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## General Information

**Universism is a modern rational religious philosophy that began in 2003 with principles laid out by Ford Vox. Universists choose their beliefs according to the dictates of their own life experience and reason. Among the Universists are people who further define their beliefs as Atheist, Deist, Pantheist, Agnostic, and Transcendentalist, or significantly, an amalgamation of these freethought traditions. Universism argues that religious philosophy should not be defined in terms of one's views toward God, but in terms of how one approaches religious questions. Universists apply personal reason and experience to the fundamental questions of human existence, derive inspiration from the natural uncertainty of the human state, and deny the validity of revelation, faith and dogma.**

**Universism seeks to popularize the union of all freethought. The philosophy grew out of the Deus Project, whose ultimate goal was to craft deism into the religion of the future. The Project was founded by Ford**

**Vox in reaction to an increasingly vigorous and politically active religious fundamentalism in late 20th century America and around the world; it was motivated by the pathological aspects of religion. The Project had a premise that the divorcing of reality from the mind inherent in the act of faith results in misunderstandings between individuals and groups of individuals leading into hatred and violence. A later rejected premise of the Project was that belief in God alone (deism) was the simplest form of religion; as the project progressed, it became apparent that criterion could be eliminated as necessary. In the weeks and months after September 11, 2001, thousands of people searching the Internet for discussion of religious terrorism and the possibility of rational religion found the Deus Project's web site and pledged their support for its mission.**

**To achieve their goal Vox and project members addressed a number of puzzling questions that proved highly productive. These questions included "What can satisfactorily replace faith?" Surprisingly, the opposite of faith, uncertainty, appeared most promising. Uncertainty brought postmodernism into the philosophy, whereas deism is synonymous with modernism. The attitude and approach modernism had taught could serve to make rational religion tenable, if balanced by an acceptance of complexity and the apparent inadequacy of reason and the scientific method to answer fundamental cosmic and existential questions**

**satisfactorily for all reasonable people. Universism, it can safely be said, is the convergence of modernism and postmodernism and the union of all reason and experience applied to religious questions.**

**A goal of the Universist movement is to understand the biological basis of humanity's high regard for mysticism and faith, and to use that understanding to better articulate empiricism as religion.**

**Vox writes "Universism addresses three essential emotional elements of Religion:**

**\* The sense that we are part of something greater than us individually.**

**Universism offers the wonder of the natural universe to fill this need. Whereas faith-based religion divides humanity from reality, Universism celebrates reality.**

**\* The sense of communion and commitment with other searchers.**

**Universism encourages the formation of grassroots networks and groups, the nature of the philosophy is to facilitate questioning and exploration of the group's experiences and thoughts.**

**\* The sense of hope in the future.**

**Universism assigns each individual incredible power, freeing them from any faith, any dogma, any supernatural powers interfering in the world. In a natural world of matter and energy, Universists are free to work towards a better day for themselves and humanity without fear."**

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**based**

**1. The Universist Movement: Organization promoting  
Universism worldwide and coordinating local Universist  
groups <http://www.universist.org/>**

**2. ReligiousTolerance.org  
<http://religioustolerance.org/universism.htm>**

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