

## **Pantheism, Atheism, Humanism**

Atheism simply makes the statement that there is no creator God, no personal God, no judging God. Beyond that atheists can be nature-lovers or nature-haters, they can see life and the Universe as joyful - or absurd.

Humanism is a form of Atheism, but humanists recognize that most people look for more than just a negative from a life philosophy, and have added statements of ethics and principles.

World Pantheism goes one step further and recognizes that most people feel a need for something that is greater than themselves and greater than the human race. In our case that greater whole is nature on this earth, and on a wider scale the entire universe or Multiverse of all that exists. We also promote a joyful and positive approach to life.

World Pantheism has many members who would also describe themselves as atheists and/or humanists, but to these they add an emotional and aesthetic dimension in their connection with nature, the universe, and their fellow humans.

## **Pantheism and paganism**

World Pantheism has many members who also consider themselves as pagans and who may observe pagan ceremonies and seasons. World Pantheism itself celebrates the major astronomical transitions of the year. It has no prescribed ceremonies: people and groups choose their own style.

However, most World Pantheist pagans view pagan deities, spirits and magic as symbolic expressions rather than literal truths. As one member put it "Nature is supernatural enough." We tend to focus more intently on the wonder of nature and the night sky. Symbolic forms are fine if they don't obscure the direct view of these realities.

## **Contacts and links**

**Join the WPM:** <http://www.pantheism.net>

**Start a group:**

<http://www.pantheism.net/uu/groups.htm>

**UU Pantheists email group:**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UUpantheists>

**Pantheist Resources for UUs:**

[http://www.pantheism.net/uu/  
uupantheists.htm](http://www.pantheism.net/uu/uupantheists.htm)

**Email inquiries/more leaflets:**

[info@pantheism.net](mailto:info@pantheism.net)

**WPM website:** <http://www.pantheism.net>

**The Natural Pantheism website:**

<http://members.aol.com/Heraklit1/>

**Posters of nature, science, pantheism:**

<http://www.nature-art.org/posters.htm>

**Books on nature, science, pantheism:**

<http://www.nature-art.org/books.htm>



# **World Pantheism and Unitarian Universalism**

**World Pantheism  
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<http://www.pantheism.net>

## **The core of Pantheism**

The essence of Pantheism is a profound reverence for Nature and the wider Universe and awed recognition of their power, beauty and mystery. Some Pantheists use the word God to describe this feeling, others prefer not to use traditional religious words so as to avoid ambiguity. From this feeling flows the desire to make the most of our present life in our bodies on this earth, to care for nature, and to respect the rights of humans and animals in general. We choose to focus on the vibrant and urgent here and now, rather than on invisible realms, spirits, deities or afterlives. Modern-era Pantheists include Frank Lloyd Wright, D. H. Lawrence, Einstein, Ruth Carson, Margaret Atwood, and Stephen Hawking.

## **World Pantheism and Unitarian Universalism**

World Pantheism has a close affinity with Unitarian Universalism. The two organizations overlap and complement each other. There is a considerable area of shared values, and at the same time World Pantheism offers a special focus on Nature and a perspective of naturalism. It can be considered as one of the main “flavors” of UUism, such as UU Buddhism, UU Humanism, UU Paganism and so on.

Many Unitarian Universalists, including ministers, are WPM members. WPM members who belong to UU churches in some cases run courses on Pantheism or Pantheist services or meets of Pantheists.

## **What are the affinities?**

World Pantheism would endorse all of the UU’s seven principles and expand on some of them.

Most Pantheists would draw some elements from one or more of the world’s religious traditions. Among these we would have a closer affinity for classical Stoicism and philosophical Taoism, as well as for modern atheism, humanism and environmentalism. We would respect and learn from some forms of Hinduism and Buddhism (in their meditation practice more than in their metaphysics). We would find less of interest in the Western theist traditions in their traditional forms - though we value individual instances of inspiring life wisdom in the Old and New Testaments and in Islamic scriptures.

World Pantheism is committed to human rights, peace and social justice. We are opposed to discrimination in all its forms. We promote religious freedom, separation of church and state, and religious tolerance. We filed a friend-of-court brief in the recent US Supreme Court case, opposing the “under God” wording in the Pledge.

We endorse and expand on the UU seventh principle and we make active care for the environment a central part of our approach, along with human rights. We have collected more signatures for UNESCO’s Manifesto for Peace and Non-Violence than any other US voluntary organization. We are in the top ten groups saving rainforest at EcologyFund and have saved more habitat than any other religious or environmental group.

## **What are the differences?**

Unitarian Universalism has shared values such as tolerance and justice, but does not take metaphysical stances, eg, on the existence of gods, souls separate from bodies, or personal afterlives.

World Pantheism promotes a few basic religious/metaphysical beliefs:

- \* Nature and the wider Universe, rather than any supernatural beings, are the focus of our deepest reverence.
- \* Everything that exists is a part of Nature
- \* Mind and body are an inseparable unity
- \* We are sceptical about personal survival after death, but we look forward to a “natural” afterlife in terms of the actions and creations we leave behind, memories people hold of us, and recycling of our elements in Nature.

## **So why be a UU Pantheist?**

Unitarian Universalism is a context where you meet sensible sociable tolerant people with differing religious philosophies for shared spiritual exploration and social action. World Pantheism is a spiritual orientation in the sense that Atheism, Christianity or Judaism are: a position about our place in Nature and the Universe. Many people need both a social context AND a belief context in order to feel comfortable with their place in the universe. There are Pantheist Unitarian Universalists, just as there are Pagan, Humanist, Christian, or Jewish Unitarian Universalists. World Pantheism also offers written materials, networking and social/environmental action among Pantheists.