

SECULAR HUMANISM

1. Definition.

- a. Secular humanism is “the system whereby men and women, beginning absolutely by themselves, try rationally to build out from themselves, having only man as their integration point, to find all knowledge, meaning and value.”¹

2. History.

- a. “Eve was the first humanist.”²
- b. Protagoras of Abdera.
 - (1) “Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are that they are, and of the things that are not that they are not. ...About the gods I have no way of knowing either whether they exist or do not exist, nor what kind they are in form; for many are the things that hinder knowledge, the obscurity and the fact that the life of man is short.”³
- c. Rene Descartes (d. 1650).
 - (1) *De omnibus dubitandum*: “Doubt everything.”
 - (2) *Cogito ergo sum*: “I think, therefore I am.”
- d. Humanist Manifesto I (1933).
- e. Humanist Manifesto II (1973).
- f. Humanist Manifesto III (2003).
- g. United Nations.
 - (1) Do a search for God, marriage, husband, wife, family, father, mother, parent, church, mosque, temple in any UN document. See what you find.

3. Beliefs.

- a. Man-centeredness.
 - (1) “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”⁴
 - (2) “[Humanism] feeds our pride, it fuels our self-centered bent, it pleases our flesh.”⁵
- b. Autonomy.
 - (1) “The idea of humanity as a deity is seldom avowed openly but rather is expressed by ascribing to man attributes of God: sovereignty (or autonomy), complete rationality, and moral perfection.”⁶
- c. Rationalism. It ignores the limits of man’s reason.
- d. Existentialism. It ignores the limits of man’s experience.

¹ Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There*, in *The Complete Works*, 1:[].

² Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, Kindle Locations 1048-1049.

³ Protagoras of Abdera (d. 420 bc), cited in Joseph Owens, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), 157-159.

⁴ Thomas Paine, quoted in Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*, Kindle ed. (Crossway, 2008), 273.

⁵ Charles Swindoll, *Grace Awakening*, 13.

⁶ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, Kindle locations 1097-98.

- e. Scientism. It ignores the limits of science.
- f. Man's inherent goodness. It ignore's man's fallenness.
 - (1) "What a comfort to be in a place where The Fall was an exploded doctrine!"⁷
- g. Optimism. Progress.

4. Self-Image.

- a. Open-minded. Liberal.
- b. Progressive. Woke.
 - (1) They believe they are on "the right side of history."
- c. Scientific. Smart.
 - (1) They believe they've "thought through" their beliefs.
- d. Skeptical. Not gullible.
- e. Tolerant.
- f. Objective. Unbiased.
 - (1) "Only humanists can see the whole elephant."
- g. Strong.
 - (1) They don't need a "crutch" like Christians do.

5. Agenda.

- a. "The next century can and should be the humanistic century. Dramatic scientific, technological, and ever-accelerating social and political changes crowd our awareness. We have virtually conquered the planet, explored the moon, overcome the natural limits of travel and communication; we stand at the dawn of a new age, ready to move farther into space and perhaps inhabit other planets. Using technology wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our lifespan, significantly modify our behavior, alter the course of human evolution and cultural development, unlock vast new powers, and provide humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life."⁸

6. Strategy.

- a. Secular humanists do have a strategy, just as Nebuchadnezzar did.
 - (1) "Culture doesn't just change. It's changed."⁹
- b. Eliminate "religion" from public discourse and be the only "non-religion."
 - (1) "The strategy is to brand as religious whatever remains of the old traditions while maintaining resolutely that everything in the dominant civil religion is really secular and thus inviolable."¹⁰
 - (2) "Separation of Church and State."
 - (3) "[Family First's] core purpose of promoting the traditional family unit cannot be shown to be in the public benefit in the charitable sense under the Act."¹¹

⁷ Aldous Huxley, *Island* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 250.

⁸ Humanist Manifesto 2.

⁹ Dave Mann.

¹⁰ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 276.

¹¹ Family First New Zealand [2018] NZHC 2273 [31 August 2018], para. 74.

- (4) “In relation to marriage, Family First’s model, to the extent it involves law change favouring the traditional family unit, would on its face run counter to human rights law which prohibits discrimination on such bases. Unless able to be shown to be a reasonable limit, the position advocated for would be unlawful, an obstacle to charitable status.”¹²
- c. Wrap the academic disciplines, especially the social sciences, with the myth of secularity.
- d. Make opponents feel like they “don’t believe in science.”
- e. Reward “religious” people and institutions who play nice.
 - (1) “Secularization—that is, the gradual conformity of our thinking, beliefs, commitments, and practices to the pattern of this fading age—is not just something that happens *to* the church; it is something that happens *in* the church. In fact, it’s difficult to think of secularism as anything other than a Christian heresy.”¹³
- f. Ridicule or shame “religious” people and institutions who don’t.
- g. Indoctrinate children through all means possible.
 - (1) Public schools are the principal agency in the West for spreading the established cultural religion.¹⁴
- h. Propagate the myth that the State is neutral.

7. Religiousness.

- a. Many atheists and agnostics say “I’m not religious” because they don’t go to church.
- b. However, secular humanism is a religion.
- c. “Auguste Comte, the nineteenth-century French philosopher who gave sociology not only its name but also its major assumptions, was one of the most influential of the theorists who deified the human race. His Religion of Humanity, as he called it, advocated the worship of the Great Being, defined as humanity past, present, and future. This religion had a catechism, sacraments, a sacred calendar, a priesthood, prayers, and something imitative of the Trinity. It also had a social system of which Comte was the chief planner. The Religion of Humanity, as a visible institution, for a time had great vitality. Comteans formed positivist societies for the worship of great people, and their churches spread even to South America.”¹⁵
- d. “Of all the misleading interpretations of this complex age, few are more so than the common one that secularism means the replacement of a world view that is religious with one that is not. This completely mistakes the meaning of religion. Max Weber rightly argued that each major aspect of human action is dependent on a distinctive set of religious attitudes. The religious outlook influences the institutions of society in ways that cannot simply be accounted for in material terms. Sociologist Gerhard Lenski’s studies in American society confirm Weber’s hypothesis. The religious character of human ideas and institutions is all-pervasive, even in nontheistic systems

¹² Family First New Zealand [2018] NZHC 2273 [31 August 2018], para. 64.

¹³ Stephen McAlpine, “Secularism’s (Misplaced) Confidence,” www.stephenmcalpine.com (26 March 2019).

¹⁴ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 275.

¹⁵ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, Kindle locations 1083-88.

like Buddhism, communism, and humanism. All social phenomena, Lenski says, constitute systems of faith, not being based on logical or empirical demonstration, and all seek to respond to the most basic problems of human existence. Thus, all normal adults are religious. ‘Human existence compels men to act on unproven and unprovable assumptions, and it makes no exceptions.’ One of Jacques Ellul’s most important contributions has been to show that modern Western society is awash with religiosity, that the much-vaunted secularization process means the flourishing of anti-Christian religions. Humanism has become the most messianic of the idolatrous religions of the West. Anthropologist Margaret Mead included in her autobiography a frank acknowledgement that it was a religious belief and called urgently for its spread throughout the world.”¹⁶

- e. “[W]hat is widely regarded as a struggle between the religious and the secular is really a struggle between religions. The current strife over such issues as abortion is perfectly in order, because it is an attempt by both sides to establish a rule of order in accordance with basic religious precepts.”¹⁷
- f. The cultural pressure to agree with secular humanists on LGBT issues or climate change shows you it is a religion with a defined orthodoxy.

8. Weaknesses.

- a. Atheism.
 - (1) Because secular humanism is built upon atheism, every critique of atheism may be levelled against secular humanism.
 - (2) Secular humanism exalts us to a place where we don’t belong.
 - (3) Secular humanism is essentially the worship of the human race.
- b. Man’s finitude.
- c. Man’s creatureliness.
- d. Man’s insignificance.
 - (1) Clearly man is not the centre of the universe.
 - (2) “The world doesn’t revolve around you.”¹⁸
- e. Man’s inability.
- f. Uncritical acceptance of anything modern, new, or different.
- g. Man’s inability to be “good.”
 - (1) Secular humanism “imputes wisdom and goodness to the collectivity that are not present in the individual.”¹⁹
- h. Ignores our penchant for self-deception.
 - (1) Our “capacity for self-deception and self-justification is almost infinite. That is the reason sentiment as an ethical principle must lead to disaster.”²⁰
- i. Ethical thievery.

¹⁶ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 273.

¹⁷ H. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 275.

¹⁸ Phil Coleman.

¹⁹ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 49.

²⁰ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 50.

- (1) “Secularism is like the teenager coming of age in his parents’ house, and who displays his wilfulness and independence by slamming the doors and abusing his long-suffering mum and dad, rather than moving out and getting a job and paying for his lifestyle himself.”²¹ Cannot account for human free will.
- (2) It contains a serious internal contradiction in that it posits a natural universe yet opts for choice in human behavior.²²
- (3) “It is ironic that for humanitarians only poor people, minorities, and those who have run afoul of the law are assumed to be shaped by the iron grip of circumstance. If we look at the villains instead of the victims—the police, politicians, social workers, businessmen—we find that the humanitarians have given them free will. They do not speak about the industrialist’s tyrannical father, the loan shark’s miserable childhood in an orphan home, the politician’s neurotic mother. Those people are responsible for their acts, and therefore are human. Humanism thus awards its enemies the status of human beings while taking that status from its wards.”²³
- (4) It assumes free will, at least for some, without accounting for it.
- j. While man progresses technologically, he does not progress ethically.
 - (1) “Since we have admitted no substantial change in man’s nature during historic times, all technological advances will have to be written off as merely new means of achieving old ends—the acquisition of goods, the pursuit of one sex by the other (or by the same), the overcoming of competition, the fighting of wars.”²⁴
- k. Secular humanism has no good argument to “might makes right.”
 - (1) Hitler, Stalin, and Mao were all secular humanists. They believed in evolutionary progress and science. In their mind, there was no “god” to stop them.

9. Result.

- a. Secular humanism inevitably leads to nihilism, skepticism, and relativism.
 - (1) Secular humanism has promised the “indefinite perfectibility of mankind,” but it hasn’t delivered.
- b. Group-think. Intolerance. Cancel culture.
- c. Tyranny of the elite.
 - (1) The writings of secular humanists “are filled with fervid arguments in favor of a powerful central state. Autonomous man, they find, needs leadership, and strong leadership is the hallmark of humanist society. Whether embodied in a committee or personalised in a leader, the elite dominates. . . . The better educated he is, the more likely the humanist is to believe that people are like machines and need to be programmed, and the more likely he is to believe that he should be one of the programmers.”²⁵
 - (2) Hitler, Stalin, and Mao became “gods” in their own countries.

²¹ Stephen McAlpine, “Secularism’s (Misplaced) Confidence,” www.stephenmcaldpine.com (26 March 2019).

²² W. David Beck, “Secular Humanism: The Word of Man,” *Fundamentalist Journal*, Nov 1982, 12-16.

²³ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 83.

²⁴ Will and Ariel Durant, “Lessons from History,” 42.

²⁵ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 87.

- (3) The model is not *1984* but *A Brave New World*.
- (4) “‘Secular humanism’ is an idea movement, not the work of any individual, and before it, as a whole, individuals are little more than pawns.”²⁶
- d. Humanism dehumanises.
 - (1) “Humanist idolatry, which begins by elevating humans to the status of gods, ends by pouring hatred and scorn on them. The creature cannot act like the creator, and those who expected him to do so fall into disillusionment and worse.”²⁷
- e. Barbarism.
 - (1) “Clean” barbarism is still barbarism.
 - (2) Man is the “intelligent, flesh-eating, cruel species, which knows how to hunt and outwit the human intelligence, and whose precise aim is the destruction of man.”²⁸
 - (3) Hitler, Stalin, and Mao all eliminated humans in the name of humanity.
 - (4) “The confidence that secularism has will ebb away when it is faced with an either/or situation by a minority group that it wishes to champion, but which is itself implacably opposed to the agenda of another minority group that it wishes to champion. The tension cannot hold.”²⁹
- f. Irrationality.
 - (1) Recreational cannabis use.

10. Our Strategy.

- a. Don’t drink the kool-aid.
- b. Read. Don’t watch. Read. Read the Classics. Read the best, not trash.
- c. Realise when you sit in class, turn on the television, watch your next Netflix movie, scroll through Facebook or Instagram, or visit your favourite news sight, you are entering a religious temple. You are reading a religious book. You are receiving religious teaching. There is a high priest, and there is an orthodoxy. You will be excommunicated if you disagree. That’s the name of the game.
- d. Speak as a theist, not as a Christian.
 - (1) The culture war in the United States is between theism and atheism.
 - (2) “...[A]s the camera pans out and we look at the last three to four hundred years of history, there is not straightforward pattern of religious decline as science and reason advance. None at all.”³⁰
- e. Ask lots of questions, like:
 - (1) What do you mean by that?
 - (2) From where did you get that idea?
 - (3) Why do you believe that?
 - (4) Have you considered alternative viewpoints, like...?
 - (5) See our YouTube channel for conversational evangelism encounters.

²⁶ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, 6.

²⁷ Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 82.

²⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, quoted in Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 82-83.

²⁹ Stephen McAlpine, “Secularism’s (Misplaced) Confidence,” www.stephenmcalpine.com (26 March 2019).

³⁰ Stephen McAlpine, “Secularism’s (Misplaced) Confidence,” www.stephenmcalpine.com (26 March 2019).

- f. Stick with you mates, your Christian community.
 - (1) Have your 120, your 12, your three, and your one.