

World Philosophy: Humanism

Objective

Learn about the premise of Humanism as a worldview

References

1. www.biblegateway.com
2. Lecture 3 from the 2008 Water Wind Faith College Convention Booklet
3. Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States Website:
Home>Resources>Literature>Humanism
4. Wikipedia
5. H.H Pope Shenouda Article titled "Humility Among the Virtues"; published in Saint Antony Monastery, Yermo CA December 2008 "Abba Antony" Newsletter

Scriptural Verse:

"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (**2 Corinthians 11:2-3**)

Lesson Outline

1. **An example of Humanistic literature just out:** "The Invisible Church: Finding Spirituality Wherever You Are" by J. Pittman McGehee and Damon J. Thomas "-- a way that encourages readers to connect with their true religious nature, while at the same time maintaining their intellectual integrity, and claiming their own authority. McGehee and Thomas offer that third way.
2. **What is Humanism?**
 - ❖ A worldview/a philosophy, a lens through which to define oneself, the world and our place in it.
 - ❖ A worldview is any ideology, philosophy, theology, or movement (basically a way of thinking) that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relation to God and the world.
 - ❖ A world view should provide the correct and true understanding through which to see myself, the world and God just as wearing the right eye glass prescription brings the world into focus.
 - ❖ Humanism especially is life-threatening (to our spirit) because it is intricately woven in our educational system. The idea of the philosopher Descartes: "I think therefore I am" which basically says that if we can't conceive of it then it isn't true, that fact that we have a mind is how we know we exist and we can't/don't exist beyond that; compare that with the Christian idea: I am what I am by the grace of the Lord (**1 Corinthians 15:10**) shows the stark contrast between the worldview of humanism and being in Christ.
 - ‡ According to Humanism, human is worthy and has dignity in and of himself, and he can determine right from wrong based on his reasoning; therefore ethics are relative to the situation and the people at hand. "Man is the measure of all things." (5th C. B.C Protagoras the Ancient Greek Philosopher). Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher

(1724-1804) said that “man himself must make himself into whatever he is to become.” Its history however is at the beginning: The temptation of wanting to be like God or little gods ourselves (Genesis 3:4). Truth and morality (the reality of God) can be discovered through human investigation: Science (“if we can’t see it/touch it, therefore it can’t be real”).

- † Belief without reason is rejected; therefore there is no room for faith. Truth is found only by applying reason and logic to observable evidence. Therefore belief or a “mystical experience of God” is considered a hallucination, irrational, a lack of sense of reality, completely against the intellect (which it is) but that means to the humanist that it isn’t truth.
- ❖ Humanism is what St. Paul was talking about in: Romans 1:25, 28
- ❖ Some Luring half-truths, which we can get caught in:
 - † Man is autonomous and independent
 - † Man is self-sufficient
 - † Man has the potential to do anything he sets his mind to
 - † Man has a free-will to choose anything he desires.
- ❖ The darker side of Humanism
 - † Man is his own point of reference
 - † Man is the solution to his own problems.
 - † Man deserves to indulge his personal gratifications
 - † Man is his own god.

3. What is our response as Christians?

- ❖ In regards to the premise that “God does not exist as an objective reality” What evidence do humanists have that there is no God? It is not possible to claim knowledge about all reality.
- ❖ Humanism will ultimately lead to pessimism, despair and destruction. It can offer no ultimate hope or purpose. With humanism we don’t reach beyond ourselves to anyone higher, we are it and then what?
- ❖ It is of extreme importance for us as Coptic Orthodox Christians to know the subtle ways that secular humanism is manifesting itself all around us.
- ❖ The first mistake that man made in the beginning, (and which humanism is now flaunting as the truth) is to separate ourselves from God. We have tried to set ourselves apart from God and said we are it, we belong to ourselves. So how do change this idea? By putting on the mind of Christ, How?
- ❖ Let our worldview be the mind of Christ.
 - † Romans 12:2
 - † Colossians 2:8
 - † 1Corinthians 15:58
 - † 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

Conclusion

One day, the world philosophy of humanism and all those who follow it will be brought low, since they exalted themselves as it says in Isaiah 2:12-15

Activities/Discussion Points

What are examples of Humanistic thought that we come across daily?