ORGANIZED HUMANISM IN CANADA AND THE NETHERLANDS

ORGANIZED HUMANISM IN CANADA AND THE NETHERLANDS:

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL COMPARISON

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis compares organized humanist organizations in Canada and the Netherlands. Using a grounded theoretical approach, three fundamental research questions are addressed: (1) Why has organized humanism been much more successful in the Netherlands than in Canada?; (2) Why is Dutch humanism informed by an inclusive ideological orientation, while Canadian humanism is militantly anti-religious?; and (3) Is there a relationship between success and ideological orientation? Using a number of socio-historical and internal-organizational factors, the study suggests that the success of the Dutch movement is, in part, indebted to the long humanist tradition in the Netherlands stretching back to the sixteenth century. Secondly, the pillarization of Dutch society along ideological lines during the late nineteenth century influenced the development of a distinct humanist pillar following the end of the Second World War. Along with the confessional pillars, humanists in the Netherlands were able to secure financial assistance from the state, encouraging an inclusive, non-confrontational ideological foundation for Dutch humanism. In comparison, Canada lacks a strong irreligious tradition and maintains a fair degree of neutrality between church and state. As a result, Canadian humanists have not received any form of subsidization from the state. Organized humanism in Canada was heavily influenced by the militantly anti-

clerical British rationalist movement and developed largely around Dr. Henry Morgentaler's controversial fight for abortion rights during the late 1960s. As a consequence, Canadian humanism is anti-religious in its orientation. By developing humanism into a practical alternative to the church, Dutch humanists have enjoyed greater success than their Canadian counterparts. However, given the tremendous decrease in religious affiliation in both Canada and the Netherlands during recent decades, the comparatively small numbers joining the ranks of organized humanist movements suggests that this non-theistic worldview does not serve as an attractive alternative to traditional religious expressions.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A favourite saying of humanists in the Netherlands is "Een humanist is geen god, maar god mag best humanist zijn", or "A humanist is not a god, but god could be a humanist". Dutch humanists do not believe that mankind is omnipotent. However, generation upon generation of Netherlanders have literally carved this tiny nation out of the North Sea, demonstrating the marvels of human ingenuity. Indeed, while Dutch humanists do not see themselves as gods, mankind's most profound expressions--be they as practical as a dyke or as awe-inspiring as the paintings of Rembrandt--are so tremendous that it is sometimes difficult to believe that they are the products of mere flesh and blood. Marvelling at the sublime achievements of men and women throughout the ages, Dutch humanists believe that if there is a god, he or she must certainly look upon mankind's accomplishments with feelings of joy and benevolence.

1.1 SETTING THE STAGE

The intellectual development of contemporary Western social thought involves the belief that over the course of the last two centuries our theologically-based worldview has been fragmenting rather precipitously. The

French sociologist and philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) believed that his generation was witnessing the demise of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and he detailed the evolution of the positivistic worldview out of the theological and metaphysical stages (1975: 200).

Decades later, another prominent French sociologist, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), noted a similar move away from traditional religious expressions. In The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912), Durkheim writes: "In a word, the old gods are growing old or already dead, and others are not yet born" (1973: xlvii).

Borrowed from the German poet Friedrich Schiller, Max Weber's (1864-1920) discussion of Entzauberung, or "Disenchantment" describes the move away from religion in Europe during the last century. "The fate of our times", Weber wrote, "is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and above all by the "disenchantment of the world"", whereby "the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life" (1946: 155). In Weber's view, a scientific and technical Weltanschauung was undermining our traditional horizon of meaning.

Like Comte, the Viennese psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) asserted that the advances of modern science would lead us to reject our dependency on religion. In The Future of an Illusion (1928), he suggests that in the contemporary world, "religion no longer has the same influence that it used

to" (1961: 38) and compares faith in a supernatural entity to a "childlike neurosis" (1961: 53), an addiction which science will eventually help us to discard.

In a dramatic expression of this idea, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) announced that "God is dead" (1982: 95). Nietzsche believed that the Judaeo-Christian Weltanschauung was exhausted and that the advances of modern science and technology were forcing the Western world to reject its outmoded myths. "What are the churches now", Nietzsche asks in The Gay Science (1882), "if they are not the tombs and sepulchres of God?" (1982: 96).

More than any other commentator of his time, Nietzsche realized that the "death of God" holds tremendous implications for what it means to be human. As Friedman points out, "there are real, inescapable consequences of the "death of God"", for we can no longer "cling to the same old values when the relationship to reality that has undergirded them has atrophied or disappeared" (1965: 499). In plain terms, the "death of God" ultimately raises the problem of meaning for humankind (Sorokin, 1946: 207; Gilkey, 1970: 80-1; Friedman, 1972: 13; 1974: 14).

This rather abstract discussion has been played out in more concrete terms and on a much more contemporary stage. Perhaps the most fascinating issue commonly addressed by sociologists interested in religious questions is

the secularization debate. In A Rumour of Angels (1969), Peter Berger suggests that

> If commentators on the contemporary situation of religion agree about anything, it is that the supernatural has departed from the modern world. The departure may be stated in such dramatic formulations as "God is dead" or "the post-Christian era". Or it may be undramatically assumed as a global and probably irreversible trend (1969: 1).

While few would perhaps go as far as Nietzsche's dramatic proclamation, a long line of commentators has argued that organized religion plays a diminished role in contemporary Western societies (Barrett, 1962: 25; Luckmann, 1963: 160; Wilson, 1966: 43; Roubiczek, 1969: 22; Gilkey, 1970: 76; Tillich, 1987: 2).

On the other hand, many scholars have taken exception to the secularization thesis (Collins, 1982: 31; Cox, 1984: 20; Stark, 1989: 416). Generally speaking, the argument from this camp is that while organized religion has undergone some tremendous changes during the modern era, it has by no means suffered the ignoble fate predicted by Comte and others. Andrew Greeley, for instance, suggests that "religion has managed to persist in the modern world" and anyone supporting the secularization thesis must "be held to explain the survival of religion in the midst of the crisis which is alleged to have been destroying it in the past decade or, depending on the observer, century" (1972: 13).

Hans Mol agrees with Greeley and goes on to suggest that human life is informed by a transhistorical "sacralizing tendency" (1976: 8). In light of the quintessential role that values play in our lives, sacralization processes may be temporarily frustrated, but they will never disappear (1976: 7).

Sociologist Reginald Bibby sheds some light on the complexities surrounding the secularization thesis. In Fragmented Gods--The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (1987), Bibby comments on the relative stability of formal church affiliation in contemporary Canadian society (1987: 46-7), while acknowledging a rapid decrease in weekly attendance rates for the mainline denominations during the last half-century (1987: 11). According to Bibby, during recent decades our once-coherent religious spectrum has become "fragmented". He suggests that

> Modern industrialization and post-industrialization have seen neither the death of conventional religion nor the inroads of new religious expressions. But the nature and role of religion has been radically transformed. The gods of old have neither been abandoned nor replaced. Rather, they have been broken into pieces and offered to religious consumers in piecemeal form (1987: 85).

A study recently published by the Environics Research Group suggests that large numbers of Canadians are rejecting traditional forms of worship such as church attendance and prayer, in favour of new expressions of spirituality. The study found that only 44 percent of Canadians "think that belonging to a religious group is important". Fifty-nine percent of the

respondents agreed with the statement: "I am not a religious person, but I am a spiritual person". Almost half of those surveyed (46 percent) "do not believe in traditional religions". Finally, a full 83 percent "say a belief in God is a personal matter and church attendance is not necessary to prove one's faith". The authors of the study conclude that "Canadians are moving away from religions based on theology and denominational identification, and toward a view of religion as an inspiration for moral and ethical behaviour" ("Globe and Mail", Dec. 7, 1993: A11).

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address the secularization debate fully, the latter forms the frame of reference against which the present discussion unfolds and, in addition, indicates some of the key theoretical issues which have led to our interest in organized humanism.

Many of the themes discussed above are entirely consistent with the fundamental assumptions of the humanist worldview. Organized humanism may be viewed as a response to the "death of God"; as an attempt to struggle with the disenchantment of the world, undoubtedly one of the most striking themes of the modern era.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

During the five-year Nazi occupation (1940-5), a group of prominent Dutch intellectuals decided to form some sort of foundation or league to

represent the increasing number of unaffiliated people in the Netherlands. Humanitas and the Dutch Humanist League (Verbond) were founded in the aftermath of the Second World War. The Verbond was recognized as a non-theistic alternative to the churches and was given the same legal status as Protestant and Catholic churches in Holland. Humanitas was responsible for developing practical welfare projects for the irreligious community and focused mainly on social work programs for the humanist movement. The overall aim of these organizations--which developed independently of one another--was to provide a comprehensive range of social programs for the irreligious community on a par with the service branches of the confessional organizations. The founders of the Dutch movement viewed humanism as a secular alternative to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Compared with other irreligious organizations of its kind, the Dutch humanist movement is large and very complex. In the Netherlands, humanist counsellors work in hospitals, prisons and the armed forces. Dutch humanists also teach non-theistic ethics in public schools and have their own university. Today the movement is supported by approximately 100,000 individuals. The movement constitutes approximately 1.42 percent of the large unchurchly community. More importantly, it is interesting to note that close to 25 percent of Netherlanders support in principle the aims and objectives of the Dutch humanist movement.

Organized humanism in Canada, on the other hand, developed largely around Dr. Henry Morgentaler's fight for abortion rights which began in the late 1960s. The Humanist Association of Canada has never had more than approximately 500 members and has experienced a fair amount of instability over the course of its brief history. Unlike the Dutch, Canadian humanists do not offer anything in the way of secular, non-theistic counselling or education programs. In fact, Canadian humanists typically view religion and its various functions with great disdain. Combining the Association's membership with the circulation of the quarterly periodical, "Humanist in Canada", the movement makes up approximately .03 percent of the Canadian Religious None category.

This dissertation addresses the following three questions: 1) Why has organized humanism been less "successful" in Canada than it has been in the Netherlands? 2) How can we account for the difference in "orientation" between the Canadian and Dutch humanist organizations? Specifically, why does the Canadian movement assume a militant anti-clerical stance, while its Dutch counterpart has formed its own secular "pillar" by utilizing the same legal privileges available to the churches? 3) Finally, is there a discernable connection between the first two questions? In other words, are Dutch humanists more "successful" as a consequence of their practical ideological "orientation"?

"Success" may be measured in terms of: 1) the size of the membership in relation to the size of the Religious None category; 2) the range of services and programs offered to the humanist community; and 3) the extent to which the surrounding society is familiar with the humanist alternative.

This question is complicated by the fact that divergent ideological orientations may lead irreligious organizations to define "success" in different ways (Campbell, 1972: 42-3). In other words, the stated goals of the Canadian humanist movement may be distinct from its Dutch counterpart.

We would argue that the aforementioned criteria for success are admissible for our comparison between organized humanism in Canada and the Netherlands. Not only do Canadian humanists frequently complain about their small numbers. More importantly, as we shall see, the Humanist Association of Canada does not meet many of its formally stated objectives.

When speaking of "orientation", we are referring specifically to the ideological assumptions underlying the respective movements and the ways in which these considerations influence the structure and operation of the organizations in question. Colin Campbell (1972) suggests that most irreligious organizations fall into one of two categories: "abolitionist" or "substitutionist". Movements belonging in the former category demonstrate strong anti-religious sentiments and consciously avoid the church model on an organizational level.

Substitutionists, on the other hand, are generally less hostile to religion and tend to pattern themselves after the churches.

With respect to the possibility of a relationship between the first two factors, we are interested in establishing whether or not the ideological assumptions ("orientation") informing a particular organization significantly influence its overall "success".

In order to evaluate our principal research questions, two distinct sets of factors will be considered: socio-historical and internal-organizational.

Insofar as "socio-historical" factors are concerned, throughout the dissertation we will be looking at formative historical events and intellectual influences, in addition to important structural factors which have either facilitated or significantly compromised the emergence of a viable humanist tradition in the countries under consideration.

With respect to "internal-organizational" factors, we will be looking at the way in which the humanist movements under examination are organized and function. In part, this will involve a consideration of the demographic background of Canadian and Dutch humanists. Within this category, we are concerned solely with the movements themselves, as opposed to the external historical and structural influences upon their development.

The Dutch humanist movement is large and very complex. It consists of Humanitas and the Verbond, in addition to the smaller projects

initiated through their mutual co-operation. In referring to the "Dutch humanist movement" we are making statements inclusive of the aforementioned organizations. In cases where our data pertain only to one particular organization within the larger movement, this is clearly stipulated in the text.

The main focus of our analysis deals with the Dutch Humanist League (Verbond). While Humanitas focuses exclusively on the provision of secular welfare projects, the Verbond represents the intellectual centre of the movement and is responsible for formulating humanist policies on topical social and political issues. In ideological terms there is little difference between the two organizations with the exception that Humanitas has very little interest in the philosophical foundations of humanism and with its open membership is perhaps even more inclusive than the Verbond.

The Humanist Association of Canada and the national periodical "Humanist in Canada" constitute the two pillars of the Canadian movement. Although they are formally independent of one another, there is a great deal of overlap between them and very little separating them on an ideological level. As the "Humanist in Canada" serves as the main forum for discussion regarding the Association, we have relied heavily on the journal for details concerning the fortunes of the HAC. All references to the "Canadian humanist movement" are inclusive of both the national Association as well as the periodical. Where our

data is relevant to one organization and not the other, this is acknowledged in the text.

1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

A number of commentators have suggested that the Religious None category (individuals without formal religious affiliation) represents an underexplored and potentially rich area for research (Vernon, 1968: 221; Veevers, 1990, 77; Schlenker, 1992: 308).

Considering the area of irreligion specifically, we find even fewer landmarks to guide our way. Two decades ago, sociologist Colin Campbell commented that "research on the subject is negligible and a body of literature hardly exists" (1972: vii). According to McKillop, the situation has not changed significantly since Campbell first noted the lack of research in this field (in Stein, 1985: 85).

The situation appears to be even worse when it comes to the study of humanism. Beverley Earles acknowledges that "organized humanism has been almost entirely overlooked by scholars of religion" (1989: i). Tielman, the leading authority on organized humanism today, notes that social-scientific research in the area is virtually non-existent (1987: 9).

In Toward a Sociology of Irreligion (1972), Colin Campbell suggests that when we evaluate the various expressions of unbelief, we must begin by

considering "the differences in the social and cultural settings in which the response emerges" (1972: 36). He furthermore claims that "one of the main tasks of a sociology of irreligion is that of discovering the circumstances which lead to the emergence of one of the forms rather than the other". The ideological and organizational contrasts between them are important, Campbell argues, "being significantly related to variations in the socio-cultural structure in general" (1972: 24-5).

Even within the humanist tradition itself, one comes across a fairly wide range of formal expressions. As Earles points out,

> the relative importance of any given mode of expression has varied according to both the particular stream of humanism involved as well as its particular place and time in the history of the movement worldwide (1989: 453).

This dissertation, comparing Dutch and Canadian humanist movements, represents a modest contribution to the underdeveloped field of literature dealing with organized irreligion. The history of organized humanism in Canada has never been documented, and literature comparing humanist organizations in different socio-historical settings is very sparse.

Our research questions emerged directly out of concerns expressed by prominent members of the Canadian humanist movement during early phases of the research. Justification for comparing Canadian and Dutch humanist organizations can be found in the fact that members of the former

frequently complain about the poor showing of their organization ("HiC" (45) 1978: 46-7; "HiC" (75) 1985/6: 32; "HiC" (77) 1986: 38; "HAC NL" (3) 1991: 3-4).

During the late 1970s, then-Association President Larry Pinkus alluded to a puzzling paradox. Reflecting on the swelling ranks of Canada's Religious Nones, Pinkus comments that "more and more people are humanists; more people have the courage to declare themselves humanists; yet our organization is not growing in proportion" ("HiC" (42) 1977: 16).

Paul Kurtz, founder of the Coalition for Democratic and Secular Humanism and Co-President of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, appears to be thoroughly bemused by the "failure" of the humanist movement in North America ("HiC" (91) 1989: 7). "If the humanist outlook is a deep trend of modern culture", Kurtz remarks, "why do not more people identify with it? Why do there seem to be so few adherents willing to stand up and be counted?" ("HiC" (64) 1983: 21).

One manner in which to address this question would be to compare the Canadian movement with a relatively successful humanist project: the Dutch humanist movement, which, according to Earles, is "by far the most developed in the western world of humanism" (1989: 303).

1.4 SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

In Varieties of Unbelief--Atheists and Agnostics in English Society 1850-1960 (1977), sociologist Susan Budd chronicles the rise and fall of the various irreligious organizations formed in England beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Budd's work represents an important contribution to this field insofar as she recognizes that the fortunes of irreligious movements have often been compromised by a lack of ideological clarity. In many of the movements she studied, Budd noted confusion as to

> whether they are secular religions, however defined, or pressure groups on behalf of the non-theological. Are they social or psychological substitutes for religion, alternatives to it, or modes of transcending and overcoming it? (1977: 266-7).

Unlike the approach chosen for the present study, Budd evaluates the various shades of irreligion principally in terms of their respective ideological orientations--what we have chosen to call the internal-organizational level of analysis. While the ideological realm forms an important component of our research, we are also interested in establishing the socio-historical factors which have influenced the formation of widely divergent irreligious responses.

In "The Faith Dimension of Humanism" (1989), a dissertation completed in the area of Religious Studies, Beverley Earles provides a comprehensive overview of organized humanism on an international scale.

Largely descriptive in presentation, Earles' thesis provides the reader with an appreciation for the wide variety of humanist movements around the world.

Earles briefly discusses the Canadian humanist movement, though by her own admission information concerning the small organization in Canada was "sketchy" (1989: 291). While she devotes a fair amount of attention to humanist organizations in the Netherlands, given the nature of her inquiry, it is difficult to do more than provide an introduction to this large and very complex organization.

In terms of her principal thesis, Earles makes the fairly obvious point that humanism qualifies as an expression of faith; that the "common ground of conventionally defined religious and secular traditions is faith" (1989: i).

Her thesis runs into difficulty once she begins her discussion of humanism's so-called "cumulative tradition", defined as "that deposit of practices, institutions, views and concerns which successive generations both appropriate and create in the process of living" (1989: 56-7). Earles maintains that within the humanist tradition one finds readily identifiable cognitive, social, ethical, experiential, mythical and ritualistic components (1989: 92).

While some of the more successful humanist organizations in the West may have well-defined "cumulative traditions", it is clearly the case that many of them do not, and, furthermore, that the absence of a viable "cumulative

tradition" may account for their overall lack of success. This point will be illustrated when we analyze the fortunes of organized humanism in Canada.

In his introduction to Toward a Sociology of Irreligion (1972), Campbell notes that "no tradition for the sociological study of irreligion as yet exists and this book has been written in the hope that it will help to stimulate the development of just such a tradition" (1972: vii).

Campbell's efforts are largely restricted to a description of the various irreligious movements covered in his study. Focusing on organizations in Britain and the United States, he considers the development of the secularist, positivist, ethical and humanist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1972: 45).

Campbell's work was helpful in terms of making sense of some of the major differences between organized humanism in Canada and the Netherlands, and we will have occasion to employ his conceptual distinctions later in the study.

However, while Campbell's typologies proved to be very useful, it is our intention to go beyond them. More important than the general classification of the Canadian and Dutch humanist movements will be our attempt to account for the many differences between them through an examination of the factors outlined earlier in the chapter.

The year 1985 saw the publication of The Encyclopedia of Unbelief, edited by Gordon Stein and issued in two large volumes. This work contains references to the historical development of the various irreligious movements around the world as well as to the key thinkers and personalities responsible for establishing these traditions. In most cases, individual entries were written by leading members of their respective organizations.

Much of the encyclopedia's historical data regarding "unbelief" in Canada and the Netherlands was helpful in preparing this study. However, this reference guide was published by Prometheus Books under the direction of Paul Kurtz, who is a militant secular humanist. Consequently, the encyclopedia reveals a pronounced bias in favour of the American freethought tradition and tends to underemphasize the development and contributions made by organized humanism.

As a consequence, in the section describing "Unbelief in Canada" less than one full page of text is devoted to the organized humanist movement. Moreover, Brian McKillop records some fairly crucial errors in this brief discussion (in Stein, 1985: 84-5). Similarly, the author of the entry entitled "Unbelief in the Netherlands" devotes less than half a page to the Dutch humanist movement.

Most of the work completed in this area focuses on the philosophical dimensions of irreligion, rather than on the history of the various organizations

that have developed over the last two centuries. Representative of this approach is Tad Clements' doctoral dissertation, entitled "A Critical Examination of the Premises of Humanism" (1962).

Focusing primarily on the scholarly contributions of thinkers Corliss Lamont, John Dewey, Morris Raphael Cohen and Roy Wood Sellars, Clements has written a comprehensive philosophical study wherein he examines the domain assumptions of "naturalistic humanism". Clements' work served as an useful guide for understanding the metaphysical foundations of this secular Weltanschauung.

A great deal less helpful than Clements' rigorous examination of humanism's domain assumptions is philosopher Gerald O'Brien's doctoral thesis, "A Concept of Man in the Humanist Tradition" (1971). Like Clements, O'Brien is chiefly concerned with the theoretical dimensions of naturalistic humanism, promising "to present the ideas of those who write of humanism strictly from the viewpoint of its philosophical principles" (1971: 5; 8).

A point in O'Brien's favour is his sensitivity to the fact that humanism, like any other intellectual tradition, is reluctant to challenge its core assumptions. Along these lines, O'Brien is critical of Corliss Lamont's characterization of this intellectual tradition. The fact that Lamont's humanism

> proceeds from "an ultimate faith in man" is unsafe ground for someone committed so thoroughly to the supremacy of reason. Lamont's presentation of humanism appears too dogmatic to sustain

> the humanistic assertion that he makes of "unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions, including its own" (1971: 9-10).

Having noticed this discrepancy, it is puzzling to find O'Brien suggest later in the thesis that one of the defining characteristics of naturalistic humanism is that it avoids making assumptions about human nature. The humanist inquiry is "founded on no preconceived idea of the nature of man", O'Brien notes, and "the sources for its validity and verification are not in any closed system of a priori ideas. The sources are rather in observation" (1971: 57).

However, at the beginning of his study O'Brien himself remarks that naturalistic humanism makes the "assumption that man by the very fact of his existence is worthy of dignity". He notes also that humanism presupposes a "belief in the freedom of man to choose his own way" and that "man's first responsibility" is to "develop his potential to the full" (1971: 21-2). This contradiction in O'Brien's work assumes even greater importance when one considers that he is a trained philosopher examining ontological questions.

Perhaps the best known work in this field is Corliss Lamont's The Philosophy of Humanism , which has undergone many reprints since it first appeared in 1949. In this work, Lamont traces the development of the humanist intellectual tradition and provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of its basic assumptions.

If it cannot be classified as a "religion", Lamont suggests that humanism must at least fulfil some of the functions traditionally provided through the churches. In the society of the future it will be necessary to establish rituals and ceremonies that are consistent with the central themes of humanism:

> Such ceremonies should appeal to the emotions as well as the minds of people, capturing their imagination and giving an outlet for their delight in pomp and pageantry ... The average family in a humanist civilization will also need wedding and funeral services based on a nonsupernatural philosophy of life (1990: 276-7).

Yet another informative introduction to the secular worldview is Jaap Van Praag's Foundations of Humanism (1982). Although he devotes some space to a brief description of the rise of organized humanism in the Netherlands, Van Praag, founder of the Dutch Humanist League, is more concerned with an examination of the philosophical foundations of humanism.

Of particular interest is the manner in which he is able to identify his approach as "nonreligious humanism" without framing this orientation in purely negative terms. "Humanism", Van Praag notes, "is a conviction characterized by an attempt to understand life and the world and to act in it based on human capabilities and directed at everyone's self-determination in a common humanity" (1982: 56). This definition is characteristic of the Dutch approach to

humanism: while implicitly "nonreligious", it is defined in terms of what it affirms (*self-determination*) rather than what it denies (*theism*).

Finally, Paul Kurtz's Forbidden Fruit (1988) provides the newcomer to humanism with a helpful introduction to non-theistic ethics. In the opening chapter the author asks:

> If all moral systems are products of human culture and if we remove the self-deceptive faith systems that sanctify them, is it still possible to lead an authentic and ethical life in which a responsible morality can be developed? Can we build new secular ethical communities? (1988: 17).

Not surprisingly, Kurtz is convinced that we can develop a secular ethical code to replace the outmoded transcendental systems common to the world's prominent religious traditions. "We should seek to transform a blind and conscious morality into a rationally based one", he argues, "retaining the best wisdom of the past but devising new ethical principles and judging them by their consequences and testing them in the context of lived experience" (1988: 18).

1.5 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Given that very little research has been conducted in this field, my investigation is largely exploratory in nature. With this in mind, I have chosen to follow the basic outlines of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theoretical approach.

From this perspective the sociologist is instructed to "study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, "relevancies" in concepts and hypotheses" (1967: 33). Consistent with this methodology, my own work began with a set of questions which were not formulated until I had spent nearly a year "in the field".

Although other research directions could have been chosen for this dissertation--an evaluation of humanist organizations using "New Social Movement" (NSM) theory, for instance (Canel, in Carrol, 1992: 46)--I felt that the lack of substantive literature on organized humanism made an exploratory study the logical choice. Having modestly expanded the foundations for research in this field, the next step might involve a more deductive analysis.

The difficulty inherent in a deductive approach--where the researcher is committed to a particular theory prior to the investigation--is that he or she inevitably forfeits "theoretical sensitivity". According to Glaser and Strauss, the sociologist must be willing to consider facts which call into question his or her pet theory. By trying to force them into a particular theoretical paradigm, sociologists often compromise the richness of their data (1967: 46).

"Grounded" theory emerges directly from the data and must be supported by them (1967: 5). Potential research hypotheses are developed inductively and remain open to revision at all times. Given that the emphasis is

on theory "generation" as opposed to "verification", this approach is well-suited for exploratory research.

Initially, my intention was to prepare a small-scale comparative study of the local humanist group and Hamilton's Unitarian congregation. To this end, I spent a number of months gathering data from both groups. However, members of the Humanist Association of Hamilton-Burlington spent a great deal of time lamenting their small numbers, and this led me to question the stability of the group as well as the feasibility of a study of this sort.

I decided to attend a national humanist conference held in Toronto during the summer of 1992, in order to find out whether this instability was common to other humanist chapters. A number of European humanists also attended this conference, and I was told of the successes of the Continental humanist movement. It was at this point that I began to entertain the idea of a comparative study between humanist organizations in Canada and the Netherlands. Following consultation with my advisor, I decided to revise the direction of my thesis to its present course.

C. Wright Mills noted the important role that history plays in sound sociological analysis: "all sociology worthy of its name is historical sociology" (1959: 146).

My approach to the historical dimension of this study was strongly influenced by Weber's essay, "The Logic of Historical Explanation" (1906). In

this paper, Weber notes that "causal adequacy" involves a creative juxtaposition of historical events and influences. The "imaginary experiment" allows us to hypothesize that

> if a particular historical fact were thought of as absent from a set of historical conditions, or as present in a modified form, this would have caused historical events to proceed in ways which were different in certain definite, historically important respects ... (1978: 113).

A comparison between the Canadian and Dutch contexts with respect to the presence or absence of particular historical and structural factors has enabled me to make certain "judgements of possibility"--"statements about what "would" have happened if certain conditions had been eliminated or altered" (1978: 119).

Some commentators have noted that historical comparisons between similar societies are more useful than comparisons involving highly divergent social orders (Etzioni and DuBow, 1970: 9-10; Bloch, in Etzioni and DuBow, 1970: 41). In the present case, however, it was necessary to find an example of a relatively successful humanist movement with which to contrast the Canadian organization. While a study comparing Canada with England or the United States might have been preferred from the point of view of methodological orthodoxy, the equally poor showing of organized humanism in those nations would not provide a suitable contrast to the Canadian milieu.

In addition to many months of archival and historical research, an integral component of this project involved fieldwork both in Canada and abroad.

Participant observation is a form of research involving a period of intense social interaction between the sociologist and his or her subjects in the milieu of the latter (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 5).

Shaffir, Stebbins and Turowetz (1980) provided me with a useful guideline for conducting my fieldwork. The authors suggest that experience within a particular social setting be coordinated around four stages (Shaffir et al., 1980: 7). First, there is the challenge of accessing the field setting, or "getting in" as the authors call it. Following this, the sociologist must concentrate on "learning the ropes": developing the skills necessary to "play one's role while there".

Next, he or she must devise working strategies to maintain "the several kinds of relations involved". Following sufficient data collection, the researcher must focus on "leaving the setting". The last stage involves extrication from the group and hopefully, by way of appreciation, some objective insights passed along to the membership to help them understand themselves better (1980: 111).

The idiosyncrasies present in different research settings ensure that any discussion of a single, authoritative methodological approach strains credulity (Wax, 1971: 20; Georges and Jones, 1980: 41). In situations where we participate with our subjects at close range, the field method must demonstrate a great deal of flexibility. Interactive contexts are always dynamic and demand on-going negotiations between three interdependent components: the researcher, his or her clients and the constraints of the setting itself (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973: 144; Georges and Jones, 1980: 67-8).

1.5.1 Fieldwork Experience

My involvement with organized humanism in Canada dates back to September, 1991, when I began attending monthly HAHB (Humanist Association of Hamilton-Burlington) meetings at McMaster University. During the last two and a half years, I have made three presentations to the local humanist group.

The first paper, entitled "Nietzsche's Challenge to Humanism" was delivered in February, 1992. Part of this presentation involved a clarification of my research interests which had been requested by the HAHB Executive. In November of the same year, I discussed "Humanism in Europe", based on the results of my fieldwork in the Netherlands during the previous summer. In October, 1993, I presented an overview of Reginald Bibby's latest attempt to

diagnose Canada's contemporary religious scene. The title of this discussion was "Unknown Gods: The Implications for Organized Humanism in Canada".

I have taken part in two Annual General Meetings of the Humanist Association of Canada. The first one, held in Toronto during the month of June, 1992, was co-hosted by the Coalition for Secular and Democratic Humanism. In June, 1993, I presented the results of my surveys at the Annual General Meeting held at Carleton University in Ottawa.

In July, 1994 I participated in an international Humanist conference in Toronto, which was organized by the Coalition for Secular Humanism, Atheism and Freethought and the Humanist Association of Canada.

I officially joined the Humanist Association of Canada in January, 1993, so that I would be allowed to attend the Executive Meeting held in Burlington during the same month. I was also given permission to attend the first meeting of the newly-elected Executive held in Ottawa during the summer of 1993.

At the first of the two aforementioned meetings, the President and the National Executive of the national organization agreed to finance a general survey of the membership. I was charged with the responsibility of designing two short questionnaires. The "McTaggart" and "Association" surveys were mailed out to the entire membership on the 18th of March, 1993.

The "McTaggart" survey (see Appendix D) was designed to provide a basic demographic outline of the national membership. In addition to questions regarding variables such as age, education and political affiliation, I included five attitudinal statements concerning religious issues. The return rate for the "McTaggart" Survey was 58 percent (N=417).

The National Executive asked me to design the "Association" survey (see Appendix D) in order to identify humanists who might be interested in volunteering their services to the movement. This survey included questions regarding occupation, skills and the respondent's willingness to become involved with the activities of the national movement. The National Executive also allowed me to include a list of substantive humanist issues. Respondents were asked to identify themes for the national organization to focus on or which were of interest to them personally. Respondents were also encouraged to comment on ways to improve the organizational strength of the movement. The return rate for the "Association" survey was 54 percent (N=417).

My formal acquaintance with the humanist movement in the Netherlands began in the summer of 1992, when I was introduced to Dutch sociologist Robert Tielman at the Annual General Meeting in Toronto. Tielman was President of the Verbond for ten years and is currently one of three Co-Presidents of the International Humanist and Ethical Union. Following our

discussions in Toronto, Tielman agreed to assist me with my research on the Dutch humanist movement.

Over the course of the last two summers (1992 and 1993), I have spent more than two months conducting research in the Netherlands. In addition to interviews with prominent Dutch humanists and lengthy discussions with Tielman at his home in Vianen, I attended three humanist conferences while in Europe.

At the end of July, 1992, I took part in the "International Humanist and Ethical Union Fortieth Anniversary Congress--Humanism for Head and Heart", held in Amsterdam. In August of the same year, I attended "Humanisms Today", an academic conference held at the University for Humanist Studies in Utrecht.

During the summer of 1993 I travelled to Berlin in order to take part in an international conference hosted by the European Humanist Federation and the International Humanist and Ethical Union. The conference theme was "East-West Dialogue on Democracy, Humanism and Human Rights", and it was attended by many humanists from Eastern Europe, the majority of whom were meeting their Western counterparts for the first time.

While overseas, I was invited to observe two Executive meetings: the 1992 Board Meeting of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (Amsterdam); and the 1993 Board Meeting of the European Humanist

Federation (Berlin). In July, 1994, I participated in the Executive meeting of the International Humanist and Ethical Union in Toronto.

Although a substantial amount of information regarding humanism in the Netherlands is available in English, in order to complete a more thorough examination, it was necessary to have some materials translated from the Dutch. The majority of this work was completed by Ms. Ine Wauben, a visiting graduate student. Last summer (1993), Ms. Eva Baars, a student at the University for Humanist Studies in Utrecht, translated two short journal articles. The translated materials are identified in the bibliography.

In addition to the my own fieldwork, including a number of interviews and the two surveys, much of the information concerning the fortunes of the Canadian humanist movement was drawn from back issues of the "Humanist in Canada" and Humanist Association of Canada Newsletters.

With respect to organized humanism in the Netherlands, I made use of written materials gathered at European humanist conferences, back issues of "International Humanist", and numerous interviews with prominent Dutch humanists. For much of the historical background on the Verbond, I am particularly indebted to Flokstra and Wieling's Humanistisch Verbond 1946-1986: de geschiedenis van het humanistisch verbond (History of the Humanist League) (1986). For demographic details concerning the Verbond, I made use of Cramer's membership study, "Komen and Gaan" (Coming and Going) (1990)

and Tielman's brief introduction to Doorn and Bommelje's maar ... men moet toch iets wezen (But ... You Must be Something) (1983).

1.6 FORMAT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the second chapter, we chronicle the rise of organized irreligion over the last two centuries. Following this, we outline the humanist intellectual tradition in particular and examine its fundamental assumptions.

In Chapter Three, we take a look at the history and development of the Canadian and Dutch humanist movements. We will see that the activities of the Canadian movement have been limited to the creation of a number of local humanist groups and the distribution of a national humanist periodical. On the whole, the movement has experienced a great deal of instability over the course of its twenty-five year history and has remained very small.

Tracing the history and development of organized humanism in the Netherlands in the second half of the chapter, we will see that Humanitas and the Verbond approach this lifeview in a manner which is very distinct from the Canadian movement. Dutch humanists have organized an impressive array of counselling and educational programs for the unchurchly community in the Netherlands, the majority of which are subsidized by the state.

In Chapter Four, we examine the Canadian and Dutch socio-historical contexts. Due to a number of factors, Canada has not provided an

environment conducive to the establishment of a strong tradition of irreligion. Secondly, we will see that despite fairly high levels of church affiliation and continuing interest in "meaning" questions, the Canadian religious landscape has experienced a serious "fragmentation" during recent decades, providing the humanists with an excellent opportunity for increasing their ranks.

Looking at the Dutch socio-historical context in the latter half of the chapter, we will see that from the sixteenth century Holland has provided a secure foundation for the rise of organized humanism. Following the division of Dutch society into a set of ideologically-based pillars during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a large non-confessional community developed which the humanists were eventually able to exploit by creating their own irreligious bloc.

In the fifth chapter, we examine the two movements in terms of important internal-organizational factors. We will see that humanists in Canada have not met the goals which they have set for the Association and that the movement has been unable to create a positive secular tradition which can be passed along to future generations of humanists.

On the other hand, by focusing on the practical dimension of their worldview, humanists in the Netherlands have developed their pillar into a successful secular alternative to the confessional blocs and have managed to

achieve the goals which they set for themselves during the closing years of the Second World War.

In Chapter Six, we will see that a profound distaste for organized religion has prevented the Canadian movement from fashioning humanism into a contemporary alternative to the churches. As "abolitionists", the Canadians are preoccupied with the criticism of religion and concentrate their energies on the philosophical rather than the practical dimension of humanism.

By utilizing the same legal privileges offered to the churches, humanists in the Netherlands may be classified as "substitutionists". Working within the pillarized structure of Dutch society, they have developed humanism into a relatively successful alternative to traditional theistic meaning systems.

In the last chapter, we will return to our original research questions before making some conclusions regarding humanism in general. While the Dutch approach has indeed been more successful than the "abolitionist" posture characteristic of the Canadian movement, we will see that organized humanism's inability to make significant advances amongst the growing numbers of Religious Nones in the West can be traced to some very fundamental problems with this non-theistic Weltanschauung.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HUMANIST TRADITION

In this chapter we introduce the humanist tradition by addressing four distinct themes. The first section examines the intellectual roots of humanism. The second section traces the development of organized irreligious movements over the last two centuries. This is followed by an overview of prominent irreligious organizations around the world. The final section outlines humanism's primary philosophical assumptions.

A precise description of this intellectual tradition is made rather difficult by the fact that the word "humanism" has been given to many diverse expressions over the centuries and is open to a wide variety of interpretations and definitions (Clements, 1962: 8; Campbell, 1972: 17-18; 91).

With regard to its etymological origin, the term humanism comes from the Latin root humanus, derived from the Latin homo, or man. In broad terms, humanism would indicate any approach or intellectual discipline intimately connected with the study of man (Clements, 1962: 4).

2.1 HUMANISM: INTELLECTUAL ROOTS

Beverley Earles makes a helpful distinction between two fairly common expressions of humanism. The form with which we are principally concerned--organized "Humanism" (in this instance denoted by the upper case)--emerged in Western Europe and North America in the aftermath of the Second World War (1989: 8). Of a number of unique irreligious movements, "Humanism" represents one particular expression.

This fairly recent development must not be confused with the emergence of a much broader current of "humanism" (denoted by the lower case) which describes "the secular or this-worldly, human-centred response to existence which has become increasingly evident in the past three hundred years of Western culture" (1989: 1).

Tracing the intellectual influences on the development of this tradition, commentators have spotted humanist themes in the writings of ancient Chinese philosophers such as Confucius and Lao Tzu ("THA": 1-2). Similarly, humanist influences can be identified in the world of ancient Greece (Earles, 1989: 2). In fact, the central theme of humanism was summed up by Protagoras 2.5 millennia ago in his dictum: "Man is the measure of all things"" ("H": 1).

The rudiments of the humanist worldview were carried over into the literature of the early Roman Empire, as witnessed in the works of thinkers

such as Cicero, Lucretius, Pliny the Elder, and the Stoics, Seneca and Marcus Aurelius (Earles, 1989: 3-4).

In the West, the worldview of the Middle-Ages was dominated by Christianity and the omnipresent Church. This situation remained largely unchanged until the Renaissance. The rediscovery of the classical tradition was due in large part to the twelfth-century Muslim scholar Averroes, who was responsible for reviving the West's interest in the works of Aristotle. The rediscovery of the Aristotelian tradition demonstrated that in addition to the worldview of medieval Christendom, there was a plausible "this-worldly" way of understanding reality (Earles, 1989: 4).

When speaking of the Renaissance, we are referring to the distinctive intellectual tradition which emerged in Italy during the fourteenth century and later spread to the rest of Europe. According to Lamont,

> Renaissance humanism was first and foremost a revolt against the other-worldliness of medieval Christianity, a turning away from preoccupation with personal immortality to making the best of life in this world .... For the Renaissance, the ideal human being was no longer the ascetic monk, but a new type--the universal man--the many-sided personality, delighting in every kind of this-worldly achievement (1990: 19-20).

Some of the most famous expressions of Renaissance humanism have been preserved in the visual arts. Italian painters such as Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Titian, and Tintoretto combined Christian mythology

with an intense interest in the details of the mundane world (Lamont, 1990: 20).

It was during the sixteenth century that the term "humanism" first came into wide use. Initially, it was used to designate the writers, scholars and artists of the Renaissance whose work reflected a preoccupation with the richness and complexity of earthly existence (Lamont, 1990: 12).

The European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century clearly advanced the secular cause and in turn carried with it the seeds of the scientific revolution, which has dramatically transfigured the modern world. With the first stirrings of the French Enlightenment we witness

> the questioning of traditional doctrines and values, a tendency toward individualism, and the emphasis on the idea of universal human progress, the empirical method in science and the free use of reason ("THA": 1-2).

In the eighteenth century, men such as Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau were influential spokesmen on behalf of iconoclastic, secular themes. In the next century, among the heirs of the Enlightenment tradition were the likes of J.S. Mill, Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx and Charles Darwin (Earles, 1989: 4-5).

Returning to Earles' distinction between the two primary expressions of humanism, it is important to note the qualitative difference between Renaissance "humanism" and the contemporary "Humanist" movement. During

the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Renaissance humanism developed largely in the spheres of art and literature. As science began to establish itself in European universities beginning in the seventeenth century, many humanists expressed hostility towards the narrow empiricism of the new Weltanschauung. As we shall see in greater detail below, the scientific method clearly underlies the foundations of the contemporary "Humanist" movement. Historically speaking, however, the relationship between "humanism" and science involved a substantial degree of ideological tension.

2.2 THE RISE OF ORGANIZED IRRELIGION

According to Colin Campbell, "irreligion" can be defined as

> a reaction or alienative response to the established religion. More specifically, irreligion is those beliefs and attitudes of hostility or indifference to the prevailing religion, together with indications of the rejection of its demands (1972: 21).

Irreligious social movements appeared for the first time during the nineteenth century. The late 1800s witnessed "the irreligious reformation, when opposition to religion was most apparent and most widespread" (Campbell, 1972: 89).

The movements that we will consider necessarily reflect a variety of ideological and organizational emphases, for they are "the product of the search of men in particular times and places to link together the ideas available to them and the dilemmas which bear upon them" (Budd, 1977: 7). However, we would note that two guiding assumptions appear to have informed all of the irreligious organizations over the last century and a half.

The negative assumption is that orthodox religious claims are mistaken and that they have had a deleterious impact on the world. The positive assumption is that reason, rather than dogma, can help men and women recover from this predicament and begin to shape their own futures (Budd, 1977: 8-9).

At this point we begin our examination of the dominant irreligious movements which began to take shape in Europe and North America during the nineteenth century. We will see that while some movements have been sympathetic to organized religion and its functions, others have taken a strong anti-religious stance.

2.2.1 Secular and Freethought Traditions

Secularism, in Britain, was the most influential irreligious movement of the nineteenth century. It predated both the positivist and ethical culture movements and had a far greater impact on contemporary society (Campbell, 1972: 46). In England, nineteenth-century secularism played an integral role in the radical political tradition. Indeed, the secularists' views on religion were simply an extension of the radicalism which they had previously demonstrated on the political front (Campbell, 1972: 46). The movement was constituted mainly by members of the working classes (Campbell, 1972: 51; Budd, 1977: 81; 274).

Largely the creation of two prominent freethinkers, George Jacob Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, the secularist movement protested against the omnipotence of the Church of England, maintaining that the latter represented the interests of the higher classes and reinforced the disparity between rich and poor. Calling for a social order based on the fundamental

equality of all men and women, secularism inherited the total radicalism which first emerged on the European scene with the coming of the French Revolution (Campbell, 1972: 46).

Secularism represented a code of duty for those individuals who could no longer subscribe to outmoded theological precepts. Secularists called for the material improvement of the human condition, using science and technology. Furthermore, they believed that ethical behaviour was an end in itself and did not depend on a higher power (Holyoake, in Stein, 1985: 613-4).

In the decade between 1851 and 1861, approximately 60 secularist groups were formed in Britain (Campbell, 1972: 49), culminating in the formation of the National Secular Society in 1866. The membership of the National Secular Society reached its peak of roughly 4,000 during the mid-1880s and then began to decline rapidly. Less than a century later (1963), fewer than 600 people were affiliated with the national organization (Budd, 1977: 1). The National Secular Society is affiliated with the International Humanist and Ethical Union to this day.

Outside of the United Kingdom, the equivalent of secularism is commonly known as the Freethought tradition. In the United States, freethought journals started to appear as early as 1820. Between 1825 and 1850, roughly twenty irreligious periodicals were published. Around the same time, a number of enthusiastic infidel societies began to take shape. Most of

this activity took place in the urban areas on the eastern seaboard, in large cities such as New York and Boston (Campbell, 1972: 57-8).

The majority of American freethinkers were lower-class radicals, tradesmen and common labourers. Industrial activity developed rapidly following the war of 1812, resulting in the emergence of an underprivileged urban proletariat. It was among this class that freethought societies first appeared in New York during the early 1820s (Campbell, 1972: 57-8).

Influenced by the secular themes which inspired the French Revolution (Campbell, 1972: 57), the American freethinkers called for a society based on the principles of equality and fraternity, and the elimination of outmoded superstitions from the minds of men and women (Stein, 1985: 247).

The freethought tradition in the United States enjoyed two distinct waves of popularity. The enthusiasm of the 1820s had dissipated by the early 1850s, at which point the movement began to suffer a severe decline in membership (Campbell, 1972: 59). However, the appeal of this movement was revived once more during the late years of the following decade. Led by the charismatic lecturing of radical freethinkers such as Robert Ingersoll, American apostasy experienced its finest hour. The period of greatest freethought activity in the United States stretched from 1860 until the turn of the century (Stein, 1985: 692).

The free thought tradition was also firmly established on the Continent during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Belgium, the Free University of Brussels (founded in 1834) served as an influential bastion of liberal thought. And in 1865, the Ligue de l'Enseignement Belge was formed in order to fight for the formal separation of church and state.

In the following year, the Ligue Francaise de l'Enseignement was established in Paris, and was dedicated to the preservation of the secular ideas of the French Revolution. Yet another important organization founded in the nineteenth century was France's La Libre Pensée. Organized in the weeks leading up to the 1870 commune de Paris, this group was comprised of political radicals, Marxists, and fervent anarchists, most of whom were militantly anti-clerical as well as anti-religious ("IH" (1-2) 1993: 8).

A Freethought movement was formally organized in Sweden around the turn of the century (1888), and a smaller group had been established in Finland even earlier (1877). During the 1930s, another fairly militant organization--the Union of Freethinkers--was established in Helsinki (Earles, 1989: 252-4).

In 1881, Ludwig Buchner established what was to become the largest European freethought movement of its day, the Deutsche Freidenker Bund. In late nineteenth century Germany, the church represented the interests of the bourgeoisie and was seen as an enemy of the nascent working class,

which developed its own politically-minded freethought organization based on socialist principles ("HiC" (99) 1992: 35). By 1930 the German League had over 650,000 members, although Hitler banned its operation when he came to power in 1933.

Italian freethinkers lacked a formal irreligious venue until the year 1944, when the Centro Coscienza was founded in Rome. This fairly small anti-clerical group continues to maintain affiliational ties with the International Humanist and Ethical Union to this day.

Outside of the developed countries, only India witnessed the rise of formal irreligious organizations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Hindu Freethought Union operated from 1875 until 1894, and the militant Atheist Centre was established in the year 1941 (Tielman, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 295).

The various freethought organizations were linked through the World Union of Freethinkers, formally established in 1880 (Earles, 1989: 258; Tielman, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 295).

2.2.2 The Positivist Tradition

The European Positivist movement was inspired by the writings of French sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who envisioned a new "religion of humanity" based on the rigorous employment of the scientific method. The

anarchic aftermath of the French Revolution warned the more prescient members of the French intelligentsia against the dangers of radical secularism. Thus, it was in France especially that the nineteenth century was marked by a proliferation of substitutes for Christianity (Campbell, 1972: 62-3). The popularity of the movement was limited to France and England and never rivalled the strength of the secularist ranks.

One of the striking differences between the nineteenth century secularist and positivist movements was the distinctly middle-class composition of the latter. The small positivist movement in Britain contained many university professors, teachers, physicians, attorneys, and students (Campbell, 1972: 68). In addition to the core of wealthy professionals and independent craftsmen, the British upper class was also well represented in the positivist movement (Budd, 1977: 199).

In terms of its ideological orientation, the positivists attempted to bring together two antithetical worldviews: the scientific and the theological. While predicting that positivism would eventually replace theological and metaphysical meaning systems, Comte's "religion of humanity" was nevertheless based on the traditional religious model, including a secular priesthood (Campbell, 1972: 43).

The first positivist society located outside of France was founded in London in 1867. The number of committed positivists in Britain never

numbered more than roughly one or two hundred at any time (Budd, 1977: 199). Combining the positivist membership in France and England, the total number of adherents never climbed above 2,000 (Simon, in Campbell, 1972: 67). In the year 1898--after which the movement's fortunes began to decline rapidly--there were a total of nine positivist centres spread across England (Campbell, 1972: 67; Budd, 1977: 199). Currently, only one positivist society is known to exist--the Centro Positivista do Parana in Brazil, which holds an Associate Membership with the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

2.2.3 The Free-Religious Tradition

Another irreligious movement founded in 1867 was the Free Religious Association, organized in the United States under the direction of an ex-Unitarian minister named Francis Ellingrove. Although it remained small, the Association eventually established some roots in Britain and the rest of Europe. Taking a much less militant stance than the secularists, the movement represented a counter-attack upon scepticism on behalf of broad religious values, which the exhausted churches could no longer defend (Campbell, 1972: 86-7).

Rather than being a distinctly anti-religious response, the formation of the Association represented little more than a liberal secession from the Christian church. In terms of a guiding philosophy, free-religionists maintained

that reason, unclouded by dogma, must serve as the ultimate authority for mankind (Campbell, 1972: 87).

While its ideology was anti-ecclesiastical and anti-authoritarian, underlying this approach was a desire to promote freedom of religious conscience, evidenced by a strong belief in a universal religious impulse. Rather than jettison the entire religious enterprise the free-religionists eschewed the strict confines of the Christian tradition in favour of a general endorsement of an innate religious instinct (Campbell, 1972: 87).

This group attracted some support from freethinkers, but the majority of its members were former Universalists, liberal Unitarians, progressive Quakers, and Jews. The Free Religious Association was later renamed the Fellowship of Religious Humanists (Campbell, 1972: 87). Like the British National Secular Society, this organization is affiliated with the International Humanist and Ethical Union to this day.

Outside of the United States the most prominent organization of this kind was the Free-Religious Community of Germany (Bund Frei-religioser Gemeinde Deutschland), established in 1859. Although in recent years it has faced dramatic membership attrition coupled with many financial problems, this organization continues to maintain formal ties with the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

2.2.4 The Ethical Culture Movement

Over the course of its history the Ethical Culture movement has been influential in establishing the secular tradition on an international scale. Felix Adler, the son of a prominent Rabbi, started the first Society for Ethical Culture in New York City in 1876. The movement was clearly an urban phenomenon, and in the United States most of its founding members were German-Jewish immigrants (Radest, 1969: 37; 151).

During the latter half of the nineteenth century the ethicists believed that they were witnessing the fragmentation of the Judaeo-Christian Weltanschauung. By claiming that morality can stand on its own without a transcendent referent behind it, they tried to ensure "that the ethical baby was not lost together with the theological bath water" (Campbell, 1972: 74-75).

Not unlike the positivist movement in France and Britain, the ethical culture societies both in the United States and Europe consisted largely of middle-class professionals (Budd, 1977: 255).

In addition to the New York Society, by 1886, ethical groups had also been established in Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Louis. Three years later (1889), the American Ethical Union was formed to coordinate some of the charitable and educational activities of the local groups.

By the turn of the last century, approximately 2,000 people belonged to American ethical societies. By 1930, the membership had risen to nearly

3,300 (Campbell, 1972: 84). During the 1950s, many ethical societies were able to capitalize on the rapid growth of suburban neighbourhoods (Radest, in Stein, 1985: 173). By 1968, there were roughly 30 ethical societies in the United States, with a collective membership of around 5,500 (Campbell, 1972: 84).

Compared to the ethical movement in the United States, its British variant was much less successful. The first English society was established in London in the year 1886. Ten years later, the four London ethical societies decided to form the Union of Ethical Societies, commonly referred to as the British Ethical Union. Between the years 1886 and 1927, 74 ethical societies were founded in Great Britain, although the movement peaked between 1905 and 1910. Membership within the British ethical movement declined sharply during the 1920s and 30s. By 1954, there were only four ethical societies left in all of Britain (Campbell, 1972: 77-83; Budd, 1977: 255). The remnants of the British Ethical Union were absorbed by the nascent humanist movement in the early 1960s.

Around the turn of the century a number of ethical societies had been established on the Continent. An ethical chapter was founded in Vienna in 1902 and slightly earlier in the Swiss cities of Lausanne and Zurich. A handful of small ethical societies were also formed in fin de siècle France (Radest, 1969: 86-7).

The International Ethical Union was formed in 1893 in the German city of Eisenach (Radest, 1969: 89-90). Taking part in its founding were representatives from the United States, England, Germany, Austria, France, and Switzerland. From 1908 until 1932, the International Union held conferences (usually in large European venues) every four years. By 1940, however, nearly all of the ethical communities in England, France, Austria, Germany and Italy had collapsed. The international movement ceased to exist (Radest, 1969: 274). From this point forward the ethical tradition remained viable only in the United States. The American Ethical Union played a key role in the founding of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, which will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter.

2.2.5 The Rationalist Movement

The history of the Rationalist Press Association (RPA) can be traced back to the 1880s and a serious ideological schism within the British secular movement. Unhappy with the latter's preoccupation with political concerns, a group of disgruntled secularists came together in 1899 to form the RPA. The Association was founded by Charles Albert Watts, whose father--also named Charles--had been an influential lecturer on behalf of the National Secular Society. In fact, Watts senior had spent some years in Canada, during which he lectured on behalf of the secular movement. It was the elder Watts who

formally broke ranks with the secular movement, and who, with Charles Albert later founded the new movement (Budd, 1977: 126).

Compared with the broad reformist tendencies of the British secular movement, the RPA limited its activities to promoting the marvels of science through the distribution of inexpensive books and magazines. Unlike many other irreligious organizations, the Association has been unconcerned with questions of social reform (Budd, 1977: 124-5).

Like the positivist and ethical culture societies, the RPA was largely a middle-class movement (Budd, 1977: 125; 131) and could boast of many professors, teachers, and professional scientists within its ranks. From the movement's inception, C.A. Watts did not attempt to establish a strong following among the British working class, but rather, wished to attract members of the middle and higher classes (Budd, 1977: 131).

Unlike many of the other irreligious groups of their day, the rationalists were largely uninterested in "communal" meetings of any sort; consequently, tendencies toward religious ritual were strictly discouraged (Budd, 1977: 131-2).

This tradition can be distinguished from the others through its rigid emphasis on the primacy of the scientific method. Rationalists argue that all beliefs should be subjected to critical examination by a common set of

standards. Both religious and non-religious domains must be evaluated in accordance with the scientific method (Chipman, in Stein, 1985: 531).

In the year of its founding, the RPA had only 65 members. By 1933 the Association's ranks had grown tremendously, as approximately 4,000 people were affiliated with the organization. Some reversals were experienced during the late 1930s, as book sales and the number of subscribers to the Association began to fall (Budd, 1977: 131; 169-70).

Due to a shortage of reading material in Britain during the Second World War, the RPA gained a substantial number of new subscribers and membership peaked at roughly 5,000 in 1947. Over the course of the next decade, the Association's numbers declined rapidly (Campbell, 1972: 88-9). Britain's Rationalist Press Association is currently affiliated with the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

A small rationalist organization (the Union Rationaliste) was established in France in 1930. Members of the Union concentrated on the dissemination of the scientific worldview and fought against the influence of the Catholic Church (Tielman, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 295). In addition, there is a Rationalist Association active in the United States. Both the French and American associations belong to the International Humanist and Ethical Union.

2.2.6 The Humanist Movement

Humanism represents a synthesis of many of the ideas and traditions outlined above and is clearly the most popular expression of organized irreligion encountered today (Campbell, 1972: 90; 94).

Organized irreligion has experienced an evolution from the early English secularist organizations of the nineteenth century, through to the ethical societies, which have in turn given way to the various humanist movements in the present century. Indeed, "Freethought, atheism, agnosticism, scepticism, deism, rationalism, ethical culture, and liberal religion all claim to be heir to the humanist tradition" ("HAC SOP", 1992: 6-7).

Originally the domain of radical Unitarian ministers and academics who referred to themselves as the Humanist Association, the movement originated in the United States during the 1920s. In 1933, the first Humanist Manifesto was published. It was written by Unitarian ministers and professors at the University of Chicago.

In this document, the original signatories outlined the guiding principles of what they called "religious humanism". Never intended to be an official creed, religious humanism was predicated on the notion that the advances of contemporary science make "unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values" and that humankind should focus on improving its condition in the here and now ("HiC" (81) 1987: 28).

Eight years after the Manifesto appeared, the American Humanist Association was formed. The same year also witnessed the publication of the first issue of "The Humanist", the official periodical of the Association. Its first Editor was a Unitarian minister named Edwin Wilson, who later in the same year became the Executive Director of the Association, a position he held for the next twenty years ("HiC" (81) 1987: 28).

In England, the British Humanist Association was formed in 1963. During the 1950s, both the RPA and the Ethical Union found that their respective membership rosters registered dramatic losses. They agreed to a trial merger for a period of five years (Budd, 1977: 177-8).

Two years later, however, the RPA withdrew from the British Humanist Association, ostensibly in order to maintain its charitable status, which necessitated a clear, apolitical orientation. More fundamentally, however, the rationalists recognized that the humanists' aims were in conflict with their own, which were deeper than particular political and social reforms (Budd, 1977: 178-9).

Largely a twentieth century phenomenon, humanism shares a number of characteristics with the irreligious movements preceding it and in many ways simply represents "a fresh response to a changed socio-cultural environment" (Campbell, 1972: 94). However, what is distinctive about humanism is the fact that it contains a strong political dimension (Campbell,

1972: 90-1). While the freethought and secular movements of the nineteenth century also espoused political concerns, they seldom went beyond a rejection of the privileged position of the churches. In the majority of cases, humanists address a much broader range of social issues--everything from abortion and euthanasia to nuclear weapons, tighter gun control laws, and alternatives to capital punishment.

2.3 ORGANIZED HUMANISM TODAY

Today the largest irreligious association in the United States--where formal organization consists of more than a simple mailing list--is the American Humanist Association. In 1991, the Association had approximately 6,000 members and 75 local chapters. In the past, "The Humanist" reached upwards of 25,000 people, but by 1989 the circulation had slipped back to roughly 17,000 (Earles, 1989: 198).

By far the most powerful irreligious organization in the United States and one of the most influential and financially successful operations on the international scene is Paul Kurtz's Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH), which consists of two quarterly journals in addition to a prominent publishing house. Kurtz formed CODESH in 1980, following his dismissal as Chief Editor of the American Humanist Association's journal, "The Humanist". Compared with the more mild-mannered Association, CODESH is

an "avowedly non-religious organization" (Earles, 1989: 105; 152). Today Kurtz's journal "Free Inquiry" has a circulation of approximately 20,000 with about 1,000 of the subscribers living outside of the United States.

In 1976, Kurtz organized The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. Critical of the continuing interest in astrology, faith healing, and New Age religions in contemporary Western societies, Kurtz founded this organization to provide scientific explanations for paranormal claims (1989: 283).

In 1991, the Committee's quarterly journal "Skeptical Inquirer" had over 40,000 readers in 62 countries around the world. Indeed, with the exception of the Norwegian Humanist League, the Committee demonstrated the fastest rate of growth during the 1980s (Earles, 1989: 290).

Founded in 1969, Kurtz's publishing company, Prometheus Books, is currently the largest distributor of irreligious literature in the world. Located in Buffalo along with the rest of Kurtz's secular empire, Prometheus releases approximately 50 new titles every year and in 1994 had nearly 600 titles on its back list.

Earlier in the chapter we referred to the German Freethinkers' League (Deutsche Freidenker Bund), which was banned when the Nazis came to power in 1933. The League was reorganized following the end of the war, and today membership is close to 600. It is interesting to note that close to 400

individuals are employed on behalf of the League as counsellors and teachers. The majority of the freethinkers live in and around the Berlin area. With the support of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, the organization recently changed its name to the German Humanist League (Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands) and is currently aiming to build a strong national organization.

On a per capita basis, the Norwegian humanist movement is one of the largest and most successful irreligious organizations in the world. In Norway, the Lutheran State Church reigns over a small country of 4.3 million inhabitants. Approximately 90 percent of Norwegians are members of the State Church (Nilsen, 1992: 1).

Church confirmation was mandatory under law until 1912. In 1950, a professor at the University of Oslo named Kristian Horn founded the Association for Civil Confirmation, as a secular alternative to the church ceremony. In 1956, the organization changed its name to the Human-Ethical Association of Norway (Human-Etisk Forbund i Norge).

Nilsen points out that the humanist movement in Norway "virtually grew out of an organization started to fulfil the need for alternative ceremonies" (1992: 4). The primary focus of the Norwegian movement is concentrated in the areas of civil baby-naming, civil confirmation, and civil funerals (Nilsen, 1992: 2).

In 1992, more than 1,000 infants participated in humanist baby-naming ceremonies ("BNCN": 1992). In the same year, 4,477 Norwegian teenagers chose civil confirmation ceremonies ("THEAON", 1993: 6). There are currently about 400 civil funerals performed each year, and officiants of the Norwegian league participate in roughly 200 of them ("HFIN": 1992).

Norwegian youngsters are given the option of taking "lifestance education" in school. These courses teach children about the various world religions and philosophies (including humanism) and are offered to all children between the ages of seven and eighteen. Currently, about 5 percent of Norwegian pupils attend these courses.

As the popularity of alternative ceremonies has increased over the years, so has the size of the Norwegian movement. The Human-Ethical Association expanded from roughly 10,000 members in 1980, to 30,000 members in 1985, to a present membership of well over 51,000. Relative to Norway's population, the Human-Ethical Association is the strongest irreligious movement anywhere in the world.

Humanists in Norway receive state subsidies for providing certain social services. Taxpayers are given the option of diverting their Church Tax--if they are unwilling to support the State Church--either to an alternative religion or to non-theistic "lifestance" organizations such as the Human-Ethical Association.

When we look more closely at many of the irreligious organizations around the world, the kinds of social programs they offer fall within three broad categories: 1) secular "rites of passage"--naming ceremonies, confirmation (or coming-of-age) services, secular marriages and non-religious funerals; 2) Counselling services and/or welfare programs; and 3) humanist "lifestance" education in public schools.

Today a number of established humanist organizations provide their respective irreligious communities with secular "rites of passage" such as "naming", confirmation, marriage and/or funeral services. The following irreligious organizations currently provide at least one of the aforementioned services: the Dutch Humanistisch Verbond; the Belgian Humanistisch Verbond; the Norwegian Human-Etisk Forbund; the Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands; Sweden's Human Etiska Forbundet; the Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association; Britain's Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association; the British Humanist Association; the Scottish Humanist Council; the Humanist Society of New Zealand; the American Ethical Union; and finally, the American Humanist Association.

Many irreligious organizations also offer counselling services and/or a variety of secular welfare programs. In the former category we would classify formal or informal counselling in the armed forces, hospitals, or other institutions, while in the latter (welfare) category we are speaking primarily of

programs which target particularly disadvantaged groups. Nations where irreligious organizations currently offer counselling and/or welfare programs include: the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Britain, New Zealand, India and the United States. Kurtz's CODESH was instrumental in founding the American Secular Sobriety Groups back in 1986. These groups provide a non-theistic alternative to the Christian-based Alcoholics Anonymous (Earles, 1989: 281). The American Humanist Association offers a similar program called Rational Recovery.

Humanist "lifestance" education programs offered through the various public school systems currently operate in the following European countries: the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Germany, and Finland, as well as in a handful of English public schools. Of the countries mentioned, only the British Humanist Association must finance this project entirely on its own.

Humanist organizations in a handful of European countries receive subsidies for some of their social programs. Alternative state-sponsored activities are currently provided through humanist organizations in the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, Germany, and Belgium.

Today, the various irreligious organizations around the world are linked through the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). The offices of the IHEU are located in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

One of the important events influencing the formation of the IHEU was the World Union of Freethinkers Congress, held in Rome during the summer of 1949. Holland's Jaap Van Praag, who attended the Congress along with Harold Blackham of the British Ethical Union, noted that the freethinkers "did not appreciate our desire for a more constructive approach to freethought and humanism (a suspected term in itself) and did not seem eager for our affiliation" ("IH" (2) 1992: 2). The militancy of the freethinkers' anti-religious posture convinced Van Praag and others that they had to "construct their own humanist international" ("IH" (2) 1981: 3).

On August 21, 1952, more than 200 freethinkers and humanists came together at the Municipal University of Amsterdam. In the beginning, seven member organizations constituted the Union: the American Ethical Union, the American Humanist Association, the British Ethical Union, the Belgian Humanist League, the Dutch Humanist League, the Indian Radical Humanist Movement, and the Ethical Society of Vienna.

Indicative of the many ideological differences between the various irreligious movements, the founders required fourteen hours of deliberation before they agreed to include both "humanist" and "ethical" in the name of the Union ("IH" (2) 1992: 2).

The presence of an international organization is important in terms of representing the irreligious cause on a world-wide basis. The IHEU has

recognized status with the United Nations (New York, Vienna and Geneva), UNESCO (Paris), UNICEF, the Council of Europe, the European Union and Parliament, and the World Health Organization (Geneva). Furthermore, it facilitates an exchange of dialogue between the different irreligious organizations by publishing the journal "International Humanist" and by convening an international symposium every two to four years ("IH" (2) 1992: 2).

For the most part, the IHEU is supported through contributions from its member organizations. The Union is governed by three co-chairpersons and a Board of Directors. There are four categories of membership designated in terms of the size of the member organizations and their ability to contribute to the functioning of the Union.

Membership in the IHEU has grown substantially since its founding forty years ago. From seven member organizations in 1952, it had expanded to 60 by 1988 ("IH" (1) 1988: 14). Today the IHEU represents 97 irreligious organizations in 35 countries with a total membership of over five million individuals worldwide. More than 70 irreligious journals are published around the world.

In 1991, the European Humanist Federation was founded in Brussels. While the IHEU represents secular organizations the world over, the

European Humanist Federation is an umbrella organization which represents irreligious movements in Europe.

Today irreligious organizations exist in most European nations, notable exceptions being Greece and Portugal. In recent years, the IHEU has accepted member organizations from former Eastern bloc countries such as Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary and has managed to establish ties in a handful of developing nations: Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil, Ghana, Nigeria, and Bangladesh.

Tielman suggests that, generally speaking, countries with strong Protestant traditions have been conducive to the development of irreligious movements stressing the notion of self-determination. In part, this can be explained by the strong theme of personal responsibility encountered in Protestantism, compared with the emphasis on institutional responsibility in Catholicism and the theme of collective responsibility associated with the Islamic tradition (in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 298-9).

2.4 HUMANISM: DOMAIN ASSUMPTIONS

Just as the West has been witness to the emergence of many distinct irreligious expressions over the last two centuries, within the humanist tradition itself it is possible to identify a number of unique ideological themes. In recent decades, the varieties of "naturalistic humanism" have included

ethical, democratic, scientific, religious, and Marxist humanism ("HAC SOP", 1992: 6-7).

In terms of a broad working definition, Corliss Lamont (1949) claims that "Humanism, in brief, is a philosophy (or religion) the guiding principle of which is concentration on the welfare, progress and happiness of all humanity in this one and only life" (1990: ix).

In recent decades, humanism has drifted away from the distinctly "religious" flavour of the 1933 Manifesto, which was influenced by the Unitarian tradition out of which the American movement developed. Paul Kurtz drafted and published a second Humanist Manifesto in 1973. In this document, even though "religious humanism" is acknowledged as a form of naturalistic humanism, religion is no longer "married to the term humanism". Indeed, the closest we come to approximating traditional religion is in the statement that the principles contained within the Manifesto represent "an expression of a living and growing faith" ("HiC" (75) 1985/6: 25-6).

The recently issued Minimal Statement of the IHEU narrows the definition considerably:

> Humanism is a democratic, non-theistic and ethical lifestance which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility for giving meaning and shape to their own lives. It rejects supernatural views of reality ("IHEU GBM", 1991: 19).

Despite the wide variety of influences which have shaped its development, it is possible to identify eight primary philosophical assumptions underlying the contemporary humanist Weltanschauung. Not every individual calling him or herself a humanist will subscribe to these assumptions to the same degree. However, they serve as a useful guideline for assessing the humanist outlook, and may be referred to when we look at the Canadian and Dutch movements beginning in the next chapter.

In terms of basic epistemological presuppositions, humanists agree that: 1) the world is intelligible and knowable. If there are things about the world or human life which we do not understand, it is simply the case that we have not yet developed the scientific tools which will allow us to find out about them. 2) The natural world is the only world. In other words, no other mysterious or supernatural realms different from nature exist (Clements, 1962: 170-1).

3) It follows that humanists reject traditional conceptions of God. Most humanists are either atheists or agnostics. Indeed, the humanist Weltanschauung is predicated on the rejection of transcendental meaning systems.

4) The humanist paradigm is clearly informed by an empirical, rational methodology (Clements, 1962: 171; 363). The scientific method is a

necessary prerequisite for the generation of knowledge, and all accounts of nature must pass the test of scientific evidence (Kurtz, in Stein, 1985: 329).

5) For humanists, moral values neither transcend our earthly existence, nor are they to be considered independently of the circumstances which produced them: values emerge out of the human condition. Due to the fact that they are inherently situational, values possess a historicity, a temporal quality which they share with all phenomena in the natural world. Contrary to traditional religious expressions, for a humanist, ethics is neither unchanging nor absolute.

Insofar as values are grounded in human experience, humanists make a clear distinction between ethics and religion. They are, in other words, entirely separate concerns and are in no way dependent upon one another:

> Humanism sees no need for resorting to supernatural explanations or sanctions at any point in the ethical process .... Human beings can and do behave decently toward one another without depending on the intercession of a third party known as God (Lamont, 1990: 231).

6) Humanists believe in free will. The "self determination" of the individual stands at the very centre of the humanist Weltanschauung. The ultimate goal for the individual should be the full development of his or her personality (Kurtz, in Stein, 1985: 531; Kurtz, in Earles, 1989: 387). Free from the stultifying influences of a capricious God, man is ultimately forced back

upon him or herself and using the powers of reason must discover meaning and purpose in this world.

7) Although the emphasis in humanism is typically placed on the individual, the social order is both real and important. However, society exists largely as a means for creating greater opportunities for individual self-determination. "The humanist concept of a growing, expanding personality, which comes to include social aims and ideals as an integral part of the self", Lamont contends, "cancels the false antithesis of the individual versus society" (1990: 245).

8) Central to the humanist worldview is a strong belief in progress, influenced by the evolutionary paradigm which has informed the various irreligious movements since the middle of the nineteenth century (Campbell, 1972: 94-5). Informed by the Enlightenment intellectual tradition, humanists believe that advances in science and technology will continue and that the powers of human reason will ultimately triumph over religion.

2.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Insofar as it has drawn upon a wide range of artistic and intellectual influences, from Confucius through to the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution, the humanist Weltanschauung does not represent a systematic, tightly defined philosophy. Broadly characterized in terms of its focus on the

ennoblement of humankind, threads of this secular tradition can be found throughout man's intellectual development.

The closing decades of the nineteenth century marked the Golden Age of irreligion. In the West, this period witnessed the rise of industrial working classes coupled with tremendous scientific and technological advances. What began as a protest against the oppressive authority of the churches among lower class radicals evolved into a fairly sophisticated rational philosophy, monopolized by a well-educated elite.

Many varieties of organized irreligion have surfaced over the course of the last two centuries. Some of them have been militantly anti-religious, inspired by a strong dislike for the religious project, while others have been motivated by a desire to replace religion with a more contemporary meaning system.

The humanist worldview in the late twentieth century has moved rather far from it historical roots. From a general concern with the richness of human experience and a celebration of man's protean ability to renew and expand this experience, contemporary humanism has developed into a rational, non-theistic worldview centred around the scientific method.

Having sketched the development of organized humanism and its domain assumptions, we will now turn to an in-depth examination of the rise of organized humanism in Canada and the Netherlands.

CHAPTER THREE: ORGANIZED HUMANISM IN CANADA AND THE NETHERLANDS

In this chapter we trace the development of organized humanism in Canada and Holland. Militant irreligious movements emerged in both nations during the 1800s. However, while there is a fair degree of continuity between Canada's humanist movement and its nineteenth-century predecessors, the contemporary Dutch movement has developed in a very different direction and has enjoyed a much greater degree of success.

3.1 EARLY IRRELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN CANADA

Prior to the establishment of the Humanist Association in the late 1960s, organized irreligious activity in English-speaking Canada dates back to the latter half of the nineteenth century. The earliest known organization of this kind was the Toronto Freethought Association, founded in 1873. Through frequent meetings and their "Freethought Journal", which began publication in 1877, the Toronto freethinkers were dedicated to popularizing evolutionary theory, challenging Christian beliefs, and combating strict sabbatarian laws (Mc Killop in Stein, 1985: 82). Though they eventually changed their name to the Toronto Secular Society in an attempt to attract a broader membership, the

group remained very small and managed to publish only a few issues of their journal before financial restrictions precluded its continuation.

The most prominent freethinker in Canada's history was a man named Marshall Jerome Gauvin (1881-1978). Born in New Brunswick, Gauvin eventually became a devout follower of the burgeoning American freethought tradition and spent many years travelling through the United States and Canada, explicating in dramatic fashion the works of Ingersoll, Darwin, and Thomas Paine. Gauvin visited Winnipeg in 1926, and, once there, encountered a receptive audience, many of them members of the radical labour community. Under Gauvin's direction, the Winnipeg Rationalist Society thrived until the early 1930s, when the Great Depression set in and the "congregation" could no longer support its leader. In order to attract more members, Gauvin changed the name of his group to the Winnipeg Humanist Society in 1933, but interest in this project had by now clearly waned.

In addition to the activities in Winnipeg, small freethought societies also emerged in Saskatoon and Regina. Both, however, had collapsed by the beginning of the Second World War. Among the English-speaking elite of Montreal, the Pioneer Freethought Club (founded in 1880) served as a popular venue for the expression of rationalist philosophy until the early years of the present century, when membership dwindled substantially (Mc Killop in Stein, 1985: 84).

From the earliest days of settlement, the province of Quebec has been steeped in Roman Catholic religious traditions, and the Church has been tremendously influential both socially and politically. Although it was fairly limited, early irreligious activity in Quebec took the form of militant anticlericism, "a response quite common in heavily Catholic countries" (Dubuisson, in Stein, 1985: 86).

Almost a century before the first stirrings of irreligious activity in English-speaking Canada, a series of anticlerical journals and newspapers were published in Quebec, beginning with "La Gazette de Quebec" (1764) and "Le Canadien" (1806). In addition, L'Institut Canadien was founded in 1844 by a handful of French intellectuals who were dedicated to fighting the influence of the Catholic Church in everyday life. Yet another anti-clerical organization--La Ligue de l'Engseignement--was formed a few years later. The League was guided by the demand for a secular public school system, although its efforts were inconsistent in this campaign (Dubuisson, in Stein, 1985: 86).

By the end of the Second World War, Canada was without a single irreligious organization. Posner suggests that there were only thirty known humanists in all of Canada in the years immediately following the war ("HiC" (100) 1992: 12).

The development of the Canadian humanist movement during the present century was preceded by the appearance of liberal religious

organizations. Unitarian congregations in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal grew significantly during the 1950s (Mc Killop, in Stein, 1985: 85). Within the same historical period and regions mentioned--Victoria (as opposed to Vancouver), Montreal and Toronto--organized humanism first took root and remained for many years the focal points of the Humanist Association of Canada.

When speaking of the "Canadian humanist movement", we are referring to the Humanist Association of Canada (HAC) and the quarterly journal entitled "Humanist in Canada" ("HiC"). The Association and the magazine currently form the twin foundations of the organized humanist presence in Canada. As was noted in the first chapter, if we are making a point which is relevant only to one of the two aforementioned organizations, this will be clearly specified in the text.

3.2 "VICTORIA HUMANIST" AND "HUMANIST IN CANADA"

Along with Henry Morgentaler, J. Lloyd Brereton (1901-77) was probably the most influential figure in the early development of the Canadian humanist movement. The latter travelled a long and fascinating philosophical journey before finally embracing humanism.

Raised in a strict religious home in England, Brereton, during his teens, flouted his father's theism by becoming a devoted follower of Darwin's

evolutionary doctrine. After graduating from Cambridge University his interests turned to Marxism, and he became a committed communist, eventually visiting the Soviet Union in 1936. His devotion to Marxism began to wane after six or seven years. At this point Brereton turned to irreligion, inspired by his longtime interest in the Rationalist Press Association's "Literary Guide". Before coming to Canada, Brereton worked as the General Secretary to the Examination Board of Cambridge University ("HiC" (22) 1973: 16; "HiC" (42) 1977: 10-11).

In 1964, Brereton and his wife Menie arrived in Victoria from England. Shortly after joining the local humanist fellowship Brereton began to publish a quarterly journal entitled the "Victoria Humanist", modelled on the RPA's "Literary Guide". The first issue went to the press in the closing months of 1964 ("HiC" (1) 1967: 6).

Noting the success achieved with the "Victoria Humanist", Henry Morgentaler, a young doctor from the Montreal Humanist Fellowship, approached Brereton with the suggestion that the latter distribute the periodical coast-to-coast. Morgentaler agreed to stop printing his own quarterly, the "Montreal Humanist", and the first issue of the "Humanist in Canada" was launched from Victoria in 1967.

In order to obtain charitable status, the new magazine was incorporated as Pacific Northwest Humanist Publications ("HiC" (39) 1976: 16).

All of the writing, printing, and mailing duties for the "HiC" were performed on a strictly voluntary basis.

In terms of a guiding philosophy, the Editorial Board of the "HiC" agreed

> to print, publish, distribute and promote literature with a humanistic content reflecting the principle that human problems can best be solved by human beings relying on their intellectual, moral and social capabilities, disavowing notions of supernatural purpose or design, and affirming that human life has meaning in its own terms ("HiC" (64) 1983: 8).

Due in large part to Lloyd Brereton's untimely death and the eventual demise of the Victoria Humanist Fellowship, in 1983, operations for the "HiC" shifted eastward to Ottawa. Re-incorporated as Canadian Humanist Publications, Don Page and a handful of committed Ottawa-area humanists assumed total responsibility for the contents and distribution of the quarterly journal ("HiC" (62) 1982: 42; "HiC" (66) 1983: 2).

The HAC and Canadian Humanist Publications have remained formally independent of one another, although there has always been a great deal of co-operation and mutual interest demonstrated between the two organizations ("HiC" (45) 1978: 44). The members of the Editorial Board of the "HiC" (the majority of whom are also paid members of the HAC) have final say with regard to all matters concerning "HiC"'s publication.

Generally speaking, the magazine examines and discusses various humanist concerns, while the Association chooses positions on issues in its annual resolutions ("HiC" (79) 1987: 27). Most of the contributors to the "HiC" are prominent members of the "HAC". There is very little ideological difference between the two pillars of the Canadian movement, although one encounters a slightly wider range of viewpoints in the "HiC" (due in part to the fact that it caters to a larger audience) than in the quarterly HAC newsletters, which tend to be more anti-religious in orientation.

In 1969, there were 340 paid subscribers to the "HiC". By 1977 there were approximately 600 readers from coast-to-coast ("HiC" (42) 1977: 10-11). Over the last few years, the number of paid subscribers has risen steadily, and currently stands at roughly 1,000. Today approximately one-quarter of "HiC" readers are also paid members of the Humanist Association of Canada.

Additional data characterizing the "HiC" readership is rather limited. A survey was conducted by the magazine in 1987 for which the return rate was 46 percent. The editors found that 3 percent of the readers were under 30 years of age, 41 percent were between 30 and 50, and 56 percent were over 50. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents had been raised in "religious" households--76 percent reported Protestant backgrounds, and 20 percent Catholic.

Canadian Humanist Publications is an Associate Member of the IHEU and forms an integral component of the humanist movement in Canada. Although there is a great deal of overlap between the HAC and the CHP, it would be difficult to decide which of the two organizations is more important to the national movement. Many of Canada's humanists--thinly spread across this vast country--never actually meet one another. As a consequence, the quarterly journal, "regarded by many humanists as one of the best in the world" (Earles, 1989: 292), ends up serving as the only effective means of communicating ideas and rallying support for the various humanist social causes.

3.3 THE HUMANIST ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (HAC)

Henry Morgentaler has been one of the key players in the rise of organized humanism in Canada. Raised as an atheist by his father (who had abandoned the Jewish faith for socialism during his own youth), Morgentaler was sixteen years old when the Nazis overran his native Poland. He spent nearly five years in concentration camps (both Auschwitz and Dachau), where the majority of his family perished ("HiC" (100) 1992: 11). Following the liberation, Morgentaler emigrated to Canada, attended medical school and settled in Montreal to begin his family practice. Soon after arriving in the

Montreal area he joined the local Humanist fellowship (1963) and became its President in the following year.

The decision to form a national humanist movement was clearly influenced by Morgentaler's involvement in the controversial abortion issue. In his first "HiC" editorial (1967), Morgentaler urged that the struggle against the harmful influence of organized religion in Canada "should be done, preferably, on selected issues such as abortion law reform" ("HiC" (1) 1967: 1).

It no doubt occurred to Morgentaler that his efforts would carry more weight with a nationally established organization supporting him. Indeed, his first brief on abortion law reform, made before the Commons Standing Committee on Health and Welfare (October 10th, 1967), was presented on behalf of the Humanist Fellowship of Montreal and was endorsed by both the Toronto Humanist Association and the Victoria Humanist Fellowship ("HiC" (2) 1967: 12).

Realizing that the appearance of the "HiC" might serve as a catalyst for the formation of a strong national movement, Morgentaler, together with like-minded individuals in Victoria and Toronto, decided to form the HAC.

The formation of the HAC in the late 1960s "coincided fortuitously with the climax of a period of social movement activism in Canada and other capitalist countries" (Carrol, 1992: 2). During these years, the counter-cultural

mentality spread beyond the hallowed halls of the university, though it was clearly rooted in the larger cities: Toronto and Montreal (Levitt, 1984: 46).

The HAC was officially founded on May 4th, 1968 and was immediately given Consultative status with the IHEU ("HiC" (5) 1968: 3). In addition to his editorial responsibilities with the "HiC", which were shared with Brereton, Morgentaler was named first President of the HAC.

In the words of past-President Philip Jones, the HAC was founded in order to represent "the views of humanists, freethinkers, rationalists, and secularists across Canada" ("HAC NL" (3) 1989: 6). The drafting of a formal Constitution and By-Laws fulfilled the conditions set down by federal law and ensured that the HAC would receive charitable status as an "educational" organization ("HiC" (6) 1968: 10-11).

In summary form, the objectives of the Association are: 1) To promote the humanist philosophy through education; 2) To provide Canada's humanists with opportunities for fellowship, study, and service; and 3) To present humanist positions on important social issues (HAC Constitution, 1991: 2).

Overseeing the direction of the HAC is an elected Executive Committee consisting of a President, First- and Second Vice-Presidents, a General Secretary, Membership Secretary, and a Treasurer, in addition to a number of Members-at-Large. The Editor of the "HiC" is also provided with a

non-voting seat on the Executive Committee. Executive meetings take place at least twice a year, and elections for offices are normally held at the HAC Annual General Meeting. The Executive is also responsible for appointing ad hoc committees and designating informal Special Interest Groups as it sees fit ("HAC Constitution", 1991: 1-6).

There are three classifications of HAC membership (1994): 1) "Individual" ($25 per year); 2) "Household" (a minimum of two humanists sharing the same address and costing $30 per year); and 3) "Life" membership (involving a $500 one-time fee) ("HAC By-Laws", 1991: 1). Members are mailed quarterly HAC newsletters and, until recently, also received a copy of the quarterly journal "International Humanist".

Local humanist groups can either be "affiliated" or "associated" with the national organization. "Affiliation" demands that all members of the group also be fully paid members of the national organization. If a particular group chooses to be "associated" with the HAC it must pay the equivalent of a single membership fee for every five members of the local group ("HAC By-Laws", 1991: 3). Election of a voluntary Board of Executives is left entirely in the hands of the local humanist group or association.

The HAC is currently an Ordinary Member of the IHEU. The Association also belongs to the North American Committee for Humanism (NACH), which links the various irreligious organizations on this continent into a

loose union (Earles, 1989: 240). In 1992, together with CODESH and a number of small anti-religious groups, the HAC founded the Coalition for Secular Humanism and Freethought (CSHAFT).

3.3.1 The HAC: Local Group Activity

Prior to the formal establishment of the HAC, three small, independent humanist groups developed in the cities of Victoria, Montreal and Toronto.

The Victoria Humanist Fellowship

In 1956, eight longtime readers of RPA's "Literary Guide" decided to form the Victoria Humanist Fellowship ("VH" (2) 1964: 3). In addition to the voluntary work done on behalf of the quarterly journals, early activities of the Victoria Fellowship involved monthly lectures and discussions regarding humanist themes. Members typically met in a private homes, although in cases where a prominent guest speaker could be secured, larger accommodations were sought and the public would be invited to attend.

Membership in the Victoria Fellowship peaked at around 35 in 1969 ("HiC" (7) 1969: 11). By 1975, the group had collapsed, due largely to the deaths of many of its founding members. In 1987, the late Lloyd Brereton's second wife, Irene, rekindled the Victoria Fellowship, although it maintained an

"associated" rather than an "affiliated" status with the national organization. The latest HAC Newsletter reports that the national organization has not heard anything from this group in some time and that it "may no longer be in operation" ("HAC NL (1): 1994: 20).

The Humanist Fellowship of Montreal

In 1956, Mrs. Strethel Walton and a professor from McGill University named Ernest Posner founded the Humanist Fellowship of Montreal ("HiC" (5) 1968: 20). Beginning with twelve humanists, membership had increased to well over 200 by 1968 ("HiC" (5) 1968: 20).

Initially, the majority of the Fellowship consisted of recently arrived immigrants from war-torn Europe. The Montreal humanists were opposed to the power wielded by the Catholic Church in the province of Quebec. They objected to the denominational basis of public education; the need to swear an oath on the Bible to serve in public office; the exclusion from some public offices on the basis of ethnic origin (Jews for instance, could not serve on either of Montreal's school boards); and finally, the law requiring that an individual must state his or her religious affiliation when receiving hospital care ("HiC" (88) 1989: 20-1).

In addition to the monthly meetings and lectures held in the Stephen Leacock building at McGill University ("HiC" (13) 1970: 16-17), the Montreal

Fellowship also initiated smaller weekly discussion groups in the home of Joy and Bill Chipping, two of the founding members ("HiC" (22) 1972: 19-20).

The most unique aspect of the Montreal Fellowship was the Sunday School service that first began operating in 1957. The Sunday School offered humanist classes into the mid-1970s. At its peak, in 1969, more than 60 children ranging in age from six through to seventeen were supervised by five qualified teachers. The "Junior Program" as it was called, met every second Sunday in a room rented from the local Unitarian congregation. For a small fee children would receive instruction in the areas of comparative religion, situational ethics, and humanist philosophy ("HiC" (6) 1968: 12; "HiC" (10/11) 1969: 16).

Despite its initial success, within roughly two decades the Montreal Fellowship had completely collapsed. Though many of the Canadian humanists are reluctant to speak about past events in Montreal, a significant portion of the demise can be attributed to the abortion issue. Most of the Montreal Fellowship agreed with Morgentaler's philosophical position on the abortion question. However, his many acts of civil disobedience (the fact that he continued to perform "illegal" abortions after he had been charged with contravening the Canadian Criminal Code) found less support. Although numbers rebounded slightly during the late 1970s ("HiC" (42) 1977: 10-11), by the turn of the decade the Fellowship had completely dissolved.

Any chances of reviving the Montreal group (or initiating a new one) were further diminished during the late 1980s when Helen Kiperchuk, editor of the "HiC", issued two editorials in which she complained that the rights of Anglophones living in Quebec were being compromised by the provincial government. These comments generated an angry response from French-speaking "HiC" readers, who complained that the magazine's insensitivity regarding the preservation of French Canadian culture was inconsistent with humanism's professed inclusiveness ("HiC" (86) 1988: 2; "HiC" (87) 1988: 2).

Although a handful of HAC members currently reside in the province of Quebec, the Humanist Fellowship of Montreal has never been revived. In 1984, a group of French-speaking rationalists came together to form La Libre Pensée Quebecois ("HiC" (71) 1984: 27). Through its publication "La Libre Pensée", this movement was dedicated to instituting a secular school system for the province of Quebec. However, the LPQ was dissolved during the late 1980s, leaving French Canadians without an organized irreligious movement.

The Humanist Association of Toronto

From 1961, humanists were active in what was then Canada's second largest city, Toronto ("HiC" (17) 1968: 7). The Humanist Association of Toronto was founded by "a group of people disenchanted with the political, social, and spiritual world around them" ("HiC" (57) 1981: 39). The Association

initially held its monthly meetings in private homes or community centres and periodically organized public lectures at Hart House, located on the University of Toronto campus. By the year 1968, the Association had over 100 paid members although the mailing list for their monthly newsletter actually listed more than 250 names ("HiC" (4) 1968: 13; 18-19).

However, the Toronto Association eventually went the way of the Montreal fellowship. An overall lack of direction or purpose ("HiC" (9) 1969: 16), coupled with the fallout from the Morgentaler affair, resulted in a rapid membership decline during the 1970s. In 1978, the group disbanded ("HiC" (46) 1978: 16). Twelve years later (1990), 23 Toronto-area humanists got together to form a new association ("HiC" (94) 1990: 29). By 1991, the resurrected Association had submitted a new Constitution, rented a room in a local community centre, and requested formal affiliation with the national organization ("HiC" (95) 1991: 30). Today approximately 20 humanists meet each month and typically organize lectures and debates dealing with important secular concerns.

The Humanist Association of Ottawa

The Humanist Association of Ottawa was founded in 1968 ("HAC NL" (1) 1989: 10). Over the short course of the Canadian humanist movement, the Ottawa Association has remained the most stable of all the local groups.

This consistency played a key factor in the decision to transfer the responsibility for the national magazine to the Ottawa area in the early 1980s ("HiC" (64) 1983: 2).

In addition to being home to the production of the quarterly "HiC", Ottawa is also the headquarters of the national organization, involving the maintenance of a post office box and a telephone contact. Aside from a brief decline during the mid-1970s ("HiC" (36) 1976: 37), group membership in Ottawa has remained fairly consistent, fluctuating between 20 and 30.

The Humanist Association of Hamilton-Burlington

With respect to organized humanism in the Hamilton area, on April 5th, 1968, a small gathering of humanists--many of them students and faculty affiliated with the Department of Philosophy at McMaster University--began to meet on a monthly basis ("HiC" (9) 1969: 14; "HiC" (40) 1977: 26-7). It would appear that the group disbanded sometime during the mid-1970s ("HiC" (51) 1980: 32).

In 1989, a new group--the Humanist Association of Hamilton-Burlington--began to hold monthly meetings at McMaster's Ewart Angus Centre ("HAC NL" (2) 1990: 5). In the beginning, roughly 40 people would attend the lecture-style discussions each month, but recently attendance has been consistently lower, attracting between 10 and 15 members.

Disgruntled over the patriarchal tendencies within the Hamilton Association, a few of the female members formed a break-away group during the early months of 1994. Members of the new group currently refer to themselves as the Oakville Humanists. In May, 1994 a special meeting was held to discuss the declining fortunes of the Hamilton Association. At the end of the meeting, Association President David Russo announced his resignation, claiming that he could not agree with the strong anti-clerical stance of the group. Daylene Lumis agreed to take Russo's place, although it would appear that the group's future is far from stable.

McMaster University has some interesting connections with the historical development of the international humanist movement. One of the signatories of the first Humanist Manifesto (1933) was Dr. Eustace Haydon who attended McMaster University at the beginning of the century. Haydon, who eventually became a Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Chicago, returned to McMaster in 1964 in order to accept an honourary doctorate ("TH" (4) 1964: 1).

In 1968, McMaster University purchased the Bertrand Russell Archives ("HiC" (23) 1973: 7). Russell, the prolific British philosopher and social activist, was also a long-time President of the RPA. In 1974, Kenneth Blackwell, the official Russell archivist at McMaster, helped to found the

Bertrand Russell Society which currently belongs to the IHEU ("HiC" (29) 1974: 34).

During the late 1970s, a McMaster professor by the name of John Thomas served as President of the HAC for a brief period. Previously, Thomas had been a longtime advisor on the "HiC" Editorial Board ("HiC" (45) 1978: 27).

The British Columbia Humanist Association

Interest in starting a local organization on the British Columbia mainland was expressed as for back as 1968, when a small group of individuals in the North Okanagan Valley discussed the possibility of forming some type of secular association ("HiC" (45) 1978: 28). However, a group was not formally established until nearly twenty years later (1984), when Gordon and Goldie Rodgers started the Humanist Association of Greater Vancouver ("HiC" (67) 1984: 30).

In 1991, the Executive of the Vancouver Association changed the name of the organization to the British Columbia Humanist Association, as many people were attending the meetings from outside of the lower mainland region ("HAC NL" (1) 1991: 6-7). The Association holds its monthly meetings in the Killarney Community Centre in Vancouver.

Due to the distance separating the humanists of British Columbia from most of the activities of the national organization, this group currently

maintains an "associated" status with the HAC, as did the Victoria Humanists before them. The British Columbia Humanist Association is independently incorporated as a charitable organization. Today, approximately 40 humanists pay local group dues, although many of the members also belong to the HAC.

Recent Additions

In terms of recent additions to the Canadian movement, it should be noted that the Humanist Association of Alberta has been functioning for approximately two years. In the summer of 1993, the Alberta group had roughly 45 humanists, and it is formally affiliated with the national organization. However, the Association's President, Leslie Fauvel, recently resigned, and the future of the group appears to be in question.

Also started in 1992 was the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge-Guelph Humanist Association. Organized by businessman John Draak, this group is also formally affiliated with the HAC and has roughly 40 fully paid members.

3.3.2 The HAC: Local Group Activity (Some General Considerations)

Over the last quarter-century, numerous attempts have been made to initiate humanist groups in other Canadian venues such as Halifax, Windsor,

Sarnia, London, Barrie, Brandon, Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, but not one of these initiatives has met with any lasting success.

According to Joe Piercy, co-editor of the "HiC", at the end of the 1960s, membership in the national Association was somewhere around 500, and the city groups--Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Victoria and Hamilton--were the principal contributors to this success. Very few HAC members were not directly affiliated with a local group ("HiC" (6) 1968: 10-11).

By 1979, however, there were only 77 members in the entire organization, and only the Montreal and Ottawa groups were still meeting regularly ("HiC" (51) 1980: 32). The eventual collapse of the Montreal Fellowship meant that, by 1982, Ottawa was the only group functioning in the entire nation ("HiC" (62) 1982: 49).

This bleak situation remained unchanged until 1984, when the small Humanist Association of Greater Vancouver was founded.

HAC membership has rebounded in recent years and currently stands at about 520. Compared with the late 1960s, however, fewer humanists today belong to local groups. By 1979, only 42 percent of HAC members were affiliated with humanist chapters. Today, the figure rests around 20 percent.

3.3.3 The Canadian Humanist Movement: Issues and Concerns

With respect to the various social issues addressed by the national movement, the most significant has been its support for Morgentaler during his fight for the decriminalization of abortion.

Morgentaler performed his first abortion in his Montreal clinic in 1968. In all, he was charged with performing an illegal abortion (in contravention of Section 251 of the Canadian Criminal Code) on four separate occasions during the 1970s and 80s ("HiC" (75) 1985: 5). Despite the fact that he was acquitted by a jury of his peers in each of the trials, following the first acquittal (October, 1973), Quebec's highest court overturned the verdict, sending Morgentaler to jail for nearly one year ("HiC" (64) 1983: 38).

During the early 1980s, Morgentaler opened free-standing abortion clinics in Winnipeg and Toronto. His fourth and final acquittal was announced in the latter city on November 8th, 1984. It was not until January 28th, 1988, that the Supreme Court of Canada declared Section 251 of the Criminal Code "unconstitutional" (HiC" (84) 1988: 27). In 1988, Morgentaler was presented with the "Distinguished Humanist Award" at the IHEU Congress held in Buffalo ("HiC" (86) 1988: 29).

Through the submission of various briefs and petitions, appearances before a number of government panels and committees, and work with related non-governmental organizations such as the Canadian Abortion Rights Action

League), both the HAC and the "HiC"--at least insofar as the Executive levels are concerned--have been supportive of Morgentaler's cause ("HiC" (88) 1989: 20-1).

Next to the abortion controversy, opposition to public funding for sectarian education has been an issue of great importance to Canada's humanists. The movement has consistently spoken out against all forms of denominational education ("HiC" (74) 1985: 25). The national movement's impassioned opposition to public support for religious education intensified in 1986, when the Ontario Supreme Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Bill 30, extending funding for Roman Catholic education in the province of Ontario through to the end of high school (Pfalzner, in Charlton and Barker, 1991: 406). In 1992, the HAC passed a resolution "reaffirming" its continued fight against a system "fostering discrimination, social divisiveness, exclusivity, intolerance, and indoctrination" ("HiC" (102) 1992: 33).

The HAC also opposes the inclusion of "religious" teachings in the public school curriculum ("HAC NL" (3) 1989: 4-5), as well as the recital of prayers during opening exercises ("HAC NL" (1) 1989: 3). In the estimation of the Association, compulsory religious education neglects the rights of the growing numbers of non-believers, who must be guaranteed freedom "from"--as well as "of"--religion.

Additional items of concern to Canadian humanists over the years have been a variety of "peace" initiatives, including resolutions against American involvement in Vietnam; the use of chemical and biological weapons ("HiC" (13) 1970: 13); cruise missile testing in Canada; and the spiralling arms race ("HiC" (66) 1983: 28).

During the last decade, the HAC has initiated numerous interventions with the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission, calling for balanced programming by restricting the growth of religious broadcasting on television ("HiC" (61) 1982: 16). The HAC has also spoken out in favour of an end to tax breaks for Canada's churches ("HiC" (31) 1974: 37-8).

More recently, the Association has issued resolutions calling for the legalization (and hence, decriminalization) of voluntary, doctor-assisted euthanasia ("HiC" (97) 1991: 34). The HAC has also demanded that all references to God be removed from the Canadian Constitution and the national anthem ("HiC" (100) 1992: 42).

Inclusive of many of the social concerns already discussed is the HAC's general demand for the complete separation of church and state in Canada, based on the American model. Although it has long been the overarching goal of the national Association, in 1980, the HAC passed a resolution requesting that the drafting of the new Canadian Constitution be based on that very principle ("HiC" (54) 1980: 22).

3.3.4 The HAC Membership: Some Demographic Details

As we mentioned in the introductory chapter, "The McTaggart Survey" was designed to provide some basic demographic details relevant to this dissertation. The second project, known as "The Association Survey", contained questions of interest specifically to the Executive of the HAC.

A brief look at the official HAC membership list reveals that nearly two-thirds (60 percent) of the membership reside in Ontario, and another 22 percent live in the province of British Columbia. If we factor in the HAC members currently residing in Alberta, these three provinces account for close to 90 percent of the entire membership.

The two surveys were fairly representative, both in terms of the distribution of membership across Canada and the "sex" variable. Male respondents outnumbered females by more than 2 to 1 (71 and 29 percent respectively).

The mean age of the sample was 57, and the median age was 60. Only 3 percent of the respondents were under 30 years of age, while 33 percent of the humanists sampled were between 30 and 49. Another 28 percent of the respondents were between 50 and 64 years of age. The last category of respondents--those 65 years of age or older--was also the largest; 36 percent of the humanists sampled fell within this category.

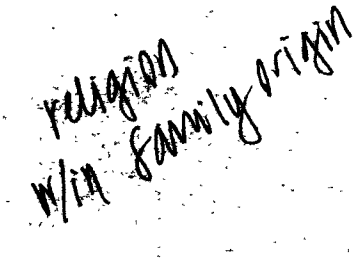
In terms of the education variable, 7 percent of the respondents had completed high school diplomas. 10 percent of the sample had some college or university education. In the largest category, 55 percent of the respondents had either a college diploma and/or a university degree. More than a quarter (27 percent) of the HAC members had earned at least one graduate degree.

More than half (51 percent) of those who had earned either a college diploma or a university degree (undergraduate and/or graduate) recorded a discipline within the pure and/or applied sciences when asked for their principal "area of study".

With regard to "current or past profession/occupation", teaching constituted the largest category: 27 percent of the humanists sampled identified themselves within this profession. Eight percent claimed to be professors, and 5 percent of the respondents were medical doctors.

Although "The McTaggart Survey" included a question concerning personal income, it was difficult to assess this variable accurately. Many HAC members are retired and consequently left this question blank. However, considering the high levels of formal education and the number of professionals who belong to the Association, it is safe to assume that, on the whole, the HAC membership enjoys a relatively high socio-economic status.

Concerning race and ethnicity, 43 percent of the respondents were born outside of Canada. Of this number, 40 percent had been born in the



United Kingdom. Of the humanists born in Canada, nearly half (49 percent) reported that their ethnic background was either English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh--or a combination thereof--on both sides of their "family of origin".

In terms of "religious faith in family of origin", 87 percent of humanists surveyed reported at least some exposure to traditional religious teachings and/or practices during their formative years. The largest denominational categories were: Roman Catholic (21 percent); Anglican (18 percent), and United Church (12 percent).

Only 10 percent of Canada's humanists recorded "no religion". An additional 2.5 percent were raised as "humanists" or "freethinkers" and 1 percent of the sample were raised as "atheists".

With reference to political sentiments, nearly half of those surveyed (45 percent) indicated that they traditionally support the New Democratic Party. Another one-quarter (25 percent) of the respondents were "undecided". Eleven percent of those questioned claimed that the Liberals were consistent with their own political sentiments, and 5 percent reported that they would support the Conservatives.

Compared with the sex ratio for the general Canadian population, we note that men are considerably overrepresented in the HAC.

The membership is also much older than the general population. In addition, significantly greater numbers of HAC members were born outside of

Canada than the general population. Humanists belonging to the national Association are also considerably overrepresented with respect to higher levels of formal education and higher socio-economic status.

3.4 EARLY IRRELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The history of organized irreligion in Holland dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century. The Dutch Freethinkers' Organization (Nederlandse Vrijdenkers)--alternately referred to as De Dageraad--was founded in 1856. The movement was organized under the direction of a German naturalist named Franz Junghuhn (1809-1864) and consisted mainly of radical members of the lower middle class. The formation of the movement was inspired by the appearance of Junghuhn's periodical, "De Dageraad" ("Daybreak" or "Dawn"), first published in 1855.

The most famous Dutch freethinker was E. Douwes Dekker (1820-1877), more commonly known by his pseudonym, "Multatuli" (which translated, means "I have borne much"). Both Junghuhn and Dekker had served with the Dutch East Indies Company, and the latter's experiences were preserved in the well-known autobiographical novel Max Havelaar.

In part, the freethought movement was inspired by the astounding scientific and technological advances of the nineteenth century. According to the freethinkers, science provided man with the ability to understand and

influence nature for the betterment of humanity (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 477).

The freethinkers also addressed important social issues. During its lengthy history De Dageraad has spoken out in favour of: emancipation for Dutch workers; militant pacifism; equal rights for men and women; access to safe birth control; cremation; substitution of a promise in place of the religious oath; and non-religious education (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 477-8).

Forced to disband during the Nazi occupation, De Dageraad reorganized its ranks following the end of the war. In 1957, the freethinkers changed the title of their monthly journal to "De Vrije Gedachte" ("Free Thought") (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 148).

The Dutch freethought movement has consistently maintained socialistic sympathies and is anti-religious in its orientation (Tielman, in Cliteur and Van Dooren, 1991: 294). Today De Dageraad has approximately 1,000 members.

The influence of the Freethought movement in the Netherlands had diminished by the end of the Second World War. Indeed, it was during the war that "the idea of a broad humanist movement, one that would contain many philosophical insights and carry out many practical activities, came to fruition" (Van Praag, 1982: 51).

When speaking of the "Dutch humanist movement", we are referring to the two organizations which were founded in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War--Humanitas and the Verbond, as well as the complex range of specialized humanist organizations and services which have been created by them.

3.5 HUMANITAS

During the Nazi occupation, members of the Social Democratic Labour Party formed a commission to assess the need for social programs designed specifically for the growing numbers of people without religious affiliation--the Dutch call them "Unchurchly" ("Onkerkelijken")--in the Netherlands (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 28).

Prior to the Second World War, many of the social welfare programs offered in the Netherlands were implemented through the churches, and the majority of them were subsidized by the state. With the founding of Humanitas in May, 1945, a variety of alternative, secular services began to take shape alongside the confessional welfare programs. While the Dutch government recognized the new organization, initially no subsidies were forthcoming for its proposed welfare projects (Earles, 1989: 304).

Joris in't Veld and the other founders of Humanitas were prominent members of Holland's Labour Party (PvdA), which was organized in 1946 to

replace the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP). Many of the early members also played key roles in the development of Holland's first secular trade union, the NVV (Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions).

One of the first challenges awaiting Humanitas was the clarification of its relationship to the Humanistisch Verbond. Ideological differences concerning political questions prevented the two organizations from joining ranks. For while the leaders of Humanitas saw irreligion as a synonym for socialistic views (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 29), the founders of the Verbond wished to disassociate themselves from any particular political ideology.

The leading members of Humanitas were invited to the Foundation Congress of the Dutch Humanist League in 1946. At this meeting it was agreed that they would cooperate on particular social issues, while remaining formally independent of one another.

The division of labour between the two organizations is relatively straightforward. The Verbond enjoys the same legal status as Holland's Protestant and Catholic churches. For the sake of simplicity, we may refer to it as the "humanist church". The Verbond is responsible mainly for creating an organization conducive to "bezinning" (reflection on one's fundamental values), humanist counselling (geestelijke verzorging), life-stance education, publicity, and political influence (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 30). Humanitas, on the

other hand, has traditionally focused on developing the social work (maatschappelijke zorg) dimension of humanism.

Humanitas and the Verbond organized separate Executive Boards. Today, there are half-yearly informal meetings between delegates on the steering committees of both organizations, in addition to regular consultations between the managing directors of the main Dutch humanist organizations.

Humanitas adopted an open membership policy in 1948 (Earles, 1989: 304). To become a member it is not necessary to call oneself a "humanist" but simply to support the belief that the individual is responsible for determining the course of his or her life. Members are not forced to accept a formal creed, humanist or otherwise.

The head office of Humanitas is located in the capital city of Amsterdam. There are nearly 100 local and regional branches located throughout the Netherlands. The majority of Humanitas' members live within the Randstad, the highly urbanized ring of cities (including Utrecht, Amsterdam, Haarlem, the Hague, and Rotterdam), in the western provinces of Utrecht and North and South Holland. There is also a considerable concentration of membership in the northern regions of the country.

Each branch is responsible for electing its own Board of Executives. Unlike the local chapters of the Verbond, which meet on a regular basis, within Humanitas , local and regional groups typically meet only to discuss the

organization and implementation of specific community projects. On some occasions, members of Humanitas hold joint meetings with local Verbond communities. Although there is a fair degree of autonomy in terms of the practical activities developed on the community level, regional branches are responsible to the Head Board, which oversees programming and develops new initiatives ("Humanitas", 1992: 1).

Today, Humanitas has approximately 22,000 paid members including some 7,000 volunteers. Approximately 6,000 members also belong to the Verbond. Humanitas has been losing supporters since the early 1970s, when it reached a peak of approximately 37,000.

Supporters of this organization maintain their membership by paying an annual fee of D.fl. 30-. (1993). In return they receive the bimonthly journal called "Van Mens tot Mens" ("From Human to Human"), which describes the activities of Humanitas. Individuals working with the elderly receive their own quarterly newsletter, as do volunteers.

Individuals active on behalf of the organization fall into three distinct categories (Earles, 1989: 305-6; 316). In addition to the administrative staff working out of the main office in Amsterdam (their salaries are provided through the Dutch government), there are 14 consultants (most of whom work part-time) supervising Humanitas' welfare projects. In the majority of cases these

professionals are university graduates of social work programs, and their wages are paid directly by the government.

In addition, there are currently about 2,000 full- and part-time workers implementing the various community projects. Where applicable, their wages are subsidized by the clients themselves, and, in other cases, they are paid directly through Humanitas. In the last category are the volunteers who work alongside the professionals and employed workers.

Although it took many years and a considerable amount of determination on behalf of its founders, today most of the social programs offered through Humanitas receive at least partial funding from the public purse. The organization receives subsidies from local, provincial, and national governments and additional revenues from lotteries, donations and legacies ("Humanitas", 1992: 4).

In order to finance the various projects not covered by formal subsidies, Humanitas conducts fund raising projects of its own. In 1985, the organization raised sixteen million guilders in three months through an extensive television campaign. In the last few years, Humanitas has received a fixed percentage of revenue from the "National Sponsor Lottery".

3.5.1 Humanitas: Social Programs

In 1948, together with the Labour Party, the organization initiated a project called Thuisfront Humanitas (Homefront Humanitas). At the time, Catholic and Protestant clergy in the Netherlands were paid by the state to counsel obligated military personnel in the armed forces. The intention of Thuisfront Humanitas was to provide alternative activities for non-religious soldiers. On November 8th, 1950, a home was opened in the city of Amersfoort, where local soldiers could visit each Sunday rather than attend church services on their base. Less than a year later a second home was opened in Nunspeet (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 83). We will return to this project further on in the chapter.

Until fairly recently (1992), Humanitas offered a successful national counselling service for troubled youths which employed approximately 150 professionals and assisted an average of 2,000 clients each year. However, as a consequence of state-forged mergers, this program is no longer offered.

Currently, Humanitas provides supervised day care for approximately 1,200 children and also offers a "guest parents program", whereby children of working parents are cared for in private homes. The costs of maintaining this program are absorbed directly by the parents themselves. The "guest parent program" provides care for roughly 1,000 children each year. The organization

also runs summer camp programs for children, with a special emphasis on services for underprivileged youths.

Today, one of Humanitas' most important projects involves the provision of welfare programs for mentally handicapped children and adults. The Stichting voor Verstandelijk Gehandicaptenzorg (Society for the Care of the Mentally Handicapped) was founded in 1983. Presently, it operates six accommodations, caring for a total of 127 residents. Within the next year, four more centres are to be opened, providing shelter and care for an additional 100 residents. Humanitas VGZ is also planning to open a centre outside of Rotterdam for people afflicted with severe mental disabilities.

In addition to its involvement with the Humanistic Society for Housing the Elderly, which will be discussed further on in the chapter, Humanitas supervises its own nursing and retirement homes, providing care to more than 2,500 residents. Humanitas also has professionals and volunteers working with the elderly in public hospitals and private homes. The organization has nearly 1,500 paid professionals working with the aged, their salaries provided through contributions from private pensions and direct subsidies from the Dutch government.

Other important social services offered through Humanitas include: 1) financial counselling and money management programs; 2) a counselling service for transsexuals; 3) a support group and counselling service for

Rotterdam's prostitutes; 4) orientation programs for refugees; and finally, 5) bereavement counselling.

Most of the services offered through Humanitas are free, exceptions being the cost of living in the homes for the elderly and the child care program. In order to secure government subsidies, the services of Humanitas are available to all those who requires them, regardless of their age, sex, ethnicity or life style ("Humanitas", 1992: 4).

3.6 THE HUMANISTISCH VERBOND (DUTCH HUMANIST LEAGUE)

In February, 1946, Jaap Van Praag and the other founders of the Dutch Humanist League held their first Foundation Congress. In the face of the "spiritual nihilism" gripping Dutch society following the Second World War, Van Praag identified three principal aims for the DHL: 1) to provide spiritual care for the Dutch "unchurchly" community; 2) to educate and empower this group in terms of important social and political issues; and 3), to clarify the relationship between the newly constituted Labour Party and the League (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 20).

The Central Bureau of the DHL is located in the city of Utrecht. The Verbond is guided by a President (the position is largely honourary), League Director, and a Head Board, consisting of thirteen members. The head office is

divided into six departments, and 38 staff members supervise the activities of the Verbond.

Approximately 60 people are employed by the DHL to oversee its many social programs, and an additional 700 individuals--their salaries paid by the state--are active in schools, prisons, hospitals, the armed forces, and in other community projects ("Verbond", 1992: 2; Tielman, in Cliteur and Van Dooren, 1991: 297). It is important to note that while the state is responsible for the remuneration of humanist counsellors and teachers, and for ensuring that the standard of care is acceptable, the contents of the programs are left entirely in the hands of the League. While the Verbond prefers that its employees belong to the League, it is not a formal prerequisite.

Membership in the Verbond requires that the individual pledge approximately one percent of his or her annual income to the organization (Earles, 1989: 306). For those with restricted incomes, a smaller membership fee can be negotiated with the League. It is also possible to receive the monthly periodical, the "Humanist", without belonging to the Verbond. The magazine may be obtained either by subscription or by purchasing the journal at the local newsstand.

The official publication of the DHL first appeared in 1946 under the title "Mens en Wereld" ("Human and World"). During the 1970s, the title was changed simply to "Humanist". Today, over 17,000 individuals receive the

magazine, and approximately 2,000 of these subscriptions are mailed to people who are outside of the Verbond.

The DHL is organized largely around its many local communities (gemeenschap). Each local group is responsible for electing an Executive Board on a voluntary basis.

Once a year, elected representatives from the different communities attend the Verbond Congress where they formulate and discuss matters of importance to the League. Representatives at the Congress are asked to cast their vote on proposed resolutions, although the Head Board reserves the right to veto any decisions taken by the larger body (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 50).

In 1946, the Verbond had roughly 2,100 members, divided into fourteen communities. Today, there are more than 60 communities located throughout the Netherlands, though the Central Bureau is currently considering a plan to consolidate some of the smaller communities, reducing the total to approximately twenty-five. Most of the League's 15,000 members live within the Randstad.

The local humanist communities, or "departments", range in size from 30 to 50 members in some of the smaller locales in the north and east of the country, up to the largest group--1,350 members--located in the city of Amsterdam ("Verbond", 1992: 2). Between 10 and 15 percent of Verbond members attend local community meetings on a regular basis.

In addition to the local groups, there are five larger Humanist Centres (Humanistische Bezinningcentra), located in the communities of The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht, and Groningen. These centres offer a wide range of activities and programs which attempt to satisfy the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of the humanist commitment.

3.6.1 The Verbond: Counselling Services

During the early 1950s, the Dutch Labour Party and Humanitas agreed to transfer the military project to the Verbond. In 1952, the Thuisfront Humanitas was renamed the Humanistisch Thuisfront (Humanist Homefront). In addition to the soldier homes mentioned above, the Verbond opened a new home in Havelte. Over and above the various recreational activities offered in these homes, drafted military personnel could speak with humanist counsellors regarding personal life issues (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 84-92).

Although the League petitioned the government on several occasions--arguing that they deserved the same privileges granted to confessional counsellors--little financial support was given to the Humanist Homefront until 1956, when the project was granted a small subsidy. Between 1955 and 1958, Dutch soldiers made more than 80,000 visits to the humanist military homes (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 90).

In 1964, the Dutch government agreed to subsidize five full-time counselling positions for the armed forces. By the middle of the next decade, most of the counselling activity took place directly on the military bases themselves. Today, there are 36 full- and part-time humanist counsellors working in the Dutch armed forces, their salaries paid by the Dutch Department of Defence. The program curriculum is designed entirely by the League, and humanist counsellors are responsible directly to the Verbond.

By the middle of the 1950s, the Verbond was also working in the Dutch prison system, where non-religious inmates could request counselling sessions with humanists, rather than with priests or ministers. Volunteers were replaced with paid counsellors in 1968. By 1974, the Verbond prison-care project employed thirteen full- and part-time counsellors, all of them subsidized by the Dutch Department of Justice (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 88-102; Earles, 1989: 314). Today, there are 33 humanist counsellors working in Dutch prisons. Once more, it is important to note that the state does not interfere with the contents of humanist counselling which is left entirely in the hands of the Verbond.

The Verbond also developed a humanist counselling service for Dutch hospitals. By 1959, 50 volunteers in twenty-two communities had been appointed to visit the infirm in private homes and hospitals. Approximately 2,000 patients were visited every year through this service. In 1968, the first

subsidized humanist hospital counsellor was appointed in the city of Zutphen. By 1984, 36 full and part-time positions had been allocated for humanist counselling in the hospitals, all of them state-funded (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 108-12).

Today, when we factor in the counselling positions in nursing homes, psychiatric institutions, and homes for the elderly, a total of 97 individuals are employed in this area. While humanist counsellors in this field are paid by their employers, their salaries are drawn from the national Health Care Fund. In common with the other counselling programs offered through the Verbond, the state does not interfere with the contents of curriculum.

Counsellors who would eventually assume positions in the armed forces, prisons, hospitals, or elderly homes received instruction through the Humanist Training Institute (Humanistisch Opleidingsinstituut) (HOI), located in Utrecht. Founded by the Verbond in 1963, the Institute offered a part-time two year course (later expanded to four years) for the training of humanist counsellors (raadslieden) (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 127). This institution was eventually replaced by the University for Humanist Studies, founded in 1989.

On the local community level, humanist volunteers are engaged in a number of projects, the most important of which is the provision of secular funeral services. In 1993, more than 200 volunteer counsellors supervised roughly 1,500 humanist funeral and cremation ceremonies on behalf of the

Verbond. Bereavement counselling is available upon request (Earles, 1989: 309).

3.6.2 The Verbond: Education

Changes to the national education policy at the end of the 1950s ensured that Dutch humanists would be given an opportunity to teach non-theistic ethics in the public school system.

In 1961, the Verbond organized the Centre for Humanist Forming (Centrum voor Humanistisch Vorming) (CHV), which was given three main tasks: 1) to sensitize teachers to the principles of humanist ethics; 2) to mobilize the support of parents interested in humanist education for their children; and 3), to ensure that the option for "humanist ethical education" (humanistisch vormingonderwijs) (hvo) was available in regions where parents and children desired it (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 120-1).

Although the Verbond petitioned the Minister of Education on several occasions--inspired by the fact that Catholic and Protestant instructors were paid by the state to teach optional religious ethics in the confessional schools--the CHV was not granted full funding until 1977. From that year forward, the training and remuneration of humanist lifestance adult educators (vormingsleiders) has been absorbed by the Dutch government.

With the realization of state support, the Verbond founded the Pedagogical Study Centre (Pedagogisch Studiecentrum HVO) and the Management Foundation (Stichting Beheer HVO) in the early 1980s to supervise the teaching program on a national level and to monitor the employment opportunities for humanist instructors. These two organizations effectively took over the CHV. Today, the latter continues to maintain responsibility only for adult education.

Humanist education has achieved its greatest success at the primary school level, where it is offered to children between the ages of eight and twelve for one hour each week. In its first year of operation (1970), the course was given to 1,155 pupils by twenty HVO instructors. In 1991, more than 300 instructors taught approximately 30,000 pupils humanist ethics in more than 1,000 public schools in the Netherlands (Tielman, "R" 39 (2) 1992: 87).

In 1992, the Pedagogical Study Centre founded a teacher-training program for humanist ethics instruction in Dutch secondary schools. The part-time course takes two years to complete and is currently training 60 teachers, with more than 100 candidates on the waiting list. Organized by Tielman, the course is taught in co-operation with the University of Utrecht, where he is a Professor of Humanist Studies.

A significant development in the recent history of the Verbond was the founding of the University for Humanist Studies (Universiteit voor

Humanistiek) in 1989. Located in Utrecht, this state-subsidized university is responsible for providing academic and vocational training to those who wish to become humanist counsellors in Dutch hospitals, prisons or the armed forces, and replaces the Humanist Training Institute (HOI).

Today, approximately 200 students are enroled at the University, and the first class of professional "Humanisticians" will complete the six-year course in mid-1995. Twenty-eight teachers and six full-time professors of humanist studies are responsible for supervising a combination of course work and practical, in-the-field training.

Another vital dimension of the movement is the Socrates Foundation (Humanistische Stichting Socrates), which was founded by the Verbond in 1950. This foundation is concerned with the promotion of "cultural and academic humanist values" and caters to the intelligentsia of the Dutch movement (Rood de-Boer "R" 39 (2) 1992: 67). In 1954, the Foundation began publication of a quarterly journal entitled "Rekenschap" (meaning "account", in the sense of accounting for one's life), which currently has a circulation of about 1,000 copies. The Foundation also oversees the annual Socrates Lecture, typically given by a prominent member from within the ranks of the DHL.

The Socrates Foundation was responsible for the establishment of ten special chairs at state universities, created to promote discussion of non-theistic belief systems. With the first humanist chair appointed in 1951,

university students have been able to examine a "non-religious approach to life's problems" (Rood de-Boer "R" 39 (2) 1992: 68) on par with the special chairs for Catholics and Protestants. In most cases, the Socrates Professor is appointed for half a day once a week and is expected to have a full-time teaching position outside of this appointment.

3.6.3 The Verbond: Media and Publicity

The Verbond has also managed to establish a secure foothold in the Dutch media. The DHL first began broadcasting radio programs on the VARA (socialist) network on January 20th, 1946. The DHL was also provided with a radio slot through the AVRO (liberal) network and the Frisian-language station (RONO) in the north. In 1963, the Verbond began broadcasting short television shows on the VARA network.

In 1967, the Dutch government agreed to provide the Verbond with a subsidy from the "Watch and Listen Tax". This enabled the Verbond to institute its own independent broadcast firm, the Humanist Broadcasting Foundation (Humanistische Omroep Stichting), located in the city of Hilversum. By the end of the 1960s, an average of 300,000 people listened to humanist radio broadcasts, and more than 600,000 viewers watched the television programs each week (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 130-8).

Today, the Verbond's television audience is much smaller, holding steady between one and two hundred thousand each week. The humanist radio programs currently attract an audience of about 30,000 listeners. The Verbond is given two hours of radio time each week, in addition to its half-hour television spot.

Roughly twenty journalists are employed with the Foundation (Tielman, "R" 39 (2) 1992: 87), which also produces short documentaries and programming designed specifically for children. In many cases the Foundation works in close co-operation with other socially conscious interest groups.

In 1956, the DHL created a special department devoted solely to fund-raising activities. The Steunfonds Praktisch Humanisme (Fund for Practical Humanism) petitions individuals to secure funding for activities not subsidized through state support. The department campaigns for legacies and offers to settle the estates of childless individuals or couples for a small contribution to the Support Fund. In 1992, the Steunfonds raised nearly 850,000 guilders, and currently has total assets in excess of 5,000,000 guilders.

3.6.4 The Verbond: Issues and Concerns

Although the DHL has dealt with many pressing social concerns, from the beginning, issues of war and peace have dominated its agenda (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 179). From a strident rejection of the

government's attempts to hold Indonesia during the late 1940s, to condemnation of the war in Vietnam, and formal requests for bilateral and, later, unilateral disarming, the DHL has revealed its antipathy to armed conflict. The Verbond has also spoken out against the testing and storage of cruise missiles in Europe and the dangers associated with the use of nuclear energy (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 179-88).

Long before it was decriminalized in the Netherlands (1984), the DHL supported a woman's right to seek an abortion in the case of an unwanted pregnancy. And in light of the global population crisis, the League promotes the use of safe birth control technologies, especially in the developing world (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 175-9).

Leading members of the DHL have played an influential role in advising the Dutch government and the medical community around the issue of voluntary euthanasia (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 193-6). Due, in part, to their hard work in this area, legislation has recently been passed in the Netherlands which recognizes the right to euthanasia under strictly regulated guidelines.

3.6.5 The Verbond: Some Demographic Details

Research conducted in 1989 revealed that women outnumbered men in the Verbond--56 to 44 percent (Cramer, 1991: 10). With regard to the age variable, the Verbond has been consistently underrepresented in the group

younger than 40 years of age (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 57). In 1989, 14 percent of the members were under 40; 32 percent were between the ages of 40 and 59; and 42 percent of the members were 60 years of age or older (Cramer, 1990: 10).

From the beginning, the Verbond has been overrepresented in relation to higher levels of education and income. In 1946, the League had a total membership of 2,100. Of this number, 90 men and women were involved in manual labour occupations, while 110 League members were either teachers or professors, and an additional 40 members were medical doctors (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 75-6).

Research conducted in the early 1980s revealed that only 8 percent of the Verbond membership belonged within the lowest SES category (as defined by the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics), while a full 29 percent fell within the highest category combining income, education and occupational variables.

We must note that compared with the relatively small size of their community following the Nazi occupation of Holland, Jews have clearly been overrepresented within the Verbond. Though it is not uncommon to meet second and even third generation freethinkers in Holland, a majority of the Verbond's members have broken away from the Dutch Reformed Church. In

recent years, greater numbers of Catholics have joined the League, although there is little danger of them shadowing the formerly-Protestant majority.

As we will see in Chapter Four, over the course of the present century, the relatively liberal Reformed Church has suffered dramatic membership losses. Between the years 1909 and 1930, for instance, membership within this denomination slipped from 44.1 to 34.3 percent (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 72). After leaving the Reformed Church, some of the more liberal Calvinists turned to humanism.

In terms of political preference, Verbond members tend to vote "left of centre" and are typically major supporters of the more progressive Dutch parties, such as the PvdA (Dutch Labour Party), D'66 (Democratic Party), and the new Green Left Party.

League members tend to support secular broadcast networks such as the VARA (socialist), in addition to the AVRO (liberal) and VPRO (progressive) corporations. In the majority of cases, Verbond members prefer to read non-confessional newspapers and magazines (Tielman, in Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 7).

Compared with the general Dutch population, we note that females are moderately overrepresented in the Verbond. The Verbond membership is substantially older than the general population. On the whole, League

members have had more formal schooling and enjoy higher socio-economic status than the general Dutch population.

3.7 THE DUTCH HUMANIST MOVEMENT: SHARED INITIATIVES

In 1948, the Verbond and the Dutch freethinkers came together to form the Humanistische Stichting voor Huivesting van Bejaarden (HSHB), the Humanist Society for Housing the Elderly. The purpose of this organization is to provide housing for the aged on a non-confessional basis. Once more, the goal was simply to secure subsidies on a par with religious organizations already working in this area. The first HSHB project was completed in April, 1957, when Amsterdam's AH Gerhardhuis opened its doors, providing a home for 235 elderly residents.

Humanitas joined the initiative in 1959. By 1973, the HSHB operated a total of 35 homes for the elderly (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 109). Today, the HSHB owns 100 homes for independent living and in addition oversees 40 supervised homes of which two have nursing care. This foundation cares for more than 6,000 elderly people in the Netherlands. The HSHB program is completely subsidized by the Dutch government.

The DHL first took an interest in developmental issues in the year 1965, when it raised 100,000 guilders to deal with the starvation crisis in the province of Bihar, India. Not long after the "Food for India" campaign was

completed, Van Praag and others decided that the Verbond should initiate its own developmental aid program. Together with Humanitas and the Stichting Weezenkas (a non-confessional Dutch welfare fund), the DHL founded HIVOS (Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking), the Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries, in December, 1967 (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 116).

By 1983, the Institute was supporting a total of 156 projects in developing countries, to the amount of nearly fourteen million Dutch guilders ("HIVOS", 1992: 2). HIVOS has grown substantially over the last decade and today channels approximately 35 million dollars (U.S.) worth of aid to non-governmental partner organizations in the south. The foundation works with over 400 organizations in twenty-five developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In terms of financing these projects, 95 percent of the funds come "from governmental sources, to say humanist and non-humanist taxpayers on the basis of a long-term agreement with the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation" (Dijkstra, PD IHEU 1992: 1-3).

In 1981, together with the Verbond and HIVOS, Humanitas helped to establish the Humanistisch Overleg Mensenrechten (HOM), the Humanist Council for Human Rights (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 118). Now existing as an independent foundation, HOM monitors political, civil, social, economic, and cultural rights violations in developing countries around the world. The current

President of the Council is also a member of the Dutch Parliament, as have been many former presidents. This close political connection allows the foundation to apply pressure to the proper authorities (including foreign governments), where these measures are necessary.

In addition to the various courses and workshops offered through the local communities and the Humanist Centres, continuing adult education programs are sponsored by the Dutch Humanist Study Centre (Humanistisch Studiecentrum Nederland) (HSN) ("IH" (1) 1982: 16), which operates out of the University for Humanist Studies. The Centre provides informative sessions on the history of humanism and on topical issues such as threats to international peace, euthanasia, and prostitution. Originally founded by the Verbond, Humanitas , and the Dageraad, today the Centre plays an important role in co-ordinating the activities of the Dutch humanist movement.

3.8 THE DUTCH HUMANIST MOVEMENT: RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

Catering to Dutch-speaking humanists living south of the border, is the Humanistisch Verbond (Belgie). Founded in 1951, the Belgian League is modelled after the Dutch Verbond and today has approximately 4,000 members. The Belgian League has been officially acknowledged as an alternative "lifestance" organization and is given subsidies for specific programs.

Currently, there are more than 60 volunteer counsellors working in Belgian prisons and close to 200 volunteers working in the hospitals. As of yet, there are no humanist counsellors working in the armed forces ("IAHECL HP" (1) 1989: 31-4). The Belgian League is also given an opportunity to teach non-denominational ethics classes in the public schools, the costs of which are absorbed by the state. In addition, the Belgian Verbond currently offers a secular confirmation ceremony for twelve year-old humanist children (Earles, 1989: 257-8).

On the island of Curaçao, in the Netherlands Antilles, there is a humanist primary school (Kolegio Erasmo), which was founded in 1987. Subsidized by the Dutch government, the school currently educates 200 young children and is the only venue through which they may receive training in their native tongue, Papiamento. During the same year, a humanist group was organized, called the Konsenshi Humanista (Arion, PD IHEU 1992: 1-6).

Out of the 97 Member Organizations currently affiliated with the IHEU, seventeen are Dutch. In total, eleven humanist and freethought journals are published in the Netherlands.

Estimating the total size of the humanist movement in Holland, the two main organizations--the Verbond and Humanitas--possess a combined membership of roughly 31,000. To this number, we must add the individuals who utilize the various humanist social services, (for instance, lifestance

education, housing for the elderly, and counselling in hospitals and prisons) in addition to those who support some of the other foundations outlined above. Tielman places the most recent estimate of membership within the humanist pillar at approximately 100,000 supporters (in Cliteur and Van Dooren, 1991: 297). Nearly one-quarter of Netherlanders agree with the IHEU's Minimal Statement which was quoted in Chapter Two.

3.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From its founding a quarter of a century ago, Canada's humanist movement has experienced a great deal of instability. On an organizational level, the movement consists of the HAC (including the national Executive and a number of local chapters) and the quarterly "HiC" journal.

Vast differences exist between the Dutch and Canadian humanist movements. As we have seen in some detail, the former has developed a wide range of programs and services for the unchurchly community in the Netherlands, many of which receive state-support. Considered against the meagre fortunes of the Canadian movement, it is difficult to dismiss the remarkable success of organized humanism in Holland.

Having considered these organizations at length over the course of this chapter we must now examine some of the important socio-historical

factors which have influenced the respective movements to develop in such radically divergent directions.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CANADIAN AND DUTCH SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

In the first part of this chapter we focus on the various historical and structural factors which may help to account for the relative lack of success achieved by irreligious movements throughout Canada's history. In addition, we outline some of the principal characteristics of Canada's Religious None category, in order to have a frame of reference with which to compare the organized humanist movement. We close our examination of the Canadian milieu with a brief discussion of Bibby's "fragmentation thesis".

In the second half of the chapter we evaluate the Dutch context in order to identify the key historical and structural factors which have influenced the development of a successful humanist tradition in the Netherlands. Following an examination of the Dutch milieu, we end the chapter with a description of the large unchurchly community in the Netherlands.

4.1 CANADA: PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the year 1760, following a prolonged military campaign over territorial rights, French forces surrendered to the British in the city of Montreal. Three years later the two opposing sides signed the Treaty of Paris, thereby recognizing the permanency of British law in Canada. For their part, the victors

promised to respect "the free exercise of the Catholic religion as far as British law would permit" (Walsh, 1956: 74).

The fortunes of the French in British North America improved with the signing of the Quebec Act of 1774 (Clark, 1948: 42). Co-operation with the French marked an attempt on behalf of the British to form an alliance against the "Republican sentiments", which were stirring in the older colonies. By creating an autonomous province for the French, and by allowing the Catholic Church to tithe its people, the British provided the framework for the dual culture of Canada (Walsh, 1956: 2-3).

In the aftermath of the American Revolution, many United Empire Loyalists relocated north of the American colonies. The large influx of British sympathizers into Canada's central and eastern regions led to the drafting of the Constitutional Act of 1791 (Clark, 1948: 70). With this legislation, Upper and Lower Canada were formally designated.

Britain had been attempting to establish a national church in Canada since 1758, when the First Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia swore allegiance to the Church of England. Another step in this direction involved the enactment of the Clergy Reserves Act (1791). With this legislation, the colonial government set aside one-seventh of the land in each township for the use of the Anglican Church (Walsh, 1956: 90-1; 172). The Church was free to sell any portion of its property to settlers or developers. On many occasions, the former

was accused of abusing its authority by demanding exorbitant prices for its land.

In the year 1836, it was announced that forty-four new Anglican parishes were to be designated in Upper Canada, each one to be allotted four hundred acres of land. This announcement resulted in a spontaneous outburst of public anger against both the government and the Anglican Church. Outrage over the decision to spend public monies for religious purposes was one of the chief factors in precipitating the 1837 rebellion (Walsh, 1956: 182).

The Clergy Reserves Act remained a source of irritation until a predominantly Conservative government, under the direction of John A. MacDonald, passed the Clergy Reserves secularization act (1854), "which for all intents and purposes brought to an end the contentious era in the relations of church and state in Canada" (Walsh, 1956: 183-4).

4.2 RELIGION AND THE CANADIAN FRONTIER

Church-sect theory suggests that, as they mature, religious organizations tend to become rigid, bureaucratized institutions solely interested in preserving the interests of the economically prosperous elite. In so doing, they exclude the religious needs of less fortunate classes. In an attempt to be representative of the status-quo, the accommodative church typically forfeits its

"otherworldliness", the intense spiritual quality characteristic of its founding. As a consequence, fundamentalist "sects" are organized by the less privileged, in order to revive the religious dimension which has been lost to the secular "church" (Stark, 1989: 416).

While church membership tends to make relatively few spiritual demands upon the daily lives of its members, the sect requires strict adherence to its principles, reflected through a high level of personal commitment (Wilson, 1968: 252-3). The sect's response to the world "is more intensely and specifically religious than that of the churches. They have, in general, made much less compromise with the social order" (Wilson, 1969: 207).

English-speaking Canada's early religious history was dominated by the presence of Protestant sects (Clark, 1948; Walsh, 1956). The greatest period of sect formation took place during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when New Light Evangelicism and Methodism established deep roots in the Maritime provinces and in Upper Canada (Clark, 1948: 83). Although the pace began to slow during the 1820s (Clark, 1948: 270-1), it continued until roughly the middle of the century, when the first signs of industrialization began to draw greater numbers away from farms and into the towns and small cities (Clark, 1948: 272).

On a more limited scale, sect formation picked up once again after 1885, although the locus had shifted away from the frontier in favour of

dislocated urban dwellers (Clark, 1948: 366-7). Sect formation also enjoyed a fair degree of success in the Western provinces in the aftermath of the economic depression of the 1930s (Clark, 1948: 431-2).

While most of Lower Canada remained fairly isolated in the closing years of the eighteenth century--held together through the ties of ethnicity and religion--the West was experiencing a rapid expansion, giving rise to a set of social conditions quite unlike those found in Quebec. The mass movement of population westward after 1795 created a vast new "open frontier", which included the recently organized province of Upper Canada (Clark, 1948: 90).

Canada's proximity to the United States was influential in determining the form taken by religious organization during the early days of settlement. Protestant sect formation had been prevalent along the American frontier and quickly spilled across the border, with the extension of settlement into Canada (Clark, 1948: 93; 166).

Regions characterized by high levels of population mobility typically experienced increased levels of sect activity. Many of the settlers arriving in English-speaking Canada from the United States and Great Britain had emigrated from regions where religious fundamentalism had a very strong presence (Clark, 1948: 232-3).

Conditions along the frontier were fairly primitive, and many of the social conventions familiar in a more stable social order were out of place in the

early Canadian settlements. In many cases ethnic and class ties could not be sustained in the face of powerful levelling forces characteristic of the frontier community (Clark, 1948: 145).

The Churches of England and Scotland were effective instruments of cultural preservation but not of social reorganization. They managed to preserve traditional loyalties among small numbers of middle and upper class settlers of English and Scottish descent. Outside of these privileged groups, the churches were unable to provide the poorer settlers with a viable expression of group solidarity (Clark, 1948: 81; Walsh, 1956: 106).

Where traditional churches did not adapt themselves to the Canadian frontier, Protestant sects were essentially a product of these conditions (Clark, 1948: 83). The quest for personal salvation became the ultimate goal for the sect member, one which transcended denominational, ethnic, and class ties (Clark, 1948: 197). On the level of the individual, the highly emotional evangelical message served as a means of personal reorganization and, on the social plane, allowed for the establishment of new cultural ties (Clark, 1948: 170-1).

Life along the Canadian frontier during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was inhospitable to rational currents of thought (Clark, 1948: 87; 431-2). The isolated nature of frontier life--the fact that settlers living in a particular town or village were seldom exposed to surrounding

communities--precluded the emergence of noteworthy secular trends and reinforced the hegemony of the religious sect (Clark, 1948: 233).

Compared with the prevalence of sect-formation witnessed in the Maritimes, Ontario, and the Western provinces during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, religious activities within the province of Quebec were carefully regulated by the Roman Catholic Church. In Quebec, the spirit of the religious sect was stifled beneath the weight of an elaborate ecclesiasticism (Clark, 1948: 90).

By the time of Confederation, Canada's rural frontier was undergoing a profound transformation, as greater numbers of citizens were forced to relocate in the rapidly growing industrial towns. As urban towns and cities drew people away from the small village or hamlet, the territorial church began to replace the fundamentalist sect as the dominant form of religious organization (Clark, 1948: 329-30; 381-2).

4.3 CHURCH AND STATE IN CANADA

Despite the American influence on the development of our religious landscape, the separation between church and state has always been narrower in Canada than in the United States (Stark and Bainbridge, 1982: 353-4).

While the First Amendment clause of their Constitution precludes the Americans from adopting a *similar* approach, it is important to note that Roman

Catholic education is publicly funded in five Canadian provinces, including Ontario. In the province of Newfoundland, there are currently eight publicly supported denominational school boards. The financial responsibility for sectarian education falls under provincial jurisdiction (Pfalzner, in Charlton and Barker, 1991: 408-9).

Aside from the public financing of confessional education and select social welfare programs (such as private orphanages and Catholic Children's Aid Societies), Canadian churches receive little financial support from the state. However, on the federal level, churches do enjoy certain privileges. These include: special customs and tariff rates; discounted postage rates; exemption from municipal property taxes; personal income tax provisions for clergy; protection from "hate" literature; and exemption from equality rights clauses in the Charter with respect to discrimination on the basis of religion (Pfalzner, in Charlton and Barker, 1991: 411).

4.4 IMMIGRATION: THE RELIGIOUS FACTOR

In addition to the role played by its indigenous native population, Canada's early history was shaped by two founding peoples, French and English. The most salient factor in the development of Canada has been the presence of two culturally distinct groups within one national framework (Walsh, 1956: 1).

Immigration has played a important role in shaping contemporary Canadian society. Between the years 1896 and 1910, immigrants arriving from every quarter of the globe helped to push Canada's population from five to eight million. As a consequence, a number of large ethnic communities began to take shape, and the bicultural social fabric began to reveal distinct shades of multiculturalism. Ethnic segregation and intense ethnic loyalties in Canada originated in attempts made by French, Scottish, and Irish settlers to remain distinct from the English. Over time, they established the pattern for all cultural groups immigrating to this country (Porter, 1973: 71).

In Canada, ethnicity and religion have reinforced each other, with the result that the nation consists of a complex network of cultural enclaves (Porter, 1973: 73). "It is from a perspective of Canada as bi-cultural and in many respects multi-cultural", Westhues suggests, "that its religious bodies are best analyzed" (1976: 215).

One of the key factors accounting for relatively high levels of formal church affiliation within the North American milieu involves the important role played by immigration. In the church, more than anywhere else in their adopted societies, immigrants could maintain their native language, folkways, and customs (Herberg, 1955: 23; 26-7; Wilson, 1969: 115-6).

Many of the immigrants coming to Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were devoutly religious, and had been persecuted for

holding sectarian beliefs in their countries of origin. Upon arriving in Canada, they hoped to build stronger religious communities than had been possible in the Old World, which was becoming increasingly secular (Palmer, 1975: 5-6; Woodsworth, in Palmer, 1975: 170-76).

In Canada, churches have served a vital function in providing immigrants with a sense of identity in an alien society. The churches represented powerful agents of socialization and assimilation, introducing new settlers to the Canadian way of life (Walsh, 1956: 265; Westhues, 1976: 212).

The plurality of religious denominations characterizing our religious landscape can be traced to the wide range of ethnic backgrounds in Canadian society (Hiller, 1976: 373; Bibby, 1979: 110). According to Hiller,

> The heavy dependence of Canada on immigration meant that each ethnic group would probably bring with it its own religious heritage, and if religious activity increased on coming to this continent, it was probably the result of ethnicity and religion having become clearly aligned (1976: 367-8).

4.5 CANADA: ABSENCE OF SECULAR INFLUENCES

Considering the power wielded by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Quebec and Britain's role in the development of English-speaking regions, Canada's national history reveals a strong current of conservatism (Porter, 1973: 373; Hiller, in Bibby, 1979: 292; Stark and Bainbridge, 1982: 354).

Beginning in the 1800s, stringent immigration policies ensured that radical influences were unable to establish a secure foothold in Canada. Within Canadian society, the French and American Revolutions (and the ideas which inspired them) encountered sustained military and political resistance. Due to the fact that both English (McKillop, in Stein, 1985: 81) and French settlers (Clark, 1948: 82-3) were sheltered from the impact of these events, liberal, enlightened intellectual themes were conspicuously absent within the Canadian milieu.

The republicanism of Thomas Jefferson and the rationalism of Thomas Paine simply could not thrive in colonies which had been founded in opposition to the liberal excesses of the American and French Revolutions and the desire to extend Christian denominations into British North America (McKillop, in Stein, 1985: 85). With respect to irreligious trends in particular, McKillop notes that Canada "has not provided a hospitable environment for unbelievers" and therefore has "no strong tradition of rationalist or secularist thought" (in Stein, 1985: 81-5).

4.6 THE SECULARIZATION OF CANADIAN SOCIETY

Following Confederation, industry began to draw the rural populace into larger urban areas. As the transition from an agricultural to an industrial mode of production took place, pragmatic concerns over economic and political

issues began to push religious matters to the periphery of contemporary life (Clark, 1948: 272).

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, science emerged to challenge the hegemony of traditional religious expressions. A growing interest in questions of social and biological evolution strengthened rationalist tendencies in social thought and began to undermine the faiths of religious fundamentalism (Clark, 1948: 257-8; 430-1).

The full impact of the industrial revolution was not felt in Canada until after the First World War. The impersonal character of mechanized production coupled with the impact of the War resulted in a "deep seated malaise" in Canadian society (Walsh, 1956: 326).

During the 1920s there was a general drift away from the religious values that informed Canadian life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to Clark, this period was characterized by a "weakening of Puritan mores, the secularization of the Sabbath, the declining influence of the Bible, the falling off of church attendance, and the increasing neglect of family prayers" (1948: 431-2).

4.7 THE CANADIAN RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Canada's religious climate has changed dramatically over the course of the present century. In 1921, 39 percent of the population were Roman Catholics and 56 percent were Protestants.

According to the most recent census figures (1991), Catholicism claims 46 percent of Canadians. However, Protestant denominations currently account for only 36 percent of the population--a decrease of 20 percent in little more than half a century. Close to 3 percent of Canadians support Eastern non-Christian faiths. The Eastern Orthodox faith is supported by 1.5 percent of Canadians. Jews constitute an additional 1 percent of the population.

While close to one-half of Canada's population are Roman Catholic, members of this faith are clearly overrepresented in the eastern regions of the country (Veevers, 1990: 78). More than 80 percent of Quebec's inhabitants are Catholic. Catholicism is also the dominant faith in New Brunswick (54 percent). Protestants enjoy a clear demographic majority in the rest of Canada's provinces (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 16).

4.7.1 Canada's Religious Nones: Some Demographic Features

In terms of recent changes within Canada's religious landscape, "the only new development that stands out statistically has been the post-1960s

tendency of an increased percentage of people that have no religious preference" (Bibby, 1993: 22).

According to the 1941 census, fewer than 20,000 Canadians (approximately 0.2 percent of the population) were without formal church affiliation. By 1981, this figure had increased to approximately 1.8 million Canadians (7.4 percent of the population).

Between 1981 and 1991, the number of Religious Nones rose dramatically. Nearly 3.4 million Canadians (12.5 percent) are currently without formal religious ties.

Today the Religious Nones constitute the second largest "denominational" category in Canada, slightly edging out United Church membership (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 1; 16).

The latest census revealed that an average of only 4.6 percent of Canadians living in the Atlantic provinces are without formal church ties. The figure for Quebec is also low, as fewer than 4 percent of residents claim to be Religious Nones. In Ontario, 12.5 percent of the population are without formal church affiliation. The census reports that close to 15 percent of the prairie population are Religious Nones. The highest figure was recorded in British Columbia, where 30 percent of the population are without religious affiliation (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 16-17).

The majority of Canada's Religious Nones are concentrated in three provinces: more than one-third (37 percent) currently reside in Ontario, 29 percent live in British Columbia and another 15 percent reside in Alberta (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 16).

There is an inverse relationship between nominal religious affiliation and urban dwelling. In Canada's three largest cities--Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver--the rate of non-affiliation is currently twice as high (14 percent) as it is for cities and towns with fewer than 100,000 residents (7 percent) (Bibby, 1993: 174).

Fifty-six percent of Canada's Religious Nones are men, and 44 percent are women (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 16). In research conducted during the mid-1970s, Bibby and Weaver found that approximately two-thirds of the Religious Nones included in their sample were under forty years of age (1985: 454). Consistent with these findings, the 1991 census reports that the largest age cohort is for those Religious Nones between 25 and 44 years of age (39 percent). Only 5 percent of Canada's Religious Nones are over 65 years of age (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 19).

Bibby notes that some Religious Nones eventually affiliate with a particular church establishment. Arguing that the None category is largely "transitional", he found that roughly half of the Nones included in his 1975

sample had joined denominations by 1990 (1993: 158). In many cases, affiliation corresponded to the religious orientation of the respondent's parents.

In cases where Nones have chosen to join religious establishments, it is seldom the result of a burning religious commitment; for the most part, affiliation stems from a practical demand for rites of passage. Bibby suggests that approximately 60 percent of Canada's Religious Nones eventually seek out churches for baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and an additional 35 percent will look for Confirmation rites for their children (1987: 108).

The tendency for some Nones to affiliate appears to be dependent on prior religious socialization. In the case of children raised without any formal religious training, Bibby and Weaver found that nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of their sample maintained a non-religious status (1985: 454).

Canada's Religious Nones tend to be better educated than individuals within the other principal denominational categories. According to the latest census, 17 percent of Canadians between 25 and 44 years of age have university degrees. The corresponding figures for Protestants and Catholics in particular are slightly lower: 16 and 14 percent respectively. Meanwhile, 20 percent of Canada's Religious Nones have completed university degrees (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 150-161).

4.7.2 Canada's Irreligious Community

Bibby reports that approximately 8 percent of Canadians are "blatant atheists" (1993: 128). This is fairly consistent with the figure quoted in a survey conducted for "Maclean's" magazine which found that 9 percent of Canadians believed God is "just an old superstition" (April 12, 1993: 37).

With regard to an officially recognized irreligious community in Canada, in the last census, 470 Canadians identified themselves as "freethinkers", and an additional 1,245 men and women specifically identified themselves as "humanists". Fifty-six percent of Canada's humanists were men, and 44 percent were women. Forty-six percent of these self-described humanists lived in Ontario, 31 percent resided in British Columbia, and an additional 7 percent lived in Alberta. (Religions in Canada (1991 Census): 16).

4.8 BIBBY'S FRAGMENTATION THESIS

Looking at church attendance figures over the last half-century, it would appear that the trend towards secularization is well entrenched. During the 1940s, approximately 60 percent of Canadian adults attended church services on a weekly basis. By the 1950s, the six in ten who claimed to be worshipping every week had slipped to five in ten; today it stands at just over two in ten (Bibby, 1993: 4).

The precipitous decline in church attendance has been witnessed in all of the major denominations. "What has to be disturbing about the drop", Bibby argues, "is the extent to which it has been experienced right across the country and across all social categories. Pockets of resistance are few" (1993: 11).

Based on the findings of an in-depth longitudinal study, Bibby reports that fewer Canadians are being exposed to organized religion today than was the case in 1970s. In 1975, 74 percent of adult Canadians attended religious services at least periodically when they were growing up. In 1990 only 64 percent of adults made a similar claim.

Along the same lines, in 1975, approximately 35 percent of Canadians with young children were exposing them to some form of religious instruction, such as Sunday School. Fifteen years later, the figure had declined to 28 percent. According to Bibby, "fewer adults than in the past have faith to pass on. As the cycle repeats itself between new generations, involvement and commitment will further dissipate" (1993: 100).

The importance of religious socialization for the maintenance of faith cannot be overestimated (Mackie and Brinkerhoff, 1993: 246). The transmission of religious faith typically follows readily identifiable social lines. In the majority of cases, parents pass religious traditions along to their children.

Bibby suggests that "few religious ideas can be traced to social vacuums" (1993: 311).

Today, only about one-quarter of Canadians claim that religion is very important to them (Bibby, 1993: 129). Given the decline in church attendance and religious socialization, Bibby contends that organized religion no longer plays an important role in Canadian society (1987: 4). Furthermore, prospects for the future are less than promising: "life for organized religion in Canada's twenty-first century looks extremely grim" (1993: 105).

However, while Canadians may not be turning out to the nation's churches very often, they continue to demonstrate a fairly high level of interest in religious themes. Bibby found that just over 80 percent of Canadians continue to believe in God, and close to 70 percent believe in life after death (1993: 126-8). Bibby also detected substantial interest in non-traditional religious trends: "God and the spirit world, ESP, astrology--it all adds up to a lot of Canadians putting a lot of stock in a lot of supernatural phenomena" (1993: 133).

Moreover, despite low levels of regular attendance, the vast majority of Canadians continue to maintain formal church ties. While the ranks of our Religious Nones have increased dramatically in recent decades, it is important to note that close to 88 percent of Canadians continue to identify themselves with a particular faith (Bibby, 1993: 154).

One of the reasons for the continuation of formal religious affiliation stems from a deep desire for rites of passage. Most Canadians wish to mark the major events of their lives with some sort of formal ceremony. Approximately nine in ten adults say they will turn to religious groups when they need weddings, funerals, and birth-related ceremonies performed (1993: 154).

The decrease in church attendance and religious socialization, coupled with fairly stable levels of affiliation, leads Bibby to conclude that the religious landscape is "fragmented". The majority of Canadians are drawing upon religion as consumers, adopting beliefs and practices at their convenience. While many Canadians are reluctant to sever their ties with organized religion, they are nevertheless moving away from Christianity and other religions as meaning systems which are intended to address all aspects of life. Canadians, Bibby claims, "are into "religion a la carte"" (1987: 80).

For Bibby, it is the breaking apart, the fragmentation (and trivialization) of a comprehensive horizon of meaning that ensures organized religion's insignificance in Canadian society today (1987: 135; 213). The implications of Bibby's findings for organized humanism are very interesting. Canada's early socio-historical context was not conducive to the emergence of a strong irreligious presence. However, in recent decades the religious landscape has changed dramatically, and it would appear that humanists are currently in a position to capitalize on the increasingly secular mentality

characteristic of Canadian society. To this date, Canada's humanists have taken few steps in this direction. We will begin to examine reasons for this oversight in the next chapter.

4.9 THE NETHERLANDS: SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of important geographical considerations, a distinctive feature of the Dutch nation is its small size (Goudsblom, 1967: 8). Close to fifteen million people live in an area which is approximately one-quarter of the size of New York State. Holland is currently the most densely populated country in all of Europe (Kurian, 1989: 149).

The Dutch are surrounded by large and powerful neighbours: Germany, Britain, and France. Located at the crossroads of northern Europe, over the centuries, the Netherlands has been exposed to an "intensive traffic in goods and ideas" (Shetter, 1971: 4).

The Dutch are an ethnically homogeneous people, descended from Saxon, Frankish and Frisian tribes (Lijphart, 1968: 202; Kurian, 1989: 150). Basically a Germanic race, they have experienced some mixed ancestry through foreign occupation and by providing refuge to religious dissenters and ethnic minorities (Hoffmann, 1973: 27-8).

The ethnic homogeneity of the Dutch nation was undisturbed until the end of the Second World War. In 1947, only 1.1 percent of the population

were foreign-born. By 1987, this figure had risen to 7 percent (Eisinga et al., 1990: 58). For the most part, the immigrants may be classified in two main categories: former colonials and "guest workers" (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 475).

The Dutch nation is united by a common mother tongue ("Hollands" or "Dutch"), which is spoken by nearly all of its inhabitants (Goudsblom, 1967: 59; Lijphart, 1968: 92). The Frisians in the north have managed to preserve their own ancient language (Frisian), which is currently spoken by roughly 400,000 people.

4.10 THE NETHERLANDS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the year 1477, the Burgundian Netherlands became part of the Hapsburg Empire. The marriage between Philip of Hapsburg and the Spaniard, Joanna of Castile, held important implications for the fate of the Low Countries. Their marital union eventually produced a son, Charles V, who became King of Spain in 1516. In 1519, Charles V united Spain and the Netherlands, becoming the undisputed sovereign of the Low Countries (Kurian, 1989: 158).

By the early 16th century, the ideas of the Protestant Reformation were having a powerful impact on Dutch society. In part, Calvinism found fertile ground in the Netherlands because it represented an effective political expression against Spanish rule (Hoffman, 1973: 29-30; Bagley, 1973: 2-3).

In the year 1555, Philip II became the King of Spain, and the fervour of his devotion to the Catholic Church led to a dramatic revolt among his Dutch subjects. In 1566, the suppression of Calvinism in the Low Countries culminated in the "Beeldenstorm", a series of uprisings that destroyed Catholic religious symbols in churches throughout the country (Shetter, 1971: 75).

When the Spaniards sent the Duke of Alva to restore order in the Low Countries, he was met by a formidable Protestant force, organized by William the Silent, Prince of Orange. Thus began a rather protracted battle--the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648)--which ended with the Treaty of Westphalia and Spain's official recognition of an independent Dutch nation (Hoffman, 1973: 30). Large segments of the Low Countries had been liberated from Spanish rule by 1577. In 1579, the seven northern provinces signed the "Union of Utrecht" as the United Provinces (Kurian, 1989: 158). In the same year, the southern provinces issued their own "Union of Arras", in which they pledged allegiance to Spain. Facing an ignoble defeat, the Hapsburg King of Spain was pressured to abdicate in 1581, though the Spaniards did not officially relinquish the throne until 1648. The Dutch proclaimed the Republic of the United Provinces in 1581 (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 474).

In the year 1618, an international assembly of Protestant spokesmen gathered in Dort. Following some intense theological negotiations, the Synod of Dort announced that the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlands Hervormde Kerk)

was to become the officially recognized (though not formally established) church of the Netherlands.

The seventeenth century is commonly referred to as Holland's "Golden Age". Dating from the accession of Philip II to the throne of Spain (1555) through to the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the Dutch enjoyed an "embarrassment of riches" (Schama, 1988). Holland became the wealthiest nation in all of Europe and the leading commercial and maritime power in the world (Shetter, 1971: 5-6).

In addition to its most profitable commercial initiative in the East Indies (Indonesia), the Dutch established settlements and colonies in South Africa, the West Indies, South America (Surinam, Guyana and Brazil), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Formosa (Taiwan), and Japan.

During the seventeenth century, the prosperity of the Dutch was not restricted to the world of business. As Kurian notes,

> arts, sciences, literature and philosophy flourished. It was the golden age of the great Dutch masters in painting. In terms of religious freedom, it was the most liberal in the world and a haven for refugees from religious prosecution (1989: 158-9).

Indeed, Holland has a long and well-established reputation for religious and ethnic tolerance (Goudsblom, 1967: 18-19; Huggett, 1971: 49; Bagley, 1973: 47-8; Thoenes, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 274). During the seventeenth century, large numbers of Jews from Spain and Portugal fled

to the Netherlands in order to escape the Inquisition. Holland also provided refuge for French Huguenots who feared the Catholic absolutism of Louis XIV (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 474). In addition, many liberal Protestants living in cities under Spanish control--such as Antwerp--resettled in the Netherlands (Shetter, 1971: 86-7).

During the "Golden Age", Holland also served as a popular refuge for iconoclastic thinkers (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 475). Both Descartes (1596-1650) and Locke (1632-1704) were able to find a "hospitable sanctuary from intolerance" in the Netherlands during their productive years (Shetter, 1971: 93).

Perhaps the most influential dissenter of his day was the Amsterdam-born Jewish philosopher Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677). Although commonly referred to as the "God-intoxicated Jew", Spinoza had in fact dismissed the traditional Judaeo-Christian image of God in his posthumously published Ethics (1675) (McKenney, in Stein, 1985: 653-4).

The Republic of the United Provinces lasted for approximately two centuries. It ended when Napoleon's army occupied the country in the year 1795. On August 5th, 1796, a decree issued from Paris revoked the authority of the Calvinist Synod of Dort, restoring equal civil rights to the various religious minorities in the Netherlands and formally ending the close connection between church and state.

Introduced mainly through the Napoleonic regime, the ideas of the French Enlightenment had a profound influence on Dutch society during the late eighteenth century (Huggett, 1971: 49; Shetter, 1971: 156-7; Schama, 1977; Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 476-7). The deistic philosophies of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot were especially popular with Amsterdam's wealthy burghers, although distinctly liberal themes were eventually reflected throughout Dutch society.

Following Napoleon's defeat, the Congress of Vienna (1814) met to revise the political boundaries of Europe. In 1815, the Netherlands was proclaimed a constitutional monarchy (Kurian, 1989: 159). After more than two centuries of separation, the northern and southern provinces were to be united in a single kingdom under William the First, House of Orange.

The two regions had grown apart over the years, and it was not long before the impoverished Catholic south grew to resent the influence exercised by the wealthy Protestant trade merchants from Amsterdam. Following a series of revolts, the southern provinces (in what is now the country of Belgium) declared their independence in 1830 (Shetter, 1971: 78-9; 140-1).

More recently, a tremendously important event shaping contemporary Dutch society was the Nazi occupation (1940-5). The "Hunger Year" (1944) was particularly harsh, as many Netherlanders were forced to eat rotten vegetables and tulip bulbs simply to survive. However, a much greater tragedy

befell the Dutch Jewish community. Prior to the war, more than 125,000 Jews lived in Holland, most of them in Amsterdam. By the end of 1945, less than 25,000 had managed to escape deportation to Nazi concentration camps (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 474).

4.11 THE NORTHERN HUMANIST TRADITION

Compared to Renaissance Italy, northern Europe took longer to break free from the embrace of medievalism because the latter region had been dominated by Gothic cultural traditions, and classical learning had never flourished there. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, this region experienced its own "northern Renaissance", centred around a distinct humanist literary culture. Humanist influences were also clearly discernable in the visual arts (Spitz, 1971: 274).

More than any other scholar of his day, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469-1536) was responsible for establishing the foundations of the humanist tradition in northern Europe (Weinstein, 1965: 19; Spitz, 1971: 294; Wilcox, 1975: 281).

"Generally acknowledged as the most representative humanist of all" (Lamont, 1990: 64-5), Erasmus was strongly influenced by the classical Weltanschauung. Though raised within the Catholic faith, his writings reflect a complex intermixture of Christian and pagan themes, and he frequently cites

Greek and Roman authors and moral philosophers (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 475).

While the Calvinist view of the universe was unmistakably deterministic, the northern humanists believed in the principle of limited free-will (Schama, 1988: 522). Central to Erasmus' humanism was the belief that the individual is the sole repository of reason and the ultimate judge of morality.

Erasmian education emphasized humane, ethical behaviour, with an aim to cultivating one's inner moral compass. The individual's life was to be informed by patience, perseverance, resourcefulness, and humility (Schama, 1988: 43). Following Aristotle, the northern humanists maintained that the golden mean of moderation was the most important ethical virtue (Schama, 1988: 158-9; 202-3).

From the humanistic perspective, wisdom was not amenable to any one dogma or creed in particular, but was given its fullest expression in Antiquity and Christianity (Shetter, 1971: 61-2; 178-9). By suggesting that wisdom was inscribed on the human heart, the northern humanists were anticipating nineteenth century irreligious thinkers, who believed that morality and religion represent two entirely separate concerns.

To the extent that, for the humanists, ethical judgements transcend particular religious and philosophical systems (Constandse, in Stein, 1985: 475),

the principle of tolerance was to take precedence over any severe or unyielding orthodoxy (Schama, 1988: 215; 266-7).

4.11.1 Erasmian Humanism in the Netherlands

Although it is commonly assumed that Calvinism has thoroughly monopolized Holland's contemporary religious landscape, if we look back to the seventeenth century we are forced to broaden our perspective. According to Schama, the Golden Age was informed by "the contending (though not mutually exclusive) influences of Calvinism, humanism and commercial pragmatism" (1988: 67).

From its origins, the Dutch Reformed Church consisted of orthodox Calvinists, in addition to a sizable faction of "worldly" latitudinarian Protestants (Goudsblom, 1967: 18-19), who were heavily influenced by the humanist teachings of Erasmus and Arminius (Howe, 1972: 321; Thurlings, 1979: 82-3; Schama, 1988: 67).

As early as the fourteenth century, the province of Holland was characterized by a highly sophisticated urban consciousness. During the 1600s, the wealthy merchant class of the province's cosmopolitan capital--Amsterdam--began to exert a continuous force in Dutch politics against Calvinist influence ((Lijphart, 1968: 18-19; Shetter, 1971: 88-9; Howe, 1972: 309-10).

The members of the Amsterdam elite concerned themselves with the world of trade and commerce, rather than with questions of religion or politics, especially when the latter were not particularly relevant to the pursuit and enjoyment of wealth. Their conduct was characterized by an urbane politeness "that was played by the rules of acceptance, tolerance, self-control and reserve" (Shetter, 1971: 89).

The assumptions of the northern humanist tradition were consonant with the "worldly" interests of Amsterdam's merchants (Shetter, 1971: 90-1; Schama, 1988: 391; 490). Humanism demanded a confrontation with wealth and denied refuge from the trials of the material world. According to Schama,

> Going into the world, the better to master its vanities, was the quotidian order to which Erasmian humanists subjected themselves. The awful risk that in so doing the sins of the world might master them was ever present (1988: 326).

Inspired by the works of Erasmus, during the seventeenth century prominent Dutch thinkers and artists, including the likes of Coornhert, Hooft, Grotius, Scriverius, and Rembrandt, fell under the influence of classical art and scholarship. In the realm of letters, it was not uncommon to find Christian thinkers mentioned alongside authors of antiquity such as Tacitus, Pliny, Strabo, Seneca and Ovid (Schama, 1988: 77; 123).

Similarly, Dutch art underwent a paradigmatic shift away from transparently religious themes (Huggett, 1971: 105; Schama, 1988: 489).

Ironically, the turn towards secular themes was in no small part influenced by the Calvinist tradition itself. "Calvin's reading of the Old Testament", Brown argues, "led him to condemn any form of religious imagery, including painting, as Popish idolatry" (1993: 22).

Many of the prominent Dutch painters working during this era were influenced by Renaissance art, a passion which was often reinforced by lengthy sojourns to Italy (Brown, 1993: 7; 14). Flemish and Dutch painters such as Bruegel, Hironymous Cock, Hogenberg, and later, Hals and Vermeer, reveal the influence of humanism through their new-found fascination with commonplace objects and themes (Schama, 1988: 497). For the painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,

> the pleasure at extending the range of symbolic vocabulary away from the arcane and towards the familiar and the vernacular was not just casual or promiscuously sensuous. It also betokened the humanist determination to colonize the most mundane details of worldly life with the Christian ethos, so that it may become literally inescapable (Schama, 1988: 489).

Given the obvious affinity between this contemporary Weltanschauung and the practical concerns of Amsterdam's elites, it is not surprising that the latter became avid patrons of the humanist arts (Howe, 1972: 309-10). Commenting on the veritable explosion of portrait painting during the Golden Age, Brown notes that "it is no accident that we know more about the

appearance of the seventeenth-century Dutch than any people until the Victorians" (1993: 7).

The suggestion that Amsterdam's burghers found justification for their appetitive business ethos in humanism contradicts a fairly sacred sociological canon. Indeed, at many points in The Embarrassment of Riches (1988: 322-3; 330; 335), Schama openly challenges Weber's (1904) hypothesis concerning the affinity between Calvinism and the development of capitalism.

Schama argues that the Weberian thesis is not very useful for making sense of the economic climate in Amsterdam and northern Holland during the Dutch Golden Age. Much to the chagrin of the Reformed Church, this period was characterized by a pragmatic and unabashed desire for capital coupled with the conspicuous consumption of wealth. "In essence", Schama notes, "the more passionate his Calvinism, the less likely was an entrepreneur to fit into the older modus operandi of Amsterdam capitalism" (1988: 340-1).

Where it was extremely difficult to reconcile the opulence of seventeenth century Holland with the humility of the Calvinist worldview, humanism came to the rescue. "Wealth", Schama contends,

> so far from being the reassuring symptom of the predestined Elect, as Weber argued, acted on contemporary consciences as a moral agitator .... What was needed was a set of rules and conventions by which wealth could be absorbed in ways compatible with the godly purposes for which the Republic had been created. Profit was emphatically not one such end, but taxes and

> philanthropy were, the latter vindicating the humanist belief in the redemptive quality of good works, notwithstanding Calvinism's theological repudiation (1988: 124).

4.12 THE PILLARIZATION OF DUTCH SOCIETY

Over the course of the last century, Dutch society has undergone a process of vertical segmentation, along distinct ideological lines. This structural differentiation is commonly known as "compartmentalization" or "pillarization" (in Dutch, "verzuiling") (Shetter, 1971: 18-19; Bax, in Dekker and Ester, 1990: 169).

According to Huggett, the principle of tolerance, which informs the pillarized structure of Dutch society, can be traced back to the influence of Erasmian humanism (1971: 17). Lijphart argues that three distinct intellectual traditions influenced the structural changes which occurred during the late nineteenth century: Roman Catholicism, the Renaissance, and the Reformation (1968: 17-18).

Since the end of the sixteenth century, the Netherlands has been populated by a wide variety of religious groups, including Catholics, orthodox Calvinists, liberal Protestants, dissenters, and Jews, "none with numerical or other supremacy in Dutch society as a whole" (Dekker and Ester, 1990: 168).

The divisive social events which led to the emergence of the pillars surfaced between 1878 and 1917 (Lijphart, 1968: 104-5). During this period,

Roman Catholics, orthodox Calvinists, and labour workers demanded full emancipation and recognition of their respective rights. This fight involved three major issues: 1) government subsidies for confessional schools; 2) universal suffrage; and 3) proportional representation (Dekker and Ester, 1990: 169).

The most contentious issue of this period involved the "schoolstrijd" or "school conflict". In 1857, the ruling Liberal government passed a bill legislating against state funding for confessional education. In a rather bizarre alliance, Roman Catholics and orthodox Calvinists formed a coalition to combat the influence of "liberal modernism". The coalition achieved its first victory in 1887, when the Dutch government passed a new education law, wherein the state agreed to provide subsidies for confessional schools (Thurlings, 1979: 82-3).

However, the conflict over sectarian education was not resolved until the "Pacification Bill" was signed in 1917. From this point forward, "all elementary schools, public and private, were to get the same financial assistance from the government in proportion to their enrolments" (Lijphart, 1968: 110). With the signing of this legislation, the foundations of the pillarized social structure were established.

4.12.1 The Emergence of Holland's Pillars

Holland's first confessional political party, the orthodox Calvinist Antirevolutionary Party (ARP), was formed in 1878. It was followed by the founding of the Roman Catholic National Party (RKSP) in 1896. Nearly a century later (1980), the three largest confessional political parties merged to form the Christian Democratic Party (CDA).

Also formed at the turn of the last century (1894) was Holland's first socialist political party, the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDAP), which later evolved into the Labour Party (PvdA). Following a serious ideological split within the Labour Party during the late 1940s, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) was formed as a continuation of earlier liberal parties, including the Free Democrats (Vryzinnig Democraten).

Dutch trade unions followed a similar pattern of development during the early years of the present century. The formation of a non-confessional union in 1905 was followed by Protestant and Catholic organizations, both founded in 1909 (Kurian, 1989: 206-7).

Beginning with the first radio broadcast in the Netherlands (1919), Dutch media have been organized along ideological lines. By the end of the 1960s, five main radio and television corporations (all of them publicly funded) served the various segments of Dutch society (Hoffman, 1973: 158-9).

4.12.2 What is a Pillar?

Each pillar or "bloc" contains a set of organizations encompassing every sphere of the individual's life. Schools and universities, newspapers, radio and television networks, trade unions, welfare agencies, and sports associations were organized along sectarian lines (Bagely, 1973: 3).

Most commentators identify four distinct ideological pillars in Dutch society (Gouldsblom, 1967; Dekker and Ester, 1990). They are: 1) Roman Catholic; 2) Protestant (split between Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlands Hervormde Kerk) and 3) the orthodox Re-reformed group (Gereformeerd)); and finally, 4) a "secular" or "humanist" bloc (Bagely, 1973: 1-2).

Essentially, the humanist bloc represented what was left over, following the formation of the confessional pillars. This large middle bloc includes non-confessional liberals as well as socialists. We must not confuse Bagley's classification of the humanist pillar with the much smaller organized humanist movement in the Netherlands, which actually forms a kind of "mini-pillar" within the larger bloc.

The pillarized social structure has been so influential in shaping contemporary Dutch culture that a specialized vocabulary has emerged to describe its distinctive characteristics. Volksdeel , or "part of the population", is the word typically used to encompass the people belonging to a particular bloc; levensbeschouwelijk, the adjective form of levensbeschouwing , or "lifeview",

indicates the ideological differences between the pillars; buitenkerkelijk is a term used to describe people who are literally "outside the church" (also known as onkerkelijken, or the "unchurchly"); finally, andersdenkend means "thinking in another way", a word used to designate those who are in a different pillar from one's own (Goudsblom, 1967: 50-1).

One of the practical implications of pillarization is that particular activities within the blocs are subsidized by the state. The financing of these projects is facilitated through revenues gathered from all Dutch tax-payers at municipal, provincial, and national levels. Funding is distributed according to the ratio of membership in each group in addition to the demand for services: the larger the pillar, the greater the level of subsidy (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 10).

The relatively smooth functioning of the pillars is safeguarded through the principle of "proportionality" underlying the entire system. Traditionally, the sole criterion determining the allocation of resources is the size of the various pillars. The state is thereby prevented from favouring one pillar over another. The same rule that applies to funding for education extends to hospitals and other welfare functions (Lijphart, 1968: 127-8).

Although church and state are constitutionally separate in the Netherlands, various religious communities receive financial support from the government. In addition to funding for denominational elementary and

secondary schools, the state also finances a number of confessional universities (including the University for Humanist Studies); theological faculties in state-run universities; the salaries of chaplains and humanist counsellors working in Dutch prisons or the army; and finally, television and radio time in the state-financed electronic media (Kurian, 1989: 157).

The success of the Dutch system relies heavily upon the principle of "accommodation" (Goudsblom, 1967: 126; Lijphart, 1968: 78). A basic ideological commitment to the system is necessary for its proper functioning. Particularly at the level of the political elites one discovers a

> pragmatic acceptance of the ideological differences as basic realities which cannot and should not be changed. The fundamental convictions of other blocs must be tolerated, if not respected. Disagreements must not be allowed to turn into either mutual contempt or proselytizing zeal (1968: 123).

The acceptance of "difference" is predicated on a shared commitment to a deeper goal transcending the various pillars (Goudsblom, 1967: 151). While tolerance has been shown towards a number of ethnic and religious minorities throughout Holland's history, this has occurred "only to the extent that the minorities conform to the Dutch verzuiling rules, and the parallel rules of restrained and deferential inter-personal behaviour" (Bagley, 1973: 171).

4.13 THE DUTCH RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

The Dutch government has been gathering data regarding religious affiliation since the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1849, the Dutch Reformed Church represented the largest denomination in the country, claiming close to 55 percent of the population, while Roman Catholics constituted an additional 38 percent (Thurlings, 1979: 82-3).

By the end of the 1980s, the largest Protestant denomination claimed only 16 percent of the Dutch population. Roman Catholics had dropped to 31 percent, while the orthodox Calvinist faction constituted roughly 8 percent of the population (Lechner, 1989: 139).

Compared to that of the Dutch Reformed faith, the decrease in formal affiliation has been less dramatic in the Catholic Church. However, a look at weekly attendance figures during recent decades reveals an obvious decline in fortunes there as well. While more than 70 percent of Dutch Catholics attended mass regularly during the early 1960s, by 1976 the figure had dropped to just over 30 percent (Thurlings, 1979: 96-7). Five years later, only 25 percent attended mass on a regular basis (Lechner, 1989: 139). The Dutch government's recently published Social and Cultural Planning Report (SCP) (1994) demonstrates that the Catholic Church has been losing members at a tremendous rate in recent years.

4.13.1 Holland's Religious Nones

Shadowing the development of a pillarized social structure in the Netherlands has been a dramatic century-long decline in formal church affiliation (Goudsblom, 1967; De Loor, 1983; Eisenga and Felling, 1990). The "process of "dechurching"" in the Netherlands began at the end of the last century in the highly urbanized Ranstad (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 45-6) and the predominantly Protestant provinces of the north (Goddijn, 1983: 410).

In a national survey conducted before the turn of the last century (1879), not one respondent claimed to be "onkerkelijken" or "unchurchly" (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 20). By 1920, the figure had risen to nearly 8 percent (Thung, 1983: 505).

Most commentators agree that the rapid pace of industrialization in the Netherlands--especially following the end of the Second World War--influenced the secularization of Dutch society. With the transition to an industrial mode of production, the relative isolation of rural living was exchanged for life in large cities, where economic and political issues superseded religious concerns (Huggett, 1971: 166; Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 45-6; de Loor, 1983: 430; Dekker and Ester, 1990: 168; Thoenes, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 286).

Indeed, the ranks of the "unchurchly" have increased most dramatically since the end of the Second World War. In 1960, 18 percent of

the Dutch population did not identify themselves with a particular affiliation. In less than a quarter of a century, according to some estimates, this figure had increased to almost 45 percent (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 17; 23). More recent studies have reported that close to one-half of the Dutch population are without formal church ties (Eisenga and Felling, 1990: 111; Van Houten, "R" 1992: 118). In fact, the government's recently published Social and Cultural Planning Report (1994) suggests that today close to 55 percent of the Dutch population are without church affiliation.

During the early 1980s the Dutch Humanist League commissioned a national survey to assess the principal demographic characteristics of the Dutch "unchurchly" community.

The study found that 44.5 percent of the Dutch population over sixteen years of age claimed to be "unchurchly"; 29.1 percent were Catholic; 15.1 percent were Dutch Reformed (Nederlands Hervormd); 7.5 percent were orthodox Calvinists (Gereformeerd); and finally, 3.4 percent answered "other" (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 15).

At the time of the study, slightly fewer than 50 percent of Holland's Roman Catholics lived within the two southernmost provinces of North Brabant and Limburg (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 34). However, within this region, Catholics constituted approximately 85 percent of the total population.

The greatest concentration of Religious Nones was found within the highly urbanized province of North Holland. This area was followed, in order, by the mainly agricultural provinces of Groningen and Friesland in the north. Limburg, which is the southernmost province in the nation, registered the lowest percentage of Religious Nones (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 25-30; 45).

According to the Doorn and Bommelje study, the heavily populated Zaanstreek area in the province of North Holland was the most "unchurchly" (67.5 percent) municipality in the nation. In the Amsterdam area, 66.1 percent of the citizens claimed to be without formal church ties (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 32).

4.13.2 Holland's Religious Nones: Additional Demographic Features

Men without formal religious ties outnumbered women by a margin of 55 to 45 percent (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 55). The "unchurchly" are overrepresented in younger age cohorts. Almost half of the people between 18 and 29 years of age were not formally affiliated with Dutch religious organizations, and, for those between 30 and 34 years of age, the figure was exactly 50 percent. Above the age of 35, the percentage of non-affiliates declined to approximately 33 percent for those individuals over 70 years of age (Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 51-2).

Members of the "unchurchly" community in the Netherlands tend to be better educated and more liberal in political matters than members of all of the other denominational categories (Tielman, in Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 7).

When questioned about church attendance, of those people who identified with a particular religious, affiliation more than one-third of the respondents (40.3 percent) claimed that they typically attended church less than once a month (1983: 17). The majority of people in this category were Roman Catholic (1983: 76).

Due to the fact that many of them attended church infrequently while maintaining formal affiliational ties, Doorn and Bommelje referred to this group as "unchurchly religious" (onkerkse kerkelijken). This group shared many significant demographic characteristics with the "unchurchly" community in general (1983: 75; 77).

Holland, Thung remarks, "has long been notorious for [its] early and rapidly growing disaffiliation" (1983: 505). At the end of the 1980s, Lechner suggested that "If current trends continue, church-going believers will be a distinct minority by the year 2000" (1989: 137). If the recent SCP Report is an accurate indication, Lechner's prediction was realized even sooner than he had anticipated.

4.14 DEPILLARIZATION

Since the end of the Second World War, Dutch society has experienced a significant amount of depillarization (ontzuiling) (Huggett, 1971: 83; Bryant, 1981: 56; Doorn and Bommelje, 1983: 77; Eisenga and Felling, 1990: 111; Thoenes, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 286). The sharp cleavages once separating the various pillars from one another have decreased in recent decades.

The onset of depillarization paralleled the exponential growth of the "unchurchly" community beginning in the 1960s. The growth of Holland's Religious None category has contributed to a partial decolumnization or "breakthrough" ("doorbraak") and with it, a greater degree of social integration (Lijphart, 1968: 182-3).

With respect to the causes of depillarization, the Nazi occupation encouraged a strong ecumenical response from the various religious organizations in the Netherlands. Yet another significant event leading to the partial "decolumnization" of Dutch society was the emergence of a predominantly neutral welfare state during the 1960s and 70s (Thurlings, 1979: 99-100; Dekker and Ester, 1990: 171).

Though it remains dependent on pillar-linked initiatives, the Dutch welfare state increasingly functions on a non-confessional administrative basis and is no longer forced to maintain precise equilibrium between the pillars

(Lechner, 1989: 141-2). By offering programs from a neutral pillar, the government is able to reduce the costs incurred through the duplication of services.

4.15 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The ideological and political foundations of Canada were predicated on a rejection of the revolutionary zeal characteristic of the American colonies during the eighteenth century. As a consequence, strong liberal intellectual currents failed to develop in Canadian society.

With the expansion of the Canadian frontier, beginning in the early 1800s, evangelical Protestant sects established the pattern for organizing the new social order outside of Quebec. In the decades following Confederation, cities and towns began to draw people away from the rural frontier. Territorial denominations began to make gains on the sects, and, as a consequence of massive waves of European immigration at the turn of the century, ethnic differences became very pronounced. Immigrant churches allowed newcomers to preserve their ethnic heritage while acclimatizing them to the Canadian way of life.

Mainly during the present century, secular influences have made gains in Canadian society. Despite the fact that the churches have managed to

maintain relatively high levels of formal affiliation, Canada has witnessed a dramatic growth in its Religious None category in recent decades.

And while Canadians continue to show an interest in the kinds of questions traditionally tackled by organized religion, sharp declines in church attendance and shrinking congregations would suggest that many people no longer find satisfactory answers in the mainline denominations.

Dating back almost five centuries, a number of secular intellectual currents have informed the development of the Dutch nation. Classical themes from the Renaissance were imported into the Netherlands via Erasmian humanism, which was popular with the wealthy Amsterdam trade merchants during the Golden Age. In addition, both the Protestant Reformation and the French Enlightenment played important roles in shaping contemporary Dutch society.

Beginning in the last years of the nineteenth century, a number of confessional pillars were formed by the major religious groups in Holland. Structural segmentation along ideological lines, coupled with early and pervasive secularization, prompted the emergence of a sizable unchurchly community, which has grown significantly in recent decades.

Religion and ethnicity have traditionally reinforced one another within the Canadian milieu. As we have seen, Dutch society has experienced its own inner divisions. However, where ethnic ties indicate the fault lines along which

Canada has been divided, in Holland these have been replaced almost exclusively by ideological differences.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNAL-ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS: THE CANADIAN AND DUTCH HUMANIST MOVEMENTS

In this chapter we put aside external historical and structural considerations in order to focus on internal factors. We will see that profound ideological differences inform the respective movements and that these differences have led the Canadians and the Dutch to approach humanism from very different angles.

5.1 CAMPBELL'S CATEGORIES

According to Campbell, irreligious movements must be evaluated principally in terms of their response to religious institutions. Whether the rejection of religion is implicit or explicit, "it is by the nature of the response to religion that irreligion is defined" (1972: 26).

Campbell suggests that where the reaction of an irreligious movement to a traditional religious organization is characterized by a rejection of the latter "and the expression of hostility towards its beliefs and practices", we are confronted with a classical example of an "anti-religious" response (1972: 24).

If, on the other hand, we encounter "a merely implicit rejection and behaviour expressive of indifference toward the religion", the response in

question is "a-religious" (1972: 25). In the "a-religious" response, less emphasis is placed on the criticism of religious institutions.

Campbell points out that the organizational structure of irreligious movements is typically either "associational" or "communal" in nature. Associational organizations "emphasize the functions they fulfil for society and are oriented externally towards some aspect of their environment" (1972: 45). In the majority of cases, activities are limited to the dissemination of their anti-clerical message, and little attempt is made to provide a congregational-style replacement for the churches.

The communal type of organization is loosely based upon the church model, emphasizing "the functions which membership fulfils for the member; in this sense the organizations are oriented internally to their members" (1972: 44). The less hostility displayed to organized religion, the greater the likelihood that the movement under scrutiny functions like a liberal church congregation.

On the broadest level, irreligious organizations characterized by "anti-religious" sentiments and "associational" organizational patterns may be classified as "abolitionist". Abolitionists believe that religious needs "need not continue and that to dispense with religion is to dispense with unnecessary needs" (1972: 139).

From this perspective, the ultimate goal of irreligion is the eradication of traditional expressions of religion. On an organizational level, "abolitionists"

generally take measures to ensure that their organization does not resemble a religious denomination in any manner. (Campbell, 1972: 42-3).

On the other hand, irreligious organizations which can be characterized in terms of an "a-religious" response and a "communal" organizational pattern may be classified as "substitutionist". Substitutionists maintain that religious needs "will continue and that traditional religion will not therefore be replaced until alternatives are offered" (1972: 139). A more moderate ideological stance informs their thinking, and they typically develop a secular replacement for organized religion.

5.2 THE HAC: PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the authors of the HAC Constitution, "Humanism" represents

> a non-theistic, non-religious ethical philosophy of life based on the principle that human beings are responsible for giving meaning and purpose to their lives relying on their human capacities of reason and responsibility and natural and social resources (1991: 1).

This definition closely resembles the Minimal Statement issued by the IHEU (stated in the second chapter), with the exception that whereas the former simply "rejects supernatural views of reality", the HAC's version is explicitly "non-religious".

According to the author of the HAC's "Are You a Humanist?", though we are born atheists, powerful religious institutions prevent us from developing our potential to the fullest ("AYAH?": 3). From this perspective, religion is unnatural and ultimately has a corrupting influence on the individual's development.

Canadian humanists typically go to great lengths in order to distinguish their worldview from theistic meaning systems. Humanism represents "a way of life", or more specifically, a "philosophy", asserting the fundamental dignity of all men and women and affirming their capacity for self realization through reason ("THA": 1).

The authority of the scientific Weltanschauung figures prominently in the Canadian movement. According to the HAC's "Statement of Principles", every account of nature must pass the tests of scientific evidence ("HAC SOP", 1992: 8-9). As it is impossible to test the veracity of traditional religious accounts scientifically, deference to a transcendent God signals "a disservice to the human species" ("HAC SOP", 1992: 8).

5.2.1 The Canadian Humanist Movement: Formal Organization

The humanist movement in Canada is very loosely organized. The formal structure of the HAC does not extend beyond a number of small groups and the national Executive. The loose structure of the national Association is

reinforced by the fact that the two largest concentrations of HAC members--in Ontario and British Columbia--are separated by thousands of miles.

The relative isolation of the humanist groups in British Columbia has meant that they have traditionally maintained "associated" rather than "affiliated" status with the national organization. Little news about the groups in British Columbia is available through the "HiC" journal or the quarterly HAC newsletters.

As only one in five HAC members currently belongs to a local chapter, many of Canada's humanists never meet one another. Outside of group meetings, the only opportunity for humanist fellowship is the Annual General Meeting. These gatherings usually take place either in Ottawa or Toronto. As a consequence, humanists from Ontario are generally overrepresented. Due to prohibitive travel costs, HAC members from the western provinces seldom participate in the annual conferences.

For the most part, the only tangible links between members of the Canadian humanist movement are the "HiC" quarterly journal and the smaller HAC newsletter. These two publications are crucial to the functioning of the movement.

Returning for the moment to our earlier discussion of the church-sect theme, we must point out that one of the important differences between these two forms of religious organization concerns the issue of generational

continuity. Where the individual is born into a "church" and automatically becomes a member of that particular community, membership in a "sect" requires a voluntary, conscious conversion (Weber, 1968: 305-6; Troeltsch, 1976: 338-9). As a consequence, it is generally more difficult for a sect to establish a stable membership than it is for a church, insofar as the latter can claim a steady stream of congregants.

In common with religious sects, the HAC has experienced a fair amount of difficulty maintaining generational continuity over the last quarter-century.

Despite the fact that the HAC membership has been growing in recent years, the average annual rate of attrition remains close to 30 percent. Looking at the results of our surveys, we find that close to two-thirds of HAC members were fifty years of age or older. Nearly two-thirds (61 percent) had been members of the national organization for less than five years. And more than one-third (34 percent) had been members for two years or less. Although the membership is fairly old, most humanists have not been affiliated with the movement for very long.

It will be recalled that close to 90 percent of the HAC's members were exposed to some religious training during their formative years. Of these, close to 40 percent "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their family of origin "was fairly strict with regard to religious issues and practices".

We would argue that this figure may actually be higher, but that many humanists were wary of giving the impression that religion had played a formidable role in shaping their lives. In support of this hypothesis, we found that more than half of the respondents (54 percent) admitted to having experienced a slow and sometimes painful struggle to break free of the religious influences of their youth.

Combining these three factors--high average age, relatively brief affiliation, and the fact that the majority of respondents have relinquished previous ecclesiastical influences--it is probably the case that many humanists join the organization only after they have successfully severed the religious ties of their formative years.

In 1980, only 77 individuals belonged to the HAC. By the summer of 1994, there were approximately 520 members in the organization. While it would appear that the HAC is enjoying unparalleled growth, in actuality, the current size of the Association approximates the figure recorded during the late 1960s, when the HAC was first organized.

The fact that membership within the HAC dipped sharply throughout the 1970s and is now on the way back up to its former levels can be explained by a cyclical pattern of growth observed in some of the more prominent irreligious movements during the nineteenth century.

The fortunes of many of the early irreligious organizations declined after approximately thirty years. Among others, this was true of the Freethought movement in the United States (1860-90); Secularism in Britain (1850s-1880s); and the British Rationalist Press Association (1900-1930s).

The figure of thirty years is likely encountered because it approximates the length of a single generation. It would appear that the prosperity of many irreligious movements is closely linked to a specific generation of irreligious people. When the members of this group pass on, the movement essentially dies with them.

We would argue that the recent resurgence in membership simply represents a new generation of Canadian humanists. When the members of this group begin to die or are no longer able to participate in the organization due to old age or illness, it is likely that the size of the Association will drop once more.

5.2.2 The HAC: Local Meetings

During the course of her research,Earles found many humanist organizations complaining of small numbers, poor participation,and an absence of young people. In the majority of cases these groups were following the "lecture/discussion model", which evolved as part of the nineteenth century freethought tradition ("IH" (3) 1987: 4).

For the most part, local humanist gatherings in Canada continue to follow this approach. Meetings typically involve academic-style lectures or presentations. Topics for discussion usually address religious themes directly--the manipulative practices of televangelists, for instance--or controversial social issues such as euthanasia, allowing the humanists to deal with more substantive themes, while at the same time indulging their anti-religious biases.

Only one of the local humanist chapters (Ottawa) has managed to function throughout the HAC's twenty-five year history. Furthermore, between the years 1982 and 1984 the Ottawa Association was the only group meeting on a regular basis in the entire nation. It is interesting to note that between 1978 and 1990, there was no local group in Canada's largest city, despite the fact that the Metropolitan Toronto area has consistently recorded the highest concentration of humanists in the country.

5.2.3 The HAC: Humanist Counselling and Services

According to the revised HAC Constitution, one of the aims of the national organization is "to provide opportunities for fellowship, study and service at all levels of humanistic endeavour". The fourth Article of this document claims that the HAC intends

> To offer and provide meaningful ceremonies to members and non-members at significant times such as marriage and death; such

> ceremonies to be free from supernatural implications and to be dignified (HAC Constitution, 1991: 2).

Despite the stated aims of the Constitution, the provision of non-religious ceremonies or services has not played a prominent role in the history of the Canadian movement. Indeed, we have managed to uncover only three instances where Canadian humanists have been involved in non-religious ceremonies: a humanist "naming-at-birth" was held in Ottawa in 1986; and within the last eighteen months two secular memorial services were conducted by humanists for their recently deceased parents.

Asked to identify important humanist themes on "The Association Survey", out of a possible sixteen issues, the development of "non-religious ceremonies" ranked tenth. Less than half (49 percent) of the respondents indicated that they were personally interested in this topic.

A comment made by Phil Jones, a former HAC President, summarizes the "unofficial" Canadian position on non-religious ceremonies. According to Jones, "a humanist life stance is life-affirming and creates the conditions for real happiness .... the daily living of life is vastly more important than some ceremonials" ("HAC NL" (3) 1991: 4).

Frustrated by the lack of interest in developing non-theistic ceremonies or services for the membership and the larger community of Religious Nones, in an early "HiC" editorial, Page asked

> What can and should we offer as a moral equivalent of religion? Humanists are as deeply concerned with the vital turning points of life as are the religious. Yet humanism, at least in Canada, does not address the "meaning function". This may be a significant factor in the small size of our membership ("HiC" (64) 1983: 22).

5.2.4 The HAC: Education

The second Article of the HAC Constitution states that the organization will

> serve the educational needs of its members and others of humanistic, scientific and naturalistic outlook in a democratic, non-dogmatic manner free from authoritarian doctrine (HAC Constitution, 1991: 2).

However, throughout the history of the national Association, Canadian humanists have placed little emphasis on non-theistic education. Aside from Montreal's humanist Sunday School (which operated during the 1960s), the only other initiative in this area involved recent attempts to have a section on humanism included in a multi-faith religious module intended for Ottawa's public schools.

Some of the HAC's leading members put together a draft version of the humanist chapter, which was completed in late 1993. The Ottawa Board of Education recently decided to put the entire project aside for the time being.

As was mentioned earlier in the thesis, a particularly contentious issue addressed by the national Association concerns funding for religious education. One of the questions on "The McTaggart Survey" asked whether or not

"Canadian Separate Schools should receive any financial support from the public purse". Ninety-three percent of the respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they should not.

According to the results of "The McTaggart Survey", 60 percent of respondents with children claimed to have raised them "in accordance with the principles of humanism". However, given some of the answers to this question, we have reason to believe that this figure is too high.

Consider a few of the responses to the question of whether or not members raised their children as humanists:

> Very much so. However this will include education on religion and does not mean that our children cannot attend church if they choose.
>
> Yes, in combination with their mother's Catholicism.
>
> Yes, except for the atheism angle.
>
> Yes, but we also sent them to Sunday School to learn about moral principles. We felt that they should have a good moral example outside of the home ... [We] also felt that they should learn about Christian religion, in case they needed its support.

While the aforementioned respondents obviously believe that humanism and religion are not necessarily mutually exclusive, others operate from a more militant position. Representative of the anti-religious responses are the following:

> Yes. Both, I'm proud to say, are atheists.

> Yes, of course. We are trying not to clutter their minds with superstition. We are trying to set a humanistic example.

While all of the aforementioned answers are affirmative, they contain a great deal of variation with respect to what humanism actually stands for. The lack of consistency revealed in the two sets of answers suggests that many members of the organization probably do not possess a clearly defined idea of the humanist Weltanschauung, or its guiding assumptions.

Ten percent of respondents reported that they had raised their children observing at least some traditional religious teachings and/or practices. Another 9 percent simply answered that they did not raise their children as humanists. An additional 8 percent claimed that they did not know about the presence of an organized humanist movement when they were raising their children, or that the latter were grown by the time that they themselves became acquainted with humanism's teachings.

5.2.5 The HAC: Proselytization

Despite their professed disdain for the tactics of fundamentalist churches, Canadian humanists are not averse to proselytization. A substantial amount of time at local meetings is devoted to developing innovative strategies for "getting the humanist message out".

At some point, individuals visiting humanist gatherings will be asked to clarify their ideological beliefs in front of the group, usually after a spokesperson from the local association has outlined the non-theistic foundations of the Canadian movement. If the newcomer's views are deemed sufficiently orthodox, he or she is asked to join the group on a formal basis and is often petitioned to accept a low-ranking administrative position within the Association to ensure continued participation.

5.2.6 The HAC: Publicity

Since its founding, the HAC has done little to publicize itself ("HiC" (44) 1978: 3; "HiC" (89) 1989: 38). Very few people are aware of an organized humanist movement in Canada. A common complaint from many HAC members is that they were "humanists" long before realizing that there was a formally organized movement. Of the respondents who made additional comments on "The Association Survey", 43 percent claimed that the HAC required a much higher profile in Canadian society.

Twenty-six percent of those surveyed joined the national organization after being introduced to humanism through a personal acquaintance. An additional 17 percent joined after coming across references to the HAC in local or regional newspapers. Another 12 percent discovered the HAC through reading the "HiC" quarterly journal.

5.2.7 The HAC: Co-operation with Churches

In his first "HiC" editorial (1982), Don Page described the growing secularization of Canadian society, evidenced by the ecumenical trend in many of the mainline churches. In his opinion, progress had been made towards a secular and more humanistic society, and it was time for the humanists to recognize that they had many allies among the more liberal religious groups. Page advised the HAC to take a more inclusive stance on this issue:

> Perhaps it is time to reconsider our objectives as humanists, and to restate them in such a way as to include those Christians, Jews and other religionists who consider themselves to be humanist. Perhaps the absence of theism should not be a factor in our definition of a humanist, but rather the crucial issue should be the absence of dogmatic belief that one has the only truth ("HiC" (62) 1982: 1).

With the exception of one occasion--where the Montreal Fellowship and the local Unitarian congregation co-hosted a dinner to raise money for Morgentaler's legal defense during the early 1970s (HiC (40) 1977: 46)--any form of cooperation with "religious" organizations has been an anathema ("HiC" (77) 1986: 38; (80) 1987: 44; (81) 1987: 39; (88) 1989: 21).

Stan Stokes' response is representative of the typical attitude of Canadian humanists on the issue of co-operation with liberal religious organizations. For Stokes, the secular worldview must remain

> undiluted through affiliation with other groups .... to merge with the Unitarians, as certain American groups have done, is, perhaps, not acceptable to such of us who are not comfortable in a church;

> the Unitarians are still part of the Christian church. Religion is one of the taboos with our non-religious orientation ("HiC" (44) 1977: 46).

It will be recalled that the American humanist movement emerged out of the Unitarian religious tradition. Stella Falk, one of the founders of the Montreal Fellowship, suggests that humanism and Unitarianism actually have very little in common. For Falk, formal affiliation with the Unitarians on any level

> would send the humanist movement, as an orientation, into a deathly spin .... secularism, is, of course, a rational philosophy, not a religion, though many hazy thinkers tend to think it is the latter ("HiC" (44) 1977: 46).

5.3 THE VERBOND: PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Humanism", according to the Verbond's official definition,

> is the moral conviction through which man endeavors to understand life and the world exclusively with human powers. It regards the capacity of discriminative judgement as fundamental for man; nothing or nobody beyond him can be made responsible for this judgement (HV, 1992: 1).

It is important to note that, unlike the Canadian example, this definition does not explicitly address the "non-theistic" foundations of humanism.

That man is alone responsible for directing the course of human affairs serves merely as a point of departure for the Dutch, and the assumption itself is never questioned. Unlike Canadian humanists, the Dutch do not endlessly debate the non-religious foundations of their worldview. By steering clear of

difficult metaphysical questions, they affirm the practical focus of their movement. Van Praag points out that

> It is not the primary purpose of humanism to attack religion, but rather to formulate a basis for humanist practice in everyday life ("TH" Nov./Dec. 1969: 17).

In Holland, the humanist levensovertuiging (literally, "life conviction") is predicated on the principle of human self-determination (menselijke zelfbeschikking). Self determination means "the right to give meaning and shape to one's own life as long as others are not prohibited to apply their right of self determination" (Tielman, "R" (39-2) 1992: 85).

The social order most conducive to this ideal is one which facilitates "pluriformity" ("pluriformiteit") (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 215; Tielman, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991: 291). Pluriformity is based on the premise that competing belief systems should be encouraged to exist alongside one another and that the state bears the responsibility for creating an environment which will accommodate this approach. To this end,

> the separation of church and state does not provide the government with an excuse for indifference in the field of religions and life stances. This separation constitutes a challenge to our welfare state to face up to its duty of creating favourable conditions in this field as well, without interference or neglect (Tielman, "IH" (2) 1986: 2-4).

While the humanist's penchant for pluriformity has clearly been influenced by the pillarized structure of Dutch society, it is important to note that

they are not one and the same (Tielman, 1987: 9). Originally, the pillars represented a set of mutually exclusive, self-contained sub-units within the larger society. With the onset of depillarization, the divisions separating the various blocs were relaxed, resulting in a more pluralistic, or "pluriform" social order.

Given the primacy of ethical questions in our lives, Dutch humanists feel that the individual should be presented with a wide range of options (both theistic and non-theistic), empowering him or her to make informed moral choices. Implicit in this approach is the recognition that while the various lifeviews represent different interpretations of the human condition, all have their place, and no one in particular is granted hegemony over the others.

Support for the principle of pluriformity extends so far that, were they given the option, Dutch humanists would reject a lifeview education program based on a single meaning system, even a humanistic one:

> The Dutch humanist movement has always been in favour of a pluralist school system. It is also against humanist schools because lifestance-based schools tend to become dogmatic and indoctrinate their philosophy of life ("IH" (2) 1992: 24).

The principal threat posed by "neutrality"--where the state refrains from involving itself in ethical matters altogether--is that important moral issues tend to be ignored, resulting in a nihilistic social climate. The Verbond plays a vital role in contemporary Dutch society because in the highly individualistic post-

Christian era, we encounter many temptations to live "sinfully", in other words, nihilistically (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 51).

5.3.1 The Dutch Humanist Movement: Formal Organization

Compared to the movement in Canada, humanism in the Netherlands is characterized by a much higher degree of formal organization. Over and above the many practical services and programs offered through the movement, Dutch humanism caters to a wide range of special interests.

For instance, humanists concerned strictly with the philosophical dimensions of their worldview can join the Socrates foundation, while individuals interested in supporting aid programs in Third-World nations can make contributions through the Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (HIVOS). Meanwhile, humanists concerned with the oppression of racial minorities or the fate of political refugees around the globe can support the Humanistic Council for Human Rights (HOM).

Undoubtedly, the most impressive feature of the Dutch humanist pillar is the wide range of educational and welfare projects it has developed over the last half century--everything from day care programs for children, through to homes for the elderly and secular funeral services.

Unlike the situation in Canada, where the humanist community is thinly spread across a vast country, members of the Dutch organizations are

concentrated in a relatively small, densely populated nation, making it possible to establish a high level of intercommunication between the different departments within the movement. Employees, volunteers, and directors of the various projects meet on a regular basis.

However, it must be noted that in the case of both the Verbond and Humanitas, a fairly small number--approximately 10 percent of their respective memberships--participate in the provision of non-theistic adult education programs and services. Furthermore, as is the case in Canada, attendance and participation in the Verbond's local chapters is fairly low (approximately 10 to 15 percent).

For the majority of humanists in the Netherlands, on the organizational level, commitment to the pillar seldom involves more than maintaining their membership and keeping abreast of activities and events through the humanist media (magazines, newsletters, radio, and television programs) (Cramer, 1991: 31-3).

Where membership within the HAC appears to be following a cyclical pattern of development, affiliation with the Verbond rose steadily from its founding until the late 1960s when it began to level off. Membership has remained fairly stable over the course of the last quarter-century, fluctuating between 14 and 16,000 (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 224). It is interesting to

note that membership within the Verbond began to plateau just as the humanist pillar was becoming formally institutionalized in Dutch society.

We would suggest that the Verbond escaped the cyclical membership pattern as a result of its formally recognized status as an alternative life-stance organization. State support provides the Verbond with a degree of organizational stability that is missing from the Canadian scenario.

In 1989, approximately 80 percent of Verbond members had belonged to the organization for two years or longer (Cramer, 1991: 10). The attrition rate for the Humanist League is significantly lower than it is for the HAC, typically falling between 7 (Cramer, 1991: 5) and 10 percent each year (Earles, 1989: 305-6). Death was the reason cited for 90 percent of the losses recorded in 1989 (Cramer, 1991: 9). In some cases, individuals joining the Verbond have belonged before: in 1986, for instance, 6 percent of the new joiners had been members previously (Cramer, 1991: 27).

However, despite the success achieved with humanist education programs during the past two decades, in addition to numerous attempts to attract young men and women into its ranks (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 41-5), older people continue to be overrepresented within the Verbond. In 1989, close to three-quarters of the membership were over 40 years of age. Children who received humanist lifestance education when the program was first offered in

1970 are approximately 30 years of age today, and it is reasonable to expect that there would be more involvement among Dutch youth.

Based on the available data, we would suggest that like the Canadian membership, the majority of people who affiliate with the Verbond join the organization only after they have broken free of formal religious bonds, a process which seems to take place predominantly during the individual's middle years. This hypothesis is supported by Cramer, who found that many people join the Verbond in order "to belong somewhere after they leave the church" (1991: 7; 9; 10; 17).

5.3.2 The Verbond: Local Meetings

Despite the attendance problem discussed earlier, upon joining the Verbond, every member is nominally included in the community closest to his or her place of residence. Group affiliation in the League is important because the determination of subsidies is strongly influenced by the size of the humanist community within a particular municipality or province.

During the early years, local Verbond chapters consciously followed the church model. Meeting on Sunday mornings, most of them included a liturgical component and, through humanistic "sermons", attempted to establish a strong sense of community among their irreligious membership (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 30).

These efforts met with little success, and attendance figures remained fairly low. In cases where the more rational lecture/discussion model was employed, the results were equally unsatisfactory.

As is the case with local get-togethers in Canada, in the past, some participants within the Verbond have complained that the meetings are often too cerebral and that it is difficult to establish a true sense of fellowship with humanists, many of whom tend to be rather individualistic by temperament (Cramer, 1991: 9; 14; 18).

However, unlike the Canadian movement, in recent years many of the larger European organizations have moved away from the traditional lecture/discussion meeting. The more creative movements are attempting to "multi-dimensionalize humanist meetings to cater for the feeling (as well as the thinking) person" (Earles, 1989: 389-90).

In the majority of cases, the Verbond has abandoned both the church model and the lecture/discussion approach. The leaders of the Verbond argue that falling attendance rates--both for theistic and non-theistic organizations--indicate that new expressions of fellowship are required.

Today, meetings in the Netherlands are usually organized around a specific theme or event and attempt to engage members in an active manner. Many of the Verbond chapters organize special outings, such as hikes, picnics, and visits to art galleries. Deserving special attention are the larger Dutch

humanist centres, which "have a host of activities that cover the range of what being human involves--the social, the intellectual, the celebratory, the physical, the ethical and the aesthetic" (Earles, "IH" (3) 1987: 4).

5.3.3 The Dutch Humanist Movement: Counselling and Services

For the Dutch, thought and praxis meet in humanism, a lifeview designed to respond to contemporary problems and challenges. According to Van Praag, there can be no

> separation between humanist thought and action. We should recognize that fertile humanist thought inspires deeds and that significant actions require thought. A humanist organization has meaning precisely in regard to action .... Our humanist movement can never exercise real influence if it merely represents an abstract idea ("TH" May/June 1973: 28).

As was described in Chapter Three, both Humanitas and the Verbond began to initiate non-theistic services soon after they were founded, indicating that a practical, service-to-people orientation informed the Dutch movement from the very beginning. The chief aim of the Dutch humanist movement has been to provide the unchurchly community with non-confessional services on par with the churches. The quest for parity has furnished the movement with a clear raison d'etre (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 1; 49). Today, the humanist pillar is firmly established and equal legal position has been reached between

theistic religions and nontheistic lifestances ("IH" (4) 1991: 8-9; "IH" (2) 1992: 9).

Comparing the HAC with the Verbond, the only remarkable demographic difference between the two organizations is that while men outnumber women in the former by more than two to one, in the latter, women outnumber men (56 and 44 percent respectively). Budd notes that in all of her research the only irreligious organization with fairly equal levels of participation between men and women was Britain's ethical culture movement (1977: 250). She points out that in the secularist, rationalist and humanist organizations in Britain, men have consistently outnumbered women.

We must note that in common with the Verbond, most ethical cultural societies have placed a great deal of emphasis on the provision of secular services. Although data from other organizations would be required to make a strong case for this argument, we would suggest that irreligious groups with positive, service-oriented programs may simply be more attractive to women than rationalistic organizations such as the HAC, with its exclusive emphasis on atheism and the scientific method.

5.3.4 The Dutch Humanist Movement: Education

Humanist education plays a very significant role in the Dutch movement. Informative programs are in place for children and adults of all ages, from lifeview education in public schools and select universities, through to continuing adult education seminars offered by the Humanist Study Centre in Utrecht.

Consistent with the principles of pluriformity, Verbond members believe that the school-age child must not be exposed to one lifeview only; rather, he or she should receive a thorough grounding in a number of distinct religious and philosophical approaches, which will allow him or her to make an informed and mature choice between them (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 125-6).

Theistic and non-theistic approaches are equally relevant because both address important ethical questions. "By integrating both religious and humanist education in an optional way in public schools", Tielman points out, "we prevent both theocratic and technocratic tendencies and strengthen democracy" ("R" (39-2) 1992: 86).

5.3.5 The Dutch Humanist Movement: Proselytization

Due to their commitment to pluriformity, Dutch humanist organizations are reluctant to proselytize. There is no pressure placed on students taking humanist lifestance education to join the Verbond, which may in part account

for the low levels of participation among Dutch youth. Unlike the Belgian Verbond--which was in fact modelled after the Dutch league--the latter does not offer secular confirmation ceremonies because it believes that it is important for their members to embrace humanism freely and in a mature manner.

5.3.6 The Dutch Humanist Movement: Publicity

Unlike the Canadian Association, the Verbond has a relatively high profile, largely as a consequence of media exposure. In 1989, 48 percent of new Verbond members joined as a result of humanist radio and television programming (Cramer, 1991: 7).

In addition to humanist media, the movement clearly gains publicity through the provision of successful counselling and educational programs. In 1979, an independent survey revealed that 83 percent of Dutch adults knew of the Humanist League and its activities ("R" (30-1) 1983: 15). In 1981, a similar survey found that 96 percent of Dutch adults were familiar with the Verbond ("R" (30-2) 1983: 57).

5.3.7 The Verbond: Co-operation with the Churches

Throughout its history, the Dageraad has refrained from establishing formal contact with Dutch churches. Relations between the freethinkers and

the confessional pillars have traditionally been characterized by a state of mutual ignorance (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 150).

When the Verbond emerged during the mid-1940s, it was informed by a radically different ideological orientation. The humanists hoped to reverse the tide of "spiritual nihilism" gripping Dutch society in the aftermath of the war. From the beginning, the churches were viewed as potential partners in this fight (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 150).

The contrasting approaches of Dutch and Canadian humanists on this particular issue marks an important distinction between the two movements. Despite a few serious misunderstandings, from 1949 onward the Verbond managed to establish formal contacts with the mainline churches in the Netherlands (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 152).

In 1951, together with a group of liberal Protestants within the Reformed Church, the Verbond issued a joint declaration favouring an ecumenical approach to religious instruction in Dutch schools (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 151). Over the years, the two organizations have held numerous dialogues together. When they first proposed state subsidies for non-theistic lifestance education, the Verbond sought the support of the Reformed Church.

Around the same time, contacts were also established with the Re-reformed Calvinists, though relations were not as amicable as they were with the Reformed Church. A less enthusiastic response was to be expected from

the smaller church, given its strict adherence to Calvinist doctrine, compared with the more secular Reformed Church (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 154).

The greatest challenge has been posed by the Roman Catholics. Throughout its history, the League has been careful not to make statements reflecting an anti-Catholic bias, even when members of the Church were themselves very negative towards the Verbond (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 159).

In 1954, Van Praag initiated a dialogue with a prominent professor at the Catholic University in Nijmegen. Relations with Dutch Catholics steadily improved over the years, and, in 1969, a representative from the Vatican was invited to attend the IHEU Board Meeting held in Utrecht. Similar talks were held again in the following year (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 160).

This tradition has continued until fairly recently. With the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe--an event which, according to the Vatican, demonstrates that Christianity has triumphed over atheism once and for all--the Church suspended this on-going dialogue with the IHEU in 1993.

Where the churches have attacked humanists, the latter tend to respond in a measured, rational manner. Typical, for instance, was the Verbond's reaction to a Catholic bishop's public announcement (1947) that only those who believe in God can truly be said to have values and that ethical principles are

given to men and women directly by God. Humanists, the bishop went on to claim, could not be said to have moral values at all.

The leaders of the Verbond reacted calmly, pointing out that research conducted in 1910, 1946, and again in the current year (1947), revealed that Catholics themselves constituted the largest denominational category in the Dutch prison system--much larger than the irreligious, who generally occupied a higher position on the socio-economic scale (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 156).

5.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Campbell suggests that some irreligious organizations may be characterized by a "fear of sectarianism" and a strong "preference for loose-knit and unformalized organizational structures" (1972: 41-3). In other words, they do not want to resemble religious organizations in any way, and, as a consequence, remain fairly underdeveloped. Considering the instability of organized humanism in Canada, it would appear that Campbell's observations fit the Canadian setting very well.

Commenting on the various British irreligious organizations, which were the focus of her study, Budd remarks that

> There were and are unavoidable ambiguities in the purpose of these movements, since members have on the whole been united by what they do not believe but anxious to do more than go on attacking it (1977: 31).

This statement adequately describes the HAC, which manages to hold itself together through an intense dislike for organized religion. However, perhaps only on an implicit level, the members of this organization view humanism as having more to offer than a critique of the churches. As we will see in greater detail in Chapter Six, the underdevelopment of the national Association can in part be traced back to its militant anti-religious response.

In the Netherlands, humanists work alongside Catholic and Protestant counsellors in hospitals, prisons and the armed forces. Similarly, where Protestants and Catholics are given an opportunity to teach ethics courses in public schools, so are the humanists. Lastly, while the churches have their own state-financed confessional radio and television networks, Dutch humanists have been given the same consideration.

In short, just as Protestants and Catholics have managed to construct distinctive pillars, so have the humanists, which provides the movement with a very good reason to cultivate an amicable relationship with the confessional blocs (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 162).

Referring to the nineteenth-century secularist movement in Britain, Budd notes that most of the membership fell within two distinct ideological camps. The "militant secularist believed that to abate the anti-religious nature of the movement destroyed its only legitimate purpose", while the more moderate secularist attempted to "make the movement more respectable--to make it

accepted and valued within the existing legitimated forms of social protest" (1977: 31).

Budd is similarly describing the vast differences separating the Canadian and Dutch humanist movements. By limiting its role to a hostile dismissal of religion and its concerns, the Canadian movement typically attracts a militant clientele, and remains on the periphery of society. Humanists in the Netherlands tend to be much more accommodating, as evidenced by their willingness to work within the pillarized structure of Dutch society.

CHAPTER SIX: ABOLITIONISTS VERSUS SUBSTITUTIONISTS

6.1 ORGANIZED HUMANISM IN CANADA: ABOLITIONIST

Throughout its history the Canadian humanist movement has been distinguished by its strong distaste for organized religion. In the mid-1980s, Page noted that the rejection of religion is the only area in which we enjoy a widespread consensus" ("HiC" (72)1985:2). However, the same mentality characterized the early days of the organization. In one of his first "HiC" editorials, J. Lloyd Brereton acknowledged that the "movement is based primarily on anti-clericalism" ("HiC" (7)1969:1). In a later editorial, Brereton expanded on these sentiments, admitting that he

> cannot accept that we are wrong to attack religion ... If, as we maintain, religion allies itself with forces that are oppressing mankind, and if mankind is disinclined to face that ugly fact, then this magazine must keep making the point... Building often involves first pulling down ("HiC" (14/15)1970:3).

By the end of the 1970s Brereton could see the limitations of a narrow anti-clerical approach. At one time religious organizations in Canada were so powerful that it was necessary to organize a movement that was quite independent of religion, "even hostile to it". However, Canada was becoming increasingly secularized during the 1970s and Brereton felt that the humanists

should take measures to attract more members. It was time, he noted, "to spearhead a system different from confrontation" ("HiC" (42)1977:10-11).

Morgentaler was similarly concerned with the anti-religious tendencies characteristic of the Canadian movement ("HiC" (100)1992:11). In an early "HiC" editorial, he demands that the movement not spend all of its energies "knocking established religious bodies" ("HiC" (1)1967:2).

Morgentaler felt that the anti-clerical posture of the movement was anachronistic. A "narrow" definition of humanism is outdated and lacks vitality... It would be a mistake to allow ourselves to be blinded by a hatred of traditional religion into following a narrow path of limited concern in opposition to the churches... ("HiC" (13)1970:13-14).

6.1.1 The Page Fiasco

The strong current of anti-clericism within the ranks of Canada's humanists is clearly illustrated through the events surrounding Don Page's editorial reign at the "HiC", lasting from 1983 until 1987. For our purposes, Page's involvement with the "HiC" was interesting because he attempted to coax Canadian humanism into pursuing a more inclusive path.

The majority of Page's criticisms of the North American movement were based upon his knowledge of the relative success achieved by organized humanist movements in Europe ("HiC" (75)1985/6:2). Returning from the

IHEU Congress held in Oslo, Norway, he has obviously been impressed by the European approach. He speaks glowingly of

> The provision of counselling services and non-theistic ceremonies for baby-naming, marriages and funerals. We heard about the exciting developments in countries like Holland and Norway where humanist counsellors and chaplains now have equal status to religious chaplains in prisons, in hospitals, in the armed services and in schools ("HiC" (77)1986:2).

In one of his first editorials Page suggests that humanism may be classified as a religion ("HiC" (66)1983:1). Two years later Page returned to the issue once more, arguing that humanism qualifies as a "religion" because it represents a form of faith:

> In my opinion, religion has more to do with having a faith, and a faith is central to being a humanist--faith in the possibility of our species to create a worthwhile life here on earth for all... ("HiC" (75)1985/6:2).

If the Canadian movement insisted on ignoring the spiritual dimension of human experience, Page believed that its appeal would be seriously compromised ("HiC" (81)1987:39). "Humanism is more than a purely rational, non-theistic philosophy", he argued, and "must appeal also to the poetic side of human nature if it is to offer a widely accepted alternative to theistic religion" ("HiC" (77)1986:2).

Page's attempts to have the Canadian movement "acknowledge a wider role for humanism" ("HiC" (72)1985:2) were not well received. Petitions for his resignation began to appear in the quarterly journal late in 1986 ("HiC"

(79)1986/7:39). He was eventually relieved of his responsibilities as Editor of the "HiC" in 1987. Page remained a "Member-at-Large" on the HAC Executive until 1990 when he was pressured by other board members to recant his heretical views or leave the Association. In the end, he chose the latter option.

The last mention of this turbulent period in the history of the Canadian movement appeared in a 1990 HAC newsletter. Although he does not identify Page by name, then-HAC President Phil Jones mentions an attempt

> to incorporate a quasi-religious and mystical aspect into our Association. The rest of the Executive and myself have rejected this dilution of our aims... There comes a time when the Association cannot survive on a diet of ambiguity in its stance ... A few might say that we should broaden our aims in the interest of toleration. People who say this are misunderstanding what toleration is all about. There is nothing intolerant about having clear goals and objectives ("HAC NL" (1)1990:4).

And indeed, the HAC's membership figures during Page's editorial stint with the "HiC" were poor. Throughout his five year tenure with the magazine, it fluctuated between 93 and 127 for the entire Canadian movement.

In the recent history of the international humanist movement a serious ideological schism has been documented. At an IHEU Board Meeting held in 1989, on behalf of CODESH Kurtz opposed a motion calling for tolerance and recognition of religious humanists.

The militancy of Kurtz's position caused a fair amount of dissent on the international level. Two years later, the controversy surrounding this issue

had not yet abated, leading Page (who was the Editor of the "International Humanist" at the time) to publish an editorial critical of Kurtz's approach to humanism. He suggested that

> The sectarian distinction between "secular" and "religious" humanism which has become so embedded in humanist language and thinking ... can be seen to be ephemeral and, to submit, destructive of the original spirit of our movement... It is also clear from the record that this was to be a service-to-people enterprise, and not simply to be a philosophy ("IH" (3)1991:10-11).

In the next issue of "International Humanist" some of the more prominent leaders of the North American Committee for Humanism (NACH)- having heard of Kurtz's ambitions to form a rival non-theistic organization- decided to throw their support behind Page. In a letter of protest written in support of the Editor, the leaders of NACH claimed that the North American humanist movement was "experiencing an internecine dispute that drains our resources and undermines our ability to gain public respect and credibility" ("IH" (4)1991:2).

In the same issue leading European humanists entered this discussion, documenting their careful avoidance of philosophical debates in favour of creating practical humanist initiatives. The Europeans typically employ

> the word "humanism" without any prefixes. No social movement can develop any importance without a clear image... In several European countries, humanist movements have succeeded in creating a clear image of humanism. In some countries, like the Netherlands, equal

> legal position has been reached by theistic religions on the one hand and nontheistic lifestances on the other.

On the Continent dangerous ideological schisms are precluded by focusing on the service dimension of the humanist Weltanschauung: "In Europe we do not see many different humanist organizations with conflicting strategies trying to obtain equal rights for humanists... European humanism tends to be pluralist, pragmatic and practical" ("IH" (4)1991:8-9).

The events surrounding this issue eventually led Kurtz and a handful of anti-religious groups--including the HAC--to initiate the Coalition for Secular Humanism and Freethought (CSHAFT) which is intended to be a purely "nontheistic" alternative to NACH.

Following Page's resignation as Editor of the "HiC", the relationship between the HAC and CODESH intensified significantly. Kurtz and his assistants began to travel north of the border, visiting and lecturing to local groups as well as attending HAC's semi-annual Executive meetings ("HiC" (90) 1989:23). At the present time it is common practice for CODESH to send representatives to the various HAC functions and to advise the Canadian movement on an ad hoc basis.

6.1.2 The Canadian Humanist Movement: The Anti-Religious Response

Wendell Watters' discussion of organized religion and Christianity in particular are representative of the Canadian movement's response to meaning systems involving a transcendent referent. In the intensity of this reaction, we begin to see why the Canadian movement has not fashioned humanism into an alternative to the churches.

For Watters, Christianity represents a "noxious set of beliefs". However, in attacking its principles, Canada's humanists must not be seen as mocking its adherents:

> As we see it, Christians are victims of a belief system that is not good for human consumption and we could hardly call ourselves humanists if we attacked victims of any description ("HiC" (94)1990:38).

The prominent psychiatrist describes Christianity as "a shared psychosis" and equates its harmful effects with a deadly carcinogen: "With its addiction to proselytization, Christianity is like unstable cancer cells which can only survive by feeding on other unaffected cells" ("HiC" (58)1981:13; 1992: 10).

In other places, Watters describes religion as a dangerous form of addiction. In essence, religion represents "a very harmful existential soother, like a painkiller with serious side effects" ("HiC" (100)1992:33).

In many cases attacks on religion leave the clinical realm of Watters' "scientific" investigations, taking on an unmistakably malicious tone. One often comes across comments such as the following, strewn throughout the pages of HAC newsletters and back issues of "HiC":

> Heavenly musings: "Jesus of Nazareth, fact or fiction?" The increasingly prevailing view among biblical writers is that Jesus was simply the main character invented by writers to provide a common thread to a collection of romantic short stories, entitled the New Testament, together. It is a standing joke in writers' circles that, if you can't find an ending to your plot, have the main character run over by a truck ("HAC NL" (1)1990:6).

Having rejected all formal expressions of religion, the Canadian humanist movement is equally suspicious of "mystical" or "spiritual" tendencies in its membership. Responding to an inquiry from a potential member who had expressed some "spiritualist" tendencies, Ottawa humanist Dan Morrison wrote:

> We accept that a person's life may involve a spiritual dimension, but this is not very demonstrable to other people and is therefore a very personal thing. Basing world views on such mystic "unrealities" (of which no two may be the same) is what produces variation and discord among belief systems. Instead, using the real world, human experience, reason, etc., is more likely to result in agreement and harmony ("HiC" (82)1987:22).

The anti-religious mentality of the HAC is plainly evident at the monthly meetings of the local chapters. Every effort is made to distinguish humanist gatherings from traditional church services. Meetings take place on weeknights rather than Sundays, and are held in secular settings such as

university lecture rooms or community centres. Organizers consciously avoid using a set "liturgical" component, such as special readings.

Topics for discussion seldom venture beyond the seemingly endless injustices perpetrated by organized religion. At many points, the monthly gatherings appear to be little more than a support group for people who have left the church and are seeking validation for their hostility.

Roger Greeley's comments concerning many of the humanist gatherings he attended correspond to our own experience with the Canadian movement. He complains that most humanist meetings are "aesthetically impoverished" and that their organizers often lose sight of the fact that "humanists, being humans, feel their commitments as well as think them". Meetings usually consist of "bloodless, coldly rational, barren intellectualizing". Greeley maintains that because they typically fail to "move people", this form of service "is hardly a service at all. It is more like a disservice" (in Earles, 1989: 388).

Indeed, the most commonly-voiced criticism repeated at these meetings is that they tend to underestimate the emotive and aesthetic dimensions of human life while overemphasizing reason and rationality. Given its cerebral preoccupations, it is humanism for the head rather than the heart.

Evidence of an intense preoccupation with religious issues is revealed through the results of an "HiC Readership Survey" mailed out in 1987.

When asked to identify issues of interest nearly three quarters (72 percent) listed "debunking myths" in first place ("HiC" (82)1987:29). In the more recent "McTaggart Survey" the same percentage of HAC respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that they were "offended by public acts of religious observance".

It is interesting to consider the response to a statement on "The McTaggart Survey" which was submitted by Wendell Watters. In what was surely the most revealing attitudinal statement on the survey, 84 percent of the sample "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with Watters' comment that "religious indoctrination of children is a form of emotional abuse".

When asked to indicate important "issues of interest" on "The Association Survey', "separation of church and state" and "harm caused by religion" were the most frequently identified themes (81 and 74 percent respectively).

Despite their strong dislike of religious dogma, as we have seen, Canadian humanists are typically very intolerant of certain views, particularly where they involve sympathy for the religious outlook. One of the respondents to "The Association Survey" suggested that the HAC should

> Come across less dogmatically and intolerantly as a movement and be seen as more loving and understanding in our interpersonal relationships. We seem to love humanity in the abstract--but in the flesh?

Ironically, an organization which is thoroughly opposed to the abrasive tactics employed by religious fundamentalists often ends up looking very much like the enemy. As one humanist perceptively remarked,

> There is a serious problem but I have no easy or ready answers. We tend to attract cranks and single-issue, dogmatic, anti-establishment types who take control of meetings and frighten away more thoughtful, inquiring, pragmatic individuals.

Given its unrelenting criticism of theistic belief systems and its negative attitude towards cooperation with liberal churches, the Canadian movement can be characterized in terms of its "anti-religious" response to traditional religion. As Campbell notes, this is not simply the repudiation of particular aspects of religion, but "the very fact of religion itself as a social and cultural phenomenon of any kind" (1972:32-3).

The lack of interest in developing non-religious programs or services characteristic of organized humanism in North America recently led Page to question the future of the movement. In a thinly-veiled reference to CODESH and the HAC, he wonders whether

> a unified objective exists among humanists to develop a positive mainstream public image, with an emphasis on programs to serve the practical humanist needs of the large numbers of non-theistic people we wish to represent. It seems clear that such an objective is not shared by those who, in the name of humanism, emphasize intellectual and iconoclastic activities which appeal only to narrow groups and which drive away the great majority of

> the potential members and progressive allies whose support we need to achieve our goals ("IH" (1)1992:4).

The HAC is very weak in terms of communal development and currently provides nothing in the way of secular social services or educational programs. Considered alongside Campbell's classificatory scheme, we would suggest that the HAC is clearly "associational". Despite its stated aims, its main interest lies in the propagation of its non-theistic message.

Given that both the HAC and the "HiC" are: 1) consistently preoccupied with religious themes, taking an avowedly anti-clerical position vis-à-vis organized religion; and 2) offer nothing in the way of humanist education or non-theistic services, either to their own members or to the larger community of Religious Nones, the Canadian movement is clearly "abolitionist" in orientation.

For the Canadians, religion is viewed as something to be overcome, and this mentality ensures that humanism--both on an ideological and an organizational level--does not resemble traditional religion in any discernable manner. From this perspective humanism does not represent an alternative to theistic meaning systems but rather the means through which the latter can be destroyed: the eradication of traditional religious expressions must occur in order for humanism to thrive.

6.2 ORGANIZED HUMANISM IN HOLLAND: SUBSTITUTIONIST

In contrast to the Canadian movement, the Dutch have refrained from attacking organized religion on any level. With the example of the Dageraad before them, humanists in the Netherlands realized that an overtly anti-clerical attitude would result in obscurity for the movement; recognition was not to be secured through antagonism (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986:49; Tielman, 1987:9).

The Dageraad tends to focus principally on fighting organized religion and everything connected with it. The freethinkers maintain that given its penchant for practical humanism, the Verbond tends to neglect the intellectual dimension of the secular worldview.

Many freethinkers believe that the Verbond is "too much a church alongside the other churches". Given the Verbond's willingness to work within the pillarized structure of Dutch society, the freethinkers do not feel that humanists are sufficiently committed to a social order free of religion (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986:147-50).

Evidence of the "a-religious" response of the Dutch is found in Tielman's distinction between theocratic and technocratic concerns. The Dutch sociologist suggests that in the closing years of the twentieth century, religion in the West no longer poses a major threat to the self-determination of the individual. Rather, the potential abuse of science and technology represents the

most potent threat as we approach the millennium. Today, computers and sophisticated machines take the place of men and women in the workplace and the omnipotent media create a homogeneous, consumer-driven world where critical thought and creativity are severely undervalued.

As theocratic concerns have been supplanted by technocratic ones humanists have been forced to reconsider their aims. The desire to roll back the power of the churches has been replaced by the need to preserve the fundamental dignity of mankind and the wide range of human values traditionally expressed through religion, philosophy and the liberal arts. This can be achieved only through active cooperation between competing lifeviews, or lifeview pluriformity (levensbeschouwelijke pluriformiteit) (Tielman, in Cliteur and van Dooren, 1991:292).

In Europe, petitions for state support of humanist services typically emphasize the common goal shared by theistic and non-theistic organizations. This rationale is evident in the following IHEU resolution (1991) regarding state funding of optional humanist education and counselling:

> The IHEU demands that countries which support organized religions follow the pattern developed in Norway and the Netherlands (and others) of general financial support to humanist organizations which provide services to the non-believer on the same basis as those states do to organized religions ("IH" (2)1992:9).

Returning to Campbell's categories, our data suggest that humanist organizations in the Netherlands are both "communal" and "associational" in nature. By following patterns established by the churches, the Dutch movement has organized a wide variety of counseling services and educational programs available to its members and the larger unchurchly community as a whole. In other words, the Dutch movement has consistently demonstrated a strong "commitment to social responsibility" (Earles, 1989:152-3; 376-7).

While maintaining a communal focus for humanists who continue to value it, in light of the growing disinterest in traditional forms of "worship" (affecting both theistic and non-theistic organizations) the Verbond is also trying to appeal to those individuals who want to support the secular cause, albeit on a less formal basis. To the extent that large numbers of Dutch humanists support Humanitas and the Verbond solely through the maintenance of their memberships, the movement is clearly "associational".

Given that humanists in the Netherlands: 1) refrain from attacking traditional religious expressions and have successfully established ties with the mainline churches; and 2) have fashioned a wide range of welfare services and educational programs by consciously imitating confessional organizations, we have uncovered a textbook example of a "substitutionist" irreligious model.

Unlike the Canadians, Dutch humanists do not wish to eradicate religion altogether, a response which would be more consistent with De

Dageraad. An "abolitionist" approach would be inconsistent with the assumptions of pluriformity, which is predicated on the co-existence of a variety of worldviews, both religious and secular. The Dutch movement wants nothing more than to be on an equal footing with the churches. "Our starting point", Tielman notes, "is not a dogmatic rationalism nor a blind faith in scientific and technical progress...We do not fight against the religious institutions but against their disproportionate power and their monopoly positions" ("IH" (2)1986:2).

The confessional pillars have traditionally filled an important role in Dutch society. In order to compete with them, the humanists have presented the unchurchly community with an attractive alternative in the form of their very own pillar.

In the Netherlands, the humanist Weltanschauung represents an option for those individuals who no longer believe that theistic meaning systems are relevant to the complex challenges facing the world as it approaches the beginning of a new millennium.

6.3 PROBLEMS WITH THE ABOLITIONIST OUTLOOK

Generally speaking, irreligious movements which limit their activities to the criticism of organized religion seldom attract a large following:

> In the past, the emphasis of some humanist organizations on philosophical discussions rather than on practical

> humanist work has damaged the growth and development of the humanist movement ("IH" (4)1991:8-9).

In "The Challenge of Humanism" (1991), an essay distributed by the Scottish Humanist Council, Eric Matthews makes a case against teaching humanist ethics in public schools. He argues that humanism does not challenge Christianity in the same way that other world religions do. Unlike Judaism or Islam, for instance, humanism cannot boast of an alternative set of doctrines or rituals. Nor can it offer an alternative set of answers to the questions posed by traditional religious meaning systems. For these reasons the humanist tradition cannot be presented as a distinct "worldview".

For Matthews, humanism is nothing more than a "way of trying to find the answers. The way which it suggests is that of rational reflection, making use of scientific knowledge" (1991:14). In short, humanism is little more than a methodology.

Here he has unknowingly identified one of the main reasons why this narrow approach to humanism fails to attract more people. If we limit the humanist Weltanschauung to the hypostatization of the scientific method, we are left with little more than a set of epistemological assumptions. By claiming that all truth-statements must be empirically testable, humanism's role is confined to the denial of religious meaning systems.

In one of the first issues of "The Victoria Humanist", Canadian humanists commit themselves to the rationalist worldview, thereby ensuring a very narrow focus for the movement:

> The basis of rationalism is its appeal to experience and observation--to judge in accordance with the evidence and follow the argument wherever it leads. It is thus a philosophical attitude rather than a system of philosophy, but it is an attitude which has made the revolutionary advance of the sciences possible. Rationalists take science seriously and accept the consequences of its methods in all departments of thought and life ("TVH" (3) 1967:16).

The Canadian movement approaches humanism from a narrow perspective and is therefore trapped within a frustrating paradox. It would appear that in order for humanism to have any chance of success, it would have to be fashioned into some sort of secular alternative to organized religion. Even the militantly anti-clerical Kurtz recognizes the need to replace religion with an attractive secular tradition. Humanism, he suggests,

> will not succeed simply by destroying the old faith and symbols, for new ones, perhaps more appealing, will only replace them. It is necessary to substitute moral equivalents ... Indeed, if there is a failure of humanism as an "ism" it is precisely at this nexus: as a competitor with the churches it offers nothing imaginative or eloquent ("HiC" (64)1983:22-3).

However, building humanism into some sort of alternative to theistic meaning systems requires an admission that certain aspects of religion are relevant to the human condition, which runs counter to the Canadian's

"abolitionist" assumptions. Indeed, their strong antipathy for religion and all that it represents ultimately prevents them from moving in this direction.

6.4 ARE SUBSTITUTIONISTS MORE SUCCESSFUL?

Budd suggests that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the success of many irreligious movements was seriously compromised by the militancy of their message. Some of these movements challenged "universal commonsense assumptions, such as that religion, even if untrue, does no harm, and in that sense they stand outside the wider society" (1977:270). The impracticality of their goals--a world free of religion, for instance--meant that very few people would be attracted into their ranks.

Page suggests that "The humanist movement is strongest in those countries where it has had a unified strategy aimed at becoming a mainstream component of a pluralistic society" ("IH" (1)1992:4). In cases where irreligious organizations have chosen to work within the parameters of a given social structure--Holland, Norway, and Belgium, they have had much more success, both in terms of securing financial support and with regard to the size of their respective movements.

Page notes that on the Continent humanism typically goes beyond

> intellectual concerns to address a core of practical human needs which are its raison d'être--needs which were formerly the domain of traditional religions. Thus mainstream humanism provides the existential support that people continue to need when they are no longer theistic. And it is concerned with confronting the spread of nihilism as traditional religions wither in influence, by promoting a continuing emphasis on moral values ("IH" (1) 1992:4).

In other words, where humanism aims to replace traditional religion through the assimilation of some of the latter's more impressive characteristics, it has been more successful than in countries where it is predicated on the eradication of the religious project.

6.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The prospects for abolitionist irreligious movements are not very good in contemporary Western societies. In the majority of cases they are fighting against institutions that do not offer much in the way of opposition. Based on the contrasting fortunes of the movements in Canada and the Netherlands it would appear that the future belongs to organizations that develop humanism into a viable alternative to traditional religious expressions.

Looking at the current status of the international movement and its historical precursors, organizations limiting their aims to the fight for self-determination by petitioning for parity with the churches have enjoyed greater

success than those which have become preoccupied with outmoded theological questions.

Unlike the Canadians, the Dutch have demonstrated that humanism can be something more than a basis for criticizing religion. By emphasizing the practical dimension of their worldview Dutch humanist organizations have become the "envy of many humanist groups throughout the world because they are achieving much of what others aspire to do" (Earles, 1989:317-8).

In the final analysis, Campbell's categories may not be entirely sufficient to capture the profound differences between the two movements under consideration. In effect, the Canadian movement provides ideological support for the "technocratic" viewpoint which Tielman claims Dutch humanists set out to counterbalance. From this perspective it would appear that the ideological gap between Canadian and Dutch humanists is even greater than the abolitionist-substitutionist distinction would suggest.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

Having considered the socio-historical contexts informing the development of organized humanism in Canada and Holland, in addition to the internal-organizational dimensions of the movements themselves, we must now return to our initial research questions.

To reiterate, we began our inquiry with three general questions: 1) Why has organized humanism in the Netherlands enjoyed greater success than it has in Canada?; 2) Why has the Canadian movement adopted an exclusive, anti-clerical stance, while Dutch humanists chose to work alongside, rather than against, the churches?; and finally, 3) Is there a connection between "orientation" and "success"--in other words, have the Dutch been more prosperous as a result of their inclusive ideological approach?

7.1 SUCCESS

The four most important factors accounting for the relative success of organized humanism in the Netherlands are: 1) the presence of an indigenous humanist tradition; 2) the Nazi occupation of Holland; 3) the pillarization of Dutch society; and 4) the "substitutionist" approach of the Dutch movement.

The history of humanism in Holland stretches back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the Golden Age, the burghers of Amsterdam found justification for their earthly pursuits in Erasmian humanism. Where the "overvloed" (excess) of wealth offended the austerity of the Dutch Reformed Church, it found greater affinity with humanism's ideal of the "golden mean". Erasmus and his seventeenth-century followers advocated a confrontation with the world, a conquering of its profane elements, which served as a necessary precondition for a life of moderation.

The tremendous riches acquired during this period enabled the enlightened merchant class to support the flowering of Dutch culture. Humanist themes were abundant in literature and the visual arts.

Preoccupied with the accumulation of wealth and influence the pragmatic merchant class was fairly unconcerned with religious matters. Thus, the Dutch seventeenth century was renowned not only for its riches but also for its liberal values.

As Dutch society began to divide itself along ideological lines during the closing years of the nineteenth century, the emergence of institutionally-complete pillars left a sizable middle bloc consisting mainly of liberal Protestants and socialists.

Secularization came early to the Netherlands. By 1920, close to 10 percent of the Dutch population were without formal church ties (Thung, 1983:

505). When the humanist pillar began to take shape during the mid-1940s, the unchurchly community in the Netherlands was already very large.

We would argue that the "radical secularization" (Lechner, 1989: 137) witnessed in the Netherlands owes something to the Protestant Reformation itself, and more specifically to the seminal influence of Calvinism , in shaping contemporary Dutch society. Calvin's rejection of the imposing Roman Catholic hierarchy was meant to encourage a more direct relationship between the individual and God. One of the unintended consequences, however, was that religious devotion was reduced to little more than a cerebral exercise:

> By abolishing festivals and rituals in which the story was enacted, and limiting corporate religious observances largely to talk, [the Protestants] inevitably made the traditional story a more remote and theoretical affair (Hewitt, 1985: 54).

Where the "good works" of Catholicism demanded active participation within a devout religious community, Calvinism focused primarily upon the subjective dimension of faith. Mol suggests that there is a distinct relationship between the domain assumptions of the Reformation and the secularization of Western societies. Within the Protestant churches, the

> social need for the rewards of conformity to clearly visible and workable prescriptions became proportionately less important. Secular humanism, with its overemphasis on the individual, is in many respects a legitimate child of the Reformation (1976: 102).

Another important historical factor contributing to the development of the Dutch humanist movement was the Nazi occupation (1940-5). As we have seen, Dutch humanist organizations emerged immediately following the war.

According to the author of "Humanistisch Verbond", a small pamphlet describing the League's formation, it would be difficult to overestimate "the influence of the Second World War and the German occupation on the revival of moral and spiritual life in the Netherlands" (Verbond, 1992: 1). Constandse notes that in Holland, "The war had led to a religious crisis in the church. Where had God been during this horrifying tragedy of murder, persecution, genocide, and destruction?" (in Stein, 1985: 474). For many Netherlanders, humanism represented a novel approach to contemporary meaning questions in the aftermath of the war.

The emergence of the humanist pillar paralleled the rising influence of socialism in the Netherlands during the late 1940s. The socialist movement had a strong irreligious character, lending added incentive to the formation of the humanist pillar, which could provide social services on a non-confessional basis. Prominent members of both Humanitas and the Verbond were active in the Dutch Labour Party (Flokstra and Wieling, 1986: 165).

As the state depended on the various pillars to supply many of the welfare programs in the Netherlands, the Dutch humanist movement could focus its attention on developing parallel projects for the non-confessional bloc.

This was achieved by consciously imitating the confessional programs offered through the churches and petitioning for support on the same basis.

In part, the relative strength of the Dutch humanist movement must be attributed to its "substitutionist" approach. From its origins, the humanists concentrated on developing a number of non-confessional education and welfare programs for the unchurchly community. Humanism was presented as an attractive alternative to traditional religious expressions.

After examining the Dutch experience with organized humanism, we would argue that the three most important factors accounting for organized humanism's lack of success in Canada are: 1) the absence of strong secular or irreligious themes in the development of Canadian society; 2) a greater degree of formal separation between church and state (a "neutralistic", rather than a "pluralistic" approach, which is characteristic of the Dutch model); and 3) the "abolitionist" approach of the Canadian movement.

The birth of the Canadian nation was predicated on a rejection of the liberal ideals informing the American and French revolutions. The combination of British imperialism and an omnipotent ecclesiastical hierarchy in Quebec precluded the development of a strong rationalist tradition in this country. When the contemporary humanist movement developed during the 1960s, there was no irreligious "cumulative tradition" for it to draw upon.

Outside of Quebec, Canada's early religious history was characterized by a high level of sect development. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the more secular state churches of England and Scotland failed to adapt themselves to frontier conditions, enabling intensely religious Protestant sects to serve as an important means of social reorganization among English-speaking settlers.

Within Quebec, the Catholic Church was instrumental in establishing the cultural foundations of French-speaking Canada.

Immigration has played a tremendously important role in the development of Canadian society. Massive numbers of foreigners from around the world began to arrive on Canada's shores during the late nineteenth century, and the churches served as an excellent vehicle for the preservation of their heritage. At the same time, religious institutions also served as an effective means of acclimatizing foreign-born citizens to their new surroundings. The strong bond between religion and ethnicity helps to account for the relatively high levels of church affiliation reported in Canada.

In contrast to the Dutch pillarized system, with the exception of public funding for Separate Schools and select welfare projects, the state does not offer financial support to confessional denominations in Canada. The Canadian welfare state operates largely on a secular basis. Unlike the Dutch, humanists

in Canada were never given an opportunity to create a non-confessional pillar of their own.

In part, the relative weakness of the contemporary movement must be attributed to its "abolitionist" mentality. From its origins, a profound distaste for religion has led the Canadian movement to focus its attention against the churches, rather than towards the development of a viable humanist alternative.

Due to the narrow focus of its message, the movement manages to attract mainly hard-core atheists, rather than the growing number of people who have left the church and who might be attracted to a more relevant worldview.

7.2 ORIENTATION

The various irreligious movements that managed to take root in Canada during the nineteenth century and before were anti-clerical in orientation. For the most part they were influenced by the British secularist and American freethought traditions.

Many of the founding members of the Canadian organization were British immigrants who had belonged to the militant Rationalist Press Association before coming to Canada. Indeed, Canada's quarterly humanist periodical was fashioned directly after the RPA's "Literary Guide".

While the American humanist movement developed out of the Unitarian tradition and openly acknowledged its "religious" foundations, as Schreiber points out, "the Humanist Association of Canada (HAC) has its roots in the British rationalist movement, a decidedly secular organization" ("HiC" (97) 1991: 2).

In part, the strong anti-clerical mentality characteristic of the Canadian movement can be attributed to the controversial social issue around which it developed: abortion. During the 1960s and 70s, opposition to Morgentaler's fight for decriminalization was fairly pronounced in Canada. Much of the dissent could be traced to conservative religious organizations (in particular, the Roman Catholic Church), reinforcing the anti-religious tendencies of the Canadian humanist movement.

More recently, the anti-clerical flavour of the Canadian movement has been reinforced through its affiliation with Paul Kurtz's CODESH. The influence of a distinctly secular organization has provided the Canadian movement with a sense of ideological clarity, which had been drawn into question during Page's tenure at the "HiC".

When the Dutch humanist organizations developed after the Second World War, their founders made a conscious decision not to follow in the footsteps of De Dageraad. Though it had been organized for nearly a century, the freethought movement never managed to establish a large following in

Dutch society, leading the humanists to consider a more inclusive direction for the contemporary movement.

The "a-religious" response characteristic of the Dutch approach was clearly influenced by the pillarized social structure in the Netherlands. In choosing to form a secular bloc for the unchurchly community, Dutch humanists had to observe what Lijphart refers to as the "rules of the game" (1968: 123), which stipulate that the ideological convictions of the other pillars must be tolerated, if not respected.

7.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORIENTATION AND SUCCESS

The data suggest a strong relationship between ideological orientation and success. There is reason to suggest that as "abolitionists", the demands made by Canadian humanists are typically so radical that they tend to overlook the integrative aspects of organized religion.

Canadian humanists assume that by accepting the principles of the scientific worldview we will no longer have any need for the "religious" project. And yet, Bibby's research demonstrates that despite the fragmentation of traditional religious expressions, men and women continue to turn to the churches for "rites of passage", just as they continue to seek answers to the kinds of questions traditionally tackled by organized religions.

In part, failure to recognize these needs condemns organized humanism in Canada to relative obscurity. The contrasting fortunes of the Dutch and Canadian movements lends support to Page's claim that

> humanists who confront mainstream society with a hard anti-religious position have unconsciously decided that humanism must always be a minority, elitist movement ("TH" Jan./Feb. 1993: 2).

On the other hand, by building a practical, service-oriented humanist pillar alongside the confessional blocs, the Dutch humanist movement offers the unchurchly community in the Netherlands a viable alternative to the churches.

7.4 FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE CANADIAN HUMANIST MOVEMENT

To the extent that most Canadians maintain an interest in religious themes and borrow "fragments" as they need them, it would appear that Canadian humanists would have to present their philosophy as an attractive alternative to traditional religion in order to draw more members into their ranks.

With more emphasis devoted to developing the humanist worldview--beginning with greater publicity for the movement and educational programs for the children of humanists (in their homes, in local chapters, and perhaps eventually in public schools)--the Canadian movement might well be able to broaden its membership base, while establishing a tradition that can be passed along to future generations.

However, the strong anti-clerical sentiments characteristic of the Canadian movement render this scenario extremely unlikely. From its founding, Canadian humanism has been defined largely in terms of what it is not--namely, a "religion". As one respondent to "The Association Survey" noted, it is going to be difficult to improve the fortunes of the Canadian movement "without becoming another "religion"".

While Canadian humanists often complain about small numbers, they appear to be uninterested in making substantial changes to the organization. Our discussions regarding the European approach to humanism typically met with lukewarm enthusiasm. And despite the fact that the HAC Executive agreed to subsidize the cost of distributing my surveys, Canadian humanists were not eager to consider any of the findings to increase their membership. Based on the results of our study, we are led to conclude that the Canadian humanist movement will not expand much beyond its present horizons.

7.5 FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE DUTCH HUMANIST MOVEMENT

Dekker and Ester (1990) found that ideological self-perception had decreased significantly within the Dutch confessional pillars over the last three decades, while increasing for non-confessional pillars. In 1953, approximately 3 percent of the respondents to a national survey identified themselves as humanists. By 1987, this figure had increased to 14 percent. During the same

period, the number of respondents indicating their support for socialism increased from 9 to 17 percent (1990: 181-2).

According to Tielman's research, close to 25 percent of Netherlanders agree with the basic premises of humanism as stated in the IHEU Minimal Statement cited in the second chapter ("R", 1992: 84).

Humanitas and the Verbond are currently considering a formal merger. The on-going depillarization of the Dutch welfare state ensures that a greater number of projects are being absorbed by neutral social agencies. During recent years, in common with the confessional pillars, the humanist bloc has faced some reductions in state subsidies, though they were not as severe as first anticipated.

The Dutch government's recent financial commitment to the University of Humanist Studies (1989) suggests that the movement is currently on fairly secure ground. It is unlikely that the state would have chosen to finance the University's operation if it intended to break up the humanist pillar.

At a ceremony commemorating forty years of organized humanism in his country (1986), Dutch Prime Minister R. Lubbers--himself a noted Catholic--spoke of the "important role that Dutch humanism will undoubtedly play in the future, in terms of filling the gap caused by the exponential increase of secularization in the Netherlands" ("IH" (2) 1986: 14). Indeed, the long history

of the humanist tradition in the Netherlands and the prospects for continued "dechurching" ensure that it will continue to prosper in one form or another.

7.6 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: RETURNING TO BIBBY

Considered alongside other humanist movements around the world, the Dutch organizations have been highly successful. However, despite the fact that the Dutch movement has enjoyed greater prosperity, it is obvious that many people within the large unchurchly cohort in the Netherlands are not particularly interested in joining the humanist pillar on a formal basis. Indeed, while the unchurchly community continues to grow, formal membership within Humanitas is dropping and remains fairly stagnant within the ranks of the Verbond.

Felling, Peters, and Schreuder (1987: 125-143) argue that even though Bibby's fragmentation thesis was developed with the Canadian *milieu* in mind, it is helpful for making sense of the contemporary religious scene in the Netherlands. While large numbers of Dutch people have left confessional pillars in recent decades and church attendance is very low for most denominations, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that many of the unchurchly have formally embraced alternative meaning systems, at least not on a very large scale.

We would argue that Bibby's thesis is in fact applicable to both nations. The fragmentation of the Judaeo-Christian religious spectrum is evidenced, in part, by the dramatic growth of the Religious None category in Canada and the Netherlands in recent years. However, rather than struggle towards an alternative theological meaning system, or a rational worldview such as humanism, a growing number of Canadians and Netherlanders seem content to remain on the periphery of established religious traditions. Bibby is fundamentally correct in stating that

> people who give up conventional religion cannot be assumed to be adopting alternate systems of meaning .... Indeed, the evidence is strong in the opposite direction. If people are not visibly religious, the likelihood is that they are not informed by any system of meaning at all (1987: 43).

7.6.1 Religious Nones and Humanists

There is an interesting qualitative difference between humanists and Religious Nones in both nations. As we have seen, on average, humanists tend to be much older than individuals without formal religious affiliation. In addition, the Canadian survey results indicate that most humanists do not join the movement until middle or late adulthood.

We would suggest that individuals are typically drawn into the ranks or organized humanism in one of two ways. The survey results and informal discussions with members both here and abroad reveal that most humanists

have experienced either: 1) a gradual, ideological drifting away from the religious traditions of their formative years; or 2) a fairly important life experience (or series of experiences) which calls into question the plausibility of traditional theistic meaning systems.

The second category is required to account for humanists who have had limited exposure to religious training during their youth. Among many other possibilities, examples from this category would include individuals with a thorough grounding in a specific scientific discipline which leads them to reject meaning systems predicated on "faith"; homosexual men and women who do not find acceptance for their lifestyles within the church; and individuals who develop a sensitivity to a particular social issue such as sexual abuse of children while in the care of religious institutions.

Of course, individuals may be drawn to humanism through a combination of these distinct paths. In any case, the required break with former religious ties would account for the relatively old age of many of the humanists in Canada and the Netherlands, compared with the larger Religious None categories in the respective nations.

While we may assume that many of the Religious Nones both here and abroad were raised without formal religious training, and may eventually affiliate with mainline confessional organizations, as Bibby points out, our data would suggest that most humanists follow the opposite course--many come

from strict religious backgrounds and engage in a process of psychological disassociation that may consume a sizable portion of their adult lives.

We find some support for this idea in Budd's work on irreligious organizations in Britain. With respect to the nineteenth-century secular movement, she found that formerly devout believers often made the most committed irreligionists:

> As a secularist proselytizer remarked, "it is the hardest thing in the world to convert a "nothingarian" to freethought. A much easier task is to convert a sincere believer in Christianity, or for that matter, a sincere believer in anything" (1977: 120-1).

Rejection of the religious worldview in favour of humanism or any other irreligious expression presupposes that the former has influenced the individual's life in one way or another. Indeed, if one's life has not involved a confrontation with religion on some level, it seems unlikely that the individual would embrace a belief system predicated on its absence.

7.6.2 The Problem with Ritual in Irreligion

The attempt to incorporate some form of standard liturgical element within irreligious organizations typically fails because the vast majority of members no longer believe in the sacred realm, which is recreated through ritual. Rituals can only reinforce and give a numinous quality to feelings which already exist. "It is precisely the splitting apart of the layers of intellectual

meaning, myth, symbols and ritual", Budd points out, "which constitutes the decline in their significance" (1977: 242-3).

This may also account for the relative lack of success experienced with many humanist meetings. Part of the "communal" charm of traditional church gatherings involves the celebration of something which transcends the group, under which all members stand united. In humanism this element is missing altogether; there is little to celebrate but man himself. As a result, forms of worship more commonly associated with a church setting appear forced and fairly artificial within many humanist organizations, especially the more militant among them.

7.6.3 Is Humanism Accessible?

Yet another problem facing organized irreligion in general is the intellectual difficulty of its message. We have seen that individuals with higher education tend to be overrepresented in many irreligious groups, including the humanist organizations in Canada and the Netherlands.

A basic grasp of the humanist Weltanschauung presupposes that the individual can appreciate the supremacy of science over faith, empiricism over metaphysics. Indeed, unless they are academically inclined, many people simply would not find the occasion to consider these issues.

Charges of elitism are fairly common within the ranks of the Verbond (Cramer, 1991: 9; 33) and the Canadian organization. Consider the following sample of statements chosen from our surveys:

> We have not been able to bring the organization down to grass roots level. [Humanism] appears to be an intellectual exercise .... The HAC needs to find a forum through which the populace at large can be addressed.
>
> One gets the impression from the "lofty academic nature" of many ["HiC"] articles that it is an organization for the intellectually elite. I respectfully suggest that a more "down to earth" approach may promote a wider public appeal for humanism.
>
> One feels that, for the present at least, humanism is somewhat elitist and should be so accepted. It might be desirable to attract more members with fewer academic credits, but not at the cost of devaluing the humanist message.

If organized humanism in its present form intends to make significant gains on an international scale, it will have to find a way to attract individuals outside of well-educated circles. However, this may represent only a small portion of a much greater problem: the humanist theodicy, or, to borrow Berger's term, its "plausibility structure".

7.6.4 The Humanist Theodicy

In The Sacred Canopy (1969b), Peter Berger suggests that every worldview, whether theistic or non-theistic, provides the individual with a horizon

of meaning--a "theodicy"--which attempts to make sense out of his or her existence. The theodicy allows us to interpret the various stages of our lives in a pattern of meaning which transcends our own unique experiences (1969b: 54).

Not unlike traditional religious expressions, the humanist worldview clearly entails a theodicy of sorts: the individual is encouraged to seek out avenues for his or her self-determination without infringing upon the rights of others. For the humanist, however, the question of an overarching meaning or purpose in life is naive because it is no way amenable to the methods of modern science. "These questions", Lamont suggests,

> assume in their very formulation that there must be a great over-all purpose in the cosmos .... The humanist believes that these conundrums are essentially insoluble because actually no such purpose can be found (1990: 124).

Where the Christian worldview supplies some obvious comfort to its adherents--the promise of eternal life through Christ, for instance--the domain assumptions of humanism cannot provide similar "existential soothers": life has meaning only to the extent that men and women create it, and death brings with it nothing beyond the end of our personal existence.

While the truth of the human condition may in fact be without any ultimate meaning, it would appear that very few people find this view of life particularly appealing. As Berger concludes, "the stoicism that can embrace

this kind of truth is rare. Most people, it seems, want a greater comfort, and so far it has been religious theodicies that have provided it" (1969b: 32).

Near the beginning of Varieties of Unbelief, Budd remarks on "the paradox that the ideas which these [irreligious] movements represent are for the most part dominant in our society, yet the organizations themselves are small and lacking in social influence" (1977: 2).

Today the majority of the world's most powerful nations are secular liberal democracies, where church and state represent fairly distinct and separate spheres. Most of these same nations support the non-sectarian principles informing the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948), in spirit and--with varying degrees of success--in law. Furthermore, in most of these countries organized religion has fallen on hard times. And yet, on an organizational level, the international humanist movement is extremely small and lacking in influence.

It may very well be that some form of humanism is emerging in the West to replace the tired and worn-out vestiges of the Judaeo-Christian Weltanschauung. However, living, as we do, in the midst of this tremendous spiritual crisis, we are simply unable to visualize its dimensions or predict its future course.

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Appendix A: The Canadian Humanist Movement-- Archival Materials

"The Victoria Humanist" (Victoria: Pacific Northwest Humanist Publications (PNHP)):

"TVH" (2) 1964
"TVH" (3) 1967

"Humanist in Canada" (Victoria: Pacific Northwest Humanist Publications (PNHP)):

"HiC" (1) 1967
"HiC" (2) 1967
"HiC" (4) 1968
"HiC" (5) 1968
"HiC" (6) 1968
"HiC" (7) 1969
"HiC" (9) 1969
"HiC" (10/11) 1969
"HiC" (13) 1970
"HiC" (14/15) 1970
"HiC" (17) 1971
"HiC" (22) 1972
"HiC" (23) 1973
"HiC" (29) 1974
"HiC" (31) 1974
"HiC" (36) 1976
"HiC" (39) 1976
"HiC" (40) 1977
"HiC" (42) 1977
"HiC" (44) 1977
"HiC" (45) 1978
"HiC" (46) 1978
"HiC" (51) 1980
"HiC" (54) 1980
"HiC" (57) 1981
"HiC" (58) 1981
"HiC" (61) 1982
"HiC" (62) 1982

"Humanist in Canada" (Ottawa: Canadian Humanist Publications (CHP)):

"HiC" (64) 1983
"HiC" (66) 1983
"HiC" (67) 1984
"HiC" (71) 1984
"HiC" (72) 1985
"HiC" (74) 1985
"HiC" (75) 1985/6
"HiC" (77) 1986
"HiC" (79) 1987
"HiC" (80) 1987
"HiC" (81) 1987
"HiC" (82) 1987
"HiC" (84) 1988
"HiC" (86) 1988
"HiC" (87) 1988
"HiC" (88) 1989
"HiC" (89) 1989
"HiC" (91) 1990
"HiC" (94) 1990
"HiC" (95) 1991
"HiC" (97) 1991
"HiC" (100) 1992
"HiC" (102) 1992

Humanist Association of Canada Newsletter (Ottawa):

"HAC NL" (1) 1986
"HAC NL" (3) 1989
"HAC NL" (1) 1989
"HAC NL" (1) 1990
"HAC NL" (1) 1991
"HAC NL" (3) 1991

Additional Archival Materials:

Humanist Association of Canada--By-Laws (1991)

Humanist Association of Canada--Constitution (1991)

Humanist Association of Canada--Statement of Principles (1992)

"Humanism" (Information pamphlet distributed by the HAC).

"Are You a Humanist?" (Information pamphlet distributed by the HAC).

"The Humanist Alternative" (Information pamphlet distributed by the HAC).

Appendix B: The Dutch Humanist Movement--

Archival Materials

Cramer, Ingrid. Komen en Gaan--ledenonderzoek Humanistisch Verbond (Coming and Going--Membership Survey of the Humanist League). Translated by Ine Wauben. (Utrecht: Humanistisch Verbond) 1991.

Tielman, Robert. "Humanistische sociologie--een paradox als paradigma". (Humanist Sociology--Paradox as Paradigm) Translated by Ine Wauben. (Utrecht: Humanistische Stichting Socrates) (1987): 1-16.

"Humanitas" (1992)

"Humanitas VGZ" (1992)

"Humanistisch Verbond" (1992)

Dijkstra, Jaap. "Perspectives for North-South Cooperation in the Nineties--The HIVOS Experience". (Paper delivered at the IHEU Congress, Amsterdam (July, 1992)).

Arion, Frank. "A Humanist Primary School in Curacao". (Paper delivered at the IHEU Congress, Amsterdam (July, 1992)).

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"Rekenschap" 30, 1. "Humanism in the Netherlands: A Survey Summary". Translated by Eva Baars. (Utrecht: Humanistische Stichting Socrates) 1983.

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"Rekenschap" 39, 2 (Utrecht: Humanistische Stichting Socrates) 1992.

Appendix C: The International Humanist Movement-- Archival Resources

"International Humanist" (Utrecht: International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU)):

"IH" (3) 1981
"IH" (2) 1981
"IH" (1) 1982
"IH" (2) 1986
"IH" (3) 1987
"IH" (1) 1988
"IH" (1) 1989
"IH" (3) 1991
"IH" (4) 1991
"IH" (1) 1992
"IH" (2) 1992

"The Humanist" (Amherst: American Humanist Association (AHA)):

"TH" (4) 1964
"TH" (2) 1969
"TH" (3) 1973
"TH" (4) 1988
"TH" (1) 1993

"Humanist News" (London: British Humanist Association (BHA)):

"HN" (61) 1993

Additional Archival Materials:

Matthews, Eric. "The Challenge of Humanism". (Kilmarnock: Humanist Society of Scotland) 1991.

"Draft IHEU Working Plan (1992-2002)" (IHEU Board Meeting, July 1992).

"The Journal of the International Association of Humanist Educators, Counselors and Leaders". Vol. 1 (1989).

"Minutes from the IHEU General Board Meeting". (Prague, July 1991).

"Birth Naming Ceremonies in Norway" (1992)

"The Humanist-Ethical Association of Norway" (Oslo, 1993).

"Humanist Funerals in Norway" (Oslo)

Nilsen, Stinar. "Meet a Million: Ceremonies in Norway". (Paper delivered at the IHEU Congress, Amsterdam, July, 1992)).

Appendix D: The "McTaggart" and "Association" Surveys

Humanist Association of Canada
Association Humaniste du Canada

P O Box 3736, Station 'C'
Ottawa, Ontario,
Canada K1Y 4J8

H.A.C. is a voting member of the International Humanist and Ethical Union; Utrecht, Netherlands.

Dear HAC Member,

As you know, HAC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. But this year is also significant to the organization for another reason. We have been growing steadily over the last few years and have reached a critical stage in our development. We are rapidly growing from a group with a small volunteer administration, into a larger, more dynamic organization. These are exciting times, but the transition requires some planning. It is vitally important that we continue with our present initiatives and expand our activities to further present our ideas and philosophy to the public and the decision makers in this country.

Before the executive can decide how to best utilize our scarce resources, we need to get a better idea of what those resources are and also in what areas our members think that we should become more active. The executive had therefore recently discussed the use of a membership questionnaire, and we were in the initial stages of preparing one when John McTaggart contacted us to see if he could carry out a survey of the membership for his doctoral thesis. I will leave him to explain his needs and what he will do with the information, except to say that this has given us a good opportunity to conduct both surveys at the same time.

Since some of the information that John is looking for may be considered "private," the two surveys are quite separate and the information collected by John will remain strictly confidential. To achieve that, the completed McTaggart survey should be sealed in the enclosed small envelope before being mailed back to us in the larger, addressed envelope along with the completed HAC questionnaire. The completed McTaggart questionnaires will then be forwarded to John unopened. John has agreed to share the results of his study with us when it is complete, and we may publish excerpts from it in the newsletter, but by that time nobody will be able to identify any of the personal information given. Please note that all humanists within a Family Membership should complete separate questionnaires for both surveys. Please help us to learn more about you and the Canadian Humanist movement. Complete your questionnaires today.

Finally, you should all have recently received details of the June conference in Ottawa. We listened to the members that attended last year, and have made this year's conference format less formal, leaving more time for discussions and socializing. The contacts and friends that we make at these kind of events are important to all of us, particulary those of us that live in the more humanistically isolated areas. If you have never been before, give it a try. I think that we can promise you a stimulating and memorable weekend. It also helps us with our planning if you can register as early as possible, so before you lose that registration form, fill it out and return it. I look forward to meeting you there.

Peter R. Smith

Peter Smith, First VP.

The McTaggart Survey

Please place the completed questionnaire in the small envelope, seal it and mail it with the completed HAC questionnaire to:

Questionnaires,
The Humanist Association of Ottawa
P.O. Box 3736, Station C
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y-4J8

(Please check the appropriate response)

1.) Sex: M___ F___ 2.) Age: Under 30___ 30-49___ 50-65___ 65+___

3.) Current Marital Status:
Single___
Married___
Separated___
Divorced___
Widow/Widower___

4.) Education (highest level achieved):
High School Diploma___
Some College or some University___
College Diploma or University Degree___
Graduate Degree___

b) If you attended College and/or University, what was your main area of study?_____

5.) What is/ was your profession or occupation?_____

6.) What is your personal current annual income?
Under $30,000___
$30,000-$49,000___
$50,000-$69,000___
$70,000+___

b). Estimated total annual contributions to non-profit organizations?_____

7.) Were you born in Canada? Yes___ No___

b) If not, what is your country of origin?_____

c) How long have you been in Canada?_____

8.) What is your ethnic background? (please describe)_____

9.) What, if any, was the religious faith practiced or observed in your family of origin?_____

10.) Do you have any children? Yes___ No___

b) If yes, did you attempt to raise them in accordance with the principles of humanism?_____
_____

11.) How long have you been a member of the HAC?_____

b) How did you first hear about the HAC? (e.g., personal acquaintance, local newspaper)_____

12.) In general, which of Canada's major political parties is most consistent with your own political sentiments?

Bloc Quebecois___ National Party___ Undecided___
Liberal___ New Democrat____
Conservative___ Reform Party___

13.) Do you belong to any other humanist organizations? (state which)_____

(PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE)

14.) On the whole, my family of origin was fairly strict with regard to religious issues and practices.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5

15.) I can distinctly recall a moment in my life when I became thoroughly disillusioned with religion.

1 2 3 4 5

16.) Canadian Separate Schools should not receive any financial support from the public purse.

1 2 3 4 5

17.) As a humanist, I am offended by public acts of religious observance.

1 2 3 4 5

18.) I believe that religious indoctrination of children is a form of emotional abuse.

1 2 3 4 5

The Association Survey

ease return the survey to:

Questionnaires,
Humanist Association of Canada
P.O. Box 3736, Station C
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y-4J8

) Name:_____

) Current Address:_____
_____

) Phone # (home):_____ (work)_____

) Sex: M___ F___ 5.) Age (optional):_____

) Are you a member of a local group? (state which)_____

Would you like to meet with other humanists or join a local oup?_____

) What is/was your profession or occupation?_____
_____

) In addition to the skills required for your job, have you ceived formal or informal training in any other vocations? lease describe)_____
_____
_____
_____

) Do you have any particular skills or abilities? (e.g., law, nputer programming, accounting and finance, graphic design, eative writing, music) (please describe)_____
_____
_____
_____

.) Please list and describe your interests/ hobbies:
_____
_____
_____

.) Have you ever had letters or articles published? (please scribe)_____
_____

) Do you have any experience with public speaking? (please scribe)_____
_____

13.) Do you support any other charitable organizations or social movements? (please describe)_____
_____
_____

14.) Would you be willing to put your skills/talents/interests to work for the HAC if the need or opportunity arises by:

a) becoming a member of the National Executive?_____
b) taking an office in a local group?_____
c) acting as a Special Interest Group Coordinator?_____
d) (other) (please describe)_____

e) Approximately how many hours per week could you devote to these efforts?_____

15.) Which of the following issues do you think should be of interest to the HAC, and/or which are of interest to you personally? (please check)

	Of interest to HAC	Of interest to you
a) separation of church and state	a) _____	_____
b) religion in education	b) _____	_____
c) non-religious ceremonies	c) _____	_____
d) creationism	d) _____	_____
e) scientific investigation of religious claims	e) _____	_____
f) media bias	f) _____	_____
g) the harm caused by religion	g) _____	_____
h) international humanism	h) _____	_____
i) religion on television	i) _____	_____
j) population control	j) _____	_____
k) bioethical issues	k) _____	_____
l) feminism	l) _____	_____
m) gay and lesbian rights	m) _____	_____
n) animal rights	n) _____	_____
o) sexism in religion	o) _____	_____
p) reproductive rights	p) _____	_____

(other) please state:
_____
_____

16.) Do you have any suggestions as to how we could improve upon the organizational strength of the Humanist Association of Canada? (please describe)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____