

by ***Adam Hellyer***

In the 400s BC, the Greek philosopher Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things: of the things that are, that they are, of the things that are not, that they are not." In the 1700s AD, the Enlightenment renewed interest in this kind of thinking, which persists till today.

That man is the measure is a core doctrine of humanism, but to the smart thinker this immediately raises a question: Which man? For if man is the measure, you will surely have as many measures as you have men. With man as the measure, truth becomes subjective rather than objective. Everything is perceived as relative to the individual. This kind of thinking is called relativism. It is the routine outcome of humanism, because, although humanism will often hide behind reason, logic and science, at its very core is ego.

Humanism is a worldview whose starting point is man. While some might describe themselves as Christian humanists, to be a true humanist is to put man before all. And thus, break the first of the Ten Commandments, "Have no other gods before me".

Humanism leads to a dim view of God. Rather than explaining the world within a Biblical framework, acknowledging God's role, humanists seek to explain everything through the eyes of man. Not all humanists are materialists, but most humanists act like materialists. They act as though the material realm is all there is. They believe every explanation must come from the natural world, rather than the supernatural. In humanism, the basis of knowledge comes from man's rational thought, a.k.a. rationalism, or scientific discoveries, known as empiricism or scientism.

The Death of Truth

The current morality of Western Culture was birthed from the Judeo-Christian worldview. Do not murder, do not steal, do not commit adultery are foundational. And while there is a sense in which this moral law is universal, the ultimate reason behind our moral choices is our acknowledgement of the moral lawgiver. Why should my wife not commit adultery? Not because I am such a remarkable husband, not because I am such a jealous husband, not because it would be unreasonable, she may have subjective reason to think adultery to her advantage. The reason my wife should not commit adultery is because God said, "Do not commit adultery".

If man is my only measure, I will struggle to censure adultery. If you ask the man in the street what he thinks, he may disapprove, but the sheer number of people committing adultery is itself a compelling cultural argument against prohibition. Arguments are made for "a right to happiness". "Love wins" has been heard a lot lately. But we know that such arguments would not stand if used to justify theft, murder or lying. "I only stole, your honour, because I love money - #LoveWins". To quote C S Lewis, this double standard, "is like having a morality in which stealing fruit is wrong, unless you steal nectarines". But in the end, the adulterer has only to say, "why should I justify myself?" And that is

where the matter ends. Because if man is the measure, each is their own judge and jury. In that world, adultery is only wrong if you believe it is.

Morality, in a world without God, is defined in new ways. But this is no easy task and rarely leads to consensus. As Christian Apologist, Ravi Zacharias explains, "Atheists live under this delusion that if you deny God then there is a monolithic way of thinking about reality. It's completely false."

For any verdict, you need a judge. Traditionally, the judge was God. But with man become god, man becomes judge. Man's relativism sees truth as belonging to a time or place, culture or individual, not as something that exists objectively. Where there is no divine law-giver, where every man is equal, truth no longer exists as an absolute. In our relativist culture, certain morals can be labelled "outdated", no longer relevant to modern society. Our interpretation of scripture, we are told, must keep up with the times, rather than being authentic to the orthodox doctrine of the church. Relativists want the church to slowly and constantly evolve, not just her methods, but even her core doctrines. As Chesterton remarks in his excellent book, *Orthodoxy*, "There is only one great disadvantage in this theory. It talks of a slow movement towards justice; but it does not permit a swift movement ... What on earth is the current morality, except in its literal sense—the morality that is always running away?"

Death and Racism

And run away morality has. The Bible is clear, God made man, male and female, in His own image. Even before the law of Moses, God said, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed". But killing can be rationally justified once you eliminate God as judge.

In 2002, the Netherlands made assisted suicide legal, for the first time in Europe since Nazi Germany. The same year Belgium follow suit, then in 2014, they extended the "right to die" to those under 18. In 2015, over 2000 patients chose death. Death tourism has become a thing, with people travelling to Belgium to receive lethal injections. People talk about, "dying with dignity", or "the right to choose". But assisted suicide, is just pairing suicide with murder. Children seeking death in Belgium must be suffering an incurable, painful disease. The same is not so for adults. The largest increases in euthanasia cases between 2003 - 2013 was among people older than 80, those without cancer and those not expecting a natural death anytime soon.

God hates murder. But His image in man also speaks to another blight on our society. The Bible makes it clear that God, "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth." Every man is a descendent of Adam, through Noah. In the early church there was, "neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free." To Philip, the foreign Ethiopian eunuch was as important as the saints of Philip's homeland.

But man's rejection of the Bible and God meant a new story had to be written. And man, left to his own devices will always find creative excuses to hate and kill his fellow man. At the time of the Enlightenment, Europe's intellectual pride was at its height. First came Polygene theory. The idea that each race had a separate origin. The French writer, Voltaire, said of humans with dark skin, "It is a big

question whether among them they are descendants of monkeys, or if monkeys come from them.”

This weapons-grade racism is typical of the so-called Enlightenment. The French Declaration of the Right of Men and of Citizens, claimed, “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights...”. The US Declaration of Independence, insisted, “that all men are created equal...”. But, both America and France continued to use and trade African slaves. When Darwinian evolution replaced polygene theory, it did nothing to help. Evolution theory, while different in some fundamentals, still supported the notion that certain races were more developed than others. A falsehood still believed by some today.

In 2015, when National Geographic published a cover story about Homo-Naledi, claiming her to be a previously undiscovered ancestor of man, not everyone was buying it. South African MP, Dr Mathole Motshekga, said, “As an academic myself, I attach great importance to scientific research. But for me this research is very suspect because it seems to be seeking to justify the racial ideology which says African people descended from baboons.” The Twitterverse immediately exploded in massive criticism of Dr Motshekga. But he has a better understanding of evolution than most. Evolution, as a theory, has traditionally painted Europeans as more evolved than Africans.

In the 18 and 1900s, the rising popularity of Polygene theory and Darwinian evolution, rather than improving the treatment of indigenous people, provoked an increase in callousness and brutality. Some were featured as curios in travelling shows and human zoos. Others were killed so their skulls could be included in museum collections as “missing links”. Madison Grant, founder of the Bronx Zoo, USA, exhibited Ota Benga, a pygmy from the Belgian Congo, in his Zoo's Monkey House. Grant wrote a book, *The Passing of the Great Race*. In it he bemoaned the watering down of northern European blood lines, and championed the need to preserve the Aryan race.

Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party in Germany, read this book and followed its principles. Grant's idea of ‘racial hygiene’ (state control over procreation), combined with Darwinian ‘survival of the fittest’, gave him what he needed. Once in power, Hitler eliminated over 17 million Jews, gypsies, mentally handicapped, and other ‘undesirables’. This genocide was carried out ‘scientifically’, and was seen as nation building, by identifying those who weakened society and selecting them for extinction. Russian dictator, Joseph Stalin, was responsible for purging 23 million of his own people. Mao Zedong killed anywhere between 49 and 78 million in his Cultural Revolution and Great Leap Forward. Each of these killings was justified within a humanist framework of thinking. Ironically, humanism has no reason to be humane, provided what is done is believed to benefit the majority.

Fear God

The Bible says the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. There is a way that seems right to man, but in the end, it leads to death. Nowhere has this been more literally demonstrated than in the history of the 20th Century. When man turns from God, when he becomes his own lawgiver, morality is dead and death follows.

Holocaust survivor, Eliezer Wiesel, wrote in his book *Night*, “The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.” Human life matters. Life in the womb, the life of a child, the living who grow and love and marry. The life of those who are old, or sick or alone. The law of God teaches us to value life and value one another. The second command after loving God is to love our neighbour. But it is only because we love God that we can love our neighbour. Because we see Him in them. Humanism doesn’t give us that.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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