

## WHAT IS SECULAR HUMANISM?

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In 1980 a group of 58 prominent persons from the United States, Great Britain, and six other countries signed "A Secular Humanist Declaration," a document that expresses the principles and goals of a growing movement and a pervasive attitude that threatens to erode and destroy the biblical principles that have formed the core of the Judaeo-Christian heritage of western culture and society. Previous to 1980, two other documents of a similar nature had appeared -- Humanist Manifesto I (in 1933) and Humanist Manifesto II (in 1973). Prometheus Press, founded in 1970 in Buffalo, New York as the publishing arm of the movement, lists 175 books and booklets in its current trade catalog on various aspects of Humanist thought, including such titles as Atheism: The Case Against God, The Encyclopedia of Unbelief (2 vols.), Ethics Without God, Jesus in History and Myth, Some Mistakes of Moses, Religion Without God, and A New Bill of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities. And recently Humanists have launched a magazine to spread its views -- Free Inquiry -- edited by Paul Kurtz, drafter of "A Secular Humanist Declaration."

But why should Christians be interested in or concerned about the growth of Secular Humanism? At least three good reasons could be mentioned. First, Secular Humanism has quietly permeated almost every educational institution (at every level), and almost every discipline of knowledge in our culture and society. Second, Secular Humanism is actively seeking to eliminate all absolutes from our culture, thereby opening the way for the acceptance of a materialistic, agnostic, and hedonistic world-view. And third, Secular Humanism is diametrically opposed to all types of formal religion in general, and to Christianity in particular!

What is Secular Humanism? The term should not be confused with humaneness, or humanitarianism, or cultural humanism, or the humanities. Paul Kurtz, professor of philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo, enunciates four