



The Enlightenment



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Religions – Can a Civilized Society Exist Without Them?



Notre Dame Cathedral – Paris France

Probably nothing in the past has had more influence on western society than Christianity, and indeed the term Christendom has been coined to encompass the areas where Christianity is the predominate religion. In addition to the purported responsibility of saving souls, Christianity has inspired remarkable architecture, such as the Notre Dame cathedral pictured above, and prompted great composers including Bach, Haydn, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and others, to compose a wealth of awe-inspiring music that we still enjoy today. The best architecture and music must be preserved, but what about Christianity itself? Has it outlived its usefulness?

Prior to 1500 CE, the Christian religion played a vital part in the lives of most Europeans, but since then, Europe and other Christian areas have gradually become more and more secular, partly aided by the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment. Today in most Christian countries (other than the U.S.), adherence to a church is the exception rather than the rule, making it incumbent upon us to explore the alternatives that have, or will, replace religion in the lives of the majority. This special issue of *The Enlightenment* examines these developments.

Outgoing President's Remarks

At an Annual General Meeting on January 13th, 2010, a new executive Board of the Humanist Association of London and Area was put in place. The new slate is shown below. After a term of four years, I expressed a desire to step down from the President's position, and we are all pleased that Rod Martin has agreed to assume the Presidency. I will take on the role of Secretary. Claire Van Daele-Boseret will continue as Treasurer. Ed Ashman and Dave Mabee will remain Members at Large. We welcome Charlotte Kurn and Walter Heywood to the Board, and we extend a hearty thank you to retiring Kate Balogh and André Lachance for their services to the HALA Board. Jon Hore has agreed to be on the Program Committee along with Bill Chefurka and Goldie Emerson. And we wish to thank the following volunteers: Jackie Emerson – Refreshments, Camile Van Daele – Music, Richard Gibbens – Research, Maria Stuhlemmer – Entertainment, Alison Cunningham – Web Master, and Don Hatch – *The Enlightenment*.

As is well known, the traditional mainline Christian religions are in decline in much of the western world. For many, religions have filled psychological and social needs in the past, so what, if anything, is replacing these needs as fewer people tend to be associated with a religious institution? As mentioned on the cover, this special issue of *The Enlightenment* contains articles that examine these occurrences. (DAH)

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The Humanist Association of London and Area meets at the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, 505 Dundas Street in London, on the second Wednesday of the months September to July inclusive at 7:30 p.m. Please use the rear door off the parking lot. *The Enlightenment*, edited by Don Hatch, is published quarterly in January, April, July and October. Please note: We reserve the right to edit and publish articles at our discretion.

Visit our web site at www.humanists-london.org

New members are welcome. Contact Membership Secretary Dave Mabee at (519) 697-6010, e-mail davemabee@rogers.com Membership fees are listed below.

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Single	\$40	\$22	\$20	\$10
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Religions – Can a Civilized Society Exist Without Them?

“Religion Poisons Everything” is the sub-title of Christopher Hitchens’ book, *God is Not Great*. Anyone observing what is going on in the world today might well tend to agree with Hitchens. In the United States, Christian fundamentalists are threatening the separation of church and state, and they also helped George W. Bush get elected for two disastrous terms. In the Middle East, Jewish zealots will not rest until the Israelis occupy all the land that they believe was promised to them by God; as a result of this on-going conflict, the Palestinian people are suffering intensively, and many civilian lives are being lost. In certain areas, Islamic fundamentalists are bent on establishing theocratic governments in as many countries as possible, often using force if necessary. Furthermore, fundamentalist terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda aim at inflicting havoc on western countries because of U.S. involvement in certain Muslim countries and because of U.S. support for Israel. And then there are the well- documented religious atrocities from the past, including the crusades, the inquisitions, the persecution of European Jews, and the burning of so-called witches at the stake. No wonder Hitchens claims, “Religion Poisons Everything.”

But is there a flip side? Have religions not done some good during the millennia in which they have existed, and are they not doing good things today? In other words, have religions not had some significant positive influences on the way people live? A case can be made for the affirmative. Most monotheists look to their religion for moral and ethical guidance, and most at least attempt to live by the universal Golden Rule and prescribed Commandments. Many parishioners get great spiritual satisfaction from the rituals and the atmosphere of church sanctuaries, believing that this provides some balance to their lives. Others get satisfaction from the outreach activities of their church because they feel they are helping the underprivileged. For many, the social attributes of their church are quite important.

Another, but seldom mentioned, positive aspect of the Christian religion is the very definite beneficial influence that Protestantism has had on western society. Without the Protestant Reformation, that lessened the influence of the dictatorial Catholic Church, the advancements of science and democracy in the West would have been much slower. In his recent book *Consumed*, Benjamin Barber credits the Protestant work ethic as a major factor in bringing about the advances in western civilizations that occurred after the Reformation. I believe that the Protestant work ethic and the liberal Protestant churches helped contribute to the stability of a moral and ethical lifestyle in parts of Europe and North America in the early years and beyond, resulting in their citizens being recognized as industrious, modest, caring, and compassionate people. The question today is, however, are these benefits still relevant, or as Sigmund Freud asked, have religions outlived their usefulness? It can be argued that they have, and that it is time to move on to some meritorious alternative.

Many religious believers insist that religions are necessary to impart morality and ethics to humankind. As mentioned above, religions have had some beneficial moral and ethical influences, but morality does not come from on high; it is a human construct for the purpose of imparting some stability into society. The great code of Hammurabi was established in Babylon around 1700 BCE, several centuries before the Axial Age, when the world’s great religions first appeared. Morality was taken over by religions in order to exert control over the masses. But in spite of having usurped morality, religions have been only partially successful in their efforts to instill morality and ethics in their followers. All religions advocate the Golden Rule and sharing with others. They proclaim the commandments, thou shalt not kill and thou shalt not steal, but murder and robbery and wars are rampant, not to mention excessive greed and white collar crime. In a recent Reuters press release titled, “Corruption Tears Apart Society,” an FBI agent states that corruption is now the country’s No. 1 criminal threat, as financial scams ranging from

hedge fund frauds to Ponzi schemes have jumped by more than 25% in the last five years. Many, or even most, people committing these crimes were probably raised in a religious environment, but it seems to have had little effect on their subsequent actions. Greed, a powerful motivator for some is still, and may always be, with us.

So just where are we today? The reality is not encouraging. The main line liberal Protestant churches (and Catholic churches in the west) are in decline, and many are closing. Any positive influences they might have had in the past are waning. The religious evils mentioned in the first paragraph on the previous page are ascending, and the short-term future looks bleak. It is the belief of many humanists that establishing secular societies with strong, prosperous middle classes is the long-term solution to the religious, economic, and social problems that are now prevalent, but as long as today's leaders insist on war to settle differences and achieve their agendas, there is little hope for global prosperity and equality. Only through educating future generations about scientific truths, and about the reality that monotheistic religious beliefs are questionable, and have outlived their usefulness, will significant changes occur. At the present time, the actions of certain monotheists are certainly causing more harm than good, and perhaps poisonous is not an inappropriate adjective to describe the worst of them, particularly the radical fundamentalist Islamists that belong to terrorist organizations. And then there are the religious-right fundamentalists in the United States that want to turn the country into a Christian theocracy. As incredible as this may seem, the threat is real, and these people have considerable financial backing as well as some political clout.

So, can a civilized society exist without religions? I think the evidence presented above would suggest that many societies would be better off with less religious involvement. Most of the major strife in today's world is a result of religious differences and tribalism. Unfortunately, it is going to take considerable time to reform fundamentalism in certain parts of the globe, but there are some areas that do prove that societies can exist quite prosperously and peacefully with a minimum of religious influence. One of these areas is Western Europe, and in particular Scandinavia. In a book entitled *Society Without God*, sociologist Phil Zuckerman describes his experiences living in secular Denmark and Sweden for fourteen months. This book is reviewed on page 5, and more comments on the Scandinavian experience are on page 6.

Although Canada is considered to be less religious than the United States, we have not yet achieved the level of secularization that is present in much of Europe. About 20% of Canadians are still active in religious organizations, compared to less than 10% in Europe. The active church people in Canada can be broadly slotted into three categories, the fundamentalist/evangelicals who are growing, the mainline churches that are largely in decline, and a small new group called progressives that reject many of the traditional Christian beliefs, while still wishing to meet on Sundays to obtain some semblance of spiritual fulfillment. One such group is the West Hill United Church in Toronto led by the Reverend Gretta Vosper. Gretta believes that more cooperation between liberal Christians, humanists, skeptics, free thinkers, agnostics and atheists can produce desirable results. Her story is on pages 7 and 8.

A topic of discussion that crops up from time to time among humanists concerns the matter of definition. Can humanism be considered to be a religion? Attempts have been made by some in the past to claim that humanism should replace traditional religions, but still be identified as a religion. More recently the majority opinion seems to favour the approach that humanism is definitely not a religion and is quite capable of promoting non-religious ethics and morality. After all, in ancient Greece and Rome, ethics and morality were considered the domain of philosophers, not the priests, until such time as they were later taken over by the Catholic Church to serve their own purposes. On pages 8, 9 and 10, retired educator and HALA member Donald Santor makes a strong case that humanism is indeed a philosophical life stance and world view, and in no way should be considered a religion.

Book Review

Society Without God – by Phil Zuckerman

A previous Special Issue of *The Enlightenment*, with the thematic title of “Secularization,” presented a summary of Gregory Paul’s research, comprehensively comparing the high degree of religiosity in the United States with the rather low levels in the rest of the industrial world. In *Society Without God*, sociologist Phil Zuckerman narrows his focus to two countries, Denmark and Sweden. Zuckerman’s central findings, based on his fourteen-month residence in Denmark, and his extensive interviews with nearly 150 Danes and Swedes are; that “society without God is not only possible, but can be quite civil and pleasant.” And contrary to “the claims of certain outspoken, conservative Christians who regularly argue that a society without God would be hell on earth, rampant with immorality, full of evil, and teeming with depravity, in reality Denmark and Sweden are remarkably strong, safe, healthy, moral and prosperous societies.”

Zuckerman adds, “It is crucial for people to know that it is actually quite possible for a society to lose its religious beliefs and still be well-functioning, successful, and fully capable of constructing and obeying sound laws and establishing and following rational systems of morality and ethics. Worship of God can wane, prayer can be given up, and the Bible can go unstudied, yet people can treat one another decently, schools and hospitals can still run smoothly, crime can remain minimal, babies and old people can receive all the care and attention they need, economies can flourish, pollution can be kept to a minimum, and children can be loved in warm homes--without God being a central component of everyday life.”

Phil Zuckerman acknowledges that a much-attenuated cultural Lutheranism continues in Denmark and Sweden. Most Danes and Swedes still pay the church tax (though they can easily opt out), have church weddings, and baptize their children even though they rarely darken the door of a church. Most Danes and Swedes regard themselves as Christians, though like Thomas Jefferson, they regard this simply as being a good and moral person and pay no attention to traditional creeds. “Benign indifference” is the term Zuckerman uses for the Scandinavian approach to religion, and he emphasizes that this indifference is neither hostility toward religion, nor plain atheism; religion is simply a non-topic.

It is important to note, as Zuckerman points out, that a high degree of security, “evaluating factors such as homicide rates, levels of violent crime, levels of disrespect for human rights, political instability, levels of distrust among citizens, etc., leads to benign indifference” regarding religion. Denmark and Sweden rank third and seventh on the 2007 Global Peace Index. (Norway ranks first). A low degree of security generally typifies societies that tend to be more religious. For example, the United States ranks ninety-sixth on the aforementioned Index.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from Zuckerman’s important book is that traditional religion fades in a society, not as a result of aggressive atheist activity, but as a result of a society achieving a high level of personal security. The United States, according to Phil Zuckerman and Gregory Paul, would do well to emulate the Scandinavians.

A final point: when Zuckerman arrived in Denmark he believed the human brain was hard-wired for religion. On leaving, he reasoned religion was predominately a cultural phenomena. (DAH)

Phil Zuckerman is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Pitzer College in Claremont California.

What Can Be Learned From The Scandinavians?

Assuming that the ultimate aspiration of the Humanist movement is the establishment of a prosperous secular society with a minimum of religious influences, perhaps exploring conditions in the societies of secular Denmark and Sweden can provide helpful guidelines in how to further this desire. In order to understand how secularization evolved in these countries, it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Prior to the Reformation, the residents of Denmark and Sweden were predominately Roman Catholics. Both countries were somewhat backward, but the Catholic Church was wealthy and owned a considerable amount of land. With the advent of Lutheranism, however, the Kings of both countries recognized a good thing and established Lutheranism as the national religion, while confiscating the wealth of the Catholic Church. They instigated a "church tax" to insure that the Lutheran churches would be healthy and prosperous --- a very smart move. Today Lutheranism is still the predominant religion in both Denmark and Sweden. There are very few Catholics. The "church tax" is still in effect, at least in Denmark, and most still pay it, but residents have the option of applying to be exempt. So the obvious question is, with the Lutheran Church so well established in both countries, why are they so secular?

Most of the 150 people interviewed by Dr. Zuckerman for his book *Society Without God*, indicated that their grandparents attended church fairly regularly, their own parents less often and they themselves hardly ever. About the only time the present generation darkens the door of a church is to attend baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals. They attend, not because of any strong religious beliefs, but because these occasions are family social events and everyone seems anxious to hold onto the tradition. The church per se plays little or no part in their everyday lives. Most do not believe in God, the virgin birth, the resurrection, or in an afterlife. They just go about their lives trying to get the most out of living. Many see churches as generally a good thing, sort of community monuments. Although church attendance is very low, the "church tax" keeps the clergy employed and the buildings maintained. Some priests are more concerned with studying history and philosophy than in preaching sermons.

A quality that stands out in the Zuckerman interviews is the amount of scientific knowledge possessed by the Scandinavians, (few creationists here). They all appear to have had a superior education that instilled a keen sense of critical thinking. Although they reject belief in the supernatural, most (but not all), are reluctant to be labeled as atheists. For them, the term is too restrictive, too condemning. One interviewee said, "I would not call myself an atheist, I'm not a fanatic, atheist is too strong." Another labeled herself as a "gentle agnostic." When asked if he or she were a religious person, many said no. They defined religion as believing in the supernatural. If you do not believe in the supernatural, you are not religious, it is as simple as that. But Zuckerman characterizes the Danes and Swedes as having a "cultural religion." They do not believe in the supernatural claims of most religions, but accept the fact that the church is a part of their culture, while attending only on special occasions.

To answer the question posed in the last sentence of the second paragraph above, I think having only one predominate church, supported by the state, has been a major factor in Denmark and Sweden being among the most secular countries in the world. This single church did not have any significant opposition, and had no need to actively promote itself, because it was guaranteed public funding. The Church became lazy and the people just lost interest in religion. And an added factor: a prosperous socialist economy has provided social safety nets.

Now we must examine the situation on our side of the pond. What led to America having such a high degree of religiosity? The first factor is history. In Europe the Enlightenment philosophers considered the Church the enemy. In contrast, in the New World, the early settlers emigrated from their homeland in order to obtain religious freedom. Although the U.S. Constitution

established a firm wall between church and state, all religions were allowed the freedom to proselytize their faith, with the result that evangelizing became popular and many people were persuaded to join one religious denomination or another. This prolific expansion is still going on today with the religious-right evangelists.

A second factor is immigration. Immigrants came from many European countries, brought their culture and religion with them and tended to maintain their ties to the church.

A third factor is income inequality. Where there is a wide disparity between rich and poor, as in the U.S., poverty rates are high, and low-income people are generally more religious. This is in contrast to Scandinavia, where a lower gap between rich and poor and a lower poverty rate tends to encourage secularism.

A fourth factor is social security. Scandinavians do not have to worry about paying medical bills and there are other social safety nets that provide stability and lessen the need for support from religions. In America, President Obama's health care bill will do more to promote secularism in the U.S. than any amount of atheistic proselytizing.

A fifth factor is education. In America 44% of the population believes humans and dinosaurs roamed the earth together less than 10,000 years ago. The well-educated secular Scandinavians would laugh at this. A much improved education system in the U.S. would help to speed up secularism and lessen the influence of religions.

In summary, the historical events in America have tended to foster religion rather than diminish it. Secular organizations in the U.S. have a daunting challenge in helping their society arrive at an improved, less religious life stance and a more secular society.

But what about Canada? Fortunately, I think, we are closer to the Europeans than the Americans. We have social safety nets, and we allow abortion and gay marriage without the excessive controversy prevalent in the U.S. Only about 20% of Canadians are active in their churches, (as compared to almost 50% in the U.S.) and about 20% call themselves non-religious. The 60% in the middle go about their lives trying to make a decent living without much thought about religion. We are basically a secular country, but there is still work to do. We need to help bring an end to public financing of religious schools and we need to promote dying with dignity. Ironically, it is Quebec that is leading in these fields. Both of these are issues that humanists, free thinkers and like-minded groups should work on, instead of thumping the atheist drum. A serious religious problem facing Canadians is the spread of Christian fundamentalism. Convincing the fundamentalists to think critically is a huge challenge. If any of these fundamentalists achieve authorized political power, it could set the country back 50 years. This is a threat of which humanists must be acutely aware.

So, can a civilized society exist without religions? On the basis of the Scandinavian experience the answer is yes, but only when there is no overt attempt to eliminate them; (remember Communism failed). Under conditions of economic prosperity, adequate social security, and a top-notch educational system, people will tend to drift away from religion on their own. The result --- a thriving secular society. (DAH).

The Reverend Gretta Vosper – Progressive Thinker

Gretta Vosper, minister of the West Hill United Church in Toronto is probably the most progressive minister in Canada. She is the rare clergy person who has completely abandoned the supernatural. She believes Jesus was fully human, not born of a virgin, nor bodily raised from the dead. She believes the Bible is a human construct, and that there is no supernatural deity that answers prayers. Her progressive thoughts and ideas are brilliantly outlined in her latest book, *With or Without God: Why the way we live is more important than what we believe*.

She makes the strong case that living without belief in the traditionally accepted Judeo-Christian God is not only possible, but desirable.

Gretta knows that the main-line Protestant churches are in decline, and she is searching for a better alternative, one that is centred on the teachings of Jesus, the man, but adapted to conditions in this 21st century. I believe she would be comfortable with all the twelve principles of humanism as a guideline for living, but she is trying to add something more in the way of an appreciation of the awe and wonder of our existence while celebrating the aesthetics of life. In her church services she is attempting to achieve a kind of meaningful and inspiring secular transcendence, to replace what is normally thought of as God worship and religious spirituality. Unlike the Unitarians, who are also very liberal and progressive, but at the same time tending to be all things to all people, Gretta calls it like she sees it. In her view there is no supernatural deity, period.



I have heard Gretta speak on two occasions, and I talked with her briefly the second time. I have been impressed with her knowledge of evolutionary science and of the real history of Judaism and Christianity. She knows as Carl Sagan often said, that we are made of “star stuff.” As well as being minister of West Hill United Church, she is the founder of the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity. This is an organization devoted to educating the public on the present state of modern views on Christianity. They publish a quarterly newsletter called *Progressions*, and hold periodic conferences to discuss the latest thinking on Progressive Christianity and other topics.

I think humanists can learn something from Gretta. In her latest book she mentions the case of a young man who was searching for a humanist group that “wasn’t made up of old angry men and women consuming all their time denigrating the church.” She states, “it is time for humanists, atheists, agnostics and skeptics, to realize they share a common future with progressive moderates that are still comforted by religious beliefs. We all have much to offer one another: not supernatural beings to whom we can offload our problems, but spiritual tools and practices that can help us to know and honour our shared and richly human experiences of life.”

If we humanists wish to benefit society in any meaningful way, I submit that we must, as Gretta suggests, learn how to work cooperatively with like-minded people on important societal issues, employing the many positive aspects of humanism, while respecting those with liberal progressive beliefs. Humanist will never be taken seriously by the public, as long as we are known primarily as proselytizers of atheism. We must be seen as doing something constructive to help further the advancement of our democratic society. (DAH).

Is Humanism a Religion?

By *Don Santor*

For well over a century prominent individuals have contended that Humanism is a religion. Octavius Brooks Frothingham (1822-1895) was one of the first to make such a claim when he published *The Religion of Humanity* in 1872. Brooks, a Unitarian preacher, abolitionist, evolutionist and transcendentalist, presented Humanism as the ‘new religion’. Many other

supporters of this position appeal to Julian Huxley who once called Humanism 'our common faith'. Perhaps his use of faith is ambiguous since it carries so much semantic baggage. Huxley looked upon traditional religion as "an outdated piece of ideological furniture" that needed to be jettisoned." He advocated abandoning the "god hypothesis" and the supernatural and constructing something else in its place.ⁱ With these caveats in mind it is difficult to believe that Huxley saw Humanism as a traditional 'religion'. His declaration begs the question: What understanding or definition of religion Huxley was using?

In the 1920s John Dewey presented Humanism as religion in an article he wrote for *The New Republic*. Later on a 1961 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States buttressed his claim by affirming that Humanism is a religion. In *Torcaso vs. Watkins* the Supreme Court stated in one of the footnotes, "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others." Since the case was actually about "test oaths" and not about religion, it behoves supporters of the religion thesis to use this court decision as confirmation of their position.

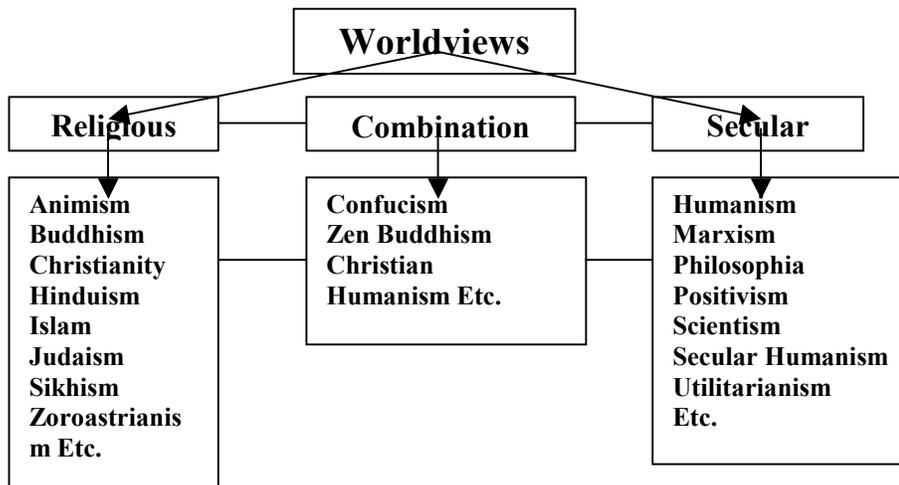
As debate over the nature of Humanism heated up in the 1970s and 80s, Christian fundamentalists and other conservative religionists had a vested interest in establishing that Humanism is a religion. If such a claim could be established or proven, and if it could be shown that the public schools were based on humanist principles, then alternative religious schools would demand funding from the public purse by appealing to the equality clause of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Whether Humanism is a religion depends on the definition that is used to classify a set of beliefs. But a definitional approach to answering the question is often the refuge of convergent thinkers who may select a definition of either Humanism or religion that suits their purpose and leads to the desired answer. For example, *The Collins English Dictionary* defines Humanism as, "the rejection of religion in favour of a belief in the advancement of humanity by its own efforts."ⁱⁱ This would seem to favour a negative response and end the discussion once and for all. But another definition of religion from the same dictionary, "something of overwhelming importance to a person,"ⁱⁱⁱ permits a positive response and lumps Humanism in with religion. But when the dictionary says that religion is the "belief in, the worship of or the obedience to a supernatural power"^{iv} then Humanism does not fit the mould. Much to my satisfaction, *The Penguin Dictionary of Religions* defines a humanist as "a person with a set of entirely non-religious beliefs and values."^v Clearly, a definitional approach to answering the question is futile, if not even a fallacy of logic. Hinnells himself, the Editor of the Penguin dictionary, asserts under the entry for religion that "Dictionary definitions are often circular, prejudiced or so general as to be useless."^{vi}

For almost a century, religious scholars and theologians have decried the very use of the word 'religion' to describe a faith tradition. For example Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoefer, Paul Tillich and even C. S. Lewis himself have avoided or at least apologized for ever using the word.^{vii} World class historian of religion Wilfred Cantwell Smith suggests the concept of religion is 'inadequate' and should be 'dropped'^{viii} because to define something is to set limits which can lead only to ambiguity and distortion. Consequently, an alternative approach is required.

Instead of describing and defining religion and then determining if Humanism fits the mould, it would be much more meaningful to talk about 'worldviews' through which individuals try to make sense of their lives. It is within the context of a worldview that individuals find answers to the great questions of life, and it also enables them to work out their purpose and meaning in life. Worldviews may be predominantly religious or secular, or may be a more balanced combination of both. (See diagram below.) While religion and Humanism have much in common, they each have several distinguishing characteristics. By religious I mean those worldviews that include and emphasize some or most of the following characteristics: a belief in the divine or

supernatural; a belief in some sort of existence beyond death; the acceptance of a body of literature that is sacred or holy; a belief in revelation as a source of truth; the inclusion of worship and ritual in honour of a deity; and the acceptance of an epistemology that is not totally reliant on empirical evidence. A secular worldview, on the other hand, includes and emphasizes the following characteristics: a belief in humans as the epitome of evolution and the subsequent rejection of the divine or the supernatural; a belief in an epistemology based on empiricism and the subsequent rejection of divine revelation as a source of truth; the acceptance of knowledge as tentative and not absolute; an optimistic view of human potential; and the capability of humans to understand the world and shape their lives and destiny apart from the divine.



Each worldview within either the religious or humanistic domain has many manifestations, and exhibits both strengths and weaknesses. This offers the opportunity for individuals to adopt a worldview that best meet their spiritual and temporal needs. Many Christian traditions incorporate several of the principles set down in the *Humanist Manifesto* into their worldview, but because they retain a Christo-centric theistic belief, they consequently call themselves *Christian Humanists*. Needless to say, there is still a profound difference between Humanists and Christian Humanists, namely a belief in the divine or supernatural.

Both the religious and secular worldviews serve a similar purpose: they provide a framework for helping the respective adherents answer or resolve the great questions of life, and consequently they help an individual determine purpose and meaning in life. But just because Humanism serves a similar purpose to Christianity or any other religious tradition, it does not make Humanism a religion or even religious. That would be like saying a car is a truck because it can be used to carry lumber on the roof.

Even though Humanism fulfills the role that is traditionally filled by religion, it is not a religion: it is a secular worldview.

ⁱ Huxley, Julian. "The New Divinity" in *Essays of a Humanist*. (London, Penguin, 1969).

ⁱⁱ *The Collins English Dictionary*. London: Collins, 1987), p. 745.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, p. 1291.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p. 1291.

^v John R. Hinnells. *The Penguin Dictionary of Religions* (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 156.

^{vi} Hinnells, p. 270.

^{vii} Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991 (1962), p. 125.

^{viii} Smith, 131.