

# Are *you* a **QUAKER?**



## **HUMANISTS** *believe* in **GOOD.**

### **THE AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION**

provides a humanist perspective in strong support of separation of religion from government, preservation and restoration of the environment, protection of civil rights and liberties, and promotion of personal choice regarding introduction of new life, family structure, and death with dignity. Though humanists are not monolithic on every issue—this is a community that encourages tolerance and nurtures diversity—we directly challenge human rights violations and discrimination.



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**QUAKERS** are members of the Religious Society of Friends, a faith that emerged as a new Christian denomination in England in the mid-1600s and is practiced today in a variety of forms throughout the world. George Fox, the founder, wanted to persuade the church to return to what it had been in the days of the Apostles. He called for an egalitarian religion that would not be oppressive of people on account of race, sex, or class. The words “Quaker” and “Friend” are synonymous.

A central dimension of the Quaker beliefs promotes “testimonies,” or values or principles to be pursued. Among them are peace, social equality, integrity, simplicity, and stewardship of the planet. These are not so much rules as they are the outcomes of efforts to live in harmony with what most Quakers view as the Holy Spirit.

A lesser known part of Quaker history recalls that in 1939 a Quaker group in California formed a nontheistic society based on humanist beliefs called the Humanist Society of Friends. Today, renamed the Humanist Society and an adjunct of the American Humanist Association, this organization continues as an endorsement and training institution for Humanist Celebrants and Chaplains, nontheists who are afforded the same rights granted to theistic ministers and clergy of traditional faiths.

You may *also* be a  
**HUMANIST!**



**HUMANISM** is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernatural beliefs, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity.

“Whether in times of war or times of peace the Quaker is under obligation to assist and to forward movements and forces which make for peace in the world and which bind people together in ties of unity and fellowship.”

—**Rufus Jones**, represented the American Friends Service Committee when the Quakers were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947

“We must have research for peace...

It would embrace the outstanding problems of morality. The time has come for the human intellect, and the scientific method, to win over the immoral brutality and irrationality of war and militarism.”

—**Linus Pauling**, AHA’s 1961 Humanist Of The Year

“I have no idea of submitting tamely to injustice inflicted either on me or on the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral powers with which I am endowed. I am no advocate of passivity.”

—**Lucretia Mott**, Quaker antislavery advocate and women’s rights activist

“When we speak of equality, of women and men, of blacks and whites, of all the world’s people, we are talking about humanism.”

—**Gloria Steinem**, AHA’s 2012 Humanist Of The Year

## But *how* can I be a **QUAKER** and a **HUMANIST**?

Many people identify with Quakerism and humanism. Explore [Nontheistfriends.org](http://Nontheistfriends.org), a website on nontheistic Quakerism for more.

“There is thus much common ground between humanists and Quakers, and some comparative analysis of the nature of beliefs and practices in the two communities is long overdue.”

—**Roy H. W. Johnston**, Irish author

“I don’t see ‘humanism’ as being in conflict with my Quaker religious beliefs or practice. As a matter of fact, I see Quaker faith and practice as a very challenging way to express my care and concern for my fellow human beings.”

—**Anonymous**

“Are you a humanist? You needn’t answer ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ For it isn’t an either-or proposition. Humanism is yours to adopt or to simply draw from. You may take a little or a lot, sip from the cup or drink it to the dregs. It’s up to you.”

—**Fred Edwards** in his essay “What Is Humanism?”

“Quakers celebrate their roots in a radical libertarian Christianity, but the new shoots that have sprung from these old roots come in a diverse array of colors. There are biblical and secular Quakers, Jewish and pagan Quakers, born-again Quakers, and Quaker agnostics and humanists. Is this diversity a problem? Only to those who stubbornly insist that they alone know the way, the truth and the life.”

—**David Boulton**, Quaker humanist, editor of *Godless for God’s Sake* (a book of essays by twenty-seven nontheist Quakers)

The following values have been developed, promoted, and practiced by Friends’ schools throughout the United States:

**SIMPLICITY:** Clearing the way for deeper engagement in ourselves, our community, and our education.

**PEACE:** Creating peace in ourselves and our community.

**INTEGRITY:** Being true to oneself and one’s values and honest with others.

**COMMUNITY:** Respecting and valuing every person’s place in our lives.

**EQUALITY:** Respecting every person’s right to fairness and respect.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Valuing the gifts we have been given.

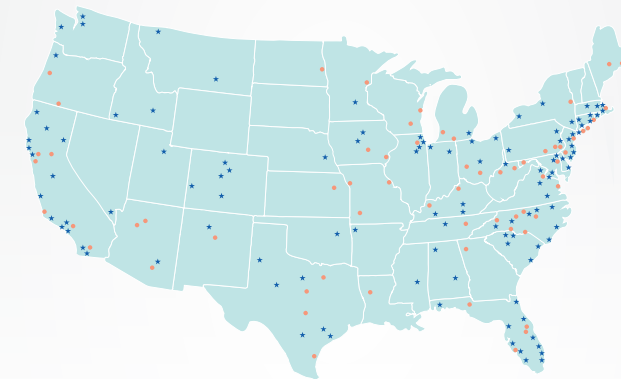
The acronym for this is SPICES, an outlook and approach that adds a delightful flavor to the Quaker lifstance, and one that humanists surely also support.

Be a part of the *growing*  
**HUMANIST**  
**MOVEMENT!**

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

**Membership:** New members receive a free book about humanism. All members receive voting privileges, the *Humanist* magazine, and discounts on AHA conferences, seminars, books, literature, and more!

**Local Communities:** Start or join a local AHA Chapter or Affiliate to connect with humanists in your area and build the humanist community.



Local AHA communities: ★ Chapter ● Affiliate

**Education:** Enjoy our Center for Education’s innovative online and in-person resources designed for individuals, professionals, and groups across the humanist spectrum.

**Advocacy:** Help us protect the separation of church and state and advocate for social justice and universal human rights.

Visit us at [AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG](http://AMERICANHUMANIST.ORG) for details.

See more at [www.americanhumanist.org/paths](http://www.americanhumanist.org/paths)