

2. An analysis of the document

Democratic Secular Humanism is under attack today, especially by activists from various religions, who claim that it is dangerous and morally corrupting. Yet millions have adopted its ideals and its outlook; and it has accomplished much to make the good life possible for many.

With regard to the matter of free inquiry, Secular Humanism opposes any attempt to shackle free thought. In the past, these attempts have been made by churches and states; today they are being made by sectarian ideologies. No restraints should be placed on free expression of opinions in science, philosophy, art, literature, morality, or religion.

With regard to the separation of church and state, no religious or ideological views should be imposed on society as a whole, nor should churches be exempt from taxation.

With regard to the ideal of freedom, Secular Humanism opposes all totalitarianisms, and stands for basic human rights, including the right of self-defense, free economic competition, and private property.

With regard to ethics, Secular Humanism holds that it is autonomous, and can and should be formulated apart from revealed religion. Ethics should be based on critical reason. No church should impose its views of morality on society, including its views on sexual conduct, marriage, divorce, birth control, and abortion. Secular Humanism is opposed to Absolutist morality, yet holds that objective standards are achievable.

With regard to moral education, Secular Humanism holds that public education has a duty to educate children and young adults in moral values, especially moral virtues, intelligence, and the building of character. Children should not be indoctrinated into a particular religion, but should be left to evaluate the merits of religion for themselves at maturity.

With regard to religious claims, Secular Humanism is skeptical about all supernatural claims; and rejects traditional views of God, a divine purpose in the universe, divine intervention in history, salvation from sin, the divinity of Christ, the literal interpretation of scriptures, the existence of the soul, and survival following physical death.

With regard to reason, Secular Humanists hold exclusively to human reason and science as the path to truth, and to the need of constant modification of all principles.

With regard to science and technology, Secular Humanism is committed to the scientific method; and looks to the sciences for knowledge. It is opposed to the censorship of scientific research.

With regard to evolution, Secular Humanism is committed to the modern theory of evolution, and deplores the efforts of fundamentalists to infuse creationist theory into science classrooms and textbooks.

With regard to education, Secular Humanism holds that schooling should not be pre-empted by the mass media as the primary means of education; and that the mass media have a pro-religious bias which should be corrected.