



The Enlightenment



The Newsletter of the
Humanist Association of London and Area
An Affiliate of the Humanist Association of Canada (HAC)

Volume 3

Number 3

August 2007

Julian Huxley – Evolutionary Biologist, Author and Humanist

Sir Julian Sorell Huxley (1887-1975) was known for his popularization of science in books and lectures. He was the first Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). His interest in international conservation led him to become a founding member of the World Wildlife Fund. He was knighted in 1958.

Julian was born in London England into a famous family. His Grandfather Thomas Huxley was a biologist and a colleague and supporter of Charles Darwin. He became known as “Darwin’s Bulldog.” His brother Aldous Huxley became a world famous author. Julian became interested in ornithology while a student at Eton and in 1905 obtained a scholarship in Zoology at Balliol College Oxford.



Julian Huxley with
Grandfather Thomas

Over the years after graduation he became involved in numerous zoo-logical endeavours and made considerable contributions to evolutionary biology. He was one of the key biologists in modern evolutionary synthesis. This synthesis of genetic and evolutionary ideas produced a consensus known as neo-Darwinism which has reigned in biology since about 1940. It is still broadly tenable and describes how cultural traits take on a life of their own, spanning over generations. This was a major source of Richard Dawkins’ subsequent concept of memetics: a theory of cultural evolution in which the basic unit is that of a ‘meme’ (or ‘idea’ communicated by means of symbols) rather than ‘gene’.

Julian Huxley was a humanist. He presided over the founding Congress of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and he served with John Dewey, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann on the founding advisory board of the First Humanist Society of New York. In his essay *The Crowded World* published in *Evolutionary Humanism* (1964), he was openly critical of Communist and Catholic attitudes toward birth control, population control and over population. Based on variable rates of compound interest, he predicted a probable world population of 6 billion by the year 2000. His prediction was amazingly accurate. October 12th 1999 was marked by the United Nations as **The Day of 6 Billion**. He published about thirty books and essays. At least four of there were on Humanism: *Towards a New Humanism* (1957) *Religion Without Revelation* (1957) *The Coming New Religion of Humanism* (1962) and *The Humanist Frame* (1962). (The above information was obtained from Wikipedia)

Presidents Remarks

I received several e-mail and verbal replies to my request for comments on my article on humanism as a religion. There was also one written reply by Goldie Emerson and Goldie's comments are printed on page 3. One comment stated that humanism should never be considered as a religion under any circumstances. Most of the other comments suggested it all depends on the definition of religion. If there is absolutely no connection to the supernatural, then maybe some form of religious humanism could be devised. One problem of course is the word religion itself. If religion is defined as living according to a moral and ethical life style, then perhaps humanism is compatible with this concept. On the other hand, perhaps the word religion should be discarded entirely and replaced with something like "life stance."

It is plainly obvious that no single form of humanism will be acceptable to all humanists. In his essay, *The Humanist Frame*, Sir Julian Huxley (featured on this Enlightenment cover) proposes a form of "Evolutionary Humanism," that he suggests should replace existing religions. His ideas are summarized on pages 4, 5 and 6. These ideas may appeal to some, but not to others. There are other alternatives, some of which are considered on page 7 in a discourse on the future. Comments from readers are welcomed.

Best Regards, Don.

The Board of the Humanist Association of London and Area (HALA)

President – Don Hatch – 472-6167 – e-mail – dahatch@rogers.com

Past President – Derek Kaill – 432-6122

Secretary – Position Vacant

Treasurer – Claire Van Daele-Boseret – 451-5962 - e-mail, c.v.d.b@rogers.com

Membership Chairperson – Ed Ashman – 457- 9982 – e-mail, edward017@sympatico.ca

Member at Large –Jim Cranwell – 275-2055 – e-mail, jcranwell@rogers.com

Member at Large - Kate Balogh – 432-6122 – e-mail, olgab36@hotmail.com

The Humanist Association of London and Area meets at the Cross Cultural Learner Centre, 505 Dundas Street in London, on the second Thursday of the months September to July inclusive at 7:30 PM. Please use the rear door off the parking lot. The Enlightenment is published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Visit our **newly revived** web site at www.humanists-london.org

New members are welcome. Contact Membership Chairperson Ed Ashman at (519) 457-9982 edward017@sympatico.ca . Membership fees are listed below.

	<u>HAC</u> <u>Basic</u>	<u>HAC Limited</u> <u>Resources</u>	<u>Humanist</u> <u>Perspectives</u>	<u>HALA</u> <u>Basic</u>	<u>HALA Limited</u> <u>Resources</u>
Single	\$30	\$15	\$22	\$20	\$10
Family	\$35	\$20	\$22	\$25	\$15
Life	\$500				

Some Comments on “Should Humanism be Considered a Religion”

(Don Hatch, *The Enlightenment* May 2007)

From Goldie Emerson

Let's begin by giving credit where credit is due. Our local Humanist Association is fortunate to have Don Hatch as our current President, and I am grateful to Don for the work and thought he devotes to **The Enlightenment**. It is an excellent newsletter and I am pleased that Don has invited responses to his article on “Should Humanism be Considered a Religion.”

My overall response to Don's article is that one of the things that humanists *can* do better than most traditional religions is to encourage people to think clearly and critically and to speak openly and freely about the directions in which critical thinking may lead them. Probably one of the things that we would do worse than most traditional religions is to put our efforts into offering sports activities, fine organ music, computer courses, stained glass windows, and the usual trimmings of religion. In these matters, even with a lot of experience and volunteer help, the best we could hope for would be but a pale copy of what traditional religions have already done successfully for many years.

So why not devote our efforts to doing the things we can do well and which religions usually fail to do well? Don has mentioned that on the most recent census about six million Canadians indicate “no religious affiliation.” If the extra trappings of religion do not have the necessary appeal to bring the members of this group into their religious folds it is highly unlikely that they can be attracted into the humanists fold by adding the extras that conventional churches provide. After all, as humanists we cannot offer this disaffected group eternal life nor heavenly bliss.

Don seems to be making a leap in logic when he states, “there must be something wrong with Humanism in its present form because membership is so low.” The fault may not lie so much with humanism as with the fact that most Canadians have been bathed in religious mythology from childhood and have had little practice in critical thinking. Add to this our society's taboo on questioning or challenging religious assumptions.

The idea of incorporating humanism into religion is not new. Certainly it is not new among Unitarian thinkers of the present day. Nor was it a new idea to religious clerics, such as Erasmus in the early 1500s who suffered excommunication for his efforts to encourage people to think more clearly and to incorporate the principles of humanism within religion. By Don's standards of success, the present-day low membership of Unitarians, for example, would indicate a lack of success.

For me, the success of humanism does not lie in the number of members, nor in the variety of activities provided, nor in making visitors from many religious backgrounds feel comfortable. A better measure of success is whether we can provide a place where that group identified as “no religious affiliation” can meet together, question openly and express their ideas freely and feel safe in doing so.

A Quote To an evolutionary psychologist, the universal extravagance of religious rituals, with their costs in time, resources, pain, and privation, should suggest as vividly as a mandrill's bottom, that religion may be adaptive. – Marek Kohn.

Julian Huxley's Evolutionary Humanism

I never thought of equating humanism with any kind of religion until I read Julian Huxley's long essay entitled *The Humanist Frame* written in 1962. He states in this essay that the older order of religions organized around beliefs in an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnibenevolent supernatural being have failed us, and he advocates that a new idea system, which he calls Evolutionary Humanism, should replace existing religions. Such a Humanism is not dualistic. Rather, it affirms the unity of mind and body, and the unity of the material and the spiritual. It will be naturalistic, not supernaturalist; it will be global instead of divisive and affirm the unity of all mankind. Huxley outlined this new vision in a Commemoration Address given in 1959 at the University of Chicago's Centennial Celebration of Darwin's launching of the *Origin of Species*. The following excerpts from this address profile his exhortations on this proposed life stance that he believes has the potential to improve the lot of humankind on earth. (Not in heaven).

"Through the telescope of our scientific imagination we can discern the existence of a new and improved ideological organization, albeit in embryonic form: many of its details, however, are not yet clear, and we can also see that the upward steps needed to reach its full development are many and challenging. We will only succeed if we face the task consciously and use all our mental resources – knowledge and reason, imagination and sensitivity, capacities for wonder and love, for comprehension and compassion, for spiritual aspiration and moral effort. And we must face it unaided by outside help. In the evolutionary pattern of thought there is no longer need or reason for the supernatural. Evolutionary humans can no longer take refuge from their loneliness by creeping for shelter into the arms of a divinized father-figure whom humans have created themselves."

"We face many problems and challenges including the threat of super-scientific war, nuclear, chemical and biological, the very serious threat of overpopulation, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the struggles with fundamentalism, both Christian and Islamic. We must transcend nationalism. The new evolutionary outlook must be global. These and other problems can only be met with the aid of a new organization of thought and belief, a new dominant pattern of ideas relevant to the new situation."

"Of course the new evolutionary outlook must be scientific. The only way in which the present split between science and religion can be mended would be through the acceptance by science of the fact and value of religion as an organ of evolving man, and the acceptance by religion that religions must evolve and change if they are to benefit society in a positive manner."

"The new idea-system must jettison the demonic myth of equality. Human beings are not born equal in gifts or potentialities, and human progress stems largely from the very fact of their inequality. Free, but unequal, should be our motto, and diversity of excellence, not conformist normality or mere adjustment should be the aim of education."

"We require a new religion that we can be sure will arise to serve the needs of the coming era. This emergent religion of the near future can be a good thing. It will believe in knowledge. It will be able to take advantage of the vast amount of new knowledge produced by the knowledge explosion of the last few centuries in constructing what we may call its framework – the framework of facts and ideas which provide it with intellectual support: it should be able, with our increased knowledge of mind, to define humankind's sense of right and wrong more clearly so as to provide a better moral support, and focus the feeling of sacredness on fitter objects."

Instead of worshipping supernatural rulers, it will sanctify the higher manifestation of human adoration, and will emphasize the fuller realization of life's possibilities as a sacred trust."

"Thus this evolutionary vision, first opened up by Charles Darwin, exemplifies the truth that truth is great and will prevail, and the greater truth that truth will set us free. Evolutionary truth frees us from subservient fear of the unknown and supernatural, and exhorts us to face this new freedom with courage tempered with wisdom, and hope tempered with knowledge. It shows us our destiny and our duty. It shows us mind enthroned above matter, quantity subordinate to quality. It gives our anxious minds support by revealing the incredible possibilities that have already been realized in evolution's past; and, by pointing to the hidden treasure of fresh possibilities that still remain to be realized, it gives us a potent incentive for fulfilling our evolutionary role in the long future of our planet."

Huxley goes on in the essay to outline what he conceives to be the Humanist view of the three great activities of humans that transcend the material business of making a living – art, science and religion. He uses the terms broadly – art to cover all organized expression of significance and aesthetically effective form, science in the continental sense of organized knowledge and learning, and religion as including all systems of belief and morality concerned with the problem of destiny.

Huxley states, "Art provides a qualitative enrichment of life. It opens the door to that other world in which matter and quantity are transcended by mind and quality. Art is sometimes contemptuously dismissed as escapism. We all, however, need escape, but where and how shall we escape? We can escape downward through drink or drugs or dissipation: but that is not the best way. Or sideways through sports or pastimes or entertainment: this within limits is desirable and indeed necessary. Or we may escape upwards into a new world comprising new countries of life and new levels of being, where we make contact with something more enduring, more satisfying and in a certain true sense higher than is to be found in the world of material needs and everyday routine. In the fulfillment society envisaged by Humanism, art would be assigned a large role – to beautify the public sector, to bear witness to the richness of existence, to affirm values in concrete effective form, to provide achievements of which societies can be proud and through which humankind can find itself more adequately."

"Science, like art, is a loose and general term for a broad range of human activities and their products. Science has two interrelated psychosocial functions: it increases both comprehension and control. It enlarges human understanding of the world, both the strange world of external nature and the equally strange world of our own internal nature. It increases the capacity for humans to control or guide various aspects and processes of our world. Science is self-correcting. It aims to unify experience. It creates patches of knowledge in the vast expanse of human ignorance. One immediate need is for the scientific study of values. Philosophers and theologians sometimes assert that this is impossible, claiming that values lie outside the range of science. The Humanist cannot accept this: after all, values are phenomena, and therefore capable of being investigated by the methods of science. The problem of values is a part of the one really major problem now before science – the problem of relating mind and mental activities to the rest of the phenomenal universe in a single scientific picture. For the first time in history, science can become an ally of religion instead of its rival or its enemy, for it can provide a scientifically-ordered framework of belief to whatever religion emerges from the present ideological disorder."

Huxley moves on to religion, the third pillar of Evolutionary Humanism. Before outlining his vision of a new religion he sums up the problems with existing religions in the following manner: “Any belief in supernatural creators, rulers or influencers of natural or human process introduces an irreparable split into the universe, and prevents us from grasping the real unity. Any belief in Absolutes, whether the absolute validity of moral commandments, of authority of revelation, of inner certitude, or of divine inspiration, erects a formidable barrier against progress and the possibility of improvement, moral, rational or religious. And the all too frequent combination of the two constitutes a grave break on human advance, and by obfuscating all the major problems of existence, prevents the attainment of a full and comprehensive vision of human destiny. One of the main things needed by the world today is a new single religious system to replace the multiplicity of conflicting and incompatible religious systems that are now competing for the spirit of humankind. Our new vision of the universe and the role of humans in it is beginning to indicate the lines of its construction.”

“Accordingly, any new emergent religion must have a background of reverence and awe in its belief-system, and must seek to keep alive our sense of wonder, strangeness and challenge in all our particular dealings with the general problems of existence. Religion can usefully be regarded as applied spiritual ecology. Our religious aim must therefore be to achieve not a static, but a dynamic spiritual equilibrium. And our emergent religion must therefore learn how to be an open and self-correcting system, like that of science. All religions provide for some ceremonial sanctification of life, especially of events like birth, marriage and death, and those marking the transition from one stage of life to another, like initiation or the taking of a degree. Our new emerging religion must continue to do this, though it must translate the ceremonials into terms that are relevant to the new vision and the new circumstances of life. This reformation of traditional religious concepts and beliefs and ceremonies, their translation into a new terminology and a new framework of ideas is a major task for Humanism, because religion on the whole resists any such transformation.”

“We need to develop a new psychosocial ecology aimed at a right balance between different values, between continuity and change, and between the evolutionary process for whose guidance we have responsibility and the resources with which we have to operate. These resources are of two kinds – material and quantitative, for maintenance and utility; and psychological and qualitative, for joy and fulfillment. The first encompasses such things as food, clothing and shelter, energy, mines and industrial plants. The second encompasses solitude, landscape, beauty, marine and mountain adventure, and the wonder of wild life. Planned human ecology must balance and where possible reconcile the two kinds of resource.”

“What is the place of the individual in all this? At first sight the individual human being appears as a little, temporary and insignificant creature, of no account in the vast enterprise of humankind as a whole. But in Evolutionary Humanism, unlike some other ideologies, the human individual has high significance. Quite apart from the practical function that humans perform in society and its collective enterprises, they can help in fulfilling human destiny by the fuller realization of their own personal abilities. A strong and rich personality is the individual’s unique and wonderful contribution to the psychosocial process.”

Huxley ends the essay with this paragraph: “The immediate effort needed is an intellectual and imaginative one – to understand this new revelation made to us by the growth of knowledge. Humanism is Seminal. We must learn what it means, then disseminate Humanist ideas, and finally inject them wherever possible into practical affairs as a guiding framework for future action.” (DAH)

The Future of Humanism

Humanism was first introduced into western society by Epicurus about 2300 years ago, but did not survive because it was suppressed by the Roman Church. It began to stir in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods and there were great hopes for a truly new beginning, but even today, the average person has little awareness of what humanism is all about. Why?

What really concerns me is this. I firmly believe that humanism (and as far as I can ascertain, no other ideology) holds the key to a more peaceful and prosperous world for our descendents. Admittedly, progress against the existing world religions will be slow, but can we be doing more to get some sort of an effective, practical and highly visible humanist movement underway? At the present time many of us older humanists tend to meet to listen to philosophical talks, and some write interesting and thoughtful articles for periodicals and magazines. As Goldie Emerson suggests in his discourse on page 3, this is satisfying for a great many humanists and is sometimes referred to as preaching to the converted. Consequently, it would logically seem that it falls to the younger generations to put humanism on the map, so to speak, and in this regard I think there is hope.

Throughout the western world young people are staying away from churches in droves, and I surmise that many of them are already humanists, even though they may not be familiar with the term. If our youth and future youth are educated to think critically and logically, they will see the spuriousness of the monotheistic religions and look for an alternative. This alternative could well be humanism. They should be educated to aim toward achieving a balanced lifestyle encompassing a blend of art and science, and encouraged to adopt a moral and ethical life stance based on humanist principles. Hopefully they will abhor wars, and base their spirituality on a sense of awe and wonder at our incredible universe. Some will wish to be independent and not join a group or organization. Others may wish for some form of structure and belong to an organization such as a non-theistic Celebration Fellowship as outlined in the May 2007 Enlightenment. This desirable turn of events would fit in with Julian Huxley's Evolutionary Humanism.

Yes indeed, the future of humanity lies in the hands of our present and future youth. Let's hope they will do a better job of managing the affairs of humans than the present adult generation. They can if they are brought up to believe – "You can be good without God." (DAH)

Up-coming Meetings

September 13th - Paul Chefurka will be discussing the world's dependency on oil in a presentation entitled - The View From The Peak. Paul is now Project Manager with the Canadian Coast Guard working in Ottawa.

October 11th - How Do Astronomers Determine the Vast Scale of Cosmic Time and Space? is the title of the talk to be presented by Dr. Amelia Whelau, Professor Emerita, retired from the Astronomy Department of the University of Western Ontario.

November 8th - Ethics Without God is the title of Don Santor's presentation in November. Don is retired from The Education Department of UWO where he taught history, world religions and ethics for many years.

December 13th - Dr. Lorne Campbell's presentation in December is entitled - How Do People Want to be Perceived by Their Romantic Partners? Dr. Campbell is an Associate Professor at UWO. His interests are interpersonal relationships, research design and evolutionary psychology.

Africa

At the Humanist Association of London and Area regular meeting on May 10th, Dr. Arja Vainio-Mattila informed us of her extensive experiences involving humanitarian work in various countries in Africa. Her talk was most informative and despite all the concerns and problems we hear about Africa, she expressed a feeling of optimism as she spoke about the resilience and courage of the people she encountered.

Recently I read an article written by Dr. Alastair Summerlee, President of the University of Guelph (my Alma Mater) describing his feelings immediately after a two-week trip to Botswana and Kenya. I found this article to be very moving, and I thought this would be a perfect follow-up to Arja's talk. It is printed below, with permission. (DAH)

How Can I Look the Same When I Feel So Different Inside?

By Dr. Alastair Summerlee. President of The University of Guelph

I am writing this column while flying home from Africa. It's hard to put into words what I experienced and learned over the past two weeks and how it has affected my life. Suffice to say that when I look in the mirror, I am surprised by my reflection. The transformation that has taken place in my heart and mind is so profound, I can't believe it isn't visible on the outside. But I know the person looking back at me in the mirror is different, with a new appreciation for everything and everyone.

This was not entirely unexpected. I am a seasoned enough international traveler to know that you don't embark on a journey like this and come back unaffected. Still, the magnitude of the change has taken me by surprise, and I have only begun to process it.

The plane ride back to Canada is long and tedious. There is much to do when I return, so my thoughts should be occupied by the many tasks that await me. But I can't think of anything other than what I saw in Africa and what I — and we as a university community — must do now.

I was in Africa as part of a special mission organized by World University Service of Canada (WUSC), whose board of directors I chair. Our trip was intended to help build a figurative bridge to Botswana, where we hoped to deepen and broaden contacts, activities and programs. We also visited Kenya, where WUSC has a student refugee program that brings young people to Canada to pursue an education. I am happy to report that we did lay the foundation for a figurative bridge and that the traffic traveling over that bridge will be two-way. We will go back, and some of the many wonderful people I met in Africa will come here.

But what I didn't fully anticipate was the impact the people of Botswana would have on me. I think I learned more from them in two weeks than they can ever learn from me. It is impossible to describe all these lessons in detail here, but I want to share a few key things.

First, I am returning home with new understanding of — and renewed faith in — the power of internationalism. This has always been one of Guelph's strategic directions, but I am more convinced than ever of its importance. We must continue with exchanges, internships and overseas research. Our community can learn and grow from what people in Africa have to share with us. And we must change the way we develop academic programs to ensure we are teaching with a global perspective in our Canadian classrooms.

But more than that, we need to encourage our students, faculty and staff to think and act globally. Helping different people, cultures and communities leads to an understanding of the aspirations of people from all walks of life. It also helps produce compassionate, virtuous and engaged citizens.

During my trip, I was reminded of how blessed we are in Canada with our abundance of educational opportunities and how we should never take our access to learning and knowledge for granted.

I visited two refugee camps in Kenya: Dadaab in the southeast, which has about 170,000 inhabitants, and Kakuma in the northwest, which has about 70,000. WUSC has student refugee programs in both camps.

There are some highly challenging situations in Africa at the moment, with a number of countries torn by strife and civil war and a substantial number of refugees fleeing terrible atrocities — these are the real victims of war, and their plight is unfathomable and tragic.

Many of the children in the camps have lived there for most, if not all, of their life, and the stories of what brought them there are harrowing. Yet somehow through this misery and sadness, the human spirit shines through. With nothing to bequeath to their children in a material sense, many parents support education for their kids as the only hope of escape. And everyone is eager to learn — sometimes 30 to 40 children share a single textbook.

Fundamentally, I have always believed in the goodness of people, but Africa has taught me a lesson in absolute humility and the true meaning of the indomitable spirit of the human mind.

There is no doubt that those of us who are fortunate to live where conflict does not exist need to do more to extend a hand.

There are people in the camps who are trying to help. They are preparing refugees to come to Canada and, above all, giving them hope of a brighter future.

During my trip, I met some of the kindest, most committed people on earth. Most of them are volunteers just trying to help, and they possess a depth of love, hope and determination the likes of which I have never seen before. I am full of awe and admiration for them. They are working in unbelievably bleak circumstances and against all odds, yet they never tire and they never give up. They give me hope that it's possible for small groups of people to change and improve the lives of thousands.

During my journey, I also saw first-hand how vital it is that U of G continue its efforts to raise money to help fight AIDS in Africa through the Masai Project: For Africa, for AIDS, for Hope. The disease has ravaged this continent, and seeing the extent of the destruction, especially the effect on children, is heartbreaking.

In Botswana, for example, 24 per cent of the 1.6 million people who live there have AIDS. It's estimated that the country has at least 53,000 AIDS-related orphans, and more people die every day. The freshly dug graves everywhere are a grim reminder of this.

Where do you begin when faced with such staggering statistics? How do the people who are trying to help keep on going and why do they stay? The answer I heard over and over again is that failure is guaranteed if we don't even try.

As a university, we can help by continuing to support the Masai Project. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 on campus as part of a larger community effort headed by local doctor Anne-Marie Zajdlik to raise \$1 million for an AIDS clinic in Lesotho, the epicentre of the AIDS epidemic in Africa. To date, we have raised close to \$50,000, partly by selling the red and white "Bracelets of Hope."

I hope soon to see a bracelet on the wrist of every person on this campus. They are both a symbol that we are trying to help and a reminder of how much desperately needs to be done in Africa.

I am thinking of all these things and more while I am winging my way back to Guelph. I know that soon I'll be landing at Pearson, where I'll wait in line after line, collect my luggage, find Red Car and make my way home, just like I've done so many times before.

While going through these routine motions, however, I'll think about the happy, smiling faces of the people who touched and inspired me. I'll recall the overwhelming sadness I felt at times and the sense of rejuvenation I experienced at others. I'll remember Africa and know that I'm coming back a different person.

Declaration of Humanist Principles

1. Humanism aims at the full development of every human being.
2. Humanists uphold the broadest application of democratic principles in all human relationships.
3. Humanists advocate the use of the scientific method, both as a guide to distinguish fact from fiction, and to help develop beneficial and creative uses of science and technology.
4. Humanists affirm the dignity of every person, and the right of the individual to maximum possible freedom compatible with the rights of others.
5. Humanists acknowledge human interdependence, the need for mutual respect, and the kinship of all humanity.
6. Humanists call for the continued improvement of society so that no one may be deprived of the basic necessities of life, and for institutions and conditions to provide every person with opportunities for developing their full potential.
7. Humanists support the development and extension of fundamental human freedoms, as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and supplemented by UN International Covenants comprising the United Nations Bill of Human Rights.
8. Humanists advocate peaceful resolutions of conflicts between individuals, groups and nations.
9. The humanist ethic encourages development of the positive potentialities in human nature and approves conduct based on a sense of responsibility to oneself and to all other persons.
10. A fundamental principle of humanism is the rejection of beliefs held in absence of verifiable evidence, such as beliefs based solely on dogma, revelation, mysticism or appeals to the supernatural.
11. Humanists affirm that individual and social problems can only be resolved by means of human reason, intelligent effort, critical thinking joined with compassion, and a spirit of empathy for all living things.

Humanists affirm that human beings are completely a part of nature, and that our survival is dependent on a healthy planet which provides us and all other forms of life with a life-supporting environment.