

Correspondent: G. Louis Heath

A New Value System?

Normal, Illinois

Dear Editor:

There are some basic inconsistencies in Morris Gelfman's December 1971 article "Is A New Value System Emerging?"¹ Dr. Gelfman's conclusion seems to be that a new ethic is not emerging, that indeed youth will eventually see the moral indefensibility of their ways and return to the traditional, much vaunted life style of the nuclear family. He seems to equate the survival of humanism with the survival of the family.

The family will, no doubt, survive, I agree. Yet it is not the fountainhead of humanism. The high divorce rate and the unavoidably high consumption levels of the family unit (hence, undesirable environmental effects) point to some of the dysfunctional, inhuman aspects of the family. Humanism is not founded upon a mono-

lithic life style but thrives in a free and open society that allows alternatives, that provides opportunities for individuals to make significant choices. The best psychotherapy for any ailing society is authentic choices for the individuals within the society.

Research such as that by Kenneth Keniston and Margaret Mead indicates that our dissenting youth are really a permutation from the past, that their perceptions are so different that there will be no recapitulation to the old forms of existence. Even if they do marry, as many will, the values upon which they base their relations will be more cooperative, sane, and human than the old, authoritarian form of marriage and family. The perpetuation of that which is human does not depend, as Dr. Gelfman contends, upon the survival of the contemporary family, but upon its reconstruction and renewal with the new youth culture's values.

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¹ Morris Gelfman, M.D. "Is a New Value System Emerging?" *Educational Leadership* 29 (3): 242-44; December 1971.

Future ASCD Annual Conferences

1973	March 17-21	Minneapolis	<i>Minneapolis Auditorium</i>
1974	March 9-13	Anaheim	<i>Anaheim Convention Center</i>
1975	March 15-19	New Orleans	<i>Rivergate</i>
1976	March 14-17	Miami Beach	<i>Convention Center</i>

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