

WHY DOESN'T THE CHURCH GROW MORE?¹

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I sometimes read articles in brotherhood papers saying that the church is not growing today as it was in the 1950s because Christians now lack the dedication that Christians then had. While there is truth in that idea, it seems too simplistic! Such declarations generally fail to note that society is different now than then. Why is that? How does that difference affect Christians' lack of dedication today?

The answer is that humanism and its allied philosophies have changed our world. They have displaced the Christian precepts that our Constitutional forefathers structured into our society, and replaced them with the principles of humanism. These philosophies have destroyed absolutes in law and morality. They have given us situational ethics and relativity. They have removed Christianity from the school classroom and the market place and they have secularized all of our culture. They have overturned many of the checks and balances of our republican form of government and they have produced judicial supremacy over the legislative branches of government. They have promoted extensive governmental agencies and built vast governmental bureaucracies. They have threatened our culture by minimizing gender roles in society. They have overturned anti-abortion laws and now produce about a million and a half abortions every year. They are leading toward legalized infanticide and will ultimately promote obligatory euthanasia on everyone who is considered a burden to society.

Humanistic ideologies have made America the most violent crime ridden nation on earth. They have produced massive marriage failures and contributed immensely to the breakdown of the home and family. They have cursed our country with extensive pornography and vile profanity. They have not yet destroyed Christianity in America, but they have already won over to themselves almost all agencies of government, schools, and other institutions of society. Mainline denominational churches have, for the most part, already capitulated to these anti-Christian philosophies. Many Christians have had their faith weakened, and many Christian families have lost one or more of their members to these erroneous philosophies. Christian families are hurting.

I'm fully persuaded that converting people to Christ is not as easy today as it was in the late 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. I'm convinced that the rise of humanism is a primary cause. And I've said so on several occasions while conducting church workshops about humanism. One day, in response to such comments, a Christian brother called my attention to Robert Hooper's book about brother Willard Collins. Brother Collins noticed in 1973 that the secularization of our society was having an impact upon the church. This was obvious to him because of the annual decline in the number of baptisms and restorations resulting from his gospel meetings. (Robert Hooper and Jim Turner. *Willard Collins: The People Person*. Nashville: 20th Century Christian. 1986, 66-68).

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Scholars from both conservative and liberal perspectives are also agreed about the significance of humanism in the western world. R. J. Rushdoony, a Calvinist scholar, writes that

"in most countries today, and no less in the United States, humanism is the established religion of the state and is progressively the source of legal revisionism. Humanism is also the established religion of schools and most churches, and most of society. Christianity is quite logically progressively excluded from state, school and church and has a weak and scarcely tenable position in modern life. It probably lacks extensive and organized persecution in most countries because orthodox Christianity has become progressively weaker and less and less relevant." (Rousas John Rushdoony. *Christianity and the State*. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1986, 8).

Moreover, James Reichley, of the Brookings Institute, has written that

"Despite many ups and downs, the influence of secular civil humanism in the West since the Enlightenment has generally followed an ascending course. Even in the United States, where religion remains a powerful social force, civil humanism is now probably the dominant value system within the intellectual community. It thereby exerts strong influence over the entertainment and news industries and over the higher levels of the educational system and the government bureaucracy. Leo Pfeffer, a distinguished authority on church-state relations, has written, 'Secular humanism [is] a cultural force which in many respects is stronger in the United States than any of the major religious groups or any alliance among them.'" (A. James Reichley, *Religion in American Public Life*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institute, 1985, 47, with quotation from Leo Pfeffer, "The Triumph of Secular Humanism", *Journal of Church and State*, Spring, 1977, 211.)

Since our culture generally no longer looks to God, the Bible, and Christianity, and since the faith of many Christians has also been weakened by humanistic influences, it is no great marvel that the church is not growing very rapidly in these times. What really concerns me, however, is that many Christians seem to be totally unaware of humanism and how it has already changed our society. I'm fully convinced that before we Christians see much church growth, we will first have to do battle against humanism. And if Christians are to effectively fight against humanism, then we must know what humanism is, how and where it operates, and what we can do to overcome its devastating influence in our world.

That's why I've dedicated myself to conducting church seminars about humanism. Brethren need to know how humanism is threatening, and sometimes destroying, Christian families and churches. If Christian families stay close together and grow strong together in the Christian faith, then Christians must have the knowledge to disarm this growing menace of humanism that is now attacking us in so many different ways. Why not invite me to your congregation to conduct such a seminar. Let's get it scheduled on your church calendar at your earliest convenience. I think you'll be glad you did.