

revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species...As nontheists, we begin with humans, not God, nature not deity.

CONCEPT MAP

Religion as Ethics

We are philosophically and practically committed to a view of humanity as *Homo ethicus*. That is, we see all of life primarily through an ethical lens and we live all of life primarily in pursuit of quality of relationship and of social transformation. We define ourselves in terms of a commitment to study, promote, live by, and apply ethical values. We value care and respect for the individual, the pursuit of justice in society, and the creation of community.

HOW WE ARE A RELIGION

As noted above, the semantics of the word *religion* was addressed in the Leaders' statement of 1895, where the Ethical Movement was seen as a religion when religion is defined as "passionate devotion to a supreme cause." Adler expressed a tolerance in relation to the terminology and considered it optional whether our way of life is characterized as a "religion" or as a "philosophy," though it is clear that he was content with the term "religion." In a footnote to the Supreme Court's judgment in *Torcaso v. Watkins* (1964), it was noted that a non-theistic religion is for legal purposes as valid as a theistic religion. We urge careful clarification when the term religion is used. We assert our affirmation of the term religion when it refers to:

The reverence, wonder, and thankfulness with which we take our place in the universe.

The sense of a larger whole of which we are a part.

The organization of communities that generate values and meaning and seek fellowship in pursuit of ideals.

The passionate devotion to the cause of serving the good of humanity and the world.

A way of life that integrates our values and gives ethical direction and resources for ethical living.

Access to the "ethical energy" that resides in the human mind and heart and in the inspiration of human companionship and collaboration.