

Thoughts about the 8th Principle (and Article II)

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As many of you know, there has been talk of adding an 8th principle to the list of principles outlined in the Unitarian Universalist Association's [bylaws](#) (Article II). All the existing principles are currently preceded by this phrase in the bylaws: "We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote." That preface is also clearly printed in our hymnal. So please note that this language is not part of the proposed 8th principle itself. (Even the [website about the 8th principle](#) doesn't clearly delineate what comes from the bylaws and what's in the actual proposed principle, so I feel it's important that I clarify this point!)

What *is* suggested as the language of the 8th principle is this:

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.

This principle is not about what an *individual* must *believe* but rather about what the *congregations* of the UUA covenant to *do*--to dismantle racism and other oppressions, thereby building Beloved Community.

Is this idea that controversial? I would not have thought so. Surely, our own congregation is committed to this crucial work in transforming ourselves and our world.

As of General Assembly this past June, over 200 UU congregations adopted the 8th principle. Decorah UU can choose to join that number, or it can wait to see what happens at the denominational level. Whatever path we opt to take, it is inevitable that the UU principles will continue to evolve. They do not constitute a static creed but rather an expression of communal commitment that informs our ethics, our behavior, our worship, and our relationship to one another and the world. We continue to learn and to be challenged, and it would be a disservice to ourselves not to apply that hard-earned wisdom to the articulation of our principles.

"A change is gonna come." A [responsive resolution](#) to ensure the principles 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" passed with 91% of the vote at the [2021 General Assembly](#). The [Article II Study Commission](#) has been charged to review Article II and propose revisions; and it is clear that, whether the 8th principle will be adopted as currently proposed, Article II *will* address how we must covenant to address systemic oppressions.

As we consider whether we as a congregation want to affirm and promote the 8th principle, the following resources could be helpful (in addition to the links above):

- [The 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism: Other Comments](#)
- [Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective Urges Adoption of 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism](#)
- [The Article II Study Commission and the 8th Principle](#)
- [The 8th Principle Matters to Members of the BIPOC Community](#)