If You Love Everything
The struggle to be ethical and relevant

Love all creation, both the whole and every grain of sand. Love every leaf; every ray of light, all animals. If you love everything, you will perceive the mystery in all, and when you perceive this, you will grow every day in fuller understanding of it, until you come at last to love the whole world with a love that will be all-embracing and universal.

—Fyodor Dostoyevski

On page 15 of this issue of the HSUS News, you will find a report of the many activities and programs of The Humane Society of the United States and its family of organizations during 1992. You will be amazed, I am sure, at the scope and depth of our various efforts to protect animals from abuse and suffering while fostering a reverence for all life and for the Earth itself.

Since its founding in 1954, The HSUS has sought to create a community of people dedicated to the proposition that animals have intrinsic value and are not beings created to serve and satisfy humankind's wants and needs. In so doing, we have attempted to avoid the extremes at both ends of that proposition.

On the one hand, we have tried to resist the idea that the human species is utterly depraved and unrelentingly exploitative and, thus, deserving of nothing other than condemnation and censure. On the other hand, we have tried to keep in perspective the reality of the interdependence between humans and other animals and have accepted, with certain constraints, the use of animals by humans when such use is regarded as necessary and appropriate.

It has not of late been a proposition readily acceptable to all animal protectors nor a position easily maintained. In an ideal world, it is one we should most likely abandon for one simpler and less risky.

It has been said that to be ethical in today's world is a challenge without equal. I would modify that statement just a bit, for I think life's greatest challenge is to be ethical while being relevant. The HSUS never has been—nor ever will be—an organization of “saints” but rather a community of dedicated people striving to create within the world a respect and consideration for animals that afford them protection from abuse and suffering.

Albert Schweitzer, who lived with, and embraced, a reverence for all creatures, wrote:

I would never have believed that my philosophy, which incorporates... a compassionate attitude toward all creatures, would be noticed and recognized in my lifetime. I knew this truth would impose itself one day on human thought, but it is the great and moving surprise of my life that I should... be able to witness this progress of ethics.

Schweitzer would, I think, have approved of The HSUS. He would have seen in our philosophy and principles a commitment to his philosophy of reverence for life. He would have applauded our attempt to be relevant without being compromised, to be ethical without being arrogant, to be caring and sensitive without being sentimental.

On behalf of my colleague HSUS President Paul G. Irwin and each person on our staff and board of directors, I wish to express our appreciation for your dedicated and generous support during this past year. Because of you, and each person associated with The HSUS, we continue to be our country's leading force for animal protection and an ever-growing influence for an ethic that extends compassion and kindness to all creatures, human and nonhuman alike.