**COMMON VIEWS AMONG UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

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**BIBLE**

Both Unitarianism and Universalism grew out of Christianity. Early Unitarians and Universalists took the Bible seriously, though rarely literally. While we continue to see it as a rich resource of stories and wisdom, most Unitarian Universalists do not see the Bible as authoritative on its own.

**CLERGY**

The role of clergy and the extent of their authority was an active question of the Reformation. From our radically Protestant heritage, we believe each person must formulate their own beliefs rather than subscribe to what is passed down. Clergy offer their views, which may hold some authority based on their education and experience. However, they hold no more authority for most Unitarian Universalists than other respected members of the community.

**GOD**

UUs have widely divergent concepts of God. Some espouse belief in God and others do not. Few Unitarian Universalists believe in an anthropomorphic God, tending instead toward concepts such as Nature, Love, or Spirit of Life. Some UUs do not find the term God useful. Rarely do Unitarian Universalists ascribe gender to God, but when they do, they may deliberately use a variety of gender formulations: for example, Mother-Father God.

**DIRECTION FROM GOD**

Unitarian Universalists do not categorically deny the experience of receiving guidance from a divine or holy source as an individual understands it. Our first Source references "direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder" which could be called God or could be Nature, Ultimate Reality, or other concepts that are meaningful to UUs. UUs do believe that all knowledge, from whatever source, requires testing, and that testing is best done in community.

**JESUS**

Jesus is generally considered a prophet and teacher rather than God, or the only son of God. Christian Unitarian Universalists endorse the religion taught by Jesus, rather than the religion about Jesus.

**AFTERLIFE**

While there are a variety of views of the afterlife, most Unitarian Universalists consider this life the important one. Some believe in an ultimate unification with God, or the universe. Many Unitarian Universalists believe that the only afterlife is the legacy people leave on earth. Consistent with the idea of universal salvation, hell is rarely discussed except as a metaphor, as in "hell on earth."

**SIN**

Unitarian Universalists shy away from talk of sin, but some agree with the Jewish tradition that defines it as "missing the mark"—falling short of our values. That is, we acknowledge that people have shortcomings and make mistakes but have an optimistic view of human nature. Good and evil are usually considered human constructs that result from human actions.

**EVOLUTION**

Evolution, as a scientific proposition, is widely accepted. Unitarian Universalists rely on scientific process as one of the ways to truth.

**SPIRITUAL PRACTICES**

Spiritual practices vary widely among Unitarian Universalists. Some practice meditation, either from a tradition such as Buddhism or in a more generic fashion. Prayer is a spiritual practice for some Unitarian Universalists, while some avoid it. Other spiritual practices include music, yoga, Tai Chi, social action, or activities like gardening, walking, or playing with children.

**SALVATION**

Salvation receives little attention, but when it does, it is often construed as wholeness and health in this life, rather than a state attained after death.

**REVELATION**

Some traditions are persuaded that God's revelation was given at a particular time and place. In contrast, Unitarian Universalists perceive that truth comes not only from many places, but that we are continually discovering truth. The truth I learn tomorrow may contradict or enhance what I have learned today. The traditional way of saying this is, "Revelation is not sealed."