

## **Christian Humanism**

About the same time I was introduced to Don Cupitt and the Sea of Faith organisation, I read about the publication of a book “ God in Us” by an Anglican priest, Anthony Freeman ( SCM Press, London 1993) , which caused quite a stir in the media because he was sacked by his Archbishop for proposing and delineating Christian Humanism. It is a very thin volume of only 90 pages but I remember at the time it had a profound influence on my own thoughts .

Recently I have reread it , and I will try and summarise his ideas.

- 1.The supernatural God described in the scriptures , to which Christians pray does not exist. Nor does the God who made the universe and all that’s in it either.
2. Instead God is something different ; it is purely human and exists “within us” representing all values and ideals in life we respect. These are positive things such goodness , love, rightly used power, knowledge , wisdom etc, and negative ones such as freedom from fear & tyranny of death and suffering. It is the sum of all our ideals.
- 3.This newly designated God is represented by the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. Thus gone are God the Father and God the Son, but God the Holy Spirit remains and is” present in the hearts and lives of ordinary people as they go about their everyday business,”
- 4.Jesus is seen as purely human calling hearers to a completely new attitude to life, to turn around ,to trust, to love, to forgive and not to judge. Thus a Christian Humanist wants to comply with all these values while not accepting the divinity of Christ.
- 5) There is no heaven and no afterlife, This life is all there is and it is up to us to give it a purpose ourselves.
- 6) Christian Humanism differs from Secular Humanism in that it “offers something to those brought up in within a Christian culture and provides a common ground on which the church and the world can meet”

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## Comments

Freeman's ideas appeal to me personally since I was brought up as a Christian and can attend an Anglican church in good conscience, and thereby have the benefits of good fellowship with other church members, whilst not agreeing with the theology preached therein. The concepts in the book are in general agreement with those of members of the Sea of Faith organisation. However, many are what are called "Post-Christians" in that they have given up links with the Christian church or are Secular Humanists being strictly agnostic or atheists. I like the idea of linking a new definition of God with the Holy Spirit within us, which is a very Christian idea. Since many of our young people and my generation cannot agree with the concept of a supernatural being, Christian Humanism does provide an acceptable and more believable alternative