

C.I.M. Outline #13 HUMANISM I. Introduction: In the early 80's evangelical Christianity discovered secular humanism. Many books were published exposing this anti-christian worldview. Actually various forms of humanism have been around since Eden. II. Definition A. General: 1. The word "humanism" was coined during the Renaissance. 2. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (vol. IV, p. 69ff.) defines humanism as "any philosophy which recognizes the value or dignity of man and makes him the measure of all things or somehow takes human nature, its limits, or its interests as its theme." 3. A humanist was originally one who focused his studies on man, his art and thought, and nature, as opposed to God, the spiritual and revelation. Today such study of culture is called the humanities. 4. It was originally an innocuous term. The humanists of the Renaissance were Christians. This type of humanism can be wedded to any religion or philosophy, for it only recognizes the value and dignity of man and his art. There are as many varieties of humanism as there are of Christianity. For example, one of the most visible forms of humanism today is a mystical variety known popularly as the New Age Movement. (See CIM Outline #2) B. Specific and Contemporary meaning: 1. One who makes man his ultimate concern, his ultimate point of reference. 2. Today's humanist is generally not theistic or at most deistic or agnostic. 3. It was declared a religion by the Supreme Court in 1961. 4. The best definitions of contemporary humanism can be found in the Humanist Manifesto I and II (p. 16.). "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity." C. What humanism is not: Many confuse humanism with humanitarianism. The latter is simply one who shows philanthropic concern for his fellowman. Anyone can be humanitarian. III. An overview of the history of modern humanism. A. It is the second oldest religion in the world. 1. In Genesis 3:4, Satan told Eve, "Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 2. In Psalm 2, the theme of the Bible is the conflict between these two--God and His kingdom versus man and his schemes to replace God. Humanism denies the sovereignty of God. 3. Revelation 17 and 18 predicts the outcome of the struggle. B. The Greeks: Protagoras (5th Century B.C.) coined the phrase "Man is the measure of all things." The Greeks became known for their emphasis on reason apart from superstition and religion. It brought about the Golden Age of Greece. They believed man could control his own fate. C. The Romans: They borrowed from the Greeks. Caesar was worshipped as God. D. The Renaissance (began about 1200 A.D.): It was a revival of classical learning. Greek thought and Christian doctrine were synthesized. Reason began to be separated from religion. St. Thomas Aquinas mistakenly believed man's reasoning ability was unaffected by the Fall. E. The Enlightenment (1600-1800): Humanism became secularized. The enlightenment became the foundation of modern humanism. They proclaimed reason a goddess. Principle figures: Rousseau and Voltaire. F. The 20th Century: After Darwin's theory of evolution, humanism had all it needed. Other notable events: 1. Founding of the Ethical Union in England in 1896. It later became the influential British Humanist Association. 2. In America in 1933, the Humanist Manifesto was published. Later in 1949 a humanist society was formed. 3. There is now an international network of humanist organizations. 4. In 1973 the Humanist Manifesto was updated. IV. The Major Tenets of Naturalistic Humanism. A. Concerning the nature of things: 1. All is material: no spiritual dimension, no life after death. 2. All events are natural and uniformitarian. There is no supernatural, no god. B. Concerning man and his nature: 1. Man is central, sovereign and autonomous. 2. Man is the hallmark of evolutionary development; only a part of nature. 3. Man's dignity is derived from his position on the evolutionary scale; the difference between man and animals is quantitative. 4. Man does not need salvation. Just more time. Man can now control his own evolution. C. Concerning Ethics: Values are relative, based on experience, human reason, the will of the majority, or based on the situation, i.e. what will bring the greatest good. (For further critique of humanistic ethics see CIM Outline #38). D. Concerning the process of knowing: 1. Reason is supreme 2. All that can be known is known through the scientific method. E. Concerning Government: 1. It is a positive force, a tool to re-engineer man. 2. Internationalism: goal is world government. "We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of a human family can participate." from THE HUMANIST MANIFESTO p. 22. F. Concerning Social Concern: 1. Emphasis on education and changing the environment. 2. Equitable distribution of wealth, eliminating poverty, disease, etc. 3. Ending oppression caused by religion. V. Four Common Illusions about Humanism A. Humanism is humane. 1. But humanism has no basis for human dignity. Man was not created in God's Image but rather evolved from the slime by a purely chance operation. There is therefore, no clear demarcation between human and animal rights. 2. Values are relative. On what basis do we declare Himmler more Humane than Mother Teresa? 3. No adequate reasons can be given as to why survival is important. 4. There is no safeguard against manipulation. B. Humanism is not a religion. 1. A non-theistic belief is not necessarily non-religious. Several Religions of the world do not subscribe to a supreme being, i.e. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. 2. The Supreme Court declared it to be a religion in 1961 in Torcaso vs. Watkins. 3. Humanist publications refer to it as a religion. 4. Julian Huxley predicted that humanism would be the ultimate religion of the world. C. Humanism is unbiased. 1. Neutrality is a myth; we all have presuppositions or unprovable assumptions. 2. A school teacher with humanistic convictions cannot help promoting humanistic values. 3. If humanistic objectives are to be achieved it cannot allow a pluralistic society. D. Humanism is broadminded. 1. It ignores the facts concerning the resurrection of Christ. 2. It ignores contradictory evidence concerning evolutionary theory. 3. It ignores logical contradictions in its worldview. For example: a. The universe is self-caused. If it caused itself it would have to exist prior to causing itself--a logical absurdity. b. It says man must determine his own future yet

its scientists proclaim all man's behavior is determined by his genes and environment. Free will is a myth. c. They say there are no absolutes yet that is an absolute statement. 4. It claims to be the only hope for man yet it has no valid basis for that hope. VI. The Current Influence of Humanistic Philosophy A. Education: It is the major unifying factor in public education today. Children are viewed as property of the state. Their primary aim is the social adjustment of children into group-oriented mentality. Education is social and not content oriented. Self-development is stressed rather than learning from the wisdom of the past. Secular does not equal neutral! The public education system from elementary to college is a monopoly of the religion of Humanism! They are parochial schools!! B. Media 1. Newspapers-- Most newspapers are compiled from two wire services. 2. TV. Most news is from 4 networks. C. Active Humanist Organizations: The most active and visible are: The American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way, The American Humanist Association, and the National Education Association. VII. The most Influential Humanist Books THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES by Charles Darwin. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY by Ludwig Feuerbach. THE FUTURE OF AN ILLUSION by Sigmund Freud. WHY I AM NOT A CHRISTIAN by Bertrand Russell. BEYOND FREEDOM AND DIGNITY by B.F. Skinner. THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO by Karl Marx. BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL by Friedrich Nietzsche. VIII. What can Christians Do? A. Pray for our country and its leaders. B. Vote responsibly, work to elect Christian-oriented public officials, run for public office. C. Take responsibility for the education of your children. D. Boycott slanted news or immoral TV programming. E. Don't allow humanism to outdo Christians in the social concern department! F. Share your faith. G. Create Christian alternatives in education and the arts. H. Be informed. I. Seek intellectual superiority. J. Learn to see all things from a Christian perspective. FOR FURTHER READING: There are many good critiques of Humanism. We recommend the following: Blackham, H.J. editor. OBJECTIONS TO HUMANISM. Ehrenfeld, David. THE ARROGANCE OF HUMANISM. Geisler, Norman L. IS MAN THE MEASURE. Hitchcock, James. WHAT IS SECULAR HUMANISM. Johnson, Paul. INTELLECTUALS. Christian Information Ministries is a non-profit ministry and is dependent on gifts from God's people in order to operate. If you receive a benefit from our materials would you consider giving a tax-deductible gift to CIM. We suggest \$25. a year minimum. Send to: Christian Information Ministries 2050 N. Collins Blvd. #100 Richardson, TX 75080 214-690-1975_