Ethiopia, for example, with *any* city in the United States, Canada, or Western Europe.

But you say that times are worse ethically and morally. "Yes," someone will say, "we do have *technological* advancements, but the moral climate is degenerating." But don't you think that there's some relationship between a nation's religious commitment and technological advancement? Is it just coincidental that the West has advanced culturally and technologically while the East has either stagnated or even declined? And how about this: Why is it that when pagan nations adopt the world view of the once-Christian West that their culture advances at a rapid pace? Japan, for the most part, is pagan, but the Japanese imported Western values long ago. While they give lip service to the pagan worship of their ancestors, they know that if they're going to do business with the once-Christian West, they must adopt Western, Christian, ways. That includes the expressions of a Christian world view.

There were times when declines set in, but over the long haul, life got better. What we tend to do is make our slice of time normative and absolute. Because life looks bad now, we prematurely conclude that life can't possibly get better. Once evil starts, there is no stopping it. Tell that to the slave prior to the Civil War. Tell that to my grandparents and millions of other immigrant families who came to America with little or no money. Hard times, even evil times, are temporary in biblical terms. Study the lives of Joseph and Daniel to see what I mean.

Overdosing on Bad News

One of the reasons why times look so bad now as compared to, say, two centuries ago is that we hear about nearly every evil in the world on the six o'clock news. We read about the most vile events in the morning and evening editions of our newspapers. Filth and violence are brought into our homes via weekly magazines, in living and dying color. We overdose on bad news daily. Of course, things are bad. But what if our counterparts 500 years ago had the same communication system? How do you think the papers would read? Pretty rotten, I would say.

Don't get me wrong. Times are bad. But times are not impossible. Even if we were to experience the total collapse of Western civilization, this would not necessarily mean the end. Israel and Judah collapsed numerous times. All one has to do is read the book of Daniel to see that kingdoms rise and new kingdoms are built on the smoldering rubble. Babylon fell, and the Medes and the Persians took over. The Medes and the Persians were conquered by the Greeks. Greece was vanquished by the Romans. A vibrant Christian civilization won out. Christianity is still alive and well and these other kingdoms are distant memories only revived in textbooks.

It may be that the once-Christian America will pass away. It happened to Israel. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 should stand as a constant reminder that there's an end to God's patience. If the tide of immorality is not turned back, America might be relegated to the dust bin of history. But is it impossible to believe that a more godly civilization will rise from the ashes? Revival may spread throughout Africa, Korea, China, or even the Soviet Union. What we now see as famine and death in Ethiopia may one day become a new continent saturated with Christians fulfilling the original dominion mandate. Just because our nation seems to be disintegrating, doesn't mean that there's no hope for the rest of the world. Who would have ever thought that the United States could have carried on the great Christian tradition of the Reformation? Consider what this continent looked like 400 years ago. Who could have imagined that a garden could have been carved out of such a wilderness?

We've locked ourselves into a mode of thinking that becomes self-fulfilling. One generation of Christians believes that their culture is at the breaking point. In their minds, this is the end. What do they do? They retreat from building a Christian civilization, believing it's futile to try to transform society. As time points out, it was not the end, but the damage to the world was done. Humanists came in and filled the vacancies left by once-dominion oriented Christians. Now life is worse than it was in the previous generation. The current generation evaluates the times and concludes that their generation will experience the end. More retreating. Humanism takes more territory vacated by Christians.

In a hundred years, three generations of Christians have retreated thinking that the end was near. Each generation left the world in worse shape than the way they found it.

The Christian Problem

So then, the Humanist is not the problem. It's the Christian! Christians aren't thrown out of positions of authority and influence. If they are thrown out it's because they have let evil creep in. A little compromise here, a little compromise there. There is retreat in the face of hostility. They go along to get along. This too will pass. If you think the end is near, such persecutions just add fuel to the fire of prophetic speculation. "This was all predicted, don't you know." To fight against such anti-Christian hostility is thought to be futile and maybe even subversive to God's plan for the ages.

The New Testament writers called on the church to nip evil in the bud early. Humanism only flourishes when the church loses its leavening effect on the world. A corrupt world is the result of a corrupt church. Read Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. He was shocked that the Corinthians were tolerating "immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles" (1 Cor. 5:1). The church is not told to tolerate evil, nor is the church to retreat in the face of evil. Paul tells the Corinthian church to "remove the wicked man from among" them (v. 13).

How about doctrinal error? Paul shows that they "must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach…" (Titus 1:11). Such troublemakers are to be "delivered over to Satan, so they may be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). The leadership in the church is to reprove those who err and those who listen to them so they "may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). But for too long, the church has neglected the creeping secularism that has infiltrated the church.

Why does it seem that the religious radicals advance to the positions of power? Edmund and Julia Robb make this observation in their book *The Betrayal of the Church*:

> The Religious Left has controlled the church by default….In many ways the radicals have demonstrated more integrity than the moderates [and conservatives]. Most radicals are willing to risk their reputation for what they believe. They are not afraid to be controversial and to take unpopular positions. What they believe, however misguided, they believe fervently. As a result, they have influence far above what their numbers would justify.
>
> It would seem that conservatives, which represent a majority of members in most mainline denominations, could have stymied a Religious Left with which they totally disagree. Their fervency is unquestionable. But the conservatives have held only marginal positions of influence during the last fifty years (p. 209).

Why are the Humanists so upset with Christian involvement? Underneath it all the Humanists are weak! They're really afraid of us! Yet we act as if they are stronger than we are. So we believe we ought to reason with them, even give in a little. "Let's dialogue!" is the favorite ploy of the Left. While we're listening to their rhetoric, they're moving into positions of power. Before we know it, all the exists are covered, and they're ready to beat us to a pulp if we do not follow their program. The Humanists, because of our retreatest doctrines, have the newspapers, the radio and television stations, the courts, most of Congress, the schools, and nearly every other policy making institution in their control. As the Robbs point out, the mainline denominations, unbeknownst to the tithers in the pew, fund Leftist organizations destined to destroy America.

The Demise of Humanism

The entire Humanistic system is being called into question, not only by Christians, but by the Humanist establishment as well. The generally liberal Brookings Institution concluded in its 389-page report, *Religion in American Public Life*, that "government depends for its health and values that over the not-so-long run must come from religion." It concludes that secular value systems fail "to meet the test of intellectual credibility for doing the job" of holding society together.

The Brookings Institution is reiterating what the apostle Paul said of Humanists and Humanism nearly 2,000 years ago: They're "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth….[T]hey will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all…" (2 Tim. 3:7, 9). The entire Humanistic system is on the verge of collapse, and some Christians are still preaching and teaching that the world's coming to an end. Well, the world of Humanism is certainly coming to an end.

Even with our pitiful efforts, the Humanists are scared. Why? They know that their view is the minority view. If the cat gets out of the bag that their position is as awful as they know it is, in five years their entire world view will turn to dust. They will be seen as the fools they really are.

What is really sad is that millions of Christians will find any excuse not to build a Christian civilization. But some Christians are firmly convinced on theological grounds that we should not even bother with the effort. In fact, any attempt to stem the tide of Humanism and supplant it with a Christian civilization is considered a doctrine of demons. It's "New Age thinking." As I've written elsewhere, the New Age movement is copying dominion-oriented Christianity. Satan is using the lies of New Age thinking to blind the minds of Christians. The trick of the devil is to get Christians to believe that they are in fact honoring God when in reality they are not. The idea that the world can be changed is *thought to be evil because some evil people are working to change the world with evil means*. The devil gets his "useful idiots," the Humanists, to counterfeit a central tenet of the Christian faith, dominion-oriented Christianity, call it New Age thinking, and then get Bible believing Christians to reject anything that even smells like the New Age Movement. Once again, the devil has millions of Christians going in reverse while the New Age Humanists are going full steam ahead. In the meantime, the devil is laughing his head off. He loves it when Christians follow him, believing that they're really following Christ.

Many Christians have never considered such a thing. There's no way they could be tricked by the devil. They don't want to believe that there could ever be another explanation for the way things are. Numerous people have come up to me after I delivered a series of lectures and say: "Why, I never looked at it like that before. I never heard that. I never consider that explanation or that interpretation." The devil doesn't want us to ask questions. He doesn't want us to think that there might be another explanation for the way things are. C.S. Lewis in his immortal *The Screwtape Letters* addresses this very issue. Speaking to his apprentice devil Wormwood about his Christian "patient," Screwtape writes:

> By the very act of arguing, you awake the patient's reason; and once it is awake, who can foresee the result? Even if a particular train of thought can be twisted so as to end in our favour, you will find that you have been strengthening in your patient the fatal habit of attending to universal issues and withdrawing his attention from the stream of immediate