

An Introduction to the Proposed Eighth Principle

History of the UU Principles

1961: Unitarians + Universalists → Unitarian Universalists

Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the organization that UU congregations belong to.

The Principles in 1961

In accordance with these corporate purposes, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith, unite in seeking:

1. To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;
2. To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man;
3. To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of every human personality, the dignity of man, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;
4. To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace;
5. To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;
6. To encourage cooperation with men of good will in every land.

The Principles in 1985

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

An Eighth Principle is Proposed

In 2013 Paula Cole Jones and Bruce Pollack-Johnson proposed a new principle:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

What does the principle actually mean?

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

journeying toward spiritual wholeness

journeying toward spiritual wholeness: this means making anti-racism anti-oppress a core part of our identity as individuals and as a congregation; it's not just social justice

by working to build

working to build requires awareness at the personal level and institutional level to heal, re-imagine, and create together. It means building inclusion into our spiritual lives and our congregational practices

a diverse multicultural

diverse multicultural: inclusive of all; not just European Americans and African Americans/Black folks, but also Native people, Latinx, Asian, multi-racial, and other cultural groups

Beloved Community

Beloved Community: a community in which people of all kinds join together in love and respect and seek justice together

by our actions that accountably dismantle

accountably dismantling means creating an effective mechanism to ensure that UUs do what they say they will do: white UUs holding themselves accountable to communities of color and BIPOC UUs holding each other accountable and helping each other see and dismantle internalized racism.

racism and other oppressions

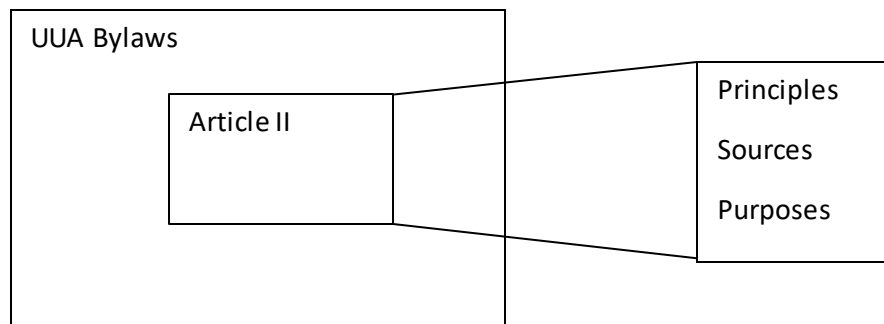
racism and other oppressions: this means inclusion across the board: race, gender, age, ableism, sexual orientation, etc., all of the ways that we are actively engaged in recognizing our full humanity

in ourselves and our institutions

ourselves and our institutions: it's not just about individuals; it's about congregations and the UUA

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

The Article II Study Commission



At least every 15 years, the UUA Board has to appoint a commission to study Article II and to recommend appropriate revisions, if any.

Timeline of the Article II Study Commission

2020	Article II Study Commission created
June 2021	Delegates at GA presented and approved a resolution asking the Article II Study Commission to include “a clear and direct statement that accountable systemic anti-racist and anti-oppressive actions to build Beloved Community are part of what it means to be Unitarian Universalist”
Jan. 2023	Commission will present its proposed revisions
June 2023	Delegates at GA will vote on the proposed revisions
June 2024	If the vote in 2023 was to accept the revisions, delegates at GA will vote again on the proposed revisions

General Assembly (GA): Annual conference of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)

Status of the 8th Principle

- Congregations are considering the 8th Principle for themselves. More than 200 congregations have adopted it so far.
- Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) and Diverse Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) endorsed the 8th Principle; Allies for Racial Equity (ARE) supports these endorsements.

Why Adopt it?

- Our country and our communities are steeped in racism and other oppressions. The commitments embodied in the 8th Principle are needed to counter the racism in our culture.
- Proposals at the national level will be more effective if congregations are doing the work to understand and live the 8th Principle.
- Adoption signals to the Article II Study Commission that there is broad support for explicitly including these concepts and commitments in the Principles.
- BLUU and DRUUMM have asked us to adopt this principle, to understand it, and to live it.

What About the Article II Study Commission?

- It's valuable for the congregation to take time to consider the 8th principle regardless of what happens with the Study Commission's proposed revisions.
- Even if the proposed revisions are rejected, if we adopt the 8th principle, it'll still be effective for us.

Adoption of the 8th Principle is the beginning or continuation of the journey toward dismantling racism and other forms of oppression. It is not an end point. It is a commitment to do the work.

For More Information

The 8th Principle website
www.8thprincipleuu.org

The Article II Study Commission
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>

The Article II Study Commission and the 8th Principle
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/blog/8thprinciple>

UU World article, The Original Principles
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/the-uuas-original-principles-1961>

UU World article, -Principles and Purposes
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/how-uu-principles-purposes-were-adopted>

Widening the Circle of Concern - Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change (CIC)
This report contains results of an audit of white privilege and the structure of power within Unitarian Universalism and an analysis of structural racism and white supremacy culture within the UUA
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>

Video (1hr 1 min): Presentation of the CIC report at General Assembly in 2020
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic>
(scroll down to reach the video)

Video (23 min): Introduction and discussion of the 8th Principle by Paula Cole Jones
youtu.be/bUvJ3c1xSu8

Video (45 min): Conversations with Satya Mamdani: The Eighth Principle Project and the Article II Study Commission
<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/blog/conversation-eight-principle-project>

Video (1 hr 28 min): Four ministers' insights from their congregations' adoption of the 8th Principle
<https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/ministry-8th-principle>

Video (1 hr 17 min): The 8th Principle Matters to Members of the BIPOC Community
[uua.org/leaderlab/bipoc-and-8th-principle](https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/bipoc-and-8th-principle)

Video (1 hr 24 min): Youth Value the 8th Principle
[uua.org/leaderlab/youth-8th-principle](https://www.uua.org/leaderlab/youth-8th-principle)

Video (1 hr 21 min): Congregational leaders discuss governance and the 8th Principle
youtu.be/YQewvZW4kvg