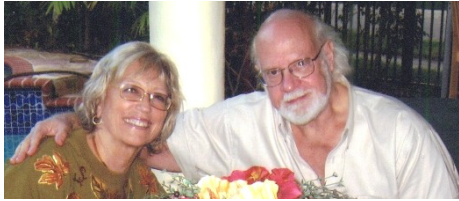




## HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

It was the fall of 1969 at the student forum of Bergen University in Norway. The auditorium was packed with over two hundred students: lively and engaged.



Steve and R.K. Ulrich 2009

The debate was intense and passionate. On the platform sat a panel consisting of six students who took turns trying to overturn each other's points-of-view through convincing arguments. At issue were one's ideologies and worldview.

I had been invited onto the panel to represent the Judeo-Christian worldview, as I was studying toward an MB in Christian Education, and was a member of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

When it was his turn, one of the debaters, a zealous Communist, kept waiving Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book* (widely distributed on campus) while proclaiming with dramatic rhetorical style his Humanistic ideology: Man — being inherently good at the core — is the measure of all things. Evil originates from an unjust society. Social justice brought about by revolution of the masses, will remove evil, i.e. the class system, resulting in the proletarians creating a utopian society in which people live in perfect harmony and peace without war, jealousy, greed, or selfish ambition — a result of everybody being equal, having equal opportunities, and equal ownership in all things.

When my turn came to rebut his statements, I said, *"The society you describe is bound to fail!"* "Why?" he shot back. *"You have excluded the most important component in the universe: the living God as revealed in the Word of God — the Bible! You have also failed to recognize man's true nature — he is born self-centered and sinful. The Bible states that the heart is desperately wicked; it can only be changed by regeneration through God's righteousness and love, which is received by repentance and faith in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who was without sin. The change is from the in-side-out, not from the out-side-in. Transformed people transform society — society does not transform people's hearts!"*

The 1961 launching of the first man into space from Russia, heralded the progressive Soviet Communist system a great success, while the fact that tens of millions killed and displaced by Stalin, was ignored. In 1969, Communist China launched the Cultural Revolution; the fact that the regime tortured, killed, and starved to death 3 million intellectuals, artists, and people of faith, was not yet known.

My opponent and I agreed to revisit our worldviews in thirty years, to determine who was right. I never saw him, again. Through an unconfirmed source, I heard that he had followed his convictions, left his studies in Norway, joined the revolutionary freedom movement somewhere in South America, where he disappeared. Forty years later, Steve and I have witnessed time and again the power of the Gospel transforming people and communities in many nations!

## HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

### EUROPE

The written narrative on the previous page is an illustration of the ideological debate that took place throughout Europe in the 1960s which galvanized the democratic socialist form of government that has been the hallmark of most Western European countries ever since.

The basic premise for the European form of socialism and Soviet communism are identical, the **Humanist ideology**, which was defined in the first publication of **The Humanist Manifesto** in 1933, as a religion without God. Its fundamental belief is that man, being intrinsically good, is the final measure of all things, and that man's reason determines values of life — **"...the universe is self-existing and not created... humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change...religion consists of those action, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant... ethical values are derived from human need and interest as tested by experience..."** The original Humanist Manifesto has been revised three times, as the principles and thoughts of men are vacillating and evolving without God. To read the original and 2003 third revision, please copy the following websites into your browser):

<http://www.jjnet.com/archives/documents/humanist.htm>

<http://www.thehumanist.org/humanist/articles/HM3.pdf>

As a young adult in Europe from the mid-sixties to 1973, when I moved to the States, I knew I was on a collision course with the culture of my day, having experienced a very personal, powerful, life-changing encounter with the Living God of the Bible, and embraced the Word of God as absolute Truth to which I was submitted. I watched **absolute moral values**; based on the Judeo-Christian faith, that had been fundamental to our European way of life, give

way to **Atheist Humanism**, resulting in a dependency on the socialist government, rather than God, for provision and direction. Pursuing personal convictions and the creative gifts and talents endowed the individual by God, were curbed by bureaucratic regulations and muddled by political correctness.

The result of the breakdown of the socialist societies of Western Europe is presently evident in increased numbers of mental and emotional problems resulting from the generational breakup of the nuclear family (In Norway, the abortion rate is 25%; in the United States it is nearing 50%!), and a generation that is not immoral (knowing the difference between right and wrong, but choosing to do wrong), but amoral (having no sense of right and wrong, thus doing what is expedient at the moment without any pangs of conscience or remorse.)

The church at large in Europe had little impact on the culture of the day. Many of the Christian leaders adapted to the political correctness of the day, denied the Bible's absolute Truth, thus lost the ability to be salt and light in the church or the secular society.

Nevertheless, there were light-houses — individuals and groups of people who took God at His Word and enacted on it in practical ways, and had spiritual impact on people in their communities.

From Norway, one such person was **Niels Skjælaen**, who, as a youth, left everything to reach the inner jungles of the Amazon in South America where he lived for several decades among the Indians, teaching them the Gospel in practical ways. *"Just follow the example of Jesus in the Scriptures"*, he would say. In later years, he visited college campuses in various parts of our country. As a student, I joined in informal discussion groups, where he engaged us in relevant dialogue about

Cont...

## HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

Spiritual matters. I was impacted by his strength of faith and his practical approach to missions, which I adopted later into my own mission work.

I was also greatly influenced by another beacon of light, **Francis Schaeffer**, renown American Reformed theologian and philosopher living in Switzerland, where he founded the Christian retreat center, L'Abri. At the time, he was a lone, prophetic voice in the spiritual wilderness of Europe. An avid writer and public speaker, he warned Europe fifty years ago about the danger of embracing Humanism; that it would lead into a post-Christian era in which we might lose — not only our Christian culture — but our 2000 year old **Christian civilization!**

In 1976, Schaeffer published an excellent series: **How Should We Then Live? — The rise and decline of Western Thought and Culture.** It is presently available in DVD, which I highly recommended as relevant background information for you and your family (available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)).

Schaeffer spoke at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in 1982 in Fort Lauderdale, and outlined his **Christian Manifesto**, exposing the Humanist Manifesto. Consider the present relevance of his opening words:

*“Christians, in the last 80 years or so, have only been seeing things as bits and pieces...instead of understanding that they are **the natural outcome of a change from a Christian World View to a Humanistic one**; things such as over permissiveness, pornography, the problem of the public schools, the breakdown of the family, abortion, infanticide, increased emphasis upon the euthanasia of the old....*

*All of these things and many more are only the results. We may be troubled with the individual thing, but in reality we are missing the whole thing if we do not see*

*each of these things... as only symptoms of the deeper problem. **that is the change in our society, a change in our country, a change in the Western world from a Judeo-Christian consensus to a Humanistic one .... instead of that which is the basis of all reality being... a Creator God, now largely, all else is seen as only material or energy which has existed forever in some form, shaped into its present complex form only by pure chance.”***

Schaeffer ended his address with the following words, **“CHRIST MUST BE THE FINAL LORD; NOT CAESAR AND NOT SOCIETY!”** (read the full article at <http://www.peopleforlife.org/francis.html>).

### AMERICA

When I arrived in the United States in 1973, I immediately sensed the tremendous freedom Americans enjoyed; a freedom most were unaware of, therefore did not appreciate. I quickly discovered, however, that In the States, there had been a — just as intense, although more subtle — battle as in Europe, to remove the Judeo-Christian worldview from the American society, .

**Today, the most important overall issue facing the United States, is that people in powerful positions - judging from recent events and political decisions - are progressively endeavoring to usher in a new Humanist-based global world order and world religion. To do so, their agenda is to first marginalize, then replace, the Constitution of the United States, as it is based on the Judeo-Christian, Biblical principles, thus intrinsically spiritual in nature. This beacon of light must be snuffed out in order to make relative ethics take its place.**

**Therefore, be vigilant in standing up for your rights as a citizen, and make your voice be heard!**

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## FROM R.K.'S CORNER

In this issue, rather than presenting an update from the mission field, I feel an urgency, based on my own life's journey, to share some thoughts and reflections of the current issues we face today. I trust my words will be an encouragement as you continue to stand firm in hope and obedience to the living God through Jesus Christ.

As I drove home from a rather multi-cultural day of activities, I realized America was celebrating D Day, the commemoration of June 6, 1944 when the United States troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, France and began the liberation of Europe from Nazi occupation. This D Day in America, I attended a Norwegian luncheon served aboard a Norwegian luxury liner docked in the Port of Miami. Afterwards, just a few blocks away, I participated in a Jewish-Christian sponsored rally in support of Israel brought about by the Turkish-Israeli conflict over the Gaza-bound flotilla.

My thoughts took me back to my childhood in post-war Norway, how my mother every June 6<sup>th</sup> would have tears of gratitude that we were a free country.

Contemplating the recent event in Israel, the radicalization of America, the oil-spill in the Gulf, and the future challenges that face this country and the nations of the world, my thoughts turned to the words of Psalm 36:9. *“For in You (Lord) is the fountain of life, in Your light we see light.”*

It seems that the last days events as described in Matthew 24:4-14 are beginning to unfold (the exact timing is not known to man; it is only in God's hands). As we move ever closer to His Second Coming, navigating safely through the turbulence of the storm as committed believers in Jesus Christ, it is essential that we stay informed, educated and engaged in the issues of our day while filtering everything through the absolute Truth of the Word of God. As spiritual deception becomes more prevalent and subtle, we are in need of increased discernment, wisdom and sensitivity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must continually cleanse our minds with the washing of His Word for *“...in Him we live and move and have our being.”* (Acts 17:28), remembering that *“...my soul finds rest in God alone”* and that *“He alone is my rock and salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”* (Psalm 62:1-2). I believe it is crucial that we keep these and other scriptures foremost in our hearts and minds as we begin to see our culture, society, and our world, shaking and crumbling before Him with whom we have to do.

**...Cont. Be prepared — read Matthew 24 and Luke 21.** Jesus exhorted his followers, *“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”* (Luke 21:28).

Therefore, let us be firm in faith, bold in witnessing, honest in all matters of life and conduct, committed to the Word of God, quick to forgive, slow to anger, enduring in love, generous in giving. Pray for Israel, and the peace of Jerusalem, and support those who bring the Gospel to the nations!



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