



The Enlightenment



The Newsletter of the Humanist Association of London and Area

An Affiliate of the Humanist Association of Canada (HAC)

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Harold Koehler – Humanist and Humanitarian (1924 – 2007)

We were all saddened to learn of the death of Harold Koehler on Saturday November 3rd 2007. Harold was the Secretary of the London humanist group when it was first formed in 2000. He stayed on as Secretary when the group became affiliated with the Humanist Association of Canada and was named The Humanist Association of London and Area in 2004. Harold most definitely was one of the king pins in the formation of a Humanist group in the London area and he continued to be a steady worker in the key executive position of Secretary until mid 2007.



Harold Koehler

Harold was raised on a farm in Huron County, completed high school at Harbord Collegiate in Toronto and obtained his B.Sc. (Eng.) at the University of Toronto in 1948. As a mechanical engineer, he worked initially for A.V.Roe, Orenda Engines and Hawker Siddeley on the design of airplane engines, including the Orenda engine intended to be used in the Avro Arrow. (Airplanes had been his passion since childhood.) With the cancellation of the Avro Arrow project, he had to change employers and he then spent the rest of his professional career working for Ontario Hydro as a vibrations research engineer at nuclear energy plants.

Over the years Harold became involved in many community activities. He served as a school board trustee in North York (1973-1978) where his interests included preserving small schools, special needs schools, school bus safety and values education. In the late 1960s he was involved in the battle to save York Downs-Earl Banks Park. He was a tireless and dedicated worker in numerous peace and social justice organizations in Toronto and also in London after moving there in 1988. His community contributions were recognized by the Governor General of Canada in 1992, when he was awarded the Commemorative Medal for the 125th anniversary of Confederation. Most recently he was treasurer of London-Fanshawe NDP, the Association for the Elimination of Hate, and Wiich ke yig (the London Chapter of the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples) and Secretary of the Humanist Association of London and Area (HALA). An inspiration and mentor to many in both his paid and unpaid careers, Harold worked in a quiet, patient, often behind-the-scenes way. Canada needs more citizens to follow his example.

President's Remarks

The month of November 2007 was a sad time for HALA members. The front cover of this Enlightenment records the passing and the lifetime achievements of **Harold Koehler**. It was also with profound regret that we learned of the death of our member **Nancy Symonds** on November 15th after a battle with cancer.

Nancy was a person who really loved life and lived it to the fullest. Her early training as a pianist established music as a strong motif throughout her life and that of her daughter Leigh. She enjoyed the theatre, acting at one point with the London Community Players. She along with her husband Graydon, whom she fell in love with at the age of sixteen, had a keen interest in photography. She touched many lives, especially those of her elementary school students. She particularly enjoyed working with children whose special needs demanded individual attention. And there were many other interests, including the environment and human rights. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

A celebration of Harold's life was held at the Unitarian Fellowship on November 10th. Sympathy is extended to his wife Dorothy, his four children, and other members of his family. A celebration of Nancy's life occurred at the Fellowship on December 1st. Sympathy is extended to her husband Graydon, daughter Leigh and son-in-law Richard Ling.

The 2007 Board of the Humanist Association of London and Area (HALA)

President – Don Hatch – 472-6167 – e-mail – dahatch@rogers.com

Past President – Derek Kaill – 432-6122 – e-mail - Derek_kaill@yahoo.com

Acting Secretary - Kate Balogh – 432-6122 – e-mail, olgab@hotmail.com

Treasurer – Claire Van Daele-Boseret – 451-5962 - e-mail, c.v.d.b@rogers.com

Membership Chairperson – Ed Ashman – 457- 9982 – e-mail, edward017@sympatico.ca

Member at Large – Jim Cranwell – 275-2055 – e-mail, jcranwell@rogers.com

Member at Large - Vacant

The Humanist Association of London and Area meets at the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, 505 Dundas Street in London, on the second Thursday of the months September to July inclusive at 7:30 PM. Please use the rear door off the parking lot. The Enlightenment is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Visit our web site at www.humanists-london.org

New members are welcome. Contact Membership Chairperson Ed Ashman at (519) 457-9982 edward017@sympatico.ca . Membership fees are listed below.

	<u>HAC</u> <u>Basic</u>	<u>HAC Limited</u> <u>Resources</u>	<u>Humanist</u> <u>Perspectives</u>	<u>HALA</u> <u>Basic</u>	<u>HALA Limited</u> <u>Resources</u>
Single	\$30	\$15	\$22	\$20	\$10
Family	\$35	\$20	\$22	\$25	\$15
Life	\$500				

Humanism and Religion

We have received two more submission on the topic of humanism and religion expressing two different points of view. One is by Jim Cranwell and the other is by Bob Harrington. These are printed below.

To the Editor of The Enlightenment:

On receiving the last issue of "The Enlightenment" and seeing the heading: "Humanism as a Basis for Religion" my first thought was that it was some sort of joke. Even after reading the two articles I still think (and hope) that they were written somewhat tongue-in-cheek to initiate reaction, so here goes.

Let me first state where I stand as a Humanist; I am non-religious, I am only concerned with the observable natural universe, not the supernatural (or as Ann Druyan calls it the "Sub-natural"), and I have no idea what "spirituality" means. Humanists would not call themselves "anti-religious" - they don't need to. If we inform religious followers that we don't believe in the existence of any of their gods, if we tell them their holy books are not divinely written or inspired, and are full of errors, contradictions and interpolations, and that revelation is not science, then *they* will label us anti-religious, and I don't blame them.

The articles make a number of general comments and references to religion that have to be addressed. The heading itself is ambiguous; does it mean religion in general, all religions, or Christianity?

Humanists support the scientific method and promote the teaching of critical thinking. All religions advocate the exact opposite. Faith is belief without evidence.

The sense of awe and wonder is not a religious sense. Science writers like Jacob Bronowski, Carl Sagan and Richard Feynman have written extensively on the fascination of the universe with humour, feeling and encompassing all the humanities.

Religious organizations do not necessarily celebrate life or have a sense of responsibility for the earth. Their *raison d'être* is to prepare believers for death and life after death, whatever that means. Certainly nearly all the opposition to cleaning up the environment, especially in North America, comes from followers of some religious faith. And this is not just the extreme fundamentalists, both George Bush and Stephen Harper are members of a branch of Christianity who believe the Apocalypse is imminent.

Religions do entail a belief in gods, life after death, supernatural phenomena and also in worshiping, ritualistic magic, punishment for their own "sins" and even worse for anyone not a member of their sect. Even Buddhists believe in supernatural concepts like the soul, nirvana and reincarnation.

"Religious Humanists" seems to be a rather meaningless phrase, especially redundant for Christians. If you are a good Christian it is assumed that you practice humanity. It is only a label but Humanism with a capital "H" is by definition a secular movement. That's the whole purpose for calling ourselves Humanists.

Considering the present situation in the world surely we would agree that it would be better off without any religions, without separate Christian schools and madrassas teaching dogma to young children. No one is naive enough to think that religion will soon cease to exist, but it is not true that people “need” religion. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world, but the same cannot be said for Christianity. The Scandinavian countries are 90% non-religious, Western Europe is 50% to 60% non-religious. Even in North America the percentage of the non-religious in Canada and the US grows each year.

There are many reasons why we should distance ourselves from all religions, but let us just consider one extremely important reason: evolution. It is appropriate as we approach the 200th anniversary of Darwin’s birth that we should consider how we can counteract the religious attack on arguably the greatest scientific discovery in history. Charles Darwin has been described as “one of the towering intellectual figures of world history.” The evidence in support of evolution is overwhelming. Dr. Campbell-Johnston’s statement that we can’t prove for certain that God does not exist is of course correct. Darwin was fully aware that natural selection did not prove that a creator did not exist, but it did remove the requirement for one. This is what religions, specifically Christian religion, are concerned about. Teaching about evolution in school at an early age makes it very difficult to indoctrinate children with belief in a supernatural deity.

Any move towards religion in any shape, way or form would indicate to me that I am in the wrong organization.

I don’t want to end on a sour note so would like to give a quotation by Jennifer Michael Hecht, author of the excellent book; “*Doubt: A History*”

*“... there are universal values that are secular and they are better, yes, **better**, than the religious ones.”* (her emphasis)

Jim Cranwell, Stratford.

Humanism as a Religion *BY BOB HARRINGTON*

It may not be well known, but both Buddhism and Hinduism are based on humanistic beliefs. The ancient philosophy that gave rise to these two religions did not project a concept of God. Their concern was to perceive the reality and to do so required a quiet mind. We are too impatient in trying to understand some of the deeper questions that arise, and our impatience makes us create concepts such as God to explain problems such as the meaning of life. And so the gods that we create are very human in their impatience and anger and lusts.

From early teachers, or gurus as they were called, we have the story of the snake and the rope. Walking along the path in the evening twilight, a peasant sees a coiled cobra blocking his path and freezes with fear. But as he looks more carefully and the snake does not move, he sees it for what it is, a coiled rope. Like the peasant our emotions move us too quickly to jump to conclusions.

In other words when we ask ourselves religious questions there is a supposition in the question that it has an answer. Rather these two religions encourage us to ask questions about our own self, about the questioner. How can we answer questions about God if we do not know our own

selves? Do we exist or are we like a breath of wind, here for just a moment and then gone. What is the mind, what is consciousness? If we can understand the questioner then maybe we can ask ourselves larger questions.

One of my favourite writers is J Krishnamurthi. His insistence, like that of Humanism, is that we discard all beliefs. He maintains that we cannot see the real if we are influenced by beliefs or something like fear or anger, impatience or desire. I find it a very strict and demanding discipline to discard all beliefs and quiet all emotions. It can be so very comforting to accept certain beliefs and let ourselves be lulled into thinking we know the truth.

Yes, humanism cannot only can be considered a religion, but at least in Buddhism and Hinduism, it is the backbone of their religion. It could even be argued that Christianity is a humanist religion, if it is understood that the concept of God, as Father, is really there so that the imagination of the ignorant masses could have something to cling to. You may remember that Jesus spoke in parables to the masses, but for the disciples he spoke in a plainer language so that they could understand.

Editors Comments:

After some reflection on the content of the four articles that have been submitted to The Enlightenment, it seems to me one of our problems is the word “religion” itself. This is because people tend to immediately associate it with one or more of the world’s established religions. Perhaps it is better to categorize humanism as a life stance, as is done on the reverse of the HAC membership card which states: “Humanism is a proactive life stance guided by the principles of rational thought, scientific inquiry, responsibility, ethics, compassion, fairness and equality.” What Julius Huxley was suggesting fifty years ago, was that humanism should be a new religion to eventually replace all the world’s religions. It would be based on humanist principles and would be free of any consideration of the supernatural. In hindsight, perhaps it would have been better if Huxley had used a phrase like “life stance,” instead of using the word “religion.”

The definition of humanism on the back of the HAC membership card is a good concise description of humanism, but in my view it does not go far enough. This is because there is no reference to the feelings of awe and wonder and reverence that most humanists have for our natural world, and the fact that humanists strive to get the most out of life because this life is all there is. I think those who imply that humanism can have religious qualities are merely saying that humanists should feel they belong to a community of like-minded people who not only adhere to humanist principles, but also wish to meditate and celebrate the wonder of being alive, and in some way contribute to a more peaceful and more compassionate world. Yes there will be differing opinions among humanists on various matters, but surely tolerance is also a characteristic of humanists. (DAH)

A Thank You to Contributors by Goldie Emerson.

I am grateful to Rod Martin, to Catherine Campbell-Johnston, to Jim Cranwell and to Bob Harrington for their thoughtful responses to the articles written in a previous Enlightenment by Don Hatch and myself expressing two different views of Humanism with and without a religious component. The greatest compliment one writer can give to another is not that they are in complete agreement, but rather that they have read carefully what has been written and they have taken it seriously enough to offer their own thoughts on the same topic.

Report on the Humanist Association of Canada's Annual General Meeting

Held at Milton Ontario on October 6th 2007

This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was well planned by Executive Director Kathy Meidell and well chaired by President Pat O'Brien. All attendees received a professionally produced booklet containing the President's Message, the Vice President's Message, Financial Report, Membership Report, Marketing/Education Report and the Executive Directors Report.

President Pat skillfully adhered to the agenda and the meeting ended right on time at 5:00 PM. The majority of time was taken up discussing the proposed Federation Model. A draft proposal had been circulated earlier and this was the basis for discussion. It was obvious from the start that the proposed fee structure was not acceptable and required modification, so this segment of the draft was separated out and omitted from the discussions. A revised fee schedule for the affiliates will be issued later.

A few members wished to vote without discussion on the proposal as presented in the draft, but the majority sensibly wished to put forward numerous amendments for consideration by the committee that has been struck to compose and issue a final document, incorporating the suggested amendments. This document is to be completed by March 1st 2008. After that date the final version will be sent to all members who will participate in a mail-in vote. A motion to adopt this procedure was proposed and voted on. The motion was carried.

All in all it was an excellent AGM. My one recommendation for the future would be to issue the financial report prior to the meeting so that members can scrutinize it ahead of time. The time and place of the next AGM has yet to be determined. It will probably be combined with a conference, so it is necessary for a local affiliate to volunteer to hold this event.

In the evening a banquet was held at which June Callwood was posthumously honoured as Humanist of the Year for 2007.

The Humanist Association of London and Area's Annual General Meeting

The HALA AGM will be held at the regular January 10th 2008 meeting. There will be a short report of 2007 activities followed by the nomination and election of the 2008 executive and Board of Directors. The nominating committee, consisting of Bill Chefurka and Goldie Emerson, has put forward the following list of candidates:

President – Don Hatch

Past President – Derek Kail

Secretary – Kate Balogh

Treasurer – Claire Van Daele-Boseret

Membership Secretary – Ed Ashman

Member-at-Large – Jim Cranwell

Member-at-Large – Rod Martin

Other nominations may be made from the floor by members of HALA.

Volunteers Our thanks go to the following volunteers, serving HALA in 2007.

Refreshments – Jackie Emerson. Music – Camile Van Daele. Programs – Bill Chefurka and Goldie Emerson. Research – Richard Gibbens. Enlightenment and Web Site – Don Hatch.

Book Review
EINSTEIN – HIS LIFE AND UNIVERSE

By Walter Isaacson

The release of Einstein's personal letters fifty years after his death has enabled Walter Isaacson to author what is probably the most complete biography of Albert Einstein's life and work. This book is a skillful amalgam of Einstein's youthful years, his scientific achievements, his personal and family life, his politics, his pacifism, his Jewish heritage, his music, his philosophy and his thoughts on the nature of God.

Einstein was born in Germany in 1879 and grew up in Munich. When he was sixteen in 1895, he moved to northern Italy. As Einstein was growing up, there were really few signs that he would come to be regarded as one of the greatest geniuses of the twentieth century. Although he excelled in science and mathematics, he failed in his first attempt to enter the Zurich Polytechnic because he was weak in certain subjects including literature, French, zoology, botany and politics. He spent a happy year at a cantonal school in Aarau Switzerland improving his knowledge in these subjects and was successful in being admitted into Zurich Polytechnic in 1896 at the age of seventeen.

At the Polytechnic he was known as an impudent scholar and non-conformist who did not endear himself to his professors, partly because he skipped a lot of classes. His overall marks were not outstanding, but he managed to graduate in 1900. It was at the Polytechnic that he met fellow student Mileva Maric who became his first wife in 1902 after he had landed his first steady job at the Bern Patent Office. His first son, Hans Albert, was born in 1904. Einstein enjoyed working at the patent office. He was so efficient at his work that he had plenty of time to think about how the universe works and to write papers. It was there in 1905 that he wrote five papers that would make him famous and change science forever.

His first paper proved that light was propagated not only as a wave motion, but also as bundles or quanta, that later became known as photons. This work was based on the photoelectric effect and won him the Nobel prize in 1921. The second paper, which became his doctoral thesis, dealt with the sizes of atoms. The third provided an explanation for Brownian movement. Then came the big ones. The fourth introduced the hard to grasp theory of special relativity, which includes time as the fourth dimension. As if that was not enough, he then devised the most famous equation in physics, $E=mc^2$, which eventually led to nuclear fission and the bomb that changed the world.

Special relativity deals with the relative motion of bodies at a constant speed of motion, but not if they change speed or direction. It took Einstein another ten years to develop the equations that would fit all conditions of movement, and this theory became known as general relativity. By this time he was thirty-six years old and his best creative years were behind him. He spent the next forty years trying to prove that there was a mathematically explainable connection between gravity and electromagnetism. This search, for what he termed the unified field theory, never did come to fruition. The other major development of science in the early part of the twentieth century was the Danish physicist Niels Bohr's theory of Quantum Mechanics, which stated that the movement and positions of electrons in the atom are based on probability, and their exact positions cannot be determined. Einstein never fully accepted this concept, causing him to utter his famous statement, "God does not play dice with the universe."

Einstein was a great admirer of certain of the scientists and mathematicians that preceded him. Among these were Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Faraday and Maxwell, whose brilliant equations on electromagnetism predicted the possibility of radio waves. He stood on the shoulders of these giants and became a giant himself. He was friends with most of the famous scientists of his day including Marie Curie, Max Planck, Ernest Rutherford, Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born, Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud, Arthur Eddington and others. In 1919 the British astronomer Eddington proved, during a solar eclipse, that the sun's gravitational field did bend light waves, thus verifying Einstein's theories of relativity.

As Einstein became more famous he was able to leave the Bern patent office and assume various teaching positions, ending up at the University of Berlin. As time went on it became evident that Germany was rearming, and that Jews could be subject to persecution. In 1933 Einstein emigrated to the United States, settling in Princeton New Jersey, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Einstein's second son Eduard was born in 1910. His first marriage was turbulent, and he obtained a divorce in 1912. His relations with first wife Mileva Maric and their two sons were on-again, off-again, being strained at times, but amiable at other times. He was very proud when his eldest son, Hans Albert, became a professor of hydraulic engineering at Berkley in California. His longest lasting and happiest relationship was with his younger sister Maria "Maja" Einstein. He was greatly saddened when Maja died in 1951. Einstein's second marriage, to his first cousin Elsa Einstein in 1919, was more successful than the first, and he remained with her until her death at Princeton in 1936. Einstein was not monogamous and had several dalliances throughout his life, but Elsa accepted this and maintained her loyalty and affection for him. She enjoyed being married to such a famous and interesting man and always looked out for his best interests.

Albert Einstein had many interests besides physics and mathematics. He was a lover of music, played the violin extremely well and the piano reasonably well. His favourite composer was Mozart, followed closely by Bach. He was well grounded in philosophy. His favourites were Spinoza and David Hume. Like Spinoza he thought of God as the beautiful laws and forces of the universe, not as a personal God influencing events on earth. He admired Hume's philosophy that conclusions must be based on hard facts, not on unproven articles of faith.

Einstein was Jewish, but only in the ethnical, not the religious sense. His family did not attend synagogue and in fact they sent Albert to a Catholic school for a while because it was close by. He was proud of his Jewish heritage and became a Zionist, one of the group encouraging Jews to settle in Palestine prior to WW II. He did not favour the establishment of a Jewish state at that time because in his view, it could lead to an ongoing conflict with the Arabs. As it turned out he was right. He did, however favour the establishment of a Jewish university in Jerusalem.

In his early years Einstein was a devout pacifist encouraging young males not to enroll in the military. His views later changed when he realized Germany was rearming and that nearby countries such as France, Belgium and others would require a military to defend themselves. And, as is well known, he realized that Germany had the potential to develop the atomic bomb and he and Niels Bohr contacted president Roosevelt and convinced him to start the Manhattan project. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki he very much regretted that his equation $E=mc^2$ had led to so much destruction and human suffering. He recommended that governments form an international body to regulate atomic weapons, but was unsuccessful in this endeavour. He detested nationalism saying, "It is an infantile disease, the measles of mankind," and urged

politicians to think in worldly terms for the benefit of humankind. He particularly liked the freedom of speech and life in general in the United States. He saw the benefits of a prosperous middle class and wished this situation could be more widespread throughout the world.

“Einstein’s God,” is the title of Chapter Seventeen. He said, “I believe in Spinoza’s God who reveals himself in the beauty and harmony of all that exists, but not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and doings of mankind. Spinoza was the first philosopher to deal with the body and soul as one, and not two separate things. I do not believe in immortality. One life is enough for me.” When asked if he was religious he replied, “try and penetrate with our limited means the secrets of nature and you will find that, behind all the discernable laws and connections, there remains something intangible and inexplicable. Veneration for this force beyond anything that we can comprehend is my religion. To that extent I am, in fact, religious.” On another occasion he said, “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

Unlike Sigmund Freud, Bertrand Russell or George Bernard Shaw, Einstein never felt the need to denigrate those who believe in God; instead he tended to denigrate atheists. He said, “What separates me from most so called atheists is a feeling of the cosmos. The fanatical atheists are like slaves who are still feeling the weight of their chains, which they have thrown off after a hard struggle. They are creatures who – in their grudge against traditional religion as the ‘opium of the masses’ – cannot hear the music of the spheres.” And he went on, “You can call me an agnostic, I do not share the crusading spirit of the professional atheist whose fervor is mostly due to a painful liberation from the fetters of religious indoctrination received in youth. I prefer the attitude of humility, corresponding to the weakness of our intellectual understanding of nature and our own being.” Einstein the agnostic, had no objection to being labeled a humanist.

When asked if he was influenced to any extent by Christianity he said, “As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”

Finally, Einstein’s sense of morality must be mentioned. He was able to develop, and to practise, a strong personal morality. “The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions,” he explained, “our inner balance and even our existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty to life.” When leaving on a trip with Elsa, he gave the following moral advice to her two daughters: “Use for yourself little, but give much to others.”

In total the book contains 551 pages of narrative plus about 100 pages of sources, notes, index, etc. For the most part it is a straight-forward read, although at times the going gets a little tough when the author is attempting, with some success, to explain complicated theories in layman’s terms. Reading this book I was impressed not only by Einstein’s genius as a scientist, but also by his broad interests in so many worldly aspects throughout all his life. Yes he was human, and at times had strained relations with some members of his family, but at the same time he was by and large a man with a very balanced all encompassing outlook and a keen sense of morality. He died in 1955 at the age of 76. His funeral was attended by his son Hans Albert and a few close friends. His ashes were scattered in the Delaware River.

For me, one of the benefits of reading this book is that for the first time I understood the difference between special and general relativity. Also I was pleased that Einstein called himself an agnostic. Being an agnostic myself, I am often accused of sitting on the fence or even on the “pot,” but I don’t mind being in the company of Einstein, if only in this one respect. (DAH).

Papal Gobbledygook

The Pope is at it again. In his second encyclical entitled "Saved by Hope," he states, "Atheism may be understandable when confronted with evil and suffering, but man's attempts to banish God has led to the greatest cruelty and violation of justice, whether through Marxist revolution, or the science that produced the atomic bomb. A world without God is a world without hope. Only God can create justice. And faith gives certainty that he does so."

Surely any serious thinker can deduce that these words are nothing but a bunch of nonsense. In a Letter to the Editor in the December 1st Globe and Mail, Joanna Rozender of Oakville states, "The Pope should revisit the history of his own organization before criticizing others for creating great forms of cruelty and violations of justice." In other words, the cruelty and suffering caused by the crusades and the various inquisitions cannot be just swept under the rug. And the statement that "only God can create justice" is ludicrous. Practical systems of justice were in effect in ancient civilizations long before monotheism (God) was invented. As we humanists know, it is entirely possible to be "good without God." Another fallacy is the claim that "faith gives us certainty." Since faith is a belief in the unproven or the unknown, how can it be labeled as a certainty?

While we are at it, lets look at a few of the other incredulous beliefs and practices of Roman Catholicism. Papal infallibility immediately comes to mind. This ridiculous concept was invented at the time of the first Vatican Council about 1870 when Popes lost much of their political clout at the time of unification in Italy. This put all future Popes in a straitjacket because it is difficult to say that any statements of an infallible Pope should be questioned or modified. Another absurd concept is transubstantiation in the Eucharist whereby the body of Christ is present in the host. Luther recognized this absurdity and changed the concept to consubstantiation where Christ is supposedly present in spirit only. And another ridiculous practice is the opposition to artificial birth control that is helping to foster the spread of AIDS and to create a population explosion that the world can ill afford. Other questionable traditions are the celibate priesthood and the reluctance to allow women priests. And the list goes on.

Up-coming HALA Meetings

January 10th - Annual General Meeting followed by the showing of a DVD on Thomas Homer-Dixon's recent book, *The Upside of Down*.

February 14th - Two Concepts of Secularism. Dr. John Thorp will present two different meanings of "secularism." On the one hand there is "vertical secularism," and on the other hand there is "horizontal secularism." Come and learn about these two different concepts. Dr. Thorp is Acting Chair of the Philosophy Department at the University of Western Ontario.

March 13th - Dr. Christopher Viger - Topic to be announced in the March Enlightenment

April 10th - Humanism and Religion. Our member Dr. Rod Martin will discuss the nature and function of religion, and will explore ways in which a naturalistic, non-theistic humanism might be able to address the religious needs that seem to be an essential aspect of human nature. He will argue that humanism offers a viable alternative to the dominant religions in the world today. Dr. Martin is a professor of clinical psychology at UWO. Prior to studying psychology, he completed a bachelors degree in theology.