

# Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

Volume XV

April 1995

Number 9

## Ethics Without God

By

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In a recent meeting with the New Port Richey Church of Christ I presented a lesson on this theme. This lesson was not recorded and I promised some who wanted it that I would put in print some of the points made in the lesson.

This lesson has its roots in a class we teach on the subject of Ethics. It is hoped that the thoughts here might be of help to the brethren at New Port Richey as well as our regular readers.

### Without God

In the world about us there is the talk of right and wrong, good and evil with little consideration to whether such items have objectivity or not. When men talk of good what does it mean? How may one thing be considered good and another not good? Is there such a thing as morality? Immorality? What do you mean by such terms? If there is no God, no final and absolute standard, there can be no such thing as objective and absolute good or

evil.

### Illustration

Consider two individuals with a difference and you as a third party observing their dispute. Suppose that they are discussing taking the life of another human being. One says the life should be taken and the other opposes taking this life. You are called upon to make a determination. Should life be taken or not? If you are honest, you know there is an urgency on your part to have some justification for your action. What ought I to do? You cannot agree with both individuals. You must have some standard to which all three of you are equally related. Not only the three of you but the party whose life is being considered must also be related to a value system that is above you as well as he.

Agnosticism cannot help for it does not know if there is such a system or not. Atheism cannot help you for it knows of no objective value system. Your culture cannot solve the

problem. By what right does one culture impose its values upon another? The dilemma becomes more complicated when you recognize that (subjectively speaking), no one has a set of values that is above others that are objective and authoritative.

People know the need for such a value system but there is none from man. The situation becomes more confusing. Not only can you not make a decision as to what ought to be done but you have no standard to which to appeal in order to stop the individual from taking another human life.

The scenario is no different in domestic disputes among nations. By what right does one group of nations have to place their value systems over another? Nations do so and we know that our nation joined others in condemning the Nazis. Was this right? Wrong? Why do you answer as you do? Closer to home nations came together to condemn the aggression of Iraq. Was this right? Wrong? Why do you answer as you do?

We often hear of human

rights. What are human rights? If there is no absolute value system there is no such thing as the right of one value over another.

Society without God is not an orderly place. With no law, no values, all acts become the same. The law of the jungle, survival of the strongest, becomes the norm. Yet, few atheists or non-moralists will live with their valueless philosophy. They will appeal to a standard (while inconsistently denying one exists). They will not affirm that what Hitler did was right. The world community would condemn them if they did. Their own consciences will not permit them to live by their philosophy. Consider the following excerpts from the preface of *Humanist Manifesto II*.

### Humanistic Frustrations

"It is forty years since *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) appeared. Events since then make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook. In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation.

"As we approach the twenty-first century, however, an affirmative and hopeful vision is needed. Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary. In the choice between despair and hope, humanists respond in the *Humanist Manifesto II* with a positive declaration for times of uncertainty."

Continuing, What does the Humanist affirm? Their words:

"We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is *autonomous* and *situational*, needing no theological or ideological sanction."

Again, quoting from *Humanist Manifesto II*: "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. As non-theist, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity."

### Observations

Please note that Humanists accept nothing above the individual in the field of ethics (autonomous and situational). Could any philosophy be more inconsistent? How may an autonomous individual check a mad man with military might at his disposal? Is he not acting on his autonomous and situational value system? The Humanists have no means of condemning such actions for by their own writings they sanction it. They must give up their system or admit mad men are merely acting out their autonomous and situational life styles.

Read again the quotations and note that these men find a number of problems

in society. Yet, according to their philosophy autonomous and situational values is all there is. They have no value system that can justify one action above another. Subjective ethics leads to total moral chaos. You, nor they, can take their philosophy and objectively criticize any action of another human being. All one can say is I do not like it. So what, who are you and I to make judgment upon another?

**Blind faith.** Upon what do the Humanists base their "hopeful vision" and "faith?" They affirm that we need it if we are to face the twenty-first century with a "positive declaration for times of uncertainty." Is our faith to be built on the past? They say the past demonstrates failure. Do we base it on the present? Are people acting differently today than in the past? What is your evidence? May we look to the future? What does the future hold? Is there any reason to believe that the future will be different from the past with people exercising their autonomous and situational freedom?

The Humanists accuse Christians of having a blind faith with no evidence for accepting the Bible or God. No people have a faith built upon less evidence than do the atheists.

Ethics without God leads

### *The Harvesters*

Published Monthly by the Florida School of Preaching 1807 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33803 (813) 683-4043

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to despair. Ethics without God is no ethics. Ethics implies a standard. Atheism denies a standard. Ethics without God leaves people with no hope, no purpose, no future, no meaning for the present, disappointment—**despair**.

We teach the ethical system of God as revealed in the Bible. Our society and all societies need it. If you do not know this system, you must be confused.

### **Ethics With God**

Man is unable to create a religious or ethical standard that is objective and authoritative. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer 10:23). If he could do so he would still stand in need of a savior, forgiveness of sins (transgressions). Only the ethical system of Christianity as taught in the Bible provides man with all his needs. It provides a perfect system that came from God and will furnish man with all that he needs to know in the realm of spiritual and ethical elements. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:14-17).

Since the Bible came from God and is inspired by God, this guarantees its truthfulness

and objectivity. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25). God loves all men and would have all be saved, and to live a life that is moral and upright. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Tit. 2:11-15).

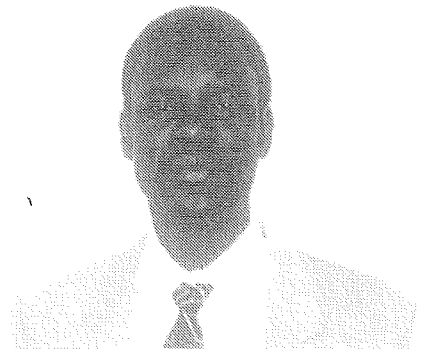
Our moral standard has been tested and demonstrated to be objective and beneficial to all who apply it. Without it, man is condemned to utter confusion and chaos both religiously and morally. Our ethical system is from the Bible, and directs us in all of life. It involves individual attitudes, thoughts and actions. The ethical code of the Bible regulates the home for the good of all in that family unit as well as those related to it. The Bible's ethical code directs proper conduct for the civil state and provides us with God's design and purpose for governments (Rom. 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17).

The ethical standard of the Bible takes into account all actions of all persons at all times. There will be a final day of judgment. At that time all actions of all persons will be evaluated by an all wise, all loving, and all just God. Justice may be avoided now as may love for our fellow man, but in that day the final results of failure to love God and

our neighbor will be properly evaluated and dealt with.

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## **May Graduates**



Jean Celestin

Jean and his wife Micheline have been married since 1979 and are the parents of six children ranging in ages from fourteen to three. At the present time they live in Orlando.

Jean is a Haitian and he desires to work with his people in Orlando to build a congregation among the more than 15,000 Haitians.

Anyone who wants to help support this work should contact the school office for information.

Jean wishes to thank all the congregations and individuals who helped support him during his two years of study.



Edward P. Duffy

Edward is a retired correction officer from Brooklyn, New York. He and his wife Florence are members of the South Florida Avenue congregation in Lakeland. They have both been taking classes as part-time students.

"I am happy to say that as I learned to seek God and study the Bible, it was an honor for me to be able to attend this school and learn the truth."

Ed plans to help as much as he can in his home congregation at South Florida Avenue. He is very appreciative of all the help and encouragement that he and his wife have received from his congregation and the school while completing his studies.

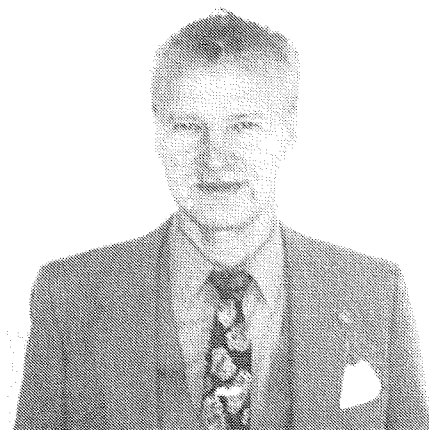


Michael Elledge

Michael is single and also a member of the congregation at South Florida Avenue. He is originally from Michigan, but has lived in Lakeland for three years.

Mike became a Christian due to the influence of Ed Duffy about two years ago. Shortly after that he started his studies at the school. This past year he has helped with the congregation at Springhead.

Mike says that the school has helped him in his personal life beyond measure; but that his heart is still grieved for one thing. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." (Jer. 8:20) He plans to find a position as a preacher with a congregation.



Robert Frasure

Robert is retired from the Navy after serving for twenty-three years. He comes most recently from Ohio.

Bob started his studies here for one semester in 1985. He returned in the fall of 1993 to complete his course of study.

Bob is a member of the congregation at South Florida. After graduation he would like to serve as a minister and teacher of the gospel.

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**Note:** There were two other men who finished their studies at the end of the first semester. If you know of a congregation that could use a preacher, please contact the school and let us know.

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