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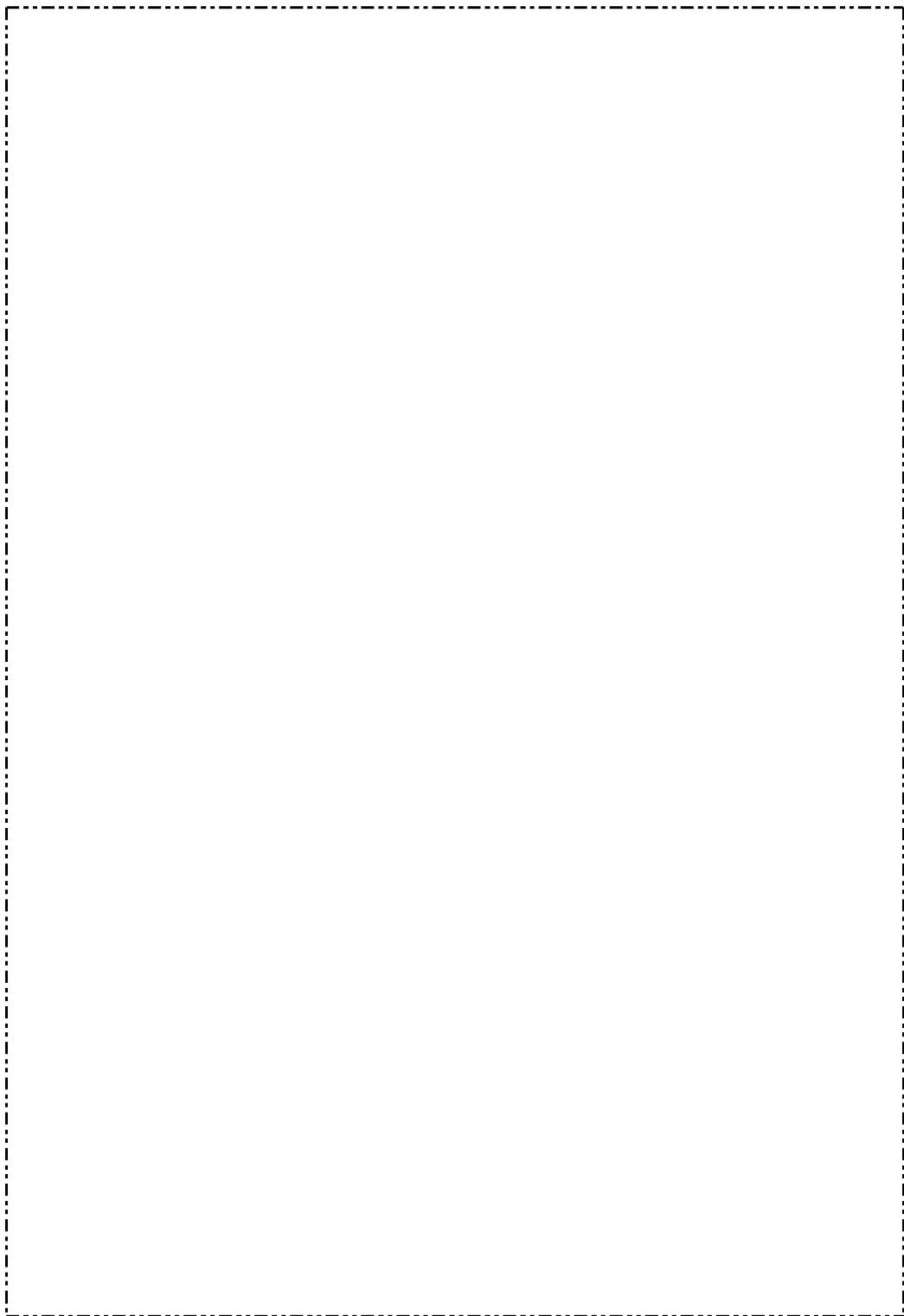


TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
➤ THE CIRCLE OF REASON.....	5
➤ CULT OF REASON (1792-1794).....	5
➤ CULT OF THE SUPREME BEING	6
➤ DEISM.....	7
➤ FOURTH WAY	8
➤ GOD-BUILDING	8
➤ GODDESS MOVEMENT	9
➤ HUMANISM.....	10
➤ OPEN-SOURCE RELIGION	11
➤ SPIRITISM (SPIRITUALISM)	11
➤ SUBUD.....	12
➤ UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH	14

➤ THE CIRCLE OF REASON



THE CIRCLE OF REASON

The Circle of Reason is a Twin Cities, Minnesota-based international society of theists, atheists, conservatives, and liberals who espouse the social philosophy of "pluralistic rationalism" (also "plurationalism" or "methodological rationalism").

Pluralistic rationalism is described in cultural media as "commitment to reason[ing], regardless of one's worldview," and by the society itself as "communal commitment to more consistently practice the basic methodological tenets of a reasoning lifestyle (reality's acceptance, assumption's denial, and emotion's mastery) irrespective of our theological, ethical, cultural or political worldviews.

According to The Circle of Reason, pluralistic rationalism is practiced through encouraging not a particular worldview, but rather factualism, skepticism, and moderationism; and furthermore through discouraging their opposing practices of denialism, dogmatism, and emotionalism -- or "denials of reality, unquestioned assumptions (potentially false realities), and emotive arguments or actions (dissociation from reality)."

Plurationalist practices include discouraging the verbal, printed or televised use of insults. Because plurationalists hold that "as a sapient being one's best tool to survive is one's ability to reason," they claim people's basic universalized moral imperative must then be "to consistently allow, and encourage, others to reason."

A fellowship of the religious and non-religious who believe communal commitment to reason will transform the world."

➤ CULT OF REASON (1792-1794)

The Cult of Reason was France's first established state sponsored atheistic religion, intended as a replacement for Roman Catholicism during the French Revolution. It also rivaled Robespierre's Cult of the Supreme Being.

A Temple of Reason was a temple for a new belief system.

Cult of Reason was a hodgepodge of ideas and activities, a "multifarious phenomenon, marked by disorderliness".

Cult of Reason was based on the ideals of reason, virtue, and liberty.

This "religion" was supposed to be universal and to spread the ideas of the revolution, summarized in its "Liberté, égalité, fraternité" motto, which was also inscribed on the Temples.

Within the Temple of Reason, "atheism was enthroned".

No gods at all were worshiped in the Cult of Reason—the guiding principle was devotion

to the abstract conception of Reason itself.

The Cult encompassed various elements of anticlericalism, including subordination of priests to secular authority, wealth confiscation from the Church and doctrinal heresies both petty and profound. It was atheistic, but celebrated different core principles according to locale and leadership: most famous was Reason, but others were Liberty, Nature, and the victory of the Revolution.

The official nationwide Fête de la Raison, supervised by Hébert and Momoro on 20 Brumaire, Year II (10 November 1793) came to epitomize the new republican way of religion. In ceremonies devised and organised by Chaumette, churches across France were transformed into modern Temples of Reason. The largest ceremony of all was at the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. The Christian altar was dismantled and an altar to Liberty was installed and the inscription "To Philosophy" was carved in stone over the cathedral's doors. Festive girls in white Roman dress and tricolor sashes milled around a costumed Goddess of Reason who "impersonated Liberty". A flame burned on the altar which was symbolic of truth. To avoid statuary and idolatry, the Goddess figures were portrayed by living women.

In the spring of 1794, the Cult of Reason was faced with official repudiation when Robespierre, nearing complete dictatorial power during the Reign of Terror, announced his own establishment of a new, deistic religion for the Republic, the Cult of the Supreme Being.

➤ CULT OF THE SUPREME BEING

The Cult of the Supreme Being was a form of deism established in France by Maximilien Robespierre during the French Revolution. It was intended to become the state religion of the new French Republic and a replacement for Roman Catholicism and its rival, the Cult of Reason.

Devised almost entirely by Robespierre, the Cult of the Supreme Being was authorized by the National Convention on 7 May 1794 as the civic religion of France.

Robespierre believed that reason is only a means to an end, and the singular end is virtue. He sought to move beyond simple deism to a new and, in his view, more rational devotion to the godhead.

The primary principles of the Cult of the Supreme Being were a belief in the existence of a god and the immortality of the human soul.

The Cult of the Supreme Being and its festival may have contributed to the Thermidorian Reaction and the downfall of Robespierre.

The Cult of the Supreme Being was an artificial religion, developed by Robespierre and given formal status by the National Convention in May 1794.

In Robespierre's mind, the Supreme Being was a deist god who created the world according to natural laws. The purpose of the cult was to educate the people and teach them morality and virtue.

The high point of the Supreme Being movement was a Festival, held in Paris and other locations in early June. It was marked by symbolism, pageantry and speeches celebrating

the Enlightenment and regeneration.

The Paris Festival featured a gigantic artificial mountain on the Champ de Mars and featured speeches and gestures from Robespierre, who at his insistence played a leading role.

The Festival itself was popular with the people, however the Cult of the Supreme Being failed to take hold, and Robespierre's central role only increased his unpopularity among other deputies of the Convention.

With Robespierre death at the guillotine on 28 July 1794, the cult lost all official sanction and disappeared from public view. It was officially banned by Napoleon Bonaparte on 8 April 1802 with his Law on Cults of 18 Germinal, Year X.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LufFBHTbk2c>

➤ DEISM

Deism is a philosophical position that posits that a god does not interfere directly with the world. It also rejects revelation as a source of religious knowledge and asserts that reason and observation of the natural world are sufficient to determine the existence of a single creator of the universe.

Deism gained prominence among intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment, especially in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. Typically, these had been raised as Christians and believed in one God, but they had become disenchanted with organized religion and orthodox teachings such as the Trinity, Biblical inerrancy, and the supernatural interpretation of events, such as miracles.

Today, deism is considered to exist in the classical and modern forms, where the classical view takes what is called a "cold" approach by asserting the non-intervention of deity in the natural behavior of the created universe, while the modern deist formulation can be either "warm" (citing an involved deity) or "cold" (citing an uninvolved deity). These lead to many subdivisions of modern deism, which tends, therefore, to serve as an overall category of belief.

A religion whose followers believe in a God who created the universe, established its rules of behavior, set it going, left, and hasn't been seen since.

Deism is a natural religion. Deists believe in the existence of God, on purely rational grounds, without any reliance on revealed religion, religious authority, or holy text. Because of this, Deism is quite different from religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The latter are largely based on revelations that Jews, Christians and Muslims believe mostly came from God to prophet(s) who then taught it to humans.

We like to call natural religions by the title "bottom-up" faiths because they were created by humans about God; Daism refer to revealed religions as "top-down" because their followers believe that they were created by God and delivered to humans.

One faith that is opposite of Deism is Atheism, which is the lack of a belief in the existence of a god or gods. Another seen in the beliefs of most Theists who conceive of God as a deity who is all-present, all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing and has a personal interest in every human on Earth.

Deists:

- Do not accept the belief of most religions that God revealed himself to humanity through the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures (a.k.a. Old Testament), and/or the Christian Scriptures (a.k.a. New Testament), and/or the Qur'an, and/or other religious text.
- Disagree with strong Atheists who assert that there is no evidence of the existence of God.

Many Deists reason that everything that exists has had a creator -- from a wristwatch, to a television set, to the Internet itself.

Thus it is logical that the universe itself must have been created by God.

Because the deist god is entirely removed from involvement, he has neither need nor want of worship.

Deists commonly hold that God does not even care if humanity believes in him.

Because God has no desire for worship or other specific behavior, there is no reason for him to speak through prophets nor send representatives of himself among humanity.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0oQi_aLoUA

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRqXiQm_INw

➤ **FOURTH WAY**

The Fourth Way is an approach to self-development described by George Gurdjieff which he developed over years of travel in the East (c. 1890 - 1912). It combines and harmonizes what he saw as three established traditional "ways" or "schools": those of the mind, emotions, and body, or of yogis, monks, and fakirs respectively. Students often refer to the Fourth Way as "The Work", "Work on oneself," or "The System".

The Fourth Way addresses the question of humanity's place in the Universe and the possibilities of inner development. It emphasizes that people ordinarily live in a state referred to as a semi-hypnotic "waking sleep," while higher levels of consciousness, virtue, unity of will are possible.

The Fourth Way teaches people how to increase and focus their attention and energy in various ways, and to minimize daydreaming and absentmindedness. According to this teaching, this inner development in oneself is the beginning of a possible further process of change, whose aim is to transform a man into what Gurdjieff taught he ought to be. This inner development in oneself is the beginning of a possible further process of change, whose aim is to transform man into "what he ought to be."

➤ **GOD-BUILDING**

The idea proposed that in place of the abolition of religion, there should be a meta-

religious context in which religions were viewed primarily in terms of the psychological and social effect of ritual, myth, and symbolism, and which attempted to harness this force for pro-communist aims, both by creating new ritual and symbolism, and by re-interpreting existing ritual and symbolism in a socialist context.

In contrast to the atheism of Lenin, the God-Builders took an official position of agnosticism.

➤ GODDESS MOVEMENT



Goddess movement - Spiral Goddess symbol neo pagan

The Goddess movement includes spiritual beliefs or practices (chiefly neopagan) which has emerged predominantly in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand in the 1970s. The movement grew as a reaction to perceptions of predominant organized religion as male-dominated, and makes use of goddess worship and a focus on gender and femininity.

Like many Pagan and Neopagan religions, there are no rules, no bible, no major doctrine; what has survived of ancient Goddess religions has been pieced together in fragments. Most Goddess worshippers do share the goal of living in harmony with nature.

Belief systems range from monotheistic to polytheism to pantheistic, encompassing a range of theological variety similar to that in the broader neopagan community. Common pluralistic belief means that a self-identified Goddess worshiper could theoretically worship any number of different goddesses from cultures all over the world.

Although the Goddess movement has no Ten Commandments dictating a specific code of behavior, there are commonly held tenets and concepts within the movement that form a basis for ethical behavior. Those participants in Goddess spirituality who define themselves as Wiccan/en, usually follow what is known as the Wiccan Rede: " 'An it harm none, do what ye will", ("an" being an archaic English word understood to mean "if", or "as long as").

Many also believe in the Threefold Law, which states that "what you send (or do), returns three times over". Still others postulate that the number "three" is symbolic, meant to indicate a magnified karmic result for one's actions.

Some people in the Goddess movement honor the Triple Goddess of Maiden, Mother, and Crone. The Maiden aspect of the Goddess shows women how to be independent and strong; the Mother aspect shows women how to be nurturing; and the Crone aspect shows that respecting elders is important and focuses on wisdom, change, and transformation.

Other Goddess ethical beliefs are that one should not harm the interconnected web of life, and that peace and partnership should be the goals, rather than war and domination.

Many people involved in the Goddess movement regard the Earth as a living Goddess.

For some this may be figurative, for others literal. Many of those in the Goddess movement become involved in ecofeminism, and are concerned with environmental and ecological issues.

Goddess-movement adherents claim the hierarchical scheme giving humans dominion over the Earth (and nature) has led to lack of respect and concern for the Earth, and thus to what environmentalists identify as environmental crises, such as global warming. Rather than having dominion over the Earth, Goddess-movement theorists see humans living as part of the Earth environment, and also refer to Earth as "Mother".

➤ HUMANISM



Humanism is an approach to life based on reason and our common humanity, and recognises moral values. It is founded on human nature and experience. The Humanist tradition has developed over thousands of years, in Eastern and Western civilisations, building on many complementary philosophies.

The defining characteristics of a Humanist are:

- no belief in any god, in an afterlife, or in anything supernatural
- the belief that we should all try to live full and happy lives, and help others to do the same
- the belief that all situations and people deserve to be judged on their own merits, by standards of reason and humanity
- the belief that individualism and social cooperation are equally important.

Humanists try to observe the golden rule: "Do not do to others what you would not like done to you."

Some Humanists would say they are atheists, while some prefer to describe themselves as agnostics – all live without religious or superstitious beliefs. A large section of the population is not religious, but would not say they were Humanist.

CELEBRATIONS

There are local celebrants, who are happy to arrange ceremonies to celebrate birth, marriage and death, appropriate for the individuals concerned.

DIET, TREATMENT, MODESTY ETC

There are no rules about any of these things for Humanists. They should be regarded as individuals, free to make their preference known.

FORM-FILLING

When filling in forms some people will want to say "none" or "I don't know" when asked what religion they are. Some may say "Humanist".

GREETING

There are no specific guidelines on this. Normally Humanists will adopt the convention of the country in which they live.

IN A HUMANIST HOME

You should show the same basic level of politeness and respect that you would wish shown in your own home. If individual Humanists have any 'house rules' (like not smoking indoors), then they should let visitors know.

HOSPITAL ETIQUETTE

When religious ceremonies are conducted for another patient you could either draw the curtains round the bed of the religious patient or ask if those not participating in the service in the ward would like their own curtains drawn.

HUMANIST VISITORS AND LOCAL CONTACTS

Just as religious patients may enjoy a visit from a chaplain or priest, non-religious patients, especially the terminally ill and their families, might like a visit from a Humanist hospital visitor.

➤ OPEN-SOURCE RELIGION



Open Source Judaism



Yoism symbol

Open-source religions employ open-source methods for the sharing, construction, and adaptation of religious belief systems, content, and practice. In comparison to religions utilizing proprietary, authoritarian, hierarchical, and change-resistant structures, open-source religions emphasize sharing in a cultural Commons, participation, self-determination, decentralization, and evolution. They apply principles used in organizing communities developing open-source software for organizing group efforts innovating with human culture. New open-source religions may develop their rituals, praxes, or systems of beliefs through a continuous process of refinement and dialogue among participating practitioners. Organizers and participants often see themselves as part of a more generalized open-source and free-culture movement.

➤ SPIRITISM (SPIRITUALISM)

Modern Spiritualism began in March 1848 in New York State as a result of the psychic experiences of the Fox family. The first Spiritualist Church in UK was opened in Keighley, Yorkshire in 1853. The Spiritualists' National Union Ltd. Was formed in 1901.

It acts as a trustee and support to the churches and provides educational courses. Spiritualism is based on seven basic principles: the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Communion of Spirits and the Ministry of Angels, the Continuous Existence of the Human Soul, Personal Responsibility, Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for all the Good or Evil Deeds done on Earth, Eternal Progress Open to every Human Soul.

Spiritualism is a universal religion which recognises such leaders as the Buddha, Mohammed, Moses and Jesus and considers them great healers and teachers. The main difference between Spiritualism and some other religions is that it is founded on the demonstrated proof that there is life after death and that there is a path of eternal progression for all mankind with an acceptance of responsibility for one's own actions.

Spiritualism is too diverse to have a universal code of beliefs; instead, Spiritualists accept sets of more wide ranging principles.

Unlike many religions Spiritualism doesn't have a sacred text and relies instead on the Seven Principles - a model of living that guides rather than preaches, and allows followers to interpret the Spiritualist values.

ETHICAL TEACHING

We are all part of a divine plan involving the whole universe. Spiritualism is concerned with the way we live here and now. We should live harmoniously with others doing unto others as we would have others do to us.

MEDIUMS

The work of a medium is to prove the reality of survival after so-called death and to pass on practical help and understanding when needed. The advice given should add meaning and a deeper sense of purpose to life.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

Spiritual healing is practised in churches and centres. It can assist treatment given by doctors and may cure illnesses which fail to respond to other forms of treatment. It is administered by the laying on of hands – contact healing – and should not be confused with faith healing.

WORSHIP

Church Services are conducted with reverence. An address is given on the philosophy of Spiritualism and it is normally followed by a demonstration to prove the reality of survival.

➤ SUBUD



Seven Circles symbol of Subud

Subud is an international spiritual movement that began in Indonesia in the 1920s, founded by Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo.

The basis of Subud is a spiritual exercise commonly called the latihan kejiwaan, which was said by Muhammad Subuh to represent guidance from "the Power of God" or "the Great Life Force". He claimed that Subud was not a new teaching or religion. He recommended that Subud members practice a religion but left them to make their own choice of religion. Some members have converted to Islam, but others have found their faith in and practice of Christianity or Judaism, for example, has deepened after practising the latihan. There are Subud groups in about 83 countries, with a worldwide membership of about 10,000.

It has no official holy book, no religious commandments, no requirement for extensive study of the life of its prophet. That's why it is possible for members who are Christians, Muslims, and so on, to feel no contradiction between their faith and the practice of the latihan.

Subud members practise a form of worship known as the latihan.

Subud is neither a kind of religion nor a teaching, but is a spiritual experience awakened by the Power of God leading to spiritual reality free from the influence of the passions, desires and thinking.

Latihan (spiritual experience) exercise is not thought about, learned or trained for; it is unique for each person and the ability to "receive" it is passed on by being in the presence of another practicing member at the "opening".

About twice a week, Subud members go to a local center to participate in a group latihan, men and women separately. The experience takes place in a room or a hall with open space. After a period of sitting quietly, the members are typically asked to stand and relax by a "helper", who then announces the start of the exercise.

In the practice of the exercise, members are typically advised to follow "what arises from within", not expecting anything in advance. One is recommended not to focus on any image or recite any mantra, nor to mix the exercise with other activities like meditation or use of drugs, but simply to intend to surrender to the Divine or the transcendent good or the will of God.

Although the latihan can be practised alone, members are advised to participate regularly, ideally twice a week, in a group latihan. When a member has enough experience to reliably sense the appropriate time to finish his or her latihan session, he or she may add perhaps one more weekly session of the latihan at home.

Subud officially endorses no doctrine regarding the latihan's nature or benefits.

The "opening" refers to a person's first latihan, which is specially arranged to pass on the "contact", metaphorically resembling a candle flame that lights a new candle with no difference in quality of the flame. Only after the formal opening process, in most cases, is a person able to receive for himself or herself, and is then welcome to participate in the group latihan. In the opening, the person is accompanied by one or more experienced members called "helpers", and is asked to simply stand and relax with the helpers standing nearby. A simple statement or agreed set of "opening words" is read by one of the helpers that acknowledges the person's wish to receive the contact. The helpers then begin the exercise as they would normally do. The contact is passed on to the new member without effort or intention on the part of anyone present. This is the moment of the person's first connection with the latihan kejiwaan of Subud.

Individual Subud members often voluntarily engage in occasional fasting as Pak Subuh recommended. Each year, some members fast at the same time as the Muslim fast of Ramadan which Pak Subuh, himself a Muslim, claimed to be suitable for non-Muslims.

Others fast during Lent or simply on a regular, private basis.

Although in general there are no rules in the practice of the latihan, non-members may not attend the latihan exercise without first receiving the contact known as their opening.

Membership is open to any person over 17 years of age, irrespective of the person's religion or lack of religion. The exception is that someone suffering from a serious mental illness may not be initiated as a member.

There is normally a waiting period of up to three months before a person may be opened. During this period, the enquirer is expected to meet a few times with the local helpers so that he or she can have questions answered and doubts clarified.

There is no membership fee, but most Subud members contribute, for example, to the rent or upkeep of premises where they meet.

Beliefs about Sex:

- The soul of an individual is only half a soul. Through marriage the two halves become one soul.
- Sexual relations outside of marriage bring spiritual impurities that can damage one's spiritual development.
- Menstruation is a spiritual purification and therefore women should not do latihan at that time.
- Homosexual activity harms the soul.
- The more children a woman has, the more spiritual she is.
- Male children bring spirituality, female bring material wealth.

➤ UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH



Universal Life Church Logo

The Universal Life Church (ULC) is a church founded on a simple doctrine, "Do that which is right," and states that every person has the natural right (and the responsibility) to peacefully determine what is right.

Universal Life Church is an advocate of religious freedom and offers legal ordination to become a minister free of charge. The ordination process states that anyone can become a minister by filling out a form that includes a legal name and valid address to be entered into the church records. Ordained ministers are eligible to receive an ordination credential which is a legal document.

The Universal Life Church was founded under the name "Life Church" in 1959 by the Reverend Kirby J. Hensley, who first held services for the church out of his garage.

Universal Life Church International Headquarters holds services every Sunday at 10am in an historic church building in Modesto, California.

One creed (or doctrine) is stated as: "Do that which is right."

The ULC's stated beliefs are:

Objective: Eternal Progression.

Goal: A Fuller Life for Everyone.

Slogan: To Live and Help Live.

Maxim: "We Are One."

Any person may associate themselves with the Church and apply for ordination as a minister upon agreement with its doctrine. The Universal Life Church does not issue ministerial certificates to individuals who are currently incarcerated, but any other person may be ordained as a minister.

Ministers of the church come from all walks of life and may serve under any religion or no religion or as may even serve as humanist ministers or non-religious officiants.

Church meetings typically allow all present to speak, a practice similar to the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, although these two groups were also never affiliated.

