***Defining Humanism by Contrasting it with Religion***

There are many places where religion and Humanim overlap, like where they support human rights and a morality that does not have rules that hurt or are imposed on others. One way to define Humanism is to contrast it with religion, as there are so many differences. The [*Humanist Manifesto III*](http://americanhumanist.org/humanism/humanist_manifesto_iii) (at the end of this document) attempts to define the core beliefs but it is only a one-page document that does not cover all of these points and there is currently insufficient research to determine how Humanists feel about all these areas. So using the *Manifesto’s* clauses (in italics), we understand that we are *guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience,* and that we find that *science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems*, but also recognize that there is no eternal truth, as knowledge, values, and ideals *are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance*. Therefore, where the *Manifesto* is silent on the points below, I have inserted our best scientific or latest research position, which I think most Humanists would agree with. Therefore, you do not have to agree with everything to be a Humanist.

The “Religious Positions & Critique” column speaks mostly to Western or Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism). Eastern religions like Hinduism have different views some [cultural](http://nirmukta.com/2009/05/11/hinduism-religion-culture-or-way-of-life/) and some religious which may be hard to distinguish. The masculine pronoun (He, His, Him) is used for God, as most readers are used to that terminology. While some comments may sound humorous, it is the irony of God truth vs. Scientific truth or religious belief vs. practice that give rise to them and thus show how non-believers view, and therefore, reject the religious position. We believe in religious freedom and anyone can believe anything they want, as long as they do not hurt others or deny them their rights in the process.

*Where Humanism differs from Religion and Why*

Note: *Italicized quotations are from the Manifesto (underlining mine)*

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| **#** | **AREAS OF DIFFERENCE** | **HUMANIST POSITION** | **RELIGIOUS POSITION** **& CRITIQUE** |
|  | God’s Existence  | “*Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism…”* This covers at least two positions: ‘Absence of a belief in deities or supernatural’ (atheist), or if unsure (agnostic), acting like God was not there (no praying, going to church, rituals, etc.). | Most religions believe in a least one God and that this God is an agent or personality that can be communicated with, has a plan, punishes and rewards human behavior, and at times, intervenes in human affairs, but must be praised and submitted to. It has never been established which God is the true God and no scientific evidence of His existence has ever been established. Man has been in the business of creating Gods forever: Egyptian gods, Roman gods, Greek gods, Chinese gods, Persian gods, African gods, etc. Some believe that this was man’s pre-science attempt to derive meaning in the world.  |
|  | Nature of the Universe | “*Humanists recognize nature as self-existing*.”The universe is a natural and [self-organizing system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-organization) and appears to have no beginning or end; mysterious or unexplained occurrences are natural phenomena that we do not yet fully understand. | The universe is a creation separate from God which is said to have a begging and an end. Why would a loving God created a place where suffering and evil could flourish, and therefore, knew He would have to destroy it? |
|  | Cosmology | The big bang theory appears to best current theoretical explanation with the facts available to us now, that we are approximated 13.7 billion years into a possible cycle. Science has reached a point where we no longer need God to explain why we are here. [*The Grand Design*](http://www.hawking.org.uk/the-grand-design.html) by Stephen Hawking explains why this is so. | Genesis clearly states the world was created in six days, approximately 6,000 years ago (depending on how one counts the begating genealogy), *out of nothing*, (the same way God was created--out of nothing) and that dinosaurs and men lived together at the same time. Unfortunately, science tells us that dinosaurs went extinct some [65 million years ago](http://paleobiology.si.edu/dinosaurs/info/everything/why.html) and modern humans did not [emerge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatomically_modern_human) until about 200,000 years ago.  |
|  | Evolution | Ever since Darwin came out with this theory of evolution in 1859, there has been no evidence to the contrary to challenge it. Humans did not ‘descend from apes,’ but did have a [common ancestor](http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/evolution/humans-descended-from-apes.htm) 5 to 11 million years ago. If we [descended from apes](https://www.icr.org/article/3109/) then apes would not be around anymore because we would have taken their place.  | It clearly says in *Genesis* that God created the world in six days. All the creatures were made on the fourth and fifth days. Nothing evolved, there are no such things as fossils and rock layers or carbon dating. God was also a little confused about *light*, too. On the first day He said, ‘let there be light’ but forgot that he did not create the sun until the fourth day.  |
|  | Death & Afterlife | We understand, “...*the inevitability and finality of death*.”We are animals and like all animals, death is final, and therefore, there is no afterlife, heaven, hell, or reincarnation; immortality is only achieved in what we did in life that survives us (writings, inventions, achievements…), and the feelings and memories that we leave in loved one’s hearts. | Most religions have different versions of an afterlife or believe that we are reincarnated. The afterlife can be heaven, hell, purgatory, or similar notions where souls will exist for eternity but we are not exactly sure what they will be doing all that time--except for those in hell, where [most will wind up](http://biblehub.com/matthew/7-13.htm)--and God knew this before He created the world, yet believers insist that He is loving God. |
|  | Life | Is not an energizing ‘gift from God’ or a soul, but an emergent property of matter and energy under the right conditions ([Abiogenesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abiogenesis)). | Only God can give life because it is some type of supernatural force. When He takes it away death occurs. Unfortunately, there is no scientific evidence for souls. Anything man doesn’t immediately understand requires a supernatural explanation.  |
|  | Conscience  | Innate morality is part of our brain wiring that we are [born with](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBW5vdhr_PA) (not taught), as we are social animals that need to cooperate with each other in order to survive; other [primates](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KSryJXDpZo) have primitive moral systems. We know it is part of the brain because with certain head injuries one can lose their ability to tell right from wrong, control of their emotions or inhibitions.  | Conscience is God whispering in your ear to do good or avoid bad behavior after he allowed the devil on the earth to temp you to do the wrong thing.  |
|  | Morality  | We believe in *“…our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity*.”Outside of the innate moral rules we are neurally programmed with (no cheating, lying, stealing, murder, rape, etc. which are always wrong in any culture in any era), other activities cannot be pronounced right or wrong on their face (drinking, premarital sex, gambling, etc.) but whether they are engaged in *responsibly* or not, that is conditionally (if you are going to drink, drink responsively); a third set of issues come from the clash of two good principles (should we protect individual’s right to privacy or the public’s right to know?) and can only be resolved/addressed by [moral reasoning](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasoning-moral/).  | Morality is something that is learned by studying the scriptures. All actions are labelled right or wrong no matter what the circumstances. There is no moral reasoning required because of the previous point. Most scriptures give no rationale behind the rules they are just commandments to be followed without question. Unlike Humanism, in which morality is most about human relationships, religion also regulates one’s relationship with God (first four Commandments). Unfortunately, just because one believes in God does not make that person behave good—there is a wide space between thought and actions. |
|  | Values | “*Humanists ground values in human welfare shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns and extended to the global ecosystem and beyond*.” Values have two broad classifications: moral and non-moral values, sometimes called [intrinsic or extrinsic values](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/#WhaExtVal), respectfully. Extrinsic values include instrumental values, as they are a means to end. For instance, “generosity” is a means to help someone, but if you are not generous, you are not immoral. McGowan, a Humanist author, presents the [*Seven Secular Values*](http://www.the-brights.net/action/activities/organized/arenas/2/parenting/SevenSecularVirtues.pdf)*:* *Honesty, Humility, Empathy, Courage, Openness, Generosity, and Gratitude*. The only moral value in this list is ‘honesty.’ Each person must decide which non-moral values are important to them.  | While there can be an overlap between Humanist and religious values, without getting into long lists, all religious values flow from valuing what God (instead of man) values. These vary depending on what God you worship. |
|  | Human Nature | Human nature is basically good (survive together as a group) with the exceptions in “Impulses to do Wrong” below. | Human nature can be sinful, weak, [evil](http://www.rlhymersjr.com/Online_Sermons/2008/060808AM_MansHeart.html), broken, flawed, corrupt, insignificant, morally depraved, etc. depending on which God one worships. |
|  | Impulses to do Wrong  | Why do people do bad things? Human nature is to an extent self-severing as each of us seeks to survive and get the most out of life (which can turn into greed, egotism, and power-seeking behaviors) even if this means hurting others or the environment in the process. Some bad behavior comes from our amygdala or primitive brain stem which operates more on emotion and adrenaline than reason; sometimes the source is biological like hormones (sexual urges, etc.). Socially, culture and peers have a significant impact on our behavior (everyone else is doing it), or what Hollywood and businesses portray as desirable. Poor parenting is a major cause, which allow bad habits and attitudes to develop.  | The devil is the only creature in the universe who works 24-7 and never takes a holiday or sleeps. God *allowed* him to operate on the earth in order to drag us down and increase our chances of going to hell. If you think He did that to test us, 1) why don’t angels have a test before they can be in heaven? 2) God knew before he created us if we would fail or not so he does not need a test, unless it is to show *us* why we are going to hell.  |
|  | Pleasure | We affirm that pleasure is an integral part of being human, a life without enjoying ourselves and having fun would not be a pleasant or bearable existence. There are, however, limits to pleasure that distinguish us from Hedonists. Pleasure is good as long as it does not interfere with our health, work, our relationships, or other people’s rights. We also have to be careful that these thing do not become addictions, as pertain to the next four areas. | Many religions have restrictions on pleasure, as if it is not inherently evil, it certainly leads to further sin. The Seventh Day Adventists ban alcohol, tobacco, caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, cola drinks, red meat, and every other *"soul-defiling habit."* They shun all questionable worldly amusements such as the theater, dancing, play cards, and the use of jewelry and makeup. I can see why there is not a big rush to join that religion. |
|  | Alcohol  | Here the previous guidelines on being responsible and pleasure-limits apply. | This ban varies by religion. Of course, Jesus liked wine, but someone forgot to tell the Prohibitionists this.  |
|  | Drugs | We think that there are good arguments for [marijuana](https://www.mpp.org/marijuana-is-safer-than-alcohol-its-time-to-treat-it-that-way/) to be legalized, starting with decriminalization, for adults but not used when driving or performing other actions where one must be sober to be safe. Until it is legalized one must take responsibility if you violate any current laws. Most do not agree on the legalization of any addictive drugs and view excessive/harmful drug usage as a mental/physical health problem rather than a criminal act. [Prohibition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prohibition_in_the_United_States) did not work and had the unintended consequences of fueling violent organized crime while simultaneously denying the government of taxes.  | Most religions except Rastafarians reject the use of any unprescribed drug, as they are not only evil in themselves but open one to indulge in other sins (except, of course, alcohol). |
|  | Gambling | There is nothing inherently wrong with gambling, it becomes a problem when one gambles more than they can afford to lose and go into a downward spiral to try to get even by betting their home or things that will hurt others if they lose, or if it becomes an addiction.  | Teachings on gambling vary [by religion](http://www.gambleonline.co/religious-views-of-gambling/), but most hold it as evil. God is the greatest gambler in the universe, as he bet that by allowing the devil to tempt us that we would not give in. |
|  | Pornography | Defined as, “the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures, videos, movies or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement,” we find nothing wrong with it, as long as it is between consenting adults and not available to underage children.  | All religions are against phonography because it excites lustful behavior especially in [mega-church pastors](http://ministrytodaymag.com/leadership/ethics/20095-why-megachurch-pastors-keep-falling-into-sexual-immorality).  |
|  | Lewd Music | Songs with obscene or violent language and sexual or drug-suggestive lyrics and groups that sing them should not be banned either in distribution or live concerts, but every effort should be made to keep them insulated from underage children. We do support [labelling requirements](http://www.aria.com.au/pages/labelling-code.htm) so that parents and others are aware of music content.  | All religions are against this free speech practice.  |
|  | Motivation to do the Right Thing | We strive do the right thing because *it is the right thing to do* and not for any extrinsic reward or to avoid punishment. We are guided by the natural and intrinsic motivations and consequences of an act to guide us. We also strive to do the right thing when no one (authority figure or gossip) is watching (we value *self-regulation* over obedience). | Religions are [Behaviorists](http://www.simplypsychology.org/behaviorism.html), that is, they depend on punishment and reward to control behavior (in addition to guilt and shame), usually administered by some authority figure (God, parents, teachers, boss, police, judges, etc.). Unfortunately, the force is extrinsic and not necessarily internalized.  |
|  | Free Will | We are not always in complete control of ourselves, and many times [studies show](https://www.relationshipscoach.co.uk/blog/research-shows-our-subconscious-mind-makes-our-decisions-for-us/) that a decision is already taken by our subconscious before we become consciously aware of it. Ingrained habits also mitigate against pure free will. Our legal systems make the assumption that we are accountable for our behavior, but sentencing should be mitigated considering the particular circumstances surrounding it.  | Religions give you the false idea that you are always 100% in control of your behavior if you just want to be and that God does not give you more than you can handle. Worse, if you do something wrong it is because of evilness or wickedness, that is, deliberately, instead of slip, a mistake, or the pressures of them moment.  |
|  | Relationship to Society | *“Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community.” “Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences….to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.”* We should strive to be of service, uplift, or protect others, even those outside of our group. “The World is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion,” from Thomas Paine are our watchwords. | Religion’s main concern is the salvation of men’s souls and not necessarily with the earthly struggles and injustices as [Martin Luther K](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/martinluth717842.html)ing, Jr. has reminded us. The focus is more on don’t hurt people--than help people--so that you do not sin and can go to heaven. Love your neighbor often means: *don’t love strangers*.  |
|  | Conflict Resolution | We encourage a process where, *“…differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence.*” When the conflict is over we still have to live with the groups we were at odds with. How we treat them during the conflict will set the climate for what happens after the conflict.  | Absolute power corrupts absolutely. If God is for me who can be against me? The ends justify the means, I can do whatever it takes to please God and destroy those who are wicked by holy war, terror, excommunication, or shunning (or burning at the stake).  |
|  | Human Progress & Hope in the Future | *“…we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.”* A Humanist, while realistic and pragmatic, is in the long run, optimistic about the progress of mankind. | There is no hope in religion, God said he will destroy the world and that the poor will always be with us. What is the use of trying to improve anything if it will all be destroyed? As mentioned before, God already told us that most people are going to hell, too. |
|  | Meaning of Life  | *“We aim for our fullest possible development and animate our lives with a deep sense of purpose…”*Technically, evolution has no ultimate design (plan) but we observe that there is an increased sophistication of systems, their interactions and interdependencies (so far). Humans are sense making creatures and depending on how we view evolution and our role in it, answers will vary. One generic answer could be: ‘To enjoy life while being of service to others through the expression of our talents and passion, and helping others’ to have a quality life, too, by building a progressive society where everyone’s’ rights are protected.’  | The meaning of life is to serve God by fulfilling the plan He has for your life. Much of it involves suffering and cross bearing to make you spiritually strong which will make no difference from the weaker souls, once you go to heaven, where you supposedly will not be able to sin anymore. The only way God can keep us from sinning in heaven is to remove our free will (which means that we become robots). Proof? He gave the angels free will and many rebelled against Him.  |
|  | Knowledge & Truth | “*Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies. We also recognize the value of new departures in thought, the arts, and inner experience—each subject to analysis by critical intelligence.”* We also, *“…recognize that values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance.”*Neil deGrasse Tyson says, “The good thing about science is that it is true no matter what you believe.” Knowledge also comes from personal experience but is subjective and colored and filtered by our perceptions. Truth has two meanings: 1) agreement with the facts, 2) understanding the underlying nature of reality ([Ontology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontology)), which is a philosophical question, which can have many perspectives. We all agree, at least, that there are no supernatural forces in operation. | Scripture is the source of truth even though it is full of contradictions, inaccurate science and history and a poor understanding of human nature. Anything that contradicts scripture is wrong (evolution, homosexuality, etc.). This teaches children to reject science, that is, to put the thousands of years old ‘knowledge’ over the findings of modern science. If they can believe that then they can believe anything. |
|  | Critical Thinking | All of our judgments and decisions are *“…each subject to analysis by critical intelligence*.” That is, all things are up for questioning and improvement--there are no scared cows. If something doesn’t make sense to us, further research or even [reframing](http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/reframing.htm) could be required.  | One cannot question God or His teachings, blind faith is a sign of greatness.  |
|  | Type of Government | “*We work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society and maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process…”*  | We need more God in government maybe even a theocracy where the priest class speak to God and tell us about His plans and orders and then punish us when we don’t follow them. Every year we pray for crime to be reduced and each year it increases.  |
|  | Legal System & Justice | We support a secular legal system such as that which has evolved from English Common and Statutory law, Roman law and other secular sources--without reference to divine law--where everyone has equal rights and there is [due process](http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/due%2Bprocess%2Bof%2Blaw). A legislative process should be based on human experience, needs and consequences in the era we are living in.  | Each religion has its own legal system inspired by its version of God. There is Muslim Sharia law, Hindu law, the Canon law of Christians, and the Mosaic law of Judaism, to name a few. There is nothing wrong with these systems if you approve of stoning, beheading, or denying people their [human rights](http://www.theguardian.com/law/2010/jul/05/sharia-law-religious-courts) and ensuring you fulfill your theological obligations to their particular God.  |
|  | Church – State Relationship | Governments function most fairly when there is a clear legal and political separation of church and state, where the state does not endorse or support religion, or inhibit its free practice privately. Many of us think that if churches are given the privilege of tax exemption, that they must be held to account and publically report on their income and expenditures.  | Believers like to think that their countries were founded on religious principles and should have influence over politicians and legislation thus imposing their system on everyone else (for their own good). These people should live Iran for a year and see how they like it. |
|  | Economic Wealth & Class | *“…we support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.”* There should be no hoarding of wealth gotten at the expense of others. Powerful interest groups should not be allowed to ‘buy’ politicians to influence legislation unfairly. We therefore support [campaign finance reform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_finance_reform_in_the_United_States) to level the playing field.  | The prosperity gospel is about getting rich--*not spiritual*. Calvinism taught that wealth was a sign that you are right with God, and therefore, get His blessings. If you are poor, well then…! |
|  | Nature of Work | Work is not just labor done to pay the bills, it should be an expression of one’s talent and passion, which some call purpose. | In *Genesis,* it states that after Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; [By the sweat](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/2188.htm) [of your brow](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/639.htm) [you will eat](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/398.htm) [bread,](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/3899.htm) [Till](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/5704.htm) [you return](http://biblehub.com/hebrew/7725.htm) to the ground.” Work, therefore, is seen as punishment for sin--not an expression of who we are. |
|  | Beauty, Awe, & Art | We don’t need God, the supernatural or miracles to feel fulfilled but, *“…find wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence…”* | Religion makes it appear that natural beauties of the world and human experience are not enough to excite the human spirit. |
|  | Relationship to Animals | We are part of larger ecosystem and just because we can learn and manipulate the environment does not mean that we can be cruel animals or destroy their habitats in an unsustainable manner. We do not have “dominion” over animals, but our role should be more the protector of animals. “[Deep Ecology](http://thehumanist.com/magazine/march-april-2016/editor-message/editors-message)” explores this issue in depth.  | Scripture says God gave us dominion over animals, as if they are second class creatures to be ‘ruled over’ and implies that humans are not animals at all, although we share [98.8% of the genes of chimpanzees](http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/permanent-exhibitions/human-origins-and-cultural-halls/anne-and-bernard-spitzer-hall-of-human-origins/understanding-our-past/dna-comparing-humans-and-chimps/). If we are made in the ‘image and likeness’ of God, then He is very closely related to these hairy primates.  |
|  | Environmental Protection | It is our, *“planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner.”*Global warming is not a hoax and we need to protect the environment from emissions, pollution, extreme resource depletion, and human invasiveness to the extent that it upsets the ecosystem. Any practice must be sustainable to protect the environment for future generations.  | With many believers thinking that the world will end at any minute, what incentive is there to protect an environment that God said He would destroy?  |
|  | Attitude toward other Belief Systems | *“Humanists are concerned for the wellbeing of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views.” “We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.”*Humanism is not anti-religion even if it disagrees with their beliefs and teachings. Humanists are concerned when religious practices violate human rights, the truth, or otherwise hurt people, outside or *inside* their groups. | Each religion believes that they are the ‘guardians of the truth’ that God has given them. They can view other’s outside of their group as misguided, ignorant, or even wicked, and therefore, not deserving of God’s love, or conversely, to be suppressed or eliminated. Some Christian denominations have problems with those marrying outside of their group, let alone outside the Christian religion. Love stops at the boundary of their group. |
|  | Corporal Punishment | Children’s human rights under in Article 37 of the UN [*Convention on the Rights of the Child*](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx) requires protection from corporal punishment by all persons and the explicitly repeal of all defenses such as those allowing “reasonable punishment.” “The law should clearly state that no degree or kind of corporal punishment is acceptable or lawful, including by parents in the family home, and prohibition should be enacted of all corporal punishment in all settings and by all persons with authority over children.” | Scripture says, ‘don’t spare the rod and spoil the child.’ Beating children is a method to get them to be obedient. The problem is that modern research demonstrates that it [does not work](http://healthland.time.com/2012/02/06/why-spanking-doesnt-work/) and has many negative consequences.  |
|  | Capital Punishment | “Capital punishment does not work. There is a wealth of mounting evidence that proves this fact. The death penalty, both in the U.S. and around the world, is discriminatory and is used disproportionately against the poor, minorities and members of racial, ethnic and religious communities. Since humans are fallible, the risk of executing [the innocent](http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/death-penalty/us-death-penalty-facts/death-penalty-and-innocence) can never be eliminated. Furthermore, the astronomical costs associated with putting a person on death row – including criminal investigations, lengthy trials and appeals – are leading many states to re-evaluate and re-consider having this flawed and unjust system on the books” ([Amnesty International](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjohn%5CDropbox%5CCapital%20punishment%20does%20not%20work.%20There%20is%20a%20wealth%20of%20mounting%20evidence%20that%20proves%20this%20fact)). | “An eye-for-eye and tooth-for-tooth would lead to a world of the blind and toothless” – Gandhi.This brings into question what is the purpose of punishment? Is it to hurt someone or to reform them? Brutal violence never reforms but mirrors God sending souls to hell, not to reform them but to put them in eternal torture (to pay for finite sins).  |
|  | Who has Rights? | We believe that all humans, no matter what race, nationality, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, preference or expression, prisoners, and other disadvantaged populations all have rights. We do not support [fetal rights legislation](http://lsrj.org/documents/factsheets/08-09_Fetal_Rights.pdf), as it is seen as a legal ploy to overturn abortion rights.  | It appears in scripture that anyone who does not obey God has lost their rights (LGBT) and that some are naturally inferior (women). We are not all equal in God’s eyes.  |
|  | Children’s Rights & Indoctrination | We subscribe to the [UN Child’s Rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx) Articles 12 & 13 (freedom of expression) & 14 (freedom of thought, conscience & religion), as age appropriate, and therefore, don’t believe in imposing any belief systems on children, only values to lead a good life. We think that we should expose our children to many belief systems and let the child make up their own mind when appropriate. We also do not believe in imposing our views on studies, career, political affiliation, sexual orientation, life partner, and other life-style choices. | Most religious parents do not believe that their children have any rights except to obey them and God. They do not view kids as autonomous beings (in development) but almost as property. They believe they can impose their beliefs and decisions on them in any number of areas, thus depriving them of free will that their Creator gave them. |
|  | Woman’s Status | Women are equal to men in all areas and should be allowed to enter almost any occupation unless there is a bonafide reason not to. They should earn the same pay and have the same advancement opportunities. They are equal partners in a relationship. All women should have access to an education.  | *Corinthians* 14:34 tells us: “Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.” This also applies to wives being submissive to their husbands. Sorry believers, *Corinthians* is in the NEW Testament.  |
|  | Abortion | The earliest point at which many agree that a fetus becomes a ‘human’ (with legal rights) is when it can survive independent of the mother. Rape, incest, birth defects, and risk to the life of the mother are thought to be valid reasons for an abortion, and some also think to prevent an unwanted pregnancy, as a last-resort form of birth control. We believe that a woman should be able to control her own body within those parameters. | While it is OK for religious persons not to have abortions, as life is a gift from God, they step over the line when they impose their beliefs on non-believers. Worse, after those non-abortion kids are born to poor single women they are not there to support them, as they are really only pro-life to keep from feeling guilt. These same pro-life people are very much in support of capital punishment (take away life).  |
|  | Age of Marriage | We follow the secular age of adulthood as declared by the government in a range between 18 and 21 years old. We consider marriages under 18 years old as a form of child abuse. [Statistics](http://family-studies.org/want-to-avoid-divorce-wait-to-get-married-but-not-too-long/) show late twenties or early thirties have the lowest rate of divorce for first marriages.  | A lot of problems are caused by trying to please God by rushing into a marriage that cannot work so that the two young parties are not ‘living in sin.’ They have a child then divorce and everyone suffers (except God).  |
|  | Premarital Sex | It is very human to express love on many levels and premarital sex is one of those natural physical expressions of love (as do [95% of all people](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17236611) of all religions). Most could agree, to avoid any negative (earthly) consequences, by acting responsibly by ensuring: 1) a disease is not transmitted, 2) there is no unwanted pregnancy, 3) keeping with one partner at a time, and 4) that some degree of emotional intimacy is present, unless there is clear understanding between both parties otherwise. | There are few things that upset God more than watching two people physically express their love for each other before marriage. He would rather see them burn in hell forever than love each other in this way.  |
|  | Sex Education | We support age appropriate sex education to keep our children healthy including biology, STD’s, birth control and learning about healthy relationships and avoiding coercive and dangerous ones. | Keep children ignorant. If you tell them about sex they may want to experiment! Let them get their sexual knowledge from the streets because we can’t trust schools to teach them the proper things. Unfortunately, so many religious parents have sexual hang-ups from religion’s obsession with sex and purity that they can’t even talk to their kids about it.  |
|  | Contraception | We endorse all forms of birth control that do not cause health problems. Abortion should always be a last resort. We condemn approaches such as [abstinence pledges](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/28/AR2008122801588.html), because they do not work and put adolescences at risk for disease and pregnancy, as research clearly demonstrates. | If we teach kids about contraception they will know how to have protected sex and would be more likely to try it. It would shield them from diseases and unwanted pregnancies, instead, we need to use more scare tactics to keep them away from sex.  |
|  | Sexual Differences | We recognize that humans are born with different sexualities, preferences, expressions and orientations, collectively called LGBT. *Orientation* is defined as having four characteristics: 1) *unchosen* (present at birth--not a choice), 2) *unchangeable* (no therapies will change it and there is no will to change it), 3) *normal* (to that person--not a disorder), 4) *natural* (affects a percentage of other mammals, too). They should be afforded all rights of heterosexual persons (marriage, adoption, employment, health coverage, military service, choice of bathrooms, etc.). | Scripture clearly calls these people *abominations* in the sight of the Lord. If they are allowed to show their affection in public (as heterosexuals do) or we decriminalize their behavior, they may ‘convert’ our children to their wicked ways. The same Lord who condemns them is the one who created them. Your sexual identity is who you *are*--not a choice you make--and is present from birth.  |
|  | Medical Health | Disease and accidents are a natural part of life, not a punishment from God, and keeping healthy should be one of our highest priorities (diet, exercise, sleep, and stress management). “The medical ethics principle of autonomy justifies letting competent adults reject lifesaving medical care for themselves because of their religious beliefs, but it does **not** extend to rejecting medical care for children. Society has a duty to override parents’ wishes when necessary to protect children from harm” ([FHRFCP](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/faith_healing_religious_freedom_vs._child_protection)). | Most religious people see a doctor when they have a medical problem. Some extreme groups would rather see their children die than to get them proper medical attention in order to glorify God. For instance, the Seventh Day Adventists refuse to allow blood transfusions. |
|  | Mental Illness  | There are a lot of causes for mental disorders, some biological and others behavioral, but they certainly don’t come from demon possession. | Everyone knows that demons are the leading cause of mental health problems, it is shame that medical schools do not have a clinical department of demonology. |
|  | Vaccinations | We encourage vaccinations, as the child’s health can be seriously endangered or they can die without them, or the unprotected child can spread disease and cause outbreaks to other children. | Our religious beliefs are more important than making sure that the neighbor we ‘love’ is protected.  |
|  | Healing | We support scientific medicine and some forms of alternative medicine but reject notions of faith healing whether by prayer or a faith healer. We do though believe that the mind has a powerful role in healing (as [placebos](http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-007-0332-z) clearly demonstrate).  | No one goes to a faith healer when they break their leg which highlights the hypocrisy in this area for those big on faith healing. God has [never healed](http://whywontgodhealamputees.com/) an amputee (and I was told that He could do anything).  |
|  | Bio-Technology (Stem cell, Cloning, Genome Editing, etc.) | We encourage [medical research](http://www.explorestemcells.co.uk/benefitsofstemcells.html) and applications that will help reverse diseases, replace damaged organs, or even [edit bad genomes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genome_editing) before a disease can start, in addition to other medical benefits, as long as they are consistent with bioethics.  | Religious people are not allowed to “play God” with life unless they are getting a heart transplant or extend someone life in a coma with tubes and wires all over their bodies, which is OK. |
|  | End-of-Life Issues | We support one’s choice in *Dignicide* (aka euthanasia) or ‘dying with dignity’ usually because of an irreversible chronic disease or if one is in extreme pain for an interminable amount of time, whether done by oneself or doctor assisted.  | Life is a gift from God and can only be given and taken by Him. It is better for someone to suffer in unbearable pain until they die rather than relieve them of that burden because God is purifying that soul.  |
|  | Science in Education | We advocate teaching scientific subjects even if they are in conflict with certain scriptures, like evolution or other controversial topics (sex education). Schools should not be allowed to teach [Creationism](http://ncse.com/creationism) (God created the world) because it is not science but a theological theory.  | The [Scopes Monkey Trial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scopes_Trial) in 1925 showcased religious thought on science. If science contradicts God’s word, it cannot possibly be true. ISIS uses the same process to spread Islamic terrorism under the name of religion.  |
|  | Diet | Humanists are not necessarily vegetarians or are characterized by any other style of diet. We are guided by the latest research on nutrition and realize that we have different requirements in each decade of life.  | All religions have some types of dietary rules about clean and unclean foods. It appears that heaven has real problem with pork, as pigs are dirty (and other animals are clean?).  |
|  | Exercise | Humanist believe that this is only life that we have and we should live it to the fullest, and one can’t do that if they are in poor health. We are guided by sex and decade appropriate findings of research (men in their 60s should…women in their 30s should…). | No western religion says anything about healthy exercise, many times because the body is material and that we should focus on the soul instead. In that sense religions are incomplete.  |
|  | Dress & Grooming  | While Humanists do believe in walking around nude in public, we are generally not adverse to limited-access beaches and clubs where this is permitted. There are no specific rules for how to dress or what length and style of hair to have, except that it expresses who you are (not what others think you should be). | Some religions require external expressions of faith like hijabs for Muslim women or the third-eye red dot (Bindi) for Hindus. Some have specific rules on how much flesh can be exposed in public. The God who designed these bodies tells us how we must cover them up. Beards are required in some religions.  |
|  | Burial | We accept a wide range of burial arrangements depending on our preferences and budget. | Religions have very specific rules regarding burial. Some cannot be cremated because on the Day of Judgment, God will call forth the bodies from the graves. Hindus are the opposite with funeral pyres.  |
|  | Organ or Body Donations | Many Humanist support donating their organs after death that may save others’ lives and discourage [illegal body-parts harvesting](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/reading-between-the-headlines/201311/body-snatchers-organ-harvesting-profit) practices. Some donate their whole body to medical schools for research and teaching purposes.  | Many religions allow but do not *endorse* the practice amongst their membership by having “[no official policy or statement](http://www.donorrecovery.org/learn/religion-and-organ-donation/)” on the matter. Many religious people are skittish about donating their bodies, some for superstitious reasons.  |
|  | Cleanliness | We engage in common sense approaches in keeping us from harmful effects of bacteria, dirt or excessive bodily odor.  | This is often taken to extreme where normal bodily functions are viewed as unclean or impure in God’s eyes (yes, the same God that created them). God has a problem with unclean menstrual periods and forbids Muslim women from praying in the mosque at that time or having sexual intercourse.  |
|  | Gun Control | Humanists generally believe that guns are like driving, that is, a [*privilege* not a right](http://napavalleyregister.com/news/opinion/mailbag/difference-between-individual-rights-and-privileges/article_07f76ae8-4029-11e3-926c-001a4bcf887a.html). Not everyone should have access to a weapon and not every kind of weapon (e.g., assault weapons) should be on the market. We certainly do not believe that by arming everyone (school teachers, etc.) that we will become a safer society.  | While there is no scriptural injunction on the ownership of weapons, by enlarge there is a [significant correlation](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/is-gun-ownership-christian/2013/01/25/c7afe7fe-6724-11e2-93e1-475791032daf_story.html) between gun owners and the religious. They say that their Lord is always protecting them but they aren’t taking any chances.  |
|  | Organization &Conversions | Humanist do not believe in preaching or converting others but they do realize the value and strength of community. Churches have tremendous organizational power that they leverage politically to influence legislation in their favor. A sense of community is important in any minority movement to validate and support one another as we work toward noble societal goals. | With the belief that they have ‘the truth’ most religions want to preach it and then have you convert to their brand so that you can be saved. Many times as with the American Indians this conversion came at the end of rifle barrel. They were so obsessed with converting you that they will kill you if you don’t. |
|  | Salvation | To a Humanist, salvation is obtained by each person reaching out and understanding those outside of their ‘comfort’ groups, in order to work together to build a society where everyone enjoys dignity, freedom, opportunity, and justice.  | Believe that Jesus (or another God) is your lord and savior and that you are nothing without Him, and restrain from committing any major sins so you can go to heaven.  |

## Humanist Manifesto III

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

The lifestance of Humanism—guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience—encourages us to live life well and fully. It evolved through the ages and continues to develop through the efforts of thoughtful people who recognize that values and ideals, however carefully wrought, are subject to change as our knowledge and understandings advance.

This document is part of an ongoing effort to manifest in clear and positive terms the conceptual boundaries of Humanism, not what we must believe but a consensus of what we do believe. It is in this sense that we affirm the following:

**Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis.** Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies. We also recognize the value of new departures in thought, the arts, and inner experience—each subject to analysis by critical intelligence.

**Humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change.** Humanists recognize nature as self-existing. We accept our life as all and enough, distinguishing things as they are from things as we might wish or imagine them to be. We welcome the challenges of the future, and are drawn to and undaunted by the yet to be known.

**Ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience.** Humanists ground values in human welfare shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns and extended to the global ecosystem and beyond. We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consonant with responsibility.

**Life's fulfillment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.** We aim for our fullest possible development and animate our lives with a deep sense of purpose, finding wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence, its challenges and tragedies, and even in the inevitability and finality of death. Humanists rely on the rich heritage of human culture and the lifestance of Humanism to provide comfort in times of want and encouragement in times of plenty.

**Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships.** Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences, where differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

**Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.** Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community. We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.

Humanists are concerned for the wellbeing of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views. We work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society and maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process and a planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner.

Thus engaged in the flow of life, we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.

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