HUMANISM

During this period, certain significant political changes were taking place. Some of the noblest ideals of the period were best expressed by the movement known as Humanism. Humanism is a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centred on human interests or values, stressing an individual'sdignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason and other human skills. It usually rejects supernaturalism, but some religious people consider themselves humanists. In the Renaissance, the highest cultural values were usually associated with active involvement in public life, in moral, political, and military action, and in service to the state. The traditional religious values coexisted with the new values; some of the most important Humanists, like Erasmus, were churchmen. The concept of the "Renaissance Man" refers to an individual who, in addition to participating actively in the affairs of public life, possesses knowledge of and skill in many subject areas, such as Leonardo Da Vinci, John Milton, and Francis Bacon. Nevertheless, individual aspiration was not the major concern of Renaissance Humanists, who focused on teaching people how to participate in society and rule a society (though only the nobility and some members of the middle class were included in this ideal).