

8 Humanistic Errors That Crept Into the Modern Church

In my opinion, humanistic values frame much of the teaching and theology of the contemporary church. By humanism, I mean anything people refer to as self-empowering that does not originate from the Scriptures' worldview or depend upon our identification with the cross of Christ for existence and essence. It is also any concept that glorifies the self instead of glorifying God.

1. You can do anything you dream you can do. I remember hearing many people say they can do anything they desire or dream to do. Some even quote the Scripture (out of context, of course) in Philippians 4:13 (BSB), "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength," regarding their success in fulfilling their dreams. However, despite all this wishful thinking, we cannot be anything we desire, and we cannot make something happen merely because we dream about it.

God has apportioned to each one of us only a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3) based upon our particular assignment (Eph. 4:7) according to His will, not our will (1 Cor. 12: 5-7).

Hence, no matter how hard one tries, wishes or dreams, God gives us assignments that limit our capacity based on the natural and supernatural abilities we have received at birth by God's design. Those who teach that people can do or be anything they want to do or be have taken their cue from secular humanism rather than from the Bible.

2. Cut out toxic people from your life. I have read numerous posts on social media related to people advising their followers to cut "toxic people" out of their lives. Of course, we have to define what they mean by toxic. If they are referring merely to people who are challenging to get along

with or may not always agree with them, then said posts are misleading since the Word of God instructs us to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves (Rom, 15:1).

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Furthermore, disagreements are sometimes a healthy way to come to proper conclusions regarding right and wrong (1 Cor. 11:19).

Paul tells us that love is patient and kind and bears everything with others (1 Cor. 13). I would agree with the proposition to cut toxic people out of one's life if it were referring to people who are a bad influence and who lead a person to fall into sin or away from following the Lord.

However, attempting to live an insular life without conflict is unreasonable. It arises from an erroneous, self-focused, humanist ideology that nurtures weak-minded people with a victim spirit rather than those who can handle dissonance and still function at high capacity.

3. Only do what you have a passion for. Although passion at times can depict what we are called to do for God, it can also become a distraction since it's possible to have a passion for hobbies that have nothing to do with our assignment. Furthermore, this teaching arises out of the context of secular humanistic success literature that is narcissistic, since God calls us to do many things we do not have a passion for.

Do you think Jesus was excited about going to the cross? He did not die on the cross because He was "*following His bliss*" (a la Joseph Cambell). He did it out of obedience to the Father (Matt. 26:36-46). For the mature Christ-follower, when passion fails, stewardship takes over.

4. The empowerment of individual identity. People living in

today's secular humanistic culture are obsessed with being unique and being known for the identity they carved out for themselves. Whether it be by identifying themselves with tattoos, gender, sexual lifestyle, attire or a cause, people are spinning their wheels, trying to make a name for themselves (not that everything mentioned in this list is always evil or wrong).

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This has crept into the church with rampant individualism, as illustrated by people and churches competing with others to win their community's attention by being "different" and "better" than others. Consequently, the humanistic concept of individual identity is opposed to participating in the body of Christ for the glory of His kingdom and honor.

5. Individual autonomy is worshipped. Even as Lucifer attempted to lift himself above God and His heavenly council (Isa. 14:12-14) so he could do his own thing and receive worship (Matt. 4:10), human autonomy is honored most in contemporary culture. Christians and churches who are unaccountable to anyone else and who place more priority upon actualizing the self than fearing God have fallen into the erroneous trap of secular humanism.

6. Spirituality without community. Millions of Christians think they can follow God without connecting to a community of Jesus' followers. Consequently, many who call themselves "spiritual" define themselves as isolated from others because they value their private faith. This concept of spirituality is more akin to humanistic New Age religions (such as Hinduism and Buddhism) than to biblical Christianity, which describes Christ's followers as belonging to His family (1 Cor. 12).

7. Happiness without holiness. Some practice humanistic

techniques such as “mindfulness” and desire to control their atmosphere and be tranquil and happy amid life’s turmoil. (I am not saying that there is anything wrong with using a technique to be fully “present.”) However, any believer who attempts to prioritize happiness over holiness (which involves being set apart for God’s purposes) has been sucked into the vortex of secular humanism.

8. The enlightenment concept of knowledge and truth. The launch of the secular humanistic “Enlightenment” (1685-1815) resulted in humanity’s attempt to define truth merely as that which can be empirically proven through the sciences. Whenever a Christ-follower, church or denomination collapses Christianity down simply to that which can be rationally understood while rejecting supernaturalism, it has fallen into the trap of secular humanism.

To summarize what should we do to avoid the trap of secular humanism in the church:

- 1. Embrace God’s will, not our dreams.**
- 2. Practice endurance, not avoidance.** Cutting “toxic” people from our lives, as often advised, contradicts the biblical call to bear with others’ weaknesses and practice patience (Rom. 15:1, 1 Cor. 13).
- 3. Practice obedience over passion.** Jesus’ example on the cross shows that true discipleship often requires sacrifice and obedience, even when passion fades (Matt. 26:36-46).
- 4. Ground your identity in Christ, not individualism:** Humanism promotes self-created identities, but in Christianity, we are called to find our identity in Christ and function as part of His body, the church, not in isolation (1 Cor. 12).
- 5. Celebrate holiness over happiness.** Prioritizing personal happiness over holiness is a humanistic error. True Christian life focuses on holiness and being set apart

for God's purposes, even in difficulty (1 Pet. 1:16).

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