

KERISTA

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Amor Vincit Omnia * LOS ANGELES, CALIF. 90034

Nunc Scio Quid Sit Amor *

An Interim Explanation of KERISTA

(The Life Affirming Religion)

Kerista is a movement whose goal is to create a better and happier society - in fact a truly ecstatic society - not in the far-away future but here and now, in our own lifetimes.

This society will be neither antiseptic nor fanatic, as other utopian efforts have been. The only central point of "dogma" in Kerista is the common belief of its members that they should joyfully do as they please, without guilt or shame or punishment, so long as what they do is based on mutual love and mutual help, and is not destructive to the interests of people, governments or institutions who may hold opposing views.

Beyond this core of love and help, without which Kerista could not exist at all, there are varying attitudes, trends, customs and viewpoints espoused by individuals and by individual colonies or "families". With love as its axis, Kerista embraces and contains virtually every diversity imaginable. Keristans themselves have both backgrounds and foregrounds as varied as their individual views on individual matters.

(Since there is no political view common to even a majority of Keristans, Kerista is not a political body, and any individual or group advancing political views in the name of Kerista does so without the approval of his fellow Keristans.)

The Kerista movement is not as yet developed in detail - part of the excitement is participating in the creation of what we believe to be the greatest new social evolution since Christianity - but what particulars do Keristans now agree upon? What do we foresee as following from Kerista's central concept of love-help-freedom? What do we aim to do about our beliefs - and why?

We aim to de-clutter life.

We aim to strip life of the complex nonsense invented by drudges, chastity perverts, and single-minded fanatics. We mean to peel the banana's thick skin and enjoy the fruit inside - to burn through every layer of paint, paper and scum that hides the rich bare grain and smothers the fragrant sap of the wood of the tree of life.

We aim, in other words, simply to walk away from all routines, slogans, chants, rules, habits, customs and laws that crush with scolding contentiousness man's inborn primary need to love and be loved.

(Kerista is not, however, just a new word for anarchy. Anarchy is a negative concept and, among other differences, Kerista

attempt to achieve harmony - not chaos - through the substitution of love for laws.)

In this country alone, according to a recent estimate by Time Magazine, there are some 50,000,000 laws (yet "ignorance of the law is no excuse"). And this figure does not even include multiple millions of additional rules and regulations, most of them insulting to intelligence and destructive of the rights they seek to protect, imposed by courts (through their interpretations of the law), government agencies (state, federal and local), employers and labor unions, insurance companies, banks, churches, hospitals, health plans, schools - and scores and scores of other institutions whose unquestioning faith in worn-out principles causes them, regardless of the possible good intent of their perpetuators, to become the pests and persecutors of life and the wasters of its juices.

Montaigne, with only a tiny fraction of today's laws to contend with, said: "It would be better to have no laws at all than it is to have as many as we have." (As it happens, this remark is a very good summary of one of Kerista's most fundamental tenets.)

Now, after centuries of industrious work by hundreds of thousands of tinkerers, our civilization is the "beneficiary" of a body of law that is as orderly, as reasoned, as just, as majestic, and as consistent as the edicts of Caligula or the Mad Hatter's Tea Party. There are laws against almost everything joyful - from the smoking of marijuana (which all objective studies reveal to be a good deal more beneficial than alcohol) to the walking of lions in the street (which is very much safer than walking alone).

Take this spectacular illustration of lawful malignancy: Because the income tax law is one that tortures practically everybody at one time or another, there is no more visible example of legalized cancer: The latest "simplified" federal law runs to 929 pages of inscrutable and contradictory regulations. On top of that there are tons of thousands of pages and millions upon millions of words devoted to attempts to understand what the law actually means. Add to that a comparable proliferation of regulations by individual states and cities having their own tax laws and you have isolated a virulense that probably causes more unhappiness, suffering and death than cigarettes, traffic accidents, air pollution or any of the scores of relatively minor health hazards it is "all right" to be against. So incomprehensible is this one type of law alone that hundreds of thousands of businessmen live in continual anxiety lest they become criminals by sheer accident. Albert Einstein, when having to hire a tax consultant, said of the income tax, "This is too difficult for a mathematician."

You may not be among these most tortured by the tax laws in particular, but you are almost certainly losing joy of life as the victim of other similarly ridiculous laws and rules you have to plod along under every day.

Yet, so ingrained now has the law-making reflex become that every attempt to improve matters in our society involves the spawning of additional thousands of laws whose complexity generally has the effect only of frustrating their purposes.

It has not yet occurred to most people that this proliferation of confinements is anything more than comical and the source of hundreds of amusing jokes.

But these rules and laws are not at all funny. They are cruel and terrible, for they are depriving men and women of joy of life - and that is worse than murdering them outright. (In the United States, the incredible profusion of petty laws is the most fundamental denial of the rights set forth in The Declaration of Independence, the rights of all citizens to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.")

It is truly a tragic fact that most people alive today spend almost every waking moment on matters that are either dull or agonizing - living and working with people they do not love, at jobs they hate, and taking only the "approved" pleasures - the ones they secretly do not enjoy at all.

But matters need not remain this ugly, and it can be shown to be true that "love conquers everything" (the "amor vincit omnia" above.) We can put Kerista principles to work in an environment of our own making, unharrassed by pressures from existing social structures. One of the central tactical ideas of Kerista is to walk around obstacles that cannot be moved. We therefore believe that to spend our lives in protest against the colossally complex social system we happen to inherit a place in, is to drain energies that may be more practically used in the pursuit of happiness during our own lifetimes.

Big problems call for big solutions, and to cut out, one by one, the many millions of foolish or ancient rules we are made to grunt and sweat and worry under would be like trying again to squeeze the camel through the eye of the needle or to condemn ourselves to the nightmare work of Sisyphus, endlessly rolling his gigantic boulder to the top of the mountain. For during the time it takes to change a single law, a million new ones may be born.

It is for this reason, too, that Kerista is pointedly non-political.

It is our simply stated aim to taste and feel life - and to savor its sights, sounds and smells - every minute of every day in every week of every month in every year. And we intend to do this without hurting any living thing.

We are going to walk around the agonizing "comforts" of the "great" society. We are going to turn our backs on its life-smothering encrustations. Instead we are going to create the ecstatic society. It can be done. It will be done. It is already being done - and nothing whatever can stop it. Because Kerista is the first visible evidence of an evolutionary trend we believe will spread over the entire world in a century or two. Meanwhile, however, it is the most sensitive among us who first felt the terrible grip of the Iron Maiden's spikes - the everdeepening grayness of life in this super-prosperous era of "benefits" whose price is incredibly higher than most people realize: The price is your life.

Join us, then, if you will. Help us develop Kerista into a practical force that can make love and mutual help available to all. Make a contribution - whether in thought, or work, or money - but only if you really want to.

You can start to revel in life only if you re-think your way through wearying cliches and come again to what all men once agreed were the most important things in it.

Then you, too, will know and feel the meaning of Virgil's Dido when she said: "Nunc scio quid sit amor" - "Now I know what love is."

