

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association Bylaws contains our Principles and Purposes, articulating the essence of who we are as UUs .

## What's Happening?

In June, 2020, as part of a mandated 15-year review, a Study Commission was appointed and charged to revise Article II to assure that we are “living into the Unitarian Universalism of the future.”

The result was a proposal voted on and approved at General Assembly (GA) 2023 that eliminates the Principles, replacing them with Values and Covenant statements. The Sources are now Inspirations with no historical references, only “understandings.” Commitment to Individual Freedom of Belief is replaced by a vague reference to “congregational freedom.” Love, expressed as “the power that holds us together” is now the theological core of UU, not freedom, tolerance, and reason.

These changes will become permanent if they're approved with a two-thirds vote at GA in 2024.

January 17, 2024  
[savethe7principles.org](http://savethe7principles.org)

## What's the Problem?

- In their report, the Study Commission did not articulate compelling justification for such major changes. They alluded to “ethical, moral and spiritual crises” without identifying what they are.
- No rationale was offered to show how the rewrite can address those crises or better lead UU into the future.
- The language in the current Principles and Purposes is unambiguous, poetic and elegant, and incorporates the spirit of inclusion, anti-oppression and multi-culturalism. The rewrite uses abstract words and phrases with connotations that cannot be consistently understood and interpreted.
- The current Sources statements articulate our rich religious heritage, affirming what is unique about our religion.
- Individual Freedom of Belief is our bedrock, establishing our identity as a liberal faith. The rewrite has replaced that with “congregational freedom,” which is undefined.
- Love, as the theological core of the proposed Values, does little to advance a unique faith community that cherishes reason, tolerance and freedom.

## ARE WE LOSING UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM?

The bylaws, articulating the fundamentals of our faith, are being rewritten.

Our Principles, Sources, and Individual Freedom of Belief are being eliminated.



*Do we want to remain a  
religion of free thinkers?*

## Is the Process Fair?

The Study Commission report lists 15 groups of stakeholders. Members of congregations were NOT on this list! Consequently, the majority of UUs were allowed little or no input in crucial decisions about our shared future. Congregations did not ask for the Principles to be eliminated.

Members were shocked in October, 2022, when they first learned that our Principles and Sources and individual Freedom of Belief could be eliminated as soon as June, 2024. The 1985 bylaws changes, which were not nearly as consequential, took six years for passage, and involved much discussion among diverse groups.

Many congregations are receiving little to no information about the pending changes. At General Assembly 2023 no forums were held for open discussion about the changes; delegates were instructed to approve the proposal to "continue the conversation."

What conversation?

Unitarian Universalist Association is using its power and extensive communication channels to push through an agenda that has not received adequate, widespread member support.

## Get Involved

UUs have come together from around the nation to oppose this radical proposal. At the very least, many UUs want to understand the implications.

Excellent discussions, articles and other sources can be found at these websites:

[savethe7principles.org](https://savethe7principles.org)  
[fifthprincipleproject.org](https://fifthprincipleproject.org)

## More Covenants?

***"Covenants without consequences are not covenants."***

**The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, President, UUA**

Covenant statements appear multiple times in the rewrite. In religious contexts, covenants can be interpreted as doctrine or creed, which are antithetical to the very essence of UU. Covenants can also be used to limit or eliminate congregational autonomy.

### **Being "Out of Covenant"**

As suggested by Rev. Dr. Betancourt, the covenants in this rewrite could be used as instruments of control and enforcement. They invite UUs to judge each other's behavior and intentions and could stifle honest dialogue and divide us against ourselves.

*"...there is no possibility for black people making progress if we emphasize only race,"*

Bayard Rustin

## Antiracism

Four of the current seven Principles address the inherent worth and dignity of every person; justice, equity and compassion in human relations; acceptance of one another; and world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

In spite of these concepts being woven into the fabric of our faith, a particular antiracist, anti-oppression, multicultural (ARAOMC) ideology has been adopted by the Unitarian Universalist Association. This ideology characterizes our congregations as institutions of white supremacist culture.

Skin color is being used to divide us.

This belief system is an outright repudiation of our Enlightenment (Humanist) values that demand evidence and critical thinking. We have been provided no studies to show that this approach to racism, ablism and other "isms" will dismantle "systems of power, privilege and oppression." Other strategies exist that would unite us in fighting racism and oppression.

By eliminating Enlightenment values, the Article II proposal lays the groundwork for full adoption of this misguided ideology.