

SUNDAY SESSIONS

World Religions

WEEK 6 - UNIVERSALISM

Question Time #1:

- Think about people in your life who seem to reject any type of religion. Pick one or two to focus on in your mind. What are the things that these people value the most? What do you think influences their decision-making?
- Why do you think humanity as a whole is often so tempted to come up with or believe in worldviews that exclude or downplay the existence and work of God?

Initial Stats

“Currently, about three-in-ten U.S. adults (29%) are religious “nones” – people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or “nothing in particular” when asked about their religious identity. Self-identified Christians of all varieties (including Protestants, Catholics, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Orthodox Christians) make up 63% of the adult population. Christians now outnumber religious “nones” by a ratio of a little more than two-to-one. In 2007, when the Center began asking its current question about religious identity, Christians outnumbered “nones” by almost five-to-one (78% vs. 16%).”

- Smith, Pew Research, 2021

History of Secularism

- The Renaissance (~1400-1600 AD)
- The Enlightenment (~1600-1800 AD)
- The Modern Age (~1800-Present)

History of Universalism

- New Age Universalism
- Pseudo-Christian Universalism

Belief and Practice - Secularism

Belief and Practice - Universalism

- New Age Universalism

- Pseudo-Christian Universalism

Belief and Practice - Similarities and Differences

Evangelism

(special thanks to Halverson)

Suggestions for Evangelism - Secularism

1. Ask the question - What kind of God did this person reject?

2. Offer evidence for God's existence - with love

Suggestions for Evangelism - Universalism

1. Acknowledge the person's search for spirituality
2. Major on the primary issues

Question Time #2:

- What is something new that you learned today?
- Think about your own upbringing and your worldview today - how are you practically tempted to downplay the existence or work of God in ways that affect your Christian faith (if you are a Christian)?

Primary Resources

Halverson, Dean C. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*. Bethany House Publishers, 1996.

Scrivener, Glen. *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality*. The Good Book Company, 2022.

Senthil, Noah. "Why Christians Need Philosophy." *The Gospel Coalition*, 5 Oct. 2023, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/need-philosophy/>.

Smith, Gregory A. *About three-in-ten U.S. adults are now religiously unaffiliated*. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project, December 14, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/12/14/about-three-in-ten-u-s-adults-are-now-religiously-unaffiliated/>.

Taylor, Jordan. "I Left New Age for Jesus." *The Gospel Coalition*, 3 Oct. 2023, www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/new-age-jesus/.