

Our Mission and Statement of Values and Principles of the Secular Humanists of Calgary

Secular humanism is comprehensive, touching every aspect of life including issues of values, meaning, and identity. Thus it is broader than atheism, which concerns only the nonexistence of god or the supernatural. Important as that may be, there's a lot more to life ... and secular humanism addresses it.

Secular humanism is nonreligious, espousing no belief in a realm or beings imagined to transcend ordinary experience.

Secular humanism is a lifestance, or what Council for Secular Humanism founder Paul Kurtz has termed a eupraxsophy: a body of principles suitable for orienting a complete human life. As a secular lifestance, secular humanism incorporates the Enlightenment principle of individualism, which celebrates emancipating the individual from traditional controls by family, church, and state, increasingly empowering each of us to set the terms of his or her own life.

The principles of secularism which protect and underpin many of the freedoms we enjoy are:

- Separation of religious institutions from state institutions and a public sphere where religion may participate, but not dominate.
- Freedom to practice one's faith or belief without harming others, or to change it or not have one, according to one's own conscience.
- Equality so that our religious beliefs or lack of them doesn't put any of us at an advantage or a disadvantage.
- Securing justice and fairness in society and with eliminating discrimination and intolerance.

Secular Humanism protects both believers and non-believers

Secularism seeks to ensure and protect freedom of religious belief and practice for all citizens. Secularists want freedoms of thought and conscience to apply equally to all – believers and non-believers alike. They do not wish to curtail religious freedoms.

Secular Humanism is about democracy and fairness

In a secular democracy all citizens are equal before the law and parliament. No religious or political affiliation gives advantages or disadvantages and religious believers are citizens with the same rights and obligations as anyone else.

Secularism champions universal human rights above religious demands. It upholds equality laws that protect women, LGBTQ2S+ people and minorities from religious discrimination. These equality laws ensure that non-believers have the same rights as those who identify with a religious or philosophical belief.

Equal access to public services

We all share hospitals, schools, the police and the services of local authorities. It is essential that these public services are secular at the point of use, so no-one is disadvantaged or denied access on grounds of religious belief (or non-belief). All state-funded schools should be non-religious in character, with children being educated together regardless of their parents' religion. When a public body grants a contract for the provision of services to an organisation affiliated to a particular religion or belief, such services must be delivered neutrally, with no attempt to promote the ideas of that faith group.

Secularism is not atheism

Atheism is a lack of belief in gods. Secularism simply provides a framework for a democratic society. Atheists have an obvious interest in supporting secularism, but secularism itself does not seek to challenge the tenets of any particular religion or belief, neither does it seek to impose atheism on anyone.

Secularism is simply a framework for ensuring equality throughout society – in politics, education, the law and elsewhere – for believers and non-believers alike.

Secular Humanism protects free speech and expression but not hate speech

Religious people have the right to express their beliefs publicly but so do those who oppose or question those beliefs. Religious people and organizations who express hate speech are not guaranteed a right to a public platform to express such views. Religious beliefs, ideas and organizations must not enjoy privileged protection from the right to freedom of expression. In a democracy, all ideas and beliefs must be open to discussion in a safe and non harmful or demeaning and destructive manner. **Individuals have rights; ideas do not.**

Secular Humanism is the best chance we have to create a society in which people of all religions or none can live together fairly and peacefully.

Secular humanists hold that ethics is consequential, to be judged by results. This is in contrast to so-called command ethics, in which right and wrong are defined in advance and attributed to divine authority. “No god will save us,” declared Humanist Manifesto II (1973), “we must save ourselves.” Secular humanists seek to develop and improve their ethical principles by examining the results they yield in the lives of real men and women.

Our Mission:

We work towards fostering a secular humanist society based on reason, science, and humanist values. We campaign for a secular humanistic society in which all citizens are free to practise their faith, change it, or have no faith at all. A society inspired by the ideals of the Enlightenment. We promote secular humanism as the surest guarantor of religious freedom and the best means to foster a fair and open society, in which people of all religions and none can live together as equal citizens. A free of the dogmatic influence of religion and pseudoscience.

Humanism is not interchangeable and we follow the same principle in the Amsterdam Declaration 2002

Amsterdam Declaration 2002

Humanism is the outcome of a long tradition of free thought that has inspired many of the world's great thinkers and creative artists and gave rise to science itself.

The fundamentals of modern **Humanism** are as follows:

1. **Humanism is ethical.** It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.
2. **Humanism is rational.** It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world's problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. But Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.
3. **Humanism supports democracy and human rights.** Humanism aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.

4. **Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility.** Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society, and recognises our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.
5. **Humanism is a response to the widespread demand for an alternative to dogmatic religion.** The world's major religions claim to be based on revelations fixed for all time, and many seek to impose their world-views on all of humanity. Humanism recognises that reliable knowledge of the world and ourselves arises through a continuing process of observation, evaluation and revision.
6. **Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination** and recognises the transforming power of art. Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.
7. **Humanism is a lifestance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment** through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times. Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.