

# PURPOSE AND MEANINGLESSNESS

By

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Good citizens are bewildered that so many in our society can engage in practices which decent people have always considered immoral and unacceptable. They find it hard to understand why young people so readily risk ruining their lives by experimenting with drugs, drink and sex. Gifted men sacrifice their integrity for money and power. Politicians seem not to have the faintest idea of what they should be doing, and almost all their decisions have disastrous results.

Why? In his book, *Ends and Means*, Aldous Huxley gives a clue. "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning, consequently assumed that it had none and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially a matter of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously a liberation from a certain system of morality. We object to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom."<sup>1</sup>

Huxley's "we" includes his contemporaries such as Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, H. G. Wells and others who for many years have been quoted as authorities and whose books have been required reading in many classrooms. Huxley was honest enough to admit that his philosophy of meaninglessness had not been the result of any search for truth but simply because it afforded him and his colleagues freedom from economic and sexual morality. If the world has no meaning, then there can be no rules other than the ones we forge for ourselves. This is the philosophy embraced by today's leaders in education, art, economics, science and politics. It is also the reason young people are recklessly endangering their future and their lives by indulging in drugs, alcohol and sex. They have been skillfully taught that the world came into existence without meaning and that there is no absolute moral basis upon which to make judgments. The public schools call this "Value Clarification", meaning that you make up your own values and morals as you go. That's Huxley's philosophy of meaninglessness.

The same philosophy erases moral responsibility for the gays and lesbians, for the publishers of pornography; it accounts for the absence of justice in the courts as well as in other government decisions.

Is there meaning and purpose to the world? If there is, wouldn't it be the greatest folly to live out one's life without ever knowing its purpose and thus to have lived in vain?

The fact is God does have a purpose and has revealed it. The Bible calls it God's "eternal purpose,"<sup>2</sup> which means that it does not change, so it is still His purpose for man today.

At creation God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion..."<sup>3</sup> This, then, was the original purpose: that man should exist in God's image, that he should live, think and act like his Creator. As long as he reflected God's image, by thinking God's thoughts after Him and acting in harmony with God's will, there were no problems. But the day he chose to think and act contrary to the

Creator, the image was rejected, and he ceased to fulfill the purpose of his existence. He was cast out of the garden, “lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life and eat and live forever.”<sup>4</sup> Life is only for those who desire the Creator’s purpose for life.

It is no wonder that so many who see the world as meaningless find suicide as the ultimate answer to their problems. Others who are blind to the purpose of God, yet believe there must be meaning somewhere, try to create a meaningful world through pantheism, the worship of earth and nature, as seen in the environmental hysteria.

Jesus is “the image of the invisible God.”<sup>5</sup> This means that He did everything according to God’s desires. “I do always the things that are pleasing to him.” He said.<sup>6</sup> This is exactly what God expected of Adam. The difference is this: when Adam was tempted he gave up the pursuit of pleasing God in order to please himself; when Jesus was tempted — “in all points tempted like as we are”<sup>7</sup> — he chose the will of the Father in every case. In the life-and-death issue of the cross, Jesus’ decision was, “Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.”<sup>8</sup>

The purpose for all men is the same: the image of God. Whatever occupation one chooses for his livelihood, the vocation of every person should be to fulfill the purpose of his Creator, to please Him in thought and action that we may be transformed into His image.<sup>9</sup>

Of course, we all admit to failure when it comes to total fulfillment: that is, perfectly reflecting God’s image. In the words of Paul, we all have “come short of the glory of God.”<sup>10</sup> Without a doubt Jesus is the only One Who succeeded perfectly. But it is not the total completion of that purpose in this world that God asks of us but only that we embrace that purpose with all our hearts. Hence we read: “Seek the things that are above where Christ is;”<sup>11</sup> “Seek you first His kingdom and His righteousness;”<sup>12</sup> “And everyone that has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as He is pure.”<sup>13</sup>

The final purpose is held before us throughout Christ’s teaching and in the New Testament scriptures. In the final state the glory of the new creation is portrayed as: 1) Christians perfected and made immortal, powerful and glorious in the day of resurrection.<sup>14</sup> 2) A new creation where all things evil have been totally banished. “And He (God) shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall they be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away.”<sup>15</sup> Note that these are totally absent from creation, not merely removed to some other place in the realm.

In reading Acts and the apostles’ letters, there is a continuous note of joy in expectation in spite of the persecution and hardship the believers were having to endure. God is portrayed as One working to bring man to an ultimate goal of triumph and glory.<sup>16</sup> The completed product will be the creatures in His own image, as purposed from the beginning.

It takes no professional expertise for anyone to see that meaninglessness is the philosophy of modern society. It has been this way since Adam, although there have been periods in which Christians were able to have significant influence on government, education and the arts. The tragedy in our century is that Christians seem to be unaware of God’s primary purpose. We see large congregations, with impressive buildings and highly educated staff of clergy and other professionals, with no apparent purpose other than to fill the buildings and reap the funds to keep the whole operation going. Many

Christians think only in terms of the organizational structure, its leadership and its programs.

Many leaders are more concerned about numerical growth than in growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ, as Peter exhorted,<sup>17</sup> and the power of God to transform us by renewing our minds has been replaced by the complex hoax of psychology.

The success standards of the world have become the criterion for the modern church, resulting in its failure to reveal the message of God's purpose.

This purpose, that man should reflect the image of God, was emphasized by Jesus then demonstrated by Him every step of the way. There is no hint that He ever considered the traditions of men nor the demands of society nor His own personal pleasure nor that of His loved ones as having any weight whatsoever against His doing the Father's will. "My meant is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish His work,"<sup>18</sup> He declared.

As long as people fail to heed God's purpose, the world will have no meaning to them and will continue on its downward plunge to misery, chaos and destruction. Like Huxley, evil people prefer meaninglessness to the moral order of God.

But Christ's disciples are those who live what God loves and hate what God hates and who measure all things by how they advance His eternal purpose.

In raising Jesus from death and making Him immortal, the Bible says that God was manifesting to man His eternal purpose.<sup>19</sup> Jesus, as the "first fruits of the dead,"<sup>20</sup> is now "alive for evermore."<sup>21</sup> This is the purpose and goal for each Christian, to finally be raised from death, given immortality, and live in God's image forever.

Take courage and rejoice! There is no power outside of yourself that can defeat God's purpose for you.

## REFERENCES

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