

## CONFUSION IN THE WESTERN VALUE SYSTEM

The world today has attained a level of technological development that few dared to imagine only fifty years ago. Men have stood on the moon and can mine the ocean floor. We can communicate with any part of the world in seconds. Scientists from many nations working together have been able to find solutions and cures to problems which have plagued our civilization for centuries.

Yet with all our great advances, humanity is still plagued by hunger and war. Our cities worldwide are experiencing unprecedented levels of crime. Drugs, racial strife, corporate crime, and even political assassinations, have all left their scars on contemporary society.

The fact that these problems go beyond national boundary lines, and affect every social sub-group, suggests that such problems are not simply caused by the local environment. The problems are deeply rooted; therefore we cannot respond to them superficially. The problems which confront 20th century man cause us to reflect on the philosophical and moral bases of society. The following is an examination of the present Western value system, its historical origins and its impact on current affairs.

### I. The ideal world and reality

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ offered the Lord's prayer in which we find the words, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven." These words express Jesus' desire to see God's Will fulfilled on Earth. Physically (externally) at least, this hope has not yet been fulfilled. Humanity continues to suffer.

### Confusion in the Western Value System



*Tremendous technological advancement of 20th century.*



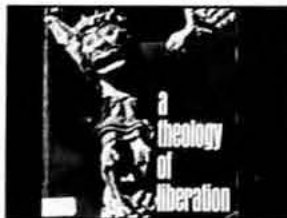
*Starvation, war, crime and assassination plague Western society.*

“Our Father, Who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name,  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On Earth as it is in Heaven.”

**Matthew 6:9-10**



*Pope John XXIII*



In history, various individuals have attempted to fulfill the words of Christ's prayer. In more recent times, the Second Vatican Council (presided over initially by Pope John XXIII) addressed the immediate need to respond to the deplorable living conditions of the world's poor. "Liberation theology," which has gained considerable popularity in the Americas, also alludes to building the Kingdom of God on Earth and eradicating social injustice. We can say that even Marxism, in terms of its ultimate goal and purpose, imitates the Kingdom of God on Earth, and attempts to construct a utopian world from which God has been excluded.

Although various methodologies aiming to build an ideal society have emerged, none have been successful. This causes us to re-examine the bases upon which a just society can appear.

### The bases of a truly just and moral society

Although there are some who believe that society shapes the individual, it is generally accepted that the individuals who make up a society project their way of thinking into the institutions of that society. For that reason, in order to build a just, moral, and God-centered society, we would first need individuals of real integrity. Unless God-centered, moral individuals dwell in an ideal society, it will eventually be corrupted.

What then is the basis of a moral person? Within the human being, there is both a mind and a body. A harmonious relationship should exist between these two dimensions. Essentially the mind, or spirit, which seeks the godly, should guide the body, which relates to the material. Both of these aspects have great importance, but the relationship between them should be properly balanced.

The Apostle Paul speaks of the discordance between mind and body in the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans. He confesses, "In my innermost self, I delight in the law of God, but in my members I see another law warring against the law of my mind..."<sup>1</sup> It is this contradiction between mind and body which causes a struggle within the self.

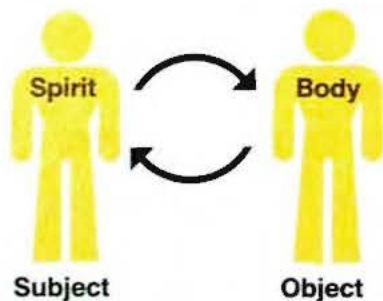
Ideally, as we have stated, a reciprocal relationship of subject and object, with the mind guiding the body, should exist. Instead, we find a relationship of subject-subject. In other words, a relationship of conflict exists between the desires of the mind and those of the body. This conflict has found expression in the historical tension between two trends in human cultural tradition — one stressing faith and the other reason and sense experience.

**Moral society**



**Moral individuals**

**What is a moral individual?**



*St. Paul*



## II. The religious and humanistic traditions

Western society traces its roots back to two great traditions. Hebraism, or the religious tradition, is based on faith. Truth is found in the transcendental and it can only be known and understood through faith.

Hellenism, or the humanistic tradition, on the other hand, links truth with reason and sense experiences. We can summarize the tension between the two as a question of faith vs. reason. These two traditions have greatly influenced the foundations of Christianity and continue to influence us today.

Over the centuries, philosophy and culture developed from the humanistic tradition as well as from the religious tradition. Only rarely have there emerged great thinkers, such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, who strived for sainthood as well as for intellectual understanding, and who helped to bridge gaps between these two parallel roots of Western culture.

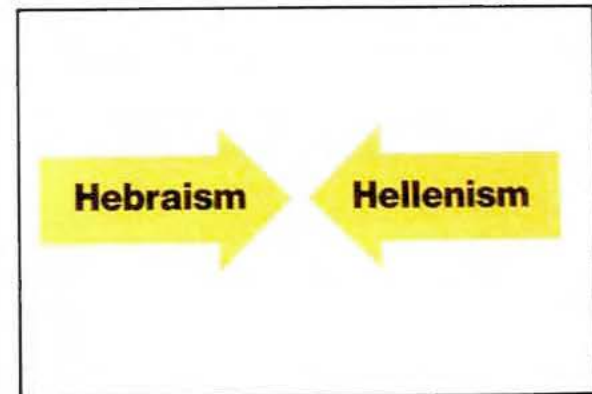
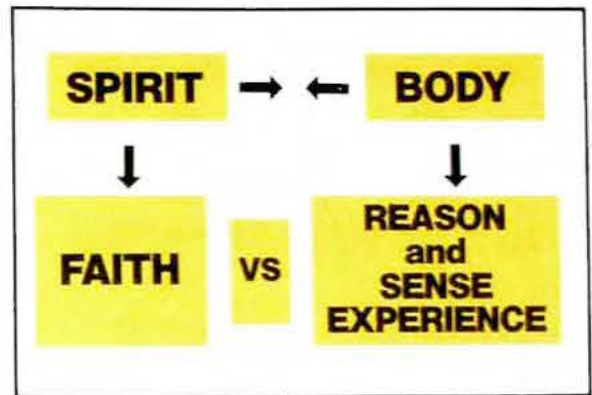
### The general nature of the religious and humanistic traditions

The religious tradition is symbolized by the Israelites and their leader Moses. Moses turns to heaven for guidance and receives from God the 10 Commandments. If we examine Exodus, we notice that it teaches that all problems stem from man's failure to unite with God. When the people disobey God, there is suffering, and they are called to repentance and obedience once again.

In contrast, in his text *The Rebel*, French philosopher Albert Camus sees Prometheus as a prototype of the humanistic tradition. Prometheus was the immortal responsible for taking fire from Zeus and giving it to humankind. Zeus punished Prometheus for this act by chaining him to a mountain. According to Greek mythology, Zeus sent his eagle day after day to devour Prometheus' liver. During the night, Prometheus' liver supposedly grew back again, and the process was repeated. Prometheus encountered this torment because he refused to repent before Zeus. Zeus for him was an unjust god. Camus maintains that this view of God as unjust is typical of the Hellenic tradition which, he says, glorifies the greatness and the goodness of man, and belittles the justice of the gods.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas Hellenism posits the injustice of God, Hebraism focuses on the justice of God and the moral weakness of men. When we study history, we can recognize that time and again, struggles have occurred between these two divergent viewpoints. The religious tradition has manifested itself in the

“For I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.”  
**Romans 7:22-23**



Moses

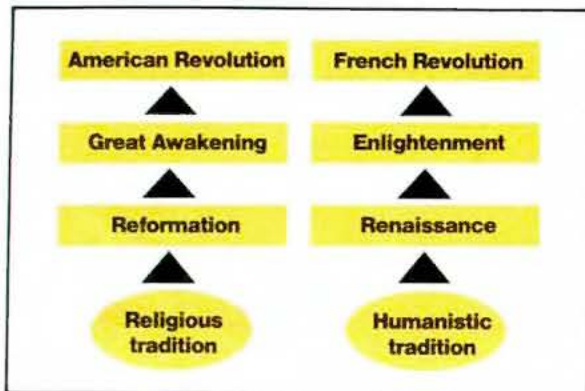


Prometheus





Middle Ages



Martin Luther



St. John of the Cross



St. Theresa of Avila

## REFORMATION:

1. Internal
2. Need for a personal relationship with God and the Bible

mystic, the saint, and the religious reformer. Humanism has manifested itself in the intellectual, the scientist, and the artist. Though not necessarily contradictory in nature, these different perspectives have resulted in historical divisions and conflict.

### III. Religious tradition and humanistic tradition in recent history

In this presentation we cannot study the whole development of the religious and humanistic traditions. We will limit ourselves here to considering the impact and influence of these two traditions upon modern society. When we turn to 15th and 16th century European history, we recognize that two important phenomena took place: the Renaissance and the Reformation. The Reformation constituted a re-awakening of spiritual values and is characteristic of the religious tradition. The Renaissance results from a resurgence of humanism. Both of these trends have had a great impact upon the development of today's religious, moral, and sociopolitical institutions.

#### A. The Reformation

The best known champions of the Reformation are the Protestant reformers, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin. However, the impact of the Reformation is not limited to Protestantism. Through the Catholic Counter-Reformation, there was also a spiritual awakening within the Catholic Church which produced such mystics as Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.

The character of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation was internal. It inspired men and women to reflect upon their relationship with Christ and their understanding of the Bible. It brought about a reawakening of moral values and a sincere re-examination of the implications of faith.

#### B. The Renaissance

The Renaissance provoked a very different phenomenon. Most particularly, the Renaissance challenged many concepts which people had blindly accepted for centuries. For example, in *The Prince*, Machiavelli implicitly challenged the concept of the monarch as the "elect of God." He likewise challenged the Christian ethic and opted for what was "pragmatic" in the gaining of power. The prince depicted by Machiavelli must be pragmatic, and he must be ready and able to step outside the boundaries of Christian conduct if it allows him to maintain

power. It is from Machiavelli that we develop the concept that the "end justifies the means," and the end for Machiavelli is political power.

We can term the Renaissance as "external" in nature. Rather than reflecting upon the moral character of humankind, it focused upon intellectual advances. Revelation and mystical experience were rejected as not being valid modes of acquiring knowledge. Descartes and Bacon raised up rationalism and empiricism as new standards for discerning the truth.

**C. The Great Awakening**

Approximately two centuries after the high point of the Renaissance and the Reformation, we find similar patterns of development in the religious and intellectual tradition through the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening.

The Great Awakening certainly can be said to represent a kind of second Reformation. The Great Awakening occurred primarily in the United States, however its roots are also related to France and England.

During the 17th century, France replaced 16th century mystical Spain as the spearhead of a Catholic renewal. With reformers like St. François de Salle and St. Vincent de Paul, the 17th century in France was called the Century of the Saints. Popular religious practice attained levels never reached before in French history. In the intellectual field, the philosopher Blaise Pascal propagated a Christian doctrine that taught the experience of God through the heart rather than through reason.

During the same epoch, Puritanism developed as a movement of purification in the Church of England, seeking to carry the Reformation beyond the stage it had reached in the previous centuries. The religious, social, economic, political and intellectual institutions of the modern Anglo-Saxon world remain deeply influenced by the Puritan spirit.

In England in the 18th century, the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, founded the Methodist movement aimed at sparking a new spirit in the churches. According to many historians, the great popular outreach of the Wesleys' evangelical and social action helped England to avoid the violent revolution which neighboring France had to endure.

The Great Awakening, in some sense, constituted a departure from the intellectual developments of the 18th century. Instead of emphasizing intellectual understanding of God, the Great Awakening emphasized faith and a relationship with God.



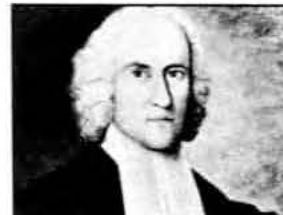
Machiavelli (1469-1527)



René Descartes (1596-1615)

**RENAISSANCE:**

- 1. External
- 2. Focused on the development of intellectual understanding and the glorification of man.



Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

**Pietism and the Great Awakening**

- 1. Reaction to Formalism and Intellectualism
- 2. Bible Study
- 3. Need for Personal Religious Experience



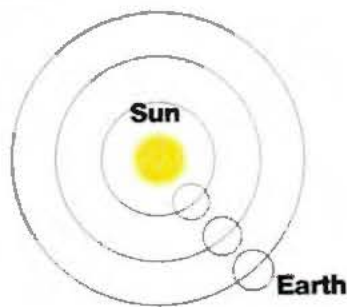
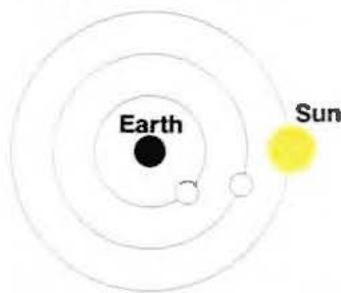


Charles I (1600-1649)

## Enlightenment

1. Questioning of Doctrines and Values
2. Individualism
3. Universal Human Progress
4. Empirical Method
5. Rationalism

### The Ptolemaic View:



### Copernican View

The Great Awakening inspired a religious revival throughout New England. Its God-centered direction came to have a great impact upon the spiritual and cultural development of America. One of the foremost figures of the Great Awakening was Jonathan Edwards. Preachers such as Edwards emphasized the need for developing a personal relationship with God and Christ and also called Christians to study and apply the teachings of the Bible to daily life. Many historians relate the spiritual and cultural roots of the American revolution to the events which surround the Great Awakening.

## D. The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment largely had its origins in France. One of the highlights of the Enlightenment was the development of the Encyclopedia by Diderot and D'Alembert. The Encyclopedia provided a means whereby the cultured individual could have quick reference to any number of topics, including music, philosophy and art. The French philosophers of the Enlightenment challenged religion as a social institution as well as the traditional view of God as a personal being able to intervene in man's life, accomplish miracles and guide the history of Providence. (see Chapter 2)

The Enlightenment thinkers contributed to an anti-religious attitude in 18th century France. Through such individuals as Voltaire, the Enlightenment challenged the traditional view of God. Voltaire and others adapted the discoveries of 17th century British Deism.

The Deist view of the universe as a machine stemmed from Copernicus. It was Copernicus who first challenged the Ptolemaic notion which placed the earth rather than the sun at the center of our system. Copernicus, a contemporary of Luther, was rejected by Protestantism and Catholicism alike. When, in the following century, Galileo espoused the same position, he was also exposed to ridicule and religious persecution. Through the later discoveries of Newton, it became clear that Copernicus' observations had been accurate. This caused some to question Christianity's credibility and to search for a new approach to religion. That view was Deism. Deism emphasized the role of science and the mechanistic character of the universe. To a large extent, however, there was no conflict between Christianity and British Deism.

For 18th century French Deism, God assumed the role of an indifferent machine-maker and the universe the role of a machine. God had created the universe, His machine, in accord with rational laws which were discoverable by men. After creating the universe, God had withdrawn. He would not interfere with the processes of nature and the works of man.



Humankind alone bore the responsibility for effecting change in the world. Human beings should not rely upon God; His help would not be forthcoming.

The Enlightenment connected itself strongly to science. The development of science and technology, Newton's discoveries of the laws of motion, and the Industrial Revolution left people with a great sense of optimism. Many felt that universal human progress was inevitable and that through the advance of science, humankind would ultimately succeed in solving all problems within society. This optimism encouraged the Industrial Revolution, but allowed social injustice to go unchecked because social theorists felt that the injustices suffered by laborers were a necessary evil in order to open the way to a utopian future for humanity.

### E. The American Revolution

In the latter part of the 18th century, these two trends in human cultural history became manifested in two revolutionary models — one based on God and the other denying the existence of God.

Although these two revolutions occurred approximately at the same time, they had two different philosophical origins. Generally, we can attribute the philosophical basis of the French Revolution to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. We can attribute the philosophical basis of the American Revolution more to the Great Awakening. Let us consider each of these revolutions.

An important factor in the founding spirit of the United States was the attitude of many of the pioneers who came to the shores of Massachusetts, New York and Maryland. They came to America not merely in search of economic prosperity but because they sought the right to practice the faith of their choice in freedom. The Pilgrim Fathers who crossed the Atlantic in the Mayflower risked their lives in order to practice their religious beliefs and ideals.

The importance of God in their lives is clearly reflected in the wording of the charter which they created before disembarking from the Mayflower. During their first winter in Massachusetts, 47 out of 102 settlers lost their lives due to the harsh conditions. These pioneers were prepared to make such sacrifices because, for them, nothing was more precious than to worship God as they saw fit. After harvesting their first crop, the Pilgrims gathered together in prayer and thanksgiving in commemoration of the God who had protected them. Some of the early pioneers viewed America as a New Israel and a nation of Providential design.



Copernicus (1473-1543)



Newton (1642-1727)

### The Copernican Revolution

1. Strengthening of Deism
2. Theories of Evolution
3. Indifference to Situation of Working Class

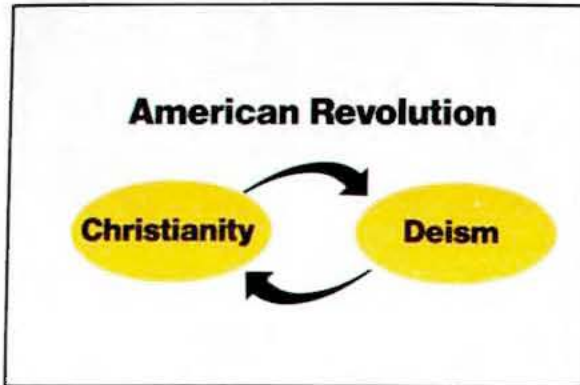


Embarcation of the pilgrims



George Washington (1732-1799)





**Art. 1**  
**Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.**

**U.S. Bill of Rights, 1791**

When we study the documents which surround the American Revolution, we find constant references to Divine Providence and to the belief that, without the guidance of the Almighty, the revolution could not have accomplished its goal. When the Constitution of the United States was written, the first article of the Bill of Rights read, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In his first inaugural address, George Washington dedicated one-third of his message to expressing the need for America to rely on God as she took her first steps toward nationhood. When Washington became president, he received broad, interdenominational support. Catholics, Jews, Methodists, and Episcopalians all pledged their prayers and their support to his presidency and called upon God to guide their new nation.

Even though the roots of the American Revolution are essentially religious, one should also take into account the influence of the humanistic current upon it. The pioneers of political liberalism, Locke and Hobbes, served as a major inspiration in the development of the American Revolution.

The key for the success of the American Revolution was that it was able to harmonize the Christian and humanist currents (unity of Christians and Deists). The ideas of the Enlightenment, such as Deism, were not foreign to the American people. These ideas penetrated deeply in America, but the militant incredulity and anti-clericalism of the French philosophers never found an echo in the American people. For them, the respect of religion was a guarantee of the stability of democratic institutions and the safety of individuals.

Observers of American history such as Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote that you cannot separate American democracy from underlying religious principles. In his text *Democracy in America*, he said that religious beliefs are an integral part of the American political practice. American democracy has to be understood in that way. De Tocqueville wrote that he searched for the greatness of America in the places of commerce, in the harbors, and in the places of industry. However, he did not find it there. It was not until he went into the churches and found the pulpits aflame with righteousness that he understood the greatness of America. He wrote, "America is great because America is good, and when America ceases to be good she will likewise cease to be great."

This God-centered tradition continued in America in the 19th and 20th centuries. Prayer opened each daily session of the United States Congress. All across the country, millions of students began their day with prayer. Always, even in the darkest moments in American history, a leader has come



*Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859)*



*Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)*



forth and upheld the God-affirming tradition. Abraham Lincoln, for example, had a profound understanding of the deep sin represented by slavery. On the wall of the Lincoln Memorial are carved the words of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. It reads:

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Lincoln had an understanding that the nation had sinned and the nation was paying for its sins. He realized that we cannot ignore a deep wrong such as the wrong of slavery. Lincoln called the country to join together in a national day of repentance marked by prayer and fasting on April 30, 1863.

**F. The French Revolution**

The French Revolution took a much more chaotic and bloody course than the American Revolution. Why? What was the basic difference between American history and French history?

The French *Ancien Regime* society was characterized by absolute monarchy and the absence of religious freedom. Louis XIV, known as the "Sun King," had centralized France to an extreme degree. He proclaimed: "*L'Etat, c'est moi!*" (The state is me!) He persecuted mystical groups within the Catholic Church such as the Quietists of Madame Guyon and the Jansenists. He retracted the Edict of Nantes which had granted religious freedom to the Protestants. Against them, he launched bloody massacres known as "les dragonnades."

According to many historians, Louis XIV's repressive policy explains why the Enlightenment philosophy and the French Revolution took the form of a violent reaction against the French crown and Christianity (which the crown supposedly defended).


When the French Revolution occurred, several of the foremost revolutionary figures such as Diderot and D'Holbach called for the de-Christianization of France. Christianity was viewed as an instrument through which the monarchy had justified its power. Certain proponents of the French Revolution even maintained that whereas in the past, the



Storming the Bastille, July 14, 1789



Louis XIV



**Louis XIV**

- 1. Suppressed Catholic mystics**
- 2. Retracted the edict of Nantes**

## French Revolution 1789

1. Reaction to Absolutism
2. Saw Christianity as a tool of the aristocracy
3. Suspect of religion as a whole

### French Revolution

Deism  
Agnosticism  
Atheism

Christianity

#### Art. 10

No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, *even religious ones*, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established law and order.

**French Declaration of the Rights of Man, 1789**

## Social abuses and injustice in the 19th century

1. The emergence of Social Darwinism
2. Religious response to Social Darwinism
3. Western society today

monarchy had justified repression through Christianity, this would be the appropriate moment to avenge this by crushing Christianity and its hierarchy.

Thus, Alexis de Tocqueville could speak of the “anti-Christian genius” of the French Revolution. “Among the passions born from that revolution,” he wrote, “the first ignited and the last extinguished was the anti-religious passion. Nowhere did anti-religion ever become a general, ardent, intolerant, or aggressive passion, but in France...”<sup>3</sup>

This fanatical and militant incredulity is the fundamental difference between the French Revolution and the American Revolution. Both revolutions originally sprang out of the same desire for liberty and democracy, but they took a completely opposite orientation. The French historian François Furet explains it in the following way:

The American Revolution founded institutions guaranteed by God, while the French Revolution established institutions which had no foundation but themselves. The aim of the French Revolution was to create a new man and a new society without any reference to Transcendence, serving in reality as a substitute to any kind of Transcendence.<sup>4</sup>

A quite significant phenomenon is that, in the French Revolution, as opposed to the American Revolution, the Deists united with the agnostics and the atheists to violently oppose the Christians. Therefore two camps — a Christian camp and an anti-Christian secular camp — pitilessly confronted each other. This was characteristic not only of the French Revolution, but also of the Russian Revolution which followed its tradition. Equally significant was the ambiguous position which the French Revolution took on religious freedom in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen:

No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even his religious ones, as long as the manifestation of his opinions does not interfere with the established law and order.

In this formulation, there is clearly reluctance in guaranteeing respect of religious freedom. By 1791, the French Revolution would actively attempt to de-Christianize France. In the beginning of the revolution, most clergy supported efforts in favor of democracy and the abolition of the privileges of the aristocracy, however, they soon found themselves under growing pressure. Priests were forced to swear on the Constitution under threat of being sent into exile. The monastic orders were suppressed and public



processions forbidden. Revolutionary communes were given the right to close down local church parishes. The churches were transformed into temples of Reason where effigies of the martyrs of the Revolution replaced effigies of the saints. In the department of Nièvre, the revolutionary leader Fouché tore down all the religious emblems at cemetery gates and replaced them with signs reading: "Death is an eternal sleep."

Certainly the anti-religious development of the French Revolution was a factor which led Karl Marx to view the French Revolution as a most significant event. More particularly, Marx maintained that this had been a revolution of class and was, therefore, a vital step in the development toward the ultimate revolution of class, the communist revolution.

#### IV. Social abuses and injustice in the 19th century

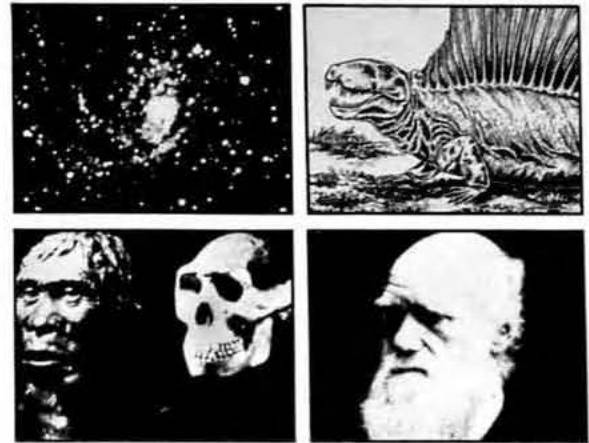
##### A. The emergence of Social Darwinism

As we have mentioned, Deism, which gained prominence during the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, perceived the universe as a machine. The question arose as to how the machine had come to life. Various explanations for the origin and development of life arose. Initially, the view which gained the most popularity was that developed by French biologist Jean Lamarck. Later, Darwin's *Origin of Species* made an even greater impact.

Darwin observed that, within nature, some organisms randomly inherited traits which made them more apt to survive than others. The principle of "natural selection" would then operate to select out those who were most fit for survival and allow them to perpetuate the species.

For example, let us say that there were two varieties of a given species of deer, one with longer legs than the other. Should a predator come, the deer with the longer legs would have a greater chance to escape from it. We can say that those deer would have a greater possibility of both surviving and reproducing. Darwin would observe that the offspring of such deer would potentially inherit this same trait. By this process of natural selection, a species would advance or develop. The guiding principle would thus be what is referred to as "survival of the fittest."

It is one thing to apply this principle to nature, another to apply it to human society. Herbert Spencer, British thinker and contemporary of Darwin, maintained that "survival of the



Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

**Darwinism**  
**Survival of the Fittest**



Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)



"fittest" applied not only to animals but to human society. For Spencer, some members of the human species were more "fit" than others. Some were inherently destined to live in prosperity, whereas others were biologically destined to live in poverty. For Spencer, certain races were also biologically destined to dominate other races.

Spencer's theories made a great impact upon the thinking of the early part of the 20th century. Social Darwinism (as Spencer's theory is usually called) served as a philosophical justification for selfishness. Likewise, it served to justify the exploitation of the weak by the strong. Certain industrialists and entrepreneurs used Social Darwinism to justify a ruthless form of "capitalist" business practice.

### B. Religion's response to Social Darwinism

We would expect Christians to respond to this degeneration of the Western tradition and come to the defense of the weak, based on the belief that all people are children of God. Unfortunately, Christianity did not strongly maintain this position. There were exceptions such as John Wesley, who advocated rights and protection for laborers, Bartolomé de las Casas, who defended rights of native Americans, and Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian and missionary. Tragically, however, we see that the Christian response was stifled by the misapplication of John Calvin's theological view on predestination.

Briefly, predestination is the theological position which stressed that the spiritual destiny of each person was predetermined by God and no amount of human effort could change that destiny. Predestination was later misapplied by interpreting it in a socio-political context to justify one race dominating other races. It also served to justify Christians being insensitive to the needs of others. The financial prosperity of a Christian came to be interpreted as an affirmation of salvation. The poverty of others testified to their damnation. Some were predestined to salvation and therefore economic prosperity. Others were predestined for damnation and abjection.

This created a tragic parallel between Christianity and Social Darwinism. In other words, the "predestined" individual coincided with what Spencer and Darwin termed "the fittest." In "affirming" their own salvation, Christians ignored the situation of the poor and the suffering. Many felt theologically justified in doing so. Yet when Christianity failed to address problems such as poverty and exploitation, Marxism did so instead.

**Social Darwinism served as an excuse for injustice**



Christ



John Calvin (1509-1564)

**Predestination in a Sociopolitical Context Justified "Survival of the Fittest"**



Marx and Engels



**C. Western society today**

Because of a twisted application of predestination, some of our most basic Christian principles, such as "love of neighbor," were laid aside. Revolting against the discrepancy between Christian words and deeds, young people have resorted to drugs and other tragic deviations, which allegedly serve as an alternative for what they perceive as hypocritical piety. This had led progressively to deeper levels of revolt. Many find themselves totally disillusioned.



**V. Western expansionism and the three world wars**

In the 20th century, we find that the entire democratic world is encountering various challenges. From the viewpoint of the loss of human life, no greater calamity exists than the ideologically-based wars, which have occurred and continue to occur in this century. Let us review some of the events and circumstances which led to these three world wars.

**A. World War I**

In the 19th century, Europe initiated a great movement of imperialist expansion in Asia and Africa. The two main democratic countries of the continent, Great Britain and France, took the lead in this movement and built powerful and prosperous empires.

Many theories were developed at that time to justify imperial expansionism. For British imperialists, it was the providential, civilizing and humanitarian mission of the British race, superior and predestined by its qualities, virtues and institutions to expand throughout the world. "If there is a God," wrote British empire-builder, Cecil Rhodes, "He works in a visible manner to make the Anglo-Saxon race the chosen instrument through which He will bring a social state founded on police, liberty and peace." In this view, educating and training the lower peoples were the "white man's burden," the moral responsibility of the British people.

Among the movements that rose to elaborate a British imperialist doctrine, the most famous was the Round Table Movement founded in 1909 by young liberals gathered around Sir Alfred Milner. These young patriots believed in the inherent superiority of British civilization and in the Englishman's duty to carry the fruits of that civilization to humanity. Their ideology was a combination of Social Darwinism and the Christian ethic. "This is the law of human progress," said Milner, "that the competition between nations, each seeking

**Western expansionism and the Three World Wars**



**World War I**



its maximum development, is the Divine Order of the world, the law of Life and Progress."

The Round Table's primary aim was the reinforcement of the political unity of the British Commonwealth as the basis of Anglo-Saxon supremacy in the world. This supremacy, which they saw as the best contribution to stability in the world, had to be established by force if needed, for the greatest benefit of all in the end.

At the end of the 19th century, the French Third Republic asserted itself as the regime which would build France's greatness through colonial expansion, as opposed to the monarchy which had lost most of the French colonies to England in the 18th century.

For the leaders of the Third Republic, colonization was a mere prolongation of the republican ideal in the line of the French Revolution. They regarded French humanistic civilization as the most advanced, the most progressive, and the most universal. During the Revolutionary Wars, France had tried to bring the principles of equality to the rest of Europe. After the failure of the Napoleonic epic, France's mission was to reach out to the backward peoples of the world, hastening the day when all mankind would be united at the highest level of human culture. This "civilizing mission" implied rights as well as obligations. "The superior races," said Republican leader Jules Ferry, main promoter of French imperialism in the 1880s, "have a right toward the inferior races... because they have the duty to civilize the inferior races."

The theories of Darwin were used to reinforce such views. Colonization presents "all the characters to which one recognizes the forces of nature." (Charles Gide) "The need for expansion... is so intimately linked to the instincts dispensed to all beings that one can see there one of the essential manifestations of life." (J. Harmand)

In the late 1880s, the United States, following the example of the European powers, abandoned the traditional isolationistic orientation of her foreign policy and launched an imperialist drive in her sphere of influence, Latin America and the Pacific. The U.S. strategy did not consist of establishing colonies, like European powers mostly did, but in building up a system of formal or financial protectorates.

New intellectual currents emerged providing historical, philosophical and religious justifications for U.S. expansionism. The arguments advanced were often a curious blend of materialistic considerations of self-interest and altruistic concepts rooted in Christian idealism. Darwin's doctrine of

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"the survival of the fittest" was used by many theoreticians to justify the superiority of American democratic institutions and Anglo-Saxon civilization. Historian John Fiske developed a Social Darwinist theory describing the American system as the "fittest" in the world and necessarily destined to be applied to all other nations. The Congregationalist pastor Josiah Strong used the theory of evolution to support his idea of the innate superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. In his book *Our Country* he explained how God invested the American people with the mission to bring the great principles of civil liberty and "spiritual Christianity" to all the weaker, backward peoples of the world. Other thinkers, more purely altruistic, described the role of the United States as protector of all the freedom-fighters and democratic movements in the world rather than defender of its selfish national interests.

The mixed motivations of the colonizers and expansionists produced mixed consequences. Positive results of Western expansion for the native populations could be witnessed in the fields of technical development, public health and education. But, on the other hand, it was mostly conducted with an obvious lack of sensitivity for the local needs.

Sometimes the most sordid intentions would appear, like in the Opium War which broke out in China in 1839. At that time the British, who dominated India, where cultivation of the opium poppy was flourishing, were looking for new markets for the drug. They succeeded in developing the vice in China, where users gathered in the notorious "opium dens." Upset by the resulting destruction of its own people, the authorities of the city of Canton threw 20,000 opium chests into the sea. After demanding payment of an indemnity for the lost opium and meeting a Chinese refusal, the British launched the bloody Opium War.

At the turn of the century, another great power arose, imperial Germany, gaining supremacy on the European continent with its booming economy and powerful army. The Germans had somehow been left behind by the English and the French, however, in the race for control of new markets and new materials overseas, thus limiting the scope of German expansion. Everywhere on the world scene, Germany butted against the more successful colonial powers.

Kaiser Wilhelm II liked to be constantly told he was the greatest sovereign on earth and the founder of German supremacy. Joseph Chamberlain's words describing the British as "the greatest people of conquerors ever seen in the world" grated strongly against him. The increasing tension between European powers finally brought about the First World War.

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## World War II



*Hitler (1889-1945)*

## World War III

After the fall of the Russian Czarist Empire and the entrance of the U.S. in the war in 1917, a mostly democratic block led by France, England and the U.S. opposed a coalition of central autocratic nations led by Germany, Austria and Turkey.

The democratic nations came off victorious from that war, but the new world order they shaped in 1918 created the conditions for a second global confrontation.

### B. World War II

The English and especially the French wanted to prevent Germany from recovering as a big power. They adopted a revengeful attitude, setting war damages to a level beyond the possibilities of the German economy, then in shambles. "Germany will pay!" was the central motto in French politics in the 1920s. And in 1923, Premier Raymond Poincare sent troops to the Ruhr region to force the Germans to start the payment. This humiliating move did much to create additional resentment among the Germans and allow the rise of National Socialism.

After Adolf Hitler took power in 1933, England and France adopted an attitude of weakness. Trying to systematically avoid direct confrontation with the new leaders, they yielded to each of Hitler's aggressive moves.

The United States refrained from taking international responsibility immediately after the war. She went back to her old isolationist tradition and did not even take part in the League of Nations which she had helped to create. Encouraged by this passivity, the Japanese challenged U.S. strongholds in the Pacific and emerged as a new imperialist power.

Thus, the lack of courage and commitment of the democratic nations resulted in the rapid rise of German Nazism, Italian Fascism and Japanese militarism. Convinced that the morally weak democracies would not respond, the Axis powers launched the Second World War.

The Allied democratic nations (United States, England and France) survived this new challenge and won the confrontation, but once again they created the conditions for a third global conflict by shaping a new world order which gave enormous advantage to the war's co-winner, the totalitarian Soviet Union.

### C. World War III

All the post-Second World War period has been marked by a constant confrontation between the Free World and the



communist world on the global level. For that reason, many observers consider that World War III has already started. The Third World especially became the field of East-West competition (Korean War, Cuban crisis, Vietnam War, Portuguese decolonization, Central American crisis, etc.)

What is the real nature of the world wars? World War I and World War II constituted threats to Christian or democratic ideals. In the case of World War I, we saw democracy challenged by the authoritarian nations of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. In the case of World War II, the challenge stemmed from Adolf Hitler who viewed himself as a "deliverer" and interpreted history on the basis of racial elitism. If the non-democratic forces had prevailed in either of these wars (particularly World War II), the situation of Western society would be tragic. Like it or not, the world already finds itself in the midst of another global conflict.

**1. The romantic appeal of communism**

Communism constitutes a deviant form of humanism. Basing itself in scientism, communism has demonstrated a unique ability to win the young and the idealistic. It promises a world of equality, freedom, and harmony. Its slogans and its vision have been able to attract millions.

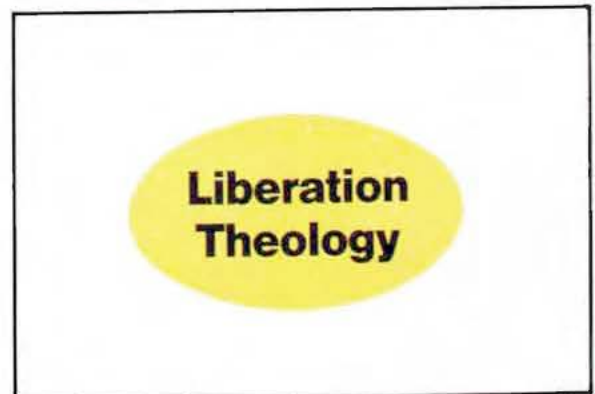
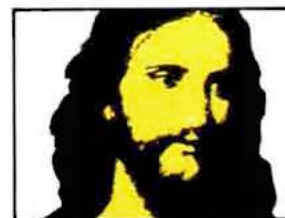
Communists romanticize their revolution. In his text *From Good Savage to Good Revolutionary*, Venezuelan writer Carlos Rangel analyzes the mentality of the Latin American revolutionary and sees him as one in search of an identity as a "noble savage," lost due to colonialism. Rangel maintains that some believe that through the revolution, the noble savage will be restored and indigenous cultures will return to what Rangel views as a mythical state of innocence. Communism has not liberated any nation. It has, however caused tremendous suffering.<sup>5</sup>

**2. Communism and Christianity are not compatible**

Instead of opposing it, some Christians have often tried to compromise with communism. In Latin America, "liberation theology" provides Christians with a Marxist analysis of history and has led thousands to communism. It is generally acknowledged that without a support base among Christians, the Sandinista revolution could not have succeeded. For many Nicaraguan Christians, the source of that support was "liberation theology." There are various forms of this theology but the most militant ones view violent confrontation with the system as part of the Christian mandate. This analysis is so powerful that it led priests such as Colombia's Camilo Torres to dedicate their lives to revolution. For Torres, the true



Lenin and Stalin, 1922



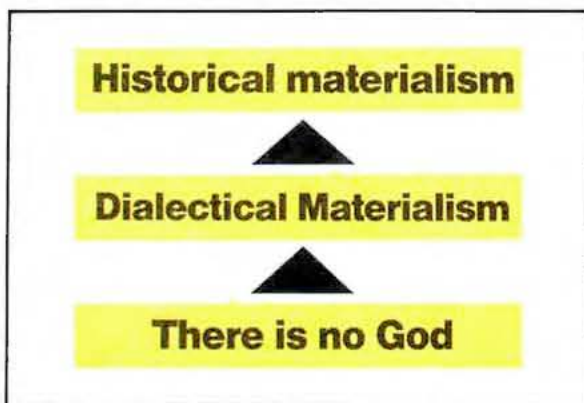




Cathedral of Managua, 1979



Camilo Torres



Nicaraguan Sandinista newspaper headlines read "The Invasion of the Sects," and "Popular Protest Against the Sects."



Christian is he who, as did Torres, goes to the mountains with a rifle to participate in the communist revolution.<sup>6</sup>

In Latin America, communists never approach the Christians in an aggressive manner. They try to win their trust by telling them: "Of course we have nothing against keeping your faith in God. All that we ask is that you accept our view of history." Once they have convinced a person to accept historical materialism, they can proceed to the next step, which is the teaching of dialectical materialism. This leads to the denial of God's existence.

From a logical viewpoint, however, Christianity and Marxism are not at all compatible. Liberation theology accepts the Marxist interpretation of history. However, Marx's interpretation of history is nothing other than historical materialism, which denies the existence of God. For this reason, the two are incompatible. God or no God, it is here that Christians are called to take a stand.

In the United States, an intermediary stage prior to communism may be secular humanism. Secular humanism is outlined in the "Humanist Manifesto," published in 1933, 85 years after the *Communist Manifesto*. It expresses, in the humanitarian style of the agnostic and atheistic ministers and professors who formed it, essential points of materialism, including belief in a universe which is self-existing and not created, and a human being who is a product of his interaction with nature. Secular humanism glorifies all that is charitable and good in human life, states that all problems are to be solved by humans alone, and although it does not deny the possibilities of "realities as yet undiscovered," believes that only that which can be proven by the scientific method exists as a reality. The 14th article of the Manifesto reads,

The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established...<sup>7</sup>

Secular humanism denies the reality of spiritual experiences. It limits truth to what can be proven either rationally or empirically. This position can lead to Marxism, and at the least it has served to dull the spirituality of 20th century man.

### 3. Communist persecution of Christians

The Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua received much support from the Church. However, when the Sandinistas came to power they began to persecute Christians, to destroy



their faith, and consequently to provoke their spiritual separation from God. Before taking power, communists always promise to respect freedom of religion. In Nicaragua, in the beginning of the revolution, the Sandinistas proclaimed unity of action with the Christians: "Let's join our forces," they said, "to destroy Somoza's dictatorship."

Once solidly installed in power, however, the Sandinistas launched a violent campaign in the official press and organized large demonstrations against the Protestant and Evangelical churches, which they depicted as "cults" ready to invade the country. They also closed down the only Jewish synagogue.

Concerning the Catholic Church, their strategy was more subtle. They attempted to break the unity of the Church by promoting a "popular Church" led by infiltrated communist agents against the hierarchy still faithful to the Pope. Pope John Paul II vigorously denounced this attempt of internal subversion in his visit to Nicaragua in 1983, and in 1984 ordered Catholic priests to leave positions in the Sandinista government.

Former Sandinista collaborator Humberto Belli describes the serious situation in Nicaragua:

The present report intends to show that Christians' hopefulness regarding the Sandinista revolution has been mistaken. The difficulties which Christians are now facing from the Sandinista government—as well as the government's curtailment of basic freedoms, cooperation with Cuba and the Soviets, and so on — are the result of the fact that the Sandinistas are fundamentally Marxist-Leninists. These policies are due to the Sandinista leader's explicit and firm commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology. Given this commitment, it would be inconceivable that they would pursue any other set of policies, besides those which they have.

The implications of this situation are very serious for Christians in Nicaragua. They face a government which has expressed its dedication to building a communist state in Nicaragua which has no place for churches that are in any way independent of the government — no place for churches that want to preserve the integrity of Christian teaching and outreach. The government has already indicated its willingness to use every means to manipulate, divide, vilify, intimidate, and otherwise persecute Christians who do not give their wholehearted support to the Sandinistas' policies.

**"While we waited for the embrace of solidarity from our brothers in Christ, incomprehensibly to us those who were embraced were our tormentors."**

**Armando Valladares  
in a Cuban prison**



*Memorial to victims of Cambodian genocide*

It is imperative that Christians outside Nicaragua should open their eyes and properly understand the circumstances that their fellow Christians in Nicaragua confront today. Failure to understand what those circumstances are has led many Christians to abstain from supporting their fellow Christians in Nicaragua and, even worse, it has led sometimes to their supporting those who are persecuting them. This has been a repetition of a pattern that developed after the communist revolution in Cuba.

Armando Valladares, a Cuban Christian and poet released last year from 22 years' imprisonment in Cuba, wrote that the most painful experience of Christians in Cuba has resulted from Christians abroad giving their support to the Marxist government rather than Christians persecuted by the government. These are his words:

"During those years, with the purpose of forcing us to abandon our religious beliefs and to demoralize us, the Cuban communist indoctrinators repeatedly used the statements of support for Castro's revolution made by some representatives of American Christian churches. Every time that a pamphlet was published in the U.S., every time a clergyman would write an article in support of Fidel Castro's dictatorship, a translation would reach us, and that was worse for the Christian political prisoners than the beatings or the hunger. While we waited for the embrace of solidarity from our brothers in Christ, incomprehensibly to us those who were embraced were our tormentors."<sup>8</sup>

The physical effects of communism have been the same everywhere: violence, hunger, elitism, and death. The West, however, has failed to stop the growth of communism. We have lost our idealism and our vision, and for that reason, we have failed to offer a viable response to Marxism.

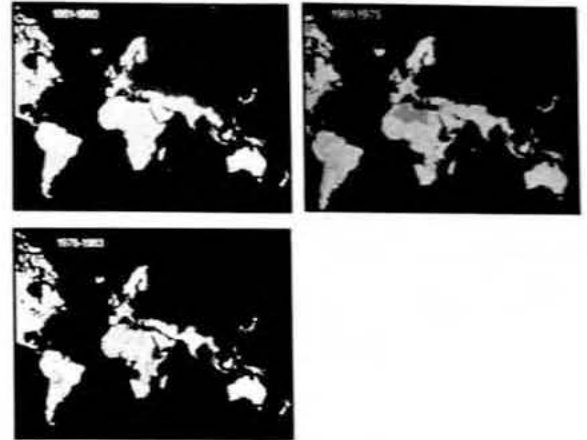
#### ***4. The lack of Western awareness of the communist threat***

Although Lenin declared from the outset that the communist revolution would not end until the world was communized, we in the West have been unable to grasp the extreme seriousness of the Soviet threat. In Western cities such as Boston and New York, thousands of young people participate in protests against cruelty to laboratory animals, but fail to protest communist cruelty to their fellow human beings.





At the same time, citizens of the West show great concern regarding the build-up of Western armaments, but fail to show similar concern regarding the massive Soviet build-up. Nevertheless, Soviet leaders have declared their objectives and have been consistently moving to achieve effective world domination.



**Conclusion**

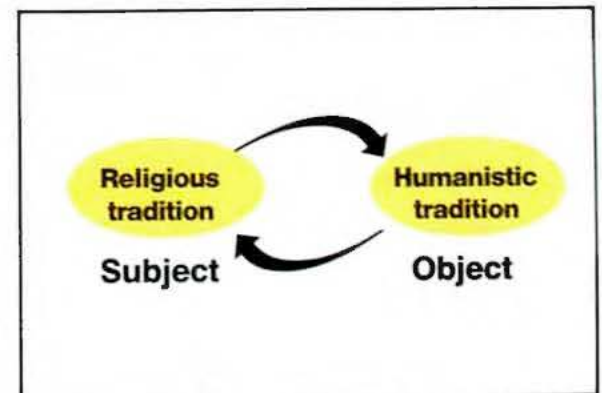
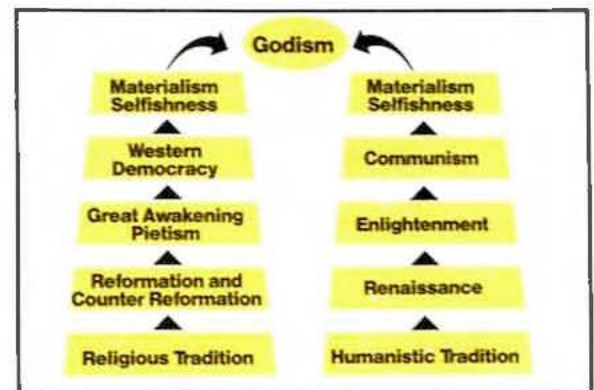
To conclude, let us summarize the development of the religious and humanistic tradition over the past five centuries. The Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation culminated in the 16th century. This was followed two centuries later by the Great Awakening in America and the Pietist movement in Europe. These religious renewals served as a basis for the American Revolution as well as a basis for Western democracy.

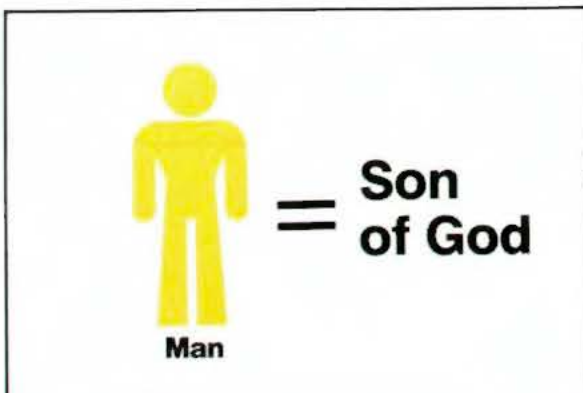
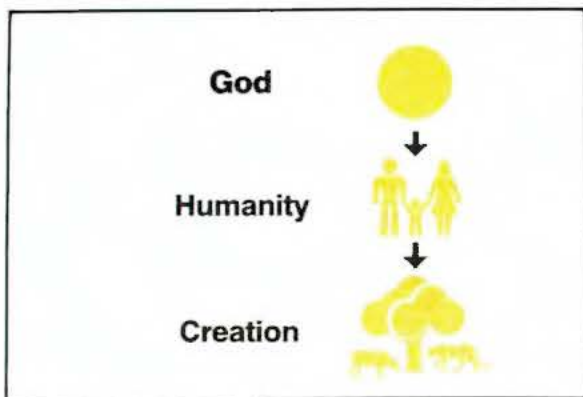
Although, in the West, we still pay lip service to religious ideals, our societies are becoming increasingly materialistic. Today all humankind is in need of a world view, which has the ability to revive idealism and altruism in the Free World, which can offer solutions for social and personal problems, and which can promote cooperation and peace among the many developed and underdeveloped nations.

On the humanistic side, the Renaissance was followed two centuries later by the Enlightenment. This humanistic view contributed not only to the French Revolution but it also established the philosophical foundation for the communist revolution. French philosopher Maurice Clavel observed that through the Renaissance, man denied sin, through the Enlightenment, he denied revelation and through communism, he denied God.

After a toll of millions of lives, communism has produced no utopian society, nor is it approaching that goal. Today Eastern Europe is rampant with crime. Every five minutes, there is a violent murder (provoked by hold-ups, robberies, etc.) committed in the Soviet Union. <sup>9</sup> Today in cities such as Budapest, young people resort to drugs. <sup>10</sup> Furthermore, because its society is composed of a rich and powerful elite (the nomenklatura), we can say that its fruits are materialism and selfishness.

We can conclude that neither communism because of its atheistic foundation nor contemporary Western society because of its present confusion of values have effectively responded to human problems. For that reason, we need a new response—one which can unite these two developments. We refer to this as Godism.





### ***Introducing Godism***

In the past, scientific theory has often contradicted religious thought. Society and even some scientists were asked to choose between their traditional religious beliefs and recent scientific findings. Since the Enlightenment, people have often opted for science.

This has changed in the present century. Materialism denied the existence of a spiritual element at work in the physical world, and it sought to rationalize all phenomena on the basis of scientific observation. In *The New Class Divided*, Alfred Parry points out that today, more and more, Eastern bloc scientists find a contradiction between recent scientific discoveries and communist materialism. Among Soviet scientists, communist theory is perceived as unscientific and outmoded. In light of continued scientific discovery in fields such as nuclear physics and cybernetics, the days of communist absolutism seem to be numbered.<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of the process by which humans developed, materialism cannot deny the unique role of the human being in the overall universal order. Only the human being can relate to and appreciate every dimension of the creation — the sea, the stars, plants, fish, reptiles, or mammals. Today scientists argue that there is increasing evidence that the world was made for man.

God chose humanity as an instrument to express His love to the whole creation. For that reason, we can appreciate the whole of nature.

The true value of the human being is infinite. Every man is a son of God. Every woman is a daughter of God.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta once said that the first time that she saw a man dying in the streets, she was repulsed. But something called her to that person and led her to pick him up and bring him back to her home. As she looked in the eyes of that man, she saw Christ. She discovered the true value of her fellow man. The implications of the Judeo-Christian tradition are boundless. Every man and every woman has unique and divine value. Every man and every woman, for that reason, merits our respect, our love, our care and our concern.

People are often blind to others because of selfishness. As we have seen in the 19th century, selfishness was philosophically justified by materialist world views. Yet the reality of the latter part of the 20th century challenges such materialist perceptions.



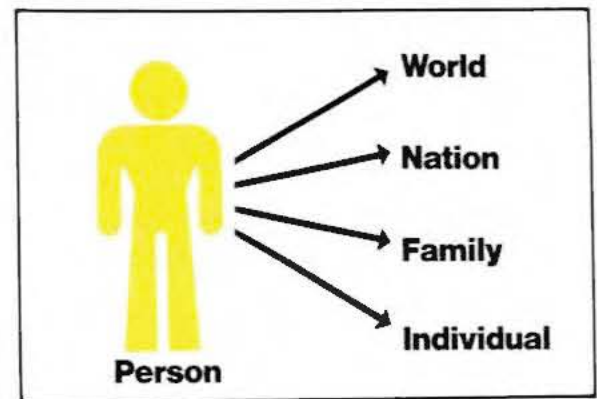
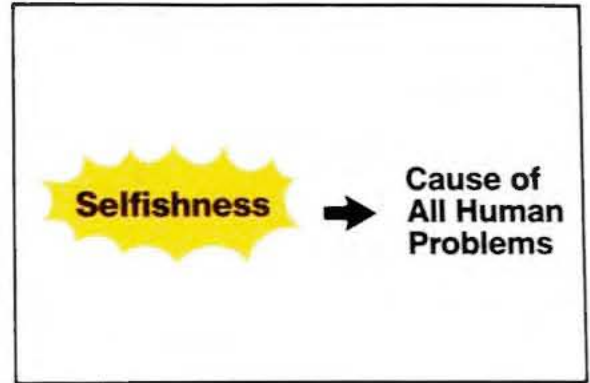
Ultimately each of us has to reflect about our own selves. Who is my life for? Myself? My family? The nation? The world? God? The great individuals of history were those who were able to live for the sake of their nation and beyond. Such a lifestyle requires one to go beyond selfishness. We cannot go beyond selfishness without God and an appreciation of the value of each person as a child of God. We are one family under God. Because we are one family under God, we can go beyond race and creed, and realize a brotherhood of man. Harmony between the religious tradition and humanism, and among cultures and nations is the goal of the CAUSA Worldview and the task of modern man.

The late U.S. President John F. Kennedy spoke eloquently to the hearts and imaginations of many people when he said:

To those people in the huts and villages across the globe struggling to break the bonds of misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required—not because the communists may be doing it, not because we seek their votes, but because it is right.<sup>12</sup>



Mother Teresa



CHAPTER SIX NOTES

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