

Universal Life Friends Letter⁵⁹

NOVEMBER 1982, #5

OUR PAGES ARE YOUR LETTERS

U.L. Friends, 753 44th Av.
San Francisco, CA 94121

The "Universal Life Friends" are a small and informal correspondence group within the Universal Life Church. We meet mostly mostly by sharing our letters with each other in a publication called the "Universal Life Friends Letter", coming out every month or two.

We are essentially a non-sectarian group but we take as our motto an old Quaker saying: "There is that of God in every one". We understand this to be a fundamental truth, found not just in Christianity, but in one way or another in all religions. We also believe this to be a truth harmonizing perfectly with the fundamental belief of the Universal Life Church: "As an organization we have no traditional doctrine. We only believe in 'that which is right'. Each individual has the privilege and responsibility to determine 'what is right' as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others. We do not stand between you and your God". The UL Friends as a group have no further doctrine, although as individuals we may take it on from there, each in our own way. This puts a big emphasis on individualism, but we would equally emphasize that we be friends, and share more with each other.

For our "subscription fee" we ask that you write us a letter now and then, sharing your religious concerns and insights with us. We will then publish it in our "UL Friends Letter". We will try to include everything we receive. In general letters should be of a religious nature, but we understand this in a very broad sense, so a poem, a drawing, or a bit of humor might be quite appropriate. Some might write in the spirit of Quaker silent worship, and define that in a very traditional sense. That would be great, but we have no intention of being so restrictive. Most of us are far too inhibited about such already. Zen letters, Sufi letters, Hare Krishna letters- all are welcome. Furthermore let us not be too concerned about spelling and such. We don't want to be paralyzed into perfection. We also volunteer to type your letters for you, if that is your wish, but they should be clearly legible. We do have some space limitations, so letters should be of a reasonable length.

It is our hope and belief that our letters will somehow help us open our hearts to each other, and be every bit as deep and meaningful as the spoken word. Hopefully too more than a few deep friendships might develop in this way.

To protect your privacy, we will not print your address unless you give us permission. If necessary you can write someone in care of us, and we will forward.

60

Dear UL Friends:

Please do not worry about how many issues of our religious magazine there are. I think we are terrific and show a lot of different kinds of thinking and feeling.

A friend showed me a list of things people consider sins, which her pastor had printed up. The only thing which bothers me is mean people. You can't tell who is mean by what they write.

Ten to one educated people are mean. Ten to one "uneducated people are nice people. Educated people run the world. They do mean things. Many times I am ashamed to own up to my education.

There is no niceness guide. Some mean people hug their kids every day. Being polite helps. There are polite people who freeze your heart. It is a puzzle to me.

Be nice.

Best,

Ellen Gillis

UNDERSTANDING

When you go down the road of Life,
Some spots will be quite rough;
And even you'll be tempted
To say "I've had enough!"

But when you get to such a time
You can seem to stand no more,
Remember, I'm here waiting
For your knock upon my door.

I'll want to know each step you take
'Til you're here in my arms,
And even in December,
You'll find my love is warm.

So, go and face the world outside
With a smile, the sign of cheer,
And any time there's trouble,
Just remember, I am here!

Dr. Ross H.L. Bowen

341 Trimble Rd. B3

Joppa, Md. 21085

Greetings to All Friends:

From the 5 Bardos, to the sixth, knowing there is no time to waste, may we enter the Path, through listening, reflecting, and meditating, so that we may not be distracted, from the Nirvanic Heaven, the Samboga/Nirmanaya of the Dharma-Kaya.

1. Yes. There is dualism to all decisions.
2. Yes. All things can be purposed.
3. Rest easy, knowing that God is here.
4. Tomorrow's is tomorrow's. Our's is now.
5. Leave yourself behind.
6. Come and share.
7. Heaven.

I have found it interesting, that even in the noble art of writing, that there is the possibility of abuse. Perhaps that abuse, is the many words that stream through the consciousness, which seem trivial, at another moment in time. And so there are "catch" words, which draw one's attention away from their own conscious levels of thinking processes, so that other levels of consciousness may be experienced. These "catch" words, are true with the other senses of sight (as in striking colors of paintings), sound (music), smell, touch, and taste. And there are "trigger" words, which are the reactions to such "catch" words. These take place in the brain, which then operates active/inactive responses.

To come to rest, we must decrease the number of responses, in the same way that death is a cutting off of the senses, until only one final term is present. These final terms are the many Mantras which exist, through which one may finally close the door behind them, and enter the Eternal Dharma-Kaya, in Bodhic Nirvana. This same process is true of Christianity. Of course, the cross is a type of Mantra, which serves as a "single" symbol with many meanings, that is a help in remembering, and meditating on Reality. The same is true of the Bible, the Word, the many parables, the rosary beads, the church service, lives portrayed in the Bible. All of these can be, and should be used for meditating upon, for union with Reality.

For this should be the purpose of all humankind, that behind every word, behind every thought; behind every sound, behind every thought; behind every sight, behind every thought; behind every eye-ful thing; behind the taste, and the touch, and the smell, we should know God, and try to seek this aspect, or that quality, and the natural laws, which are exemplified, and demonstrated. Therefore, when one observes, or attempts to communicate, one should remember that there is a single Life Force. When one tries to paint, write, speak, move, this one idea should be behind those actions. Therefore, there is no room for sin to happen. If one remembers God in all actions, whether they be self, others, manmade, and natural, the more one brings to oneself, a holy life.

These have been the heavy words for the ego. But the light words of a freed spirit.

TAT TVAM ASI

Robert C. Finch
P.O. Box 219
Basile, LA 70515

62.

(This letter to Bob is also meant for everyone. A.D.)

TO Bob Finch, down in Cajun country:
GREETINGS to both THIS and THAT:

I appreciated your essay on the fundamental dichotomy in the religions of man. It was very instructive and useful. I am always thirsty for information and analysis. But I have a problem with the word "GOD", as used in both the atheist's denial or the believer's affirmation. My problem flows from the fact that people never define "God". And in that case, what does "I believe in God." mean, where there is no definition?

Let me pick several basic definitions for that word first and then deal with them later. These are all to be fitted into the sentence or question: DO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD?

First, GOD comes from the Germanic "GUT" or good. In this case, there is, by definition, no evil or bad: only good. Thus our question becomes: DO I BELIEVE IN GOOD? I rephrase the question as: DO I BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOOD IN THE WORLD? The answer must be YES. For we have all seen some good in the world in our lives and know that it exists. But if we rephrase the question to ask whether there is also bad in existence, it forces us to change our question as to whether we believe there is ONLY good in existence. Some deny the fact of evil in the world. But I have seen too much evil to deny its existence. And I think that's true for all of us.

If it is true that "good" and "bad" are merely projections made by man onto the events around him, then there is no objective good or bad in existence: only our subjective opinion: our judgements about things (and we are not to judge). That being true, we MUST state that there is no GOOD. That doesn't deny GOD, only that it denies that the correct definition of God is GOOD.

Which takes us away from the Germanic roots of our English language and turns us to the Latin derivatives: Theos, Deus, Zeus: these are: to shine; the SKY GOD: the shining one: luminous (including the moon); also clear (sky) thence to see, look or perceive (in the light); also to set, put or do: laid down (as in law, judgement, doom); one who puts or imposes form on something (a priest), to work, divine law, creation, thema, idea; he puts meaning to sound (ADAM).

Well, CLEARLY, the sun has been man's God: the SUN GOD or SUNGOD. I don't believe in the Sun as being a God, but it IS true that ALL of the energy on earth is derived from the sun. Without it, we would not exist and I am aware of that fact. But we may extrapolate from the "SUNGOD" to that which clears away the darkness in our minds and brings us "enlightenment": thus we now have a metaphorical SUNGOD. I can accept that, also. So do all those who thirst after enlightenment, who pray for the light that shows them or illumines the WAY.

We can also slip over into the exoteric law whereby "God" becomes an authority and law giver, who sets forth our "destiny" (which means we are tied fast to where we now stand). God, in this case, can be either the maker of the law or be the law itself. No, I do NOT believe in God the law giver (law must always bend to fit the present situation or case). Some fundamentalists do make God and the law unbendable to the derogation of both God and the law. And, we know and must acknowledge that men do make a God of the law. But this God is just as lost in the mists of interpretation as the law is. Such a God is unapprehensible. In such a case, the believer becomes a priest: one who puts meaning into the law as he applies it to the case at hand. After all, it was MAN who was granted the privilege of naming everything (putting a sound to the meaning).

Which brings us to the "unknown God" or the fact that God cannot be defined. This must be, because it follows absolutely by linguistic truth and logic. In order for a man to grasp (get that: take hold of) God or the idea of God, that man must of necessity be stronger and more powerful than God himself. If "man" is limited, and God is infinite, then it is impossible for a man to PUT (as in DREMA: thema: the thing - idea - placed thereon) on "God", a DEED (judgement: the thing laid down or done), DOM or DOOM. No man can "bell this cat". God, by definition, is beyond our grasp. In this case, our word "God" is, of necessity, without definition or meaning - including infinite. Translate DO I BELIEVE IN A GOD MEANINGLESS? a concept of zero: an empty bag? No, of course not - and neither does anybody else.

Incidentally, for those interested, the word "dharma" has the same root as our Deus, etc herein; also deva, as in devine. Lastly this root includes the meaning of rising up as in a cloud: DHEUST (dust); DHUMO (smoke); THUMOS (soul) DRUMBHO (clouded in the senses); DUKH (russian: the breathe); DHEUSO (one who breathes: any animal: deer, dyr, deer). And finally Jupiter is Zeus Pitar: Pitar is the root for father: the chief God, father of the pantheon, the creator of all the others - our God the father figure.

So, our God has just gone up in smoke. I only hope that I have made clear that the word must be defined before we "believe". Otherwise, we MUST believe in our conditioned unconscious loading. That is simply blind adherence to the archtypal images deeply ingrained and indoctrinated into our psyches by our environment: our world. To believe in that is to believe in the slanderer: the devil; DIABOLOS: diabollein: Greek, to set at variance, to throw (a red herring) across (one's path or way).

YELLOW MOUSE

GOD...WHAT IS IT? WHERE IS IT?
HOW DOES IT FUNCTION IN ITS CREATION,

Down through the ages thinking men have pondered these provocative questions. The answers have been legion. In the western world the most common belief is that IT is an anthropomorphic being who sits upon a throne way out yonder, a place called heaven. A vengeful being who shows favoritism to his chosen people. In His wrath he inflicts all manner of disease and punishment upon those who are disobedient to His commands. Finally, when they have come to the end of life's toilsome journey, they are dumped head first into an eternal hell of indescribable torment!

However, according to the doctrine, escape from all this horror is simple. In fact so simple that even a little child can understand and experience it. All one needs to do is to tell the priest or minister or rabbi that he accepts Jesus as his savior, repents, and is baptised for the remission of his sins (Acts 2.38). Now that they have been fixed, they can go and do their thing in the world regardless of its blasphemy or the hurt they may cause other people or innocent creatures. They can remain in a sinless state because they are safe in the arms of Jesus, who is standing by to protect them.

What childish notions many people entertain! They have not even graduated from the kindergarten of life. Fortunately, all such cults sooner or later must succumb to the Law of Action and Reaction and this one surely will. Its leaders see the handwriting upon the wall and are struggling for survival, but die it must.

Its fount never was, nor could ever be the land of milk and honey. The eternal vigilance of evolution is forever moving forward to higher status states of consciousness and the dawn of a new world religion is unfolding. A religion of wholeness, a religion of great truth and sincerity which will eliminate fake gods and ecclesiastical dogmatism. A religion rooted in REASON, not ignorance and superstition, greed and self-interest. A religion that will draw into its fold all sentient beings. A religion of HARMONY, not conflict. A religion founded on the concept of pantheism. The pantheist sees God as the universe in its totality. If there can be a broader concept of what God is, I have not found it. Other religions and philosophers have different concepts of what God is and how IT reacts to Its creation, but to discuss them all in their total ramifications is not within the realm of this volume.

In response to the second question of the title: Where is God? It is answered in the question as to what God is. If the universe is God, then God cannot be circumscribed. It is everywhere and in everything. The third question demands greater elaboration. How does God function in creation? All the great world religions and philosophers have told us that God is Good. If God (the universe) is good, then all things are good innately. But ah, man has fallen from the primordial state. He has alienated himself from his source. In his ignorance he thinks he can live peacefully within the confines of his self-made rendezvous. This he may do in some measure for a time, but the fundamental law of life is UNITY. Thus the time will come when he will realize that his rendezvous is falling apart. He knows that the false God of avarice can no longer satisfy his needs and his yearnings. Then he turns to another fake God, the God of Christianity. Daily he engages in prayers of supplication to the fake deity, but his prayers are not answered. Why? Because prayer is never answered. Supplication is foreign to the nature of the universe. It neither rewards, nor punishes. It doesn't give or take orders. It neither sympathizes or rejoices. It doesn't love or hate and Its innermost qualities are unknowable. We can say with some degree of surety that in essence It is an immutable law. Because of this, we can pray till

64,

doomsday and the Deity will not hear us, nor will our prayers make any impression upon It.

Now, this circumlocution was necessary in order to arrive at a simple point, viz: How does It function in Its creations? First let us analogize. If we plant some corn in a fertile soil, we have not changed the chemistry of the soil in the area surrounding the corn one iota. However, the nature and innate intelligence of the soil pours its energy into the corn and causes it to sprout and produce, in time, some edible corn. The same would hold true if we planted an acorn and later a great oak tree would begin to grow there. There is an unbreakable unity in all things, great and small, a connection, a pre-destined sequence, if you will. None of us can ever be completely separated from the Deity, because we are of the Deity, a part of It.

Since we have a free will we can alienate ourselves from the principle or essence of the Deity and we may stray so far away that we are unable to find our way back during this life time, but the link between us and the Deity can never be completely severed. The prayer that will enable us to regain entry into this ocean of love is SURRENDER. When we surrender our mortal selves to this Universal Law of Life and Its twin companion, the Law of Action and Reaction, we have placed ourselves in its stream of mercy and love and we know that there is nothing to ask for. We shall receive without asking all that we have earned. We also know that yearning is a form of prayer and when we yearn for greater states of spiritual insight and dedicate our lives to noble service with no thought of reward, we open the door to a more bountiful life. We also know that VIRTUE, not riches and fame is forever drawing us closer to the Center of Universal Light and Love which pours Its blessings upon us.

Once we have reached this point on the evolutionary scale, we can never regress. The debris of materialism is now withdrawn from our path and we can only progress upward to higher and higher states of consciousness. Thus is the folly of conventional prayer. We know why prayers of supplication to a false God are neither heard or answered. It is fortunate that this is not the way of the Deity, because if all prayers were answered think of the injustices and chaos which would be heaped upon an already overburdened world of injustice. The Great Law of Life provides that we are entitled only to that which we have earned.

To quote from the Christian Bible: "You must earn your bread by the sweat of your brow." True salvation does not come while sitting in church or while listening to the peddlers of religion via television, but comes from work and service to all creatures. As this new World Religion sweeps across the face of the earth, the Kingdom of Heaven, of which a man called Jesus spoke and fore-saw, will be unfolding. Then the TRUE GOD of SHABOA will no longer be a mystery, because it will be manifested in all things.

(The above is an excerpt from a book Rev, Richards has been writing. ACD)

Tom Critchett
 710 Devonshire #30
 Celina, Ohio 45822

65,

From Psychic Tom

In doing Pyschic research since the days when loading ammunition was a necessity in Inchon harbor Korea, I've come across one "Prejudice" I worry about. It seems that no matter whether one calls one's self a Medium, a Psychic, or a Spiritist, everyone just calmly accepts the concept that you are a Christian. If not that then a Witch, or worse yet, an atheist!

Well, Madaline Murry. Ohare be damned, I'm none of those, and since it ocured to me that every witness to an accident sees that accident from a different view point, why not express mine?

After all, who really knows? Was you there Charlie? Has anyone come back to tell a twentieth century audience what it is like to be dead?

I know, I'm an irritant, a "bumb" amid scholars, but what if, just what if, for example, Darwin is truly right, Suppose we really did develop out of snails or creepie crawly things?

Suppose humans did evolve from village farming, cavemen primitives, or suppose we are all descended from Noah who crawled down the rocky cliffs of Mount Arat in Turkey?

If science is anywhere close to the truth of human kinds ancestry, then why is it so unthinkable that the Dead, the Spirits, those not in the human bodies are not evolving too?

I mean, well think of it really think for one logical realistic moment:

Suppose the dead are only people waiting their turn on Earth, and suppose that they too are trying to evolve to a state of "Grace".

Suppose they, like us, crawled out of some primeval swamp of nothingness, and suppose thy look to humans for a Savior, a God to lead them?

Suppose Atheism is as primitive as religion? Suppose prayer to Allah and Yahweh and God and the Light, is no more than mans way of trying to evolve to the stage of evolutionary intellect to create the very first God?

Why not? Why do we have to believe in the fall from perfection yet believe in evolution?

Why can't the dead and the living be on equal paths towards that moment. in the future when man kind (or spirit kind) finally sees the true value in a just fair Existence where we each love each other "AS" we love ourselves?

Is my belief so absurd? Can it be that the Christians totally refuse to admit corrupt incestual Popes twisted Judaism to their liking, just to spite the older Persians?

Can't the dead be evolving too?

I think as many dead would lide an honest answer to that question, those questions as I do.

I think in all our brilliance we've forgotten commonsense and reality.

Science confirms that sixteen percent of all allnesses go to remission mysteriously. Is that God; or coincidence of evolution?

Just suppose the dead, like the living, are trying to find or create an All Knowing, All Seeing (Omniscient to the college grads) Savior?

Wouldn't the dead winos like to find some all-forgiving saint beyond death who'll forgive their drunken wealnesses?

Has anyone ever asked, just how many Spirit Guides died in insane asylums? or (God forbid) whore houses?

Well, suppose I did and suppose that from my viewpoint of that hypothetical

66 accident, I saw a struggling mass of dead people, striving for a savior to come to them from we, the experienced humans who have smelled the grass of nature and the sweetness of pine?

I have seen the dead, literally, for ten years, thousands of years, and I really believe they are evolving from a pure silent energy nothingness, to some sort of ordered fairness for all.

Sure I know that's nuts ! Crazy ! Insane, just as it is insane to say that Plato's Republic failed, or to say there were homosexual Popes, or that Alexander the Great died of syphilis at the age of thirty two.

God was, Allah was. and is and Yahweh always will be, but could that be a future goal ? NOT a past reality ?

Could we all be evolving and growing up to our own expectations?

Is it so unrealistic or un- or non-religious to believe that even the Dead may wish there were some special "Power" or "Entity" to save their dumb butts?

Has anyone ever known really one single human spiritualist, medium or psychic who was really totally accurate?

Perhaps that is because accuracy is a goal, not a one-time perfection we fell from in a filthy disgusting disgrace.

Perhaps I'm just crazy enough and skeptical enough to be right, or partially right. Then what ?

Suppose euthanasia is the only true fairness we can offer these animal bodies we so arrogantly inhshbit.

Suppose that aborting a crippled, deformed or emotionally unwanted fetus is the only true compassion we humans can have for our dead grandparents and great grand parents ?

No no! It is all too absurd! We couldn't have come from an unexperienced past. There must be a God ! Mustn't there be?

After all who else could we blame earthquakes and hurricanes on? Who else could find reason in starving half of Africa and India?

We are homosapiens with a mind in a brain, equipped to climb out of caves and go to the moon but God had to plan it all. Didn't She ? He ? It?

Surely a mass of people capable of creating a computer chip the size of a pin-head and to blow up the planet must have come from some compassionate, all² intelligent form of somethingness. It couldn't be our own fault or our own responsibilities, could it? NAH ! We'd have no one to blame mistakes on then, no one but our paranoid selves.

Surely no God would produce sexual intercourse for reproduction. What a cruel and unholy joke to play on all us perverts. Is God cruel ? Should he, she, it be?

Perhaps we should concentrate on the real tolerant qualities we'd like God to have and spend less time on giving what "fits" name is or the reasons for such coincidences.

If man is evolving then why should we assume dead men are doing any less?

Christianity , like Taoism, is great if you never question the prior existence of a denial of intellect but ----- what if ? Weren't we gifted with minds for purposes of this kind ? Or should we all follow the sheep of tradition over the cliff?

If seers and psychics spent one third of the time questioning the intelligence of the dead as they do questioning that of their parents, we might, just might draw different conclusions about the future. We might even put to rest our Hindu heritge in a belief in some sort of Destiny and plan our own lives, our own futures and become our own Gods.

When Jews can kill Christians and Moslems alike while being critical of communism and fascism, where does that leave us capitalists ?

When the Pope can be gunned down by a Turk who believes in only terrorism, and a nstion can call the 19060's Camelot whwn Jack was busy seducing Marilyn, then why is it we can't question "up" or " Heaven? ?

continued

67

Why can't we allow the dead the same fairness we expect? Perhaps, just perhaps, they are evolving too and looking to us for a Messiah. Ever consider that?

Perhaps the ultimate sick mind has just expressed the ultimate prejudice, or maybe, just maybe, man is due to grow up a little.

Perhaps perfection is the human admonition that we are each responsible to each other to try to help mankind produce the very first NON PREJUDICED SOUL. One with forgiving ways due to vast experience at being a fool and one who can love truth more than tradition, Religion, or ego.

Psycho Psychic Tom

A.C. Dalenberg
753 44th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94121

Dear Friends:

I usually seem to be in such a hurry to get somewhere, although if you asked me just where that is I wouldn't know quite what to say. I suppose most people are like that, at least part of the time. Anyway it seems that I somehow don't have the time to live fully in the present, whether from fear or general agitation or what. There always seems to be this important thing I have to do next, so I don't have the time to really do what I'm doing, and on and on it goes. Actually when I look back at it those things which seemed so important turn out to be not so important at all, and I might have much better stayed in the present, doing fully what I was doing.

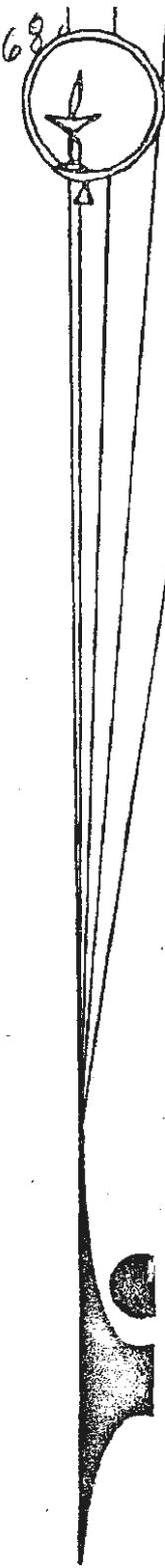
Meditation, I think, is an answer to such a problem. It means, among other things, a willingness to be fully in the present. It means to be with one's own life and breath, to be with all in a moment of silence, to be with those we love, the trees, the flowers, and the great open sky. Where are we going anyway, that we don't have time for all of that? Surely in some sense that is what life is all about, or should be.

What a rare and precious thing it is, this moment we take to listen to each other. I think that is what the UL friends Letter is all about. Not that our Letter is all that great, but then again maybe it is not so bad.

Anyway I thought I ought to slow down enough to say:

I'm mighty glad that you all are there,

Ananda Claude

68


Letters Received

In corresponding with Larry, the subject of prayer and humanism came up. The context was praying for a more human attitude towards our fellow men, particularly in a place such as Lebanon. His letter follows:

Lawrence Reyka
1021 C, Bridgeway Circle
Columbus, Ohio 43220

Dear Friends:

Humanism is not really something you can pray for, it's a rational and compassionate view of life that a person gets not through praying to some external agency or being, but by calm reflection on one's own or through contact with persons who are Humanists. I became a Humanist through the experiences I had as Universal Life minister, ministering to people who had very little, if any, interest in "religion". Over that time, and in part due to my own reflection of the prevailing mythologies of our own culture, I was able to evolve my own religious view of the world and my place in it. I later discovered that the Humanist philosophy fit like a glove the view I had "invented" for myself.

If by "prayer" you were to mean a yearning within one's own head and heart, (as many do mean these days) I will join you in such a "prayer" for more Humanism... In Lebanon, Northern (& southern) Ireland, and in prisons, colleges, hospitals, etc. in all lands all around this world.

I am enclosing a pamphlet that tells about Humanism. Please share the indicated portions of this with the "meeting", too. Again, I invite correspondence direct to me, as well as via the "meeting"

Humanistically,

Larry

MEET THE HUMANISTS ...

PRE-ENLIGHTENMENT

Greek: Protagoras, Democritus, Epicurus ...
Chinese: Confucius, Lao Tze ...
Other: Omar Khayyam, Buddha ...

ENLIGHTENMENT

David Hume, J. S. Mill, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin,
James Madison, August Comte, Kant, Newton, Diderot, Voltaire ...

MODERN

Susan B. Anthony, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Albert Camus, Erich
Fromm, Margaret Sanger, Andrei Sakharov, Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, Steve
Allen, Jonas Salk, Linus Pauling, John Dewey, Betty Friedan, Dana Andrews ...

"THE ONLY PHILOSOPHY TO TRANSCEND ALL PAROCHIAL BOUNDARIES IS
THE PHILOSOPHY OF FREE THINKING, RATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, FREE INQUIRY
... HUMANISM"

WE ARE A WORLD COMMUNITY

Through the International Humanist and Ethical Union, we are part of a world Humanist Community with national organizations in the following countries:

(Source: 1977 I.H.E.U. Directory)

United States (3), Korea, Nigeria, India (4), Britain (3), France (2),
Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Netherlands (4),
Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Italy (2),

Norway, Yugoslavia, Argentina, Austria, Finland, Bangladesh, Philippines

(Numbers indicate number of national organizations in those countries with more than one I.H.E.U.-affiliated organization.)



HUMANISM IS . . .

SCIENTIFIC We believe that the best method for the discovery of truth is human reason and observation.

NATURALISTIC We believe that the only reality is the natural world. We don't need the idea of the supernatural to give meaning to life.

ETHICAL We believe the primary purpose of human life is to serve human needs.

POSITIVE We believe the primary power to solve human problems is human power.

SECULAR We approach the world with an open mind, worshipping nothing and willing to question everything.

UNIVERSAL We believe our primary identity, that which comes before all parochial identities, is our human identity.

COMMUNAL We affirm the need for communities of support in which we may celebrate our connection with one another and most fully live our Humanism.

ECOLOGICAL We believe that human beings are part of the ecology of this world, we evolved naturally. This world is our home.

RESPONSIBLE We are concerned with individual freedom, consistent with social responsibility.

HISTORICAL We honor our tradition, recognizing our philosophical roots in the Enlightenment, the Pre-Socratic Greeks and in Chinese philosophy.

1. Outside of the ULC, I don't think many religious groups can be found with the same freedom of spirit as our own. We were then happy to hear of a group of several hundred people in England calling themselves "Quaker Universalists". Their viewpoint is similar to our own, and hope to have it recognized as a legitimate possible Quaker view. However, since they have no intention of limiting themselves to Christianity, they have had only partial success so far. John Linton, a representative of the group, has recently given a series of lectures on the subject in the U.S. They would welcome correspondence. Write: Quaker Universalist Group, c/o John Linton, 18 Hurst Rise Road, Cumnor Hill, Oxford Ox 2, 9HQ England.
2. We intend to include news items here from the different groups with which our subscribers may be associated, when it is of interest to us all. However more organizational kinds of messages perhaps should be mailed separately, since our Letter itself is intended to be of a more personal religious nature.
3. Change of Address: Rodney Reynolds B 57468, P.O. Box AE Rm. 5125, San Luis Obispo, CA 93409.
4. I think we would all appreciate it if we would each tell a little bit more about ourselves, so we are reserving space for such in this section. To get things started, I thought I might volunteer a brief biographical sketch:

Ananda Claude Dalenberg: I was born on July 2, 1927. I was brought up in the Dutch Reformed Church, but was not at all a religious type. Later I encountered Zen Buddhism and met Alan Watts, and that was a big change for me. I studied philosophy and religion for a number of years and then in 1957 went to Japan to study Zen. I joined the priesthood not long after meeting Shunryu Suzuki at Zen Center in San Francisco, where I have been until recently. I am now married, and the proud father of twin daughters.

In 1981 I became a minister in the Universal Life Church, not as a rejection of Zen, but as a natural next step on my own religious pilgrimage. I never have been the sectarian type, and I feel quite at home in the ULC. With a few friends, we have recently started a small group in the ULC called the "Bodhi Friends Mission". It seems to be the right thing to do. My present address is 753 44th Av., San Francisco, CA 94121.
5. We have extra copies of this issue, so if you want to help spread the word a bit, let us know. This issue will be mailed to about 30 subscribers, and maybe 20 others who have requested information. The next issue is planned for January and with some luck might be out before the New Year.
6. We seem to presume that in this country everyone has freedom of religion. In our prisons however that is only partly true. Rev. Paul has written of his many difficulties in starting a ULC group in a Louisiana prison. They would appreciate correspondence and printed ULC materials but have great difficulty in getting clearance for such. Write Rev. Robert E. Paul, Pastor #90760, Universal Life Church Inc., Congregation #53942, Angola Camp 'C' Bear '3', Angola, Louisiana 70712.
7. Linda (Robin L. Hood) is continuing with the many activities of PRIS-UNAN (Prisoners Unanimous--- Embracing All Planetary Prisoners). If you want to share in their activities, they would welcome your participation. Write: PRIS-UNAN, PO Box 1517, Redondo Beach, CA 90278.

Ananda Claude Dalenberg, Clerk