



Vol. 6 Number 4 – Dec. 2024

# 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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**Note: Articles reflect their author's views. They do not necessarily reflect a position taken by the UUMUAC Board of Directors**

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## **UUMUAC Organizational Matters**

**by Allan Lindrup**

First, I want to thank the UUMUAC members who, this fall, provided input on organizational direction for the new year. We heard a desire for us to come up with revised wording for the part of our Mission Statement that relates to defending the classic 7 UU Principles. A committee of the Board will come up with either a consensus or multiple options for revising the wording of our Mission Statement. You will hear more about that during the first quarter of 2025 and the UUMUAC membership will be asked to vote on amended wording, most likely at the end of our spring convocation. We also heard that most members wanted a recommitment to multiracial unity, so the Board will be looking at some ways to be more active in that area.

Second, I want to thank Richard Trudeau for his providing leadership to UUMUAC these past three years, while he served as Board Chair. I also want to thank the 4 Board members, who are leaving the UUMUAC Board at the end of 2024, for their time serving on the UUMUAC Board. Two of those individuals, Marie Cobbs and Carl Wolf, both of whom have served in officer roles, have been on the UUMUAC Board since the years when UUMUAC was a Caucus, before it incorporated as a Council and secured Sec. 501(c)(3) status. The other 2 Board members who are leaving are Matthew Shear and Aspen Basaldua.

New UUMUAC Board members include Judith Barisonzi, Erik Guter and Barbara Jean Walsh. Our officers for 2025 are: Allan Lindrup (Chair), Jack Reich (Vice Chair), Dick Burkhart (Treasurer) and Richard Trudeau (Secretary).

## Neo-Racism and Its Language Must Be Rejected

**Finley C. Campbell**

*UUMUAC founder Rev. Finley C. Campbell is having his book on NeoRacism published posthumously by UUMUAC, most likely within the next 30 days. The following excerpt from the book was published by the online journal Presser three months ago. The UUMUAC Board believes that enough time has passed that we can now share it with you in this journal. UUMUAC will advise it's members when Tinley's book is published.*

Today we are faced with the new mask of an old foe: racism. This current form of racism, which I refer to as neo-racism, includes some elements of traditional antiblack racism, such as prejudice, discrimination, and segregation, which have continued, though in altered and diminished form, since the ending of Jim Crow segregation, but it masquerades under the guise of antiracism. This new ideology of racism includes the belief that (1) racism in the United States preceded the development of the slave labor system rather than the other way around and (2) the formation of caucuses based on racial identity is a vital part of multiculturalism and the wave of the future. Further, it is undergirded with an anti-white component, as evidenced by the rapid spread of anti-white language and doctrine.

Indeed, the ideological abuse of language is a key aspect of neo-racism, which includes not only overt anti-white doctrines and tactics but also more subtle anti-black attitudes and practices. Originally the anti-white blame-and-shame language of this neo-racism centered around phrases like “white privilege” and “white fragility,” but it has now intensified into an Orwellian weaponization of the phrase “white supremacy culture” to intimidate activists for multiracial unity. Often these doctrines have been disguised under the innocent-sounding rubric of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (DEI), but let’s be clear: we must rebut this new ideology of racism, noting that it is not grounded in ethical scholarship or validated social science. Rather, it has been created without guardrails—more in the manner of a dogmatic religion or authoritarian political regime—and it is undoing the multiracial victories of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Criticism and dialogue have been silenced by ad hominem attacks, including slander and character assassination, while the authoritarian attitudes and undemocratic doctrines associated with this ideology have justified censorship.

The beliefs and language of neo-racism have predictably led to a “white backlash”: the rise of white nationalists who argue that since whites are now the despised and defective racial group, they themselves need to be defended, both intellectually and in action. These white nationalists implicitly and explicitly call for a neoliberal form of white supremacy (white populism) to defend “whites” and their allies from a totalitarian form of social democracy. And these beliefs have also led to breakdown of solidarity among progressives

of all racial backgrounds, who traditionally supported universal—not tribal—values.

These two related developments are perhaps the greatest danger facing us today, and their fruits are entirely predictable: an increase in racist violence and the continued oppression of the working class.

The purpose of the neo-racist propaganda, unleashed by the power elite, including a black elite recruited into the ruling class, is to hide the class nature of governance in the United States today. Sometimes the white supremacist element is deliberately exaggerated, as in the constant stories about white police officers killing black lower-class brothers. The much larger number of poor white brothers and sisters also killed by the police often goes unreported. The point of such propaganda is to magnify white guilt, creating a fallacious view of modern racism.

Not surprisingly, many well-meaning progressives, who want to appear virtuous on issues of race, have fallen for this clever trap. Conflict arose when the concept of “whiteness” was promoted to spur white guilt. This promotion began in the 1990s with the dogma that “all whites are racist” but really took off two decades later, rephrased as “white identity is inherently racist” by Robin DiAngelo and popularized by the UUA Beacon Press

in her book *White Fragility*. This concept featured the Kafkaesque/Orwellian ploy that denying racism is proof of racism.

But it is actually class, not race, that determines an individual’s fate under global capitalism.

Capitalism these days is so focused on new ways to make a profit that it draws few distinctions based on race. It depends far more on manipulating vulnerabilities related to class, or to financial, job, or family stresses, using clever advertising and deceptive terms to confuse people, black or white, about where their true class interests lie. In such a world, the very term “white supremacy culture” is little more than a Machiavellian anachronism. The “everything-included” Critical Race Theory notion of “white supremacy culture” serves as a divide and conquer ploy by the ruling class to inflame racial tensions by magnifying and exploiting white guilt. The overall strategy is to mask the damaging political, economic, social, and ecological effects of neoliberal globalization while capturing much of its unprecedented wealth for elite interests and consumption

Those lower on the class ladder, of whatever racial group, are more likely to be imprisoned, to be laid off or fired, or to lose pensions or health care. In fact, old fashioned anti-black racial prejudice is fading away in our globalized world. While at the higher echelons of society, there may still be some racial tensions, there is also shared wealth, power, and luxury. But why any remaining racial tensions at all? Continued separatism, which is promoted by some, both black and white, is clearly one factor. And why are well-known methods of

conflict resolution not more widely applied? Instead of seeking to work out differences between racial groups, “whiteness” is the new original sin, making a mockery of progressive aspirations. But the new anti-white racism promoted by Robin DiAngelo, Tim Wise, and others won’t cancel the old anti-black racism in U.S. society as a whole. In fact, it will only continue to re-racialize U.S. society, reinvigorate the cultural wars, and magnify the social breakdown we are experiencing.

In the neo-racist concept of separatism, even online networking must be determined by color rather than by skill, interest, or careers. Some people claim that potential friendships can be based only on racial identity because people of color cannot feel safe unless they are with one another. For instance, segregated institutions such as the historically black colleges and universities were designed for the Jim Crow era, not for the collaboration required in the integrated institutions of higher education that are now the norm.

The weaponization of language (“racism” as in “all whites are racist” and “white supremacy culture” as in “centering whiteness”) has been successful in producing many DEI jobs in many parts of academia, non-profits, corporations, and government. Note that as one purported “redefinition” wears thin, another is quickly found to keep the grift going. Sadly, the actual effect is to hobble those white brothers and sisters who are seeking to create a post-racial society.

The answer is multiracial unity, not a new racial segregation or disengagement. What is needed is “ethnic pragmatism”—looking at the actual circumstances in one’s community, then building relationships and trying to figure out practical ways forward.

On the national level, those of us who propose a true multiculturalism have little power to directly oppose the global political-economic system. However, we can oppose its socio-psychic and socio-cultural aspects by building organizations based on multiracial unity. Building that multiracial unity lies in our hands, but only through the slow process of making clear the class nature of neo-racism.

We must recognize, of course, that many from all backgrounds will not on their own move in the direction of multiracial unity. Instead, many will opt instead for black unity, white unity, Latino unity, or other ethnic unity. This inclination to identify with one’s racial group explains why, for the ruling class, the promotion of racial identity became a key strategy of division. Only an active multiracial struggle against specific forms of racism, both in society at large and within organizations, can clarify what neo-racism looks like. We’d like the masses of black folks here in the United States to learn to see what Zimbabweans experience

every day: that the oppressor in a black skin is as much an enemy as the oppressor in a white skin. An oppressor is an oppressor is an oppressor, though the color of the oppressor can confuse the unwary - for a while.

The ironic consequence of the neo-racist movement, when seen through the lens of multiracial analysis of class, has been to make white members of the world's rank and file victims of this neo-racism. Given the escalating inequality produced by neoliberal globalization, many rank-and-file whites, especially those in the "middle class," have been pushed into the discovery that they have become members of an oppressed working class. If they had bought into the notion of white privilege, they came to realize it as a form of false consciousness, or even a poisoned carrot.

Despite the claims of white privilege or supremacy, millions of white workers have been victims of the class oppression that from its beginning lay behind the mask of racism. This was especially true for those who died in factories and mining accidents, or in imperialist wars, or from nutritional deficiency or diseases. Their suffering was connected to the exploitation and oppression of their black working-class brothers and sisters.

In the neo-racist theory of white supremacy, whites as a whole, rather than the capitalist/imperialist institutions of racism, are the cause of this oppression. White folks are depicted as having a variety of racially determined defects: white prejudice, power or privilege, rage or fragility, with even kindness negatively labeled as paternalism. The targeted result is white guilt. Those so propagandized are expected to become subservient allies.

However, such "white allies" may not be dependable, given the long history of confessions and apologies that crumble before the complexities of life. In addition, these "allies" may alienate their more level-headed, multiracial brothers and sisters, who resent the bigotry of the true believers in "whiteness" as the pre-eminent source of evil that must be exposed and denounced, whether real or imagined.

In sociological terms, neo-racism posits that whites can be in *gesellschaft* (formal community) with people of color and with blacks in particular, but never in *gemeinschaft* (personal community). Translated by Malcolm X into plain English: they can work with us, but they cannot join us. But even Malcolm believed that this separation was a transitional reality until blacks worked out their black inferiority and whites rid themselves of their white superiority. He gave the process ten years of functional separatism in preparation for eventual unity (1965 – 1975). In the context of today's anti-racist practitioners, that made him a full-blown optimist.

In the midst of this complex racial situation, one essential truth breaks forth for us like a fiery torch, and that is the class nature of racism as well as the often-racist nature of class oppression. We must be prepared to struggle even with our friends and acquaintances to overcome this blindness. We must take direct aim at the economic and political inequality that breeds racism in order to create a truly multiracial, international, universalist community.

Within our organizations and churches, we must reject race-based identity groups and “diversity” training that promotes racialized practices. Instead of ideologies of victimhood, such as white guilt-tripping and black paranoia, we must practice post-racial endeavors. These might include projects for the common good where each contributes his or her personal or cultural assets to coordinate and boost activities toward successful outcomes.

The redefinition of “white supremacy culture” on the pseudo left and its attendant revival among the far right must be repudiated. To restore a balanced society and eventually achieve a fully post-racial society, multiracial unity will first be required. This means we must reject neo-racism and all the language that comes with it.

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**The comment below was just sent to the UUA Board, President, and Executive Vice President. You can find the power point slides in question at <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/board/packets/20240912-14> , especially at page 13+. - Dick Burkhart**

### **Comment on the UUA Bylaws Renewal Team Update of Sept. 13, 2024**

I found this “update” to be seriously deficient, particularly in its strong authoritarian and identitarian implications, contrary to the historical commitment of Unitarian Universalism to “freedom, reason, and tolerance”. Particularly egregious is ignorant and bigoted language such as “de-centering white culture”.

In the context of the team’s proclaimed value of “interdependence over individualism”, the traditional UU commitment to the civic and moral individualism expressed in the first of our 7 principles would appear to be the “white culture” demeaned. In fact, this slur comes across as a rejection, not just of our 7 principles, but of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself. This international law is the bedrock for defending the rights of “marginalized groups” world-wide, law being flouted by Israel in a most horrific manner in the Middle East at this very moment.

In fact, we live in a world with a globalized economy, with globalized technology, yet still in serious social and political disarray in the face of ecological overshoot, headed toward civilizational collapse. Will Unitarian Universalism play a constructive role – to help humanity to survive? Or it will it dissipate our energies in crude divide-and-conquer cultural wars,

sponsored by a self-centered ruling class, hastening the fall? New UUA Bylaws should be addressed toward this global predicament, seeking to transcend identities to work together, rejecting the blame and shame game of woke identity politics.

Specifically, UUA sponsorship of identity groups has been counterproductive because they and allied groups have been captured by woke ideology, creating serious harm and conflict in many congregations by explicitly violating core values and practices of justice. For example, “innocent until proven guilty”, sometimes phrased as the “principle of charity” (assume good intentions), has been intentionally violated by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in ways that make the UUA look like an authoritarian state or autocratic and dogmatic religion.

In part this is because some of those welcomed into identity groups under the banner of “inclusion” do not share or practice our values. The UUA should renounce woke ideology and its anti-science victimhood culture and stop supporting these unaccountable and persecuting identity groups who have so discredited the UU enterprise.

Dick Burkhardt, Ph.D., Seattle, WA (Saltwater UU, UUCS, UUMUAC, UUJEC)

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**The Humanity Question -- A Sermon --**  
**UU Community Church (Park Forest, IL) – Nov. 17, 2024**  
**By Rev. Larry McClellan**

**Children’s Message –**

When we talk about people – often use categories: tall/short old/young boys/girls

That is useful in our talking / but we do not make friends with categories

We make friends with individual people AND the categories are not important anymore

A story from my life: Years ago when studying in Ghana in West Africa, I traveled a long way from the coast / near the Sahara Desert – to work at an archaeological site

Next to a small village – absolutely wonderful people lived there

Some worked on the “dig”

Got to know one fellow, about my age, very well, his name was Evan.

Evan was one of the few in the village who ever traveled to the coast.

He spoke English well and easily translated for me

I was invited to join a hunt in the bush – real excitement –

And we returned from the hunt, cooked, and sat around telling stories.

One of the elements of this experience was that the people had beautiful skin

--- black, ebony black, deep black



A kind of shining black - beautiful people

So I was sitting with Evan and a little girl came up, I smiled at her and she reached out to touch my hand. She asked Evan a question and he smiled and translated:

“She wants to know if it comes off.” And, of course, human beings are Black, so I must have something on my skin. I invited her to touch my hand and arm and she rubbed deeply and the whiteness, the “pale-ness” of my skin did not come off.

She said to Evan, “That is his real skin.”

So, this dear little girl knew about “white people” in general

Now – here was me - a particular person

And here I was – not a “white person” in general, but me with my pale skin.

And maybe all of us have to get to that, again and again.

I am not a category, I am a human person, this is me.

### **Reading: Tao Te Ching -- Passage Two**

There are sets of opposites that create each other:

### **Sermon: The Humanity Question**

There is so much of the “this or that” around us. (If you are not with us, you are against us)

All the world boils down to the tension of “This or That”

We talk about folks politically, culturally, spiritually, and we drop people into categories

And some how we need to get past the categories to see just regular old human beings

Language matters / the way we see things/talk of things matters

So, considering categories and individuals

I have run deeply into this is my work with the Underground Railroad – seeing for example:

That our language needs to change, to shift from old categories:

*Fugitive Slave* is 19<sup>th</sup> century language, a category of property

– *freedom seeker* reflects the human intention of people seizing their own freedom to escape from their enslavement.

*Slavery* is a large descriptive category – also use the language of “*enslavement*” to focus on the human situation – an enslaved person rather than slave.

*Conductors* – this is the old category of those engaged with assisting freedom seekers, it puts those assisting in charge. Rather, think of the white and black families that assisted freedom seekers as the “*responders*.”

In addition to understanding language and categories with the underground railroad, we need to get at the deep humanity of all this:

There was a profound existential question for a family who had freedom seekers show up at their door. Would they help? Would they respond? Would they break the law? They were confronted by people running for their lives. And it was those who said: we will help – with lodging, food, directions – we will break the law – these families formed the networks that came to be the underground railroad.

We all talk with categories – but we have to see the people

Part of the dilemma – categories become stereotypes, and often nasty.

Zora Hurston's wonderful image of the Museum of Un-natural History

At this crazy, imaginary museum, for every human group, there are stick figures in a little diorama and a paragraph description. We see a diorama and description of "Black People" and then assume we have learned all we need to know, we know "those people." And we see dioramas of "White" or "Asian," or "Brown" people and with that little paragraph description, we assume we now have them figured out and classified.

The brief generalizations easily become stereotypes.

With the rise of Western science over the past five hundred years – part of the process was to describe, define and categorize everything, including us.

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century geography books – describe lands, animals and peoples/races

Again and again – all the categories and often a hierarchy develops

The created categories of human beings becomes a hierarchy.

Whites on top and all others in differing degrees below

Often point to Nazism as the final terrible expression of race categories.

But here – in this, our beloved country

We carry this complicated history of race, meaning Black and White

(Of course, this is now complicated by other categories like

Asian, and Latino and beyond.)

But with the legacy of slavery - there really are "two kinds" of people

Black people and White people

And one is superior and one is inferior

Today, these categories and stereotypes are alive and doing fine.

And we forget what has to be seen – not categories, but individuals --  
diverse/ every person is their own soul / their own life /  
their own unique capacities for love and being in the world

But we are today awash in categories -- culturally and politically

We categorize by race

by education levels

With families – gay / straight

With abortion - pro-choice / pro-life

With war and peace - hawks / doves

With our newly elected President - Trumpers / Anti-Trumpers

So the challenge -- how do we respond to the “humanity question” ??

Whatever side you’re on – those are people on the other side

Living, breathing, mortal, imperfect individuals – over there !

Remember the Tao Te Ching - there are dualities – *so let them slide*

There are categories, always – *but do not be defined by those*

Look *around* the categories, as much as you can

Look *thru* the categories, as much as you can -- *let it go*

*These “others” are your brothers*

*These “others” are your sisters*

*They* may not be able to escape the categories, the generalizations

Chances are they may well operate with stereotypes

*BUT FOR US* – people of faith, people of spirit and mystery –

We are called to *look around* the categories / *look thru* the categories–

To embrace our brothers and sisters “on the other side”

This is not easy - however, it is essential

If we live only with our categories and our stereotypes –

*THEN* – *we are diminished as human beings*

This is a hard calling – to see thru the categories

And it is clear to me that *much of the time – this may be a lost endeavor,*

A style that doesn't work much. Of course it doesn't work much, of course it fails a lot.

When we try to honor / engage with people AS people

Lots will still come back at us in terms of categories and reject our efforts.

However, *it terms of our own souls /*

For the sake of our own souls / our own integrity / our own being in the world

I reckon we have to do this!

So, think of this as a challenging spiritual exercise:

The challenge is ages old – the challenge is brand new:

What strength *can I find, in myself* - to see people *as themselves*, not as categories

This does not mean they are going to change

But it does mean that YOU seek to remain a human person.

Perhaps a modern mantra, for each of us, for all of us:

We are all *here*, we are all *broken*,

We are all *different*, we are all *the same*,

We are all *beloved*, *we are one.* AMEN

---

**Consider Using the Preamble to the ICUU Constitution**  
**by John Eichrodt**

I wonder if the strong attachment that Unitarians have to our seven principles may not very well be due their evolution from natural law and human rights?

It seems to me that the moral principles of natural law are expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Article 1 states:

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.' This is almost entirely summarized by our 7 principles!

There is also a strong similarity between our 7 principles and the Preamble of the Constitution of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists (the ICUU) .

. It affirms (as quoted):

liberty of conscience and individual thought in matters of faith,  
inherent worth and dignity of every person.  
justice and compassion in human relations,  
responsible stewardship in human relations,  
and our commitment to democratic principles.

See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Council\\_of\\_Unitarians\\_and\\_Universalists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Council_of_Unitarians_and_Universalists)

This preamble remains valid as a legitimate basis for our faith since it was ratified by almost all Unitarian groups around the world.

So I think it could be argued that Unitarianism is based on the principles of the enlightenment that find their expression in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in natural law, in our classic 7 UU principles and sources, and in the Preamble to the ICUU Constitution.

It is of importance to note that the ICUU managed to find a commonly agreed wording for God ('the infinite spirit of life'), also ratified by all. See the quoted section of the preamble below on the purposes . It took an all night discussion to find the commonly agreed wording.

- to serve the Infinite Spirit of Life and the human community by strengthening the world-wide Unitarian and Universalist faith,
- to affirm the variety and richness of our living traditions,
- to facilitate mutual support among member organizations,
- to promote our ideals and principles around the world,
- to provide models of liberal religious response to the human condition which upholds our common values.

My hope is that we find the same depth, inspiration, and breadth in our statements. I don't see how the ICUU Preamble could pose any copyright problems if we use it as inspiration along with some of the wording.

## "Stolen Indigenous Land Acknowledgements:

**Empty words like past empty treaties, or motivation for action?"**

**By Celebrant A. Anne Holcomb**

*Printed version from the Vespers Service on Wednesday, 11.20.24*

*(due to human error this service was not recorded)*

### **Opening Words:**

From the Sauk Native American warrior, Black Hawk, after he was captured and imprisoned in 1832, He said:

*"Our home was very beautiful. My house always had plenty. I never had to turn friend or stranger away for lack of food. The Island was our garden. There the young people gathered plums, apples, grapes, berries and nuts. The rapids furnished us fish. On the bottom lands our women raised corn, beans and squashes. The young men hunted game on the prairie and in the woods. It was good for us. When I see the great fields and big villages of the white people, I wonder why they wish to take our little territory from us."*

### **Reading:**

#### **Stolen Land Acknowledgement**

**–adapted from the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative**

Has Chicago always been Indian Country? From creation, the ancestors say. Over 150 tribes, past or present, have called Chicago home. From creation they say, the over 500 tribes across the nation that speak over 200 languages and who reside in every state, city and town as well as reservations. From Creation, as our ancestors have told us, just like the forest, rocks, lakes, mountains, animals, and plants.

For thousands of years before Europeans touched the shores of Lake Michigan, tribes with rich complex societies lived here. The Chicago Area was a central trade hub. They hunted, fished, prayed, birthed their children and died here. The food was plentiful and transportation was swift by canoe. Located at the intersection of several great waterways, the land naturally became a site of travel and healing for many Tribes. Hardwood forests and prairies stretched throughout the land. They lived in harmony as stewards of this land.

Chicago is the traditional homeland of the Council of the Three Fires: The Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Tribes like the Sauk, Fox, Meskwaki, Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo, and Mascouten also called this area home.

Today, Chicago continues to be a place that calls many people from diverse backgrounds to live and gather here. Chicago is now home to **the 6<sup>th</sup> largest Urban American Indian community** that still practices their heritage, traditions and care for the land and waterways. It is easier to deny Indigenous people their rights if we historicize their struggles and simply pretend they don't exist right here, right now. Colonialism is a current, ongoing process, and we need to be mindful of our present participation.

Despite the many changes the city has experienced, our American Indian community sees the importance of the land and this place that has always been a city home to many diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

The ground we stand on is sacred ground. We stand together to acknowledge this land and to name those who were this land's original stewards. We offer this Land Acknowledgement as a small act of resistance against this continued erasure of Indigenous people and their rights as well as our continued destruction of the natural world.

### **Sermon:**

It's becoming a trend. Many church services and liberal meetings on various policy issues now start with some sort of "Stolen Land Acknowledgement." I've attended several meetings recently where the meeting started with one of these. Land Acknowledgements have also been said at UUA General Assemblies.

As someone who has partial Eastern Band Cherokee heritage, I began to feel a certain-sort-of-way, when I heard these. Most land acknowledgements weren't written, like the one I just read, by indigenous people. And I thought to myself, what do these acknowledgements really mean? What's it for? Like most of you, I had almost no Native American history in school. I knew nothing about who this land was stolen from. And then there's the elephant in the room: The land was stolen, so there has to have been a thief! That left me with a sense of historical "guilt". What am I supposed to do with that?

So, I started to do some reading and I asked some folks who are more connected to Indigenous Rights Movements than I am. How do Native Americans feel about this trend? Some don't like it. They find it patronizing and disrespectful. Others want to turn this trend around by becoming authors of real, Indigenous Land Acknowledgements for use as a teaching tool—like the one I just read. All strongly encouraged me to dig deeper, read more, learn more... and share what I discovered... and ultimately contribute to reparations.

As we approach Thanksgiving, a holiday based upon a very flawed, nationalist myth, I thought this would be a great time to share what I've discovered so far. We were all taught that there was a friendly feast of thanksgiving in 1621, where Pilgrims and Native Americans sat down together and shared the harvest. In reality, this peaceful coexistence was very temporary at best, and the feast was really to cement political alliances

initiated by Wampanoag tribe who thought the Pilgrims might become allied with them against the Narragansett. It was also really the Wampanoag's party and not the Pilgrims'. There were about 90 Wampanogs present, double the number of Pilgrims, and they provided most of the food.

The truth is more like some memes I saw on Indigenous T-shirts recently:

*"Feed a man corn and he eats for a day. Teach a man to grow corn and he kills you and steals your land."* **Or**

*"Happy Thanksgiving, celebrating the day Americans fed undocumented immigrants from Europe who were starving."* **And**

*"If only we would've built a wall. Make America Native again!"*

So, I'm going to share with you some of what I learned about the Indigenous peoples who populated the Chicago area prior to Chicago being named a city in 1837, a story that is sadly more universal throughout America than not, and I will try to put a face on who was displaced:

Tales from Native American Oral Traditions coincide with archaeological evidence that the Chicago area had been a crossroads of trade since the late pre-Columbian period. The Mississippian Culture relied heavily upon farming and fishing. They intensively cultivated maize, beans and squash (often called the "three sisters") and who spread theocratic village states run by priest-rulers over a wide area of mid-continent and the Southeast. They were especially fond of settling in the river valleys, including in Illinois, from 700 CE to the arrival of the very first European explorers. They left behind them large scale public works, such as the Cahokia Mounds. When the Mississippian civilization collapsed, it is believed that the survivors assimilated into other tribes.

The Sauk Tribe and their frequent ally, the Meskwaki (or Fox), had been forced out of their original homelands in the Northeast by the Iroquois and the Huron tribes in the 1600s. They settled in what is now Wisconsin and Detroit, but then were forced into conflict with the Ottawa in 1712, who were allied with New France. This war raged on for thirty years and even disrupted the fur trade. Eventually the Sauks and Meskwakis migrated to the Rock River region of what is now Illinois, around the 1740s. Again, they had to fight existing tribes in Illinois, who also were allied with the French, for their survival. In 1752 a big battle took place, but this time the Sauk and the Meskwaki won. They then made the Greater Chicago area their home.

The French traders returned. Many married Native Women who then bore "Metis" (mixed race) children. These marriages were particularly fortuitous for the French as they were welcomed into Native hunting grounds and derived support from extensive Native kinship networks. While the traders were out hunting, the Native women became business women who ran the trading posts, and made sure that profits were fairly shared among Native kinfolk, the French, and the arriving Americans. The intermarried and Metis culture served as a "middle ground", a place to navigate cultural, political, and economic challenges between



peoples. The famed, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, an Afro-French trader married Kitihawa, in 1778, a Potawatomi woman, who was of this culture.

A parcel of land at the mouth of the Chicago River was acquired from the Native Americans as part of the 1795 Treaty of Greenville. This area had strategic trade importance as it was a portage area between waterways. In 1808, a small fort was constructed, named after President Thomas Jefferson's Secretary of War, Henry Dearborn. During the War of 1812, the fort was attacked by Potawatomis and burned in what became known as the "Fort Dearborn Massacre." After the war, settlers began returning again to the area and Fort Dearborn was rebuilt in 1816.

The Sauks and the Meskwakis were a religious people. The Sauks believed in a number of nature-based spirits (*manitous*), including *Wisaka* who connected the four directions with the Medicine Dance. Prayers were made by offering tobacco, charcoaling the face, fasting and singing. The sacred pipe (*the calumet*) was central to most worship as well as peace negotiations. They celebrated the *Midewiwn* (or Medicine Lodge) Curing Ceremony. The *Mide*, made up of both men and women who'd had powerful visions or dreams, performed the ceremony. New initiates were shot with a white shell so that supernatural powers could enter the body. Then an elder shaman would cure the initiate, who thereafter, would have enhanced supernatural powers, tribal prestige, and was charged with becoming a keeper of traditions.

There were also ceremonial rites for births, namings, a child's first successful hunt, and puberty where youth would go on a vision quest. The youth who attracted powerful *manitous* would create a medicine bag containing spiritual tokens that would be passed down through their families. There were marriage rites and death rites and formal adoptions to replace family members who had died. A ceremonial feast was performed four times a year to celebrate the seasons. There were also seasonal ceremonies like the Midwinter Ceremony, the White Dog Ceremony, Feast of the Dead, the War Remembrance Dance, the Raven Festival, and a few others.

Black Sparrow Hawk, known as "Black Hawk," was born into the Thunder Clan in 1767, at Saukenuk (now Rock Island). At age 15, he wounded his first enemy in battle, which earned him the right to paint his face and wear feathers. He became a proud Sauk war leader, but he was not a birthright chief or a medicine man. Although the Sauk practiced polygamy, Black Hawk had only one wife, Singing Bird. Together, they had five children. Sadly, both their eldest son and youngest daughter died in childhood within the same year. Black Hawk mourned the deaths of his children for two years in Sauk Mide tradition. He built a small house, isolated outside of his village, blackened his face with ashes, and fasted by drinking only water at mid-day and eating a small amount of boiled corn at night.

In St. Louis, in 1804, five Sauk and Meskwaki chiefs led by Chief Keokuk were tricked into signing a treaty with the United States government, selling nearly 51 million acres of tribal lands in Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Alcohol was likely involved in the trickery. The US ratified this treaty knowing that it defied the Sauk and Meskwaki tribal councils. The treaty stipulated that the tribes could remain on the ceded lands until that land was wanted for white settlement. Due to this, the tribes didn't know that their lands had been sold out from under them for nearly two more decades.

Black Hawk fought with Tecumseh for the British in the War of 1812 and was particularly determined to hold onto Saukenuk, their main village, in perpetuity. After the war, Black Hawk refused to terminate his relationship with the British and he continued to annually take the Great Sauk Trail to Ontario, Canada to trade and receive gifts from the British military.

In 1828, white settlers began to move into Saukenuk and the surrounding area, buying the land from the US Government and demanding the Sauks and other tribes be removed based upon the 1804 treaty. War-weary, most Sauks and Meskwakis moved across the Mississippi beyond its West bank. However, Black Hawk and his followers refused to go and remained at Saukenuk, living side by side with white settlers. Conflicts between the settlers and the remaining Sauks ensued, and Black Hawk prepared his warriors. Black Hawk said: *"Whites were in the habit of saying one thing to the Indians and putting another thing down on paper."*

Black Hawk was joined by additional Kickapoo and Potawatomi warriors, who were often Sauk allies. Americans called this confederation "The British Band" because they often flew a British flag to defy the US and they hoped to gain the support of the British stationed in Canada. The Governor of Illinois sent a dispatch for military troops. A US Army Commander assembled troops to try to intimidate Black Hawk into leaving, but he lacked a cavalry for pursuit, so requested help from the Illinois militia. By the time the militia mounted an assault upon Saukenuk, Black Hawk's band had left and re-crossed the Mississippi River.

On June 30, 1831, Black Hawk and other Native leaders signed a treaty promising to remain West of the Mississippi and to cease contact with the British in Canada. The US government, however, failed to provide the provisions promised in the 1831 treaty and Black Hawk's people went hungry that winter. In April 1832, Black Hawk's Band reentered Illinois with 500 warriors and 600 women, children, and elders. Black Hawk's band was carrying a large amount of seeds, indicating they were not seeking war but were planning to farm peacefully, as it had been their lifestyle to move from a winter grounds back to their summer grounds for growing season, so they could stock up on food for the next winter. Black Hawk also was not armed for war and knew the British were not going to help. He knew they could not return to Saukenuk due to the 1831 treaty, but had been led to believe, by the ranking Chief, White Cloud, that the treaty did not prevent them from settling in at Prophetstown, a town of 200 that included members of several tribes. Later White Cloud would be demonized for being a warmonger who misled Black Hawk and instigated hostilities.

The ensuing *Black Hawk War* only officially lasted between April and July of 1832. Black Hawk's band won the first battle, the *Battle of Stillman's Run*, but thereafter suffered several defeats. President Andrew Jackson refused to consider diplomacy and wanted to make example out of them to discourage future Native revolts. Fort Dearborn became the American military hub. In addition to the US Army, Abraham Lincoln, Captain of the Illinois Militia, ordered the militia to remove the Sauk and Meskwakis Indians from their lands. The militia proved to be particularly brutal and they were willing to defy orders. They burned Native villages such as Prophetstown. They open fired and killed Black Hawk's emissaries that he had sent them under a white flag to parley. They had no qualms about taking scalps, nor killing non-combatant women, children and elders. Twice, Blackhawk tried to get his band's wives, children, and grandparents out of harm's way when a battle started by moving them across the nearest river. Many of his warriors lost their lives successfully protecting them that first time. But the second time, during *The Battle of Bad Axe*, the militia broke through Black Hawk's defense and killed 110 women, children, and elders as they fled across the water. It became a massacre.

Black Hawk said, "*We told (the white men) to let us alone and keep away from us; but they followed on, and beset our paths, and they coiled themselves among us like the snake. How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong like right.*"

The warriors of Black Hawk's band were dying as they fled, leaving a trail of corpses for the Americans to track them. They died from battlefield wounds, disease, (The US Army had brought Cholera with them), and hunger. They were forced to eat their horses. Other Native tribes thought it would be in their self-interest to side with the Americans. The final battle occur when the Dakotas killed most Black Hawk's remnants. The Ho-Chunks continued to hunt fleeing warriors and took over 50 scalps. Then the Ho-Chunks sent a delegation to the Ojibway camp, where Black Hawk had taken refuge, and demanded his surrender.

Black Hawk and White Cloud, surrendered on August 27, 1832. They were taken by steamboat to incarceration at the Jefferson Barracks in Missouri where they were forced to wear a ball and chain for nearly a year. Then, still in Federal custody, Black Hawk, White Cloud, and four other prisoners were taken to meet President Jackson in Washington, D.C. on the way to being transferred to another prison. Huge crowds turned out along the way to peer at them. Easterners satiated an obsession for seeing a real "*Noble Savage*". In the media, Black Hawk was wrongly tagged as a "Chief", a false attribution that can still be found. They posed for portraits by known artists and a formal dinner in Washington, D.C. was held in their honor. They were taken on a tour of Eastern cities where they were shown off: at a military parade, on a battleship, at various public events, and more black-tie dinners. Keep in mind, however, that they were prisoners. An image of the *Parade of Victors* in the *Hunger Games* comes to mind. It was thought that showing the Natives what American progress looked like would discourage further uprisings and make them placidly compliant with the Indian Removal Act, while simultaneously showing them the privileges of American life that might inspire assimilation.

The Black Hawk war marked the end of Native armed resistance to American expansion in Illinois and all lands East of the Mississippi River. The US Government hastened to fully execute Indian Removal policies and 1833 Treaty of Chicago. The Sauk and several other tribes were relocated to Iowa or pushed into Kansas on reservation land. Then in 1864 they were forced to relocate again to Oklahoma to make way for more white settlement. No reservations were located in Illinois. After the removal, Chicago did not have a significant Native presence for over 100 years.

In the 1950s, laws such as the Tribal Termination Act and the Relocation Vocational Training Act sent 1000s of Native Americans to urban cities for training and employment. Chicago became a major relocation center. But poverty, poor health, low levels of education, language barriers, and prejudice became hurdles for tribal peoples. Chicago, however, became a model for other areas as Native Peoples organized to fight for their rights and for services, such as the American Indian Center, that was founded in Uptown in 1953. Uptown developed the nicknames, “Hillbilly Heaven” and “Redskin Row” because of its population of poor whites (many from Appalachia) and the Indigenous. Chicago today has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest urban Native population in the US, with more than 65,000 people representing 175 different tribes.

Ned Blackhawk, in his 2023 book, “The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of American History,” asks: “How can a nation founded on the homelands of dispossessed Indigenous peoples be the world’s most exemplary democracy? ...Indigenous (removal laid) the ground for America’s trifecta of original sins: the genocide of Native American cultures, the legal misogyny of women, and 300 years of chattel slavery of African Americans.”

Nonetheless American Indians are still here despite all attempts to obliterate them. They survived broken treaties, war, starvation, small pox blankets, the diaspora of their tribes, the slaughter of the bison, and the lure of alcoholism. They survived Indian Removal to reservation concentration camps, and the abduction of Native children to prison-like, industrial boarding schools. They learned to survive, then thrive, in 20<sup>th</sup> Century urban cities like Chicago. They have fought for self-government, civil and human rights. They found ways to gain revenue from the whites via casinos. Today they are fighting for the environment and to regain their lands through the reparations.

David Treuer, an Ojibwe historian wrote in *The Atlantic* in 2021 said, "For Native Americans, there can be no better remedy for the theft of land— than land."

**The LandBack Movement**, is today a decentralized campaign for decolonization that envisions a world where BIPOC liberation co-exists. Landback is about much more than the land itself, but one meaning is literally putting Indigenous lands back in Indigenous hands. One goal is for the return all federal public lands—some 640 million acres—to the continent's original caretakers. “Land Back!” became a war cry adopted by water protectors fighting oil and gas pipelines. Mt Rushmore, a particularly infuriating symbol of colonialism, has been a primary site of protest. However, Landback does not mean that non-Indigenous people should be made to leave unceded Indigenous lands.

Lakota and President of the NDN Collective says, "Land Back for sure is about the physical return of the land, but it's also about dismantling the systems that made it possible for the diluting of our land in the first place. Landback is a war cry for the liberation of Indigenous people... When I hear Indigenous youth and land protectors chant "Land Back!" at a rally, I know it can mean the literal restoration of land ownership. When grandmothers and knowledge keepers say it, I tend to think it means more the stewardship and protection of mother earth. When Indigenous political leaders say it, it often means comprehensive land claims and self-governing agreements. No matter what meaning is attached, we as Indigenous nations have an urge to reconnect with our land in meaningful ways."

**Spoken Meditation** (Includes contact information for the opportunities that were mentioned in the sermon)

Our meditation today is to share some opportunities to live out our UU principals by putting into action, *"The inherent worth and dignity of every person; and Justice, equity and compassion in human relations."* I challenge you: Every time you participate in a Land Acknowledgement or see Indigenous people in the media, or a problematic American holiday comes around like Independence Day, Columbus Day or Thanksgiving; conduct a small act of reparations. Write a letter, Sign an Action Alert or a petition supporting Native American rights, or donate to an Indigenous-led organizing campaign, a legal fund for Native American protesters, or to purchase land, restore bison, or create affordable housing for Native peoples in Chicagoland or in the US. Here, I will offer some suggestions:

**The expression "A'ho" has in recent times become a multi-tribal expression of affirmation, meaning, "I hear you!" or "Amen!" The Congregation will say "A'ho" after each suggested opportunity for reparations:**

Write the mayor of your community demanding that "Columbus Day" be officially changed to "Indigenous Peoples' Day".

Don't wear any sports fan apparel that objectifies Native Americans with a name, cartoon character or mascot as this sort of branding is insulting to indigenous people. The Chicago Blackhawks professional hockey team is one bad example of this branding. Write to team management to advocate for changing the name and mascot.

Educate yourself more on the Native Americans of today who live in your area.

For an example in the Greater Chicago Area visit :

**The Mitchell Museum of the American Indian**  
3001 Central Street, Evanston, IL 60201  
<https://mitchellmuseum.org>  
[info@mitchellmuseum.org](mailto:info@mitchellmuseum.org)  
847.475.0911

In the Indianapolis area there is the:

**Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art**  
500 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317.636.9378  
<https://eiteljorg.org>

Nationally:

**The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian**  
Third Street & Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C.

**New York City Campus**  
Alexander Hamilton US Custom House  
1 Bowling Green, Lower Manhattan  
<https://americanindian.si.edu>

4. Here are some national suggestions for making individual monetary reparations in the form of donations:

**The NDN Collective's Land Back Campaign**

Support an indigenous-led organization dedicated to building Indigenous power. Through grant making to Native tribes and through organizing via the **#LandBack** movement and the climate justice campaign, create sustainable solutions on Indigenous terms.

**408 Knollwood Drive, Rapid City, SD 57701**  
605.791.3999  
<https://ndncollective.org>

**Lakota People's Law Project ("Lakota Law")**

Support Indigenous communities tackling legal and systemic issues, building effective grassroots movements, protecting traditional family structures, and winning Native and environmental justice.

**547 South 7th Street #149**  
Bismarck, ND 58504-5859  
(605) 299-5261.

<https://lakotalaw.org/> <https://action.lakotalaw.org/>  
[info@lakotalaw.org](mailto:info@lakotalaw.org)

## **The InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC)**

Asist a collection of 80 tribes in 20 different states that facilitates the management of over 20,000 buffalo. Commit to reestablishing buffalo herds on Tribal lands in a fair manner that promotes cultural enhancement, spiritual revitalization, ecological restoration, and economic development.

**(406) 679-5697**

**<https://itbcbuffalonation.org>  
[shaina@itbcbuffalonation.org](mailto:shaina@itbcbuffalonation.org)  
[michael@itbcbuffalonation.org](mailto:michael@itbcbuffalonation.org)**

### **Benediction:**

May we use our hands each day to give more than we receive, to help and not to harm, to provide reparations to peoples who have been oppressed by our nation, and to create rather than destroy. We are all relatives. We are all related. Aho!