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**The Twilight of Naturalism**  
***Five Ways Naturalism Fails to Answer the Big Questions - Part 2***

By Tal Davis

"Life has no meaning the moment you loose the illusion of being eternal." (Jean-Paul Sartre: 1905-1980)

"Morality is neither rational nor absolute nor natural." (Friedrich Nietzsche: 1844-1900)

On December 1, 1948, the General Assembly of the newly formed United Nations passed Resolution 217 A, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The statement passed with 48 countries in favor, none opposed, eight abstentions, and two that did not vote. The declaration was, at the time, hailed as a milestone in the fight for human rights around the world and is often cited to criticize regimes that fail to uphold it. In nearly every case where it was cited, it was against right-wing governments (egs.: South Africa under Apartheid; Chile under Pinochet) and rarely against left-wing and Marxist regimes (egs.: Cuba; China).

As great as the UDHR purports to be, it has major a problem. A large portion of the world's governments, even many that signed it in 1948 and since, actually completely ignore its contents. The UN established the UN Commission on Human Rights to investigate and police violations of the HDHR. In 2006, that commission was disbanded because some of its members were among the most egregious violators of human rights. It was replaced by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to accomplish the same task as the commission.

Unfortunately, the UNHRC is really no better at enforcing the UDHR than was its predecessor. It

tends to focus on only a few countries its members do not like. For instance, Israel, a democracy, has been cited more than 70 times. This while many countries, mostly Marxist and Islamic, that have genuinely disgraceful records of child slavery, abuse of women, authoritarianism, dictatorships, etc., are left unchallenged. This led to the United States to announce on June 19, 2018, that it was pulling out of, and would no longer financially support, the UNHRC as it is now structured.

By now you are probably asking what all this has to do with the problems of Naturalism. Just that Naturalism and Secular Humanism are the faith systems that underlie such documents as the UDHR. The document sounds wonderful, and if it had any teeth could make a real difference in the world. The truth is, though, that it is a hollow statement. It glorifies the rights of humanity and gives lip service to them, but it provides no absolute basis for those rights. Furthermore, those countries or individuals who do not really believe what it says to do, don't abide by them.!

As we indicated in Part 1, most Naturalists do not think seriously about the full implications of their belief system. They just pretend nothing about Naturalism is problematic. In this two part article, we are examining five reasons why Naturalism, as a worldview, fails to provide a satisfying way of thinking and living, and doesn't work as a basis for national and international law.

In the last installment we looked at the first three of the five problems of Naturalism. We demonstrated that: (1) Naturalism cannot explain why anything exists; (2)

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Naturalism cannot explain how life began; and (3) Naturalism cannot give any reason why humans are special. Click here to read Part One: The Twilight of Naturalism (see:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2020/08/the-twilight-of-naturalism-five-ways-naturalism-fails-to-answer-the-big-questions-part-1-tal-davis>)

Now we turn to the other two unsolvable issues for Naturalism. Number four involves the basis for morals and ethics. As we said, these are not the only reasons we could cite to show how Naturalism fails.

#### 4. Naturalism cannot give any reason to be or do good.

Most Naturalist maintain that they are as capable of being moral and doing good as anyone, including Christians. They believe that there is an innate sense of right and wrong hardwired into human genes. This moral sense, they assert, is a product of the evolutionary principles of self-preservation and preservation of the species. Thus mankind developed ethical principles because they are expedient for its continued existence and progress.

Naturalists are right that there is an inborn subjective human sense of morality. The Bible says so (Romans 1:18-23). The problem is that they have no objective reason for saying anything is actually right or wrong. In their worldview morals do not have an absolute basis. Only their conscience and social mores determine how they should behave in any situation. Those values, of course, change over time and vary radically in different cultures.

Thus, laws, ethics, and morals are no more than what the consensus says (or what the state says) they are at any specific time and place.

Even lofty documents like The Universal Declaration of Human Rights have no universally acceptable foundation. For many governments it is just a piece of paper having no real relevance for their nations.

All honest Naturalists will admit this is true (see quotes above). They know that ultimately morality is an illusion in their system. In fact, the very act of making moral decisions is an illusion because if Naturalism is correct then humans have no free will. Our behaviors are just the inevitable consequences of our genetic makeup and the environment on our brains. Our thought processes are no more than complex firings of neurons across synapses. We just think we are thinking. We just think we are conscious. We just think we make choices.

Many Naturalists can see the legal ramifications of these presuppositions. If humans have no real control of their behaviors, then the entire basis of law, justice, and personal responsibility for crime go out the window. Likewise, nations have no reasons to care about the well being of their citizens.

In contrast, the theistic (and Christian) worldview affirms the reality of right and wrong because it is based on the moral nature of God as revealed in Scripture. We know what is good and evil because He has made it known to us in the biblical revelation and in the person of Jesus Christ. Also, since we are made in His image, we have an actual free will and the ability to make moral decisions. This is the basis of western law and justice. Otherwise, it is all arbitrary.

Finally, we see why Naturalism is, at its root, a hopeless worldview.

#### 5. Naturalism cannot provide any real hope for the future.

Finally (and, as I said, this not an exhaustive list), Naturalism has no hope for the future of the world, man-

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kind, or the individual. If indeed, all that exists is the material universe of time, space, matter, and energy, then inevitably it will all fade into extinction. Some time in the relatively not too far future, the sun will burn out, then explode, and the earth and everything on it will be annihilated. The universe itself will eventually expend all of its energy and continue to expand into an eternal darkness. No galaxies, no stars, no planets, no life.

Thus, mankind, along with all the knowledge we have obtained, the things we have made, people's noble behavior and courage, will be gone forever. Ultimately, it will have made no difference at all. Mankind's history will be, as one sarcastic writer put it, "A great sound and fury signifying nothing!"

As for the individual person, Naturalism offers nothing in the way of hope beyond this physical life. When we die, our bodies and our consciousness will be extinguished forever. Our earthly lives, whatever we may have accomplished, will mean nothing to us since we will cease to exist. And when we go, in a practical sense, everything else goes with us. With this perspective, one is hard put to explain why doing anything other than follow our own hedonistic self interest and pleasure makes sense. We might as well "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

This is a sad and tragic state of affairs

if Naturalism is true. As Christians we stand on the hope of eternal life based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know our lives have meaning and purpose and make an eternal difference. We know that God is ultimately in control of the universe and promises he will redeem it and create a new heaven and a new earth. Moreover, if we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we will enjoy that new world with Him forever.

## Conclusion

Naturalism is the predominant worldview in most major arenas of contemporary American society and in international relations. Almost every major institution in our society is controlled by those who, whether they know it or not, are living with the presuppositions of Naturalism. Academia, the mainstream news media, television, movies, the fine arts, sci-

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ence, music, public education, etc., are, with only a few exceptions, dedicated to furthering the naturalistic worldview. But as we have shown, Naturalism, as a faith system, fails to answer even the most rudimentary questions about life and meaning. Only Christianity provides coherent and reasonable explanations for the five major issues we have addressed in this article.