

## Discussion Guide for Video

### Long Strange Trip, Part 2: The Birth of Unitarianism (1:03:13)

#### Opening and Chalice Lighting

Share these words by Sebastian Castellio, professor of Greek at the University of Basel, Switzerland, written shortly after the 1553 martyrdom of Miguel Servetus:

The Scriptures are full of enigmas and inscrutable questions which have been in dispute for over a thousand years without agreement, nor can they be resolved without love, which appeases all controversies. Yet on account of these enigmas the earth is filled with innocent blood...

To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine. It is simply to kill a man.

Light the chalice in memory and in honor of our forebears through the ages who have suffered and who have died for their beliefs.

#### Discussion Questions

Choose among these questions and lead a discussion:

- The video opens just before the Protestant Reformation began and rapid religious and cultural change unfolded in a very short span of time. In what ways were our religious forbears responding to rapid change? In what ways were they creating it? What similarities do you find with the rapid cultural and religious change of our own time?
- The video highlights some of the connections and relationships that helped move new religious ideas across Europe. What did you find surprising or intriguing about those connections?
- In many ways, the story of Unitarianism in Europe is a story of new ideas put forth by learned and well-positioned people, primarily white men. How did those new ideas matter to those who were less well-positioned? Why do you suppose the ideas were seen as so very dangerous?

- Where and how do debates about religious belief occur in our society today? Do you see any commonalities with debates of the 16th and 17th centuries?
- Do you believe that ideas can be effectively suppressed? Do you believe that people will always find ways to claim their own power in matters of faith?
- The Edict of Torda includes the idea that one’s soul will not be satisfied by preaching and teaching that differs from one’s own understanding of God. Have you ever experienced the dissatisfaction of the soul of which the edict speaks?
- To what degree are Unitarian Universalists guilty of “innovation” in religion (the crime of which Dávid Ferenc was found guilty)?
- How is the European Unitarian heritage—including beliefs such as reason as a source of religious beliefs, religious toleration, individual freedom of thought, and the humanity of Jesus—reflected in contemporary Unitarian Universalism?

### Closing Reading

Share this reading adapted by the Rev. Richard Fewkes from Francis David (Dávid Ferenc), Reading 566 in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the Unitarian Universalist hymnbook.

In this world, there have always been many opinions about faith and salvation.

*You need not think alike to love alike.*

There must be knowledge in faith also.

*Sanctified reason is the lantern of faith.*

Religious reform can never be all at once, but gradually, step by step.

*If they offer something better, I will gladly learn.*

The most important spiritual function is conscience, the source of all spiritual joy and happiness.

*Conscience will not be quieted by anything less than truth and justice.*

We must accept God's truth in this lifetime. Salvation must be accomplished here on earth.

*God is indivisible.*

Egy Az Isten\*

*God is one.*

\*[Hungarian, pronounced Edge Oz Eeshten]

Extinguish the chalice.