

# A **BIG** Plan for a Small Planet: *The Humbug Manifesto 2000*

by Sarah Flashing and Joy A. Veinot

Many people faced the new Millenium with a sense of dread and apprehension. What would happen to the world in our new century? War? Famine? Economic collapse? Armageddon? We have now survived Y2K, so perhaps millennial fever will cool down for a time. Perhaps the rosy optimists will have the upper hand for a time—at least until another war or famine or something comes along and dashes their Utopian hopes. One thing is sure: *Only God knows* what the future will bring. The pessimists and the optimists have been overtaken and embarrassed by REALITY time and time again.

One group of optimists in particular, those known as Secular Humanists, presumes to offer *the alternative* to the doomsday predictions that have marked the end of the twentieth century. By insinuating that *they* exercise a level of thought and reason not available to lesser humans, they seek to address the real and imagined perils of the next thousand years of history and offer “reasonable” solutions.

By bringing alleged “fresh thinking” to bear upon the human condition,<sup>1</sup> the latest version of the *Humanist Manifesto* suggests a plan “to cope with the global society that is now emerging.”<sup>2</sup> But let the reader beware: Close examination of *the Humanist Manifesto 2000* shows itself to be just another “humbug manifesto” in matter of fact. Even their preposterous boast that Humanism represents “fresh thinking” is absurd in light of the fact that, *in the very first paragraph of the preamble*, they trace their Humanistic heritage back to “the philosophers and poets of ancient Greece and Rome, Confucian China, and the Carvaka movement in classical India.”<sup>3</sup> They stress the fact that “humanist artists, writers, scientists, and thinkers

have been shaping the modern era for over half a millennium.”<sup>4</sup>

If a rehash of out-dated pagan philosophy represents “fresh thinking,” what, we ask, is “stale old thinking?” It is no surprise to us that Humbug 2000 blames “fundamentalist” religions for saddling mankind with “old ideas and traditions” that are “no longer relevant to current realities and future opportunities.”<sup>5</sup>

These fundamentalist religions are not identified by name—I suppose the Humanists figured that we would know who we are! ☺ The only requirement to be labeled a “fundamentalist” today, by liberals and Atheists alike, is to be one who believes one’s religion is actually TRUE, which would include followers of biblical Christianity, Islam, Orthodox Judaism, and other religions.

Why Humanistic ideas are “fresh and new,” while Christian beliefs are “old and irrelevant” is not spelled out here ... we are just supposed to accept their unsupported assertion on good, old-fashioned faith, I guess. ☺

This revised manifesto is divided into several sections. The preamble provides a very helpful historical review

of previous (failed) manifestos. Exuberantly they assert, “... humanist ideas and values express a renewed confidence in the power of human beings to solve their own problems and conquer uncharted frontiers.”<sup>6</sup>

Such blarney! What does their *confidence* have to do with anything? The Heaven’s Gate folks had great confidence a spaceship was coming to pick them up—such great confidence that they laid down their lives for that belief. Their confidence, however, did not make it so. Confidence is just *faith*, folks, nothing more or less.

(Continued on next page)



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**"HM2000" (Continued from page 1)**

Anyone who takes a serious look at human history cannot have much reason to believe human beings are going to solve their own problems. Therefore, upon what is such sanguine confidence based?

We have pointed out that there have been numerous formerly ballyhooed manifestos that have utterly failed to achieve their objectives. So, the Humanist's "renewed confidence" in this latest offering (*HM2000*) does nothing to convince us they finally got it right *this time!* Didn't earlier Humanists have complete confidence in *Humanist Manifesto I*, which appeared in 1933 and advocated "national economic and social planning?" I suppose they did until 1973, when *Manifesto II* appeared and "no longer defended a planned economy, but left the question open to alternative economic systems."<sup>7</sup>

Why did they lose confidence in the boldly offered social solutions offered in *Manifesto I*? Well, here is how they explain it—STUFF HAPPENED—stuff like the rise of fascism, World War II, Communism's ascendance on the world scene, the Cold War, the decolonialization (their word) of the third world, the creation of the United Nations, and on, and on.

**We Have Zealous Faith In Our Non-Religion ...**

So, what happened that derailed *Manifesto II*? MORE STUFF HAPPENED, that's what. In particular, some mean, old, nasty critics labeled Secular Humanism a religion—that dirty word!!! So in 1980, in response to attacks "particularly from fundamentalist religious and rightwing political forces in the United States"<sup>8</sup> a.k.a. the Big Bad Wolf, a.k.a. You-know-who-you-are, *A Secular Humanist Declaration* was boldly and confidently issued in 1980. Their condensed response to the critics who insisted Secular Humanism is a religion was as follows: No we're not! The *Declaration* declared that, unlike religion, Secular Humanism expresses "... a set of moral values and a non-theistic philosophical and scientific viewpoint that could not be equated with religious faith."<sup>9</sup>

So is Secular Humanism a religion? You bet it is! You don't need a deity to have a religion. Everyone would agree that Buddhism is a religion, yet many sects of Buddhism claim no deity. Webster defines "religion," in part, as "any specific system of belief and worship, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy [the Christian religion, the Buddhist religion, etc.] b) Any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc. resembling, suggestive of, or likened

to such a system [humanism as a religion]."<sup>10</sup> Bingo.

So, the Humanists are operating on faith the same as any other religion; and they are quite open about where their faith is placed—in the most unreliable and untrustworthy of sources—mankind!

Okay, back to the inspiring tale ... After 1980, MORE STUFF HAPPENED, so *A Declaration of Interdependence* was boldly, confidently, and ardently issued in 1988 "calling for a new global ethics and the building of a world community."<sup>11</sup>

**Planetary Humanism**

Well, all that sounds very well and good, so why do we need Humbug 2000? You guessed it—MORE STUFF HAS HAPPENED! It's discouraging, isn't it? More stuff keeps happening all the time! And, since Humanism has not solved our problems so far, it is obvious *more* Humanism is needed. So now they make a fervent, ardent, zealous case for *planetary humanism*.

First, we are treated to what, in their opinion, is evidence that mankind is on the road to paradise. The section of *HM2000* entitled "Prospects for a Better Future" takes a look at how the world has benefited from science and technology. (We have to admire how the Humanists manage to imply that science and technology are the exclusive domain of Secularists, as if Christians are not well-represented in the sciences and among inventors—both historically and currently.) From the discovery of antibiotics and the development of vaccines, to increased crop yields impacting starvation and new modes of transportation,<sup>12</sup> *HM2000* looks to the accomplishments of our past to predict a rosy future for mankind. The authors boast happily that "human inquiry is now able to advance ... while the metaphysical and theological speculations of the past have made little or no progress."<sup>13</sup> Our prospects for a better future, they assert, rest in the hands of the human species equipped with confidence and rationale combined with science and technology. One might wonder why the Humanists have not solved all of humanity's problems already. After all, by their own reckoning, they have been working at it for half a millennium now.

As it turns out, the Humanists probably *could* have solved the world's problems by now if only the religionists and other wackos had gotten out of their way and let them make all the rules. ☺ Even now, it seems these religious dinosaurs are standing in the way of progress.

And so, *HM2000* reveals some insecurity about where our race may be headed, and what bad stuff may befall us in the future, if we do not heed this warning and follow their well-reasoned plan. They are, they say, "... especially concerned about antiscientific, anti-modern trends ..." Some of these trends are identified as "the emergence of shrill fundamental voices, and the persistence of bigotry and intolerance, whether religious, political, or tribal in origin."<sup>14</sup> They accuse these reactionary fundamentalists of "opposing efforts to resolve social problems or to ameliorate the human condition ..."<sup>15</sup>

At this point, it is fair to ask just what the *Humanists* have done (besides writing endless manifestos, that is) to "resolve social problems or ameliorate the human condition." How many hospitals and universities have Atheists established? How many prison ministries have they founded? How many food pantries have they set up? It seems they are more talk than action. Yet, Christians—who *did* found many of our universities, hospitals, food pantries, homeless shelters, and all manner of compassionate organizations—are scorned by the Humanists as having done nothing to ameliorate human suffering.

Moreover, they hold "theists and transcendentalists" responsible for all of the atrocities committed throughout history. From slavery and capital punishment, to wars inspired by "intransigent dogma," it is implied that Atheists would never take part in such atrocities. Humbug. It is true, of course, that religious people, including Christians, have persecuted and even killed people in the name of God. And, yes, Christians have held slaves and even upheld slavery as an institution at one time. These are terrible things. There is no denying that Christians have often transgressed God's law and have not displayed His love.

And, indisputably, pagan and mystical religions have also been responsible for much unpleasantness—what with human slavery and sacrifice, persecutions, and wars from the pre-Christian era to the present. But, the old charge that religion (in general) and Christianity (in particular) is to blame for all or even most of man's inhumanity to man is patently false. In our twentieth century, Atheism has been a *very* deadly philosophy, indeed. Stalin, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Chairman Mao—there's not a Christian or theist in the bunch! *Millions upon millions* in the twentieth century *alone* have died at the hands of Atheistic Utopian schemers in their attempt to recreate paradise without God.

## The Rocks on The Roadway

Not only are people of faith responsible (in the Humanist's view) for all of the bad stuff that has happened in history, but, as we have previously alluded to, they now *prevent* a lot of good stuff from happening. Faith-based worldviews are the biggest *obstacle* to progress in the Humanistic worldview. *HM2000* states that economic development and the reduction in poverty are repressed because certain religious and political groups refuse to fund programs that are "designed to reduce fertility and stabilize population growth."<sup>16</sup>

Have you ever noticed Christians can be blamed for almost anything? On the fiftieth anniversary of the Holocaust in Europe, our local newspaper took the opportunity to blast European Christians for not preventing that atrocity. Yet, this same paper, on another page, branded Christians in America as "right wing extremists" for their attempts to stop our modern-day holocaust of abortion on demand! Should Christians live according to their consciences or not? But we digress ...

New Age adherents, with their "spiritual/paranormal views of

reality,"<sup>17</sup> cause great consternation to the Humanists as well. This is in spite of the fact New Agers generally *agree* with the Humanists that there is no such thing as absolute truth in the religious realm. The problem the Humanists have with New Agers is the NA's tendency to reject *all* absolutes including those of the Humanist's vaunted scientific and technological variety. For example, New Agers believe all spiritual paths are equally valid and lead to salvation however one chooses to define it. Unfortunately, from the Humanist's standpoint, many New Agers also believe that Mother earth (Gaia) is a living being and find some benefit in communing with trees. This is pure nonsense from the rationally minded Humanist point of view. And they are even more upset by the NA's tendency to reject proven, scientific, medical techniques, etc., in favor of touchy-feely, unscientific, or even anti-scientific therapies of various kinds.

Humanists are distressed at the appearance and even ascendancy of Postmodernism in our universities, decrying Postmodernist's "questioning [of] the basic premise of modernity and humanism, attacking science and technology, and questioning humanistic ideals and values."<sup>18</sup>

This seems strange to us. Christians, it should be noted, share the Humanist's concern with the rejection of objective truth that manifests itself in the New Age and Postmodernist worldview, because Christianity strongly holds to absolute truth and rejects moral, spiritual, *and* scientific relativism. (We believe adultery is wrong, God is ONE, and 1+1=2, for example.) But, on what basis can the Humanists deny Postmodernist's right to question Humanist values and ideals—after all, Humanists have made a career out of questioning *Christianity's* values and ideals.

And, shouldn't the right of human inquiry, so highly praised in this very document when it applies to the religious goose, include the right to question the Atheist gander's faith as well? Nope. The Humanists defend their beliefs with a religious fervor unmatched by many "religious fundamentalists," which only proves religious hypocrisy comes in all stripes.

## Whose "Morality" Is "Right?"

What are the Humanists "values and ideals?" The following is a condensation of some of the key principles of the ethics of Humanism:<sup>19</sup>

- Moral responsibility
- Humane treatment of all persons (A fetus, of course is not one of the "favored" persons—we can abuse them all we please.)
- Moral education for young people
- Reflective inquiry regarding ethical judgements
- An openness to the modification of ethical principles
- Autonomy of choice

These principles sound really great until you realize no definitions are given. What does "moral" or "ethical" mean?" Who decides what it means to act "responsibly?" "Humane treatment of all persons" sounds great, but people disagree strongly about just what that expression entails. For example, some people believe it is "humane" to euthanise the disabled, the physically or mentally ill, or even those who are merely unwanted. Christians, for one group, would most certainly disagree with *that* definition. Whose definition rules? Also, although they presumably would mandate humane treatment for all persons, they elsewhere in this document advocate *very inhumane*, indeed *brutal*, treatment of those they

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# When Gothard Comes To Church

by Keith Gibson



**T**he ministry of Bill Gothard has unquestionably affected the lives of millions of people. The teachings of his Institute of Basic Life Principles (IBLP) influence the daily decisions in thousands of homes across America, making him one of the most significant religious leaders of this era. Many of his followers give glowing testimonies of changed lives and renewed faith. Others speak of bondage, guilt, and severed relationships. The Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. Journal has taken an extensive look at some of the unique doctrinal characteristics of this ministry. However, what is the impact on the local church? IBLP claims to be an organization committed to helping the local church and pastor. What is the result when a family becomes involved in this ministry? We will briefly examine these questions in this article.

Until recently, I couldn't have told you much at all about Bill Gothard. Of course, I had heard of him. My understanding led me to believe his teachings tended to be legalistic, but I would not have considered him dangerous. After all, my own denomination has, in the past, been known as much for what we don't do as any of our doctrinal distinctives. My opinion began to change when one of the families in my church became heavily involved in his ministry, and I was forced to research and confront many of his teachings. Over the last year, I have had several opportunities to share my concerns about this ministry with individuals and families involved with IBLP.

Unfortunately, in an article of this nature and size, I will be forced to deal in generalities. I will be painting with a broad brush. In actuality, each specific situation will be different. The actual impact IBLP makes will vary greatly in each case, depending on many factors. Those churches, that already take a position against such things as contemporary Christian music and other issues of conviction, will find fewer disturbances created by IBLP's teachings than those churches that do not. Large churches are able to absorb people of vastly differing views more easily than small churches.

Another factor will be the level of involvement in Gothard's teachings the members pursue. For instance, I have had families in the past who attended seminars, gleaned some helpful information, and never went back, because they felt Gothard's stands on arbitrary matters were too rigid. The experience of this type of family would be much different than one who attends multiple seminars yearly and begins to use the Advanced Training Institute (ATI) home-school curriculum. Having said all this, there are some common characteristics that should raise a pastor's concern.

## Isolation

Gothard's teachings leave virtually no area of life untouched—including clothing, proper diet, hairstyles and beards, music, and even appropriate and inappropriate toys. This can create a problem for Christians who are not involved in IBLP and who are trying to relate to those committed to the IBLP. It is difficult to know how to interact. One is not sure of all the areas that might be offensive. We

had an incident where a children's Sunday School teacher showed an excellent video as a part of the morning's lesson only to find herself being accused by a child's mother after church because the opening song was felt to be rock music by the child. Another family asked for prayer regarding a house they were trying to buy and were confronted by a Gothard family asking, "Do you really want to go into debt over a house?" The list of objectionable activities can seem mind boggling to someone not involved in the program. The Gothard family is quickly perceived as different, not in the sense that all Christians are called to be separate from the world, just different.

One of the effects of the Old Testament Law was that it kept Jews isolated from Gentiles by making fellowship difficult. Paul writes of the Law as a wall of separation, when he says:

*"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace." (Ephesians 2:14-15, NKJV)*

Christ Jesus abolished this wall by His death on the cross and has created a new race of people from all those who have accepted His atonement. By encouraging his followers back under selected portions of the Law, as well as other arbitrary rules, Gothard recreates the same difficulty between church members as that which existed between Jews and Gentiles prior to Christ. He is, in a sense, rebuilding the wall Jesus Christ died to destroy! It is difficult for Gothardites to eat, recreate, and socialize with others who are outside of IBLP. For many who are not involved in Gothard's teaching, it is simply easier to keep their distance from IBLP alumni than to always be guessing about whether they are going to offend them.

## Division

Gothard is very dogmatic regarding all of his positions. To disagree with him is, in effect, to disagree with God. For instance, it is his view that Christians who listen to contemporary Christian music are not exercising personal freedom and conviction ... they are carnal. Many of his followers develop a similar level of dogmatism. This can create division in the body. Several times I have had a family come to me with an ultimatum declaring that if our church was not going to follow "God's way" (i.e. IBLP teaching), they would leave the church. I have had this same testimony repeated to me from other pastors as well. In Gothardism, every issue is a test of fellowship.

## False Spirituality

Gothard's ministry may leave followers with a false understanding of spirituality. This can occur in at least two ways. One way is that some begin to think holiness is conformity to lists of rules and regulations. This was part of the error of the Pharisees of Jesus' day. It is an especially easy trap to fall into. The emphasis is placed on external rather than internal issues. People may perceive themselves to be more spiritual than others in the church based on adherence to dietary regulations, hairstyles, clothing regulations, types of music they lis-

ten to, or a host of other issues promoted by Gothard. Paul frequently wrote against the use of an external standard.

*“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23)*

There is another strain of false spirituality, though, that sometimes is found in Gothard’s ministry. For lack of a better phrase, it is a type of mysticism. Gothard’s mystical tendencies have been addressed in a previous article in the *Journal*, but let me give an example. At one of the conferences, the story was told of a woman who was so spiritually sensitive that she fainted every time she heard a particular type of rock beat. I have heard this story repeated by multiple followers of IBLP. One of the members of my church was at this conference, heard the story, and was deeply impressed. For some time thereafter, every time she heard a song that had a stronger rhythm than she felt was appropriate, she would feel nauseated. (Apparently, she could not learn how to faint.)

Gothard and his followers frequently speak of the “light in the eyes” the young people under his ministry exhibit, provided they don’t listen to contemporary music. A couple of Scriptures are occasionally twisted to support this. At a conference I attended, Mr. Gothard said essentially, “Jesus said the eye is the light of the body and let your light shine before men.” In a personal correspondence with this author, Mr. Gothard denies he uses these verses to support the “light in the eyes” phenomena. However, he goes on to state, “The light in the eyes is an observable fact.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Biblical Confusion**

By far the most disturbing problem, though, is a sense of confusion over how the Bible is to be interpreted. Gothard’s poor hermeneutic\* technique is well documented in other issues of the *Journal* and is (for this author) *THE ISSUE* behind all other problems in his ministry. An individual or family who become heavily involved with IBLP must overlook a series of Scripture abuses. This lack of understanding regarding proper methods of interpretation leaves the follower open to other teachers who mishandle the Word. Many of the techniques used by Gothard are also used by cults and faith teachers. A family who becomes involved in this ministry is ill prepared to counter these false teachers. It is not uncommon, in my experience, to find people involved in Gothard’s program who are also accepting other false teachers as well.

In addition, the followers themselves are often guilty of the same types of misuse of Scripture. There is an old adage, “like begets like and error begets error.” Those who place themselves under the teaching of Bill Gothard have improper Bible study regularly demonstrated to them. This poor use of Scripture can lead to many misapplications and harmful practices in their personal lives.

## **So What’s A Pastor To Do?**

The pastor who attempts to confront Gothardism in the lives of his church members in the hope of returning them to freedom in Christ should be prepared for some powerful obstacles. Since these

people claim to have the utmost respect for the Bible, one might think that simply showing them the evidence of misuse of Scripture would be sufficient, but for many this will not be the case. The obstacles to leaving Gothard are similar to those faced by people leaving any other aberrant movement.

One of the first things the pastor will encounter is what I will call the “power of the persona.” Hands down, this is the most common defense to which those involved in IBLP appeal. Bill Gothard presents himself extremely well. His followers are convinced he is one of the most godly, sincere, humble, gracious, you-name-it, men who has ever lived. One young lady expressed it this way, “Here is a man who loves people and families so much that he spends every waking moment seeking God’s direction about how to help them.” Though my own dealings with Mr. Gothard are very limited, I must say to his credit, that he comes across as a very likeable, gentle, elderly man. It is a powerful image.

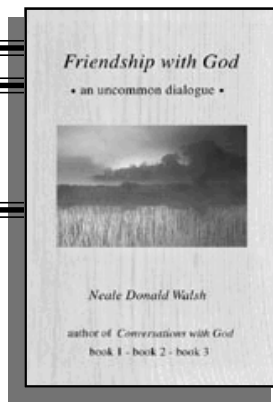
The pastor who attempts to confront Gothard’s errant teaching will very likely find himself being perceived in a negative light. There is a necessary level of argumentation that takes place whenever one disagrees with another teacher’s doctrine or interpretive method. This may very well be perceived by the follower as a personal attack against a man they deeply admire. Moving them beyond personality issues to sincerely examining the scriptural issues can be a difficult and frustrating challenge.

The person attempting to rescue another from Gothard’s entanglement must also be aware that, in the Gothardite’s eyes, you probably don’t measure up to the stature of Gothard. Gothard’s followers, for the most part, only see his public image. He is not on display before their eyes week after week. He does not have any children who can occasionally act up. His seminars abound with illustrations in which he had the right answer, the right discernment, and the right counsel to aid those under his teaching. You will likely find yourself having your human frailty brought into the conversation. Stay the course. Stay with the Scriptures and don’t allow yourself to be drawn into a personality comparison.

Another powerful obstacle is the sense of certainty and stability Gothard gives. While many of us might find all the IBLP’s rules and principles stifling, many others will find them psychologically comforting. In a world of uncertainty, apparently here are all the answers. Here are the foolproof methods to find success in your marriage or job and to raising obedient children who won’t use drugs or become immoral but will, instead, radiate the light of Christ in their eyes. Here are the answers to financial success. And these methods *have* to work because they are God’s methods. After all, they’re straight from the Bible! Rather than having to train their own senses to discern good and evil in modern issues, they find, in Gothard, a mediator who can deliver to them the opinion of God on these matters.

The flip side of this is the fear that comes with leaving. This is more than just the fear of uncertainty. An undercurrent in much of Gothard’s teaching is a sense that something bad will happen if his principles aren’t followed. His teaching regarding the sins of the parents passing on to the children certainly fits here. It is Gothard’s opinion that children experience direct spiritual consequences for their parent’s sins. The sins of the forefathers must be confessed and acknowledged in order to cleanse oneself from their ramifications. As previously stated, in Gothard’s system, to disagree with him is essentially to disagree with God. Also, there are no areas of personal freedom or conviction. Even something as innocuous as eating white bread is turned into a moral issue of either ignorance or willful disobe-

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# FRIENDSHIP WITH A WARRSINWAWAY GOD

Looking At *Friendship With God*  
By Neale Donald Walsch

by Marcia Montenegro

Continuing his string of bestsellers after *Conversations with God: Books 1, 2, and 3*, author Neale Donald Walsch has co-authored another book with “God”: *Friendship with God*. As shown in a previous article for the *MCO Journal* on *Conversations with God, Book 1*, there is no reason to assume Walsch is actually transmitting messages from God, although this is what he believes. Desiring friendship with God must take a back seat to examining what this God is saying. If this really is not God, then all the advice given by Walsch and his “God” should be disregarded, since the source would be a liar.

In spite of the verbosity of this book, no new ideas are revealed. It all boils down to the same old story: We are all one, we are one with God, truth is based on your feelings, thinking must be put aside to experience spiritual truth, there is no right or wrong, and there are many ways to God.

Since it is not clear that this is the true God, Walsch’s God will be referred to as “G” throughout this article to avoid confusion and for the sake of brevity.

## Walsch’s Fear of God

Walsch goes into detail about his background and various experiences as to how he applied lessons learned from people or circumstances. We gain insight on why Walsch has been so desperately seeking a kinder, gentler God when we learn that his Catholic background, rightly or wrongly, taught him to fear God. He recounts several episodes from his childhood, including one in which his aunt tells him that his mother will be punished by God for “trafficking with the devil” by reading Tarot cards.<sup>1</sup> Walsch was only six at the time. This fear was reinforced at a Catholic school, where Walsch and the other students had it drummed into them to go to Mass, say the rosary, go to confession weekly, take Holy Communion, etc. in order to avoid God’s anger. Walsch attacks the rules he says dominate religions around the world. Though he does not name names, he makes reference to other branches of Christianity and to Islam.

Walsch assumes his experiences to be true for everyone and apparently has never questioned this. His misunderstanding of Christianity and apparent ignorance of the Gospel of Grace lead him to reject the Judeo-Christian God and set him up as a perfect target for what seems to be new spiritual freedom offered by an entity claiming to be God.

## We Are All One

That we are all one and that we are one with God is the central, recurring theme of this book. Walsch asserts it even before his friend G starts talking, and it is repeated often. Since we are one with God, we

are divine. G tells Walsch in one of his little ditties, “Your Will and Mine, is that will which is Divine ...”<sup>2</sup> This impresses Walsch, as does much of what G tells him, although many of the sayings are shallow or are mere repetitions of previous New Age and Eastern clichés.

Walsch has come to the great understanding that life is an illusion, and we are creating the reality around us. This idea, originally from Hindu beliefs, was adapted into the New Thought teachings found in Christian Science and the Unity School of Christianity years ago, as well as becoming part of New Age thinking. However, Walsch is just now experiencing what he calls “the Ultimate Reality of Oneness, with You and with everything and everyone.”<sup>3</sup>

Not surprising, we learn that, as part of Walsch’s spiritual journey before writing the G books, he spent time with Elisabeth Kubler-Ross whom he claims taught him about a God who would never judge. Then he explored several religions, including Buddhism, finally becoming an enthusiastic follower of a woman named Terry Cole-Whittaker, who was a minister with The United Church of Religious Science (another New Thought church). While he was on staff at her church, he absorbed her teachings on “a God of unconditional love” and on the “power of God” which resides “within all of us. This included the power to create our own reality and to determine our own experience.”<sup>4</sup>

Feeling separate as an individual is an illusion, an illusion we maintain with our “drama” so that we can “play out ... all the various versions of Who You Are,” according to G.<sup>5</sup> It is up to us whether to experience the illusion or live outside it and experience Ultimate Reality. And how do we do that, asks Walsch. G replies:

“Be still, and know that I am God. I mean that literally, Be still. That is how you will know that I am God, and that I am always with you. That is how you will know that you are One with Me. That is how you will meet the Creator inside of you ...”<sup>6</sup>

Later, when Walsch is told that to apply this message, he must “be it,” not “do it,” G says, “Is it not written: *And the Word was made flesh?*”<sup>7</sup> Walsch asks how he can know that for sure, and G tells him “You are, quite literally, the Word of God, made flesh ... Speak the word, live the word, *be* the word. In a word, *be God.*”<sup>8</sup> Walsch, trying to understand this, asks if he is supposed to be God. G tells him he is not supposed to be anyone, he’s just telling Walsch “Who You Really Are.”<sup>9</sup>

Once Walsch can really live out this truth, and be one with “All That Is,” then others may call him “God, or the Son of God, or the Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Master, the Holy One—or, even,

the Savior.” Walsch will be saving everyone from forgetting their Oneness<sup>10</sup> since we are all “The Alpha and the Omega.”<sup>11</sup>

And since one’s self is God, loving one’s self is loving God. “Love your Self, for God’s sake,”<sup>12</sup> G tells Walsch.

In fact, the purpose of life according to G, is “to create your Self anew, in the next grandest version of the greatest vision ever you held about Who You Are.”<sup>13</sup> This phrase is repeated *ad nauseam* throughout the book.

## The New Gospel

Rather early in the book (page 50), G tells Walsch there is no Judgment Day and no condemnation or punishment except that which we inflict on ourselves. This is another major theme that is asserted and illustrated over and over. At one point, G tells Walsch the idea of a God who does not punish is considered heretical, and that he (Walsch) might have to “abandon the church in order to know God. Without a doubt, you will have to at least abandon some of the church’s teachings.”<sup>14</sup> There is no reference to other religions. G is unusually preoccupied with abandoning “the church’s teachings.”

G takes out the specter of the forbidding, angry God from Walsch’s childhood, waves it in front of him, and asks how anyone could be friends with *that* God. Then G compliments Walsch on his courage to explore non-traditional ideas, taking millions of others along with him through his first book, *Conversations with God*.

Since life is an illusion, so is evil, and we should accept everything, even things we disagree with. “You would have us embrace the devil himself, wouldn’t You?” challenges Walsch. To which G replies: “How else will you heal him?”<sup>15</sup>

Walsch starts pushing G on this, asking if it’s true that no one should be punished for anything. G replies that is something we have to decide, but “highly evolved societies” have learned that letting someone suffer consequences for their action is better than punishment.<sup>16</sup> Consequences are suffered on the inside of one’s self, which is more effective than outside punishment. Walsch never asks who or where these “highly evolved societies” are.

G is able to get by with a lot using high-minded sounding phrases and big words that seem to get Walsch off track. Walsch never asks the obvious questions, such as: “Should we open the prison doors and let everyone out?” or “Should we do away with all our laws?” Walsch is satisfied when G pontificates on punishment and the need for one to experience consequences without going into the practical details. In fact, the conversation quickly takes a turn into Zen-like statements about being “fully present, in every single moment” in order to be totally loving.<sup>17</sup>

There is a climactic message all this talk about no right or wrong is leading into which finally is stated as “The New Gospel.” It is introduced after G first states there are “a thousand paths to God” which all get you there.<sup>18</sup> G declares in “The New Gospel” that no one way is better than another: “There *is* no master race. There *is* no greatest nation. There *is* no true religion ... or one and only way to Heaven ... Only the truth I give you here will save you: WE ARE ALL ONE.”<sup>19</sup> Walsch is directed to carry this message “far and wide” around the world.

This New Gospel, according to G, will do away with wars, conflicts, turmoil, and disharmony on earth. The New Gospel will also take away our fear that we will not survive, because G assures us that our survival is guaranteed, and “death is only a horizon.”<sup>20</sup>

Since he is “One with everything,” Walsch wants to know if it’s okay to swat a mosquito? G evades the question for several pages, giving speeches on love and liberally quoting from the Bible—sometimes changing the words. Walsch finally reminds G he has

not answered this question. G replies that, since all life is one and acts together, Walsch actually cannot kill the mosquito “against its will.”<sup>21</sup>

Walsch at least recognizes the danger here, and points out this could create “behavioral anarchy” which would allow people to do whatever they wanted. Coyly, G replies we already have that, because we are already doing what we want. Walsch then points out our doctrines and laws of good and evil, right and wrong, etc. would be done away with by G’s message, and we would need a new message to replace our old system. There is a new message G announces, to replace the old one. It is the message that will bring us back to God, “The New Gospel: WE ARE ALL ONE” which is a “new message of total responsibility” telling us that we are all choosing together what happens. The only way to change what happens is to make these choices together.<sup>22</sup>

Immediately afterwards, G adds to “The New Gospel” this phrase, “OURS IS NOT A BETTER WAY, OURS IS MERELY ANOTHER WAY.”<sup>23</sup> This is a phrase (always in all-caps) introduced earlier in the book without explanation, that is now declared to be part of “The New Gospel.” There will be a “shift” to this thinking, G announces, although those opposed to “The New Gospel” might cause “chaos.”<sup>24</sup>

Of course, in blatantly rejecting that any religion teaches any truth, including the idea there is only one way to God, G is passing judgment on such teachings. He offers his “New Gospel” as the way to end conflict on earth, stating that it is the “only message that can change the course of human history”<sup>25</sup>—a statement that his “New Gospel” is superior. Thus, G proves he is not above making judgments as he said he was. In fact, he is *contradicting* what he has said about himself and what he has been teaching Walsch.

Late in the book, G seems to become peeved by Walsch’s statement that G keeps repeating himself. “You keep repeating *yourself*.” G responds, “Your whole history has been a repeating of your own failures—in your personal life, and in the collective experience of your planet.”<sup>26</sup> Gee, G, I thought you didn’t condemn anyone for anything!

If the concept of “better” does not exist, and there is no right or wrong, G has just violated his own teachings by passing his judgment and offering his solution. G does this elsewhere in the book, but it’s hidden in flowery language or embedded in a speech on another topic. An example of this is when G explains how the illusion of our separate beings came about. G tells Walsch that if he uses the ego as a tool to experience the “Only Reality, it is good,” but if the ego is using Walsch to keep him from that reality, “it is not good.”<sup>27</sup>

It’s as if G is a clever magician who gets the reader’s attention with a shiny diamond in one hand, while he palms a coin in the other. A reader paying close attention can catch on to his technique.

## We Can Swallow Better When We Aren’t Thinking

After each astounding idea, before Walsch can delve into the possible consequences of such thinking, G takes Walsch down another beautiful path and entrances him once again. How can G get readers to accept these ideas? How can he keep us on the path of “The New Gospel?” Well, it would certainly help if we think that thinking will keep us from true understanding. Thinking can only get us to question the fallacies, inconsistencies, and contradictions enmeshed in G’s ideas. Thinking would be something G would prefer the reader not to do, so G sets up the reader to think that thinking is bad.

G tells Walsch that he cannot find any answer quickly by think-

(Continued on next page)

### “Gothard” (Continued from page 5)

dience.<sup>2</sup> The net result of all this is to make leaving the organization and its rules very difficult. One wonders if he is rebelling against God and what the fallout will be within his family.

Another obstacle is simply the sociological consequences of leaving. Many of these people have family who are involved as well as a close network of relationships formed through the home-school support groups and other groups within the organization. Add to this the tremendous step of courage needed to admit that one was wrong about an institution to which one has given a great deal of time and money, and you have some difficult issues with which to grapple.

There is no formula that can be followed to help people that guarantees success. However, a few things can be done that may help. Warn people before they become involved. As a minister, I am deeply troubled at the overwhelming silence of the evangelical community with regard to IBLP. I realize there is a hesitancy to take issue publicly with someone who, if one only considers his written statement of faith, would be considered one of us. But is he really? His views on circumcision alone put him outside the pale of orthodoxy and in direct conflict with the clear teaching of Scripture. His unique definitions of key doctrinal terms such as “grace” and “faith” make his statement of faith questionable as well. It is much easier to prevent families from becoming involved than to retrieve them once they are entangled. I say this to my own embarrassment, since I didn’t know enough about Gothard’s ministry to warn one of my own families.

Also, when trying to reach a person involved in IBLP, establish the importance of doctrine. I would suggest walking them through the Pastoral Epistles and highlighting every instance where Paul refers to doctrine. It doesn’t take long to get the idea that God felt it was important. Once it is agreed that a minister has a duty to maintain

### “Walsch” (Continued from previous page)

ing about it. “You have to get out of your thoughts, leave your thoughts behind, and move into pure beingness.”<sup>28</sup>

G urges Walsch to “awareness,” which is not thinking. “Get out of your mind. Remember, you are a human *being*, not a human minding.”<sup>29</sup>

“Thinking is another form of being in a dream state. Because what you are thinking about is the illusion,” says G, so he advises that from time to time, “it might be good to stop thinking all together. To get in touch with a higher reality.”<sup>30</sup> Then G gives instructions on how to meditate, based on Eastern techniques, in order to stop thinking.

Our “true state of being” is the “supraconscious”—a place “above thought.”<sup>31</sup> The supraconscious is the combination of the superconscious, conscious, and subconscious “rolled into One—and then transended.”<sup>32</sup> G impresses Walsch by telling him that they are into very “complex, esoteric understandings” where the “nuances, become very delicate.”<sup>33</sup> This is G the magician at work again covering up shallow, meaningless terms by describing them as complex, when in reality they are no such thing. None of G’s ideas are complex so much as they are wordy.

The crowning blow to thinking comes when G tells Walsch how much he loves everyone, that when “My children” sing, there are no “sour notes.” G throws out a line of what he considers poetry: “The soul is that which beholds beauty even when the mind denies it,” a statement which strikes Walsch with awe.<sup>34</sup> Temporarily blinded by this, Walsch listens as G continues by telling

sound doctrine and to handle the Word of God accurately, take them to the IBLP literature and show them the scriptural abuses. I would suggest starting with *Basic Care Bulletin 11*. This is the one on circumcision and is one of the worst examples of Bible study I personally have ever seen. The errors are easy to spot and undeniable. I recently shared page five of this study with a Gothard family, and they wept because the misuse was so clear they couldn’t deny it no matter how badly they wanted to.

Lastly, deal with these people the same way you would with anyone else caught in an aberrant movement—patiently and with gentleness. It will take time, love, and especially prayer, but we can see people delivered from a yoke of slavery and brought to the freedom of Christ.



\*hermeneutics: The science and methodology of interpretation, especially of scriptural text.

The Journal would like to thank Keith Gibson for his work this issue. Keith has a B.S. in Psychology from Palm Beach Atlantic College and Magna Cum Laude M.A. in Religion from Liberty University. He has been in the ministry for 15 years, nine as a pastor.

He is currently serving as pastor of Word of Life Community Church in Grandview, Mo. He and his wife started the church under the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention nine years ago. He has been married 14 years to Doreen and they have five children.

### ENDNOTES:

1. Personal letter to author from Bill Gothard.

2. *Basic Care Bulletin 2*, “How to Greatly Reduce The Risk of Common Diseases,” (Medical Training Institute of America, Rev. 6/91), p 9.

“Throughout history the desire for white bread has motivated men to violate both of these principles either through ignorance or through deliberate disobedience.”

This entire booklet is a discussion on the need for every family to make their own whole wheat bread daily.

Walsch to always see things with his soul, because his soul will see the beauty of “my words. Your mind will deny it forever. It is as I have told you: to understand God, you must be *out of your mind*.”<sup>35</sup>

If Walsch or the reader really did think about this statement, it might give them pause. What G is really saying could be stated this way: “*If something appears beautiful to you, or if I say something that sounds good, go for it; ignore what your mind and powers of reason tell you because that might cause you to see it is not really beautiful.*” Could this not be the perfect motto for an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:13-14)?

### Walsch’s Call To Action

On a secondary level, this book could be seen as a promotion for many people in what could be called the New Spirituality movement. Some of the people mentioned are: George Lucas, Wayne Dyer, Marianne Williamson, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Ed Asner, Shirley MacLaine, Ellen DeGeneres, Anne Heche, Dr. Gerald G. Jampolsky, Dr. Bernie Siegel, and Gary Zukav. Walsch also mentions the names of books written by those who are authors and gives brief biographies of their accomplishments. At times, Walsch’s praise of these people borders on the slavish, as when he calls one a “Master.”<sup>36</sup>

G even claims to have inspired both Ken Keyes, Jr. in writing *A Handbook to Higher Consciousness* and New Age writer John Gray.<sup>37</sup> G also takes complete credit for giving filmmaker George Lucas the phrase, “May the force be with you.”<sup>38</sup> G agrees with Walsch that the late Keyes is now with G “free of his wheelchair.”<sup>39</sup> Walsch is now

(Continued on opposite page)



becoming a “messenger” like Keyes, G approvingly tells him.

Walsch’s closing remarks advocate taking action. He first mentions a program called “Dahnak,” which he says he has personally investigated and which is designed to help one connect “with the Creator Within.”<sup>40</sup> Dahn is supposedly an exercise/meditation program using the life force “Ki” or “Chi” for physical health and “spiritual awakening.”<sup>41</sup> The writer of this article typed “Dahnak” into her search engine and came up with a site for a Dahn retreat center in Arizona. There also were sites warning of the cultic tendencies of some Dahn groups in which people are recruited as free labor for various “masters.” Either Walsch is unaware of these warnings, or he is ignoring them.

Walsch has not been passive with the advice he has received from G. He and New Age advocate Marianne Williamson co-founded the Global Renaissance Alliance for people who desire to use “spiritual principles and social action to change the world.”<sup>42</sup> Their Board of Directors reads like a New Age *Who’s Who*: Deepak Chopra, Wayne Dyer, Jean Houston, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Thomas Moore, Carolyn Myss, James Redfield, and Gary Zukav. This organization includes a Wisdom Circle (people answering letters with questions), a Crisis Response Team (volunteers giving information about their communities and sometimes acting as “lay counselors” to people who call during a spiritual crisis). Also available is a Resource Network (groups of people around the world working on “spiritual and human betterment projects and ideas”<sup>43</sup>).

Walsch is also starting a new kind of school for children, the Heartlight School, partly with the purpose of helping to lead them “to their own inner wisdom.”<sup>44</sup> Walsch foresees these schools opening across the planet. There are also Re-creating Yourself retreats, newsletters, and other ways to be involved to help bring about a “fundamental shift in our collective consciousness.”<sup>45</sup> Until we realize that we are all One and speak with the one “voice of divinity within us,”<sup>46</sup> we cannot have peace. Not surprising, another book by G and Walsch is planned—*Communion with God*. Walsch concludes (imitating the pretentious style of his mentor, G): “And that Voice shall be heard across the land—on Earth, as it is in Heaven.”<sup>47</sup>

## Conclusions

Walsch unquestioningly accepts that G is God, although G gives no evidence he is who he says he is. G evades questions, contradicts himself, makes sweeping grandiose statements with nothing to back them up, has trite platitudes for philosophy and schtick for humor, butters up Walsch, and offers shallow advice culled from previous New Age writings. In fact, every single idea offered by G, which seems to strike Walsch as profound wisdom, was an idea this writer studied or read about starting back in the late 1970’s when she was personally involved in Eastern and New Age beliefs. And this is supposed to be God—a goopy, gushing marshmallow of a god with a greeting card mentality?

One has only to compare the depth and beauty of the Psalms and other biblical poetry with some of G’s own offerings—such as “God is life, at its highest vibration” or “It bathes the mind with the wisdom of the soul”—to see the vastly inferior quality of G’s creativity. It must be this lack of talent and originality that drives G to constantly borrow from the Bible and weave it in with his own declarations. In the middle of one speech, G veers off into quoting the famed Ecclesiastes 3:2 passage, “A time to be born, and a time to die,” ending this by saying it is time to awaken to truth because

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## “HM2000” (Continued from page 3)

deem to be non-persons—the unborn.

In addition, what do they mean by suggesting we maintain “an openness to the modification of ethical principles.”<sup>20</sup> Whose outdated, inferior, ethical principles will have to be “modified” to suit whose superior, rational, modern principles? Dear Reader—can you hazard a guess? We would, of course, welcome any modification of *their* supposed “ethical principles” (to allow for the protection of the unborn, for example), but I really cannot see that happening, can you? In fact, the modification they seek is to “the moral absolutes of the past” in order to promote greater “autonomy of choice.” In other words, our moral ideals must give way to their superior ones. They state:

“We should be prepared to select rationally the new reproductive powers made possible by scientific research—such as *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate motherhood, genetic engineering, organ transplantation, and cloning. We cannot look back to the moral absolutes of the past for guidance here. We need to respect autonomy of choice.”<sup>21</sup>

Anyone hearing any alarm bells about now? Of course, to be consistent with their worldview, the Humanists could not claim that their opinion on any disputed issue was “right.” There can be no “right” or “wrong” on philosophical issues from the Humanist standpoint, because philosophical issues are non-material and cannot be tested or proven by scientific examination. They would have to resort to New Age subjectivism (How does this idea “feel” to me?) to justify their moral position.

The Humanists realize this is a major dilemma for them; so in *HM2000*, they attempt to answer this objection, but their effort falls short. The authors state:

“Humanists have been unfairly accused of being unable to provide viable foundations for ethical responsibilities ... Throughout the centuries, philosophers have provided solid secular foundations for humanistic moral action.”<sup>22</sup>

To credit mere human philosophers for one’s moral understanding is not reasonable or rational. It just pushes the problem back in time. After all, where did these ancient philosophers get *their* views of morality? How can any philosophical viewpoint, however ancient, be evaluated *scientifically* and proven to be *technologically* viable. And, no matter how much the Humanist may agree with these ancient thinkers, what gives them the authority to force *the rest of humanity* to accept the reasoning of these men. Are they gods that we must listen to them?

Now they switch gears and offer another, equally lame and irrational argument to resolve this dilemma:

“Moreover, countless millions of humanists have led exemplary lives, been responsible citizens, raised their children with loving care, and contributed significantly to the moral enhancement of society.”<sup>23</sup>

It’s the old “sun is yellow” excuse. Yes, the sun *is* yellow, but how does that prove your point, Bub? I’m sure that “countless humanists have led exemplary lives” (if there is such a thing as “exemplary” that can be proven scientifically) but WHY? *Why* are they moral, responsible, loving, etc., and *why* is that way of life any better than immorality, irresponsibility, and hatred? Again, what is the foundation? What IS “morality,” exactly? Christian morality has always been tied to God and His law, but Humanists deny His existence and reject His law. So, to get back to the issue—why shouldn’t

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### **“HM2000” (Continued from previous page )**

Postmodernists or others reject Humanistic morality? After all, one man’s idea of an “exemplary life” may be another man’s idea of squandered opportunity. How could one viewpoint be scientifically proven to be any better than the other is? Why are Hitler’s values any worse than yours or mine are? Hitler was extremely scientifically and technologically advanced for his time. His eugenic theories were very scientifically fashionable in his day. University professors taught the “scientific” theory of eugenics,<sup>24</sup> and doctors were the first to carry out Hitler’s orders to kill (humanely, of course), long before the less-educated grunts in the military started herding people into ditches and shooting them. The Holocaust was only a natural outgrowth of Hitler’s philosophical Darwinian beliefs. And very evil philosophical ideas can be no more scientifically repudiated than good ones can be scientifically validated. Hitler rejected Christianity as a religion for weaklings—all that “love your neighbor” stuff was, to use the Humanists own words, “no longer relevant to current realities and future opportunities.”<sup>25</sup>

### **Intolerant of Intolerance— Those Wackos Have Got To Go**

“We should be tolerant of cultural diversity except where those cultures are intolerant or repressive.”<sup>26</sup>

There they go again. *Whose standard* will be used to determine which cultures are “intolerant or repressive?” Will the Secular Humanists remember to include themselves in this list, considering how *intolerant* they seem to be of those dastardly fundamentalists and transcendentalists? Seems doubtful to us. Whose freedoms will have to be squashed to eliminate “intolerance and repression?” And whose intolerance will be praised and even institutionalized?

That should not be too difficult to determine, since *HM2000* harshly criticizes *any* worldview that doesn’t rely on man for absolutely everything. Under the heading “Scientific Naturalism,” *HM2000* exhibits a clear *intolerance* toward spirituality of any kind. How long before such “backward” views will be repressed by the enlightened elite, who are, after all, the only ones who can be relied upon to apply rational thinking and reason to man’s plight? Don’t think that will ever happen? It certainly will happen if the Humanists get their way.

### **A New Bill of Rights ... and Responsibilities**

In the section titled “A Planetary Bill of Rights and Responsibilities,” it is stated that:

“Parents should provide a secure and loving environment for their children.”<sup>27</sup>

As humane and benign as this statement may initially sound, it ominously adds:

“Parents should not deny their children access to education, cultural enrichment, and intellectual stimulation. Although parental moral guidance is vital, parents should not simply impose their own religious outlook or moral values on their children or indoctrinate them.”<sup>28</sup>

Do you *catch* what they are saying? To “indoctrinate” is to “imbue with principles, doctrines, beliefs,” or “to teach or instruct.”<sup>29</sup> Huh? One of our great new principles is that parents cannot teach principles to their young? Parents are not to instruct their own children? What kind of nonsense is this? Good-bye sweet American freedom: hello gulag ... (a gulag is a Soviet labor camp). Humanists would indoctrinate our young to be “tolerant” instead of teaching them there is indisputable truth regarding morality or faith. The only indisputable truth that Humanists adhere to in the spiri-

tual realm is that there is NO indisputable truth! While we believe it is ultimately up to each person to choose what he or she will believe in adulthood, it would be illogical for a parent of any persuasion to present their young child with a “salad bar” of opposing ideas to choose from. No loving parent would allow a small child to choose what the parent believed would be the cause of much grief—nor would they introduce them to ideas and practices they felt would be harmful in this life or eternally destructive.

In keeping with their obvious intention to indoctrinate all children without parental interference, *HM2000* promotes sexual education at an early age. This teaching, they believe, should include “responsible sexual behavior, family planning, and contraceptive techniques.”<sup>30</sup> The Humanists claim to believe in freedom of religion, yet, how committed can they be when goals such as these are even conceived? Responsible sexual behavior, family planning, and contraception are “religious issues” for billions of us on this small planet. What gives Atheists any authority over us in these issues? Why should we follow their plan over our deeply held religious convictions?

How shall we be governed in our new great society? Globally, of course! Forget your cherished citizenship, baby; you’ll be pledging your allegiance to the planet!

“We need more than ever a world body that represents the people of the world rather than nation-states ... the world needs at some point in the future to establish an effective World Parliament—and elections to it based on population—which will represent the people, not their governments.”<sup>31</sup>

We realize Humanists truly believe their plan will result in a better world for all of mankind. We do not impugn their motives. But, it must be said the Humanist’s Planetary Bill of Rights, if some “world body” ever enacts it, will only take our cherished rights from us! Historically, Utopian schemers have meant well, but their plans have always resulted in the loss of precious freedom ... freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom to raise our children as we see fit. If the drafters of this manifesto get their way, we could enter another long, dark night of despotism as we experienced so often in the twentieth century.

William Pfaff, syndicated columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, recently wrote an excellent article that powerfully speaks to this issue. Looking back on the twentieth century, about to pass into history, he writes:

“... The West today no longer acknowledges the existence of an external rule-giver or moral authority. It regards mankind as totally autonomous, existing within a moral framework entirely of its own creation, responsible only to itself. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, religion was central to Western civilization. It originally defined that civilization ... Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Western consensus of belief in an external moral universe, to which men owe obedience, has very widely broken down. Western thinkers have attempted to construct a rational secular alternative to this moral structure ... The record of this period is one of secular political and scientific Utopias substituted for religion’s expectation of a salvation located outside of time and history. The result of making this Utopia a matter of political organization and action in this world has thus far included totalitarianism ... and Faustian scientific adventure, eugenic in purpose but nihilistic in practice ...”<sup>32</sup>

Pfaff concludes rather chillingly:


"No one can say what will happen in the new century and the new Millennium. My concern in writing this is simply to note that we in the West enter not only a new Millennium on Jan. 1, but truly a New Age, when man has declared his radical autonomy, his absolute freedom to do whatever he chooses—alone in the universe."<sup>33</sup>

We affirm, as Pfaff states, that no one can say what will happen in the new century. Will the Humanists prevail in society and remake our culture in their image? Or, will the Secular Humanists, who are essentially Modernists, be swept away by the tidal wave of Postmodernism currently engulfing our culture? Or will some entirely new ideology/worldview rise up to conquer both of these? Certainly, the Humanists have been exceedingly confident *each and every time* they offered up their idealistic plans for human progress, and each and every time their vaunted plans have come to naught because stuff happened beyond their ability to foresee or control. This only proves the old familiar adage originally penned by Scottish poet Robert Burns:

"The best-laid plans o' mice an' men  
Gang [going] aft [afterward] a-gley,  
An' leave us nought but grief an' pain  
For promised joy."<sup>34</sup>

What does "aft a-gley" mean? Loosely translated into twenty-first century American English, the expression means—STUFF HAPPENS.

Contrary to what both the Humanists and the Postmodernist's believe, there *is* an absolute spiritual reality that everyone needs to know. Man is not "alone in the universe." God is still here, and He is in control. There is absolute truth and "right" and "wrong." Salvation is not found in man as professed in the manifesto.<sup>35</sup> In fact, with the evidence given in this document alone, it should be apparent to all

that this world is broken and we can't fix it! Someday all the wrongs will be set right—by God. And through the long dark nights of human folly, as man has striven to recreate the Paradise lost by our first human parents, God has been there for his own. We can trust in Him to see us through—whatever may come. We watch and pray and wait on our God. 

#### ENDNOTES:

1. Drafted by Paul Kurtz, "Humanist Manifest 2000: A Plan for Peace, Dignity, and Freedom in the Global Human Family," *Free Inquiry*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Fall 1999), p4. *Free Inquiry* is a quarterly published by the Council for Secular Humanism, a non-profit educational corporation.
2. *Ibid.*, p4.
3. *Ibid.*, p4.
4. *Ibid.*, p4.
5. *Ibid.*, p4.
6. *Ibid.*, p4.
7. *Ibid.*, p5.
8. *Ibid.*, p5.
9. *Ibid.*, p5.
10. *Webster's New World College Dictionary*, 3d ed., s.v. "religion."
11. *HM2000*, p5.
12. *Ibid.*, p6.
13. *Ibid.*, p6.
14. *Ibid.*, p8.
15. *Ibid.*, p8.
16. *Ibid.*, p8.
17. *bid.*, p6.
18. *Ibid.*, p6.
19. *Ibid.*, pp12-14.
20. *Ibid.*, p11.
21. *Ibid.*, p6.
22. *bid.*, p10.
23. *Ibid.*, p10.
24. Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: from euthanasia to the final solution*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p4. "The term 'eugenics' was coined in 1881 by the British naturalist and mathematician Francis Galton and described by the leading American eugenicist, Charles B. Davenport, as 'the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding.' Eugenics developed within the larger movement of Social Darwinism, which applied Darwin's 'struggle for survival' to human affairs. Recruited from the biological and social sciences, or what today might be called the life sciences, eugenicists firmly believed that just as the Mendelian laws governed the hereditary transmission of human traits like color blindness or particular blood group, these laws also determined the inheritance of social traits."
25. *HM2000*, Preamble, p4.
26. *Ibid.*, p11.
27. *Ibid.*, p13.
28. *Ibid.*, p13.
29. *The Pocket Webster School and Office Dictionary*, 3d ed., s.v. "indoctrinate."
30. *Ibid.*, p 13.
31. *Ibid.*, p16.
32. Columnist William Pfaff, "With No External Ruler, the West Must Come to Terms With its Moral Autonomy," *Chicago Tribune*, (Tuesday, December 28, 1999), sec. 1, p25.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Robert Burns (1759-1796), *To a Mouse*. Burn's phrase was also used by American writer John Steinbeck (1902-1968) in his 1937 novella *Of Mice and Men*
35. *HM2000*, Preamble, p18.

#### "Friendship" (Continued from page 8)


"deliverance is at hand."<sup>48</sup>

In fact, maybe feeling he needs more than his usual grandiose and pretentious proclamations with which to end the book, G follows a final speech about how everyone is God by quoting extensively from I Corinthians 13. G concludes the passage with "then you knew in part, now you understand fully, even as you are fully understood. This is what it means to have a friendship with God."<sup>49</sup> A few more remarks are made about love, and the book ends with G and Walsch gushingly adoring each other.

G, who offhandedly refers to Jesus as a Master a few times, apparently rejects the words of Jesus in John 14:6, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me*" by constantly telling the reader there are many ways to God, and we all will get there since we are all God. In fact, G teaches *against* everything that Jesus taught, including how our sinful nature is in need of a Savior since, according to G, "there is no saving to be done at all, for love is what every soul is."<sup>50</sup> In contrast, Jesus said, "*You search the Scriptures because you believe they give you eternal life, but the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me so that I can give you this eternal life.*" (John 5:39-40)

According to G, God is all-accepting and condemns nothing. Even a Hitler would have to be accepted. Here is a question for Walsch and those who accept G's advice and solutions: Would you be willing to live according to these principles? Under G's system, there should be no punishment for anything, you must accept everything, and no one can say anything is better than anything else is

since "no behavior is even *called* wrong."<sup>51</sup> If all beliefs are equal, you cannot judge practices such as widow-burning, cannibalism, pedophilia, Satanism, or female genital mutilation.

To build the "Highly Evolved Society" described by G, you would have to live according to the only real command given and defined by G: Love yourself. You would have to do away with that outdated religious morality G so despises. You would have to live with "anything goes" in sexuality, relationships, and religions—even though this might produce repellent practices. You would, according to G, have to allow everything and condemn nothing. Are you willing to live like this? Are you truly willing? 

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#### ENDNOTES:

All page numbers refer to the book by Neale Donald Walsch, *Friendship With God: An Uncommon Conversation*, (New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 1999).

1. p07.
2. p224.
3. pp225-6.
4. p284-5.
5. pp288 & 290.
6. p291.
7. p294.
8. p395.
9. p395.
10. p409.
11. p249.
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48. p230.
49. p415.
50. p211.
51. p315.



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 - Galatians 4:16 -

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