



# The Enlightenment

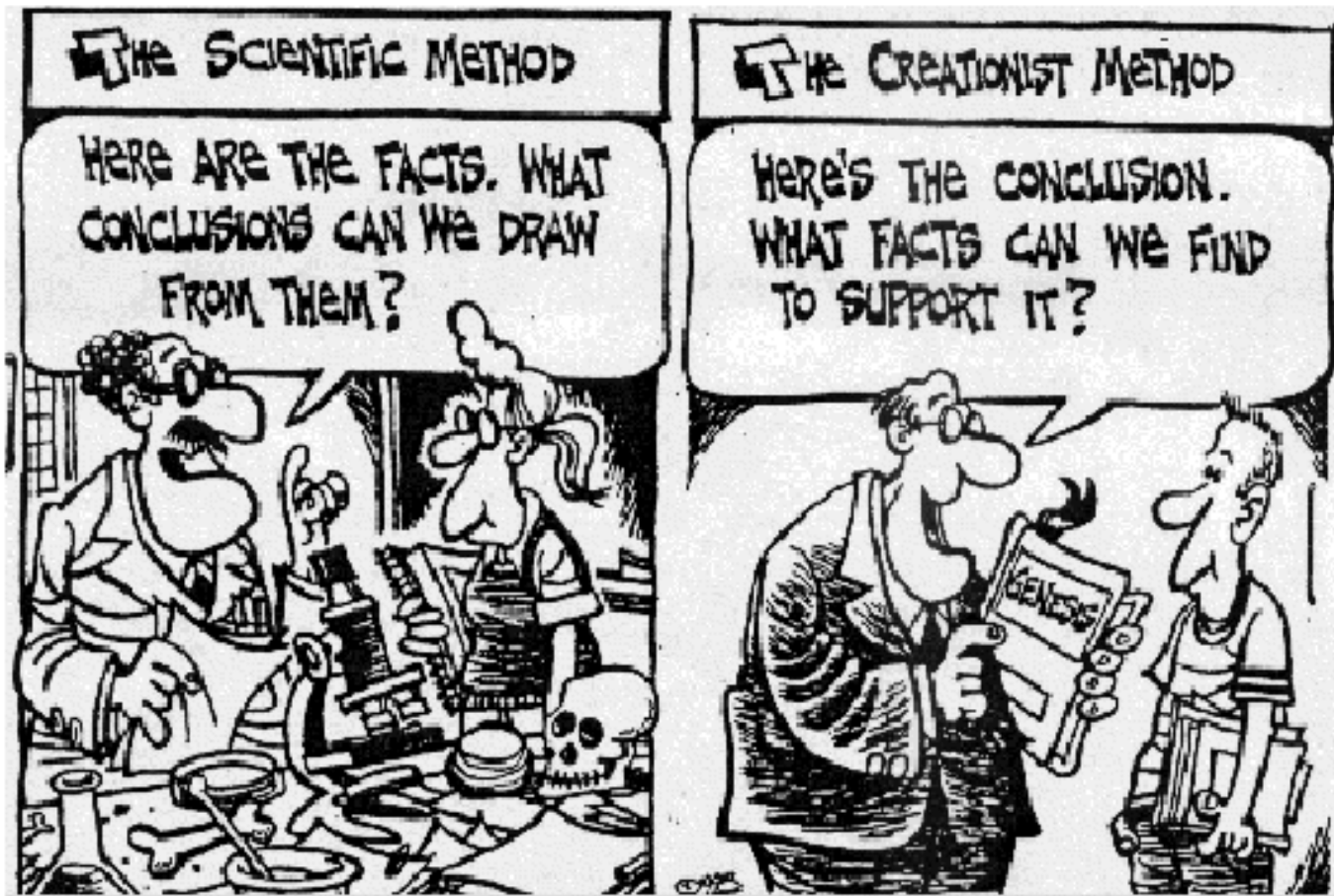


The Newsletter of the  
Humanist Association of London and Area  
An Affiliate of Humanist Canada (HC)

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## The Menace of Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism

The cartoon says it all. Scientists look for the facts. Fundamentalists and Evangelicals ignore the facts and rely on faith to justify belief in supernatural phenomena and creationism. Moreover they feel it is their God-given responsibility to evangelize and foist their beliefs on vulnerable, unsuspecting individuals. Surprisingly, the ranks of these zealots are increasing in North America, while attendance at mainline churches is in decline. Worse yet, they are beginning to infiltrate governments in Canada, as they have successfully done in the United States. And most unfortunately, they are being aided by our born-again Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Exploring these religious-right activities is the central theme of this *Enlightenment*. An excellent article on Ethics and Morality by Goldwin Emerson is also included.

## President's Remarks

In this issue of the *Enlightenment*, Don Hatch has written a provocative article about the growing influence of right-wing Christian Fundamentalism in Canadian politics. We need to speak out when we see movements such as this threaten our hard-won Canadian rights and freedoms, such as access to abortion and same-sex marriage. Many people are attracted to fundamentalist beliefs because of the false sense of certainty that they offer, providing them with simplistic, black-and-white answers to life's complex questions. Unable to tolerate uncertainty, these people are threatened by Humanism, believing that a rejection of theism leads to a loss of morality and ethics, leading to the breakdown of society. In another excellent article in the present issue, Goldie Emerson responds to these concerns, drawing a distinction between ethics and morality. He argues that an ethical system based on empathic Humanism may be even more just and virtuous than a morality based on religious traditions.

As I write this, it is the beginning of August, and we are in the midst of the "lazy, hazy days of summer." Wherever your travels and holidays may take you, I wish all of you a very relaxing and refreshing summer, and I look forward to seeing you again at our HALA meeting in September. Our program committee has lined up an outstanding series of speakers for our meetings in the Fall, which I'm sure we will all find enjoyable, thought-provoking, and enlightening.

### The Board of the Humanist Association of London and Area (HALA)

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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](http://www.humanists-london.org)

**New members are welcome.** Contact Membership Secretary, Walter Heywood (519) 434-9237 e-mail [wjheywood@yahoo.ca](mailto:wjheywood@yahoo.ca) Membership fees are listed below:

	<u>HC</u>	<u>Humanist</u>	<u>HALA</u>	<u>HALA Limited</u>
	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Perspectives</u>	<u>Basic</u>	<u>Resources</u>
Single	\$40	\$22	\$20	\$10
Family	\$50		\$25	\$15
Life	\$700			

## Book Review

### *The Armageddon Factor*

The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada

By

**Marci McDonald**

May he have dominion from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 72: 8

Psalm 72 is a Hebrew plea to God, begging Him to bless their revered King Solomon, provide him with long life so that he may reign over a prosperous nation, and enable him to defeat all enemies, while showing compassion for the poor and needy. Three thousand years later, we in Canada are being confronted by fundamentalist Christians who fervently believe that verse 8 in Psalm 72 is a prophetic omen referring to the Dominion of Canada stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the St. Lawrence River to the Arctic, the end of the earth. Furthermore, these evangelical types believe it is their duty and responsibility to work toward making Canada a theocracy, governed according to biblical precepts, rather than a democracy based on the separation of church and state. They also believe that time is of the essence because, now that there is once again an established State of Israel, the rapture and Armageddon prophesied in The Revelation of John are not far off.

The need for careful vigilance of these insidious threats is the central theme of *The Armageddon Factor*. In this best-seller, respected journalist Marci McDonald shares the results of a prodigious amount of careful research into what is currently going on among these misguided zealots. In the Preface she puts it this way:

“In this book I have chosen to focus on those political activists whose goal is to attain the same political power that their counterparts have enjoyed in the United States. But while chronicling the forces shaping Canada’s religious right, I have highlighted one faction I refer to as *Christian Nationalists*, a militant charismatic fringe with ties to Harper’s Conservatives that has gained influence out of all proportion to its numerical heft. Not only is it helping to reshape foreign policy, the public service and the courts, it has thrown its weight behind a range of socially conservative policies that it regards as prerequisites to remaking Canada as a distinctly Christian nation.”

The book begins by describing a youth rally named “theCRY” on Parliament Hill in the summer of 2008, organized by Faytene Kryslow, the leader of a youth group called “4MYCanada.” With tears coursing down her cheeks, she implored, “Father save us...Hear our cry...Heal our land... Reclaim Canada for Christ.” She continues by advocating the cessation of legal abortions and then urges the restructuring of Canada into a Christian nation governed by biblical literalists according to principles selectively plucked from the Old and New Testaments. Her aim is to wipe out the distinction between church and state around the world. Kryslow has gained ready access to the evangelicals in Harper’s caucus and has even received a letter from Harper lauding her Christian youth movement.

The first chapter continues on to document Stephen Harper’s journey from a United Church moderate to an agnostic and then to a born-again fundamentalist Christian. His accountant

father was a long-term United Church member, but switched to the Presbyterian Church when the United Church allowed the ordination of homosexuals. Stephen did not become a Presbyterian, but instead joined the Christian Missionary Alliance, and eventually the Calgary congregation of the Bow Valley Alliance. Upon moving to Ottawa he joined the rather obscure East Gate Alliance, an evangelical church in a working-class area of Ottawa's east end. (Incidentally, Harper's once divorced, motor-cycle-riding wife Laureen, rarely sets foot in East Gate. She is not interested in spiritual things and generally gives religion a wide berth.) Alliance churches are heavily involved with charity work oriented toward the marginalized and impoverished. They believe that social welfare ought to be delivered by faith communities rather than by governments. Harper is in agreement with this approach as is evident in his decision not to finance a national day-care scheme, but instead dole out a monthly allowance directly to families. This move pleased his evangelical pastor friends.

It is estimated that there are about 3.5 million evangelicals in Canada, a little over 10% of the population. Interspersed amongst these people are those whom McDonald describes as Christian Nationalists whose aim, as mentioned above, is to make Canada a theocratic nation. Most of these devotees belong to one of a number of organizations that are working to influence and infiltrate governments. The youth organization 4MYCanada, led by Faytene Kryslow has already been mentioned. Another is the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada led by Brian Stiller, a former Canadian President of Youth for Christ, and now chancellor of Toronto's Tyndale University College and Seminary. Stiller unashamedly boasts that he and his cohorts have helped to put a born-again Christian in 24 Sussex Drive. One of the most visible Christian Nationalists is the Reverend Charles McVety, President of Canada Christian College. He has pipelines to the dozens of evangelicals in Harper's caucus, including Stockwell Day. As McVety told McDonald, "A lot of our friends are in Government now, so that makes things a lot easier." McVety is also the public face of the forty thousand member Canada Family Action Coalition. He is also the Canadian spokesperson of Christians United for Israel. Then there is Watchmen for the Nations, originally a B.C. group of Pentecostal leaders, that has organized the National House of Prayer in the nation's capital and offers a haven to Conservative MPs who find themselves sidelined from Ottawa's cocktail circuit. It is estimated that nearly half of the Conservative caucus members are right-wing Catholics or evangelicals. Among these are some who believe that only those who believe that every word of the Bible is divinely dictated ought to hold public office.

Most of the Canadian organizations listed above have ties to similar organizations in the United States that support their Canadian counterparts in their efforts to influence governments. We now know that persistent, clever lobbying by the religious right in the U.S. contributed to the election of the born again George W. Bush for two disastrous terms, and McDonald warns us that a similar situation could occur in Canada if Stephen Harper ever obtained a majority.

Two issues that crop up time and again in the book are abortion and gay marriage. The evangelicals are determined to have the laws changed to eliminate both legal abortions and legal marriage of gays and lesbians. And of course, in this endeavour they are aided by the Catholics, as the Catholic Church is officially opposed to both practices. In the past, Harper has been relatively silent on the abortion issue, but the recent Government decision not to fund abortions in the developing countries demonstrates that he is beginning to show his hand. Another contentious issue is euthanasia. Although 76% of Canadians favour some form of legal assisted suicide, certain evangelicals have formed the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition to help thwart any attempt to enact legal euthanasia legislation. A further issue is that of evolution versus creationism, or its guise, intelligent design. All of Chapter VI, entitled "In The Beginning,"

is devoted to this subject. Although the percentage of Canadians believing in creationism is lower than in the United States, the evangelicals are not discouraged from attempting to wedge the subject into science classes in Canadian schools. And speaking of schools, the funding of faith-based Christian schools, always a hot political issue, is discussed and analyzed in Chapter VII, "Raising The Joshua Generation."

Two chapters in the book are devoted to the techniques evangelicals use to swell their expanding ranks. "Rocking The Vote" describes how Rock and Roll Christian music is being used at youth rallies to recruit converts, and "The Electronic Pulpit" deals with the Televangelists. In Canada the best known Christian TV program is *100 Huntley Street*, founded by David Mainse. Lorna Dueck's syndicated *Listen Up* is another, but less well-known Canadian show. These programs aid to no small extent in furthering the evangelical agenda, even though there have been embarrassing scandals among certain TV evangelical personalities in both the United States and Canada.

The penultimate chapter is entitled "The Armageddon Factor," which could be subtitled, "The Messiah is coming much sooner than you think." There are certain Christians all over the world, known as Christian Zionists, who fervently believe that the end is near now that a State of Israel has been reestablished. In his book, *Jerusalem Countdown*, Texas televangelist John Hagee states, "We are facing a countdown in the Middle East that will usher in the end of this world." It is claimed to be all part of God's plan foretold by the Old Testament prophets and the gospel of Matthew, which list wars, famines and earthquakes as "birth pains" before the return of Jesus to the world. Christian Zionists are helping to fund the State of Israel, and recently John Hagee presented Israeli charities with a six million-dollar cheque. It is well known that Stephen Harper is a strong supporter of Israel.

In the final short chapter entitled, "Here To Stay," McDonald warns that Canadians should not become complacent and ignore the threat of evangelicals to our established Canadian way of democratic life. She mentions that in a visit to Canada in 2006, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges was alarmed to discover that Stephen Harper was putting out the welcome mat for the religious-right. He warned Canadians against following the lead of those Americans who "stood sleepily by as Pat Robertson and other religious bigots hijacked the Republican Party and moved into the legislative and executive branches of government." As he made clear, the growth of the U.S. Christian right was a long and insidious process, but one that could only have happened because the media and political moderates watched in passive disbelief or wishful denial. The author concludes with the following: "In tracing this emerging religious right force in this country, I have attempted to sound a wake-up call, but in the end it is up to Canadian voters to write the next chapter. Only they can decide the kind of country in which they want to live."

#### Editor's Comments

"Up to Canadian voters" indeed, but what choice do we have? Stephen Harper may be a misguided religious-right individual, but he is no fool. He is a clever strategic schemer and will not willingly force an election until he is confident of winning a majority. In this regard he knows he must obtain support from all of the Canadian evangelical constituency and conservative Catholics. If he wins a majority he could do irreparable harm to Canadian democracy. Surely it is incumbent upon any Canadian political leader of any stripe, to lead competently, responsibly and with integrity. In addition, political leaders must be able to win elections while setting personal religious beliefs aside, and also be fervent advocates of the separation of church and state. We deserve no less, but where are the leaders who possess **all** of these qualities? (DAH).

## Why Do We Have This Dilemma?

The reality that we Canadians face the prospect of a majority government led by a misguided, but clever born-again fundamentalist/evangelical Christian Prime Minister, causes one to wonder how we got into this regrettable position. What is it about the religious-right movement that appeals to so many? Why are the evangelical churches growing while the mainline churches, both Protestant and Catholic, are in decline? Why is the United States the most religious democracy in the western world and what effect is this having on Canada? And finally, what can be done to convincingly point out the fallacies of fundamentalist beliefs, especially to young children with impressionable minds? (It is probably next to impossible to change the minds of the older people). The following discourse attempts to provide some answers.

A special spring 2009 issue of *The Enlightenment* entitled "Secularism," presented the results of European research explaining why Western Europe was far more secular than the United States. The research revealed that the availability of social safety nets such as state health care in Europe, versus the lack of the same in the U.S., was the principal cause of the differences. When people live in a relatively prosperous economy without having financial worries, religion tends to slip to the back burner. Another reason is education. European schools have excellent science programs with fewer threats from creationists. A third factor was range of income. High income inequality tends to favour higher religiosity. The results can be summarized as follows:

- Few individuals base their decisions to become unbelievers on rational analysis of philosophical and scientific arguments. Most non-religious Western citizens raised in religious surroundings simply lose interest in the supernatural when their lives become sufficiently pleasant and assured, drifting away from church with relatively little thought about the matter. And their children usually have very little interest in religion.
- Higher income inequality tends to foster religiosity, while higher education levels tend to weaken religiosity.
- The ideological struggle is largely limited to partisan activists and the intellectual élite. No broad, grass-roots, organized atheist movement has ever successfully emerged. Proselytizing atheism is basically ineffective in decreasing religiosity, and does little to promote or cause increased secularization. (At least this is the European experience. The North American situation is definitely different, and a more proactive approach may be required).

These findings help explain the high degree of religiosity in the United States, but there must be more to it. Just what else is it about religions that attract so many adherents in the U.S? Here are some possible reasons:

- religion offers solace in the face of death and suffering.
- religion offers their adherents a vision of what life should be like and offers hope for some form of existence beyond the grave.
- religion provides moral and ethical guidelines for many.
- religion offers a sense of community to adherents.
- many church-goers welcome the opportunity to volunteer for outreach work to help the needy

These qualities are present in most! Christian denominations, both liberal and conservative, so are there additional attractions for the fundamentalists/evangelicals? In other words, what do they believe that liberal Christians might not? Here are some of the specifics:

- The evangelicals are biblical literalists. They believe every word in the Bible is the divine word of God. (This causes them to be intolerant toward gays and lesbians and to oppose legal abortions and legal euthanasia).
- The evangelicals believe that you must be born again or “saved” in order to enter the Kingdom of God or heaven. Otherwise you will end up in hell.
- The evangelicals believe it is their fervent duty to evangelize and convert as many people as possible to their beliefs by persuading people to be “born again.”
- The evangelists believe that Jesus will return at some point in the near future signaling Armageddon and the end times. Many believe that the reestablishment of the State of Israel indicates that the end times are near.
- Certain fervent evangelicals believe they have a divine mandate to infiltrate governments and establish theocracies.

The fundamentalist evangelicals are not philosophical thinkers. They think in black and white terms. They believe God has dictated in the scriptures just how things ought to be, and that is that. This simple approach has to be one of the main attractions for evangelical adherents and it probably is a principal reason for the growth of the movement. Another reason has to be the messages of the charismatic TV Evangelists and the big-box mega-church preachers. Their message that God loves you and wants you to be prosperous seems to attract thousands like magnets to their programs and services. They scrutinize the Bible to select only the passages that support their message, leaving out all the ambiguity and contradictions.

One of the principal tasks of Canadian humanists should be helping to ensure that Canada not only remains a secular democracy, but also continues to become more secular, with less and less religiosity. With the decline in attendance at main-line churches, it was hoped that the European experience, where secularization progressed on its own, without any significant amount of proselytizing by atheistic organizations, would prevail here as well. But Europe did not have active evangelical churches like Canada does, so a different approach to protect our democratic freedoms is required. Surely the time has come to educate people about the spurious nature of the evangelical beliefs and messages, while espousing the benefits and attractiveness of secularism and democratic freedoms. How can humanists help in this task?

Unfortunately, thanks to the ruminations of Jerry Falwell and his ilk, many in the general public consider secular humanists to be nothing more than “agents of the devil.” In an effort to help dispel some of these misconceptions, various authors, including Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and others, have attempted to point out the many shortcomings of religions in their best-selling books while promoting secularism as a better alternative. These books no doubt have caused some liberal Christians to broaden their views, but evangelical leaders have discouraged their followers from reading any books that might cause them to have doubts about their beliefs. Obviously the challenges to counter the growth of evangelism and preserve and nurture our Canadian secular society are daunting indeed; past efforts to foster secularism have had mixed results as outlined below:

There have been many attempts in the past to inform Christians that they have been misled by the creeds and doctrines they have been persuaded to believe. Prior to the 1500s, the Roman Catholic Church was the only religious authority in Western Europe, and questioning church doctrines was punishable by severe measures including burning at the stake. After the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Church had less authority, and questions about the validity of beliefs in the supernatural began to emerge. One of the first persons to come forward was the

Dutch philosopher Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677), who questioned the existence of a supernatural God. He thought of God as the laws and forces of the universe. For this he was excommunicated from his synagogue. As time went by, not only the existence of God, but also all of the prescribed beliefs of Christianity including the divinity of Jesus, the atonement, the Trinity, and the existence of an afterlife were brought into question.

In his book *The Portable Atheist*, Christopher Hitchens lists forty-seven different non-believers who expounded on the specious nature of religions over the last two-thousand years. The list includes influential people including the above mentioned Spinoza, as well as David Hume, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, Mark Twain, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Carl Sagan, Daniel Dennett, Charles Templeton. Salman Rushdie, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. A few not mentioned in *The Portable Atheist* are Voltaire, Baron d'Holbach, David Friedrich Strauss, Friedrich Nietzsche and Albert Schweitzer. Unfortunately all of the logical thinking expressed by these famous people appears to have had little effect on diminishing the evangelical movements in North America. There are also Humanist organizations in both Canada and the U.S. trying to promote the desirability of secularism in place of religions based on the supernatural, but despite their efforts, the slick TV evangelists and the big-box mega-church preachers keep gaining converts.

Up until relatively recent times there was not a lot of concern about the fundamentalist evangelical Christians. They were left alone to carry out their own, some would say misguided, activities. But when it became evident that they were increasing, while the main-line denominations were declining, it became imperative to ask why is this happening? Just what were these people up to? Now, of course, we know that, after about thirty years of careful planning and scheming, the most radical of the movement managed to infiltrate governments and helped put a rather inept born-again President in office for two terms in the United States. And we know that the most extreme of these zealots want the U.S. to become a Christian theocracy, rather than the secular democracy the founding fathers so carefully crafted at the time of the American Revolution.

So here we are now in Canada with a born-again Prime Minister who unlike George W. Bush, is no fool. He keeps his caucus on a short rein and we know there are religious-right people and organizations that have his ear. We also know that some of these religious-right folks are zealots who want Canada to be governed according to Christian doctrines as they interpret them. What we do not know is just how far Harper will go to appease these people if he ever wins a majority, but it would be unwise to let our guard down and think that this evangelical infiltration into government is just a passing fad. It is possible that Harper wants to be remembered as a successful world statesman rather than the Prime Minister that set Canada back fifty years, but we cannot be sure of this.

So what can humanists and concerned like-minded people do to educate Canadians about the flaws in evangelicalism and about the threat the fundamentalist evangelicals pose to our democracy? I believe we must make use of the modern scholarship that has uncovered and revealed a great deal of what really took place in the early centuries of the Common Era, as opposed to the beliefs and chronicles of the Christian churches. This is not an easy task 2000 years after the fact because of the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the biblical stories. But nevertheless, with this newer scholarly research we can attempt to put forward a scenario that is far more credible than the traditional stories, get this information out to the public and hopefully start to reverse the fundamentalist evangelical trends. The resulting scenario will be presented for consideration in an upcoming special issue of *The Enlightenment*. (DAH).



## **You May be Moral, But Are You Ethical?**

*By Goldwin Emerson*

The words morality and ethics are often used interchangeably, but there are times when they should be viewed differently. To understand ethics, a good starting point is with the concept of *other*. It is when we imagine ourselves in another person's situation that we begin to sense the meaning to others of justice, equity, truth, or fairness.

Although *moral* thought and actions often resemble ethical thinking, morality is more often influenced by customs, mores, and taboos within a particular society, group or culture. Consequently, actions that seem moral to one group may be considered immoral by another. Practices such as honour killing, denial of medically approved blood transfusions for children, and ceremonies of exorcism are occasionally accepted as moral customs by some religious groups, although these practices are viewed as immoral by other religions. The concept within some religions that they are especially favoured by God, may seem strange, immoral, or abhorrent to those of other religions. Such a clash of views can result in disagreements among competing religions and, in extreme cases, may even spark holy wars.

Of course, different views of morality may also occur among secular groups. For example, different moral practices may be the product of ethnic origin, financial status, occupation, educational background, and other secular groups.

*Ethics*, on the other hand, embraces broader principles of right thinking and correct behaviour, being guided by concepts of justice, equity, fairness, and the pursuit of truth. Ethical leadership is often provided by philosophers, statesmen (or stateswomen) or by religious leaders who take a broader, more universal view of ethical issues.

The "golden rule" is shared by most of the world's major religions. In Christian terms, the golden rule instructs adherents to think and act toward others in the way they themselves wish to be treated. The golden rule is stated in slightly different words within each religion, but it is an ethical principle that encourages followers to view the whole of humanity as one family. It promotes acceptance of others regardless of differences in race, culture, religion or language.

Regarding ethical principles, secular philosophers, from Aristotle to more recent thinkers, arrive at conclusions similar to the golden rule. For example, the utilitarian concept, the humanist view, and pragmatist philosophy require us, in ethical decisions, to consider the needs of others. Immanuel Kant stated his view of the golden rule in secular language when he advised those who would be ethical to consider the needs of others. His test for ethical behaviour was to ask whether the intended action would be acceptable behaviour for all others in similar situations. That is, he believed that any action, to be ethically worthy, must be universally applicable.

Imagine a caring mother watching her child at play. She notices behaviour that she believes is unethical. She has seen her son push a younger child, causing her to fall down and cry. Instead of physically punishing her child, the mother encourages him to think of others by asking how he would feel if he had been knocked down like his playmate and how his playmate must now feel. By asking these questions, she is pointing her child in an ethical direction. Her questions, if considered seriously, introduce her son to the principle of the golden rule.

In their use of the golden rule, a secular utilitarian will consider which actions lead to the greatest happiness for the greatest number; the pragmatist will strive to be rational and think about the likely consequences of his or her action; the humanist will consider each individual, striving to accept the worth and dignity of all. The follower of Kant will ask whether his or her action would be ethical if everyone else were to act in a similar manner. The Christian will ask, "Is the way I am about to treat another the way I want to be treated?"

There is some irony in the fact that when we encourage people to think of *others*, the golden rule requires them to acknowledge their *own* feelings. But when people put themselves into another's situation they become aware of how the *other* feels. And that is the way ethics works best.

## **HALA Happenings**

A lot of great things have been happening at HALA during the period from January to July 2010. At the Annual General Meeting on January 13<sup>th</sup> a new executive was installed with Dr. Rod Martin as our new President. We welcomed two new members to the HALA Board of Directors in the persons of Charlotte Kurn and Walter Heywood. Others on the 2010 Board are Don Hatch – Secretary, Clare Van Daele Boseret – Treasurer and Members at Large Ed Ashman, Promotions, and Dave Mabee, Membership. Appreciation was expressed to Dr. Andre Lachance, who resigned from the Board, for his past services. We also welcomed Dr. Jon Hore to the Program Committee to work alongside Bill Chefurka and Goldie Emerson. A 2009 year end Treasurer's report listed a balance of \$249.58 in the chequing account and \$1651.53 in the savings account.

A major event occurred on January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 when we received notification from Revenue Canada Agency that HALA has been registered as a Charitable Organization qualified to issue tax receipts for donations. Our Purpose has been defined as follows:

*The Purpose of The Association shall be to educate and increase the public's understanding of the principles of secular worldviews, including humanism, through the provision of seminars, conferences and newsletters.*

We consider our regular meetings to be seminars and we have *The Enlightenment* as our newsletter so our challenge now is to organize and hold appropriate conferences. Our Program Committee is busy working on this challenge. To date we have received donations of \$625.00. More donations are always welcome in order that we can stage quality conferences that will attract the general public in adequate numbers.

In early March we learned that Humanist Canada (HC) has a new competent slate of executives and board members. In due course we will be receiving an Affiliation Agreement that the HALA Board will likely agree to sign and then work with HC to promote humanism in Canada.

In April we received word from Dave Mabee that for to personal reasons, he would be unable to continue as a member on the HALA Board of Directors. We accepted Dave's resignation with regret and we were pleased that Walter Heywood agreed to handle Membership duties. We are also pleased that Peter Evans has agreed to join the Board as a Member at Large. Both Peter and Walter have volunteered to look into ways that HALA might engage in some worthwhile community activity that would make the public more aware of humanism in London and Area.

Our third annual picnic at the Chefurka farm was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thanks Pat and Bill for your generous hospitality. There are no HALA activities in August, but we look forward to interesting meetings in the autumn. The 427 Wing facility at the London Airport has been reserved for our second Solstice Celebration on Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.