stand above that accusation themselves? to "enforce dogma". Do they seek to The statement accuses others of seeking

Snoilison? be the case in propagating their own faith over others. Do the NZARH hold this to beliefs should not be given privilege

 The statement contends that one set of religions would contest.

Christians, as well as followers of other confentions assumption, one that issues of this world." This is a highly otherworldly and future - not with "the

being only concerned with issues that are The statement characterises religion as before we affirm. statements of conviction. We believe course inevitable with all such bottom-line

10 si sidT ."səvəiləd ylgnoriz HAAZN The statement proceeds from faith – "the

statement of the NZARH for example: some issues to address with regard to the high ground or neutrality in this regard. There are Zealand Secular Education Network can claim Meither the MZARH nor groups such as the New

commitment of a person or community. say that an ideology flows out of the religious

religion, Koyzis goes on to eduating ideology and religious. Rather than ideologies, inescapably secniarism is, like all As Koyzis asserts,

Political Visions and Illusions, p.32

within the saeculum - the present age. created thing, or more than one thing, which, as its name indicates, worships some Secularism may be described as an idolatry

David Koyzis answers:

What is secularism?

in than those that enforce dogma - religious or otherwise." express and practice their beliefs are far better places to live organisation... Societies in which all people can openly should treat religious organisations the same as any other one set of beliefs privilege over another and the state than following a religious agenda. Our law should not give secular; that is dealing with the issues of this world rather "The NZARH strongly believes that government should be



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This resource is designed to help

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better places to live in than those that enforce dogma – religious or otherwise." organisation ... Societies in which all people can openly express and practice their beliefs are far privilege over another and the state should treatreligious organisations the same as any other this world rather than following a religious agenda. Our law should not give one set of beliefs "The NZARH strongly believes that government should be secular; that is dealing with the issues of

An article on the New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists website (reason org.nz) states:

Secularism is a belief system



Secularism is Religious

A gospel by any other name

Design Gayann Phillips

conversation Online engage network invest current relate blogs share connect build community gather learn dialogue articles kingdom speak communicate Christian voice interact collaborate ideas







Author Dr Rod Thompson



Ideologies, "isms", such as secularism, embrace the same concerns as the Christian gospel. They are concerned about the good life, about the purpose and meaning of being human, of living well in the world, forming communities, making moral choices etc.

Ideologies are, in this sense, gospel stories – declarations of good news. This is the meaning of "gospel", as we find it in Scripture. It is a public word, not uniquely a Christian word. It was widely used in the first century as the proclamation of good news through the Roman Empire. The Priene inscription, from 9 BC, makes use of the word as follows:

Caesar [Augustus] through his appearance has exceeded the hopes of all former good messages [euangelia], surpassing not only his benefactors who came before him, but also leaving no hope that anyone in the future would surpass him, and since for the world the birthday of the god was the beginning of his good messages [euangelia] ···

The gospel of Christ, the gospel of God's kingdom and reign in Christ, has always been proclaimed not only as the biblical vision and promise of life but always *in contention* with other visions and promises, other stories of the good life, told by emperors, educators, politicians and ad makers.

Such was the case in the days of the prophets when Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian or Persian stories of the good life were on offer. Such was the case in the days of Jesus and the 1st century disciples when Roman versions of the gospel were widely proclaimed – peace and blessing in the name of the Caesar who was lord and saviour of the world. When Paul proclaimed Jesus as Lord, he consciously did so in contention with the alternative Lord of the day, the Roman Caesar.

What are the threats and opportunities that present themselves in this era of secularism? Surely the greatest threat is that secularism will proclaim itself as the only way; that the secular ideology will be enforced as dogma to the exclusion of other faith positions. The danger in this is that the Christian gospel will be locked out of the main arenas of public debate and decision making, as though it was irrelevant or outdated.

However, there is also opportunity in the current secular context in which many find themselves in Western nations such as Aotearoa New Zealand. In the words of Stanley Hauerwas:

I think this is a time that God is finally helping us Christians get over what is called Christendom namely, when we thought we were in control of the world. It's terrific. We're discovering we're going to be forced to learn to live by our wits. When you have power, it dulls the mind, and it dulls the intellect. We're learning what it means to live without power. We may learn to live wittily again. When you're not in control then you have to know those who are in control better than they know themselves in order to survive. That's great. We can do that now in a way that I think is quite promising.

(Sunday Asylum: Being the Church in Occupied Territory, p. 34)

Amen. May we graciously and courageously take such opportunity.

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