

# A perspective from the petri dish

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A large, light teal graphic of a stylized human figure with arms raised, serving as a background for the text.

# Start with a personal story

A large, light teal stylized figure with arms raised, serving as a background for the text.

# Why am I telling you all this?

# Three messages

- Humanist experiences and identities in their own right, independent of relationship to religion are increasingly the norm for non-religious people

# Three contributions

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- Humanism as the lay or common sense view – a permanent alternative – not a recent, western or post-Christian phenomenon is how many of us view it

# Humanism

...a commitment to the perspective, interests and centrality of human persons; a belief in reason and autonomy as foundational aspects of human existence; a belief that reason, scepticism and the scientific method are the only appropriate instruments for discovering truth and structuring the human community; a belief that the foundations for ethics and society are to be found in autonomy and moral equality...

*Concise Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*

# Humanists

Believing that it is possible to live confidently without metaphysical or religious certainty and that all opinions are open to revision and correction, they see human flourishing as dependent on open communication, discussion, criticism and unforced consensus.

*Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*

# Three contributions

- Humanist experiences and identities in their own right, independent of relationship to religion are increasingly the norm for non-religious people
- Humanism as the lay or common sense view – a permanent alternative – not a recent, western or post-Christian phenomenon is how many of us view it
- The British Humanist Association as an organisation has a wide agenda and programme of work



# British Humanist Association

- Founded in 1896, now has over 28,000 members and supporters
- 13 paid staff and 30 regular volunteers
- Policies informed by 120 of scientists, philosophers, and other thinkers
- Over 30 local, student and special interest affiliates
- Over 130 Local Development volunteers, engaging in local public affairs
- 500,000 people attend ceremonies conducted by celebrants each year

# Promotion and Education

- [www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)
- [www.humanistlife.org.uk](http://www.humanistlife.org.uk)
- Speakers into schools to talk about Humanism
- Resources produced for schools in learning about Humanism
- Resources for colleges, universities and community settings

# Community Services

- 300 trained and accredited celebrants
- Dignified and meaningful funerals for the non-religious
- Other ceremonies such as weddings, baby-namings, divorces etc
- Growing in popularity every year
- New emerging community work

## Public Affairs

- Largest body campaigning for secularism in law and government
- Campaigning on ethical issues from a humanist perspective e.g. euthanasia
- Working with the All Party Parliamentary Humanist Group (over 100 MPs and peers) and with Lawyers for Humanism
- Current campaigns include Faith Schools, Worship in Schools, the school curriculum, Bishops in the Lords, contracting out of public services to religious groups, free speech

# Atheist Bus Campaign



The Atheist Bus Campaign in 2009 was a runaway success, raising over £150,000 to the advert on buses across the country. It was emulated internationally in over twenty countries.

# Protest the Pope

Protesting against the state visit of the Pope, we worked with other organisations to stage the largest march and rally against the policies of the Holy See in modern times





# The Census Campaign

## NOT RELIGIOUS? IN THE 2011 CENSUS TICK "NO RELIGION"

"It's intrusive so I didn't even answer last time. But this year I'll tick 'No Religion' for sure."

Results from the last Census are used to justify even more 'faith' schools, at taxpayers' expense. My children shouldn't be preached at in school."



**IF YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS  
FOR GOD'S SAKE SAY SO**

CENSUS-CAMPAIGN.ORG.UK



## NOT RELIGIOUS? IN THE 2011 CENSUS TICK "NO RELIGION"

"I put 'Jedi' in the last census. But I'll tick 'No Religion' this time."

I'm not religious and I don't want Bishops and the government saying this is a religious country.

That's just an excuse to keep religion in politics."



**IF YOU'RE NOT RELIGIOUS  
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CENSUS-CAMPAIGN.ORG.UK



We are urging people who are not religious to say so on the 2011 census. Data showing inflated figures for the religious has been used to justify many damaging policies by government.