**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

 *Ekklesia Series*

*God is the God of Morality*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

June 2nd In the Year of Our Lord 2019

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS quoted)

There is an account in the Old Testament when the Hebrew people cried to God for permission to form their own government. God allows this to happen, but He warns them of the cost. Governments, by nature, sooner or later extract from the people they govern their most precious possessions. Life, Liberty and property are taken then there isn’t any happiness. The American Republic attempts to stave-off this pestilence. However, at this point, the government, as we all experience, has its tentacles in too many things.

 We have studied the state church through the Dark Ages, and we see history has recorded their scar upon the face of the earth. God made full disclosure as to what would happen when a people rely upon themselves and the governments they form. This is all a product of the sin nature in man. Man is not capable of governing his own affairs without God. If anybody thinks the state church was about God’s plan for governing then they have not reviewed the record. This is why George Washington warns the American people and, by extension, the world in his closing letter published by the American Daily Advertiser, September 9, 1796.

“*Let it be simply asked – Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in the exclusion of religious principle.*

**1 Samuel 8:1** And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel.

 2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judging in Beersheba.

 3 His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.

 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah;

 5 and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

 6 But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

 7 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.

 8 "Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also.

**1 Samuel 8**

10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king.

 11 He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.

 12 "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

 13 "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.

 14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants.

 15 "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants.

 16 "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work.

 17 "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants.

 18 "Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

 19 Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us,

 20 that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

 21 Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD'S hearing.

 22 The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and appoint them a king." So Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

Reviewing from last Sunday, we were discussing the theological points of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church is represented by RCC which is the state church.

The main issues people found the state church to be in error centered on:

1. Water-baptism required for salvation - not justified in Bible.
2. The Lord’s Supper is symbolic. Reject RCC claim to have authority to change the water and bread into blood and flesh of Jesus. Protestors also rejected this teaching in its entirety.
3. Priesthood of the Believer, meaning that every person who believes in God has direct access to God. No more going through a priest.
4. Separation of state and church.
5. Rejection of Infant Baptism and the RCC authority to remove original sin.
6. Saved by Faith alone. (“Sola Fide”)
7. Rejection of RCC authority. Luther called for the supreme authority of the Bible to be over the Church and Pope. (“Sola Scriptura”)
8. Purgatory – not found in the Bible.
9. Treasury of merit held by the Pope.
10. Reject veneration of Mother Mary.

It is worthy to note that America’s founding took place during the emerging growth of the Age of Reason. Our founding documents reflect much of the religious and political climate of the era. In forming the American government, the Founders who signed the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution with following the Bill of Rights were all deeply concerned about the balance of power. The world knows America has three branches of Government. To keep these branches in balance and to a large degree in check by the people, there are elections and voters and the Bill of Rights. There isn’t any aristocratic blood line. It is “We The People” by which the government is formed. In addition, the government is forbidden to establish a religion. At the same time, the government is not to interfere with the free exercise of religion. Americans have fought political battles since its inception as to what these words mean in application.

 **Religion of State. What is it?**

We can all see that the state itself has become a religion for many, in that their total allegiance is given to the government. Obviously, these are lifetime welfare recipients that form generations of dependency. This system also includes the overlords who dole-out the means of production. Their vote-slaves live on the government-plantation at the expense of working people who are then enslaved to a tax system. The government-plantation, in order to form and survive, must forbid and put aside all other worldviews and/or belief systems. Specifically, religious systems. The monotheistic beliefs in the world are the biggest challenge to its rule. The new state government religion can best be described in a hyphenated phrase: Humanistic-Atheistic Secularism. (H.A.S.)

I want to be clear. There are numerous Christian Believers who serve in government. This is America’s saving grace. Without these faithful Believers making decisions in government, America would be a much darker place.

The problem is that there is a darkness that is now the majority. This in not only in elected positions but the rank-and-file.

 To a large extent, due to the vast majority of its members, the Democrat party in America is the foremost force in this movement. They lead the way, and are proud of it, in taking innocent life from the womb. They have worked to include all government offices and all public schools to establish its own religion. Their religion uses Evolution to socially engineer the minds and hearts of children, and, above all, they teach that there isn’t any God.

**Humanism** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanism

Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism and empiricism) over acceptance of dogma or superstition. The meaning of the term humanism has fluctuated according to the successive intellectual movements which have identified with it. The term was coined by theologian Friedrich Niethammer at the beginning of the 19th century to refer to a system of education based on the study of classical literature ("classical humanism"). Generally, however, humanism refers to a perspective that affirms some notion of human freedom and progress. It views humans as solely responsible for the promotion and development of individuals and emphasizes a concern for man in relation to the world.

In modern times, humanist movements are typically non-religious movements aligned with secularism, and today humanism typically refers to a nontheistic life stance centered on human agency and looking to science rather than revelation from a supernatural source to understand the world.

**Atheism https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism**

Atheism is, in the broadest sense, the absence of belief in the existence of deities. Less broadly, atheism is the rejection of belief that any deities exist. In an even narrower sense, atheism is specifically the position that there are no deities. Atheism is contrasted with theism, which, in its most general form, is the belief that at least one deity exists.

The etymological root for the word atheism originated before the 5th century BCE from the ancient Greek ἄθεος (atheos), meaning "without god(s)". In antiquity, it had multiple uses as a pejorative term applied to those thought to reject the gods worshiped by the larger society, those who were forsaken by the gods, or those who had no commitment to belief in the gods. The term denoted a social category created by orthodox religionists into which those who did not share their religious beliefs were placed. The actual term atheism emerged first in the 16th century. With the spread of freethought, skeptical inquiry, and subsequent increase in criticism of religion, application of the term narrowed in scope. The first individuals to identify themselves using the word atheist lived in the 18th century during the Age of Enlightenment. The French Revolution, noted for its "unprecedented atheism," witnessed the first major political movement in history to advocate for the supremacy of human reason.

Arguments for atheism range from philosophical to social and historical approaches. Rationales for not believing in deities include arguments that there is a lack of empirical evidence, the problem of evil, the argument from inconsistent revelations, the rejection of concepts that cannot be falsified, and the argument from nonbelief. Nonbelievers contend that atheism is a more parsimonious position than theism and that everyone is born without beliefs in deities; therefore, they argue that the burden of proof lies not on the atheist to disprove the existence of gods but on the theist to provide a rationale for theism. Although some atheists have adopted secular philosophies (e.g. secular humanism), there is no one ideology or code of conduct to which all atheists adhere.

Since conceptions of atheism vary, accurate estimations of current numbers of atheists are difficult. According to global Win-Gallup International studies, 13% of respondents were "convinced atheists" in 2012, 11% were "convinced atheists" in 2015, and in 2017, 9% were "convinced atheists". However, other researchers have advised caution with WIN/Gallup figures since other surveys which have used the same wording for decades and have a bigger sample size have consistently reached lower figures. An older survey by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 2004 recorded atheists as comprising 8% of the world's population. Other older estimates have indicated that atheists comprise 2% of the world's population, while the irreligious add a further 12%. According to these polls, Europe and East Asia are the regions with the highest rates of atheism. In 2015, 61% of people in China reported that they were atheists. The figures for a 2010 Eurobarometer survey in the European Union (EU) reported that 20% of the EU population claimed not to believe in "any sort of spirit, God or life force".

**Secularism,** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism

as defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is the "indifference to, or rejection or exclusion of, religion and religious considerations." In different contexts, the word can refer to anticlericalism, atheism, desire to exclude religion from social activities or civic affairs, banishment of religious symbols from the public sphere, state neutrality toward religion, the separation of religion from state, or disestablishment (separation of church and state).

As a philosophy, secularism seeks to interpret life on principles taken solely from the material world, without recourse to religion. Secularism draws its intellectual roots from Greek and Roman philosophers such as Zeno of Citium and Marcus Aurelius; from Enlightenment thinkers such as Erasmus, John Locke, Denis Diderot, Voltaire, Baruch Spinoza, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine; and from more recent freethinkers and atheists such as Robert Ingersoll, Bertrand Russell, and Christopher Hitchens. It shifts the focus from religion to other ‘temporal’ and ‘this-worldly’ things with emphasis on nature, reason, science, and development.

In political terms, secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institution and religious dignitaries (the attainment of such is termed secularity). Defined briefly, secularism means that governments should remain neutral on the matter of religion and should not enforce nor prohibit the free exercise of religion, leaving religious choice to the liberty of the people. One form of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government of religion or religious practices upon its people.

 Another form of secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be uninfluenced by religious beliefs or practices. There exist distinct traditions of secularism in the West (e.g., French and Anglo-American) and beyond (e.g., in India).

 Failings/Abuses of State Church

We have noted the proclamation of Karl Marx that religion is the “opiate” of the masses. It is unfortunate that Marx and others developed their philosophes due to the centuries-long failing of the state church that claimed to be Christian when in fact they were no more than common dictators in the fallen world that twisted God’s intent for people and kept His Word from the populace.

 The Hebrews in Samuel’s senior years, cried-out for a secular king like their neighbors had. This was due to the fact that Samuel’s sons who had been installed, due to Samuel’s elderly physical state, abused their position. The people then, like those seeking to be free from the Dark Age Church, sought another way. The people moved to walk away from being governed by God. So, enters Saul. Even though anointed by Samuel, Saul seeks his own way like governments do. Most of us know the story. Saul’s life and the lives of his sons do not end well. They die in battle. This is one of the more gruesome accounts in the Bible. (1 Samuel 31).

**Moving forward to the Reformation**. In review of last week’s sermon, we noted that there was one parameter that the religious culture of the Reformation anticipated, and it almost went without saying: There is God and no other deity. The atheistic school of thought for Western man had not yet sprung. It was not until the age of science had entered into a maturing age with the Age of Reason, The Enlightenment (1700’s), did the idea grow and penetrate Western Leadership and trickle to the individual.

**The Age of Reason, the Enlightenment, took place as a refutation of the state church failings**. Even in the later days of the state church men who studied the heavens, being a reasonable people, would not think the earth is flat or that the sun rotates around the earth. Once the Bible was in the hands of the common person and they could see that God’s Word had been politized to keep the state church in power, all the positions of the state church were questioned, including their science.

 **Basically, just about all things the state church used to stay in power came unraveled**. People looked for new answers to explain their world. Thus, what is reasonable, based upon observation and experimentation, became the process and produced explanations people could live with, especially if the common person did not have a state church inquisitor standing over them with a sword to make sure they agreed with the state church’s teachings no matter how ill they were.

**It is my view that the state church is still with us today. Remember the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) as a seat at the United Nations.**

**Officially today, the Roman Catholic Church is not a state-member of the United Nations. However, they were granted permanent observer state status of a non-member state on April 6, 1964. With this official recognition, they have the right to attend all sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This gives them the international right to observe their work. It is observed, because of the official status, the Roman Catholic Church has offices to the U.N. in New York and in Geneva. Thus, influences the U.N. decisions and recommendations.**

Be it that the RCC is lessoned in power, but its Dark Age twisted political theology is still in place. Purgatory, indulgences, transubstantiation, mortal and venial sins, venerating dead people, intercessory pray through Mary, Popes claim to Christ’s treasury of merit and the list goes on.

 I read the Bible, like so many others, and including none of the above, the Bible does not support these teachings. The state church held political conferences and used their own philosophies to contrive the rules of their religion. If you will, they have added to the Bible to substantiate their teachings. We know that God’s Word prohibits additions or subtractions (Revelations 22:18,19;

 Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6).

It is really sad that millions of children have been brought up in a man-made political system. These children are psychologically branded in heart and mind to believe in a religion. Remember that religion is man’s attempt; to be God or create a path to God. The state church became both.

There can be reasonable observation that the Age of Reason is still with us today in that the atheistic culture grew from this time. We are at a place now that many in academia, government and the arts possess the worldview that truth can only come from what science tells us. Many in the Church have the same worldview. God and His Bible do not represent verification of truth. Granted the Bible is not a science book but the Bible does point to overall observations about our existence. Particularly how life came into existence and our purpose to exists. In fact, the teaching from H.A.S. today is hostile toward people who believe in God and those of us who draw conclusion from the Bible or our faith in God.

It is clear that science can provide answers to how things function. Science has not provided the answer to life’s origin as taught in Evolution. Reading books like “Signature in the Cell” and “Darwin’s Doubt” by Stephen Myer, detail the failing of Evolution to account for the origin of life. Both of these books chronical scientific inquiry and stand in contrast to the “Scientism” of our day. Scientism is the religion and dogmatism of using and interpreting science to support conclusion a person already holds. Scientism holds that the only objective knowledge and reasoning comes through observations found in the material world. All human values come from these observations. There is no spiritual dimension applied to scientism. There is no God of the Bible in their equations.

How many people are being brought-up under the state government religion of H.A.S. that we can refer to as Scientism?

 This time of year, we have high school graduations.

Teachers: Fall of 2018 - Public school employ about 3.2 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) teachers.

Expenditures: 2018-19 for public elementary and secondary schools are projected to be $654 billion. The current expenditure per student is projected to be $12,910.

Attainment 2018-19: About 3.6 million students graduate from H.S.

3.3 million public schools / 0.4 million private

College and University Education: Enrollment 2018-19

Projected - 19.9 million,

higher than year 2000 15.3 million / lower than 2010 of 21.0 million

Females 11.2 million / Males 8.7 million.

Full-time estimated 12.1 million / Part-time 7.8 million

2-year school 6.7 million / 13.3 million will attend 4-year

Undergraduate 17.0 million / 2.9 million postbaccalaureate

 Under age 25 12.3 million / Over 25 7.6 million

 Attainment Projections 2018-19

Associate Degree: 1.0 million / 1.9 million bachelor’s degrees; 780,000 master’s degrees; and 182,000 doctor’s degrees (source).

 <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>

These are interesting facts to review. Over 3.5 million teens graduate from high school looking for a future. The American Dream of the post WWII generation is partially fulfilled when about 70% of these students go to college, be it that about 1/2 of the high school graduates go to a junior college pursuing a two-year degree.

So, all of these teens, decade-after-decade enter into a college education system dominated by H.A.S. These then graduate to pursue careers in government and throughout society taking their H.A.S. teachings with them.

**The Moral Question**

My experience is that people who pursue the state government religion of H.A.S., taunting Darwinian explanations for the presence of life, cannot be moral. I have heard many say that H.A.S. people can be moral. I agree they most H.A.S. people likely do not live criminal lives in the respect of robbing banks, dealing in illegal guns, drugs and human trafficking. However, consider these moral statements:

1. Anyone who supports the on-demand, for the sake of convenience, the taking of innocent life is not moral. Partial birth abortion is not moral.
2. Supporting a welfare-entitled state is not moral.
3. Supporting and pursuing teachings that there isn’t any God is not moral. Morality itself comes from God. God declares what is good, not man. People do not have ~~no~~ morals, or a moral compass outside of God’s Holy Spirit operating in their hearts and minds.
4. H.A.S. leading teachers and spoke persons teach that people are evolution’s happenstance; that people don’t have any purpose and are simply a biological organism that passes through this environment. This is not a positive message for children and thus not a moral teaching. This teaching shouts at the child that they are worthless and destroys their self-esteem.
5. H.A.S. teaching that man isn’t any more than any other animal on earth. This is not a moral teaching. I will say that without God in people’s hearts and minds they tend to act like animals abusing and killing each other. Perhaps this is why H.A.S. people have this view. They know that without God people are equivalent to animals.
6. Therefore, H.A.S. disputes people the opportunity to invite God’s Holy Spirit into their heart to change their lives. By this teaching alone, H.A.S creates an amoral world where death and destruction rule.
7. By denying God, H.A.S. denies love. God is love. There isn’t any love in the world unless God exists. A world without love is not a moral world. The heart without love is without life.

So, we pray for those who have not surrendered to God. We pray for those who deny God’s existence. We pray for those that are under the sway of godless people.

**The Answer, The Response, God’s Witness.**

We Believers have been called to be a ready witness to the world. We are called to be in preparation for the service of God. We are called to be part of The Light and Truth in a fallen world.

Matthew 5:13-14 13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under-foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

 We witness the Light that has come into our hearts.

We witness our personal testimony of the time we surrendered to the Lord.

We witness the day-to-day difference our lives have taken with God’s Holy Spirit leading our lives.

We witness that our lives are a work-in-progress, that we are maturing constantly. We call this maturing process “sanctification.”

We account for the miracles in our lives. This is to reflect upon events in our lives, whether they be small or large, that we saw God’s hand working.

We share God’s Word. Knowing Scripture in a conversational tone is the best way to share God’s Word. We do not have to quote Scripture by chapter and verse number. We need to be able to talk about the truths in God’s Word. Like, God is Love, and God does not want to lose one person. That we are called to love each other and seek forgiveness from God and our neighbor. That we all have free will to choose God. That it is God’s love as the driving force for Him to join us in our humanity and live this life with all the challenges we face. But there is one difference. God as Jesus showed us that it is possible to have victory in this life but only if we surrender to God’s Spirit, thus, “Your will, not mine”, as Jesus prayed to God in the garden of Gethsemane. This is the great teaching from God, not my will but God’s to operate in our lives. This is the moral life. A life that does not have God’s Holy Spirit operating inside is not a moral life. People cannot love their neighbor as God has designed for them unless they love God.

2 Peter 1:2-7

 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;

 3 seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,

through the true knowledge of Him

who called us by His own glory and excellence.

 4 For by these He has granted to us

His precious and magnificent promises,

so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

 5 Now for this very reason also,

applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

AMEN