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Teens will #RESIST this November in NY
Trish Cowan, YES Conference Coordinator

The 2017 Youth of Ethical Societies (YES) conference will be held on November 9-12 in New York. This is the annual conference for all high school-aged teens in Ethical Societies from around the country and it’s a weekend full of deep thought, intense discussion, and serious play.

Every year, the officers determine a theme for the conference. This year, after much deliberation, the officers decided they wanted to somehow combine social action, pop culture, politics, sex education, LGBTQ+ issues, immigration and refugee issues, systems of oppression, and resistance. The theme? A true sign of these times: #resist.

We hope the teens in your life will join us this November! For more information, please visit the YES information and registration page (https://aeu.org/event/yes-teens-in-ny-nov-2017) or contact Trish Cowan, YES Advisor, at trishhotze@sbcglobal.net.

Activity from 2016 YES Conference

Group photo from 2016 YES Conference
One would have to look back 150 years to find a time of greater peril for our nation. With the very foundations of our democracy under threat, I frequently hear fellow members say that America has never needed Ethical Humanism more than at this moment. I could not agree more.

As the 19th century drew to a close, Felix Adler encouraged the nascent Ethical Societies to unite in a federation to be called the American Ethical Union. Its mission would be to create, nurture, and inspire ethical humanist communities. So how has the AEU fared in living up to those goals? Let’s just say that the road has been rocky and our gait unsteady at times. Looking forward, I still see obstacles in our path, but I am confident that we are headed in the right direction, more sure-footed and poised to pick up the pace.

As a small organization we work to get the best return from limited resources. Our key revenue streams are Society apportionments, income from restricted funds, and donations from members and friends. These revenues only cover our basic operations and a bit more. With your help we can significantly further our programs and services, all designed to support our Societies and advance the Movement. Think about it—every additional dollar you contribute can go to expanding and improving what we can offer our Societies and fund the projects we would like to see to help us become a stronger force for good in the world. So I encourage you to visit our website, aeu.org, and click on the Support the AEU button to be part of the solution.

Don’t forget that there are other ways to give. Consider volunteering for an AEU task force; contributing materials from your Society to the Resources Site; or developing a webinar to share your knowledge. If you are interested in serving on the Board, make your voice heard. Email office@aeu.org to let us know how you want to make a difference with the AEU. There’s no better time than now.

This federation, the AEU, belongs to all of us. Moving forward together, I think we can make great things happen. Thanks for taking the time to read this message.
News from the National Leaders Council

NLC Officers: Hugh Taft-Morales, President; Randy Best, Vice-President; Kate Lovelady, Secretary; Richard Koral, Treasurer; Martha Gallahue, Dean

The National Leaders Council will hold their next meeting at Murray Grove Retreat Center in Lanoka Harbor, NJ, October 22-25. Some of their time will be dedicated to planning for the 2018 Assembly in Albuquerque, in particular how to best address the social justice theme for 2017-2018—environmental justice. We hope to network with local religious groups in New Mexico already working on this issue.

On a separate note, three Leaders (Amanda Poppe, Randy Best, and Hugh Taft-Morales) were invited to the State Department on September 26th. They met with staff from the Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF) in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL). This State Department group wanted information about non-theist groups, non-theism, and the humanist landscape including the American Ethical Union and Ethical Culture communities.

We briefed the IRF staff about Ethical Societies, as well as other humanist groups, including the international perspective of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, of which we are founding members. The State Department hoped this would help them nurture a more fully inclusive approach to “Religious Freedom,” and “to ensure that the right to doubt, deny, or simply not believe receives as much protection as the right to believe.” The new focus on protecting those who don’t have traditional faith beliefs comes courtesy of the Wolf Act, which became law in December of 2016. The new law specifically states that, “The freedom of thought, conscience, and religion is understood to protect theistic and non-theistic beliefs and the right not to profess or practice any religion.” IRF staff indicated that they learned a lot from the meeting, especially regarding Ethical Culture, and the meaning of such terms as “non-theist,” “religious humanism,” and “evangelism.”

Save These Dates
For details visit www.aeu.org

AEU Board Meetings
Individual members of Societies are welcome to attend. (Usually held at New York Society for Ethical Culture)
Sat. November 18 – NYSEC
Sat. January 20 – conf call
Sat. March 10 – NYSEC
Sat. April 28 – NYSEC
Thu. June 7 & Sun. June 10 – Assembly in Albuquerque

Community Meditations
Sun. Nov 5 & 19, 5pm ET
call 641-715-3580 (Code: 366348)

Youth of Ethical Societies Conference
#RESIST
Fri. Nov 10 - Sun. Nov 12
New York

Future of Ethical Societies Conference
Fri. May 25 - Sun. May 28
St. Louis, MO

AEU 103rd Annual Assembly on Climate Justice
Thu. June 7 - Sun. June 10
Albuquerque, NM

Special United Nations Days
(Click here for details)
Oct 24 - United Nations Day
Nov 10 - World Science Day for Peace & Development
Nov 16 - International Day of Tolerance
Dec 10 - Human Rights Day
4  Fall 2017 Dialogue

Letter from Executive Director
Bart Worden

How do you help a movement grow? As an elder among humanist organizations, the American Ethical Union has quite a bit of experience to draw upon as we continue efforts to broaden and strengthen the impact of the Ethical Movement on the world around us. Experience alone, however, does not guarantee success in the future—especially when the landscape undergoes significant change, as is the case with our current situation. Technological innovations, political turmoil, and changing expectations for interpersonal relationships have stirred the waters, and navigating our way to success is a challenge.

With that in mind, the AEU board has been looking to prioritize efforts in three main areas: the development of new Ethical Culture groups, expanding the national presence of the Ethical Movement, and the expanding of the financial base of the AEU.

More resources will be devoted to growing new Ethical Culture groups in the next year. Our Outreach Team responds to queries that come to the AEU office and offers guides for organizing along with opportunities for phone/video conferencing and email support. We’ve recently added GoToMeeting sessions for organizers of newly started groups and people who are considering starting a group. The Union now has a MeetUp Pro account that allows us to host MeetUp pages for groups that are forming.

As promised last year, we have been building up our AEU Resources website with a growing library of program ideas and organizational tools to support new and existing groups. To help avoid groups needing to “reinvent the wheel” when developing programs, we’ll be stepping up encouragement of existing groups to share successful program ideas that we can make available to everyone through the AEU Resources Site.

Since 1996 the AEU has offered Lay Leadership Summer School programs at The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, North Carolina. This has been a remarkably successful program for the Ethical Movement, providing transformative experiences for participants who continue to be highly engaged with their Ethical Societies. We’ll be looking to transform the program itself to enable us to offer more opportunities to more people more frequently. A task force will be exploring ways to provide more online and more in-person training opportunities on a broad range of topics.

The Visiting Leaders Bureau program has grown considerably between the last Assembly and the upcoming one. During that period, 10 different Leaders will make 31 visits to 13 different Ethical Societies. Societies who invite Leaders are encouraged to double the impact of the visits by hosting a workshop in addition to the regular Platform meeting—which many Societies have been doing. We have moved the Visiting Leaders Bureau to the AEU Resources Site and are also developing a database of other individuals who have been recommended as speakers and workshop presenters.

When the AEU board hosted listening sessions with Ethical Societies a few years back, the overwhelming first concern of participants was expanding the Ethical Movement’s presence and influence with the broader public. As stated in the 2012 Strategic Plan, “Ethical Humanism is a great idea that not enough people know about.” Several initiatives aim to address this concern. The Rapid Response Team develops statements on emerging issues and the Communications Committee gets the statement out to the public. Efforts continue to grow the contact list and our communications people are sending more messages through our email service. You can help expand the Union’s reach via social media by following us on Facebook and Twitter, and by Liking, Sharing, and Retweeting posts.

Many of you were among the almost 500 individuals who completed the branding survey this summer. That survey was part of a larger effort to improve the Union’s branding.

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News from National Ethical Service
Kay Dundorf, NES President

Thank you to National Ethical Service (NES) Executive Committee member and Leader Jone Johnson Lewis for conducting the business meeting for NES at the AEU Assembly where members approved proposed changes to the NES by-laws, re-elected the current Executive Committee, and elected new Executive Committee member, Carolyn Parker of the Ethical Society of Austin. And thank you to Carolyn for stepping up and speaking about NES at an Assembly luncheon.

We invite any member of an Ethical Society to join our Executive Committee (since as a member of a Society you are also a member of NES) and help us represent Ethical Culture at the United Nations. If you’d like to know more, send a message to info@nationalserviceaeu.org. You can also engage with us on the National Ethical Service Facebook page. (Facebook engagement is an indicator of our organization’s activity reported in the annual application to renew our United Nations affiliation.)

During the summer, NES Executive Committee* approved a Rose L. Walker Fund seed grant for the Global Center for Human Change “to present the work of Richard A. Bowell [its founder] and share the leading-edge insights and processes of Human Evolutary™ Change so we, humans, can evolve consciously and establish a new platform for humanity in a new time.” (*I and NES Vice President Dr. Kurt Johnson recused ourselves from the vote as we were already endorsing Mr. Bowell’s work.)

‘Evolutary’ is a new term that distinguishes itself from what we have come to understand as the basis of evolutionary process in the now established sense of what that means. Evolutary™ News awakens the consciousness of a person to their human responsibility in the unfolding evolutionary process of life. It is a call for us humans to wake up to the challenges before us and grow up to our responsibility as a human in these times. These messages are in alignment with Felix Adler’s message for us to continue to grow morally. In our relations with each other, the planet, and with ourselves, we are the ones that can take up the challenge to establish a new level of humanity. For more information: www.humanevolutarychange.org.

Having a fresh, high quality logo with a strong, succinct, and clear tagline that can be widely distributed and used is helpful for our visibility. The AEU board has engaged the services of a marketing/branding professional and a graphic design professional to work with the AEU to develop a refreshed logo, a new tagline, and a brand guideline document—all with the goal of helping us have a stronger, clearer, and more uniform brand identity.

Getting our refreshed branding materials noticed is also an effort that receives more time and attention. A higher profile might just reduce the number of times you hear the question, “What’s an Ethical Society?” and hear instead, “How do I join?” The AEU board will be looking into avenues for getting more public exposure in more areas of the country and has set up a task force to explore options and make recommendations.

To ensure success, we'll also be looking to expand our base of financial support by strengthening our fundraising efforts and by providing more materials for member Societies’ to use with local fundraising efforts. Expanding Larger Donors outreach, adding more support for Planned Giving, and more frequent email and direct mail campaigns can make a significant difference locally as well as nationally—and we’re happy to share whatever we learn along the way.

In the end, though we have a lot to do, when we find ways to work together and help each other we can coax a more ethical culture into being and that’s a good thing for one and for all.

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Notes from Your AEU Board  

Jill Aul, Board Secretary

I am truly honored to serve as the new Secretary to the American Ethical Union (AEU) Board as I begin the second year of my first term. The past year has been very educational and exciting, as I have learned much more about the AEU and its operations. It has been thrilling to travel to New York City and have the opportunity to visit the New York Society for Ethical Culture (NYSEC) where it all began! Typically, there is a three-month gap every year between the final Board meeting at Assembly and the fall Board retreat. This year, we all agreed that it was important to close that gap. On Saturday, July 29, the Board conducted a 90-minute virtual meeting by teleconference. It was gratifying to hear Law’rence Miller’s Assembly 2017 report, where we learned that attendance at the Baltimore Assembly was one of the largest ever. Survey participants indicated that the content (keynote speakers, workshops, and entertainment) were of very high quality. In the future, more attention will be given to recruiting volunteers, fundraising for scholarships, and improving diversity and technological capabilities. All in all, the 2017 Assembly was a big success. We look forward to meeting again next year in Albuquerque.

The newly formed ad hoc Communications Task Force is headed by Ken Novak (Chicago Circle) and includes Karen Elliott (Baltimore), Sonja Kueppers (Washington DC), John McCormick (Baltimore), and Emily Newman (AEU). Their plan focuses on improving communication inside the AEU (including all of our Societies) via a 5-step process that includes Planning, Current State Analysis, Target State Analysis, Gap Analysis, and Road Map. We are confident that their hard work will go a long way toward improving communications within the AEU.

Executive Director Bart Worden reported that he has been collaborating with Roy Speckhardt, E.D. of the American Humanist Association and Greg Epstein, Humanist Chaplain at Harvard University, about strategies for focusing national attention on the AEU. He is also working diligently on fundraising and new Society formation. In addition, Bart and the Board are looking at ways to support and partner with the Hip Hop Humanism program based in Delaware.

The Board will hold its annual retreat at a new location this year. We will be meeting at the summer home of Tom Castelnovo on Long Island at the end of September. There, we will be working on ways to expand diversity all around the Movement as well as a great deal of strategic planning for the upcoming year. Returning Board members John McCormick (Philadelphia), Tom Castelnovo (Brooklyn), Ken Novak (Chicago Circle), Bob Gordon (Bergen), and myself (Mid Rivers) welcome to the Board newly elected directors Martina Brunner (Westchester), Sharon Stanley (Long Island), Sonja Kueppers (Washington DC), and Liz Singer (New York). We all look forward to a productive and exciting year, serving all of you!

Wall of Remembrance

Compiled from Societies’ newsletters and websites, and newspaper obituaries

Rita Radest (Bergen) – Longstanding member Rita Radest died on August 12th at the age of 88. In addition to being the widow of Bergen’s first leader, Dr. Howard Radest (who served as the executive director of the American Ethical Union and director of the Ethical Culture Schools), Rita served as the director of the Society’s Sunday School in the 1950s. She was a professional teacher and cared greatly about education.

Lou Schwartz (Bergen) – Well-known Teaneck activist and former member of Bergen Society, Lou Schwartz died July 16th at the age of 104. Lou joined the Ethical Culture Society when he was about 100 and was active for a few years promoting public causes as part of our social action efforts.
Directions for Ethical Education

Melissa Sinclair, National Director for Ethical Education

AEU Ethical Education is getting requests for thoughts and insights into new, different areas that could lead to interesting discussions. As the National Director, I’m excited about the increasing willingness to change and bring in innovative ideas to make our programs stronger.

One area we are delving into with Ethical Education is what biases we bring to our Societies and classrooms. We were very excited to hear from Sabine Salandy, Director of Ethical Education at Ethical Culture Society of Westchester, at the Skills Summit. Sabine addressed bias in literature and media, and what that means for our teachings in Ethical Culture. Not only did Sabine show teachers how to look for bias, but also how to bring it into the classroom to help our children think about biases when they watch movies or read books for pleasure or school. It fits so well with Ethical Culture as it’s teaching our teachers and children/youth to become better critical thinkers.

Along with sharing lessons on our Ethical Education site (accessible through AEU Resources Site), a few Societies are working collaboratively as part of the Soul Matters group. A few Ethical Societies belong to a consortium of mostly Unitarian Universalist Churches where they do themed talks/education/small group work. Using the shared lessons saves time for all involved and makes it possible to be more creative and united in what we teach. It allows Societies to work outside of a purchased curriculum and tie Platform talks to what is being taught in Sunday School so that the entire gathering of people that day walk away with similar lessons for the day that can lead to thoughtful discussions for the whole family at home.

We are also looking to help Societies which do not have a Sunday School, but who want to build children’s programming. Based on recent workshops and articles about churches struggling to run and maintain Sunday Schools, an idea began forming in my head of how to run a Society without a Sunday School that is still welcoming to families with children. Many of our Societies are finding creative ways to draw families in—summer camps, special programming/workshops for the community, and multi-generational platforms—but it’s the getting enough children and volunteers in the Societies to run a program separate from Platform that has proven exceptionally difficult. One new approach being explored is running Family Platforms. It’s an interesting way to build something from nothing for children and family programming for some Societies or to change the idea of Platform for everyone at other Societies. This approach changes Platform itself once or twice a month, or even every week, to accommodate younger listeners. A Society might keep that approach forever, or might later decide to transition to also having Sunday School classes once they have built critical mass.

Lots of ideas and thoughts are bubbling up on how to be more welcoming to our children and families in Ethical Education—from addressing our biases, working together in new ways, and rethinking our Sunday Morning platforms. Look for more information after the Skills Summit this fall on how to learn what was discussed and what are our next steps.
Ethical Action Feature: Anti-Racism Commitments of Societies (as of 9/20/17)
James White, Ethical Action Committee

Our Societies are working hard on implementing our 2017 Assembly resolution “Toward Repairing the Harm of Racism.” They are running meetings, presenting Platforms, and holding Colloquies on Black history, white privilege, and racial justice. A number of groups have developed extensive learning programs to equip members and friends for better-informed action. Here are some examples:

**Ethical Humanist Society of Asheville** led “Hood Tours” of several local African-American communities to learn from the history and resilience of each.

**Ethical Society of Austin** has studied Michelle Alexander’s “The New Jim Crow.”

**Baltimore Ethical Society** is continuing its three-year partnership with “Out of Justice” to stop laws and policies impeding ex-offenders progress in their communities. Also a focus continues on affordable housing, job opportunities, and effective schools through Baltimore United for Leadership Development.

**Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County** organized a workshop series called “Being White and Its Hidden Assumptions” as well as sponsored a panel on immigration issues. Bergen founded and helps to lead the Northern New Jersey Sanctuary Coalition to provide sanctuary for asylum seekers.

**Boston Ethical Society** gave a grant to the Essex County Community organization to improve police-community relations in a racially mixed community.

**Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture** (BSEC) continues to host a group called Lucy’s Children that addresses various topics of racism and developed a workshop on “the myth of race and the reality of racism,” showing how racism has been embedded in this country’s history from the founding through today [they presented it at the 2017 AEU Assembly]. Both Lucy’s Children and the Ethical Action Committee have been working towards a rapid response network to participate cooperatively with anti-racism work in the borough (in September, rallying against the hate and racism symbolized by nooses found around Brooklyn). With the weekly splitting of the collection with local groups, Brooklyn often selects groups working in various aspects of anti-racism work. BSEC has sponsored viewings and discussions of the documentaries 13th and Riker’s, sponsored trips to relevant history sites in New York City, promoted attendance at such events as a speech by Ta-Nehisi Coates, and is planning a weekend trip to the African American History Museum in Washington, DC.

**Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island** created an interactive community/police website.

**New York Society for Ethical Culture** programmed a monthly discussion series called “Race and Ethnic Relations in the ‘Post Racial’ Society,” and with the Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP) hosted a forum on “No Fundamental Change, No Equal Justice.” NYSEC member, and PROP co-founder, Robert Gangi (2012 AEU Elliott-Black awardee) continues to develop an extensive court monitoring project proving that Mayor DeBlasio’s claim to have ended racist “broken window” policing is patently false and mobilizing broadly for fundamental police reform.

**Philadelphia Ethical Society** developed evening programs discussing Ta-Nehisi Coates’s writing on reparations. One of a number of initiatives at the Philadelphia Ethical Society is an Ending Racism Task Force. “The goal of the Ending Racism Task Force is to understand, admit and confront white privilege and ending racism, be it individual, group, and/or systemic, by motivating ourselves and our organization to unlearn our personal biases and work to undo institutional racism throughout our Society.” Philadelphia also continues to team up with POWER Coalition on Racial Justice.

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Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture led a Black History Matters series to begin to fill in the gaps in the history of racism in America. They also have taken the lead in forming a coalition for racial justice to welcome homeless families into the Northwest Bronx.

Ethical Society of St. Louis works with the International Institute of St. Louis for the resettlement of immigrants and the Concordance Academy.

Washington Ethical Society is planning an immigration film festival for the fall. They also support the Families and Friends of Incarcerated People.

Ethical Culture Society of Westchester works with the Coalition Against Islamaphobia and is awaiting a Syrian refugee family to resettle, as is the Ethical Society of Northern Westchester.

What is emerging is a broader and deeper understanding of racial oppression as systemic in America—from the late 16th century’s incipient domination and then extinction of Native American societies—and then in turn viciously and pervasively of African slaves the introduction into Jamestown in 1619.

On behalf of the AEU Ethical Action Committee, I welcome ongoing communication about any mistakes and/or omissions and all new developments in this vital, ongoing work. You can reach me at 201-956-5356 or james.white173@gmail.com.

Racial injustice is embedded into American life, from interpersonal interactions up to the highest levels of government. How do we dismantle aspects of America’s culture of white supremacy from our own Ethical Societies? How do we assure a wide diversity of voices in our work, while keeping the voices of people experiencing oppression central? Let’s come together to discuss how our Societies can move forward on racial justice, share our experience and knowledge, and ask those questions that will help us be effective allies in dismantling systemic racism in America. Consider extending the conversation at your own Society by organizing your members to watch the webinar together (in real time or afterwards) and then discuss moving forward at your own Society.

We want as many people to be able to participate as possible, so please email klaclair@aeu.org if you are interested and we will choose the date and time together. Stay tuned for email announcement with details on how to join webinar.

Philadelphia Ending Racism Task Force

L-R: John Marshall, Sylvia Metzler (co-chair), Kate Esposito, Michi Tashjian, Henry Pashkow, Nick Sanders, and Erich Younge (co-chair)
From United Nations:
World Population
Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, IHEU and National Ethical Service representative to the UN
Dr. Reba Goodman, Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County
Special thanks to Charlene Nicole Fulmore


The size and composition of World population matters in a number of important ways. The numbers affect food, water, poverty, environmental stress, children’s education, jobs, the needs of the elderly, and health services. Human population has grown very slowly in the past. Population studies show that earlier in our existence diseases were rampant, keeping life expectancy low and death rates high. It took until about the year 1800 for the human population to reach one billion. Then, in just 200 years or so, it has grown sevenfold to the current 7.6 billion.

For most of human history, the average human life span was considerably low with people not living past 50 years old. In the 17th century England’s human life expectancy was only about 35 years old. Life expectancy began to rise in the 19th century with people living to about 50 years in the US in 1900 and since then it has almost doubled. Throughout the early decades of the Industrial Revolution, life expectancy was low in Western Europe and the US. Many died from diseases such as typhoid and cholera, which spread rapidly in the crowded and filthy conditions that were common then and also from contaminated water.

From about the year 1850 a remarkable historic transformation took place which radically improved living conditions in industrial nations. Much of this progress was spearheaded by improved nutrition and most importantly by Public Health measures—e.g., improvements in sanitation, waste removal, improving the quality of the water supply, workplace safety laws, limits on child labor, and promoting nutrition through legal steps such as fortifying milk, breads and cereals. These measures strengthened people’s immune systems which in turn improved resistance to diseases. Also during this period there were advances in medicines such as vaccines for smallpox, and the discovery of the tubercle bacillus, which ultimately led to a vaccine for tuberculosis. Another important 20th century discovery was that of antibiotics.

In recent years, the United Nations, its agencies, and private humanitarian organizations have been pushing progress toward eradication for those diseases in poorer countries with some success. For example, just since 1990 more than 100 million children’s lives have been saved through vaccinations, improved nutrition, and medical care. During this time there has also been a remarkable decline in extreme poverty (less than $2 dollars a day adjusted for inflation).For most of history more than 90% of the world’s populations lived in extreme poverty. Now, fewer than 10% do. Still, much more needs to be done, too many children die from preventable causes, and still too many women die giving birth. Too many still have inadequate water supply and sanitation. The purification of water can lead to a remarkable decrease in disease prevention.

The many brutal conflicts make ongoing humanitarian work much more difficult to deliver. It prevents the delivery of help and necessary supplies to patients. In some cases nursing personnel are prevented from entering, and those who are there have not been paid for months. There is famine and outbreak of cholera which is making humanitarian help extremely difficult.

The UN tracks population and revises its estimates every two years. The engine of demographic change is the “fertility rate” i.e. the number of children that women have during their lifetime. In order for population to stabilize as life expectancy grows, the fertility rate must fall below the “replacement rate” of 2 at which a population reproduces itself. Since the 1950s fertility rates have dropped dramatically all over the world. The current worldwide rate is 2.5 and in Europe the birth rate is well below the replacement rate so these countries are in fact losing population.

The 2017 UN population projection was based on the assumption that the fertility rate would continue to fall everywhere. In sub-saharan Africa however the decline was slower than expected. The projections have been changed to reflect this change.

The current world projections are about 10 billion people in the year 2050, and 11 billion in the year 2100. This is an increase of over 3 billion people by the end of the century. Most of this growth will be in poorer sub-saharan Africa. The concentration of global population growth in the poorest countries is a formidable challenge.

Future population growth is highly dependent on the path that future fertility behavior will take. Small changes in fertility when projected over decades can generate large differences in total population. The key to stabilizing world population is the status of women. Presently over 200 million women worldwide want and need contraception, but lack access to family planning services. This can be tremendously helped by women locally trained to teach the importance of family planning.

Check out https://www.facebook.com/aiplusenglish/videos/1017914681683372
From United Nations: Universal Health Coverage

Since its founding in 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) has promoted universal health coverage. For Dr. Ghebreyesus, the newly elected Director General of WHO, universal coverage is an ethical issue. In his words: “Do we want our fellow citizens to die because they are too poor? Or millions of families impoverished by catastrophic health expenditures because they lack financial risk protection? Or the young mother who dies in childbirth because she lacks access to health care?”

The constitution of WHO establishes access to health care as a human right and a responsibility of governments. The preamble of the constitution states:

“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”

Further in the preamble:

“Governments have a responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures.”

The constitution was ratified by all member states and came into force in April 1948.

A recent issue of Lancet Global Health points out that many countries at different levels of economic development have implemented universal health coverage, e.g., Thailand, Costa Rica, and Cuba et al, showing this to be more a political than an economic challenge.

An early example of a national health system was in 1883 under the administration of Otto Von Bismarck, partly as a tactic to deflect growing support for Socialism. Currently, about a third of countries are covered, a third are progressing toward universal health coverage, and a third haven’t started. More than 100 low and middle-income countries, home to almost three quarters of the world’s population, have taken steps to deliver universal health coverage. The UN is working to get all covered by 2030.

Universal health coverage has been implemented in many ways. They all involve some level of government involvement via legislation, regulation and taxation. Many countries use mixed public and private systems. Let’s consider wealthy countries. There are basically three main ways universal health coverage is achieved:

1. Government run (tax funded) system, e.g., Britain
2. Privately run but Government pays most of it, e.g., Canada, France.
3. Private insurance companies but with regulation and subsidies to insure universal coverage, e.g., Switzerland, Netherlands.

The United States recently introduced Universal Health using the third system, the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”). The current US president, Donald Trump, has threatened to undermine this system by cutting subsidies. The Commonwealth Fund compared health care among advanced countries. The top three performers are Britain, Australia, and the Netherlands. They all use different systems.

Many developing countries striving to provide universal health care are struggling to do so. Among the problems facing developing countries are poverty, corruption, and an insufficient number of health workers such as doctors, and nurses. Also, although in many rural areas it can be difficult to access services, a number of poorer countries have shown that providing universal health care is an achievable goal. Some success stories are: Costa Rica, Cuba, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Rwanda.

In Thailand, the bulk of the population had to rely on out of pocket payment for medical care, which many could not afford. In 2001, the government introduced a minimum charge with exemptions for people who could not afford even the minimum charge. The result of universal health coverage in Thailand has been a significant drop in mortality and a remarkable rise in life expectancy, which is now 74 years of age.

After a devastating genocide in 1994, Rwanda has achieved remarkable health gains from universal coverage. Premature mortality has fallen sharply and life expectancy has increased significantly. Costa Rica and Cuba, both poor countries, have universal health coverage and a life expectancy of almost 80 years. Many poor countries are striving to increase coverage. According to the World Bank, primary care can deal with 90 percent of health problems. A survey of 102 developing countries in 2015 found that those with established primary health care systems had higher life expectancy and lower infant mortality. Recent rollouts of primary care in Brazil, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Thailand have been followed by decreases in child mortality.

Technology, while in the early stages, can help to improve primary care in poor countries. A recent example is the use of a slate, a relatively cheap ($640) device that can perform 33 common medical tests, including measuring blood pressure and blood sugar levels. In conclusion, Universal Health coverage with political will can result in an affordable dream. This is a goal we should all rally around.
Support the American Ethical Union

With your generous support we can learn, share, grow, and make a difference in our Societies and the world. Donate online, or send a check to the AEU at 2 West 64th St, Ste 406, New York, NY, 10023, or call 212-873-6500 with your credit card information. All contributions to the AEU are tax-deductible.

Increasing Inclusivity with Know Your Neighbor Back-To-School Campaign

Earlier this year, the American Ethical Union became part of Know Your Neighbor (KYN), a coalition of over 80 religious and humanist groups united in compassionate resistance against increasing polarization in America along political, religious, and cultural divisions. These problems exist not only in adult society, but among our children as well. Many children experience bullying and harassment because of their perceived race or religion. For example, the impact on Muslim students is striking, even before the recent public escalations of hate and violence. KYN reports a survey finding that over 40% of American Muslim parents reported that their child had suffered bullying or harassment from peers or school personnel on the basis of their faith. In addition, a 2015 study based on reports from students themselves found an even higher rate of religious-based bullying, with 55% of Muslim students saying they had been bullied at least once over the previous year.

To counter intolerance and bigotry in our schools, KYN members created a Back-To-School campaign for members to share resources for teachers, students and parents to help create more inclusive classrooms and schools. Some organizations shared their resources on social media, including curricula, lesson plans, materials, data points, and success stories. Educators shared videos on how they promote inclusive environments in their classrooms [see videos on aeu.org]. The ACLU shared information on the rights of immigrant, disabled, and LGBT students (https://www.aclu.org/blog/juvenile-justice/student-rights-school-six-things-you-need-know). They also highlighted students’ religious rights in public schools, an issue that is frequently misunderstood by many Americans and misrepresented in the media (https://www.aclu.org/issues/religious-liberty/religion-and-public-schools). While public schools are forbidden from attempts at religious indoctrination of their students, for example through school-sponsored prayer, students have the right to freely express and exercise their religious beliefs.

To find even more resources from the campaign, go online and search for #KnowYourNeighbor. If you have resources to share, you can also post on your favorite social media site and use the same hashtag so others can find your post. You can also take part by sharing this campaign with educators in your community, so that they can make the most of these diverse resources. Together, we can build understanding across cultures and help to finally knit together the frayed fabric of our American communities. The kind of society we strive to create cannot exist without this bedrock, and we must all reach across cultural divisions if we are to achieve it.
Discussing #TakeAKnee
Excerpts from Teaching Tolerance article
(www.tolerance.org/magazine/discussing-takeaknee-in-class)

Within the lines of the First Amendment, there is room. Room to stand—or kneel—for self-defined virtues and constitutionally defined rights. Room for interpretation. Room for context. Room for growth.

But in the classroom, there is little margin for error by omission. As professional athletes and allies #TakeAKnee, educators may not have the option to sit out the discussion surrounding peaceful protests during the national anthem...

#TakeAKnee has direct ties to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ‘60s. For example, the civil rights campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, was effective in large part because of its public nature. Television viewers around the world could see nonviolent protesters being brutalized by police officers using water hoses, dogs, and billy clubs. The same goes for peaceful protesters in Selma. In both of these moments, the catalyst for change was television. Today, much of Sunday television is dominated by full-day coverage of NFL games on major networks and sports channels. Today’s protests, much like those of the past, are meant to encourage meaningful dialogue and action by making viewers uncomfortable. As with protests of the past, that discomfort isn’t a bad thing...

- Is there a “proper” time or place for engaging in collective action? What’s the significance of this action taking place at sporting events?
- The concerns raised by Colin Kaepernick aren’t new, so why are these protests sparking such attention now?
- What role might empathy play in helping people to understand the oppression at the center of these protests?
- What could people do beyond taking a knee to help address the concerns behind that action?