

# Resistance to Change: Is All Change Good?

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Feb 28, 2023

We have heard the accusation that those of us who oppose the changes proposed by the Article II Study Commission (A2SC) are just “resistant to change.” This is not true. In fact, we do believe in change when change is necessary.

Change, in and of itself, may be good or it may be bad, or it may make absolutely no difference. For example, elections are opportunities for change. The election of Donald Trump as President of the United States after the eight years of progress of President Barack Obama was a change. I doubt that many of us would consider that change as being particularly good.

There are a number of reasons for organizations to institute change, including:

1. a crisis internal or external to the organization,
2. performance gaps within the organization, and
3. new opportunities.

These are all valid reasons for change. That is, (1) to address a crisis, such as the continued decline in membership in congregations and the denomination as a whole; (2) to remediate inadequate performance of the organization, as by restoring openness and democratic processes within the UUA; and (3) to take advantage of new opportunities such as helping to heal cultural and political divides within Unitarian Universalism and society at large.

**However, abandoning the 7 Principles does not address any of these issues!** Rather, abandoning our Principles would most likely result in a

loss in members and congregations, as congregations struggle with the ensuing divisiveness, and UUs leave the denomination altogether.

Other justifications given for organizational change often include, (4) “*Change for the sake of change*,” such as when a new CEO or administration seeks to put their own stamp on an organization, but does not address any specific issue. Other reasons include (5) “*Because it sounds good*,” even if the change actually has little likelihood of having any positive impact upon the challenges the organization faces. Lastly, (6) there may be the assumption that any change, by definition, is good. These last two are among those that we have often heard as justification for making the A2SC proposed changes. However, these particular changes would also be highly damaging to Unitarian Universalism as a liberal religious movement.

Indeed, many of us who oppose the A2SC proposed changes do see a real need for changes within both the UUA organization and our congregations. We need to:

1. Ensure and strengthen democratic processes in UUA governance – including direct regional nomination, real choice in the election of the UUA President and direct, accountable representation on the Board, using fair, open and transparent democratic processes,
2. Respect individual freedom of belief, the expression of diverse perspectives, even dissenting views, and
3. Protect congregational polity.

We believe that the changes proposed by the A2SC are contrary to the best interests and future of Unitarian Universalism, our congregations and their members. Let us focus, instead, on change that strengthens democratic process, our free liberal religious movement, and member congregations!