

## GENERAL HUMANIST BELIEFS

*This information was gathered from a humanist website [www.portlandhumanists.com](http://www.portlandhumanists.com). Bill Jack challenges us as Christians to know our audience and to be prepared for spiritual conversations by trying to learn ahead of time what answers or questions the other side might come up with. One of the first steps in doing this is researching the beliefs of the different worldviews, or belief systems. Since Bill's first "interviewee" in his next session will be a humanist, this information will enable you to have a better idea of what this man's presuppositions are.*

Humanists believe in a scientific, rather than a supernatural or divine, explanation for how we all (plants, animals, planets, stars, galaxies) got to where we are.

Humanists believe that people are capable of both good and evil all on their own, and we work hard for the good.

Humanists believe it is our purpose to become our very best selves, take care of each other, and to take good care of the planet where we live. We act this way not to earn some eternal reward, or to avoid some eternal punishment, but because it's ethical.

Humanists believe that intelligence and reason form the underpinnings of a deliberate and integrated life.

Humanists don't believe in angels, all the animals in a boat, astrology, Atlantis, auras, bigfoot, divine birth, faith healing, heaven, hell, life after death, the Loch Ness monster, miracles, numerology, original sin, people living 900 years, rising again after three days, sacred tortillas, Satan, spirit journeys, or walking on water. We know others are excited or comforted by these notions, but they exist only because people want them to.

We explain "faith healing" and "miracles" as further examples of the Percival Lowell phenomenon. Lowell looked through his telescope at Mars, about a hundred years ago, and saw canals. He mapped them, wrote (in 1906) about the intelligent life that created them, and, as you might expect, caused a sensation.

The canals were created, as we now know, by an

intelligent being, but it was Lowell, imagining more than he saw, who was the creator of the Martian canals. For Humanists, this is a perfect parallel for all the talismans of organized religion.

If you believe that religion has a good message (Be good to each other.), but you have trouble with all the prejudices, (Women can't be priests; gays and lesbians are inherently evil.), silly explanations (Rainbows are God's promise about floods.), or convoluted logic ("The Bible is the word of God." "How do you know?" "It says so in the Bible."), you may already be a humanist yourself.

There are millions of people out there who share our beliefs, who are already humanists, without knowing it.

People generally discover they are humanists, rather than seek the path toward humanism. It's not something they create or invent; it's something they discover.

For most of us, that discovery-- that there are many others who shared our reasonable, but not-quite-mainstream beliefs-- was wonderful.

A fundamentalist Christian, when asked about Humanists, once referred to us this way,

"Oh, them. They're good for all the wrong reasons." We'll take it.

Consider this: Two people are out on a lovely spring morning, taking a walk together.

One says, "Isn't God's (or Allah's, or Jehovah's or Wakontonka's) work splendid?"

The other (the humanist) is the one who says, "Isn't the world a lovely place!"

What some believe is the manifest proof of existence of God, we simply see as the world we live in.

*Now take on the challenge of researching atheism and the New Age Movement as these are both predominant secular worldviews of our day. Once you have learned about their beliefs, be sure to research areas in your own faith to make sure you know what you believe and why.*