

E T H I C A L O U T L O O K

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Sunday Morning Meetings 11:30 AM—Auditorium

April 4
Christ's Passion According to Mel Gibson, and Our Response: What's All the Fuss About?

Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader
Frank Prescod Presides

April 11
Musical Program

Gerald Ranck
Music Director
Patricia Bruder Debrovner
Presides

April 18
Getting Wise to Ourselves and to Others: The Psychology of Personal Growth

Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader
Christine Swann Presides

April 25
Are Our Children Our Future? Ethical Culture for Children and Youth

Bart Worden
Leader, Westchester Society
Meg Chapman Presides

April Happening

Sunday, April 11, 11:30 am, when Easter weekend coincides with the last days of Passover, a special seasonal treat will be the **Strathmere Ensemble** presenting a magnificent Mozart program. You won't want to miss this performance!

April Sunday Morning Meetings

April 4—Christ's Passion According to Mel Gibson, and Our Response: What's All the Fuss About?

Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader

Well over seven months before its formal release on Ash Wednesday of this year, Mel Gibson's extremely personal and disturbingly clinical film, "The Passion of the Christ," was already being hyped, so much so that during the last week of February alone, it netted the unheard-of-sum of roughly \$76 million dollars in box office receipts! Observed since the early centuries of the present era, the season of Lent is a spiritual parallel to the 40 days Jesus is traditionally alleged to have spent in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry. What could be more timely than to ponder the several aspects of this cultural, political, and religious blockbuster of a movie phenomenon on the first Sunday of April—Palm Sunday? The publisher of a conservative Catholic magazine, Deal W. Hudson, has commented, "It's going to be the go-go film for Christians of all denominations."

Not so fast, Mr. Hudson. Several prominent Bible scholars have concluded that although Mr. Gibson is unlikely to be anti-Semitic himself, the film may nonetheless unintentionally ratchet up fresh anti-Semitism that could place undue stress upon Jewish-Christian relations that of late have been reasonably warm and cordial. The bloody scourging of the Nazarene is apparently so drawn out and graphically depicted that the ethically radical message of Jesus is all but submerged.

This film will inevitably play into the political and social agenda of fundamentalist extremism, a heightened cause for concern in 2004. Mel Gibson's is a harsh medieval worldview, in temper and outlook not far from the ancient eastern Mediterranean world it tries to reprise and which is utterly alien to our modern sensibility. Yet we hear that ultra-conservatism is today's chic zeitgeist, and that those who fail to recognize so lugubrious an assumption are "out of the mainstream." What mainstream, and whose? A perfect opportunity to take issue with the unwise passions of our time. Come and join in asking what the fuss is all about.

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*Invite
a
Friend
on
Sunday*

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Ethical Culture: Who We Are

From: *An Invitation to Action: A Vision of Ethical Culture*
 National Council of the American Ethical Union, May, 2003

Ethical Culture religion is a living, dynamic, touchable faith found in the immediacy of human experience and a reverence for life. Ours is a religion of ethical engagement, of deed above creed, which we practice by building common ground through shared inquiry and action, in support of universal worth and dignity.

Our shared faith is in the centrality of ethics, the inherent worth of every human being, and the importance of actively creating a more humane world by raising the level of human relating.

A life of ethical commitment is a life full of rich relationships, meaningful integrity, and joy. It offers a foundation for genuine happiness as it allows us to sense our kinship to all of humanity.

Examples of how Ethical Societies operate as religious communities:

- By offering regular religious services that call us to our better selves
- Ceremonies such as baby namings, coming-of-age, marriages, and memorials
- Events evoking the beauty and wonder of life.

Deep within us is a longing to celebrate—to dance, to sing, to laugh, and to mourn—to find visceral, artistic, aesthetic expression of our deepest experiences, emotions, knowing, wonderings. Moments when we can share such expression with others are sublime.

Lois Kellerman

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

April 11—Musical Program

Gerald Ranck, Music Director

In place of an address, members of the Strathmere Ensemble will present a performance of Mozart's G Minor Piano Quartet, KV 478, one of his greatest and most dramatically passionate chamber works. The music for this Easter Meeting will be all Mozart, and a few words of explanation and background will precede the main work.

April 18—Getting Wise to Ourselves and to Others: The Psychology of Personal Growth

*Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader*

If there are two things we humans have existential difficulty with, they are living fully in the present, and fully accepting ourselves. The natural tendency of a conservative mentality is to seek a sense of personal security in some aspect of the past—that which has gone before and been supposedly tested as real and lasting, such as the “wisdom of the fathers.” (It’s always a male reference, isn’t it? Seldom, if ever, is it the “wisdom of the mothers.”) Conversely, the natural tendency of a liberal mentality is to seek primary satisfaction in some future state yet to come, a yearning for utopia, the vision of a better and happier life than the one we now have.

There’s literally no end to how far back in history humans may be willing to recede, or how far ahead they dare dream. In either extreme instance the present often goes begging. The peculiar weakness of religion, whether in elaborately organized form or as

a personality cult of some sort, is its tendency to regress when it feels under pressure. Sometimes religion simply retreats or goes into hiding, as did, for example, American fundamentalism following the debacle of the misnamed “monkey trial” in 1925. When fundamentalism re-emerged after WW II, many of its frustrated adherents gradually discovered their considerable collective power and became actively involved in Republican Party politics—hence today’s deeply ensconced religious and political right. In a sense, fundamentalists had finally become wise to themselves. Liberals so far have not; they’re only in the early stages of awakening from a long, contented sleep. Getting wise to oneself—who one really is and chooses to be—is a major undertaking. The good news is: it’s never too late to start.

April 25—Are Our Children Our Future? Ethical Culture for Children and Youth

*Bart Worden
Leader, Westchester Society*

Ethical Societies are committed to moral growth and development and making the world a more fair and just place. Our children make up a good portion of our world. What are we doing to meet their needs, and what has Ethical Culture done to support moral growth in children in the past?

From the Archives

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

The Angel of Grand Street



The heroines of Ethical Culture’s early years have never received their due. Who today has heard of Rose Gruening? Let us now praise her.

Sunday Activities Mornings 10:30

- April 4 Readings of Ethical Leaders
- April 11 Colloquy
- April 18 Poetry
- April 25 Yoga Meditation

Afternoons 1:45

- April 4 Ethics in the News
- April 11 Ethics Study
- April 18 Community Meeting
- April 25 Film on Children

Rose Gruening was a member of a remarkable, public-spirited family. Rose’s brother Ernest was a writer and editor for *The Nation* and later became a senator from Alaska. Today, he is remembered as one of only two senators who voted against the notorious Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. Rose’s sister, Martha, an activist and a fire-brand, wrote for *The Crisis*, the organ of the early NAACP, and co-authored an important study of lynching. Rose made her mark in social service.

After graduating from Vassar, Rose visited an Ethical Culture camp and became interested in working with the needy. She joined the New York Society in 1905, then worked on the staff of Madison House, one of the Society’s settlement houses on the Lower East Side. In 1907, she came up with a remarkable idea: to use as bunks for a camp discarded trolley cars once pulled by horses but unneeded in an era of electrification. Her creation, Camp Moodna, also called the car camp, in Mountainville, New York, served young working women from New York City. By 1911, Camp Moodna had no less than twenty trolleys. Most were used for sleeping, one served as a kitchen, two were used as dining rooms, and one was a library.

The library car had once traveled on Avenue A and did not hide its past. A sign reading, "Beware of Pickpockets!" hung on its window casing.

In 1916, Gruening left Madison House to form what later became known as the Grand Street Settle-



ment. In its early years, it provided its services through young people's clubs devoted to art, dance, and the like. But it also developed both a kindergarten for the children of working parents and child-rearing programs. Camp Moodna came under its auspices in 1925. For many years, Gruening worked at the club without pay. "The angel of Grand Street," as she was called, also supported the education of many Lower East Side youngsters with her own funds.

Gruening would have been delighted to learn that the Grand Street Settlement is now stronger than ever. It serves more than 10,000 area residents, from Early Head Start kids to senior citizens, and has a professional staff of 175.

In 1934 Gruening died—at Camp Moodna, as we might expect. At her memorial, John Elliott, then Senior Leader of the New York Society, spoke

of her steadfast will to seek the good, concluding,

"Tis that compels the elements
and wrings

A human music from the indif-
ferent air."

control our bodies and our lives—and maintain it for our daughters, granddaughters—and upcoming generations of women.

Please join us. Our group is traveling on the bus organized by Nara Pro-Choice. It will leave Lincoln Center at 6:00 am and return the same day. A round-trip ticket costs \$40.

We have received donations to cover tickets for several individuals who want to participate but cannot afford the trip. For more information, or to register, contact Suzy Frazer, Membership Director; Carol Rost; or Christine Swann. Checks should be made out to NYSEC and marked "For the Washington March."

Spring Hike

Henryka Komanska

Join us on a hike to Mt. Taurus in Cold Spring, New York on Saturday, April 17.

This four-hour hike will take us to a summit overlooking the Hudson River. We will be rewarded with stunning views of the river and, if the day is clear, Manhattan. We will take a scenic train ride to the town of Cold Spring, on the east bank of the Hudson. The town boasts many antique stores, an inviting coffee shop, several restaurants, and a lovely small park. This town is worth a day's visit, even if you do not hike!

The ride on the Metro North Hudson line takes an hour and twenty minutes and offers spectacular views of the river. A one-way ticket costs \$10. We will meet at the information booth at Grand Central at 8:40 am. If you arrive after that time, you'll find us on the train, which leaves at 8:52 am. Remember to bring a water bottle, a

March For Women's Lives

Christine Swann

The Ethical Action Committee is organizing a group to attend the March for Women's Lives in Washington, DC on Sunday, April 25. This march, sponsored by the ACLU, Black Women's Health Imperative, The Feminist Majority, Nara Pro-Choice America, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, NOW and Planned Parenthood Federation of America aims to demonstrate the overwhelming majority support for a woman's right to choose safe, legal abortion and birth control. The current Administration is not only taking us backwards; it is blocking the release of new and safe drugs such as "the morning after pill." Help us protect women's right to

light lunch and/or snack for the trail, and a few dollars for a "coffee stop" at a local café. Wear hiking or sturdy walking shoes, and dress in layers for the hike. For more information call Henryka at 212-582-5192. (Rain cancels.)

Report from Ethical Action Committee

Co-Chairs Carol Rost and Christine Swann

The March 7 Book Sale fundraiser for DNA was a resounding success! We took in \$900, including two \$50 donations, one from Abe Markman's Lower East Side Organization and one from friends of the Leimans. A hearty thanks to all volunteers who helped set up on Saturday and those who helped at the Book Sale on Sunday. The members of the Ethical Action Committee are very pleased and will pursue the goal of \$2,500, the cost of one DNA test.

From the Classroom to the World

As the Ethical Culture Fieldston School celebrates its 125th anniversary, the New York Historical Society, on Central Park West at 77th Street, features the photographs of Lewis Hine, Paul Strand, Doris Ullman, and Diane Arbus, four photographers whose work was significantly influenced by their involvement with the school. The exhibition runs from April 6 to July 18.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer

New Members

Shirlee Cohen is an advanced nurse practitioner with a background in psychiatric and medical-surgical care. She is an advocate for the mentally ill and does volunteer work for them. She has many outside interests, including Spanish and movies at the Society!

Mark Hofmaier is an actor and teacher who coaches individuals on presentation skills and job searches. He is married to new Membership Director Suzy Frazer, and they have two children, a dog, and a cat. The family resides in Morningside Heights. Mark would like to get involved in social justice causes and Sunday school activities.

Michael Torres is an attorney in New York City, who has long been familiar with Ethical Culture. He decided to become a member because of our social activism and community. Michael is fluent in Spanish.

Reinstated: Amy Schwarz has been reinstated as an active member now that her schedule has changed.

Deaths

Daniel Carpenter, a long-time Society member, died on February 7 at the age of 95. He had been living in Tucson, Arizona, for the past 18 months. Dan worked at Hudson Guild under John Lovejoy Elliott, Ethical Culture Leader and founder of Hudson Guild. He was married to Elliott's niece and served as executive director of Hudson Guild for 30 years.

Sadly, our long-time and well-loved member, **Jan Jennis**, has died. She and her late husband, Murray, joined the Society in 1953, and were very active. Their children attended our Sunday

school. She will be buried at the Mt. Pleasant cemetery in a service conducted by the family.

Long-time member **Maurine Rothschild** died in February. Formerly on the faculty at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, Maurine died peacefully, after a brief illness, at the age of 84. Our sincere sympathy to her husband Robert and the entire family.

Our Extended Family

Lewis Wickes Hine began his career in photography by photographing his students at the Ethical Culture School. Through his photography, he became a crusader against child labor. His work was recently featured at the Brooklyn Historical Society in an exhibit entitled, *Let Children Be Children: Lewis Wickes Hine's Crusade Against Child Labor*.

Ethics for Children

**Sundays, April 25 to May 23
11:00 am to 1:00 pm**

This special five-week course is based on our highly respected, innovative, and fun program. The children participate in lively discussion, art, music, and improvisational activities as we explore everyday dilemmas and social issues. On the fifth Sunday there will be a presentation and a celebration. We provide a caring, safe, and progressive environment. The children are placed into two groupings: ages 4-7 and 8-11. Childcare is available for younger children, at no charge. Everyone is welcome. For more information or to register call, Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210 ext. 113. Call soon, as the course tends to fill up quickly.

LIBERAL RELIGION AND HOW IT GREW: A HUMANIST PERSPECTIVE

**THURSDAYS – APRIL 2004
6:30-8:30 pm**

Facilitator: **Khoren Arisian**, Senior Leader, New York Society for Ethical Culture

April 1 **Fred Edwords**, Editorial Director, American Humanist Association
The Saga of Freethought and Its Pioneers: Religious Critique and Social Reform

April 8 **Khoren Arisian**, Senior Leader
From Transcendentalism to “Free Religion”: Proto-Humanism in the Making

April 15 **Khoren Arisian**, Senior Leader
Is Liberal Religion A Spiritual Counterpart to the Democratic Faith?

April 22 **Khoren Arisian**, Senior Leader
Theodore Parker, Emerson’s Greatest Disciple: From “Pure Religion” to Ethical Activism

April 29 **The Rev. Dr. Paul S. Johnson**, Senior Minister, Unitarian
Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, Manhasset, NY
The Singular Career of Thomas Paine: Deist, Pamphleteer, Political Radical

Members: \$35, Non-members: \$50

Single Admission, members: \$ 10; non-members: \$ 15

To register, call the Leader’s office 212-874-5210.

Childcare available if request is made in advance of registration.

April 2004

(Office hours for the month: 9:00 am – 6:00 pm)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 May 2004 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:30 pm – Shelter	2 6:00 pm – Ethical Action Committee	3 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
	April 7 – Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> Adams, <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i> ECRA: (Ethical Culture Retirement Activities) April 14 – Jane Smiley, <i>A Thousand Acres</i> Politics, Leadership, and Justice April 21 – J.M. Coetzee, <i>Age of Iron</i>					
4 10:00 am – Presiders Meeting 10:15 am – Leaders' Writings 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Ethics in the News	5 6:00 pm – Board of Trustees 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	6 7:30 pm – Shelter	7 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Shelter 7:30 pm – Great Books	8 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:00 pm – Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	9 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:00 pm – Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	10 No Supervised Visitation
11 10:00 am – Membership Growth 10:30 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Ethics Study	12 5:00 pm – Caring Committee 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	13 6:00 pm – Women's Group 6:00 pm – Program Committee 7:00 pm – A Special Presentation by the Advocacy Forum: featuring Kevin Phillips and Charles Lewis 7:30 pm – Shelter	14 3:00 pm – ECRA 7:30 pm – Shelter	15 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:30 pm – Shelter	16 7:00 pm – Film Forum	17 8:40 am – Spring Hike 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
18 10:00 am – Sunday Program Ctm 10:30 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:00 pm – Orientation 1:45 pm – Community Meeting	19 6:30 pm – Social Service Board 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	20 7:00 pm – Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	21 6:00 pm – Membership Services Committee 7:30 pm – Politics, Leadership, and Justice 7:30 pm – Shelter	22 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:30 pm – Shelter	23 7:00 pm – Film Forum	24 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
25 6:00 am – Save Women's Lives March 10:30 am – Yoga Meditation 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Afternoon Film	26 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	27 7:30 pm – Shelter	28 7:30 pm – Shelter	29 6:30 pm – Liberal Religion Course 7:30 pm – Shelter 8:00 pm – Strathmere Ensemble	30	

Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and philosophical movement in which people share a core of common values: the worth of each individual, ethics as central to our lives, eliciting the best from each other and doing good in the world.

We seek truth as a growing, changing body of knowledge based on experience, reason and scientific observation, and seek to use it in support of human well-being.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR
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CULTURE** 

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