

The Abolition of Man?

Recently, I heard a shocking story about young boy who was raised in a coffin. Having been abandoned by his mom and dad, the child's dysfunctional grandparents grudgingly assumed the task of raising him. For some bizarre reason, they kept him confined in a coffin, and only let him out to eat and go to the bathroom. Once the authorities rescued him, they discovered that the little fellow had no idea that there was any other way to exist. He thought all children were raised in coffins. To him that was reality. His life was dehumanizing. He did not know it.

Similarly, many of us today do not realize just how dehumanizing our own society actually is. Granted, we don't live in coffins, but we do live in a deadly culture that increasingly undermines the dignity of human life. The corruption of sexuality, the dissolution of marriage, the breakdown of the family, pornography, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, rampant consumerism, political malfeasance, corporate scandal, ecclesiastical betrayal, excessive individualism, the obsession with technology and biotechnology, and the desecration of the environment are just a few of the powerful forces that are chipping away day by day at what it means to be human. Ironically, most people have no idea that there is any other way to exist. Most simply assume that this is just the way life is. Few, if any, are asking whether or not we are witnessing the abolition of man.

Is there any vision of life that can help us realize that we are living in the coffin of a lethal, dehumanizing culture and show us a better way? A Christian worldview answers affirmatively with a resounding "Yes!" In fact, Christianity is the "true humanism" which delivers us from the pit of degradation and lifts us up to the peak of nobility and respect.

In all creation, we human beings alone are the image and likeness of God. We can reflect, love, create, and most importantly, worship the One whose image we bear. God has given us stewardship over creation to develop a rich and godly culture that benefits others and honors God. Art and science, work and play, marriage and family, church and state are our gifts and tasks. God has crowned us with glory and majesty (Psalm 8: 5).

By redemption, Jesus Christ has reconciled us to God from whom we were estranged because of sin. Our relationship with and worship of Him is restored. We are renewed in our humanity as His image in order that we might once again fulfill the grand purposes for which we were created originally. We also look forward to the consummation of history when Christ returns and restores us completely through resurrection. Our final residency will be with God forever in the new heavens and earth which He will totally restore.

Of course, this redemption would not have been possible if Jesus had not become a man. Indeed, for our salvation, Christ “came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human” (Nicene Creed). More than anything, this teaching dignifies the human person, honors the physical body, and values the whole creation and shows us just how important we and the world are to God.

Christianity is, indeed, the true humanism. Its teachings about creation, incarnation and redemption are the solution to the current crisis of dehumanization and the potential abolition of the race, whether we realize it or not.

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