

## **Social Responsibility**

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont. Prepared by Ginger Hobbs

### **Welcome and Chalice Lighting**

The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

#### Humanist Manifesto I

### **Brief Check-ins**

#### **Opening Reading:**

**Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships.** Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences, where differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

**Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.** Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community. We seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.

Humanists are concerned for the well being of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views. We work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society and maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process and a planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner.

Thus engaged in the flow of life, we aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. The responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.

#### Humanist Manifesto III

### **A Moment of Silence....**

**Main Subject:** What does it mean that we “seek to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, and we support a just distribution of nature's resources”? Do we have a responsibility as humanists to speak out about poverty, budget cuts, and the environment; to be active in working to bring about social justice?

**Individual communing:** 6 minutes per individual, 3 minutes of group response

How important is this in your concept of humanism?

Is social responsibility an ethical issue?

Are there particular issues you feel you should address?

How does this affect the way you interact in community?

**Open Discussion**

How does political action and participation in community activities relate to humanism?  
Is it essential?

**Business:**

Next meeting location:

Meeting Plan preparer:

**Closing**

"Humanism leads me to find a sense of wider relatedness with all the world and its peoples, and it calls me to work for a sound environment and a humane civilization... Humanism also makes me aware of the existence of moral dilemmas and the need to be very careful and intentional in my moral decision-making."

Unitarian Universalist Humanist Rev. Sarah Oelberg,  
From UUA pamphlet, "The Faith of a Humanist", Dec. 2007