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February 25, 2011: Is Unitarian Universalism the Answer?

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Title: Is Unitarian Universalism the Answer?

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2/25/2011—Last Wednesday night, Reverend David McFarland spoke at the Allegheny YMCA Lecture Series on the occasion of the Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church's 100th anniversary. It was an inspiring and entertaining talk. During the course of the talk, I asked Reverend Dave, as he is affectionately known in Pittsburgh, about the current age of secularism, especially among the young, and whether it presented a non-dogmatic church, such as his, a special opportunity? He answered, yes and no. Many of these secularists have decided to sleep in on the weekends. They would rather go to the park or work out or spend time with friends than engage in any sort of religious activity. Thus, they are not inclined to look to any church. On the other hand, when they do look, Unitarianism is a very congenial alternative. There has thus been growth among the young. Reverend Dave made the point that secularists do need a religious community whether they realize it or not. These other ways of life are fun and rewarding, but they do not present the opportunity to engage the deepest and most important questions and issues of human life. Nor do they give the support of deep community. He suggested that the fault here may lie in the Church. After all, who says religion has to look like religion? Who says you have to go to a particular place at a particular time? In the book *Hallowed Secularism*, I dismissed Unitarianism as too politically liberal, and thus too politically correct, to represent healthy religion. I still think that. And, of course, ironically, Unitarians could have a very traditional vision of God. So it wasn't for me. But listening to Rev. Dave, I have to wonder. Maybe there is already a model of *Hallowed Secularism* right here.