

How do UU and Pagan Thea/ologies Fit Together?: CUUPS 20th Anniversary

Rev. Rudra Vilius Dundzila, Ph.D., D.Min.

Transfer Candidate for UU Ministry

Associate Professor of Humanities and Comparative Religion, Harry S Truman College (City Colleges of Chicago)

Supervised Minister, Second Unitarian Church, Chicago

dundzila@yahoo.com, 773-593-7500

UUA “Fulfilling the Promise” Survey, 1997

Humanist	46.1%
Earth/Nature centered	19%
Theist	13%
Christian	9.5%
Mystic	6.2%
Buddhist	3.6%
Jewish	1.2%
Hindu	.4%
Moslem	.1%
Other	13.3%

Respondents were allowed to select only one answer. 6% (!) of UUA membership participated in the survey. Source: <http://www.uua.org/archive/promise/results.html>

Independent “Some UUs are more U than UU,” 2005

Humanist	54%
Agnostic	33%
Earth-Centered	31%
Atheist	18%
Buddhist	17%
Pagan	13%
Christian	13%

Respondents were allowed to select multiple answers. Source: James Casebolt and Tiffany Niekro, “Some UUs Are More UU than U: Theological Self-Descriptors Chosen by Unitarian Universalists,” *Review of Religious Research* 46.3 (2005): 235-242.

UUA Engaging Our Theological Diversity 2005

	Clergy	Laity*
Process theology (incl. panentheism and process naturalism)	32%	17%
Humanism (including Humanist-Paganism)	20%	17%
Mystic, Christian, and God/transcendence	17-19%	No data
Religious Naturalism	13-14%	14%
Buddhism	13-14%	No data
Paganism	5-6%	No data
Feminist/liberation language	5-6%	No data
Other categories		25%

Respondents were able to select multiple categories. The data sought qualitative information, not quantitative statistics. Information was collected through focus groups, forums, and surveys over the course of 3 years. Source: Commission on Appraisal. Engaging Our Theological Diversity. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005. 71.

	Religious Naturalism	Goddess Spirituality	Paganism/Earth-Centered
Leading idea	Religious reverence for the natural world, without supernatural connotations	Women (and men) and their bodies are inherently divine, connected to nature	Religious reverence for the natural world; the earth and humans are inherently divine and interconnected; harmony with nature
UU Tripod: reason, religious tradition, personal experience	Emphasizes reason, study, and science	Emphasizes personal, embodied experience	Emphasizes personal experience of nature
The Divine	<p>Impersonal, non-anthropomorphic</p> <p>1) creative process within the world (spirit), kept in check by natural selection (logos) (panentheistic)</p> <p>2) totality of the universe, considered religiously (pantheist)</p> <p>3) no need for theistic concept</p>	<p>The Goddess; the feminine divine</p> <p>1) the world, human beings, and in particular women's bodies; embodied, engendered, internalized; not supernatural; care for all, incl. nature</p> <p>2) metaphor</p>	<p>The Earth as alive, nature as holy; Goddess; God</p> <p>1) emerging panentheistic possibilities</p> <p>2) the world and earth with all things and beings in it (pantheist)</p> <p>2) metaphor; naming the experience of nature as divine</p>
Religious practice	Study and appreciation of nature	Ritual to celebrate people with their own bodies; to connect to the cycles of the body and nature	Ritual to connect humans to nature and its seasonal cycles
Religious response	Environmental ethics	Feminism, environmental ethics, eco-justice	Environmental ethics

Bibliography

- Margot Adler. Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and Other Pagans in America Today. 2 rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- . Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and Other Pagans in America Today. 3 rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- . Phone Interview with author. Saturday, 21 January 2006
- . "Vibrant, Juicy, Contemporary: or, Why I AM a UU Pagan." UU World. November 1996 (?). 15 January 2006. <<<http://www.uua.org/WRLD/1196feature1.html>>>.
- Amy K. Beltaine (Meadville-Lombard MRP M.Div. student). Interview with author. 26 January 2006.
- Helen A. Berger, Evan A. Leach, and Leigh S. Shaffer. Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States. Columbia, SC: U South Carolina P, 2003.
- Phillip Emmons Isaac Bonewits. Real Magic: An Introductory Treatise on the Basic Principles of Yellow Magic. Rev. Ed. York Beach, ME: Samuel Wiser, 1989.
- John A. Buehrens and Forrest Church. A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism. Rev. ed. Boston: Beacon P, 1998.
- John Cairns, Jr. "Reexamining 'The Inherent Worth and Dignity of Every Person' Paradigm in an Interdependent Web of Life Context." Journal of Liberal Religion. 2002 3.1.
- John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin. Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox P, 1976.
- Connctions (CUUPS Magazine). Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 2000, Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 2001.
- Ellen Cooper-Davis (Meadville Lombard residential M.Div. student). Interview with author. 25 January 2006.
- CUUPS Newsletter. Winter 1996, Fall 1997, MidWinter/Spring 1998, Late Spring/Early Summer 1998, Late Summer/Early Fall 1998, Spring/Early Summer 1999.
- William Dean. "Process Theology and the American Spiritual Culture." Journal of Liberal Religion. 2.1. Fall 2000.
- Gus diZerga. Pagans & Christian: The Personal Spiritual Experience. St. Paul: Llewellyn, 2001.
- Edward A. Frost, ed. With Purpose and Principle: Essays about the Seven principles of Unitarian Universalism. Boston: Skinner, 1998.
- Cynthia Eller. The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future. Boston: Beacon, 2000.
- Dorothy May Emerson, ed. Edge of the Wave: Great Goddess Fact, Working Hypothesis, or Feminist Myth? Collegium: Association for Liberal Religious Studies. Occasional Papers #2, 1993.
- J. Ronald Engel, "Earth Spirituality is a Many Splendored Thing!" Journal of Liberal Religion. 2000 1.2.
- Kendyl Gibbons. Interview with author. 14 February 2006.
- Ursula Goodenough. "Exploring the Concept of Religious Naturalism." UU Religious Naturalists lecture. 2005 UUA General Assembly, Ft. Worth, Texas.
- . The Sacred Depths of Nature. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.
- Graham Harvey. Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth. New York: New York UP, 1997.

- Carol Hepokoski, "Ecojustice and Ministry" Journal of Liberal Religion 2000 1.2
- "Humanism/Paganism: Can This Marriage Be Saved? II" CUUPS Workshop. 2000 UUA General Assembly, Nashville, TN. Audio recording.
- Ronald Hutton. The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.
- Khryso Heart LeFey. "The Compatibility of Transcendentalism with Paganism: A UU Pagan Perspective." 1999-2001. 21 January 2006.
<<<http://www.radfae.org/khryso/transcend.html>>>.
- Richard Wayne Lee. "Strained Bedfellows: Pagans, New Agers, and "Starchy Humanists" in Unitarian Universalism." Sociology of Religion Winter 1995. 379-96.
- Bernard Loomer. "The Size of God." The Size of God: The Theology of Bernard Loomer in Context. Ed. William Dean and Larry Axel. Macon, GA: Mercer UP, 1987.
- J. Gordon Melton. "Liberal Religions," and "The Magick Family." The Encyclopedia of American Religions. 2 vols. Wilmington, NC: McGrath, 1978. Vol. 1 ch. 5; vol. 2 ch. 18.
- C. Robert Mesle, John B. Cobb. Process Theology: A Basic Introduction. Atlanta: Chalice, 1993.
- Mark NeCamp (CUUPS chapter organizer and leader). Interview with author. 23 January 2006.
- Neil Gerdes. Interview with author. 15 February 2006.
- "Paganism and Humanism: Can This Marriage be Saved?" CUUPS Panel Discussion. 1999 UUA General Assembly, Salt Lake City, Utah. Audio recording.
- Karl E. Peters. Dancing with the Sacred: Evolution, Ecology, and God. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2002.
- Shirley Ann Ranck. Cakes for the Queen of Heaven: A Ten-Session Adult Seminar in Feminist Theology. Boston: UUA Dept. of Religious Education, 1986.
- Cakes for the Queen of Heaven: An Exploration of Women's Power Past, Present, and Future. 2 ed. New York: Authors Choice Press, 2006.
- Melanie Silver (last president of Panthea, the first UUA Pagan congregation). Interview with author. 23 January 2006.
- Sacred Cosmos: Journal of Liberal Religious Paganism. Vol 1 (2000), Vol 2 (2003).
- Marian Stewart (Meadville-Lombard residential M.Div. student). Interview with author. 1 February 2006.
- Jerome A. Stone. "Is God Emeritus? The Idea of God Among Religious Naturalists." Journal of Liberal Religion 5.1. Spring 2005.
- "Religious Naturalism: A New Theological Option." Collegium lecture. 2006 UUA General Assembly, St. Louis, Missouri.
- The Minimalist Vision of Transcendence: A Naturalists Philosophy of Religion. Albany: SUNY, 1992.
- "What is Religious Naturalism?" Journal of Liberal Religion 2.1. Fall 2000.
- Thandeka. "Earth Ethics" CUUPS Lecture. 1999 UUA General Assembly, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Joan Van Becelaere. "A Brief Introduction to UU Paganism." Parts 1-3. 1999-2001. 15 January 2006. <<<http://www.cuups.org>>>
- Phone interview with author. 20 January 2006.
- Henry Wieman. The Source of Human Good. Ed. Marvin C. Shaw. Atlanta: Scholars P, 1995.
- Michael York (scholar of Comparative Religion). E-mail correspondence to author. 13 February 2006.