

Comparative Views: Humanism vs. Judeo-Christian

by Thomas W. Jacobson (15 January 2014; revised 22 September 2014)

This morning I read again *Humanist Manifestos I and II*,¹ which explain “religious humanism” that is invading and overtaking almost every nation. The first *Manifesto* was published in 1933, and the second in 1973, the same year that all restrictions to abortion were removed in the United States.

Their language describes the dominant world religion today, which “especially rejects faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons,” and “can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.” Instead, ultimate faith is placed in mankind. “As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.” “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves” (II, Preface, First). That leads them to believe that the “complete realization of human personality” is the chief “end of man’s life” and finding “fulfillment in the here and now” (I, Eighth).

Here is a comparison of the religious humanism and Judeo-Christian faiths:

Religious Humanism

- “regard the universe as self-existing, not created” (I, First)[=reject existence of God];
- “man is a part of nature ... has emerged ... a continuous process” (I, Second)[=no intrinsic value];
- “human ... emergence from natural evolutionary forces” (II, Second)[=exist by chance];
- “moral values derive their source from human experience” (II, Third)[=human based, changes];
- “Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*” (II, Third)[=no fixed standards, different for everyone];
- “maximum individual autonomy ... *freedom of choice*” (II, Fifth)[=no accountability];
- “right to die, euthanasia ... suicide” (II, Seventh)[=sovereign over own life];
- “sexual behavior between consenting adults” (II, Sixth)[=immorality, adultery OK];
- “The right to ... abortion” (II, Sixth)[=each individual decides value of each human life].

Judeo-Christian:

- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth” (Genesis 1:1)[Personal Creator];
- “God created man in His own image” (Genesis 1:27)[=basis of intrinsic value];
- “Thou didst form my inward parts ... weave me in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139);
- “God spoke all these words” giving the 10 Commandments (Ex. 20:1)[=basis of Law];
- “not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law” (Matthew 5:18)[=unchanging];
- “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Corinthians 3:17)[=true liberty is the responsible use of freedom to do what is right in God’s sight and good for others];
- “You shall not commit murder” (Exodus 20:13)[=every human life is of inestimable value];
- “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14)[=sexuality and marriage bed are sacred];
- Shedding innocent blood invokes judgment of God (II Kings 21:1-9, 16; 24:1-4).

This comparison reveals that whatever a person believes about morality, ethics, sexuality, and human life actually arises from what they truly believe or disbelieve in their heart about God and

His Law, the origin of the universe and of man. Don't be surprised if you find that you hold some of the beliefs in religious humanism, because it flows out of who humans are apart from God. We are all born with a sinful, selfish, prideful, rebellious nature. Only through repentance and a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ can our minds and hearts be transformed to think more the way God thinks – which is perfectly consistent with true reality.

In religious humanism, there is no fixed basis for truth or the inherent value of human life. Though its framers declare their belief in “The preciousness and dignity of the individual person,” in the next paragraph they declare “The right to ... abortion,” and in the next the “right to die ... euthanasia, and the right to suicide” – to terminate any human life they do not want, including their own (II, Fifth-Seventh). That is humanism's “*autonomous and situational*” ethics, and “*freedom of choice*,” disconnected from responsibility and accountability – at least this side of the Final Judgment (John 5:29; Acts 24:25; II Peter 2:4-19; 3:7-9).

So what do you believe? If you believe in religious humanism, or have been influenced by its philosophy (as we all have), then you may find that you really don't know who you are or why you exist; why you should live a morally pure life; why you know certain things are always wrong, even if they conflict with your personal standards or way of life; why some value an animal as much or more than a person; or why you may find yourself approving of someone aborting their child, or divorcing their spouse without Biblical basis.

On the other hand, the Judeo-Christian Scriptures provide a consistent and uniform worldview. Mankind has intrinsic value, from conception to natural death, because we are “created in the image of God” (Gen. 1:27), and as such are accountable to God. He has given His unchanging Law and commandments to the entire human family, written it upon our hearts, and applies it the same to every person. He gave the gift of human sexuality to be fully enjoyed only within the covenant of marriage, because otherwise it has unbridled power to destroy. He absolutely abhors abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, suicide, and murder because it is He who has created each one of us, with love, purpose, and destiny.

It is time to reject religious humanism, and fully embrace the Truth God has given to us. It is time to examine our ways of thinking and living to discern what we truly believe.

All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

¹ *Humanist Manifestos I and II*, including prefaces, edited by Paul Kurtz (Prometheus Books: Buffalo, NY, 1973; Eleventh Printing, 1982).