

World Religions and False Cults

Part 8 – Unitarian Universalism

The History of Unitarian Universalism

Unlike many groups today, Unitarian Universalists do not credit one individual as their founder. The group formed with the merger of two churches in 1961: The American Unitarian Association (focused on Unitarianism – the rejection of the Trinity) and The Universalist Church of America (focused on Universalism – the belief that God will save everyone). Doctrines taught by these churches have always been rejected as heresy throughout church history, though these particular movements gained momentum since the 16th century through influential people (William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, etc.) who also pushed liberal viewpoints that denied such things as the sinfulness of mankind, the inspiration of Scripture, Jesus' deity, miracles, etc. Today, the group no longer considers itself Christian, but rather a pluralistic "interfaith association" blending various religions and beliefs. Estimates put the total number of followers at 800,000.

Core Beliefs of Unitarian Universalism

"Unitarians" have no creed or statement of beliefs. Rather, they hold to a set of principles focused on human dignity and pluralism. The Bible, once held as their authority, is now viewed on par with any other religious book. They emphasize reason and "free thinking," completely abandoning the idea of absolute truth. They have shown the extremes of how liberal teaching can slide further and further away from historical Christianity over time.

- God: Each individual determines what they want to believe about who or what god is, or whether a god exists at all. There are a variety of views, each considered equally valid.
- Mankind: We are basically good. We should concentrate on making the world a better place (focusing on civil rights, social injustice, equality, etc.). Tolerance is the key to unity.
- Salvation: There is no need for redemption since there is no coming judgment. The end goal of mankind is character development and finding meaning and purpose in this life.

Keys for Evangelism

- Unitarians emphasize tolerance, but show little toward genuine Christians. Stand for truth with patience and grace.
- Ask about their personal beliefs. Focus on essential doctrines and use your testimony to help point them to Christ.