

For The Unity of the Light-  
and Dark-Skinned People of the Earth

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle of Unitarian Universalism: Pros and Cons  
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Comrades in the struggle: Here is the best discussion of the Proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle which I have been able to come up with.

***From the UUA/BLUU link, the following is the full statement of the Eighth Principle and its Background information (Sources):***

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.

**WHERE DID THIS COME FROM ORIGINALLY?**

Paula Cole Jones, JPD (Joseph Priestley District—the mid-Atlantic district of the UUA, now subsumed into the larger Central East Regional Group, CERG) Director of Racial & Social Justice, developed the idea of the existence of 2 different paradigms in UU circles: the UU 7 Principles and Beloved Community (deep multiculturalism). After working with congregations on these issues for over 15 years, she realized that a person can believe they are being a “good UU” and following the 7 Principles without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level.

Evidence: most UU congregations are primarily European-American in membership, culture (especially music), and leadership, even when located near

diverse communities. She realized that an 8th Principle was needed to correct this, and talked with Bruce Pollack-Johnson about some of the components that should be in it. Bruce put together an initial draft in 2013, and the two of them worked with a group of anti-racist activists in the JPD to refine it. Bruce's congregation (the UU Church of the Restoration in Philadelphia) incorporated it into their Covenant at that time, then in May 2017 formally adopted it for themselves and recommended that the UUA adopt it.

UUs and the UUA have done very good work in fighting racism, such as during the Civil Rights Movement and in the 1990's (passing a resolution in 1997 at GA, after a precursor resolution in 1992, to become an Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression Multi-Cultural, or ARAOMC, Organization), but the funding and support started to wane in the 2000's – our accountability mechanism failed us. UU's also have a mixed record historically in other areas of racial justice: e.g., we had people on both sides of Abolitionism (including people like Jefferson who was a slaveholder), and Unitarians were proponents of Eugenics (leading to some of the racial extremes of Nazism and Apartheid in South Africa).

For people identified as white, it is too easy to ignore these issues, which is exactly what keeps the system of racism in our society alive and in fact worsening right now. We need to de-center whiteness and other dominant cultures in UUism.

The 8th Principle came from a feeling that we need something to renew our commitment to this work, to hold ourselves accountable, and to fulfill the potential of our existing principles.

## **WHY NOW?**

The UUA has just gone through a crisis related to inclusive hiring practices, especially related to whites being hired over highly qualified Latinx candidates, resulting in the resignation of the UUA President.

In response to this crisis, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU) and Diverse Revolutionary UU Ministries (DRUUMM) endorsed the 8th Principle. BLUU's main point is that the UUA voted in 1997 at GA to commit to intentionally becoming an ARAOMC institution. Initially good progress was made, with programs including the Journey Toward Wholeness, the Jubilee Anti-Racism Training workshops, process evaluation at meetings, and multicultural

consulting services. In the early 2000s, funding and support for much of this work began to decline.

The recent hiring crisis is not surprising in light of this decreasing support and lost focus. BLUU is holding all of the UUA accountable to that commitment, and expresses disappointment that the 8th Principle has not already been supported and midwived by UUA leadership. Allies for Racial Equity (ARE - the UU white ally group) support BLUU in BLUU's endorsement of the 8th Principle. The White Supremacy Teach-In April 30th and May 7 included the BLUU endorsement of the 8th Principle with their resources for planning for the Teach-In. See: <http://www.blacklivesuu.com/teachin/>.

UU funding and focus in the last decade shifted toward shallow diversity rather than deep multicultural Beloved Community and structural change. UU support of the Movement for Black Lives has been encouraging; the best way for us to truly support racial justice in a significant way is to purge ourselves and our institutions of the culture and exclusive practices of whiteness and white supremacy.

The New Jim Crow (mass incarceration and the criminal justice system replacing the older systems of slavery and Jim Crow laws), police violence against people of color, recent Supreme Court decisions on Voting Rights and Affirmative Action, and the election of Donald Trump with advisors and followers (including Attorney General Jeff Sessions) openly supporting white supremacists show that the country is moving quickly and dangerously in the wrong direction. UUs need to take strong leadership to reverse these trends.

Whiteness, and chattel slavery (structural racism) were invented in the US, at the same time that modern Unitarianism and Universalism were being created.

Unitarians originally were largely from the New England European-American elite – often did not treat Native American peoples well, benefitted from slavery, and some were leaders in the Eugenics movement (promoting birth control for people of color because they were seen as inferior).

Some Unitarian and Universalist ministers (more Universalists, since Universalism

was more of a working class movement) spoke out against slavery, but we did little as a denomination. After the Trayvon Martin verdict, many UU ministers said nothing in church.

UU's did a very good job during the Civil Rights Movement, largely at the request of Dr. King, and we should be very proud of that.

In the late 60's a promising movement (BAC, BUUC) was supported by the UUA, then de-funded because of a financial crisis, leading to a terrible conflict, after which many African-Americans left the UUA.

There was a long period of silence until the late 80's and early 90's, then excellent progress after that for a decade or so, but we have regressed, leading to the UUA President resigning over hiring inclusivity issues.

### **WHY SINGLE OUT RACISM?**

At a global level, this would not necessarily make sense (for instance, the oppression of women is fundamental to poverty and lack of development in many areas), but in the USA, racism stands out. The two worst crises of the UUA (late 1960's and now) were both related to race. Racism in the US stems from chattel slavery, where people were uniquely legally treated as property that could be inherited, for something (skin color) they had no control over.

The UUA has done well with women becoming ministers and leaders (the 7 Principles themselves came out of the Women's Movement within UUism).

The LGBTQIA+ community is well represented as members, ministers, RE staff, and other leadership in individual congregations and the UUA, and the Welcoming Congregation program has been very effective (we could use something similar for racism). Some congregations have done a good job of making sure they are accessible to people with disabilities, although many UU spaces are still not fully accessible.

The UUA, the US, and the world also have a lot of problems deeply based in economic class oppression (as MLK realized, in addition to militarism and materialism); this Principle includes that, but is not highlighting it.

## **WHAT IS BELOVED COMMUNITY?**

Beloved Community happens when people of diverse racial, ethnic, educational, class, gender, abilities, sexual orientation backgrounds/identities come together in an interdependent relationship of love, mutual respect, and care that seeks to realize justice within the community and in the broader world.

## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ACCOUNTABLE?**

White UUs hold themselves accountable to communities of color, to make sure whites do what they say they will do. In practice, that can mean having a People of Color Caucus within congregations, districts, etc., to discern and express needs and concerns to the rest of the community. Black UUs hold each other accountable and help each other see and dismantle signs of internalized racism. We need an effective mechanism or structure to ensure this. Similarly for other oppressions.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

Our existing 7 principles imply this 8th principle, but do not explicitly hold us accountable for addressing these oppressions directly, especially at the systemic level.

UUism has great potential for building diverse multicultural Beloved Community as envisioned by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (not just European/Americans and African/Americans, but including Native Americans, Latinx people, and other cultural groups) globally and could experience tremendous diversification, vitality, and thriving if it works to embody this vision, but it won't happen without conscious awareness and effort on our part.

Dismantling racism, white supremacy, and other oppressions requires work at the personal and institutional levels.

The UU Principles were designed to be dynamic, not a fixed creed. It means we want to always continue to be educating ourselves, exploring truth, and raising our consciousness. When we get to a new level of understanding and clarity, our structure makes it possible to reflect that. UU is the only religion that

intentionally builds in that flexibility to acknowledge the importance of ongoing revealed truth. This happened when environmental awareness reached a critical mass and got added as a 7th Principle (although it also has multicultural relationship implications). We are approaching a similar critical mass level of awareness with the systemic nature of racism and other oppressions.

None of the other Principles mentions love; by having “Beloved Community” in the 8th Principle, it brings our commitment to love higher in our consciousness, consistent with our Standing on the Side of Love campaign.

The 8th Principle is really just the beginning of action, rather than the ultimate goal. It should lead to restoring funding and support for Jubilee Anti-Racism trainings for any UUs who want them and the other programs of the late 90s, as well as starting an anti-racism version of the Welcoming Congregation program that was so effective for LGBTQIA+ awareness and progress. Many people of color have been attracted by the values and potential of UUism, but their souls have been repeatedly wounded by its whiteness. Let’s make our actions match our values. Let’s be a UU movement that feeds them. That would be spiritual wholeness.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Discuss the 8th Principle with your congregation. Adopt it for your congregation. Live by it. Act! For more information: email [pollackjohnson@verizon.net](mailto:pollackjohnson@verizon.net), or call 215-848-6246.

### **Response - The Neo-Racist Nature of the Proposed 8th Principle by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Former Spokesperson and Chair, the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council**

The purpose of this essay, derived from a longer work, is to give a critique of the Proposed 8th so-called principle aka the 8th. First of all, the First Principle, the inherent worth and dignity of all; the Fourth Principle, a free and responsible search for truth and meaning; and the Seventh Principle, respect for the interdependent web of which we are all apart – already encompass the key concepts of the Beloved Community. From a Marxist Leninist historical theist

perspective, the Beloved Community is a future historical reality and cannot exist in the present racist imperialist system.

First of all, what is neo-racism? Conceptually, we have two definitions: One developed by one Prof. Étienne Balibar's term for the prevalent new modality of racism he calls 'racism without race', which emerged in the 1970s. Whereas racism used to be premised on the idea of race as biological heredity, now in the postcolonial era it tends to be focused on 'cultural differences,' (Oxford Reference).

The other conception is the one which I prefer: the term refers to "the ideology which asserts that the best way to maintain an imperialistic racial hierarchy is to admit some members of an oppressed racial group into that hierarchy while shifting some members of that hierarchy into the ranks of the oppressed, based on criteria of intelligence, genetic propensity, cultural development, inherent criminality, [racial history], etc.," (Dr. P. V. N. Acharya, former member, the InterNational Committee Against Racism and former Research Specialist, the Department of Oncology, the University of Wisconsin - Madison Campus).

The proponents of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle reflect these definitions.

And as such, this 8<sup>th</sup> Principal proposal would disrupt fatally our efforts to achieve the Beloved Community. In other words, this proposal has been created by the DRUUMM/ARE coalition. DRUUMM aka Druumm (Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries) and ARE (Allies for Racial Equity) are the key neo-racist groups which have been controlling the anti-racist/anti-oppression work in the Unitarian Universalist Association for decades.

In this context the word multicultural means anti-white. For example, even though Druumm says it is multicultural, no white UU is allowed to join, unless they pass for a person of color. One explanation is that white UU's have no culture; the other is that white culture is essentially negative because of white privilege and white supremacy. And ARE does not allow people of color to join unless they identify as white. So, we see that the sponsors of this 8<sup>th</sup> Principle are practicing the true meaning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle.

Second, racially diverse is a dog whistle term meaning that BIPOCs's (Black

Indigenous People of Color), especially African Americans, will have special privileges under the concept of Accountability. Specifically, Afro-Centric neo-racists aka the Bluunitarians will be in charge of determining accountability. And since this is a covenant, anyone or any group found to be failing to be accountable, will be found to be out of covenant and expelled from their local congregations, especially those opposing the principle.

Thirdly, in 2013 at the conference designed to implement these ideas, the term multiracial, multicultural was used. Note in the present draft of the 8<sup>th</sup>, that word multiracial has been eliminated. But then, Ms. Paula Cole Jones, the leader of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Movement, indicated to me at that conference that multiracial unity or as she called it racial integration was going to be eliminated as an aspect of Unitarian Universalism (she called it the doctrine of the past) and multiculturalism would be the doctrine of the future.

What does multicultural mean anyway? Nowhere in the Cole-Pollack Johnson analysis is the term defined. At the Tulsa conference, for example, I explicitly asked Rev. Hicks, our chief presenter, what did the term mean, and he answered that each UU member had their\* own culture, which meant that we were already multicultural. At another workshop, I asked Rev. Quayman Rahman, a leader of Druumm, the same question, and she answered me by saying, well, whats your definition? So, I told her. Well, since major spokespersons for this neo-racist movement have been unable to answer this question, I will now do so.

“Multiculturalism,” denotatively, means **“Of or relating to a social or educational theory that encourages interest in many cultures within a society rather than in only a mainstream culture,** (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright 2016*).

But the key word is culture which – from the point of view of Sistah Kennie James, a follower of the Franz Boas School of Anthropology, and also my point of view as well – simply means **“the norms, traditions, mores and folkways of a people, especially people of different racial-ethnic backgrounds as expressed in their social institutions and their**



## **expressive media.”**

Multiculturalism was first developed in Canada where there were four basic racio-ethnic groups living in a single nation: Anglo-Canadian, French Canadian, Native or Indigenous Canadians, and Afro-Caribbean Canadians, with additional subsets of non-Anglo Saxon Europeans and Chinese Canadians. There it had some historic reality. But in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, the term is meaningless, unless it is really a code word for anti-white racism, the highest form of anti-black racism.

If we apply this discussion to this Proposed 8th Principle, it is clear that the term multicultural is used in an inaccurate manner. Why? Because all UU's belong to a single culture, Unitarian Universalism, characterized by the Seven Principles and especially their sources. If we would give a general socio-economic name to our culture, it would be US American (itself a synergy of multiple cultures), middle class, as shaped by various levels of higher education and shaped by the fact that the vast majority of us are professionals and entrepreneurs with all the cultural characteristic of that socioeconomic status. Thus, the only way that the term multicultural can have any logical meaning in this Proposed 8th Principle context is to refer to race and not culture. And as we all know, race is not a biological reality, but a political economic ideology created initially during the triumphant bourgeois period of US American slave labor capitalism (1781).

So, here is my basic definition of the term multicultural as used in the 8th Principle: **“multicultural”** derived from the concept multiculturalism is **“the neo-racist ideology which asserts that only people of color, especially African Americans, have true culture [because of 400 years of so-called anti-black oppression], and therefore they should become the arbiters of what is and is not racist in the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.”** Those white UU's who do not support this vision are either white supremacists, white privileged elitists, or secret Negrophobes and those people of color who oppose the 8<sup>th</sup> are race traitors, victims of their own internalized racism, or, as Rev. Mel Hoover of Crossroads Ministries once described me, CIA agents,” (Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell,

spokesperson, MAC).

This is the true meaning behind the seemingly innocuous wording of this so-called 8th principle.

**In light of all this, my proposal is this: that we fully discuss the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, pro and con, as called for by the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Committee, but we do not vote on it until we have received the official wording and rationale from the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly in 2022 or 2023.**