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10/18/2007--Hallowed Secularism acknowledges the power of humanism. It just goes beyond it. Here is a section from the book on the power of secularism.

Jesus said, "By their fruits will you know them." By that measure, humanism has done very well in recent years. Pope Benedict has been lavish in his acknowledgment of the importance of individual rights in general and religious liberty in particular. Our Religions as a whole have praised religious liberty. But, it is fair to say that such rights have been the accomplishment of humanists, rather than of Our Religions. While the roots of the human rights tradition were laid in the Bible, and while it is fair to point out that this tradition grew originally only in national soil prepared by the Church, nevertheless, our liberty has not been the gift of the Church, as it should have been. It has been the gift of the humanist tradition.

Humanism has freed humanity from the tyranny of superstition and from the illegitimate power of clerics. We need only look at the Muslim world, which has lacked a humanist tradition in the modern era, to see the importance of humanism in this regard. Some of this humanist accomplishment has been described in the books of the New Atheism. Religion has a great deal to answer for. Religion has been a stumbling block.

Humanism has shown us in various ways that Our Religions are human creations, rather than traditions given by God. Humanists from the Protestant tradition essentially created the fields of source criticism and sociology from which much of our knowledge of religion comes. Again humanism has taught us what Our Religions would prefer we not know.

Humanism has also emphasized the integration of man against all claims of dualism. Man is not a war of spirit and body. Man is both spirit and body. Or, rather, man's body is spiritual and his spirit is embodied.

Humanism also has taught us that men are responsible for their own actions. It is not enough that a leader tells us that God spoke to him and commanded an invasion of a foreign country. We are to work out our destiny on our own in the here and now.

As John Dewey hoped in *A Common Faith*, this attitude that man must handle his problems on his own, probably has helped bring about a surge of human effort around the world to alleviate poverty, cure disease, bring peace and so forth. It is also true that the world economic system is bringing increasing numbers of people out of the terrible poverty that afflicts so many people in the world. The system of representative government, market economics and judicial review has spread around the world and, if it has not solved all the problems of the world, it has provided a lot of people with stability in governance and the possibility of prosperity. There is increasing commitment to collective human action to confront world-wide problems like global warming and as soon as the United States ceases to obstruct the effort, even more will likely be done.

Human capacities are increasing. There seems to be an understanding of how to avoid the crippling economic disasters of the not-so-distant past, when the entire world could spin into depression, thus threatening and ultimately undermining world peace.

There are many problems, even crises, facing humanity. But some of the most significant have been greatly exacerbated by religion. Specifically, the struggle between the State of Israel and the Palestinian People and the general threat of terrorism both have important religious aspects. Humanism certainly cannot be as much blamed for these problems as religion should be.

There is a sense that Dietrich Bonhoeffer was right that this is a world come of age. We are more rational, less warlike, more prosperous and more reasonable than humanity has probably ever been. And to a great extent, it has been humanism in its many guises that deserves the greatest share of the credit.