

## Who's Who in the UUs – The Beginnings



A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning. One of UU's Seven Principles. UUs today take that Principle literally. Probably not any two of us believe exactly the same thing.



Our fellowship encompasses

- Religious Humanism
- Earth/Nature centered spirituality
- Theism
- Liberal Christianity
- Mysticism
- as well as most of the world's major religions.



Although now UUs are not even considered a "Protestant denomination," the church came out of the Christian faith. Mark said it best last Sunday. We value in the teachings OF Jesus, not the teachings ABOUT Jesus.

There's a story that Satan's emissaries told their boss a big problem was brewing on earth. "It seems there's this rabbi from Nazareth. So far he has only twelve disciples, but he's getting more and more popular, and it looks like he could be trouble."

No problem, says Satan. If he gathers more followers he'll have to organize and then we'll be fine."



And thus it was. During the next 300 years letters written by Paul and others and the writing of Mark and others circulated all around the known world. They were copied and recopied, interpreted and then recopied with that interpretation, and sent out to the fellowship groups and churches that were popping up all over. A church hierarchy grew, with leaders deciding between orthodoxy and heresies.

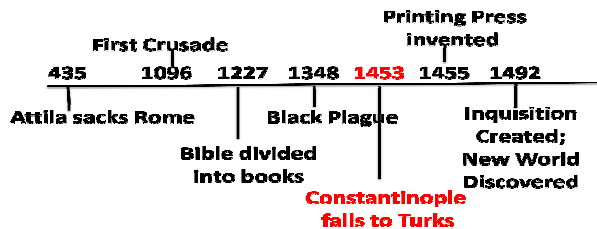


In the early 4<sup>th</sup> century the controversy over the divinity of Jesus threatened to tear the church apart. Was Jesus the literal son of God? Emperor Constantine invited the bishops to the Council of Nicaea; The chief opponent to the question was the powerful presbyter of the Church at Alexandria by the name of Arius. The question was put to

a vote and Arius was defeated. Today, you will still hear UUs referred to as "Arians" in some circles.

Here's the text of the creed; it is but one of about three that are still used today. This Nicene Creed was the only one accepted by both the Eastern (Constantinople) and Western (Rome) church. In 380 AD, Nicene Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire.

### Time Marches On.....



1453 is in red because many scholars credit this singular event as the beginnings of the Renaissance. When the Turks took over Constantinople, the Christian scholars and others fled west and took their manuscripts of classical authors and knowledge with them. A new emphasis was placed on learning with this new material. When the printing press was invented just two years later, it made it possible for the dissemination of information as it had never spread before. The Greek classics and the Bible were now available to many more people. Finally, just forty years later, the discovery of the New World expanded the horizons, and men were no longer content to live in a limited world.



Martin Luther was such a man. Born 1483, 20 year prior to John Calvin and Michael Servetus, was both a priest and a theology professor. Luther gets credit for initiating the Protestant Reformation.

- 1517: Nailed the *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of Whittenberg College
- 1522: Excommunicated!

- His 95 thesis were specifically against the selling of indulgences.... paying money to be free of God's punishment of sin

- Salvation is free gift of God through faith
- Bible is only source of divinely revealed knowledge – not the Pope
- All baptized Christians are a holy brotherhood
- Translated Bible into German

Married and had children



While Luther started a movement and has a denomination named for him Michael Servetus is almost a foot note in history. We claim him not as an early UU, but as one of the first people to question the Trinity, the theory that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are essentially one and that Jesus was somehow not quite human, but divine as we saw in the Nicene Creed.

Servetus was born in Spain in 1511 and at 17 was sent to the Univ. of Toulouse to study law. One of the first things he did was discover a copy of the Bible, a book he felt had been sent to him from heaven. Particularly he was excited to know by his reading that the Jews and Muslims had it right: God is one! The doctrine of the Trinity was wrong and a great stumbling block to faith. He committed himself to exposing the error.

After a couple of years at the court of Charles V, Servetus saw with disgust that the people seemed to worship the Pope, and how the highest dignitaries of the church displayed worldliness, selfish ambition, skepticism and unconcealed immorality.

Servetus thought he might have better luck with the Protestants since they had not yet made a creed. Brilliant Also self centered, conceited, obstinate, fanatical, insulting and exasperating. He shuffled from one town to another and never got a sympathetic audience. So he wrote a book, The Errors of The Trinity. The publisher was so afraid of the content that he refused to put his name or location on the book. When that book was condemned, he wrote a second: Dialogues on the Trinity. The Protestants clung even harder to the Trinity doctrine. Friendless, penniless and afraid of a trial for heresy, Servetus fled to France.

	<p>We next find him in Paris, studying and then teaching mathematics. He left Paris after being a no-show in a debate with Calvin to work for a publishing company in Lyon, where he edited a new edition of Ptolemy's Geography. His work on medical texts motivated him to enter medical school where he discovered that blood flow from the right side to the left side of the heart through the lungs and wrote a book on digestion went through 5 printings. He gave lectures on geography and astrology. Unfortunately, his poor opinion of his colleagues, loudly expressed, caused him to be charged with heresy and hauled before the Inquisitor. Acquitted, they then charged him with divination, and after he withdrew his words, he changed his name and left Paris.</p> <p>He ended up as physician for the bishop of Vienne for ten or twelve years. As a side line he was still much in demand to edit new publications, including a new Latin version of the Bible. His interpretations put the book on the Index of forbidden books and were part of the basis for the charges against him.</p> <p>Again he felt compelled to convert Calvin to his view and he wrote still another book, The Restoration of Christianity. His true identity was discovered and through Calvin's efforts, he was jailed. Before he could be sentenced he escaped to Switzerland, but was recognized and arrested the first Sunday he attended church. Unfortunately, Calvin was under pressure from the city council, and Servetus was Calvin's trump. Servetus was burned at the stake on Oct. 27, 1553.</p>
Tipping Point	<p>For Martin Luther, the sale of indulgences was the final straw that caused him to break with the Catholic Church. For Miguel Servetus, the ultimate disagreement was with the doctrine of the Trinity.</p> <p>What was your experience when you knew you couldn't even pretend anymore to subscribed to "orthodox" religion?</p>

