

# **Clarifications of UUMUAC Positions and History**

## **April 13, 2023**

### **The UUMUAC position on race relations:**

**Motto:** “Unity of the Light and Dark-Skinned People of the World”.

**Mission:** “It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council 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.”

**Vision:** “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. We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.”

**Summary:** UUMUAC was born from the immortal words of Martin Luther King, Jr. himself: “God is interested in the creation of a society where all men will live together as brothers and every man will respect the dignity and worth of human personality.” (1966, Ware Lecture).

### **The evidence that UUA anti-racism is anti-white:**

UUMUAC founder Rev. Finley Campbell objected to the divisive anti-white ideology of anti-racism and institutional racism advanced in Chicago by certain black leaders, labeling it as neo-racist.

Finley's position on "white privilege" is similar to Rev. Thandeka's, that it is based mostly on class privilege. This was especially true in the South during the slave-owning era when a great many working-class whites were severely exploited because they had to compete with slave labor. It was a key reason the Northern working classes were willing to fight so hard to defeat slavery in the Civil War. Its legacy survives even today under the rubric "hillbilly".

It's also true that over the last 40 years the US white working-class has lost more ground (they had more to lose) than the black working-class, leading to "deaths of despair", etc. In certain situations and locations, involving things like policing and housing, white privilege does add onto class privilege but this is highly variable and continues to fade, decade by decade.

As to anti-racism being anti-white, Finley was referring to key aspects of the ARAOM (Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppression, Multi-cultural) program of the UUA already pointed out by Rev. Thandeka in 1999 in her "Why Anti-racism Will Fail" lecture (<https://revthandeka.org/publications>). Thandeka took the Crossroads workshop herself and was taught the doctrines that (1) all whites are racist, (2) no blacks are racist, and (3) whites must confess their racism.

Now (1) & (2) create a *moral hierarchy*, not based on either science or common sense, where blacks are the superior race (as inherently non-racist) and whites are the inferior race (as always racist). Meanwhile (3) implies that racial justice will follow (1) from blaming and shaming whites and (2) from whites achieving partial absolution by confessing their original sin of racism. A generation later Robin DiAngelo said the same thing in her book on "white fragility" (strongly promoted by the UUA), only in more nuanced language – "white identity is inherently racist" and "individualism is racist".

First note that these doctrines directly contradict our 7 principles, especially our first and most fundamental principle – "the inherent worth and dignity of each person". This wording rejects not just racism and racial hierarchies but identity politics itself. In addition, the historical backdrop to our first principle is the rejection of original sin. So, yes, the

UUA's ARAOM program is not only explicitly anti-white, it rejects our core principle.

The more recent doctrines coming out of the "whiteness studies" of critical race theory are even more anti-white. First off, the pseudo mental / social illness invented by DiAngelo, which she calls "white fragility", is explicitly anti-white, being based on the 3 Crossroads doctrines. Since social science suggests that only about 1 in 10 Americans is racist in any demonstrable or meaningful sense, most people in DiAngelo workshops who object to being labeled racists will be speaking truthfully. Regrettably DiAngelo's response is to gaslight them (blaming the victim), rather than engage in mutually respectful dialogue.

Another example is the common claim that the UUA has a "white supremacy culture" (WSC), even though this claim is not only ludicrous but extremely insulting, given the common meaning of "white supremacy" as "belief in white racial superiority, justifying domination of non-whites". In the larger society white supremacy is not only rare, perhaps 1 in a 100 individuals as a ball park figure, but reviled, and for good reason.

Now it is true that some have attempted to redefine WSC to make it more palatable but many regard this as a highly unethical, Orwellian tactic, or "weaponization" – so that people or practices which are not white supremacist can be accused of white supremacy, as part of a nasty power play. The so-called 15 traits of WSC (Tema Okun) have nothing to do with white supremacy as commonly understood. And "centering whiteness" (the COIC report) reduces to the claim that every society dominated by people of European descent must be white supremacist. But that would make it like a law of human nature – that all societies are racially supremacist. Now social scientists and anthropologists do recognize "ethno-centrism" as common historically, but this is not the same as a domineering and exploitative racial superiority.

So, yes, WSC is anti-white, despite several attempts to dress it up and apply professional makeup. Comment: *This objection to anti-white language, doctrine, and practices is the fundamental difference between UUMUAC and ARAOM.*

## **The UUMUAC position on persecution and harassment (the Gadfly Affair):**

Members of UUMUAC sometimes question authorities, such as the UUA Board, in respectful ways on important points of policy and practice in accordance with our 5<sup>th</sup> principle, the democratic process.

We contrast this with the persecution and harassment, by many parties, of Rev. Dr. Todd Eklof over his book **The Gadfly Papers**, which sought to engender open and honest debate in the spirit of our 4<sup>th</sup> principle. He saw that people had been unjustly harmed (such as in the hiring controversy and the LREDA incident), with additional institutional harm due to the collapse of democratic accountability. Eklof uses typical academic-type language and argument and avoids the ad hominin attacks used by some parties in the absence of objective evidence.

The issues in question have still not been debated or addressed, nor have there been any apologies, truth and reconciliation process, or other satisfactory resolution. UUMUAC calls on the UUA to honor our 7 principles in practice, especially our 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> principles, to rectify the persecutions of Rev. Eklof and Rev. Rohde.

## **Why white people have joined UUMUAC:**

The early members of the UUMAUC board were drawn to UUMUAC because of the commitment of its founder and leader (until age-related retirement last year) Rev. Dr. Finley Campbell, to racial justice in the spirit of multiracial unity versus the white blame and shame approach of others.

More recently some have joined the UUMAUC board for the moral and social support offered by Finley to UUs who've been subjected to cancel culture for other reasons.

## **UUMUAC's position on the Hiring Controversy:**

Rev. Finley Campbell visibly protested the scandalous treatment of his friend Rev. Peter Morales and others in his administration at the 2017 GA. In fact, the incendiary allegations of racism against Rev. Morales (he's Hispanic) and others were never validated (the fraction of UUA staff that were people of color was about 14% - close to the denomination as a whole).

Only recently did the UUA Board finally acknowledge that it had been a mistake to let a Board member bypass the conflict-of-interest policy and apply for the open position in the Southern Region. There has yet to be any apology to those who resigned under duress. This is also when the harassment of Finley at the UUA level began in earnest (it had already begun in Chicago).

In fact, Finley had been accused of misrepresenting his status as "Unitarian Minister" by his enemies in Chicago. The truth is that Finley was ordained as a Baptist minister but had been an active member of Unitarian congregations since the early 1990s. He never claimed to have served a Unitarian congregation as minister or been ordained as a Unitarian minister. Instead he is both a Unitarian and a minister but is now more careful to clarify his status when among strangers.

## **The UUMUAC position on the racial composition of congregations and on gender:**

UUMUAC has no position as to a particular racial composition for the UUA. However, in practice UUMUAC wants the UUA to be more welcoming to individuals and families from a wide variety of class, cultural, ethnic, and thought backgrounds, seeking common ground only in our commitment to our 7 principles.

We recognize that while most barriers to more diversity are cultural and educational, some derive from the divisive ideology itself that underlies the UUA approach to issues of race. For example, a survey showed that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of US blacks do not even identify as liberal, let alone the many fewer who are progressive and even fewer who are woke.

Likewise, UUMUAC takes no position on issues of gender, though individual members of UUMUAC may be active on such issues. Nor is UUMUAC concerned with certain individuals unless those individuals act in unethical and hostile ways toward UUMUAC. UUMUAC is focused on current doctrines, policies, and practices, with historical narratives serving only to provide understanding and context.

### **The UUMUAC position on racial hierarchy:**

**UUMUAC opposes all racial hierarchies, caste systems, purification of souls, etc. This includes rejection of the blaming of all racial problems on white people, a key theme of ARAOM from Crossroads to DiAngelo.** Even worse this doctrine assumes that all white people are socialized into racism from birth and can never escape it. At best they only learn to apologize for racial aggressions and maybe reduce their severity by “doing the work”, all day, every day.

People of color are taught to always expect racial transgressions from white people, only being obligated to alert white people of their sins and accept their apologies. But UUMUAC regards this DiAngelo world as fictitious, as binary thinking versus a real world of vast nuance and complexity.

### **The UUMUAC position on censorship:**

It's a simple fact that GA programs have right-relations monitors and a key part of their job is to be on the lookout for speech that might be deemed harmful to people from marginalized communities. This is made clear by the GA program book itself. UUMUAC is concerned that these monitors may end up acting as censors, shutting down open and honest dialogue on controversial issues over bogus claims of “harm”. These could be anything but are often on issues of race or gender these days

because that's where the new orthodoxies and cancel culture are most strongly focused.

### **The UUMUAC position on the UUMA and MFC:**

UUMUAC is trying to save mainstream Unitarian Universalism from a leadership that has lost touch with this mainstream and abandoned key aspects of our 7 principles, especially the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> principles. It is the unjust doctrines and practices, such as cancel culture, of the UUMA and MFC that UUMUAC objects to, especially the biases of identity politics versus the time-tested universal principles of standard ethics. Examples: Hearsay as evidence versus the requirement for objective evidence, also double-standards versus legal due process and “innocent until proven guilty”.

### **General history and clarifications about UUMUAC:**

UUMUAC, as incorporated as a 501-c3, is about 5 years old but was preceded by several years as a Chicago based caucus. It is affiliated with Unitarian Universalism in mission and purpose but not organizationally. There are quite a number of such groups, covering a wide variety of issues, especially since the UUA decided to disaffiliate most national affiliates a decade or two back – contrary to the intent of the UUA bylaws.

Severe conflicts at individual churches often arise when ministers or boards attempt to impose new orthodoxies, often of race or gender, especially when open debate or democratic process has been suppressed or unethical practices prevail. When members see injustice or illiberal practices, they lose trust and decide either to leave, to organize, or to get help from an organization like UUMUAC to figure out what is going on. Some churches get help with genuine conflict resolution but some don't, suffering big losses in membership or the formation of dissident or breakaway groups.

UUMUAC was denied the virtual Exhibit Hall booth at the 2020 GA when Finley's enemies (Chicago area defenders of the Crossroads doctrines) became aware of it shortly before the opening and had to cook up a reason to get it canceled. UUMUAC could simply have removed Eklof from its booth schedule – no need to cancel the booth. But this also shows that the witch-hunt against Eklof was still in full force.

Two years later there was a charge of incompatibility between the UUMUAC mission and the purpose of a GA event, used to deny a GA Exhibit Hall booth to UUMUAC. This charge was made by the Executive Vice President of the UUA, but without supplying any evidence of such incompatibility. UUMUAC contends that its motto, mission, and vision statements embody our 7 principles and the purpose of GA, which plays a special role in our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> principles.

Other dissident groups, such as the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Project, arose independently and have no organizational relationships to UUMUAC, though they may be allies on certain issues. The 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Project responded to the corruption of the democratic process (by one-party rule) whereas UUMUAC responded to the corruption of racial policy (by resurgent anti-white doctrine). Now another group has arisen to respond to the impending corruption of our 7 principles. These 3 corruptions expose a movement to turn our liberal religion into a more authoritarian illiberal religion.

## **The UUMUAC position on the COIC report:**

There were 1100+ statements, testimonies, and focus group participants for the COIC report but no data that reliably characterized those responses by type of racial incident or concern. In addition, these were not a random or representative sampling – simply whoever responded to appeals for testimony as to “racist or culturally biased” harms.

Instead, certain behaviors were described by “avatars” (composite individuals), which are a good way to illustrate valid statistical results but can be very misleading in the absence of such results. Statistician Allan Pallay concluded that the evidence, overall, was far too weak to



conclude that racial harm in the UUA is “substantial and common”, as claimed by the report.

An even bigger problem is that the report began by assuming, without evidence, “the domination of white supremacy culture among us”, nor did the report produce any evidence at all of actual white supremacy. It only revealed incidents of racial tension, without any regional distribution or numbers showing the prevalence of these incidents.

Thus the report missed a golden opportunity to produce some real information, but some think this was not accidental - that the authors knew that good statistical results would not validate their predetermined conclusions. This is true insanity, as you’d think the UUA would be proud, not embarrassed, to have so little racism, and no demonstrable white supremacy.

### **The UUMUAC position on the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> Principle:**

UUMUAC does oppose the 8<sup>th</sup> principle as currently worded, but for a variety of sensible reasons, not racial reasons. The most basic reason for opposing the 8<sup>th</sup> principle is that it’s not really a principle – it’s a long-winded objective of a quite narrow nature, without the crisp universality and timelessness of the first 7 principles. Yes, reducing racism and other oppressions is a worthy goal, but so are dozens of other objectives, some likely to be of much greater importance for survival in a 21<sup>st</sup> century of escalating existential crises.

A related objection is that “other oppressions” is so ambiguous that either it doesn’t mean much at all or its meaning could lead to disputes. Meanwhile anti-black “racism” is not a major problem in the UUA, judging from the failure of the methodology of the COIC report to validate such a finding. Another objection is that the word “dismantle” suggests, at the very least, a forceful or manipulative procedure that is

not democratic or carefully thought out, destructive without the necessary constructive follow through. In other words, what follows the dismantling could easily be worse than what was dismantled, especially if it leads to a significant breakdown or backlash.

Another problematic word is “accountable”. According to the 8<sup>th</sup> principle website, this means that white people are to be accountable to identity caucuses but these are accountable only to themselves, not even to the larger identity groups they are supposed to represent. This is a severe problem in two ways. One is that it is based on identity politics, not the universality prescribed by our first principle. Second is the clear lack of democratic accountability, where an identity caucus has only a vague requirement of “discernment”. Abuses of power are easy to envision, especially since the UUA cancel culture has already provided several examples where conflicts over orthodoxies and feelings trump justice when adequate checks and balances are not present.

Another word with multiple interpretations is “multicultural”. For many of us it means learning from different cultures from around the world – broadening our own understanding of humanity, and in some instances testing out foreign ideas and practices in our own culture. This cultural synergism is the key feature of the US “melting pot” and its remarkable cultural diversity on the global scene.

But in the Canadian context multicultural means distinctive cultures whose separateness is maintained for centuries with less synergy and more friction, despite living under one national banner. Transferred to the US context and the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, that could mean maintaining cultural differences between the races over a long period of time, a kind of voluntary segregation. This meaning is very controversial, in the black community too, and is opposed by UUMUAC.

A final objection to the 8<sup>th</sup> principle is that research in the social sciences says that progress on race is most likely to come from working together on community projects of common interest, not on feel-good

pronouncements. Homelessness, for example, is good at drawing black and white churches together in some locations through service projects, yet it also has deep roots in state and national policies that need to be addressed.

## **The UUMUAC position on the candidacy of UUMUAC Board member Rev. Beverly Seese:**

Rev. Beverly Seese is a gentle, kind soul, who simply responded in her 2022 campaign for the UUA Board to the clear desires of some UUs of color for resources to do things their own way. For example, in 2017 the UUA allotted \$5 million to Black Lives activists for precisely this purpose, and DRUMM has always requested separate spaces and organizational support. This had nothing to do with any kind of white supremacy or replacement, as some have claimed. A key reason UUMUAC has supported the candidacy of Rev. Seese and other dissidents is to protest against such slander.

Rev. Beverly is a well-regarded small-town minister and community activist who has masters degrees in pastoral counseling and worship arts, with many additional courses, (almost an MDiv) and is a certified chaplain. She was ordained by the UU Fellowship of Kokomo, Indiana, and has served for 12 years now, but did not finish the fellowshipping process or join the UUMA. She ran for a UUA Board position in 2022 to voice an alternative to increasingly illiberal UUA practices.

She welcomes many different speakers into her pulpit, including a Muslim leader in town, a transgender employee of the ACLU speaking on LGTBQ+ protections, a black woman performance actress, a black Baptist minister, a local woman school board member on children's rights to their own beliefs, a leader from the American Atheist Association about the Do No Harm Act, and more.

## **The UUMUAC position on certain statements by Board members:**

Many people on the Left would certainly agree with the UUMUAC Board member who said, “that calling a white person racist is the equivalent of calling a black person the n-word”, since “racist” evokes the KKK of yore or certain of today’s radical right groups.

In fact, such insults and slurs of identity politics instigated the Gadfly Affair when DRUMM made incendiary accusations of racism, transphobia, and ableism against Eklof, accusations that have never been verified by citing passages from his book and their straight-forward meanings. So a UUMUAC Board member was correct to say that “woke people of color can make accusations without evidence, leading to white men being automatically judged at fault.” In fact, Eklof was never offered unbiased proceedings based on “innocent until proven guilty”, nor was DRUMM ever held accountable for its gross violation of the UUMA guidelines prohibiting derogatory speech.

As to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and victimhood culture, the link is obvious because “whiteness studies” has been a part of CRT at least since the late 1990s. At first it was only a secondary presence (only one chapter in the Delgado/Stefancic introductory text) but it is now the public face of CRT thanks to DiAngelo’s popularity. The moral racial hierarchy with blacks on top as victim and whites at the bottom as oppressor is the foundational paradigm of whiteness studies all the way through.

When a UUMUAC Board member asks questions and makes comments on issues that disturb a great many UUs, such as the UUA identity politics and cancel culture, yes, that member may be touching the third rail of UUA politics, but such questioning is the cornerstone of democracy.

And now there are hard questions being asked about the 7 principles being eliminated, diluted, or submerged by the Article II Commission, or why denominational covenants are being promoted when they have a long history of being used to justify inquisitions or purges and have been abused even recently in the UUA (false claims that “you’re out-of-covenant”).

Transparency is the life-blood of democracy. Censorship leads to abuses of power. This is a key focus of UUMAUC.

### **Books related to the concerns of UUMUAC:**

Anne Schneider’s book on “**A Self-Confessed ‘White Supremacy Culture’ (WSC)**” describes the **Gadfly Affair** (the name of a later book by Todd Eklof with documentation about what happened). But Schneider’s book also shows how the Tema Okun 15 traits of WSC have nothing to do with actual white supremacy, also how some of these traits belittle blacks. John McWhorter in his book on “**Woke Racism**” also noticed how some purported anti-racist programs are not only anti-white but also disparage blacks as victims without the same human agency or capabilities of other races. Schneider’s second book on “**(Dis)Continuing Racial Inequality**” gives an excellent overview of Critical Race Theory and victimhood culture in the UUA, including a good review of whiteness studies.

Jay Kiskel and Frank Casper in their “**Used to Be UU**” book note that past UUA commissions have cited the need for more democracy in the UUA, not less. Since then the elimination of the districts has only made matters worse to the point where we now have, in effect, one-party rule, the subject of Jay and Frank’s complaint. Jay and Frank established the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Project to further their agenda of reforms.

For example, the UUA Board has a record of campaigning against any candidate, such as Jay himself (a UUA Board candidate in 2021), not anointed by the Nominating Committee. Challengers for Board positions, such as Rev. Beverly Seese and Rebecca Matthis, are not even allowed to distribute campaign literature inside the convention center, nor are they provided communication access to congregations. For the 2023 Presidential Election only one candidate was put forward, a direct violation of the UUA bylaws.

Another good review of UUA identity politics is David Cycleback's book "**Against Illiberalism**". Cycleback also points out the elitism of the UUA anti-racism – how the vast majority of people of color (POC) are not Woke and are often turned off by Wokism, limiting the appeal of Unitarian Universalism to POC.

Also see Finley Campbell's "**The Nature of Neo-racism**".