

Speaker Information

Guest Speaker List — Sponsored by Thomas Jefferson District

The Thomas Jefferson District, a regional office of the Unitarian Universalist Association, provides the Guest Speaker List service to its member and emerging congregations. Speakers and the UU congregation or organization are totally responsible for all speaker-booking arrangements.

July 2006

Your name	Dr. Calvin Mercer		
Organization/title /affiliation	Professor, Religious Studies Program, East Carolina University		
E-mail	mercerc@ecu.edu	Phone#	<i>available on request</i>
Topics <i>Select all that apply</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Health and Wellbeing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Justice <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Music <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <i>specify</i> : Ethical issues regarding radical life extension and related issues, such as genetic engineering.		
Titles and a brief description	<p>Some of the study courses/programs/sermons I've done in churches (including numerous Unitarian Universalist congregations) and other organizations are listed below. Many are appropriate for sermons; some work better in a study course format.</p> <p>God, Souls, Spiritual Machines, and Living Forever in the 21st Century: Here I summarize the science that is fast opening up possibilities for extreme longevity and engineering the body and mind. My professional work on these matters includes coediting a book.</p> <p>Slaves of Faith: A Psychological Analysis of the Fundamentalist: Although a religion professor, I am also trained as and have practiced part-time for a decade as a therapist. This talk is based on my forthcoming book that uses a cognitive therapy model to analyze the fundamentalist mind.</p> <p>Monks and Monasteries: History, development, and contemporary expression of the monastic movement.</p> <p>Trying Not to Get Beaten: My Experience in a Japanese Zen Monastery: Mines insights and wisdom from my experience in a Japanese Renzai Zen Buddhist Monastery in Kyoto, Japan.</p> <p>What Thomas Merton Has to Offer Our World: A look at this contemporary Trappist monk.</p> <p>Headaches, Happiness, and the <i>Yoga Sutra</i> of Pantanjali: A study of this old Hindu text and its relevance for our culture and personal well-being.</p> <p>Battle on the Field of <i>Dharma</i>: Stories and Teaching from the <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i>: Stories and teachings from what is arguably the most loved text in Hinduism.</p>		

	<p>Christian Chanting: Chanting is often associated with India and religions other than Christianity. However, there is a long tradition of chanting in Christianity. We will consider this often overlooked technique for spiritual growth and mental calmness. I have attended workshops with recognized chant masters and have led group chanting where we used Christian chants that I designed from Hebrew and Greek.</p> <p>Fasting for Health and Holiness: A practical and theological study of this old spiritual technique.</p> <p>Humor in the Bible, or Why Jesus Didn't Have Ulcers: A literary/psychological study of the parables and proverbs of Jesus, which produce some interesting results.</p> <p>From Eve to Jerry Falwell: The Image, Role, and Status of Women: History, role, and status of women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions.</p> <p>Sexual Violence and the Warrior God: A study of the way the warrior God of Judaism and Christianity provides the context for sexual violence against women.</p> <p>The Case Against the Death Penalty: Presentation of the arguments pro and con, concluding with an abolitionist position; based on a public debate with a district attorney.</p> <p>Jesus' First Day at School: A look at some of the Christian gospels that didn't make it into the canon.</p> <p>The Books that Didn't Make It: A look at some of the many Jewish and Christian writings that did not make it into the Bible.</p> <p>How We Got the Bible: Examination of the writing materials, transmission, collection, and translation of the texts.</p> <p>Basic Teachings of Islam: Presentation of the essential teachings of this religion, with some attention to contemporary issues of what has been called radical Islam.</p> <p>Death, Life, Love, and Valentine's Day: A meditation on death and dying.</p>
Your availability	Availability varies with my schedule.
Fees (if any)	Fee and mileage to be negotiated.
	Have three references available to give any UU organization that contacts you.
Travel distances and regions (East, West, Piedmont, RTP, NC, GA, VA, SC, TN, etc)	I live in North Carolina, but may be able to accommodate other locations, depending on my schedule.

Additional information about Guest Speaker List service at www.tjd-guestspeaker-list-home.htm