

**8<sup>th</sup> Principle** : “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

First UU Church of San Diego and the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle  
Angela Garcia-Sims, 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Team Co-leader

In 2010 Arizona grabbed national attention by proposing SB1070. Activist First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego (First Church) members joined caravans to Phoenix to protest. Although not UU at the time, I accepted UU hospitality, marching to the AZ capitol with thousands of protestors. In the aftermath of that action, I learned about First Church and the 7 principles. It seemed that I had found a church where people walked the talk--holding up a vision of a country that affirmed all its peoples.

After joining the Church, I learned of the complexity and challenge of living the 7 principles in a country deeply rooted in racism and exploitation. While I explored this within myself and my church, I learned that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) had been contending with this national affliction for many years, from the 1960s Civil Rights movement through the 1992-1997 period when UUA general assemblies (GA) addressed racism with resolutions and programs.

At the 1997 GA, delegates committed to become an anti-racism, anti-oppression, multicultural institution, yet in the early 2000s, funding and support of these activities began declining. Commitment to the 7 Principles did not eliminate racist and oppressive actions within the UUA. Recently, the UUA underwent a crisis related to inclusive hiring practices, resulting in the resignation of the UUA President.

Those problems continue today, more blatant in American society and within our Church, which has stepped up anti-racism efforts.

Clearly, significant change even in those committed to the 7 principles requires more than the the 7 principles. In 2017 national UU leaders (<https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/background-nav>) composed the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle with more explicit language which challenged us to explore *diverse multicultural Beloved Community*, to commit to *actions that dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions* and to do so *accountably*.

Some 30 UU congregations have already adopted the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, and this year our Board voted to invite our congregation to discern and adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle for ourselves. As we discern this year, we invite our members and friends to study the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, reflect on **actions** that bring to life the 7 principles: What would living in a Beloved Community, where everyone was safe, valued, affirmed, be like? What actions could dismantle racism? Oppressions? How do we account (describe? excuse? relate? balance?) for our actions? How do we account for the practices of our institutions?

We have the power to answer these questions for ourselves and our church, working together in Beloved Community, committing to love, persist, and take baby steps if needed or great leaps as able. We invite you to join us at upcoming Board forums on **January 17 and 24 at 11:30 am**.

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