

2500 YEARS OF LIBERAL RELIGION: FROM THE AXIAL AGE TO THE PRESENT

An eight-hour program led by Rev. Davidson Loehr, Ph.D., of Austin, Texas.

Sponsored by the Religious Services Committee and the Adult Education Committee

The liberal style of being religious seemed to develop almost spontaneously all over the world between about 2200 and 2800 years ago. The difference between **liberal** and **literal** religions is profound: change one letter and you change a whole world.

Literal styles of religion look for a small collection of quotes to support the biases, bigotries, habits and hatreds the believers happen to have – as they are being used today in America. **Liberal** styles of religion look to their religious teachings as stories, lessons, allegories and metaphors about how to live most wisely and well in the present, with the largest and most compassionate kind of character.

This can be found in the Upanishads of Hinduism, much of Buddhism, Taoism, the teachings of Confucius, as well as in the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures, and the highest teachings of Jesus and Muhammad.

The relevance for our times comes through realizing that we live in the most pluralistic nation on earth, and we desperately need bridges between different religions rather than walls around them. Literalism builds walls and seeks armies; liberalism seeks the deep commonalities between all people, and builds bridges.

While the topic is bigger than eight hours – or eight books – can surround, this workshop gives an excellent introduction and overview to this perspective on religions. It will help people of differing beliefs find the compassion and understanding that might lead us toward a more humane future together.

Dr. Loehr will lead this program on Friday night January 20th from 7:00 to 9:30, and Saturday January 21st from 9:00 to 4:00 at the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater. Tickets are \$10 for Friday night only, and \$25 for the entire program. Dr. Loehr will also be preaching at the church on Sunday morning. Call the office at 727-531-7704 to make reservations.

Visit the website of the Austin UU church to read some of Dr. Loehr's sermons and for more information about him and about his book, [America, Fascism and God](#). The URL is www.austinuu.org.