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# MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist  
Multiracial Unity Action Council  
(UUMUAC)



“For the Unity of the  
light and dark skinned  
people of the world.”

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## **The Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus to carry out and foster anti-racist and multiracial unity activities both within and outside the Unitarian Universalist Association through education, bearing witness and other actions, and expansion of our membership both within and outside the walls of our congregations.

We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.

## **The Vision Statement**

We envision our congregations, denomination, and society as not being color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating members of the world’s rank and file by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their cultural heritage; and as treasuring diversity in the context of the “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unitarian Universalism.

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## **OUR ROOTS**

**Rev. Richard Trudeau**

My genealogist wife and I enjoy watching "Finding Your Roots," the PBS show hosted by Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

He likes to feature different-seeming people whose ancestors had similar experiences. One show paired a high-powered black movie director with a successful white entrepreneur, and focused on one of the director's ancestors who was enslaved and one of the entrepreneur's ancestors who survived a Nazi death-camp.

Professor Gates uses DNA analyses to show how mixed-up we are. Many African-Americans have white ancestors; professor Gates himself is more than 50% white. And significant numbers of white Americans have black ancestors. By the Jim Crow South's "one-drop rule"--according to which even a single black ancestor makes you black--these whites are only "passing."

Recently scientists have said that modern humans (*homo sapiens*) originated in sub-Saharan Africa and were probably very dark-skinned. By the one-drop rule, everybody is black!

I'm reminded of Sheriff Jim Clark of Dallas County, Alabama, who in the early '60s used cattle prods on black people trying to register to vote in Selma. He lived until 2007; I wonder if he ever learned what scientists are saying about the ancestry of modern humans. It makes me smile to imagine a reporter asking him, "Sheriff Clark, how does it feel to know that you're actually black?"

Good going, professor Gates!

### **Don't be Guilted into Giving Up the Seven Principles:**

#### **Reflections and a Strategy.**

By Dr. Kenneth Christiansen

When newcomers first enter our churches and ask what Unitarian Universalism is, they are usually pointed to Seven Principles and Six Sources. The UU church where I was most recently a member had them printed in the Order of Service each week. Even UU members who may not know the finer points of the UUA bylaws know the Seven Principles, and for many, it is what defines us as a faith tradition

The UUA's Article II Commission, charged with reviewing the section of our bylaws containing the Seven Principles and Six Sources, is proposing to revise them by replacing them entirely. Why? There must be something very broken with our theology if the only solution is to replace it with something completely different.

Here's what I know about the UUA's thinking and what you can do about it if you disagree.

The UUA argument against the Seven Principles can be summarized as follows:

The Seven Principles were written by white people of European origin.

White people live and work in a racist culture that awards them numerous unearned benefits based on skin color.

Thereby, the Seven Principles are racist and must be discarded to create a "Beloved Community."

The actual content of the Seven Principles does not need to be considered; only their source need be considered.

Being against the Seven Principles is part of the UUA approach to antiracism.

Antiracism itself is the hinge issue, the justification for everything else in the UUA.

There are precedents for these ideas. I first heard arguments still part of the current conversation after joining the UUA in 2009. The focus then was on "White Privilege." I shared an earlier version of the words below in the Fall 2020 edition of the *MAC Arrow*. This time, I've added more details and followed with a possible strategy for action.

#### Four ways to view "White Privilege."

**1: Discussion tool.** When Peggy McIntosh wrote the article, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*, (1989), I used it as a discussion starter in the Cultural Diversity classes I was teaching at the time. Looking at the list of privileges with my students, I did not enjoy many of the fifty privileges Dr. McIntosh enumerated even though I am white. They were more like class privileges. Other items in the list did identify privileges based on race including freedom from covert or overt discrimination in employment, housing, and policing. The list raised awareness, created good class discussion, and increased the level of empathy in the room.

**2: Empathy block.** In the 2010-2012 period I actively participated in an integrated anti-racism email list set up by the Unitarian Universalist Association. I remember one very painful exchange where a white participant discussed his father's very hard life. The response from several of the African American participants was that he was still better off than they were because he had White Privilege. White Privilege was used as an excuse to deny empathy. I heard a similar attitude expressed in an invitation to a Beloved Community discussion, that white people's problems would not be a subject of conversation.

**3: Guilt wedge.** In Robin DiAngelo's book, *White Fragility*, White Privilege means all the advantages received by participation in White Supremacy Culture. White Fragility refers to the defensiveness whites demonstrate when pressed to admit these advantages and their participation in White Supremacy Culture. When their White Fragility

resistance turns on, Caucasians become emotionally disabled in DeAngelo's argument. I view this as exactly what happens with [Guilt-Based Anti-Racism](#). The energy available to accomplish needed policy changes is greatly diminished both by the emotional paralysis created by guilt and by the mis-directed use of energy required to force Caucasians to own up to their collective guilt for participating in White Supremacy Culture

**4: Resource inventory.** To change racist policies and laws wherever they may be found, everyone's positive energy needs to be mobilized. This is a point where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ibram X. Kendi are in complete agreement: the focus of antiracism needs to be on policies rather than on people. Every access to power possessed by anyone, whether based on class, race, gender, age or anything else, is desperately needed in the struggle to change racist policies including policies that unfairly assign privilege. Power responds only to power. We need to collaborate with strong personal commitments and relationships across race and class lines to accomplish the goals we seek. In other words, privileges can and should be put to good use.

### **Where should UUs who treasure the Seven Principles go from here?**

It's important to help people understand the difference between antiracism that focuses on White guilt and antiracism that focuses on racist laws and policies. The former paralyzes White people with guilt. The latter helps people, both Black and White, build a coalition powerful enough to challenge unjust systems. Unfortunately, 99% of the focus of the UUA antiracism program is on white privilege and racially inherited guilt. For proof, look no further than the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and in *Widening the Circle of Concern*, *There, it says* Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC) need to monitor white people in the Unitarian Universalist Association. Empathy is allowed in only one direction. People who feel intense personal guilt for the condition of their communities buy into this kind of thing and it paralyzes them. It doesn't have to be this way.

The contents of the Seven Principles strongly support the kind of antiracism that works tirelessly for needed policy changes. When we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we overcome our hesitancy to join multiracial coalitions for positive change. Justice, equity and compassion are top values. Spiritual growth deepens our justice commitments. Being free to talk about what is going on is essential. Without democracy, we become timid enablers of uncertain truth claims. World community with peace, liberty, and justice for all is our goal. We must not trash the environment by our actions. These principles are what the current leadership of the UUA is ready to throw away.

What can we do? We can share our commitment to keep the Seven Principles. Here's a possible strategy:

Listen to where people are.

Recognize the centrality of the antiracism question in decisions the UUA is making. It is the ultimate concern of current UUA and UUMA leadership.

Explain that real antiracism is integrated action to achieve change in racist laws and policies.

**Page 4** Explain ways UUs are already doing this and can be doing more of it.

This includes participation with Church Based Community Organizations and numerous other advocacy initiatives in all our communities and nation.

Focus on issues in your own community first and foremost.

Acknowledge that strong personal feelings about racist actions that you or people associated with you may have committed are normal and natural. Help direct those feelings and that energy into action for positive change.

Find, or create, relationships with people from any background who share your specific concerns and take action.

A wise colleague of mine used to say, “What reason did not put into a person’s head, reason cannot take back out of it.” He wasn’t ditching reason. Rather, he was acknowledging reason is only one component of knowledge. Stories we tell ourselves, stories other people tell us, powerfully shape our knowledge and our commitments. An entire field of sociology called “Symbolic Interactionism” is built around the power of stories to organize communities and nations.

In this short article we have acknowledged two very different stories about antiracism. One says all white people, and only white people are racist. Antiracism is a process of purifying the white soul. The other story locates racism in the policies and laws of our communities. Antiracism is challenging and changing those policies and laws. The first is passive, the second very active. The first separates people between guilty and innocent based on race. The second unites people across lines of race, age and gender in a common challenge to bring greater justice into the world.

We need to share the second story with our UU siblings who are convinced that the first story is the only way. The fate of the Seven Principles is at stake.

## **Servetus’s Stand Against Religious and Racial Intolerance** **by Rev. Dr. Peter Hughes**

*Rev. Dr. Peter Hughes bio -*

*I graduated from Meadville Lombard Theological School with a D.Min. in 1986. I served as minister at the First Universalist Church of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, from 1986 to 1999. I have written a number of articles on the early history of Universalism in New England. I was the founding editor of the online Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography. Since 2003 I have concentrated my studies on Michael Servetus, translating his works and writing biographical articles. I am currently a fellow of the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies at the University of Toronto.*

*We are honored that he has submitted an example of his brilliant research to the Arrow Journal.*

Michael Servetus, executed in Geneva in 1553 for blasphemy, was an advocate for what he believed to be a simplified form of Christianity that he hoped would be more attractive to non-Christians and that recognized, rather than rejecting, many of the religious insights possessed by other cultures.

Servetus does not appear to have been himself a victim of racism or ethnic discrimination. The Servetus biographer, Roland Bainton, in one of his weaker speculations, suggested that Servetus, when a student studying at the University of Toulouse, may have been teased by French students as a “dog of a marrano,” that is, an unreliable Christian convert from Judaism. There is not any evidence for this. Ángel Alcalá, who translated Servetus’s complete works into Spanish, regretted Bainton’s suggestion, because it may have given readers the impression that Servetus came from a family of Secret Jews. I think it regrettable because it suggests that Servetus, as a Spaniard, was subject to serious disabilities due to ethnic or nationalistic prejudice. This was certainly not the case in his later career. When living in France under another name, Michel de Villeneuve, his Spanish origin was well-known and he lived the life of a respected physician and scholar, at least until his secret identity as a dangerous arch-heretic was divulged.

Some scholars have claimed that Servetus did have some Jewish ancestry. But the existing genealogical evidence, when examined carefully, does not back this up. He did not have any early education in Hebrew. His interest in Hebrew was as a biblical language, learned in adulthood, like Greek, in order to better understand the Christian scriptures by reading them in their original languages. Nor did he have any close acquaintance with Muslims. He never learned Arabic, as some have incorrectly suggested, as it is clear that he read the Quran only in Latin translation.

In order to understand Michael Servetus, and his relationship to racism and other forms of discrimination and oppression, we need to know, not his familial or social connections with oppressed minorities, which were few, if any, but rather how he differed in his theological motivations from most other figures of the Reformation. To do this we need to examine a bit of the history of the country in which he was born and given his early education.

Spain, in the early medieval period, under Muslim rule, is famous for having been a society that was tolerant of those practicing the other Abrahamic religions. This cultural mix helped to make it one of the most civilized places in Europe. During the late Middle Ages, however, the Christian kingdoms of the north gradually reconquered the Iberian peninsula. Because, in this latter period, restrictions were placed upon the lives and livelihoods of the Jews, some voluntarily converted to Christianity, becoming what was known as “New Christians,” also called marranos, or conversos. Anti-Jewish rioting produced many more New Christians, Jews who had been given the choice of conversion or death.

Any sense of Christian victory caused by these conversions was short-lived. When, with restrictions removed, the former Jews sought and achieved positions of power and influence they were resented by the “Old Christians,” who then sought laws to restrict the “New Christians” as well as the remaining Jews. In order to define what was wrong with the conversos a form of racism was developed, which looked to “purity of the blood.” To be eligible for certain jobs one had to prove that one’s family tree was free of Jewish taint. One way to accomplish that, in Aragon, was to get a certificate of gentility. A certain Juan Serveto, possibly an ancestor of Servetus, obtained one of these in 1327.

Additionally, former Jews were often suspected of secretly remaining Jews in their hearts and in private rituals. They often maintained contacts with family members and former associates who had not been converted. To deal with this, a new institution was created, the Spanish Inquisition, whose central purpose was to police the conversos and to hand them over to secular authorities to be punished for backsliding. The inquisition also tried Old Christians for heresy, because, in Spain, heresy was treated as equivalent to Judaizing. And as the remaining Jews were considered a bad influence on the New Christians, in the watershed year 1492—also remembered by us for a certain exploratory venture—it was decreed by the monarchs of Aragon and Castile, Ferdinand and Isabella, that any Jews who would not immediately convert to Christianity were to be expelled from their united realms.

The forced conversion of Muslims, also driven by popular economic resentment and racial hatred, began in 1502, just a few years before Servetus’s birth. The same cycle of conversion, suspicion, discrimination, cultural suppression, and inquisition as had taken place in the case of the conversos a century earlier, followed for these new “New Christians,” who were also called moriscos. Ultimately, in the early 17th century, the moriscos, even though they were at least nominally Christian, were expelled from the kingdoms of Spain.

Servetus came of age in Aragon in the 1520s. It was a time of the forced conversion and rebellion of King Charles’s Muslim subjects, and a period when conversos were subject to an inquisitorial scrutiny that put them in mortal danger. The celebrated humanist Juan-Luis Vives, whose father was accused of secretly practicing Judaism and in 1524 was burned at the stake, could no longer live safely in Spain. In Paris Vives was a student of the logician and mathematician, Gaspar Lax, a relative of Servetus, under whom Servetus later studied in Zaragoza.

Servetus had another mentor, the influential clergyman, Juan de Quintana, one for whom he later seems to have worked in some capacity. Quintana was a chaplain in King Charles’s court, and subsequently became the Imperial confessor. In the 1520s Quintana was dispatched on several missions for the king, one to investigate the treatment of the moriscos in Granada, and another to look into the heresy of the Alumbrados, a mystical and perfectionist sect that denied the authority of the papacy, questioned some central doctrines of the church, and whose leadership was composed largely of conversos. Whatever Servetus’s personal level of involvement in these investigations, he must certainly have been well-informed about them.

Accordingly, when Servetus began his Bible studies among evangelicals in Toulouse and when he traveled to Switzerland in 1530 to meet with the reformers there, he brought with him reforming ideas that were born and nurtured, in the special circumstances of Renaissance Spain. As we have seen, there, through force of arms, Christianity had come out on top, but had failed to convert all the Jews and Muslims. Many of those who had been converted had been baptized at sword's point and were only nominally Christian. While Servetus thought that Christianity was, in its potential, the best of the three Abrahamic faiths, since it was also corrupt in doctrine, it was, as currently constituted, ineffective in drawing others, like the Jews and the Muslims, into its fold.

Inspired by the theology of the earliest Church Fathers, who composed their works before the intricate doctrine of the Trinity was conceived or had become established, Servetus proposed a more monotheistic theology, which he hoped would have the broad appeal required to attract and retain Jews and Muslims. Christ is still God, but he is the one God. He is the human way that God presents himself when dealing with human beings. He is, as Servetus says, the face of God. And what was presented by the Trinitarians as the third person, the Holy Spirit, was seen by Servetus as merely an activity of God, not a person, being, or even a substance. Therefore, although the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit remained for him part of theological and devotional discourse, he could sincerely claim that God is truly one. He hoped that none would be afraid to enter this big Christian tent that would encompass all of the Abrahamic faithful together.

However, Servetus's Spanish concerns for a purified monotheism were less pressing to the Roman Catholics and Protestants who lived north of the Pyrenees. All that the Catholics could see in his first publication, *On the Errors of the Trinity*, was heresy, and all that could be seen by the Protestants in that work was danger that their apologetic stance vis-à-vis the Catholics might be compromised by association with Servetus. Hunted by the Inquisition and condemned by nearly all, Servetus went into hiding, then reinvented himself under a new name, Michel de Villeneuve, as an editor for publishers in Lyons and as a medical student at the University of Paris.

As an editor, Servetus is best known for his work on Ptolemy's *Geography* and on the Santes Pagnini Bible. The *Geography* contained numerous modern essays on the countries and regions mapped in the book, to some of which Servetus made contributions. One, comparing Spain to France, was entirely his own composition. In it he noted that, "in Spain those called inquisitors of the faith claim great authority for themselves, and very severely punish marra-nos, heretics and Saracens." While this isn't exactly open criticism, the tone seems to cast doubt upon the inquisitorial pretensions and program.



In preparing his edition of the Pagnini Bible Servetus modified the chapter headings to accord more with his own Bible interpretation. According to him, the prophecies made by the likes of Isaiah were concerned not with a distant future Christian Messiah, but with events anticipated to take place in the prophet's own lifetime. This accords with modern scholarly opinion. More important, it also lets the Jews in his own time off the hook. For instead of reading "He prophesies against the Jews," as the old header had it, Servetus's new header reads "He prophesies against the Israelites." Thus the sinners and their sins are safely in the past. Less subtly he changed "The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans on account of the murdered Christ," to "The destruction of Jerusalem by Antiochus." Servetus, wishing to bring the Jews safely into the Christian fold, will have nothing to do with the idea of modern Jews being stigmatized and persecuted as Christ-killers.

If he hadn't already resumed the theological project that he had put aside after the poor reception accorded to *On the Errors of the Trinity*, work on the Pagnini Bible must have inspired him with a renewed religious calling. In his new work, *The Restoration of Christianity*, he wrote that, even if Jews and pagans did not accept Christ, at the final judgement, they could be saved by having lived up to their own standards: the Law or philosophy. Servetus recognized that the Jews and pagans, like Christians, had their own sources of spiritual insight, and allowed that they were the leaven in two of the three measures of flour, mentioned in the parable.

In book 4 of *The Restoration of Christianity*, Servetus detailed the spiritual insight to be found in religions beyond those of the Abrahamic cluster. He did not know anything about the great religions of India and China, but he drew upon the ideas of perennial philosophy as promoted by the Renaissance Platonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino and by his contemporary Agostino Steuco, and found treasures in what he thought to be the scriptures of the old religions and philosophies of Egypt, Persia, Syria, and Mesopotamia.

Servetus availed himself of Rabbinical writings and the Quran to critique orthodox Christian theology. With the Jewish writings he demonstrated how Christians have often misread passages in the Hebrew scriptures. In book 1 of *Restoration* he quoted extensively from newly printed Latin versions of the Quran and other Islamic writing not only to bring to bear the Muslim critique of Christianity as insufficiently monotheistic, but to demonstrate that Islam was, in its honor for Christ, already almost Christian. Let me quote a bit:

In sura 12 he says that Christ "brought us the Gospel, which is the light, the confirmation of the Torah, a discipline, and the true way." In sura 13 he says that Christ had "a pure and blessed soul" and that he prepared the heavenly table for those who believe in him. ... In the book of the teaching of Muhammad, Christ is said to be the word, the spirit, and the power of God. Muhammad called Christ *Ruhallah*, "spirit or breath of God," the one begotten by the breath of God himself.

Nevertheless Servetus greatly overestimated the appeal to Muslims and Jews of his revised Christianity. It is true that he rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. That itself might have been applauded by a Muslim or Jewish audience. But he replaced it with a theology that has roles for a Father, a Son, and a Holy Spirit, easy to mistake for just another version of Trinitarianism. And, of course, there is much more to any religious culture than theology. Had he been given the opportunity to preach his gospel to a Muslim population, he would have quickly learned how much in error were his basic “ecumenical” assumptions. Nevertheless, he did occupy solid ground when he argued, to a Christian audience, that the Quran’s critique of their Trinitarian doctrine made it difficult for them to sustain the claim that they were, strictly speaking, monotheists.

The most celebrated part of *Restoration*, nowadays, is the description that Servetus made, in book 5, of the transit of the blood through the lungs. No one in Europe had done this before. This description was intended by Servetus, not as a contribution to medicine, but as a support to his theology by showing how the Holy Spirit enters the body and helps to form the soul. It is also, implicitly, an argument against racism.

Racism was, as we have seen, in those days often based upon the idea of the purity of the blood. This idea has, of course, in more recent years, been revived, among others, by Nazis, concerned about Aryan blood, and by racists in America worried about miscegenation. According to this idea, one’s character is formed by one’s blood, which is inherited from one’s ancestors. Other races are thought to be weak, less virtuous, and to exhibit other undesirable characteristics, and these are considered to be manifestations of the blood.

Servetus, on the other hand, though he thought the soul was contained in the blood, and that one received a small part of one’s soul as an inheritance at birth, he also believed that the larger part of the soul was formed by breathing in spirit from the air. The Holy Spirit and other spirits were taken in through the lungs and there met and enriched the blood, in the same way that we picture the action of oxygen today. Thus it was not the taint of race that determined one’s character, but outside influences that molded a person’s soul, for good or ill.

The printing of *The Restitution of Christianity* in 1553 led, courtesy of a denunciation by Calvin, to his arrest by the French Inquisition. After several rounds of interrogation, realizing that he could no longer maintain the fiction that he was just Michel de Villeneuve and not Michael Servetus, he escaped and made his way to Geneva. There he was arrested and put on trial for his life on a long list of charges. One of these was that he was an apostate because of the favorable way that he presented the Rabbinical writings and the Quran. He was asked “If he did not know that his doctrine was pernicious, seeing that it favors the Jews and Turks by excusing them? And if he had not studied the Quran to impugn and dispute the doctrine and religion held by the Christian churches?” He replied “that he didn’t think his doctrine pernicious, nor favorable to Jews and Turks. He did not read the Quran with any intention to harm the Christian faith, but rather to aid it.”

In the end, this line of questioning led the prosecution nowhere. It could not be maintained that his less than unfavorable opinion of other religions made Servetus an apostate. Although dozens of charges were made against Servetus, the Genevan Council convicted him only of two: blasphemy against the Trinity and against infant baptism. However, this was more than enough, in the minds of the Genevans of that time, to ensure his execution. Ever since, the story of Servetus's trial and execution has been held as a warning against religious intolerance in Western society.

Given Servetus's interest in Islamic and Jewish thought, and his use of their scriptures and commentaries to critique Christianity, it may be that, in his writings and in his story, there is a legacy for the multi-faith modern world—a world in which the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic societies, and communities of many more faiths besides, connected by speedy transportation and communications, dwell in each other's presence and are both enriched and frightened by each other's strangeness. Perhaps we, like Servetus, can study one another's scriptures in order to understand our own better. And perhaps, having studied other faiths, we can envision some interfaith superstructure that will permit us all to dwell together in harmony and mutual respect without loss of cultural individuality. There might be a way, through mutual understanding, for us to live together in peace, understanding that what we have in common is more important and more vital than the points upon which we must agree to differ.



Michael Servetus Transcending the Fires of Chapel

**In the Shadow of the Burning Stake at Champel, October 27, 1553—  
A Narratological Analysis of the Michael Servetus/InterNational Conference against  
Racism (MS/INCAR)  
by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell**

### Introduction

Here is the background to this essay: MS/INCAR was to be a hybrid event, based on a professional Zoom system, in honor of one of our martyrs, Michael Servetus, whose idea of recreating a form of Christianity to include Jews and Muslims, is an archetype of what we mean by multiracial unitarian universalism. The conference was sponsored by the Religious Professional Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council—UUMUAC -- and given an official endorsement by our Board of Directors. Our theme was the vital role which multiracial unitarian universalism could play as an embodiment of the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, especially the Fourth Principle, in the struggle against racism in all its forms from Afghanistan to Zambia.

The purpose of this essay is to present a narratological analysis of our recent Michael Servetus/International Conference Against Racism (MS/INCAR) held at the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center in Geneva, Switzerland, October 28 through October 30. My thesis is that though MSINCAR failed as a hybrid event, it succeeded as an important symbolic action reflecting the future possibility of an international UUMUAC. I will seek to cover three points: What was the overall nature of the conference as a symbolic action? How effective was the hybrid presentation? And why was MSINCAR important as a symbolic action?

Let us examine these points in detail.

### II. Body

What was the overall nature of the conference as a symbolic action? In Marxist Leninist historical theist thought, “symbolic action” means “a form of pollical activity involving a minimum of two – three proletarians, **symbolizing** the potential of an action involving hundreds more; e.g., a wildcat strike, a one-day sick out, etc.,” (Rev. Arius D. Redd).

Our action began with the registration of 18 people, representing the rank-and-file members of our organization – workers, students, and professionals, with six of whom would be attending in person, in Geneva, Switzerland. The in-person contingent was supposed to have consisted of me, Beverly Seese, Jack Reich, Carl Seese, Dick and Mona Lee Burkhardt, but because personal contradictions, Beverly and Carl did not make it. And at the hybrid meeting itself, an additional six people showed up – my son Philip, my grandchildren Laissa, Lanny, and Lya; and our Geneva representatives my daughter Paulette and her boyfriend Renault.

Still, we had more than enough for a symbolic action. It began with a tour of key sights in Geneva, including a six-course meal celebrating multiracial unity at the home of my nephew, Jean Vahe Nigolian. Unfortunately, Jack could not take part in any of our touring activities, so Mona, Dick, and I took part in a special trip to the old city, walking along the main thoroughfares—revealing the multiracial, multicultural, and international nature of this most cosmopolitan of all the Swiss cities. The climax of our preconference activities was Friday, October 28 where we had our modest program of reconciliation at the site of

Michael's execution, with the participation of Dick, Mona, myself, and my granddaughter, Laissa Pauline Campbell. However, the mayor of Geneva was not able to attend, sending her regrets. We do plan to send her a French translation of our wording.

The key event was, of course, the conference itself which chronologically went as follows:

**October 28:** The conference began officially that afternoon (Geneva time) with an introduction of members of the Religious Professional Task Force MS/INCAR planning committee — Rev's Vernon Chandler, Finley C. Campbell, and Beverly Seese, and the lighting of our chalice for the next three days with opening words. In addition, we had a welcoming by Rev. Richard Trudeau, Chair, The Board of Directors, the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council who gave the historical background about Michael Servetus. This included an overview of Michael Servetus' anti-trinitarianism as a precursor of historical Unitarianism.

This was followed by Dr. Alan Spector, former professor, the Department of Sociology, Purdue University Northwest Indiana, with a long history of racial justice activism. He outlined the difficulty of dealing with racism on an international level because there was, for him, no set definition of racism which could cover all its forms and yet clearly there needed to be a fightback against this racism, however defined. Next were comments from our co-presenter: Nedko Popov, an independent UU from Bulgaria, who described some of the problems of racism in Bulgaria and the difficulty of being the only known UU in his country. His main connection with the UUAC was through the now defunct international office. Finally, we had responses from our co moderator, Jack Reich.

**October 29** was a Saturday plenary session with a panel discussion. With the conference being called to order by Reverend Jack Reich co-moderator. The theme of the panel was "The Vision of Michael Servetus and the Multiracial Unitarian Universalist Struggle Against Racism." Our first speaker was to have been Rev. Peter Hughes, speaking on "Servetus and His Vision of a Reconstituted Christianity: Unitarian? Anti-trinitarian? Universalist? Or uniquely Servetian?" Unfortunately, as we learned later, serious health issues prevented him from participating, but he did have a copy of his talk sent to me by his wife, Lynn Hughes. Next, Rev. Craig Moro dealt with work he had done in developing a rationale for explicitly including Islam as a part of the Judao-Christian segment of the sources of Unitarian Universalism. And, I dealt with the roots of multiracial Unitarian Universalism in the Servetian Dream of multi-monotheistic unity of Christian, Jew, and Muslim within the framework of a reconstituted Christianity. I called this the Vision of 1553, which potentially would have involved a global empire stretching from the Catholic Conquest of Mexico to the Islamic conquests of the Philippines.

This was followed by Rev. Jack Reich, giving a UU humanist dissent to including monotheism as a major part of UUism.

We were also blessed to have the participation of Sheldon Gellar, an old friend from my Indiana Peace and Freedom Party days (1970-1972), speaking to us from Israel-Palestine. He dealt with how the Servetian/UU ideas — especially our Seven Principles—are reflected in his work as an anti-racist Zionist living and struggling in Israel and participating in

.Israel and participating in efforts to create unity among Jews, Israeli Arabs, Palestinians, and African immigrants. He also described a variety of organizations involved in his version of multiracial unity.

This was followed by a lively discussion by our hybrid participants.

On **October 30**, Sunday, we had our final plenary session with a small but committed turn out. But we had a problem as Rev. Reich had to leave Geneva earlier than anticipated, and so Rev. Beverly took over. I was the key speaker, giving the homily: “The Harvest Is Great; The Laborers Are Few – The Need for the Growth of UUMUAC as An InterNational Organization —Dreaming the Impossible Dream or Creating the New Narratives for Tomorrow?” I pointed out that racism had always been an international phenomenon since the days of Jefferson and the second phase of slave labor capitalism, 1781-1865. Now, we are faced with neo-racism having emerged as an international phenomenon. Former victims of white supremacist colonialism were becoming victimizers, reflecting the entrance of an international talented tenth into the ranks of a global elite. This was simply the latest form of the old anti-black racist paradigm: anti-Palestinian racism in Israel Palestine, anti-Muslim racism in India, anti- “Whigger” racism in China. A discussion then followed, led by Board of Directors member, Dr. Dick Burkhardt, on the feasibility of UUMUAC becoming an international organization. He and others thought it would be an important development.

But I argued that given the size of our symbolic action, it was not yet feasible, especially since we had not yet won many of our own members to multiracial unitarian universalism as a faith commitment in which actually building UUMUAC as a national organization was paramount. Nevertheless, as a symbolic action, MS/INCAR was a modest beginning.

And so, with closing words by Rev. Sistah Seese, we finally extinguished the chalice to bring the Michael Servetus/InterNational Conference Against Racism to an end.

Let us now deal with an important technical question, the effectiveness of our hybrid presentation. To begin with, we had some difficulty at the first session because of unfamiliarity with the AV camera system, a device which contained both video and audio mechanisms, which depended on voice directions to aim the camera. But thanks to the help of Brother Boucher from Encore, our Zoom company, we got that out of the way, thanks also to our amateur engineers – Allan Lindrup, Dick Burkhardt, and Jack Reich. Indeed, it was quite extraordinary to be able to coordinate participation from Bulgaria, Germany, Israel, and parts of the USA while at the same time keeping most of the participants engaged, despite glitches often created by individual home systems.

Nevertheless, Brotha Rev. Trudeau later argued that, giving the amount of money which we invested in MS/INCAR relative to the number of people who actually showed up, it would have been more prudent to have had just a Zoomcast originating in the US. Supplementing that view was Rev. Brotha Vernon Chandler’s more detailed analysis of what went wrong at his site in Germany: The audio and video difficulties distracted from Alan Spector’s presentation and from other presentations; the Waiting Room prevented easy access to the conference, leading to the loss of a contact from Mississippi. So, for him, it was a confusing weekend as a Zoom observer in Germany.

My overall evaluation was that we clearly needed to have an onsite Encore technician to maintain audio-visual quality and to troubleshoot problems as they arose. But I give the last word to Comrade Marie Cobbs who pointed out that she had no difficulty in taking part in the hybrid gathering and that it was an impressive example of how Zoom can be used on an international level.

Yet even with all these technical contradictions, why was MSINCAR a success as a symbolic action? The major problem we faced was the lack of participation by our Geneva UU brothers and sisters because of their commitment to the EUU Retreat, which unfortunately met on the same days though not at the same time. And, from the US side, the planning committee never had the full support of my Comrade Board members to build for the event in their own congregations, for a variety of reasons. The main one was that a majority had only agreed to the event out of affection for me. And then there was my last-minute health problems which prevented me from launching an all-out last-minute effort to confirm those who had registered to come.

Yet, despite these objective and subjective factors, the event did take place and, as in all symbolic actions, it is not the quantity but the quality which is essential. For the first time in my work as a racial justice activist, my Geneva children, grandchildren, and my favorite nephew, took part in the vision of multiracial unity, a family representing in their physical presence the essence of multiracial unitarian universalism. We even did a little skit: Four fingers and a thumb, can you see where I'm comin' from?

We were able to hear a voice from the progressive side of Zionism, a voice which is often stifled or cancelled in some international gatherings, and which reflected our commitment to the Fourth Principle. And there is no example of any organization, UU or non-UU, which has used Zoom technology, as complex as it was, to intentionally call for multiracial unity in the fight against racism as an international phenomenon. And historically speaking, this is built on Jefferson's ideological creation of anti-black racism, which he saw only as a solution for the State of Virginia in 1781.

And so, the fifteen foix who showed by room and by Zoom must be seen as the nucleus for a future international organization, dedicated to the UUMUAC vision of multiracial unity, multicultural synergy, international solidarity in the fight against racism in all its modern forms, especially institutionalized racism.

### III. Termination

Let us now summarize and conclude this essay. As a symbolic action, the conference involved the minimum of workers, students, and professionals needed to take part in pre-conference activities, a reconciliation ceremony at the statue of brother Servetus, and a comprehensive series of informative sessions, symbolizing what could have been done if we had more attendees. And while the hybrid presentation presented some problems and glitches, in the main those who were able to get in and maintain their internet connections were treated to discussions which could have been found in no other way. And I add the participation of Geneva Campbell's. And hence as a symbolic action, despite the problems, MS/INCAR showed a possible future for the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council, but not yet an actual reality.

Thus, my thesis should now be clear: though the conference failed as a hybrid event, it succeeded as an important symbolic action reflecting the future possibility of an international UUMUAC, once we really commit ourselves to building the MAC on the national level, the US American level, as a mass organization.

In conclusion: we must begin to see multiracial unitarian universalism, not simply as a slogan, but as a calling -- rooted in over 200 years of both Unitarian and Universalist history, a part of which rooted in the anti-Trinitarian or more accurately anti-Tritheistic vision of Michael Servetus. He saw the multi-religious unity of the children of Abraham, under the mystical leadership of Jesus the Carpenter, Joshua the Plebian, whom he defined, before his death by slow fire, as the son of the Eternal God, whose reconstituted church would be the basis of creating a world in which we would all be his brothers and sisters. And once we commit ourselves to this calling, either from theistic or humanistic perspectives, only then can we begin the arduous task of becoming a mass, anti-racist organization enfolded in the building nuclei, chapters, and, yes, fellowships from sea to shining sea. To paraphrase from *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo: "Utopian you say? Yes, today; but flesh and blood tomorrow."

We have a world to win.

### **English version of the letter sent to the Mayor of Geneva Switzerland**

Subject: A Ceremony of Reconciliation Concerning the Trial and Execution of Michael Servetus, October 27, 1533

Your Excellency,

Let me begin by apologizing for the lateness of this letter. However, last year I did write to your predecessor about a proposal for a program or service of reconciliation between UUMUAC members as spiritual descendants of Brother Servetus and the present government of Geneva as spiritual descendants of John Calvin. One of the purposes was accepting the apology for Brother Servetus' execution recorded on a memorial stone at the place of execution in Champel. Unfortunately, I never heard back from her, and so I am presenting the proposal to you, as late as it is.

Here is the plan: on Friday, October 28, at 12 noon, there will be a service sponsored by MS/ INCAR commemorating the execution Michael Servetus aka Michel Servet as one of our founders, historically speaking. This will be at his statue located at Croisement Avenue de Beau-Sejour, Av. de la Roseraie 53, 1206. At this ceremony we will commit ourselves to continuing his vision of uniting Christians, Jews, and Muslims in a single reconstituted Christianity, but at a higher level. I see his ancient vision as a framework for uniting the so-called different races of the world in to what we call multiracial Unitarian Universalism. Multiracial Unitarian Universalism is rooted in a variety of religious sources, but now embracing social humanism as well.



At the same time, we want to use this occasion to prayerfully accept the apology of the city of Geneva in an act of reconciliation between the descendants of John Calvin and the descendants of Michael Servetus. We want to do this by presenting to you or someone representing your office a resolution of reconciliation based on the call for tolerance featured on the monument of apology.

I hope to hear from you soon about whether you or someone from your office would be willing to participate in this ceremony of remembrance and reconciliation.

Yours in the struggle for a world based on multiracial unity, multicultural synergy, and international solidarity, part of the great principles of liberalism and radicalism,

Reverend Dr. Finley C. Campbell,  
Program Chair, the MS/INCAR Planning Committee  
along with members  
Reverend Beverly Seese  
Reverend Vernon Chandler

### **Statement Read at the Service of Reconciliation**

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2022

To: Canton of Geneva, Switzerland

From: The Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council

All humanity yearns for forgiveness. We seek redemption. We are composites of good and evil. No human is innocent. Guilt and shame are universal afflictions.

We gather today to remember our brother, Michael Servetus, who suffered an unjust, violent and brutal execution, near this very spot, 469 years ago.

Jesus of Nazareth admonished us to pray, "May we be forgiven of our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us."

As spiritual descendants of Michael Servetus, we the representatives of the Religious Professional Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council humbly accepts the Canton Geneva request for forgiveness as the descendants of John Calvin. May we forgive as we are forgiven. In this act of reconciliation, may forgiveness be experienced among everyone gathered here today.

May love and healing be our prayer and our benediction. May we go in peace as a symbol of that time in the historic future when the Beloved Community will emerge as a living reality, when all our complex humanity and all our divisions -- racial, cultural, and religious -- are reconciled as one, *comme une*.

The Michael Servetus InterNational Conference Against Racism Organizing Committee  
Rev. Vernon Chandler  
Rev. Finley C. Campbell  
Rev. Beverly Seese  
for the Religious Professional Task Force of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity  
Action Council

**A Proposal to change the Fourth UU “Sources” Statement  
as delivered to the Michael Servetus Conference in Geneva, October 2022**

Rev. Craig Moro, Minister Emeritus  
Wy’east Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Introductory Note

I first began contacting UUA leaders about this proposal over 20 years ago as post September 11, 2001 responses were taking a disastrous turn. UUA presidents from Sinkford to Fredrick-Gray showed no interest. In 2016 I had a long meeting with UUA Moderator Jim Key, who promised to support the proposal to the UUA Board. Sadly, Jim died shortly after our meeting. Further efforts were met with suggestions that I try to get the support of 15 congregations, but without offers to make use of UUA communications channels.

I tried contacting over 50 churches and fellowships, using names from the UU “We Defy” website, contacting ministers or other leaders of congregations that had held events demonstrating solidarity with Muslim neighbors. Only one showed any further interest. They’d had their “solidarity” photo-ops at the media events, and that’s as far as most wanted to go. Some made it clear that they didn’t really think much of or know much about Islam as such, nor did they care to learn any more.

Then 3 years ago members of All Peoples’ (formerly Thomas Jefferson) UU Church and the Salaam Network (a Muslim outreach organization) of Louisville, KY, found my proposal online and together we tried to move it forward. One result was a video presentation at GA 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNoJmyiD9bc>

Both groups continue their heroic interfaith work on this project and others. Recently, members of the Louisville coalition were blindsided by the proposed elimination of the UU Principles/Sources by the Article 2 commission. Hundreds of hours of work and dozens of meetings, classes, seminars, etc., and for what?

I still believe that the change I propose is an important one, and is in fact the only change to our current Article 2 statement that is truly necessary. If you would like to read an expanded version of the proposal please contact me at:

[revcmorogiggleandbeep@gmail.com](mailto:revcmorogiggleandbeep@gmail.com)

***It’s Time to Make a Good Thing Better:***

**A proposal to change the 4<sup>th</sup> Unitarian Universalist “Sources” Statement**

Our current 4<sup>th</sup> UU *Source* statement is a masterpiece of economy: “Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.” What a mouthful: Judaism, Christianity, God, and Love! That’s a [Page 18](#)

lot of weight to carry, and this statement carries it brilliantly.

Notice the precision: “Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.” There is no suggestion that we should embrace any so-called Jewish or Christian teachings that call us to do otherwise than *loving our neighbors as ourselves*. Such teachings can surely be found embedded in powers and structures associated with these traditions, and many “neighbors” over many centuries have suffered as a result. But surely such teachings are false to anything that can be called “God’s love.” We affirm with our Universalist forbears that if there is any God to speak of, this God *loves*—forever, all.

Please note how these words affirm teachings about the love of God and neighbor but don’t presume to tell us whether God exists or not! They speak with great sensitivity to the feelings of people who seek religious fellowship with each other while still maintaining a strong connection to Jewish or Christian roots; or to their hard-fought Humanist (or even Atheist) positions. If we are to increase the load this statement already bears with such gentle grace, we must also allow it to get somewhat bigger. And indeed, the time has come for this very good statement to grow, and for us to grow along with it. It’s time to make a good thing better.

We are increasingly aware that there are not two but three major traditions in the religious “family” that includes Judaism and Christianity. The third, of course, is Islam. Muslims speak of these three faith traditions as the religious family of Abraham, to remind us that all Bible heroes, such as Abraham, Moses, Mary and Jesus, are heroes to Muslims as well. Islam raises the same cry for justice and peace, the same cry against *idolatry* and the *powers and structures of evil*, that we hear in Jewish, Christian, and Humanist teachings.

The problem is that while our current source statement invites Jews and Christians to bring cherished teachings from their own traditions into Unitarian Universalist worship and discourse, it does not extend this invitation to Muslims as well. This is remarkable, given that the term “Islam” draws our attention not only to a set of texts and teachings, but also to nearly one-quarter of the world’s people and the third largest faith community in North America today.

Our current 4<sup>th</sup> statement reminds us that to join with us on the Unitarian Universalist journey is not a matter of “conversion,” but is instead a process of polishing the treasures we already carry with us from our home traditions while continuing to seek new ones on our own path. There is no requirement nor indeed any suggestion that—in order to be welcome among us—newcomers must first renounce their religious heritage. However, the fourth source statement as presently written appears to extend a special welcome to some members of the religious “family of Abraham” but not to others!

Suppose that your own family has three members. Now imagine that you have received a beautiful hand-lettered invitation to participate in a great celebration, but it names only two of you without mentioning the third. Would you guess this omission to be a simple accident? Imagine that everything else about the invitation reflects a great deal

of concern for and knowledge about you and your family. Might it not seem—at least to the one left off the list—that the third member has been pointedly *dis*-invited or excluded? Seeing how Jewish and Christian teachings have been so conscientiously included in our current statement, it may very well appear to an outsider or newcomer that Islamic teachings have been deliberately excluded from where they, too, belong.

I am certain that this was not the intention of the good folks who composed then refined the current Source statement. It was first drafted when Islam had not yet claimed the attention of most Unitarian Universalists except as an exhibit in the museum of “world religions,” one of several collections of spiritual artworks and beautiful sayings. Islam was not yet a matter that seemed to require the same careful sensitivity afforded to fellow UU’s who continued—and still continue—to identify strongly with “Jewish and Christian teachings”. This situation has changed. There are now among us many members of Muslim heritage and more will be coming soon. Do we welcome them? How? And how well?

Changes in human faith-ways cannot be entered into lightly, whether we are considering change in the practice of faith communities or changes in the written testaments of faith. Considering any change in the wording of such documents—by addition, subtraction, or substitution—will engage us at once in questions about the whole structure of faith; about its origins and its past; and about the future that is taking shape today. This will take time. It will take study. It will also no doubt involve creating and empowering a working group or commission to frame and phrase a new, more inclusive statement. (I offer some concrete suggestions in the expanded version of this document that appears on our Wy’east website: <http://www.wyeastuu.org/files/2017UUChangeproposal.pdf> )

Documents of faith, as much as they are descriptions of the world we see and the one wish to see, are also lenses through which we see it. A lens needs to be polished frequently. From time to time, our prescription also needs to be updated. I propose that such a time has come.

#### Footnote:

Some might ask, “Why not craft a statement to explicitly recognize Buddhist teachings, which are important to many UUs? The question suggests its own reply. Buddhism—like Hinduism, Taoism, and Shinto—is not confessional or exclusive in the way that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are usually understood to be. “Membership” in one Abrahamic faith community requires—or at least implies—*disaffiliation* from or *renunciation* of membership in any other. This is quite different from the situation in Japan, for example, where one might participate in both “Buddhist” and “Shinto” rites and celebrations, possibly without distinguishing between the two. The same can be said of “Hindu” and “Buddhist” observances in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia (where earlier “animist” beliefs and practices also persist alongside these great historic, literate traditions.)

### ***The Progression – From A2SC Charge to Elimination of the Seven Principles***

**by Dr. Anne Schneider**

If you are wondering how/why the Article II Study Commission (A2SC) is proposing the “cloud” of values to replace the 7 principles, and how anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multi-culturalism (ARAOMC) is being proposed as the central theological principle of

UUism, a clue is found in the charge to the task force from — I assume — the UUA board. You can find the charge here: [UUA charge to A2SC](#). Read it and you'll see the logic.

Here's the progression...

First, love is centered as the central value of UUism in the oval.

Then love is defined as love in action.

Then love in action is defined as anti-racism, anti-oppression, multi-culturism.... essentially making ARAOMC our central theological principle.

Since that

contradicts the independent search for truth and meaning, and  
contradicts freedom of conscience, and  
avoids having to use democratic processes

As ARAOMC becomes the criterion by which decisions are made,

Then, the 7 principles must be eliminated.

Just a possibility. But this is in the charge to the Article II Study Commission.

Anti-racist work is an important political activity for UUism but ARAOMC is NOT a theological principle. It and the proposed 8th principle are important political principles and activities but in my opinion are NOT religious or theological ones .

*Anne Schneider, Phd. Retired political science professor and Dean, College of Public Programs*