sup>161</sup> Margaret Sanger, “Birth Control and Women’s Health,” *Birth Control Review* 1, no. 12 (1917): 7; quoted in Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 265.

She also stated

Every feeble-minded girl or woman of the hereditary type, especially of the moron class, should be segregated during the reproductive years. . . . The male defectives are no less dangerous. . . . When we realize that each feeble-minded person is a potential source of an endless progeny of defect, we prefer the policy of immediate sterilization, of making sure that parenthood is absolutely prohibited to the feeble-minded.<sup>162</sup>

If individuals reject Creation and embrace evolution, they no longer have reason to live morally. Concerning sexuality, Sanger said,

Slowly but surely we are breaking down the taboos that surrounded sex; but we are breaking them down out of sheer necessity. The codes that have surrounded sexual behavior in the so-called Christian communities, the teachings of the churches concerning chastity and sexual purity, the prohibitions of the laws, and the hypocritical conventions of society, have all demonstrated their failure as safeguards against the chaos produced and the havoc wrought by the failure to recognize sex as a driving force in human nature, -- as great as, if indeed not greater than, hunger. Its dynamic energy is undesirable. It may be transmuted, refined, directed, even sublimated, but to ignore, to neglect, to refuse to recognize this great elemental force is nothing less than foolhardy.<sup>163</sup>

Michael Tooley argues for both abortion and infanticide because “new-born humans are neither persons nor even quasi-persons, and their destruction is in no way intrinsically wrong.”<sup>164</sup>

Stephen Pinker, an outspoken materialist, wrote an article entitled “Why They Kill Their Newborns”; in the article, Pinker said that infanticide should not be condemned because “‘a capacity for neonaticide is built into the biological design from our parent emotions,’ allowing parents, if a ‘newborn is sickly, or if its survival is not promising, . . . [to] cut their losses and favor the healthiest in the litter or try again later on.’”<sup>165</sup>

In beginning his presentation of the evidence for Creation, the student stressed that the scientists who propagate evolutionary ideals have a bias toward anti-supernaturalism. In so

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<sup>162</sup> Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization* (1922; Reprint, New York: Maxwell, 1969), 101-102; quoted in Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 267.

<sup>163</sup> Sanger, *The Pivot of Civilization*, 246; quoted in Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 270.

<sup>164</sup> Michael Tooley, *Abortion and Infanticide* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 411; quoted in Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 303.

<sup>165</sup> Wiker, *Moral Darwinism*, 150.

doing, the student wish to illustrate that evolutionary inquiry is not the white-coat laboratory process many have come to imagine. D. M. S. Watson, who promoted evolution on the B. B. C. said the following in an address to fellow biologists: “Evolution itself is accepted by zoologists not because it has been observed to occur or . . . can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.”<sup>166</sup> Sir Arthur Eddington, said, “The notion of a beginning is repugnant to me.”<sup>167</sup> Richard Lewontin, in describing the struggle between science and the supernatural said,

We take the side of science *in spite* of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine Foot in the door. . . . To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be ruptured, that miracles may happen.<sup>168</sup>

In presenting evidence for Creation, the student first mentioned the Urey-Miller experiment. Harold Urey, a Nobel Prize-winner, and one of his graduate students, Stanley Miller, conducted an experiment, the results of which were published in 1953.<sup>169</sup> Miller placed inorganic molecules in a test tube with water vapor and an aqueous solution along with gasses believed to be present in the primitive earth, and he shocked the mixture with ultraviolet radiation. The experiment produced carbon compounds, the building blocks of life. The results of the experiment have been praised by evolutionists; Forrest and Gross, for example, wrote,

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<sup>166</sup> Douglas Dewar and L. M. Davies, “Science and the B. B. C.,” *The Nineteenth Century and After*, April, 1943, 167; quoted in Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction* (Wheaton, IL: crossway Books, 1990), 144-145.

<sup>167</sup> Schlossberg, *Idols*, 145.

<sup>168</sup> Richard Lewontin, “Billions and Billions of Demons,” *New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997; quoted in Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 294-295.

<sup>169</sup> Barbara Forrest and Paul R. Gross, *Creationism’s Trojan Horse: The Wedge of Intelligent Design* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

“What the justly celebrated work of Miller and Urey did was to show that *abiotic synthesis of the molecular building blocks of life is possible*.”<sup>170</sup> In other words, Forrest and Gross say that man has discovered the material necessary for life can arise without assistance.

Such is a farce. The Urey-Miller experiment simply proves that intelligent beings can produce the building blocks of life. That is exactly what Christians believe: an Intelligent Being (God) produced life. If scientists, God forbid!, ever produced a human being from inorganic compounds, all that will have been established is that intelligence is necessary for the production of life.

The eye has caused problems since Darwin put forth his theory. Darwin, under the heading of “Organs of extreme [*sic*] Perfection and Complication,” states

To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.<sup>171</sup>

The eye is an amazing organ.<sup>172</sup> The eye can handle 1.5 million simultaneous messages, and the eyes gather 80 percent of all knowledge which goes to the brain. The retina covers less than a square inch, but the retina contains 137 million light-sensitive receptor cells; 130 million are rods (which allow the eye to see black and white) and 7 million are cones (which allow the eye to see in color). The average eye moves approximately 100,000 times daily, using muscles, which milligram for milligram, are among the body’s strongest. The eye is also self-cleaning.

Lacrimal glands produce secretions such as tears to flush away dust and foreign materials.

Blinking keeps the cornea moist and clean. Tears also contain a potent microbe-killer which guards the eyes against bacterial infections. Francis Hitching, looking for nontheistic ways to

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 102, emphasis in the original.

<sup>171</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* The Modern Library (New York: Random House, n.d.), 133.

<sup>172</sup> The scientific material about the eye comes from Bert Thompson, “The Design Argument – ‘Eye of the Storm,’” in Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson, eds. *Essays in Apologetics*, Vol. IV (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 1990), 181-194.

explain the eye and other complex organs, admits that the odds against the eye having evolved by chance are at least 10 billion to one.<sup>173</sup>

Symbiotic relationships also strongly point away from evolution. “A symbiotic relationship is one in which two organisms live in such a close relationship that one cannot live without the other and vice versa.”<sup>174</sup> If these two organisms evolved, how did they do so in such close association? Leaf-cutting ants have a symbiotic relationship with a particular mushroom.<sup>175</sup> Using leaves instead of soil, the ants cultivate the mushrooms. The ants cannot eat the leaves, for they contain a natural insecticide. The mushrooms cannot live on the leaves, either, for they have a prohibitive wax covering their surface. The ants carefully remove the wax from the leaves, and then the leaves decay into a mulch which allows the mushrooms to grow. The mushrooms absorb the insecticide and turn it into a food the ants use to survive. Additionally, scientists have recently discovered that the mushrooms have a parasite enemy which would destroy them, but they can be protected by an antibiotic produced by a certain bacterium. This bacterium just so happens to thrive in the ants’ bodies.

Termites also have a symbiotic relationship with protozoa.<sup>176</sup> Scientists believe that only termites can digest cellulose, and without termites, the vegetable growth and decay cycle would be greatly disturbed. Protozoa thrive in the intestinal tracts of the termites, and the protozoa allow the termites to digest the wood. Scientists have heated the termites to 97 degrees Fahrenheit – the termites were not killed by the heat, but they soon died from starvation, because the parasites were killed by the heat.

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<sup>173</sup> Rubel Shelly, *Prepare to Answer: A Defense of the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: 20th Century Christian, 1990).

<sup>174</sup> Clayton, *The Source*, 49.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Basil Overton, *Evolution in the Light of Scripture, Science and Sense* (Winona, MS: J. C. Choate Publications, 1981).

*Sunday Night January 22, 2006.* The student presented a lesson on “The Secular Humanist Concept of Education.” Humanists greatly value public education.

In our view, education should be the essential method of building humane, free, and democratic societies. The aims of education are many: the transmission of knowledge; training for occupations, careers, and democratic citizenship and the encouragements of moral growth. Among its vital purposes should also be an attempt to develop the capacity for critical intelligence in both the individual and the community. Unfortunately, the schools are today being increasingly replaced by the mass media as the primary institutions of public information and education. Although the electronic media provide unparalleled opportunities for extending cultural enrichment and enjoyment, and powerful learning opportunities, there has been a serious misdirection of their purposes. . . . Of special concern to secularists is the fact that the media (particularly in the United States) are inordinately dominated by a pro-religious bias. The views of preachers, faith healers, and religious hucksters go largely unchallenged, and the secular outlook is not given an opportunity for a fair hearing. We believe that television directors and producers have an obligation to redress the balance and revise their programming.

Indeed, there is a broader task that all those who believe in democratic secular humanist values will recognize, namely, the need to embark upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment concerning the relevance of the secular outlook to the human condition.<sup>177</sup>

*A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics* states that individuals should have “the right to intellectual and cultural freedom, including (a) the freedom to inquire and to engage in research, (b) the right to adequate education, (c) the right to cultural enrichment, and (d) the right to public and express one’s views.”<sup>178</sup> Rob Boston, writing in *Free Inquiry*, said

Parents who really care about children want them to grow up well educated and ready for the challenges of an increasingly technological society speeding toward the next century. Yet the Religious Right, through its constant advocacy of creationism, would have children learn Bible stories in place of real science. Thanks to their meddling, many public schools are afraid to teach evolution, and biology textbooks give the subject scant attention. As a result, an entire generation of public schoolchildren may grow up lacking an understanding of the principles underpinning modern biological sciences. Such ignorance cannot fail to have widespread and dangerous repercussions in the fields of medicine and research.

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<sup>177</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 22-23.

<sup>178</sup> *A Declaration of Interdependence: A New Global Ethics*.

Furthermore, Religious Right activists bash public education incessantly, yet they have constantly stood in the way of efforts at innovative school reform. Instead, they champion outdated techniques such as rote drilling and mindless memorization.<sup>179</sup>

In 1930, Charles F. Potter, founder of the First Humanist Society of New York, wrote, “Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism. What can the theistic Sunday-schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?”<sup>180</sup>

In critiquing such views, the student began by showing that education is absolutely vital in today’s world. Scripture stresses education, for Jesus was a teacher. “After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee” (Mt. 11:1). “Again Jesus began to teach by the lake” (Mk. 4:1). Because Jesus himself was a teacher, he told the apostles, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19). The Greek word “make disciples” refers to teaching and learning. The term basically means something like “learner” or “pupil”; the term was used in classical Greek to refer to the students of philosophers.<sup>181</sup> In the New Testament, the term was used in a heightened sense to refer to “an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct.”<sup>182</sup> Thus, Jesus instructed the apostles, “Go, *teach* people about me and encourage them to accept my instruction.” Although the term refers to far more than a simple “learner” or “pupil” in the New Testament, the idea of learning and being taught is not at all absent.

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<sup>179</sup> Rob Boston, “10 Reasons Why the Religious Right is *Not* Pro-Family,” *Free Inquiry* 19, available at [http://www.Secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=library&page=boston\\_19\\_1](http://www.Secularhumanism.org/index.php?section=library&page=boston_19_1) (accessed November 2, 2005).

<sup>180</sup> Charles Francis Potter, *Humanism: A New Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930), cited by David Limbaugh, *Persecution: How Liberals are Waging War Against Christianity* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2003), 65.

<sup>181</sup> Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon* rev. and augm. ed. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>182</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), 936.

Some might be tempted to say, “Wait a minute. The Bible stresses religious education, but Scripture says nothing about learning about science, history, mathematics, and the like.” God created this world and all the laws of science which govern this world; learning about science is learning about God’s governance of the world. History has great usefulness, for history is largely the story of God’s intervention in this world – of his bringing down kingdoms, of his protecting his people, of his will’s being fulfilled. History also informs the learner of evil, for he learns of Hitler, Stalin, and the like. Learning about Hitler, Stalin, and their ilk destroys any illusion that humans are totally good. Mathematics provides the foundation to understanding how the physical world God created operates. Reading is absolutely essential to learning anything else.

Although Scripture stresses education, the Bible recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility for education. “Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (Deut. 4:9). “Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess” (Deut. 31:13).

Why should parents not want to turn over the education of their children to the public schools?<sup>183</sup> Secular humanists want teachers to promote secular humanism in the public schools; “The battle for mankind’s future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizer of a new faith; a religion of humanity . . . utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach.”<sup>184</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Because the Alum Creek congregation has many public school teachers, the student paused at this point to stress that he did not mean to imply in the least that all public school teachers advocated secular humanism. He said, “Your values are the right values, and you would not seek in any way to teach wrong values.”

<sup>184</sup> Quoted from *The Humanist* January/February 1983 by Gabler, “Humanism in Textbooks,”: 362.

The student then turned his attention to the West Virginia educational standards. Tenth graders, according to the West Virginia Science Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools are to do the following in regard to evolution: “compare the embryonic development of invertebrate and vertebrate animals (e.g., ontogeny and phylogeny, diversity, taxonomy)”;

“construct and manipulate models which show variations in living things”;

“recognize that fossil records provide a scientific explanation for variation in the species and common ancestors”;

and “relate the role of natural selection to the development, diversity and or extinction of a species.”<sup>185</sup> In regard to social studies, third graders are to “define majority rule and give examples of that concept in a democracy.”<sup>186</sup> The problem is that, as described above, the United States is not a democracy based on majority rule; the United States is a republic where citizens elect leaders who make decisions, and not all those leaders are elected by majority rule (e.g., Supreme Court Justices and the President). Fifth graders are to “explain the consent of the governed as the source of authority of government.”<sup>187</sup> God, as described above, not “the consent of the governed” is the course of government’s authority.

Persecution also takes place in numerous schools. Raymond Raines, a fourth grader at Waring Elementary School in St. Louis, Missouri was repeatedly sent to the principal’s office, segregated from his classmates, subjected to ridicule, and given a weeklong detention. His crime? He bowed his head and prayed silently before he ate in the cafeteria.<sup>188</sup> At Lynn Lucas Middle School in the Houston, Texas, area a teacher noticed two girls carrying Bibles into her classroom. She met the students at the door, yelled “This is garbage,” threw the Bibles in the trash, and escorted the girls to the office. The teacher then contacted the girls’ mother and threatened to call child protective services, because Bibles were not permitted on school

<sup>185</sup> *Science Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools*, SC 10.4.8 – SC 10.4.11 (2003).

<sup>186</sup> *Social Studies Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools*, SS 3.2.4 (2003).

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>188</sup> Limbaugh, *Persecution*.

property.<sup>189</sup> Students at a McArthur, Ohio high school were told to remove “What Would Jesus Do” bracelets, because the bracelets might be offense to some students.<sup>190</sup>

What can parents do? The student cannot overemphasize the need for parents to be highly involved in their children’s education. The church cannot be expected to turn the tide with children when they are in services 4 hours or less a week. God has given parents the responsibility for the religious education of their children, and they dare not abdicate that responsibility!

The condition may deteriorate to the point where Christian parents need to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). They may need strongly to object to the science, health, and social studies curricula. The parents would need to do so with kindness and love in the spirit of Jesus, not ever in an egotistical, “holier-than-thou” spirit. The parents would also need to be well-informed of the subjects they will discuss lest they look like a bunch of uneducated fools (as Christians are often depicted as being).

On a positive note, parents need to fulfill their God-given role to be involved in their children’s education. They need to help children with their homework. They need to read to their children and make sure they know how to read. They need to train their children to be good citizens – to obey the laws, to pay their taxes, and to vote.

Boston worries that

the Religious Right, through its constant advocacy of creationism, would have children learn Bible stories in place of real science. Thanks to their meddling, many public schools are afraid to teach evolution, and biology textbooks give the subject scant attention. As a result, an entire generation of public schoolchildren may grow up lacking an understanding of the principles underpinning modern biological sciences. Such ignorance cannot fail to have widespread and dangerous repercussions in the fields of medicine and research.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Boston, “10 Reasons why the Religious Right is Not Pro-Family.”

The student would greatly challenge the notion that creation is not true science but that evolution is. The student sees a Christian physician, and he would by far rather see a physician who believes in Creation than one who is an evolutionists. The believer will treat the student with respect and dignity, not because he or she has taken the Hippocratic Oath, but because he or she will understand that the student bears God's image. The believing physician will understand that he or she can only do so much, and will pray to God to do the rest. The believing physician will understand that he or she cannot fathom the depths of the human body because humans are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14), not because human reasoning has not grasped all the depths of biology.

Kurtz properly understands that education is two-fold: there is public education and there is public relations. Thus, he wrote, "Indeed, there is a broader task that all those who believe in democratic secular humanist values will recognize, namely, the need to embark upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment concerning the relevance of the secular outlook to the human condition."<sup>192</sup> Partially, the student is grateful to find that statement. In essence, Kurtz is saying, "We're not going to promote our doctrine secretly, but we're going to be public about it." With the publicity of secular humanism, society will come to know exactly what the humanists desire to do in this world.

Since the humanists are willing to embark "upon a long-term program of public education and enlightenment" should the church do anything less? Jesus challenged his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt.

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<sup>192</sup> Kurtz, *Humanist Declaration*, 23

28:19-20). Again, Jesus told the disciples, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Therefore, the apostles went throughout the world proclaiming the good news of Jesus. They proclaimed that message to such an extent that Paul could refer to the gospel’s having been “proclaimed to every creature under heaven” (Col. 1:23). Can Christians say anything comparable in the modern world? Can Christians say that they have proclaimed the gospel to the whole creation? Can Christians say that they have proclaimed the gospel to their neighbor?

### **Conclusion**

The student’s project has been an effort to further a Christian worldview in the Alum Creek Church of Christ. Through his preaching ministry, the student has informed the congregation of the humanist worldview and framed the debate in terms of a biblical worldview. The student prays that his effort has benefited the Alum Creek church to think more biblically.

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