

The Humanist Unitarian Universalist (HUUmanists) Association

MISSION

The Humanist Unitarian Universalist (HUUmanists) Association is committed to Humanist principles of reason, compassion, and human fulfillment detailed in the Humanist Manifestos and in the seven *Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association*. We seek (1) to promote a broad acceptance of Humanism in our society, particularly throughout the Unitarian Universalist Association and its congregations, and (2) to provide an active interface between Unitarian Universalists and the secular community.

CORE VALUES and ASPIRATIONS

- **We are Naturalists:** Although we do not consider Humanism to be a “religion” within the wide-spread use of the term to denote beliefs and practices resting on some hypothetical supernatural entity, we are “religious” in that we share with most Unitarian Universalists the *natural* human desires for a beloved and accepting community; a purpose greater than ourselves; rituals and practices that resonate with our common humanity and shared mortality; and opportunities to work with other tough-minded, warm-hearted people to do good in the world and to help one another attain the greatest possible fulfillment in life. For these reasons most of us are members or friends of Unitarian Universalist congregations.
- **Facts not Faith:** We approach the natural world with profound humility and a deep sense of wonder, recognizing that the Human branch has only recently emerged on the ancient evolutionary tree. We turn to established facts, not unsubstantiated faith, in our approach to reality. We have a confirmed confidence in the collaborative methods of scientific inquiry, and in the accelerating accumulation of interconnected knowledge about our natural world and ourselves, which those methods continuously make possible. We are committed to pursuing fact-based initiatives that will help sustain the planet, our environment, and humanity itself for the greatest number of future generations.
- **Free and Responsible Thought:** We serve as the principal stewards of the Humanist heritage at the core of Unitarian Universalism, affirming our commitment to the values flowing from its rich history of free and responsible thought. We are “secular” in the sense of being this-worldly, acknowledging only *this* life in *this* universe. We actively foster, support, and publicize local secular and Humanist communities, and enthusiastically encourage Unitarian Universalists everywhere to support their efforts; and we promise to work with both the secular and religious communities to end discrimination against non-theists. In turn, we encourage non-theists of all stripes, within Unitarian Universalism and beyond, to “come out” regarding their non-theism. We further believe that preserving the secular character of our democracy—maintaining the wall of separation between church and state—is a moral imperative. Working closely with other secular and religious organizations, we will endeavor to mobilize the entire Unitarian Universalist community in defense of this cause.
- **Living with Joy and Love:** We espouse an “embodied” Humanism that celebrates the joy of lived experience and the importance of love in human relationships. We value experience tempered with reason, knowing that we are hard-wired for empathy and compassion. Learning to lead an ethical, Humanist life is both a moral and a biological imperative. We also know that our lived experience as humans is deeply enriched by beauty, and that encouraging, experiencing, and participating in the arts and humanities help us all to celebrate our conviction that being alive is miracle enough.

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MAJOR INITIATIVES

Publishing: We are collaborating with the American Humanist Association in the publication of the electronic version of Bill Murry's very successful book: *Becoming More Fully Human*, and are planning the publication of several additional titles. Through our Journal, *Religious Humanism*, now in its fifth decade of publication, we continue to advance Humanist thought and inquiry.

Conscientious Stewardship of UU Humanist History: We are collaborating with Meadville Lombard Theological School to establish an Archive of Humanist Documents and Materials.

Embodied Humanism: Our widely-praised "Book Smuggling project" (see <http://huumanists.org/blog/201207/smuugglers-project-ga>) at the 2012 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was only the beginning of a concerted effort to make sure we actively live out our Humanist values of reason and compassion, and not just talk about them.

Humanist Education: We continue to work with The Humanist Institute and the Institute for Humanist Studies to provide opportunities for emerging secular and religious humanist leaders to build their skills and deepen their knowledge base.

Protecting the Separation of Church and State: As one of the core member organizations of the Secular Coalition for America, we work on local, state, and national levels to mobilize Unitarian Universalists in preserving the secular character of our Democracy.

Becoming a Primary Interface (Bridge) between Secular/Non-theist Communities and Unitarian

Universalism: This initiative could provide an unprecedented opportunity for us to truly fulfill our dual mission of being the voice of reason and compassion (without supernatural assumptions) within Unitarian Universalism, while also serving as an advocate for Unitarian Universalism in the freethinking community at large. Here are some actions we are taking to make this happen:

1. Helping to establish and/or strengthen local Humanist and freethinker groups (in close cooperation with secular Humanist organizations) and encouraging UUs across the country to join them.
2. Mobilizing UU individuals, institutions, and congregations to actively support the activities of our partner organizations, especially the Secular Coalition for America and its member organizations.
3. Becoming recognized by the UUA and individual Unitarian Universalists as a primary entity assuming responsibility for building bridges with secular/non-theist communities, in the context of UUA President Peter Morales's Congregations and Beyond initiative. We are in active discussions with UUA leadership about this.

In general, we are focusing our activities on our role as a bridge between Unitarian Universalism and the secular/non-theist communities. American Humanism coalesced and began to flourish almost a century ago when it captured the imagination of freethinking Unitarians and young people at the University of Chicago and Meadville Theological School. Like our forebears, we Unitarian Universalist Humanists have a special role to play with freethinking people of today – especially young people. We must accept them where they are in their life journeys. Our congregations need to be more openly welcoming to atheists and agnostics – indeed to non-theists of all stripes. Young non-theists of today deserve the same opportunity that was given to all of us – the opportunity to find a home in a beloved community, where their life stance will be not only welcomed, but also celebrated and shared.