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A Chosen Faith: An Introduction To Unitarian Universalism



Synopsis

For those contemplating religious choices, Unitarian Universalism offers an appealing alternative to religious denominations that stress theological creeds over individual conviction and belief. In this new edition of the classic introductory text on Unitarian Universalism, which includes a revealing, entertaining foreword by best-selling author Robert Fulghum (All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It), a new preface by UU moderator Denise Davidoff, and two new chapters by the authors, John Buehrens and Forrest Church explore the many sources of the living tradition of their chosen faith.

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Customer Reviews

This book is what its title says it is: an introduction to Unitarian Universalism. It combines a brief history of the denomination (which, in one respect, goes back centuries, but in another goes back to the 1961 merger of the Unitarian and Universalist denominations, whereupon the Unitarian Universalist Association ceased to be a "liberal Christian" denomination and became the "non-creedal religion" it is today) with an overview of UU principles, mixed with the author's personal reminiscences. Unitarian Universalism is a tough religion to categorize or summarize. For those used to faiths where you are given a creed to follow and answers to life's deep questions, it can be difficult to understand the appeal of a religion that gives you questions rather than answers. There are no "authoritative" answers within the church regarding the existence of God or the nature of souls and the afterlife or why good people suffer, so the author of this book can only give his

personal opinion without presuming to speak for Unitarian Universalism in general. If you want to know more about Unitarian Universalism in general, this is a good book to start with. If you are wondering whether Unitarian Universalism might be the "right" religion for you, then you won't find the answer to that in this or any book. You need to attend a UU church and talk to the members of the congregation and see if it's a good "fit" for you. And be aware that no two UU congregations are the same -- some are heavily theistic, with a lot of spiritual/religious overtones (though none explicitly endorse or require members to believe in a deity), while others are much more "humanist." Some UU congregations are even explicitly pagan/"Earth-centered" in nature, though these are rare.

Revs. Buehrens and Church unquestionably have the institutional credentials to write an introduction to Unitarian Universalism. Nonetheless, I think this book is a travesty. To my eyes, it is full to overflowing with unfair and offensive attacks (which are in fact heavily contrary to the message of Unitarian Universalism) upon atheists, humanists and other skeptics whose belief systems do not toe the theological line drawn by the authors. There is nary a kind word about atheists in this book. Five years ago, as a non-believer interested in Unitarian Universalism, "A Chosen Faith" was my first written introduction to the religion. The book taught me, among many other things, that my religious perspective was actually a "demonic pseudoreligion"; that UUs agreed with C.S. Lewis that "the opposite of belief in God is not a belief in nothing; it is a belief in anything"; that I was a spiritual "vacuum"; and that raising children without religion means ushering them into fundamentalist cults. In short, the book taught me that Unitarian Universalists would find me and my (non-) beliefs disgusting. This is the message secular people of many stripes will take away from "A Chosen Faith"--but it is far, far from the truth about UUism. I am now a Unitarian Universalist, very much despite having read this book. My journey into the religion has consisted in large part of understanding (because I've been convinced by wonderful UUs, many of them Christians, pagans, theists, deists...) that Buehrens and Church are flat wrong about the place of atheism, humanism and skepticism within Unitarian Universalism.

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