

School of Religion

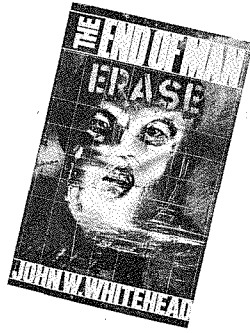
Faculty Publications and Presentations

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Review: The End of Man

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THE END OF MAN
by John W. Whitehead

John Whitehead, founder of the Rutherford Institute, is engaged as a lawyer on many cases involving religious rights. Over the last several years he has authored a number of practical books directed at specific issues in politics and education. But this one is a detailed historical and philosophical analysis of the factors that have brought our society to its present predicament and where it will go from here if we do not alter course. It is a call for Christian activism.

One real strength of this work is the carefully documented recent history. Much of our complacency is a result of bad memory. We need to see today compared with yesterday to realize just how dangerous the situation is and where it is headed.

The thesis is that American culture, and with it the very possibility of a functioning church, is fading fast! This may sound like nothing new, but several features make *The End of Man* unique and I think Whitehead is right on each count.

Whitehead points out that the real difficulty has been our inability to cope with the great strides of twentieth-century science. We have suddenly allowed ourselves to be dehumanized—turned into machines.

Another critical point is that this new view is not Humanism. The real enemy of today's Christian is not Humanism. It too is dead. The problem is Naturalism or Secularism: the view that there is nothing beyond the physical, organic, and observable. Naturalism has come to dominate our social and physical scientists. Phil Donahue's recent book and television series, *The Human Animal*, was certainly a prime example. This chance-centered Naturalism is even more destructive than the old man-centered Humanism, and we must understand it.

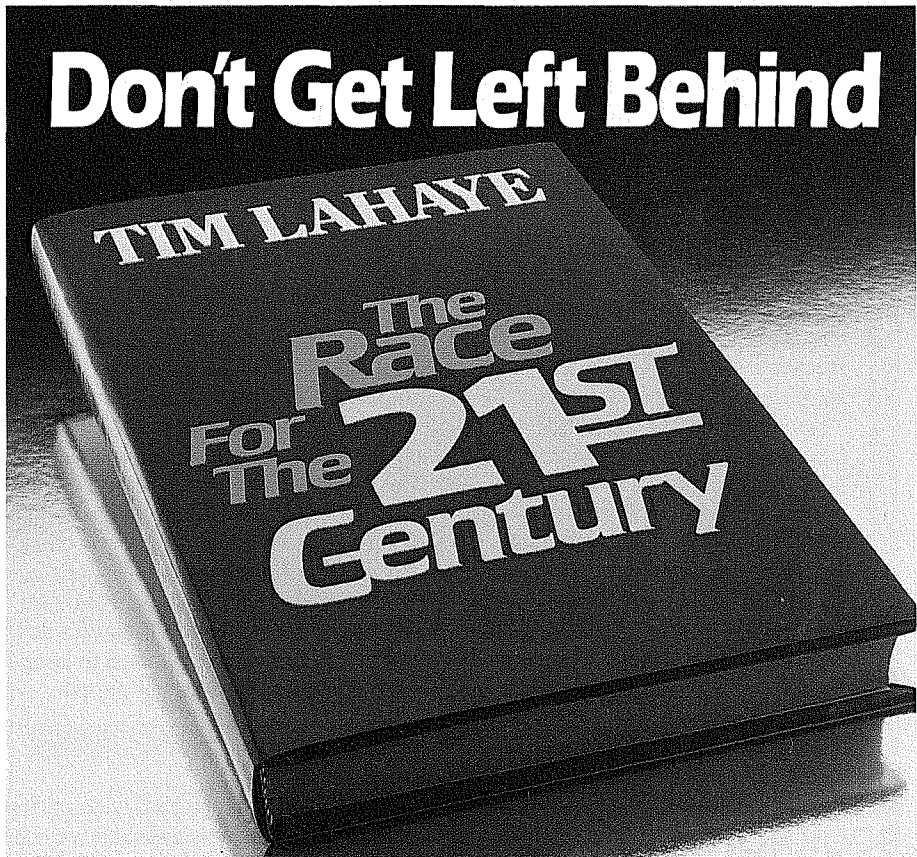
Whitehead recurrently makes another,

even more sobering, point. Christians have failed to understand the real issues and are not playing their proper role as "salt." As a result the situation is our fault. The church must bear the blame and must take up its responsibility to change things before it is too late.

I have only one quibble with Whitehead. He presents the antithesis between Secularism and Christianity as one

between religious faiths. But if this is so, we cannot claim to have the truth—to be right. Nor can we claim that Naturalism is wrong. We must, I think, fight this battle in the arena of truth.

This is a very valuable book. It deserves to be read carefully. A great deal is at stake, including our very freedom and that of our children. (Crossway Books, 1986, 304 pp., \$7.95) **David Beck**



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