Who are the Humanists?

The Humanist Community of San Jose (HCSJ) desires to make contact with kindren spirits. Please look over the below statements. If you are in agreement with most of them we hope you will get in touch.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HUMANISM

a. There is no area too sacred to explore, challenge, question or doubt.

b. We use reason and our senses to determine human goals.

c. Human knowledge is not perfect, human senses and human reason are fallible, thus rendering tentative all our knowledge and scientific conclusions. However, the scientific method remains our most reliable tool for advancing knowledge and understanding.

d. We base our ethical decisions and ideals upon human needs and concerns as perceived in the physical world.

2. TENTATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORLD

a. Our planet revolves around a medium-sized star near the outer edge of an average-sized galaxy. Life on our planet evolved slowly over billions of years.

b. Evidence does not justify the belief that the human mind is distinct and separable from the human brain.

c. The basic motivations which determine our values are ultimately rooted in our biology and early experiences. Theoretically, it should be possible to develop a scientifically based system of ethics.

d. Freedom of the individual is a primary value.

3. CURRENT POSITIONS ON SOCIAL POLICY

a. We support such freedoms and rights as religious freedom, church-state separation, freedom of speech and the press, freedom of association, a right to birth control and abortion, and the right to voluntary euthanasia.

b. We encourage an extension of participatory democracy so that decision-making becomes more decentralized and thus involves more people.

c. We support the current trend toward thinking internationally.

d. We willingly take part in scientific technological developments.

CONCLUSION

Because human knowledge is always growing, and because situations constantly change, human choices must change as well. This renders the current positions on social policy the most adaptable part of the humanist philosophy. As a result, most humanists find it easier to agree on basic principles than on tentative beliefs about the world, but easier to agree on such beliefs than on social policies.

(The above material has been edited from a much longer article, "The Humanist Philosophy In Perspective," by Fred Edwords, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association, HUMANIST, Jan/Feb '84).

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