

IN DEFENCE OF SECULAR HUMANISM

Why is Humanism not a religion?

Because it is materialistic and has no time for worship. It puts one's own feelings and pleasures, these sensations are themselves material because before anything else so it is anti-spiritual and practices a form of materialism in doing so.

What does the word Humanism mean?

Humanism comes from our love for humanity and our desire to put them before Gods and religions and Bibles. The name reflects that our philosophy is one of love.

How is Humanism organised?

Each full member is called a Guardian for she or he guards the truth and only those who entirely agree with The Gospel According to Atheism can become full members. Those members who sympathise with us but do not agree with all we teach are Hearers having a lower level of membership.

Should the Humanist discontinue all religious activity and get her name off the membership rolls of her religion?

Yes unless for a very serious reason such as the threat of violence or death.

What is altruism?

Altruism is not the same thing as helping people. You can help people while doing solely because you like to and not because you really care about them. Altruism means helping others without any regard for what you want or like.

Does intending to service God or egoism really matter?

No for they are about motives. As long as people behaves well and are good citizens it does not matter what their motives are.

Does the God believe imply that we must be altruists?

Yes. Thus it is a doctrine of oppression.

SEVER CHURCH AND STATE

How should the state be run?

The state should be run by the people through their elected representatives after they have been informed as well as possible.

Should religion interfere in the workings of the state?

Only if it does not try to enforce its distinctive and begrudging and surplus rules, for example, that sex before marriage is wrong even when no harm can ensue, on us. The law can and should act as if there is no God and no religion is true. That is as near as it can get to pleasing everybody.

Should atheists persecute religious people?

No for error is a disorder that needs help not censure and angry responses. If religion thrives that is atheism's doing and religion should not have to pay for it. Information and good example and the promise of happiness and inner peace without God and religion are better antidotes to religion than persecution and history bears witness to that.

Should blasphemy laws be abolished?

They should because every religion has doctrines that offend others and the division and condemnation of harmless things that religion is behind proves that the state should take no notice of religious eccentricities. Instead when a person mocks God before religionists with intent to spark off mayhem that person should be charged with disturbing the peace but not with blasphemy.

Should the state support the theory of free will?

No. It is an unnecessary belief and therefore a superstition and a religious dogma for only religion needs to believe in it.

Should religion be tax-exempt?

It should not for it is not a charity when it is not needed.

Does the state have the right to impel religion to give up evil doctrines?

Yes. For instance, if a religion teaches racism it should have to pay the penalty.

What happens when the state and the Church disagree or come into conflict?

Then the state comes first for it represents all the people and has to have an unprejudiced view of right and wrong that is not influenced by religious superstition and its job is to guard the people not religion.

Do atheists back complete freedom of speech?

Let people say and print what they want no matter how nasty it is but just make sure that access to warnings and other healthier perspectives is easy. That way nobody will be tricked if what is being said is very wrong and nobody will have any business blaming what was said if they start a riot. If you want freedom of speech, you must admit that there will be consequences for others and yourself depending on what you say.

Do we have a right to freedom of speech?

Freedom of speech is not a right except when you are right. Otherwise it is a privilege. Grant this privilege but don't pretend it is a right. To say there is a God means he has the right to expect you to say only what he wants you to say. This denies that as a human being you have the right to say what you like.

Should there be laws so that people who have suffered grave distress and inconvenience over their religion can sue this religion if it has deceived them?

Yes. The Catholic Church for example gets money from people who think it is the true Church and this money should be returned if it is not what it purports to be.

What are the main consequences we should expect from the separation of church and state?

No religious evangelism in state schools.

Bigamy charges against people who marry again because they got a Church annulment that is not recognised by the state.

Religion being taxed.

Politicians abandoning their religion or at least ignoring it to do their job.

That citizens refuse to put God or their religion before the state.

Does the right of freedom of religion conflict with the right to freedom from religion?

Not necessarily. A Catholic school for example can allow non-Catholic pupils an exemption from prayers and religious instruction.

When there is a conflict which right is the most important one?

Most religious people are humanists most of the time.

LEAVE RELIGION AND ABHOR SPIRITUALITY

What is spirituality?

Spirituality is when you become a good person or a better person through help from the supernatural.

Is love spiritual?

People think that love is spiritual for it is not a material thing. But love is a feeling. We don't understand what kind of power it is but that does not mean that it is spirit or supernatural.

Why must we reject spirituality?

We need only assume that all things are somehow material. To talk about spirituality or spirit is to pay homage to the supernatural - an evil hypothesis. Do not categorise love as spiritual. Just go and love and forget about defining the kind of power it is.

Why should we leave say the Roman Catholic Church, for example, if we feel that it is not the one right religion?

Because it is Catholic teaching that membership of the Church is only right if you believe that the Church is the only correct and real Church of Jesus Christ. The Church says it is a serious sin to support a religion you feel is man-made. If it is not, then no religion can exist.

Are pick and chose Catholics really Catholics?

When you join a club or Church you join on its terms not yours. Those who claim to be Catholics wilfully refuse to believe the Catholic faith are not Catholics. You can't be a true member of the Communist party if you secretly disbelieve in Communism and so it is with every religion and ism.

Is it important to register membership with a Humanist Society?

You don't have to. It is only your outlook that makes you a Humanist. However, if you want to be seen as having left your Church it may be necessary to join an official Humanist Society.

Can an Humanist be a Catholic for example?

No for you have to have specifically Catholic beliefs to be a Catholic or Muslim ones to be a Muslim.

Should the Humanist put money into Church collections?

No for that will help the Church toughen its stranglehold.

What does the fact that the natural human impulse is to imitate what we see other people do tell us about going to Church?

To stay away except for weddings or funerals and important family occasions. We must not give bad example.

Why should the Humanist try to destroy faith in religion?

Because error causes trouble and bother. To let it thrive is to give somebody else the bother of dealing with it. We have something better than religion to replace it with - honesty.

Should unbelievers stay in religion to have a church wedding or funeral?

But they have left the Church in their hearts. They are not being true to themselves or honouring themselves. And their family or society which is pressuring them to conform to religion can't be happy about this for they are not real religionists but mere users. The faith can't mean much to them after all if they make a person become a user who disrespectfully treats religion like a social passport.

Should the Humanist pretend to be a member of a religion?

In bigoted areas the religionist who becomes an Humanist may pretend to be a religious devotee and must find a way to turn as many in the congregation away from God and religion as possible though normally it is preferable to stay away and discourage churchgoing.

What is one good tip for the Humanist who masquerades as a believer?

To ask awkward questions that the religionists cannot answer adequately and which will produce doubt. Believers in religion will fall away quicker when somebody who pretends to be a friend to the Church undermines its teaching but in a friendly way.

Why do we oppose religion?

Because it is a con. Because it is not needed and anything that causes trouble and is not needed should be abandoned.

Because it is a disorder for I know that I should be my own God so it is an attempt to pervert my instinct.

HUMANISM

May we do evil when we are sure that nobody will know about it and when we will get away with it?

No for that is feeding the lion that will one day eat us. It would be willing evil to exist and evil is our enemy.

Should we meet regularly to help stay good Humanists?

Yes so that we might learn new things and gain benefit and courage from what we already know. We need to travel with other people.

Do Humanists expel people?

Nobody can be expelled – ever; except when it happens that they renounce the teaching when they disfellowship themselves. These must be won back by being listened to and by friendliness and kindness. A Guardian of Truth will be available in every area and will visit anybody who is in danger of being won back to religion. One of the conditions of membership is agreeing to avail of their assistance.

Are all equal in Humanism?

All have a vital part to play and all are equal. Leaders are necessary but they must serve and not be served or to tell anybody what to believe. We are all equal in the way it counts: we all deserve the same things for we have no free will.

Are Humanists against all forms of religion?

Humanism must critically look at all religions and praise them were appropriate. There is nothing praiseworthy about true Christianity, true Islam or true Judaism. The fact that these faiths have sinister implications is proof that they come from man and not God and so should be abandoned.

Why are we nothing without it?

Because it is the voice of simple and undefiled wisdom and is enough to refute all religion and similar nonsense with their convincing books that are full of clever lies and half-truths and which offer evidence while ignoring the stronger evidence that says the opposite so we need to depend on The Gospel According to Atheism for it alone with its straightforwardness can be our fortress against the cannons of the deceivers.

Is Humanism a belief system or is it a methodology?

For some it is. For others it is just a code of conduct and they may secretly believe in life after death. That is fine if they keep their beliefs private and do not let them pollute the rule that they must consider people and have no concern for gods or God or any other kind of supernatural entity.

SPREAD THE WORD!

Is the person who wants us to believe what he says are very important things without proper evidence a well meaning person?

Never.

What is proselytism?

Aggressive evangelism. It is based on intolerance and arrogance and serves only to put people off the philosophy you are trying to promote.

Should we teach Humanism with gentleness and open-mindedness to all who are willing to listen?

Yes for it is the truth and they have a right to know it and we must not wait until they come to us for they need to know we are here.

How should we go about this?

We listen to their questions and problems and explain how humanism has enriched our lives. We share our knowledge without being condescending, obnoxious or annoying. We could open the conversation by asking them what their beliefs about Church and state are or what their spiritual beliefs are - hopefully the answer is they have none!

Do we convert people?

No. We offer them the chance to convert themselves.

What happens if we keep the truth away from people in case it will hurt them?

We are patronising. We are saying they are dishonest people who prefer error to the truth. That will not help us to respect them but to disrespect them. Everybody has the right to refuse to assist a person in their error. Indeed the erring person is calling out for correction.

Should we be reluctant to speak the truth about our humanistic principles?

No. If people are offended that is their problem. Humanism is too important to be silent about. As long as we make it evident that we only speak out because we care, we should be fine.

What about those who won't listen?

Don't force them. Give them a tract if you can. Tracts pushed in people's doors are a wonderful and unobtrusive way to reach them. It is vital to get a say in the media.

Who should the Humanist behave towards one who will not listen to anybody denying the existence of God?

Be polite and be realistic and remember that it will often be the case that nothing more can be done than to try and instil in people a sincere and open reverence for reason so that they will hopefully go and find the truth for themselves.

What are we doing to our self-esteem if we do not do anything to attract others to the message?

As long as we do not try to reach those who will listen we are tarnishing our own self-esteem for we are not trying to protect ourselves by teaching others to be happy so that they will not harm us or despise us because of the principles we represent. It is only self-defence.

What do you say to a person there are more important things than Humanism that people should know?

Nothing is more important than the only way to grab the best out of self-esteem.

Is it cruel to refute the superstitious faith of people who need it as a crutch?

Only if you preach at them against their will and do it without a desire to bring them to joy and freedom. If they listen to you or read your tract and have doubts then you have had nothing to do with any distress that ensues. Try to convert people without them noticing, if they are likely to be antagonistic towards the truth. You could do that by asking questions that draw them into doubt.

Is it cruel to leave religious people in their errors and self-deceits?

Yes. Doing that is running the risk of producing far more harm than good. It is unrealistic to expect people to remain ignorant indefinitely. For every ten that is happy in their faith, there could be somebody who at least secretly wants to know that it is false so that they can be free. And silence allows people to be deceived by religion and lose money and slave all their lives for a God who is not there at all or for a religion that is untrue!

Why is this catechism so focused on the evils of religious faith instead of telling us how to treat one another?

Because we know how to treat one another anyway except when religion poisons this knowledge. The most fanatical religious executioner of heretics knows at some level that his actions are evil. Also, we are not focusing on these things just to be anti-religious but to be pro-goodness. That is our motive.

Why do religionists fear humanists?

They think humanists are unrealistic for assuming humankind can progress and be morally better without help from God and without religion. But the fact of the matter is humanists and religionists must see that progress can be short and help too few people. We must keep trying. Trying means having the belief and willpower and skill to help using your own resources instead of pretending a God is going to help. Religion has done nothing special for it cannot do any more than humanism can and usually makes things worse.

FINALLY ...

What does the Humanist resolve?

I pledge loyalty to the principles of Humanism now and always.