

Service  
at  
Hull Unitarian Church

Park Street, Hull

20120429 11:00

Adrian Worsfold

[Track 7: Purcell Dido Aeneas Sailor's Dance Come Away]

11:00 Chalice Lighting

[Track 8] Hymn: SF 136 Boscombe choir

Prayers

[Track 9 Benedictuses, including The Priests, Benedictus]

Reading: Momen, M. (1997), *A Short Introduction to the Baha'i Faith*, Oxford: One World, 102-103.

[Track 10] Hymn: NB 003 Hanson Place piano

Intercessions then Differences

Reading: Darlison, Bill (2007), *The Gospel and the Zodiac: The Secret Truth about Jesus*, London: Duckworth Overlook, 86-87.

[Track 11] Hymn: SF 155 Tallis Canon choir

Sermon

[Track 12: Ethical Relations extract] <Collection>

[Track 13] Hymn: SF 198 Creation of Peace choir piano

[Track 14] Hymn: SF 008 Be Ours a Religion alt <Benediction>

[Track 15: Saint Saens Swan Moore Roger Maisky Mischa]

[Track 7: Purcell Dido Aeneas Sailor's Dance Come Away]

Chalice Lighting

Awake, O sleeper, and arise, and light shall come;  
Look up and not down.  
Rise, O waker, and walk, and the light shines;  
Look ahead and not behind.  
Walk, O refreshed, and go into the light;  
Set your minds on things that are of true worth.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us. Let us pray from all our differences but with one heart and mind. As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love: now and for ever.

[Light the chalice]

We lighted this chalice, here in this one place  
We each see its flame differently, from a slightly different position -  
All of us together, yet each one in a different seat.  
But let it be a symbol of focus:  
It is our beacon of hope.  
Its light symbolises that of truth,  
It gives off a warmth of love,  
And it sits in a container of community:  
So let it shine while we reflect on all that matters.

As we enter this sacred silence,  
May our truest selves transcend  
The dissonance of daily distractions,  
As we join the spiralling, infinite dance  
Pulsing-unseen throughout all creation.  
May it be. [Martha Kirby Capo]

Grace, mercy and peace comes from God including through those prophetic figures that have been amongst us in and through time. This is the day full of the glory of God so let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We ask to receive God's saving help and be sustained by the life-giving Spirit.

[Track 8] Hymn: SF 136 Boscombe choir - a hymn about the partial nature of all knowledge and still the need to wonder and praise.

## Prayers

Under the myths and histories of the names of prophetic figures, we have come together: to hear and receive God's holy word, to seek forgiveness for wrongdoing, to offer our praise and thanksgiving and to pray for the needs of the world, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

The prophets have proclaimed that a New Order is upon us, so let us act as if this is the last day of the old and in preparation of the new. So we turn from our old ways and intend the new, confessing in penitence and faith.

We are sorry, and seek forgiveness; and we give forgiveness when it is needed:

For what we have done, but should not have done;  
For what we should have done, but did not do.  
For what we needed, but did not receive;  
For things we received, but did not actually need.  
For those who offered us love when we could not accept it;  
For those who did not receive the love we could have given.  
For friends and family we let down, and who let us down.  
For miracles that went unnoticed.  
For the truth of the situation presented but which went unheeded.

For all these we have our apologies that we can freely give, and forgivenesses greatly received, one to the other. Amen.

[After Peter Friedrichs]

In God we ask for a renewed and right spirit within us, to restore us to the pathways of salvation, as given by the many prophets of old and to come.

Blessed is the Lord, for he has heard the voice of our prayer; therefore shall our hearts dance for joy and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed is this universe and earth, evolving and redeeming of all; let us sing in glory and praise for ever.

From the gases of chaos came forth the worlds, and out of creaturely variation and catastrophe and recovery came us fashioned with a further divine image. The gases that could kill us are also the gases that let us live

and prosper, and so we offer our thanks and praise.

[Track 9 Benedictuses] The Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah) is sung (text below):

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David. Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us, to show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant. This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life. And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins. In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1.68-79

[In a combined Track 9, The Priests, Benedictus]

## Reading

'The Divine Physician', from Baha'u'llah's *Gleanings*

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. To none is given the right to question their words or disparage their conduct, for they are the only ones who can claim to have understood the patient and to have correctly diagnosed its ailments. Little wonder, then, if the treatment prescribed by the physician in this day should not be found to be identical with that which he prescribed before. How could it be otherwise when the ills affecting the sufferer necessitate at every stage of his sickness a special remedy? In like manner, every time the Prophets of God have illumined the world they have invariably summoned its peoples to embrace the light of God through such means as best befitted the exigencies of the age in which they appeared. They were thus able to scatter the darkness of ignorance, and to shed upon the world the glory of their own knowledge. (Baha'u'llah (1976), Effendi, S. compiler & translator, *Gleanings from the Writers of Baha'u'llah*, Wilmette, Illinois: Baha'i Publishing Trust, no. 34, 80), as in Momen, M. (1997), 102.

Commentary by Mojen Momen, a Haifan Baha'i:

Baha'u'llah's own claim is that he is a Manifestation of God in the line of succession of the prophet-founders of the world religions. His mission is to take humanity on to the next stage of its development. The social and

spiritual teachings that Baha'u'llah has brought are the teachings that he states will unite the world and bring about the fulfilment of the prophecies to be found in all of the religions of the world about a great day when there will be a golden age for humanity. Baha'is claim, therefore, that Baha'u'llah is the figure anticipated in the scriptures of all the religions of the world. He is the Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace foretold in the Hebrew Bible and expected by the Jews, the return of Christ in the glory of the Father awaited by Christians, the Great Announcement about which the Muslims are told in the Qur'an, the Shah Bahram of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Kalki Avatar foretold in the Hindu scriptures, and the Maitreya Buddha that the Buddhists are awaiting.

In view of the teaching described above of the progressive revelation of truth through the successive Manifestations, Baha'u'llah does not regard himself as the final Manifestation of God. In due course, conditions will change again and a new divine message will become necessary. Baha'u'llah has written, however, that this will not occur for at least a thousand years.

Momen, M. (1997), *A Short Introduction to the Baha'i Faith*, Oxford: One World, 102-103.

[Track 10] Hymn: Last time we sang the Seafarers' Hymn, *Eternal Father Strong to Save*, adapted for our purposes. Today I introduce to you another rewritten hymn, to the tune of Hanson Place, about our place near the river. NB 003 Hanson Place piano

We are gathered near the river,  
Where bright angel feet have trod,  
With its Humber tide forever,  
It is there, and for us, that of God.  
Yes, we're gathered near the river,  
Our very own (the beautiful), this river;  
Joining with the saints by the river:  
So close to the very flow of God.

[2] On the margin of the river,  
The Hull meets the Humber's way,  
We sing now and worship ever,  
Giving thanks, giving thanks, as we may.  
Yes, we're gathered near the river,  
Our very own (the beautiful), this river;  
Joining with the saints by the river:  
So close to the very flow of God.

We do love this bluest river,  
Soon our worshipping will cease;  
Our glad hearts are a-quiver  
With a yes to the fine song of peace.  
Yes, we're gathered near the river,  
Our very own (the beautiful), this river;  
Joining with the saints by the river:  
So close to the very flow of God.

[4] Ere we know this shining river,  
Lay we every burden down;  
To our spirits will deliver,  
Gift to hearts, uplifts souls, making home.  
Yes, we're gathered near the river,  
Our very own (the beautiful), this river;  
Joining with the saints by the river:  
So close to the very flow of God.

[After Robert Lowry]

## Intercessions

We pray for all people of faith, that they may see through their different doctrines a way to the most holy. We include the worldwide presence of the Unitarian comment to freedom, reason and tolerance. Give us the hope that comes through accepting, meeting, discussing and coming to tentative conclusions about our beliefs. We think especially today of the Dalai Lama under great pressure given some criticism of his non-violent response to Chinese occupation of Tibet. We think of Baha'is celebrating Ridvan and the ninth day today when Baha'u'llah received his family in a garden at Baghdad.

We pray for the world, and the hope of that one day when it may be free of conflict: when the individual heart at peace leads to harmony in the local community, and the harmony of the community can lead the nation to common friendship, and the friendship within each nation can deliver a condition of world peace and acceptance between the nations. This may well be some time off, as we consider current conflicts.

We pray for those who are ill, and who seek recovery. Let them find the resources and strength by which they can recover and re-enter the full social pattern that they have enjoyed.

We pray too for those who have died, that we continue to remember them and their deposit to the rich tapestry and history of this world.

## Differences

God of all peoples, Spirit of life and love, be in our hearts and minds this hour. Bless this gathering and this place.

Help us to speak to one another as we would be spoken to, with truthfulness and kindly regard. Help us to hear one another, to respect our differences as an aid to mutual understanding. Help us to acknowledge our limited visions - that together our grasp of truth is much greater than when alone.

May we find here greater clarity of mind and purpose, strengthened commitment and courage, and a deeper appreciation of our diversity. May we find that renewal of the spirit that comes when people of good faith, reason and passion dialogue together.

Spirit of life and love, be in our hearts and inform our minds and deeds this hour and in the days to come.

[Edmiston-Lange, Rebecca A. (1997), *UUMA Worship Materials Collection*; altered]

**Reading:** from Bill Darlison's book *The Gospel and the Zodiac*.

Since it is the primary contention of all mystical philosophy that reality is unitary, and the primary aim of all spiritual practice is to recognize this unity, it is fitting that any treatise on the spiritual life should contain a significant meditation on unity and division. Mark's Gospel contains such a meditation in its third section, where we are introduced to themes inspired by the constellation Gemini, the Twins, the first of those constellations called by Ptolemy 'bi-corporeal', 'double-bodied' (disoma), and by modern astrologers 'Mutable'. He describes them thus:

The bicorporeal signs, Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, and Pisces, are those which follow the solid signs and are so called because they are between the solid and the solsticial and equinoctial signs and share, as it were, at end and beginning, the natural properties of the two states of weather. The bicorporeal signs make souls complex, changeable, hard to apprehend, light, unstable, fickle, amorous, versatile, fond of music, lazy, easily acquisitive, prone to change their minds. (Ptolemy, pages 67-9)

Since these characteristics cover four zodiacal signs, we cannot claim that they all belong exclusively to Gemini. In fact, few astrologers today would accept that love of music, laziness, amorousness, or acquisitiveness were typically Geminian traits, but the rest seem particularly apt and feature prominently in any delineation of the Geminian type. Jeff Mayo lists the characteristics which most astrologers would accept as typifying this sign:

Adaptable, communicative, versatile. Incessantly on the go, restless, inquisitive, liking variety and change, contriving ingenious methods for transmitting anything from here to there. In this way he is the ideal middle man, mediator. Nervously excitable, inconsistent, witty, chatty, never dull. (Mayo, 1964, page 43)

All these are really manifestations of 'duality', a factor present in all the mutable signs, but particularly evident in Gemini, because Gemini is also an Air sign, and Air is the element through which mutability or changeableness best expresses itself. The glyph of Gemini (II) is a graphic representation of its nature: two poles, parallel but separate, joined at top and bottom, depicting a perpetual conflict between two quite distinct natures, and expressing the 'irrepressible restlessness by which man divides himself and widens his experience' (Jones, page 59). At its best it represents versatility, and the ability to be, with St Paul, all things to all men; at worst, inconstancy and even

duplicity.

St Paul's Geminian qualities are further underlined by the numerous roles spokesman, theologian, letter-writer, and missionary which he played in the development of early Christianity, and by his volte-face on the road to Damascus which changed him from a fervent persecutor of the new faith to its most ardent devotee. His confession of moral turbulence in Romans 7 is perfect expression of Geminian duality and Mercurial inconsistency. He was even mistaken for an incarnation of Gemini's ruler, Mercury (Hermes in Greek), by the people of Lystra ([Acts 14:12](#)).

[Jones, M. E. (1977), *How to Learn Astrology*, Boulder Colorado: Shambhala.  
Ptolemy, C. (1940), Robbins F. E. (trans.), *The Tetrabiblos*, London: Heinemann. Both in  
Darlison, Bill (2007), *The Gospel and the Zodiac: The Secret Truth about Jesus*, London: Duckworth Overlook, 86-87.]

[\[Track 11\] Hymn](#): SF 155 Tallis Canon choir. Our hymn tells us of a hope for the song of joy where whatever faith all share the image of one God.

## Sermon

1844 was quite a millennial year. William Miller, a Baptist preacher, looked at the Book of Daniel, verse 8:14, where it says:

And he answered him, 'For two thousand three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.'

Using a year for every day, Miller added the 2,300 days or years to 457 B.C.E. and its decree by Artaxerxes I of Persia to rebuild Jerusalem. It gets us to 1843, but Miller at first denied an exact date until pressed by his supporters. He came up with between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. That was the time Christ would return and bring in the last days. Another date was April 18, 1844, based on the Karaite Jewish calendar rather than the Rabbinic calendar.

Once Jerusalem is rebuilt and restored, Christ will return for the last days.

In Exeter, New Hampshire, Samuel S. Snow generated his seventh month message or true midnight cry that Christ would return on "the tenth day of the seventh month of the present year, 1844, or October 22, 1844."

The failure of Christ to return was called the Great Disappointment.

However, there is one religious group who believe that Miller was right. They

are called the Baha'i. They look to the Bab, who they regard as the forerunner of their own religion and 1844 was, amazingly, also a millennial year in parts of Shia Islam.

In Bahai mythology, the Bab is the gate to Baha'u'llah, both manifestations of God, but the Bab is for them like a John the Baptist to Jesus. That's not how the Bab saw it, however.

Originally the branch of Islam called Shia was led by a succession of Imams, each a direct descendent of Ali, the nephew of Muhammad. About July 29, 869 Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Mahdi was born, and became the twelfth Imam when five years old. In popular understanding it is believed that as a five year old he led his father's funeral and immediately went missing, and that God had hidden him, and that he will emerge with Jesus Christ in the last days. Apparently he has appeared at times to Islamic deputies or moved about incognito, but when Allah chooses, he will be revealed to all and everyone.

So, at a time of chaos, al-Mahdi will appear, and half of the true believers will ride from Yemen carrying white flags to Makkah, while the other half will ride from Karbala, now in Iraq, carrying black flags to Makkah. Islam will be instituted throughout the world and the last days will be upon us.

So to 1844 and a merchant and a member of the Shaykhi school of Shia Islam, Siyyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi, or the Bab, who predicted the coming of the Mahdi. He went on pilgrimage from Iran to Iraq and announced that the hidden twelfth would be revealed in Karbala, he said, and he was the gate to the Imam. However, then he became the hidden Imam himself, and not only that but later became a full manifestation of God in his own right, that is the equivalent of Muhammad or Jesus Christ. Such was heretical and likely to draw the strongest opposition.

The result of the Bab's early claims, was a great deal of excitement, and not a little violence between different sects of Shia Islam in the region. As the claims escalated and expectations took hold, the violence extended and the authorities cracked down on them all. The Qajar government in Iran was fighting the movement from 1848 onwards.

Eventually, after some complications, and on the orders of a new Prime Minister, the Bab was killed by firing squad in 1850, except that apparently they missed, only severing the rope holding him and a supporter up against a wall. So they tied them back up and shot them again. Although the remains were to be eaten by animals, supporters gathered them up and that is why

there is a shrine today to the Bab in Haifa. In 1852 some Babis decided in return that they'd assassinate the Shah, so the government getting wind of the plan set out to destroy the movement.

The Bab had apparently appointed a successor, Mirza Yahya, with the spiritual title of Subh-i-Azal, to lead his movement: as for a new manifestation of God, such would emerge in a thousand years, or simply claim to be "He Whom God Shall Manifest". No one could wrongly claim to be He Whom God Shall Manifest, but about 20 people did so claim it. One who did was the older brother of Subh-i-Azal, Mirza Husayn Ali otherwise known as Baha'u'llah.

Baha'u'llah, in a family of ancestral estates and high government (in and out of favour), had been connected with the Babi movement from 1848, but was in advised personal exile for some time about 1851 and temporarily imprisoned in 1852 in a dungeon in Tehran given the assassination attempt, of which Baha'u'llah was found innocent. There he had mystical experiences. Getting more involved with the Babis from 1856, he was much the better organiser than Subh-i-Azal and soon the remnants of the movement were in two camps and both being moved on by the authorities - into the Ottoman Empire rather than Russia. There was some violence between them, and the authorities eventually split them and sent the Bahai's to Akka and the Azalis to Cyprus. There were spies in each camp and the Azali spies were killed.

So Baha'u'llah thought he was a divine manifestation about 1852. He went with one other up to Kurdistan and wrote of his mission in 1854. Baha'u'llah informed close followers and family of his status in 1863, which Baha'is are celebrating as the key year of pronouncement, when he was in Baghdad, and it all became public in 1867 in Adrianople.

Baha'u'llah was polygamous with three wives and it is the offspring of the first that forms the holy family. What Baha'u'llah decided from 1854 was that the movement needed a broader identity. He read the New Testament and Sufi texts, and of course kept moving West. So he spiritualised and made a post-Muslim movement. Baha'u'llah died in 1897.

This change was intensified by the charismatic son, not a manifestation of God, but yet also capable of error-free spiritual writing like his father. Although Muhammad Ali took it that he was a leader of the faith after his father's death, Abdul Baha took control and Muhammad Ali was declared a Covenant Breaker as were those under him known as Unitarian Bahais. Abdul Baha was a charismatic figure and once free travelled around the Western world, and the faith Westernised further. He died in 1921. Some questioned whether Abdul Baha's Will and Testament was real, announcing the successor as

Shoghi Effendi, and indeed the British Museum thought it was not valid. As a result, a group arose in Germany called the Free Bahais. Shoghi Effendi further bureaucratized the faith into an Administration for exclusive membership. He died in 1957. Leaving no Will and Testament, there were then no more Guardians, because all members of the eligible family had been declared Covenant Breakers, although the French National Spiritual Assembly recognised Mason Remey as the new Guardian. From this division arose the Orthodox Baha'is under Remey. It took until 1963 for the Baha'is to sort out that there would be no more Guardians, and the faith would be run by the 9 man Universal House of Justice.

So at every point of Baha'i development, there has been division, starting with Baha'u'llah himself, then Abdul Baha, then Shoghi Effendi, and then the jump to the Universal House of Justice alone. But with great stress on unity, the faith keeps control of its archives and is not keen to let scholars see them freely. Today there are many ex-Bahais who have become known as non-Haifan Bahais. Some had published material that has led to them being declared Covenant breakers, and others just don't know why they are Covenant breakers. More on them later.

The principal claims of the Haifan Baha'i faith are a one world combined religious and secular government, originally in a period of the Most Great Peace, which was due to start in 2000, but obviously has not; indeed, it is war and religious strife in Iraq that allows us to imagine the competitive religious strife all the way back in 1844. The Baha'is believe that men and women are equal, each individual is free to search for religion, that there is no clash between religion and science, and that there will be a world auxiliary language.

The Bahais are thus run by a 9 person assembly, all of whom must be men. When Abdul Baha was asked why, he said that the writings of Baha'u'llah on this would become clear. This assembly is not directly elected, but elected by the National Spiritual Assemblies, and there are no candidates or elections. The result is that the same people in the know are re-elected every time and the bias is conservative. Furthermore, the word from the top is absolute law. This is an example of what Leninists have called democratic centralism, and clearly men and women are not equal.

Furthermore, Baha'is regard homosexuality as an aberration and not normal. There will be no equal homosexuality in a Baha'i utopia.

Then there is the claim about science and religion not being in conflict. So ask Baha'is about evolution and they say "something like evolution" is true.

Why is this? Because the Baha'is say that God is active in the evolving of creatures. But science says that local environments favour one gene advantage over another, and the more intense the environment the quicker the evolving. Evolution is always local, and represents a chaotic system from below. The reason Baha'is claim 'something like evolution' is correct is because Abdul Baha was error-free and he did not agree with Charles Darwin. But we can therefore conclude that Baha'is favour the divine word over the scientific.

Baha'is favour a free enquiry into religion. But they also state that their scriptures are error free and so are the writings of Abdul Baha. The writings of Shoghi Effendi are to be taken as decisive in all respects (and, incidentally, he is the translator of many Persian originals) and the decisions of the Universal House of Justice are absolute. Furthermore, it is made clear that individual views about the Baha'i Faith carry no authority whatsoever: only collective and approved views carry authority. That is the quid pro quo of apparent individual freedom of interpretation. So when someone declares that they have become followers of Baha'u'llah, they then submit themselves to the error free nature of Baha'i revelation. If you disagree and encourage difference, in other words suggest that *your* views carry authority, then you will become a Covenant Breaker - and, to avoid this happening, the Baha'is operate censorship committees to which all books about the faith are to be submitted. One explicit role of the Local and National Spiritual Assemblies is to protect the Faith from attack.

Another aspect of the Baha'i faith is that no outsider can contribute funds. So what this means is that after becoming a believer, you are then expected to hand over a good proportion of your income. But more than this, there is no distinction between 'the faith' and the 'administrative order', so that very suddenly you find yourself doing a lot of paper work. Now the Baha'is operate by ten and five year plans, and look to the day when people will join up in their droves, like an army coming in. As a result, a lot of work drops on few hands. A result of this is that many new Baha'is drift off and stop attending, and although the Baha'is like to talk about growth and people joining, what they don't tell you about is the numbers who simply give up. The faith has hardly got going in the West and yet is suffering from the same secularisation pressures as other faiths. The fact that much of it is a turn of the twentieth century modernism does not protect it from further change in Western societies towards equality and diversity. It too will be overtaken by new events and philosophies and different social attitudes.

The Baha'i Faith is an example of a religion that syncretises others, as arguably Islam does and as how the Sikh religion began within Islamic and

Hindu poetry. The Baha' Faith claims to be the latest and most relevant. But it becomes just one more religion. Islam doesn't accept it, because Islam claims that it was always present in every prophet from Adam and Abraham and all the way through to the last prophet, Muhammad. Christians see the Trinity as the supreme understanding of the Godhead, and Christ was not just a manifestation of God but God's actual incarnation. Buddhism does not accept the superiority of the Baha'is because Buddhists do not believe in God and the Dharma *is* the discovered path. As for Hindu's, well Baha'i insights might simply become another aspect of Hinduism absorbed into its own big melting pot.

The uniformity the Bahai's seek is their own and only their own. What makes a religion in part accept equality, or live with science, or fully engage with political authorities, or understand sexuality, is the maturity of the religion, when it shows some internal diversity and change and realises it doesn't contain all truth. Even then there will be a spectrum of intolerance to tolerance within. A mature religion contains many theologies, not one. The Baha'is champion cultural diversity, but this is not enough. It takes theological diversity and accepting diversity to produce unity: all you get with the authority of the collective is the existence of Covenant Breakers.

Perhaps the people who may advance the Baha'i faith furthest are those who are labelled Covenant Breakers and others who have drifted away from the administrative deadweight. They may develop new approaches to the texts and traditions. Eric Stetson is a Unitarian Universalist who follows the Baha'i calendar and bases some of his views on that other Unitarian, Ghusn-i-Akbar or Muhammad Ali, and has organised the Unitarian Bahai Association that asks non-Haifan Bahais to attend UUA churches. Steson writes:

...a new type of Bahatism is now emerging - Unitarian Bahatism - Bahais who share the liberalism of the Unitarian and Universalist religious traditions and find community in UU churches. The Unitarian Bahai movement represents a decision on the part of many liberal and unenrolled Bahais to simply "move beyond" the desire to reform the Haifan Baha'i Faith, and accept that Haifan Baha'is have chosen their path and we must choose our own path, independently of their organisation and tradition...

...Instead, we are developing our own way of understanding and practising the Bahai faith and, in the Unitarian Universalist Association, are finding a new religious home - a community that welcomes and celebrates our liberalism and open-mindedness.

He tells of a direct descendent of the Baha'i family - even she is unenrolled:

Nigar Bahai Amsalem, the great granddaughter of the Prophet Baha'u'llah, was interviewed in a 2006 Israeli documentary about the Baha'i organisation in Haifa, Israel, called *Baha'is In My Backyard*. In this film she described how the international Bahai leaders - whose offices are located within walking distance of her house - have alternately denied that she and her family even exist, or instructed Baha'i Faith members to shun them.

Why have they done this? Because she and her family are unenrolled Bahais - they consider themselves Bahai but choose not to belong to the Haifan Baha'i Faith organisation. Mrs. Bahai Amsalem's grandfather, Muhammad Ali Bahai Ghusn-i-Akbar, was the second son of Baha'u'llah, and he advocated a Unitarian interpretation of Bahaism that sought to limit the power of Baha'u'llah's successors and encouraged freedom of thought and conscience among Bahais. Most of Baha'u'llah's descendants supported that liberal view of the faith, rather than following the organisation created by Baha'u'llah's eldest son, Abdul Baha - and for that they are shunned.

[\[http://www.uubahai.com/2010/03/not-interested/\]](http://www.uubahai.com/2010/03/not-interested/)

If you have a commitment to openness, to criticism (positive and negative), then no matter what you think is the best approach, someone else will disagree. I don't agree with Bill Darlison's approach, and his use of the Zodiac. In fact I think it is basic nonsense. But I can accept his broader worship, and even the general view derived from his material about difference leading to a unity of purpose. You will only get unity when you arrive at the maturity of positively tolerating diversity. Institutions find this difficult, but there must always be a difference between the Church as administration and the Church as the people of faith. To see the administration as divine leads indeed to uniformity, but it also leads to heresy and the inevitable breaking of a doctrinal Covenant. And you never know, the heretic, the one who thinks otherwise, might just be right on occasions.

[\[Track 12 Ethical Relations extract\]](#) Collection and Notices

[\[Track 13\] Hymn:](#) It will be 198 but please be ready in your books to move to hymn number eight straight after. To complete our main hymns we're having a good sing along one, focussing on what matters. SF 198 Creation of Peace choir piano

[\[Track 14\] Hymn:](#) For our Benediction we have words are by Theodore Parker in SF 008 Be Ours a Religion.

Be ours a Religion, which the sunshine goes everywhere  
Its temple all space, its shrine the good heart,  
Its creed all truth, its ritual works of love.

[Track 15: Saint Saens Swan Moore Roger Maisky Mischa]