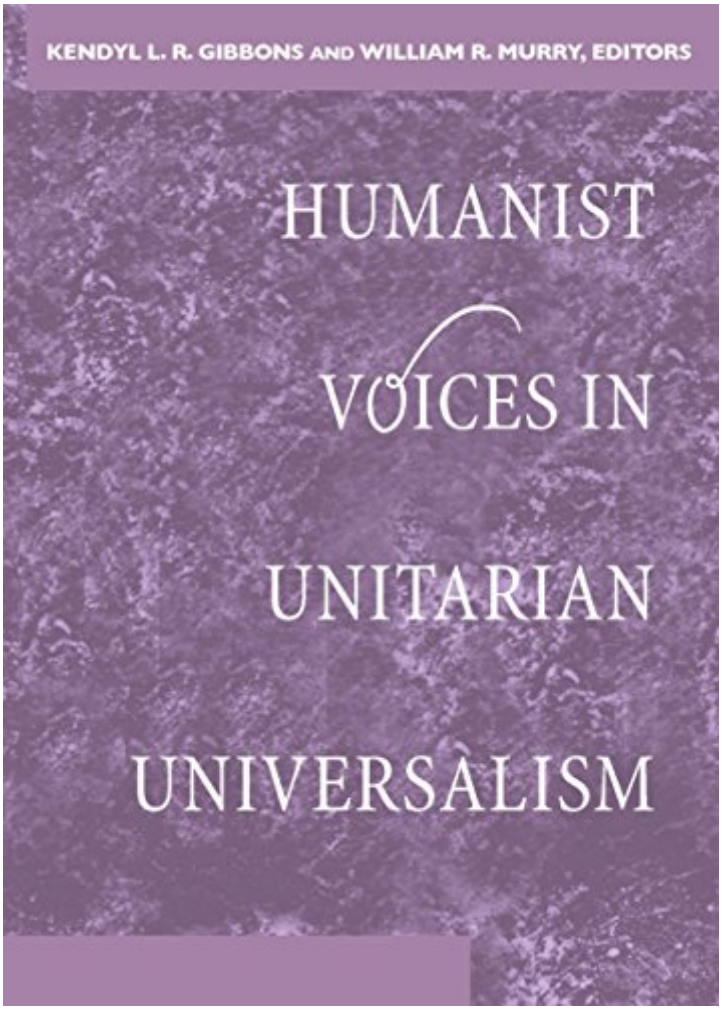
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Humanist Voices In Unitarian Universalism



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Synopsis

In this highly anticipated collection, Unitarian Universalist Humanists present their faith perspectives in 23 engaging and thought-provoking essays. The contributors, both lay and ordained, demonstrate why Humanism has been one of the bedrock theologies of Unitarian Universalism for the last hundred years. They reflect on what it means to be a religious Humanist today and how they see the movement evolving in the twenty-first century. They explore Humanist history, beliefs, approach to life, social justice, community, and religious education. Together, these voices proclaim a passionate affirmation of a rich and dynamic tradition within Unitarian Universalism.

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Customer Reviews

Delivery was timely. The book meets my needs- which were short sections on Humanism and how it is meant in the UU world. Each chapter was delegated to a class member to lead a discussion.

Humanism (with either upper or lower case ’h"), whether labelled a philosophy, life stance,

worldview, movement or religion, dates back to the ancient Greece and Rome of Epicurus and Lucretius. After lying dormant for centuries it began to reawaken following the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the development of science. The Deism of Voltaire and Paine was a sort of proto-humanism. The 19th century growth of democracy, public education, industry, and science -- aided by Darwin's breakthrough -- spurred the advances of freethought and rationalism. The Ethical Society movement took off after the Civil War and Unitarian congregations moved leftward theologically toward naturalistic Humanism.About 100 years ago some Unitarian ministers and philosophers began using the word "Humanism" to label this movement in religion, culminating in the publication in 1933 of the Humanist Manifesto. Soon after that Unitarian ministers founded the American Humanist Association, headed for several years by Rev. Edwin Wilson. Years later philosopher Paul Kurtz, the moving force behind the 1973 Humanist Manifesto II, founded the Council for Secular Humanism. By this time a majority of members of the 1000+ Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations considered themselves Humanists. Today the largest group of humanists may be found in UU congregations, while others are in Ethical Societies, Humanistic Jewish congregations, and the two main Humanist organizations, the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH) and the American Humanist Association (AHA), plus uncountable numbers with no formal affiliation, not to mention the many overseas Humanist organizations in the International Humanist and Ethical Union, founded after World War II.(Disclosure: I'm author of one of the book's chapters, a signer of Humanist Manifesto II, a columnist in the CSH journal Free Inquiry, a past president of the AHA, and a near life long UU.)Humanist Voices in UUism highlights the diversity among UUs, among UU Humanists, and among Humanists are are not UUs. Of particular importance, the book articulates a Humanism that is positive and affirming and that emphasizes community and social justice. About half of the authors are UU ministers and half are not. Some Humanists are comfortable with the word "religion" and some are not. All, I suppose, would agree with my bumpersticker definition of Humanism as a "compassionate ethical naturalism," whether religious or secular.With the religiously unaffiliated now making up a quarter of the US population and growing, UUism needs Humanism to grow, to provide homes for these "nones" and Humanism needs organizations like UU congregations and other groups.My takeaway from this important book is that Humanists, whether UU or religious or secular, must downplay differences and, working with good people across the religious spectrum, concentrate on dealing with the all too real problems facing our nation and our world: the attacks on our public schools, reproductive choice, civil liberties, civil rights, voting rights, religious liberty, church-state separation, and anthropogenic climate change (including atmospheric CO2 buildup, environmental degradation,

toxic waste accumulation, soil erosion and nutrient loss, biodiversity loss, deforestation, desertification, sea level rise, and the human overpopulation that fuels climate change). We have a lot of work to do.Edd Doerr

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