

October 8, 2013

## Unitarian Universalism – What’s It All About?

Rev. Dave Hunter

### Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg

#### I. six points

1. Humanity is OK. We could be better, but we’re OK. If we need to be saved, we need to be saved by ourselves, and from ourselves.

2. We’re not sure who, what, or whether God is, but we’re pretty sure that God does not intervene in human affairs, setting aside the laws of nature.

3. The Bible may be a good book or the good book, but it is not the foundation for our values. Its inspiration is human, not divine.

4. Religious authority for us lies primarily in human reason and human conscience. We respect our history, our heritage, and our leaders, but we are not bound by them.

5. Our lives are precious, and we, individually and collectively, must decide how to live them, and how to live in peace and justice with others and with the world we have been given, and which it is our duty to preserve for future generations.

6. We don’t really know what happens to us when we die, but we are confident that eternal hellfire is not in our future, or anyone else’s. Our morality is not based on the threat of divine punishment.

#### II. three principles: *rationality, mystery, love*:

**rationality** – we rely on reason, on science,

**mystery** – we realize there’s much that remains unknown, inaccessible – we embrace reverence as well as reason – and

**love** – love of our fellow humans, love of our descendants, love for the whole interdependent web of existence.

### III. three tensions

1. individual/community
2. rationality/mystery
3. love/law

1. Our history demonstrates the importance we attach to the *individual* – we stress the “worth and dignity” of every person. In our history we have the denial of original sin, and we have Emersonian individualism.

But, on the other hand, we are committed to *community* – in our religious communities, in our moral and political view that we are all in this together, in our realization that we share one planet, one small, temperamental planet.

2. We rely on *reason*; we pay homage to science and empiricism.

But, on the other hand, we recognize the enduring mysteries, we are moved by Bach, Beethoven, babies, and butterflies, we approach life, and death, with *reverence*.

3. We proclaim *love* as the doctrine of our church, we stand on the side of love.

But, on the other hand, love without *law* is empty. We feel more comfortable with the prodigal son’s older brother. [Luke 15:11-32]  
We preach and teach and work for standards, discipline, justice, and responsibility.

Thus, we have individual and community, reason and reverence, and love and law – our trinity of dualities.

### IV. three body parts

thinking heads,  
helping hands,  
loving hearts.

V. the bottom line –                      love