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MAC **A r r o w**

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

The Tide Has Turned

Rev. Richard Trudeau

For thirty years now, a pretend-antiracist—but actually racist—ideology has flowed into and come to dominate the thinking of national UU officials. Finley Campbell called it "neoracism." While the officials keep bleating that we should "dismantle our white supremacy culture," Finley's thinking, and mine, is that what actually needs dismantling is the officials' own neoracism.

Finally, the tide has turned—or so it seems to me. My feeling is that sometime in the last year, the ideology of neoracism has begun to ebb in society at large, as more and more people recognize it as counterproductive.

One indication that the tide has turned is a new book, *The End of Race Politics*, by a remarkable young (28) man named Coleman Hughes. After reading a review, our own Dick Burkhart said that this book would "warm Finley Campbell's heart." Yes. This is a book that blows Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* and Ibram Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist* out of the water.

"Neoracists don't want racial peace," Hughes writes, "but endless ideological war...."

"Racial strife is what fuels the neoracist industry. Neoracists need people to believe in monstrous and ongoing racial oppression. If racism were eliminated from society, neoracists would be out of a job...."

"It's only by perpetuating interracial hatred—by continuing to make old racial wounds seem fresh, by spreading the myth that our society has made little progress toward eliminating racism against people of color, and by exaggerating the threat of white supremacy—that neoracists can ... continue depicting themselves as heroes." [p. 177]

Amen. My hope is that, as the tide flows out and the stupidity of neoracism becomes more and more widely recognized, the opportunists now controlling the UU national institutions—who are no fools when it comes to protecting their own interests—will see the handwriting on the wall and resign. In anticipation of that blessed day, I say: Godspeed to Queen Sofia and her court.

The Commission On Institutional Change Part I: An Origin Story

By Dr. Kenneth Christiansen

Summary

Changing attitudes toward race and racial justice from the early days of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the 1960s to the present were extremely important influences on the work of the Commission On Institutional Change. The seeds of the current attitudes toward racial justice and racial identity in the UUA were planted during the *Black Empowerment Controversy* in the 1960s. They sprouted in educational initiatives and group structures including the *Journey Toward Wholeness* in the 1990s and early 2000s. They were watered in segregated group structures including the *Allies for Racial Equity* with only white UUs as members; the Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries with only Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color UUs as members; and later Black Lives UU with only black members. Those seeds finally bore fruit in the work of the Commission on Institutional Change, 2017-20.

Background and Context for the emergence of the Commission On Institutional Change.

The most significant racial justice involvement of the UUA came when Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called Rev. Homer Jack, Chair of the UUA Commission on Religion and Race, in March of 1965 asking for help. The call came after “Bloody Sunday” when Alabama State Troopers attacked people marching for Voting Rights as they crossed the Edmond Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. Over 350 UU ministers and lay people including the entire UU national board answered the call and participated in the successful march from Selma to Montgomery two weeks later. Two of the three people killed by white segregationists while involved with the march were UUs: Rev. James Reeb and Ms. Viola Liuzzo. The nationwide publicity that came from their killing played a key role in the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Civil Rights Movement’s approach to racial justice followed a pattern. Specific discriminatory laws and institutional policies were identified. Coalitions of Protestants and Catholics, labor movements and political parties, blacks and whites, were assembled to advocate for change. While personal identity factors varied greatly, a common commitment to racial justice and focus on discriminatory laws and practices held them together.

Other groups, most notably the Black Nationalists and White Christians who supported segregation, had very different approaches to racial justice. Black nationalists chose to build power by organizing around racial identity and resisting any white influence or collaboration. In the book *Revisiting the Empowerment Controversy: Black Power and Unitarian Universalism*, UU Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed explains in elaborate detail how the Black Unitarian Universalists for Radical Reform and the Black Action Council, both Black Power oriented UU groups, played an oversized role in segregating UUA approaches to racial justice in 1966-69.

White Christians who supported segregation held that the only valid approach to overcoming racism was personal, namely, advocating for White People to stop being racist. Directly addressing discriminatory laws and policies was not part of the picture. Other white leaders who wanted good outcomes for racial justice, notably Rev. Joseph Barndt, founder of the Crossroads Ministries, similarly focused on the personal by advocating that racial justice could be achieved by changing white people's consciousness.

Crossroads Ministries trained many UUs in the early 1990s. This approach led to the formation of the *Journey Toward Wholeness Initiative*, an active UUA ministry from 1997 into the early 21st Century. The workshops the *Journey* offered to congregations focused on the need to overcome white racism considering all the horrible things white people have done to black people in American history. The prescribed path for positive change involved confessions of personal involvement and convincing as many other white UUs as possible to acknowledge their own benefitting from White Privilege and racism. This focus on personal change to overcome racism continued into the early 21st Century with the formation of additional ministries including the Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (all Black, Indigenous and People of Color); the Allies for Racial Equity (all white); and Black Lives UU (all black). It did not become dominant in the UUA until there was a major shakeup of leadership in 2017.

In early 2017, controversy erupted over the hiring of a white Lead Minister for the Southern Region of the UUA. Another candidate, a Latina religious education professional, claimed she had been told she was qualified for the job and should have been hired. Accusations that this was just one more example of White Supremacy Culture grew to the point that Peter Morales, the first Latino President of the UUA, resigned under pressure in April. The three temporary co-presidents that served from April through June and the UUA Board joined in declaring that the Unitarian Universalist Association was "swimming in a sea of white supremacy."

The Commission On Institutional Change

The *Commission On Institutional Change* was appointed at GA 2017 to address this crisis. Their Report, "*Widening The Circle Of Concern*" (WCC), was presented at GA 2020.

The Commission was charged "to conduct an audit of the power structures and analyze systemic racism and white supremacy culture within the Unitarian Universalist Association." (WCC, p. xvii) The subsequent research study, conducted over the next three years, asked UUs who are Black people, Indigenous people, and People Of Color (BIPOC) the following two questions.

In what ways have you or your group or community been hurt by current racist and culturally biased attitudes and practices within Unitarian Universalism?

In what ways have we, as a faith community, been living outside of our values and commitments?" (WCC, p. xxiv)

No questions were asked about positive experiences or experiences in general. Based on the responses of 1,100 participants in the study out of approximately 19,000 BIPOC

Page 4 UUs, the report states that "The vast majority of people of color and others from

identities marginalized within Unitarian Universalism had experienced discriminatory and oppressive incidents or cultures within Unitarian Universalist circles.” (WCC, p. xxv).

Recommendations

In keeping with the charge to support “long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism” (WCC, p. xvii), the Commission made 36 recommendations in the areas of Theology, Governance, Congregations and Committees, Hospitality and Inclusion, Living Our Values in the World, Religious Professionals, Educating for Liberation, Innovations and Risk-Taking, Restoration and Reparations, and Accountability and Resources.

Subsequent Action

The Article II Study Commission convened in the fall of 2020. The Commission was charged to “review Article II of the UUA Bylaws, and propose any revisions that will enable our UUA, our member congregations, and our covenanted communities to be a relevant and powerful force for spiritual and moral growth, healing, and justice.” The charge elaborated that “Proposed changes should articulate core UU theological values. The Board believes that one core theological value, shared widely among UUs, is love.” A preliminary draft of the Revisions to Article II received a majority vote at GA 2023. The Final Proposed Revision was released in October of 2023. It needs a 2/3 affirmative vote at GA 2024 to replace the current Article II that includes the Seven Principles.

“*Widening The Circle Of Concern*,” the 223 page final report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, June, 2020, is available at https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/w/widening_the_circle-text_with_covers.pdf. The number 19,000 is based 158,186 members of UU churches in 2014 given in the UUA website <https://www.uua.org/data/demographics/uua-statistics>; and 12% of UUs identifying as non-white in a 2014 survey by the Pew Research Center shown in the website <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-denomination/unitarian/>. Note that the estimate is not precise. The margin of error is +/-8 percentage points. This footnote is borrowed from *REVIEW OF THE CLAIM THAT BLACK PEOPLE, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE HARMED IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ORGANIZATIONS THAT IS MADE IN THE REPORT “WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF CONCERN”* by Allan Palley, 5 April, 2021.

Scattered throughout the text and summarized on pages 171-187 of the report.

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/timeline>

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/charge>

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission/final-proposed-revision-article-ii>

Article II Proposal is flawed in many ways
By Steve Bottorff
(posted to the Save the 7 Principles Facebook site)

I believe that the Article II proposal is flawed in many ways beyond losing the 7 Principles. This is a summary of the flaws I see in the proposed changes.

Intellectual - The 7Ps are concise and succinct. The Art II proposal is wordy and vague

Emotional - Loss of the 7P and our Sources take away from our history and tradition

Procedural - The UUA did not show reasons for this action, nor vet it well with the member congregation before presenting it as a fiat accompli this spring

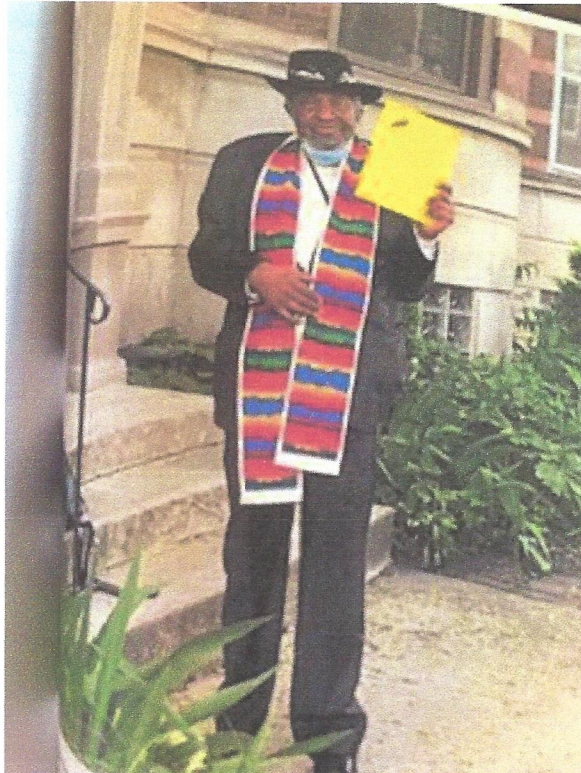
Democracy - Proper and promised democratic procedures were not followed.

Legal - This proposal changes the congregation's relationship with the UUA and should be reviewed by each congregation's lawyers.

Anti-liberal - UUA suppression of dissent and treatment of dissenters has been appalling.

Governance - This proposal changes the role of the UUA from serving the congregations to directing the congregations through covenants to focus on anti-racism while leaving climate change, gun control and a host of other social justice issues in the shadows.

You do not tear down the foundation of your house when you want to add a room. We should defeat this proposal and then amend the existing Article II to meet our current and future needs.



The Commission On Institutional Change Part II:

Why Is This Happening?

Two Cultural Tensions Influencing *Widening the Circle of Concern*

By Dr. Kenneth Christiansen

Two long-simmering cultural tensions strongly influenced the content and methodology of *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the final report of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Commission On Institutional Change. This report is now guiding proposals for the restructuring of the UUA. I will clarify both tensions and explain how each helped determine the content and direction of the 36 recommendations and 114 action steps in *Widening the Circle of Concern*, many of which are already being implemented.

What are these tensions? First, two different deeply imbedded world views are in conflict. One we are very familiar with – the Seven Principles. That's the one we live by. Individual worth and dignity. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Democracy. It is why I am Unitarian Universalist. How about you? These are Enlightenment values. The world is objective in this world view. Facts are facts. Logic and scientific inquiry are important pathways to the truth. Freedom, Reason, and tolerance are very important values. Individuals are judged by their individual character and actions. I suspect that is what most if not all of us present today are living and breathing.

There is an alternative world view. You can see its appearance lots of places in history. It got spelled out in the 1970s and 1980s as Postmodernism. But it has many variations, many flavors. In this world view, facts are based on viewpoints. There is an argument for that. I have a viewpoint. You have a viewpoint. Why is your viewpoint better than mine? Or mine better than yours? In this way of looking at reality, stories convey more truths than logic and scientific inquiry. And community is more important than the individual. Communities are formed and guided by common stories.

There is one caveat in the way people look at this, not only in the UUA but in many places in our society. That is the belief that only people at the bottom of society can see what is really going on. There are arguments for that. People at the top don't have to pay attention to life circumstances facing people not as fortunate. People at the bottom must pay attention to everything to survive. Therefore, only their stories are legitimate.

I am very aware that when I entered a volunteer ministry in my early 20s and lived near and worked in the Robert Taylor Homes Public Housing community in Chicago, I was totally baffled. What's going on here? It was a totally different world. Everybody had to live by a very different set of rules than I had to live by. Both poverty and race played a part. I had to consider that, and many experiences since then, where I had to deal with the fact peoples' worlds are different

It was a very valuable learning lesson. Basic understandings can change if a person believes that 1) all truth is contained in stories; 2) everyone has a viewpoint; 3) facts can be very different for different people; 4) only people at the bottom can see the big picture; and 5) everyone must stick together to survive. Individualistic values like freedom, reason and tolerance are seen as causing much disruption. Therefore, they must be discarded or kept under

control.

The last paragraph is a viewpoint. In my personal work, I try to understand the other person's viewpoint. I try to feel the other person's viewpoint. What would I feel given the same experiences? I actually try to go that far. Even when I disagree with a viewpoint, or especially when I disagree with a viewpoint, I try to understand it.

The second long-simmering cultural tension is two different ways that racism and antiracism have been understood and dealt with historically. This phenomenon is much larger than the Unitarian Universalist Association. But the UUA has certainly been part of the conversation, part of what's going on.

One way to deal with racism is to bring people from all different backgrounds together in coalitions to change discriminatory laws and practices. Discriminatory laws and practices are the focus. That was the path used by Dr. King with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and John Lewis with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. I think of this as integrated antiracism. Or asset-based antiracism where everyone from any background is considered a potential asset to the cause. This type of antiracism accomplished major changes in our country in the Civil Rights Movement.

Because of its effectiveness, integrated, coalitional antiracism has consistently been opposed by institutions and people with entrenched wealth and power. Nonetheless, it continues to be effective when people work together for positive change. Many UUs are experiencing this today in Church Based Community Organizations like Jacksonville's Interfaith Coalition for Action, Reconciliation and Empowerment (ICARE).

The other way to be antiracist is personal. Here the focus is on white racism and white guilt. White racism has been horrible in American History. White racism can and should be part of a larger approach. However, when it is the only area addressed, there is a problem.

In this more personal flavor of antiracism, racism is seen as a white people's problem with white people needing to fix it. The role for black, Indigenous and People Of Color is to encourage white people to study the history of white racism, and own that history as their very own, by acknowledging their White Privilege and their involvement in White Supremacy Culture. Since the roles for white people and black people are quite different, I see this as segregated antiracism, or segregating anti-racism, or guilt-based antiracism.

The book, *White Fragility*, published by UUA's own Beacon Press in 2018, the best-selling book Beacon Press ever published, is an extreme example of this approach. After George Floyd was killed there were two books that were sold all over the country: *How To Be An Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, and *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. Robin DiAngelo builds an extensive case that all white people are racist. Toward the end of the book she writes, "A positive white identity is an impossible goal. White identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy." Taking things this far leads to a very Manichean picture where all black people are victims, and all white people are oppressors.

Both of the conflicts I have just talked about, the Enlightenment vs. Post-Modernism conflict, and the Asset-Based antiracism vs. Guilt-Based antiracism conflict, both of these conflicts inform the structure of *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the final report of the UUA Commission On Institutional Change. This reflects a major shift in ways of thinking, and not just in the UUA.

"Widening The Circle Of Concern," the 223 page final report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, June, 2020, is available for downloading at https://www.uua.org/files/pdf/w/widening_the_circle-text_with_covers.pdf.

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, (Boston, Beacon Press, 2018).

Ibram X. Kendi, *How To Be An Antiracist*, (New York: One World Press, 2019).

Liberal Values Under Attack Among Unitarian Universalists: An Essay Based on the "Manifesto for Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian Universalism": A Call to Action for All Progressive Members of the Various Branches and Descendants of Liberal Christianity [article developed for the *Christian Century Journal*, 2021]

By Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell, Dr. Anne Schneider, and Dr. Dick Burkhardt, (then) Members, the Board of Directors, the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council

Introduction

This essay is based on a Manifesto for Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian Universalism. It is a call to action to all the branches and descendants of liberal Christianity.

According to Rev. Dr. Martin Marty of the University of Chicago, Unitarian Universalism (UU) represents a distinct innovation as a derivative of liberal Christianity. It seeks to manifest a creed-less church, based on humanist principles and democratic governance to be sure, but keeping many of elements of traditional Christian worship and liberation theology. It would be a shame to see this experiment fail,

Over the last five years divisions among UUs have escalated, especially over certain theories being taught in universities concerning race. These are doctrines which many UUs understand as contrary both to the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and to the core UU principles (our guideposts in place of creeds). Our organization, the UU Multiracial Unity Action Council, is a fairly new national organization dedicated to this legacy, including through worship services and anti-racism workshops which honor the multiracial unity championed by MLK. UUMUAC also facilitates outside-the-bubble dialogue which animates our UU principles toward nurturing a more resilient and just world.

We know that what is happening among UUs is impacting, or will soon impact, other liberal Christian churches too. The ideologies of concern have been major contributors to the cultural wars in the larger society. They focus on the identity politics of race, especially as rooted in postmodern philosophy, often referred to as the “whiteness studies” of “Critical Race Theory” (CRT).

We are especially disturbed by the consequent “cancel culture”. This continues to cause serious damage (censorship and intimidation, anti-male and anti-white bigotry, sanctions against ministers who challenge illiberal ideology, even witch-hunt style actions). Now add to this, unfounded allegations of an endemic “white supremacy culture” to justify certain power plays, together with a national leadership which has either tolerated or endorsed these abuses.

Congregational autonomy is under attack by this leadership and our democratic processes have been undermined or replaced by more authoritarian methods. The ends of “racial equity” are admirable but the “means” are not – without even an acknowledgment of alternative approaches that are far better grounded in the social sciences and “best practices”.

Modern racism, or what some of us call neo-racism, is multifaceted and nuanced. It deserves a deeper, more compassionate and Christian /social humanist understanding, not knee-jerk dichotomies or racial hierarchies of blame and shame.

So, let’s consider three questions in more detail: (1) What’s the problem? (2) How do we develop new attitudes based on old truths? (3) Why is all this important?

The Problem

The historic vision of racial justice and **equality** based on multiracial unity is being undermined by fallacious accusations of racism and white supremacy not only among UUs but also in society at large. A particularly dangerous accusation is that systemic racism still dominates a desegregated society such as ours, disguising the fact that it is racism in particular institutions and individuals which still exists.

Some UU ministers are being cancelled without legal due process for opposing false allegations such as that the US is a racist nation corrupted by systemic racism, even in 2021. This ignores the popular votes of the last 4 presidential elections and the vast increase in integration, interracial marriage, and multiculturalism since the civil rights era.

That is, the evidence is that a majority of Americans today are non-racist, according to the common meaning of racism as “prejudice or discrimination based on race”, even when this is interpreted to include policy choices in addition to individual interactions.

Another false and insulting doctrine is that all white people who object to being labeled as racists must suffer from a contrived malady called “white fragility”. This has led to diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings which resemble Maoist struggle sessions or “gaslighting” for advocates for racial justice or other non-racist participants who refuse to be guilt tripped, fueling a schism in liberal religion and society.

Others object to historical race reductionism – narratives that reduce the less savory aspects of US history to the narrow lens of racial injustice, masking the fundamental roles of economic self-interest and of dogmatic religion. A particular version of this is the doctrine that the US has had a white supremacist culture since 1619, even though white supremacy (“that white people are racially superior and should therefore dominate”) was never a dominant ideology outside the old South and is a fringe phenomenon today. All this is boosting the identity politics of race, expanding the opening for opportunistic politicians to scapegoat racial minorities or feed off ethnocentrism.

These doctrines also promote the ideology of victimhood culture, where one racial group (whites) are deemed to be both privileged and oppressive and while all others are to be treated as oppressed victims. This ignores the long history of struggling working class and underclass whites, which has actually expanded in recent decades, made visible by an epidemic of “deaths of despair”. Presumed oppressor / victim status also violates the ethical principle which censures “double standards”. This ideology also undermines the democratic principle of moral equality, which animates our Seven Principles. These are as follows:

- (1) The inherent worth and dignity of every person.
- (2) Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- (3) Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.
- (4) A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

- (5) The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in our society at large.
- (6) The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all.
- (7) Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Thus, our first principle expresses an aspiration to transcend the divisive identity politics of race, class, and religion. The practical consequences of failure to treat each other with respect are not just individual but societal – cultural wars fueling political polarization. In turn, these civic battles, stoked by demonization, obstruct our aim to create a more egalitarian, just, and sustainable world order, the subjects of our second, sixth, and seventh principles.

Cancel culture is a direct, frontal assault on our fourth and fifth principles, shutting down open and honest dialogue. This in turn divides people even more into media bubbles, while the resentments of the demeaned or persecuted build up, opening the arena to conspiracy theories, demagoguery, or worse. For cancellation done in the name of racial justice, this illiberal backlash may end up re-victimizing the working-class people-of-color who were supposedly being protected from micro-aggressions. Clearly these dogmas, often championed by Critical Race Theorists, are also hurting professionals and students of all colors as well, even those who think they are benefitting from these dogmas, what some of us call, neo-racism.

New Attitudes

We must revitalize an old truth, expressed in the 1930's labor organizing slogan "black and white, unite and fight". It's time now to include not just "black and white", but all races among workers, students, professionals, immigrants, and cultural groups.

We call for finding common ground, instead of stoking divisions for the power and privilege of racial elites of all stripes who profit from keeping average people disunited by "white fragility" types of diversity training and other double standards.

Our struggle is to reach out to people in the pews – to help pull back the veil so they can recognize the toxicity of identity politics, whether based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion. These cultural battles have fueled many of the great scourges of humankind – war, genocide, racism, and persecution – through the ages and continue today.

UUMUAC is calling for collaboration across class, identity, and culture. We've already implemented plans for this purpose, including a newsletter, an online discussion group, online worship services, conferences, participation in meetings and forums, and support for dissident initiatives and targeted individuals. At present we are organizing an international conference to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2022, and our Religious Professionals Task Force is working on new ways to support heterodox ministers and other religious professionals.

Our purpose is to rebuild the trust and solidarity that we had during the Civil Rights Movement, what some would call “the Kumbaya, my Lord” moments, by replacing the destructive finger-pointing ideologies of neo-racism with initiatives to find and honor our common humanity, while learning from our differences.

The Importance of the Ideas Expressed in Our Manifesto: The Quest for Reconciliation

To begin with, we affirm the immense cultural contributions of black folks and other folks of color to human civilization. But we reject the neo-racist dogmas of white privilege, white fragility, white implicit bias, and most of all, white supremacy as still ongoing realities within our present-day desegregated culture, a culture created by the contributions of whites to as well as nonwhites. To this end we call for the UUA to fully restore the democratic process for all those who claim to have been harmed by racial incidents, including legal due process for all claims of harm, yet avoiding assuming or assigning blame where there is no realistic reason to do so. Then there is the situation of historical harm; that is, the harm caused by ruthless political economic policies of American capitalists. In much of UUA ideology, these policies – deportation of Native Americans, seizure of Mexican territory, enslavement of black people, for example --are blamed on white people of all classes and immigrant status combined with the neo-racist notion that all white people today are beneficiaries of these actions.

Such thought suppresses the fact that millions of white people opposed those policies and this should be acknowledged by the UUA, for it would go a long way to creating a spirit of reconciliation between those who fought against racial injustices and those who suffered from them. This could mean, for example, applying the concept of reparations to all rank-and-file folks who were victims of being held to involuntary servitude– Black, White, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, Immigrants.

Now here is the point as related to the specific situation of the UU Association of Congregations (UUAC). There has been a variety of complaints leveled against our members, both professional and laity, under the broad category of "harm" defined as the continuation of historical wrongs or as some current incident declared to be racially harmful. We argue that we must reject complaints based on the concept of racialistic harm without strong evidence that it was racially motivated and not simply based on some ideological, linguistic, or identity differences, for clearly this would be an important step in moving toward synergy. By using the democratic process and legal procedures, we need to make sure that such accusations of race-based harm are grounded in the facts of the situation, especially around the issue of intentionality.

But today one of the most harmful term, a key high impact term, is the phrase white supremacy used by UUA leaders as a noun or an adjective in describing a variety of socio-political and socio-cultural elements identified with "the white race." This term has a specific history and a popular meaning referring to a particular period in world history and to a particular ideology. To use the term white supremacy today as spokespersons for Critical Race Theory use it as a general application to all things white or deemed to be white, racially speaking, is creating inappropriate definitions of "white supremacy", with all its negative history and connotations, is a misuse designed to create racial and cultural conflict, rather than unity and a major discussion at the next UUA General Assembly on this fact would again create a spirit of reconciliation. In other words, the concept of white supremacy should only be used in its popular understanding to describe the white supremacists in our society, and by using it appropriately, we create clarity and lay the basis of mutual understanding.

Mutual understanding becomes the basis for our vision of reconciliation, especially when we bring the multiracial unitarian universalist perspective to the table and as applied to the UUAC this would allow UU's committed to the Seven Principles to resume their place as a united, major part of the progressive/liberal movements in contemporary religious life.

To Summarize and Conclude

The purpose of us writing this article for a traditional Christian journal noted for its commitment to liberal Christianity was to share with its readers what is going on in a religion that once prided itself on being liberal and humanist, Unitarian Universalism, symbolized in our Manifesto. We did this to offer a model of how we are seeking to deal with the neo-racist movement within our own faith with a potential goal of achieving synergy, the unity of opposites, through dialogue and debate, under the power of our Fourth Principle: the responsible search for truth and meaning. What we have sought to do is to transform our brief manifesto called "Democracy in Multiracial Unitarian

Universalism” (which we had submitted as an ad, but which was turned down), transforming it into a longer article, at the suggestion of a representative of the *Journal*.

This turned out to be an excellent suggestion as it has allowed us to add the kind of detail that might be useful for other religious groups undergoing the struggle between multi-racial unity and neo-racism and to share our belief that unless such synergy is achieved, then the UUAC will experience a major schism, which would be a major setback in the evolution of our faith.

We conclude by saying that the best way to deal with racism now and in the future is through multiracial unity, as it was done in the past. We assert, and have historical evidence to show, that the best way to do this is to adopt/adapt the UUMUAC goal: the unity of the light- and dark-skinned people of the world, specifically the members of the rank-and-file: workers, students, and professionals. For, biologically speaking, our melanin content is the only genetic feature we have to indicate some kind of physical differences. We in the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Council dedicate ourselves to ideologically fighting racism in all of its modern forms, including that represented by "cancel culture".

We place before the readers of this journal and the members of our own Association of Congregations the choice declared by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his last book on the issue of race, *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community?*

UU Church of Jacksonville Town Hall, January 14, 2024:

Questions and Responses

Submitted by Dr. Kenneth Christiansen

Questions and Responses. *Questions submitted during or immediately after the Town Hall are reproduced verbatim in bolded black. PRO and CON responses are identified beneath each question. PRO responses support a YES vote at GA 2024 for the proposed revision of Article II of the UUA Bylaws. CON responses support a NO vote.*

Was there any objective evidence presented by the Commission on Institutional Change (COIC) in *Widening the Circle of Control* that there was widespread racism in Unitarian Universalism, or was there just claims that this was happening?

PRO: From the perspective of many who support the proposed revision of Article II, there is no such thing as objective evidence. Facts are tied to viewpoints. Viewpoints grow out of personal and group experiences. People in minority groups, Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC), must cope within the culture of the

majority as well as navigating their own cultures. This gives them the best viewpoint to truly understand what is going on in the world. Their stories tell the truths everyone needs to hear.

CON: From the perspective of those who oppose changing Article II, facts are facts. No change should be considered without objective evidence that supports the change. Asking only for stories of harm experienced by BIPOC individuals does not constitute objective evidence. Combining hundreds of stories into five Avatars and refusing to share the actual stories heard in the “research study” further disqualifies the study results.

PRO: The correct name of the COIC report is *Widening the Circle of Concern* (WCC). It is disrespectful of the questioner to change the name.

CON: Expressing the title as *Widening the Circle of Control* lifts up the emphasis on accountability that is present in *Widening the Circle of Concern*. Accountability means control. The proposed new Article II replaces the aspirations expressed in the Seven Principles with Covenantal relationships which are morally binding and potentially accountable.

COMMENT: Proposals for accountability entered UUA discussions after 2017 with the movement to include an Eighth Principle dealing with antiracism. Antiracism in this context refers to white racism in the context of White Supremacy Culture. In April of 2017, the UUA Board declared that the Unitarian Universalist Association is “swimming in a sea of White Supremacy Culture.” Following up in a forum at GA 2022 titled “Accountability, Justice and Wholeness – UU Theologies of Liberation,” Rev. Sonia Betancourt, now president of the UUA, said, “Covenant without consequences is not actually Covenant.”

To achieve the level of cultural uniformity imbedded in a Covenantal approach, the aspirational Seven Principles must be discarded or reworded to remove wiggle room in relation to behaviors that express the six values at the core of the proposed revision of Article II. Where the Principles allowed individual UUs to calibrate their own behavior, *Widening the Circle of Concern*, on pp. 130-132, calls for monitoring of individual and group behavior. The nuts and bolts of any system of accountability will be articulated in Article III of the UUA Bylaws which are up for review beginning after GA 2024.

Breaking news: A new “Accountability Launch Team” was inaugurated at the Saturday, January 20, 2024, UUA Board meeting. The mission is “to close the gap between who we want to be and who we are.”

What part did “avatars” play in pushing these claims rather than actual survey results? Were the results locked away?

PRO: The Avatars were the best way the survey results could be expressed. Asking for more than that is evidence of White Supremacy Culture. The five stories expressing the results of the survey are written as letters from five composite individuals or Avatars. Each Avatar represents many individual stories heard. Individual stories are not revealed for fear of backlash against the individuals who told the stories.

CON: This approach has no objective validity. There is no transparency between stories collected and the Avatars presented. This fallacy, added to the fact that only stories of harm were solicited, renders the research results useless at best, dishonest at worst.

What are the ramifications for congregational polity to have our UUA telling us we have 114 action steps to take to be properly antiracist? In other words, how does this affect our ability to make our own decisions on how to run our congregation?

PRO: The 114 action steps constitute positive guidance for a church that sincerely wants to be antiracist. To question them is racist. Getting White Supremacy Culture out of the UUA will take changing white UU's ways of thinking and acting. The baseline is well expressed by Robin DiAngelo in her bestselling 2018 book, *White Fragility*, published by UUA owned Beacon Press. "A positive white identity is an impossible goal. White identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy." There is a lot of important work to do.

CON: Antiracism that sees a positive white identity as an impossible goal has zero track record for changing discriminatory laws and practices in our society. Policy-focused antiracism where everyone works together across racial and economic lines, on the other hand, has a strong track record for changing discriminatory laws and practices. John Lewis and Martin Luther King Jr. brought white and black people and groups together to dramatically change the legal and economic conditions of life for minorities in America in the Civil Rights Movement. Everyone willing to work on the problems was considered an asset to the cause. Church Based Community Organizations like ICARE in Jacksonville and other integrated organizations continue that asset-based approach with many positive results. "When we all work together, GREAT THINGS HAPPEN."

I've heard there will be changes to Article 3 that could potentially decertify us if we don't behave. What happens to the congregation, the assets, our money? Are you going to give us information on this?

PRO: Like UUA President Sonia Betancourt said at the 2022 General Assembly, "Covenant without consequences is not actually Covenant." Congregational polity issues are not covered in Article II of the UUA Bylaws. Rather, they are covered in Article III and will be reexamined by a committee process beginning after the 2024 General Assembly. There are no changes in UUA congregational polity at this time.

CON: Like UUA President Sonia Betancourt said at the 2022 General Assembly, "Covenant without consequences is not actually Covenant." Congregational polity issues are not discussed in Article II of the UUA Bylaws. Rather, they are covered in Article III and will be reexamined by a committee process beginning after the 2024 General Assembly.

Are you going to provide the congregation an opportunity to discuss the GA vote outcome? Is the congregation going to be able to participate in "What Now?" after we find out GA's result?

PRO: That is the UUCJ plan.

CON: That is the UUCJ plan.