

PROTECTING OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE FROM THE ADVANCE OF SECULAR HUMANISM

Whilst views expressed in this article are those of the Australian Prayer Network it is acknowledged that some facts and statements have been incorporated from an article by Stephen A Chavura written on a similar subject for the Festival of Light. In cases where homosexuals are referred to it is also meant to cover lesbians as well.

The reigning ideology in the Western world today is secular humanism. By 'secular humanism' we mean an ideology that rejects religious values that there is a right and a wrong way to live. At best the modern ideology of secular humanism is that we can and should be able to do whatever we want as long as we are not obviously hurting others. At worst it holds that all institutions, religious and non-religious, should be tested to see whether they are tolerant enough of different people's choices of lifestyle. If they are, well and good, if they are not, then they must change or go.

In the end, the so-called tolerant movement of secular humanism becomes the most intolerant movement of them all, seeking to apply acid to all institutions to burn away those beliefs and practices which do not find favour with the modern spirit of tolerance and relativism.

Secular humanism today is embodied most forcibly in the activist homosexual movement and its attempts to legislate for sexual license and same sex marriage, and amongst those who argue for the separation of Church and State. The task of the secular humanist is to stamp out any form of opposition to the idea there is no 'right' way to live. This is why there has been a powerful movement in the USA and beginning in Australia to eliminate religion from public visibility under the guise of claiming that separation of Church and State is enshrined in the constitution of both countries.

This is a misrepresentation of what in fact is in those constitutions. In Article One of the American constitution it states 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech....' This spirit of allowing religion to freely develop without state interference was, of course, carried over to the Australian Constitution, which similarly assured the citizens of a new nation that 'The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion....(Sec.116)' This infers, according to our understanding, that the constitution's guarantee freedom of religion from State interference, not that the State cannot embrace aspects of religion and religious teaching and values that it may wish to for the betterment of society as a whole.

There has been a decided push in recent times to attempt to remove religion and religious influence from public life. Attempted changes to religious education practices in some States, the introduction of homosexual concepts into even pre-schools in others, and the push for recognition of homosexual marriage through Civil Unions, are just some expressions of the outworking and influence secular humanism seeks to exert upon our society by removing and denying biblical teaching and influence. To change what is taught to our children is a basic tactic to influence the thought processes of future generations to weaken a Christian worldview that has undergirded our education system and society in general for generations.

Repeated attempts, so far resisted, have been made to remove certain exemptions from Anti-Discrimination laws that allow Christian schools and other organisations to discriminate on the grounds of disability, sex, or sexuality. Attempts have been made to weaken religious education in State schools (as happened in Queensland recently) by opening it up for people to teach any "religious" philosophy (including humanism and witchcraft) to those who request it, thus undermining the special place enjoyed by the Christian faith since the foundation of the education system in this country. It seems pretty clear that the aims of such political action are to weaken and then remove step by step any Christian influence within the public education system of our nation.

Proposals also emerge from time to time wanting to remove the right of Christian schools to refuse to employ a potential teacher who is a practicing homosexual or does not share the religious faith as embodied in the confession of a particular school. If successful such proposals would mean that students would no longer necessarily be taught by practising Christians, but may be taught by atheists or practising homosexuals who have no time for religion at all. Such views are usually defended on the grounds of equality.

It is not that the secular humanist philosophy seeks to stamp out religion altogether. The humanist understanding of religious freedom is basically that when religion is confined to thoughts and prayers within a church building it is safe. They would acknowledge one has the right to believe a particular religious doctrine, or practice some mode of worship within a church building. But as soon as it tries to interact with the public they would argue that the state has a right to curtail any expression of those beliefs. They make it clear that when religious organisations interact with the public as service providers, businesses or de facto government agencies the ordinary rules of society ought to apply.

If however exclusive religious principles cannot prevail in religious institutions interacting with the public, then what is the difference between a religious public institution and a non-religious one? If Christian schools cannot request their students and employees to adhere to Christian values, what is the difference between the Christian school and the state school? The answer: nothing. And that is precisely what secular humanists want. Humanism idealises education as something that should be 'secular'; by 'secular' they mean free from religion.

So what do the secular humanists want to change?

1. They lament the fact that 'discrimination based on marital status is legally tolerated', which they find offensive to say the least. They seek "equality" in all respects but underlying their push is the desire to also remove Christian marriage and the resultant biblical family of a mum, dad and children" as the backbone of the new tolerant society they seek to bring in.

2. Secular humanists want to stop religious schools from teaching biblical principles especially those related to sexuality, human behaviour and relationships. They want to remove the concept of right and wrong which they say should be decided by every individual according to their own beliefs and not a higher being. So a religious school which teaches the essential and fixed natures of male and female and the immorality of a homosexual lifestyle would have to teach such principles whilst at the same time employing people who practice an opposite lifestyle. If the secular humanist view prevails and atheists, homosexuals, and transgendered/transsexual teachers begin to teach in Christian schools, eventually the schools will cease being Christian. This is in fact the end result secular humanists seek.

If the schools allow for their employment, but not for their right to teach classes on religion or sexual ethics they will eventually be criticised for discrimination against those teachers who they themselves hired to teach. Either those teachers will teach doctrines against their own chosen beliefs and lifestyles, or such doctrines will simply not be taught. Eventually, the secular humanists will seek to ban any religious instruction in any school on the grounds that it is exclusionary.

3. The humanists want to make it illegal for religious schools to refuse to employ practising homosexual teachers. Their strategy here is to force Christian Schools and Institutions to employ people whose lifestyle opposes biblical concepts and therefore begin to weaken the fabric and appeal of the Christian School system. The argument for why Christian schools should not be allowed to pass over practising homosexual teachers for employment is the notion that someone being judged as being suitable or unsuitable for a job based on his or her sexuality is plainly offensive. Of course, homosexuals and lesbians are free to teach in public schools and their sexuality generally remains their own business. No one has ever argued that a homosexual is by definition a bad teacher. Religious schools, such as evangelical and Catholic schools, discriminate against practising homosexual applicants, not because they cannot teach, but because they cannot teach with Christian integrity.

The Bible makes it clear that the practice of homosexuality is a sin. The apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:26-27a: 'Because of this idolatry, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another'. So it is clear that biblical Christianity teaches that the practice of homosexuality is a sin or shameful. Yet the secular humanists want to equate such practice as equal to heterosexual marriage and to allow such teaching to be considered "normal" in our state schools and pre-schools and indeed be forced on religious schools.

Christian education is not merely about imparting facts to students. It is about allowing students to be brought up in an atmosphere of Christian values and establishing a moral and ethical framework for children to evaluate the facts. Teachers not only teach facts from books, but they teach values by their own convictions and behaviour. This is an obvious fact. No public school would allow a prominent Neo-Nazi to teach children. Humanists would be the first to shout 'Offensive!' if a public school teacher was also a prominent member of a white supremacist organisation. This is because such a teacher's views and lifestyle would not exemplify the spirit of equality and tolerance that the public school system is thought to embody. Furthermore, it would be feared that the teacher's authority could make racism seem somehow legitimate, or at least, less reprehensible.

The discrimination against non-Christian teachers in Christian schools is analogous. Such teachers would undermine the very purpose of such schools, to inculcate a Christian worldview and practice within the students, derived from actual teaching and teachers' examples. The role of a teacher is not only to provide education and to impart knowledge but also to be a role model to children with certain values informing and shaping that role.

If the humanists and homosexuals wish to argue that hiring of people whose lifestyles are not conducive to traditional Christian belief and practise, would not be detrimental to the aims of Christian schools, here is a challenge. Let them allow people who have no time for their ideas to work for them as administrators and representatives. Political parties who are the proponents of these reforms in Parliament, are exempted from such reforms. Why should there be any difference between the policy of hiring staff for political parties and the policy they want to impose on Christian organisations and institutions? Of course, the obvious response is that political parties are formed to pursue a certain agenda, which would be completely undermined if they failed to discriminate against applicants who had no time for such an agenda. To think that the homosexual movement would employ Christians who oppose their standards and beliefs is unthinkable and not expected by any rational person. That is the exact reason why religious organisations who represent particular and often unique theological, philosophical and moral viewpoints should also be allowed to maintain that purity by employing people of like mind.

Secular humanists want to distinguish between the internal and external practices of religion. The internal practices refer to church practices and doctrines, the external practices refer to how the religious institution acts outside of the physical church walls. Many humanists have a neat and simple understanding of religion as a phenomenon that takes place within the mind of the believer and within the walls of a church building. It does not occur to them that there can be religious institutions other than churches, such as schools, nursing homes, and welfare agencies. They want to make these institutions indistinguishable from their public equivalents. Yet what they fail to understand is that it is precisely because these institutions are not like their public equivalents that people use them. They do not suddenly stop being religious because they interact with the public. On the contrary, the public interacts with them because they are religious.

If the secular humanists ever have their way and religious schools and other Christian institutions are not permitted to discriminate against those who do not share their religious convictions then they will be forced to hire atheists, pluralists, practicing homosexuals, and transsexuals. This will result in the eventual closure, or at least the secularisation, of Christian schools and institutions, we believe, to the detriment of society at large.

This is why we must protect our Christian heritage against further erosion in our society.

Source: Australian Prayer Network

