

## Spinoza's School of Humanism

The Humanist Manifesto III of the American Humanist Association in 2003 claims that “humans are an integral part of nature, the result of unguided evolutionary change.” That is an expression of pantheism inspired by Baruch Spinoza in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Spinoza denied the supernatural and believed that progress and possibly a vague love for one's neighbor were principles behind Nature. Greg Epstein, the Humanist chaplain at Harvard and MIT, called Spinoza “the first public Humanist in modern western history.”

1. Spinoza argued that philosophy (including science) must be separated from theology. For him, the goal of philosophy and science was to determine truth, while the goal of theology was piety. Hence only scientists could know the truth about the physical origins of the world. Spinoza's ideas strongly influenced the Enlightenment and maintain a grip on intellectuals to the present. For example:
  - a. Stephen Hawking (famous for popularizing the Big Bang) said, “I use the word ‘God’ in an impersonal sense, like Einstein did, so knowing the mind of God is knowing the laws of nature.”
  - b. Einstein considered himself a disciple of Spinoza, and wrote “I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and the doings of mankind.”
  - c. Greg Epstein, the humanist chaplain at Harvard & MIT, wrote a book *Good Without God: What a Billion Non-Religious People Do Believe*. Epstein's humanism is in fact a religion, it is just not a theistic religion. Epstein also wrote that Darwin is his hero.
2. A humanism/pantheism similar to Spinoza's is now effectively an established religion in our culture. Humanist scientists base all their speculations about origins on anti-theistic presuppositions. In particular, the theory of evolution is their way of keeping God out (the wall of Modern

Babylon). The theory of evolution also needs anti-theistic presuppositions about billions of years in geology and astronomy (the moat around Modern Babylon).