

Reimagining the 7 Principles

Presented by: Mathew P. Taylor and Erik Halseth





Mathew P. Taylor has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. He is a student at Starr King School for the Ministry and will be seeking ordination in the Unitarian Universalist Faith Tradition. He has over 15 years' experience working in his local community organizing and serving in Pagan Ministry leadership. Mathew is the Former Board President for the Universalist Unitarian Church of Riverside (2017-2019).



Erik Halseth is a seminarian studying remotely in the MDiv program at Starr King School for the Ministry and living in Southern California. Busy with raising his young son, he occasionally gets a moment to jot down a poem here or there. While studying long ago in the Writing and Literature program at UC Santa Barbara's College of Creative Studies, he swore he'd never be a poet.



This space is...

- A place for transformation;
- A place for healing;
- A place to learn about the history of the 7 principles;
- A place to respectfully discuss the topics at hand;
- And a place for curious exploration.




This space is not...

- A place for white tears;
- A place for absolving white guilt;
- A place to explain away history;
- A place to put blame on others;
- Or, a place in which People of Color are expected to do the heavy lifting.



Why this topic? And why now?

- America exists as a place of societal turmoil, class warfare, and political upheaval.
 - Implicit bias and systemic white supremacy inhabit all corners of this country.
 - Issues such as the immigration/asylum crisis, police brutality, and attacks on the rights of LGBTQIA+ people are a bellwether pointing towards a fundamental change in our democracy.
 - As UUs in an ever changing world, we want to ensure that our principles reflect the current state of the world, and our moral place in it.
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Questions To Think About

- How can we think about The 7 Principles given their nature as a living document?
- How do we interpret them now?
- What could they look like in the future?
- Can Unitarian Universalism be the faith to bring liberation to all people?



The 7 Principles (1st-4th)

- 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- 2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- 3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;



The 7 Principles (5th-7th)

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



Development and History (1960-1985)

History Lesson from 1960-1985



Development and History

The deeper malaise lies in our confusion as to what word we have to spread. **The old watchwords of liberalism—freedom, reason, tolerance—worthy though they may be, are simply not catching the imagination of the contemporary world.** They describe a process for approaching the religious depths, but they testify to no intimate acquaintance with the depths themselves. If we are ever to speak to a new age, we must supplement our seeking with some profound religious finds."

-- Rev. Eugene Pickett (from 1979)

Shared Values, UU World, May 2006



Development and History (1986-2006)

History Lesson from 1986-2006



Static...? Or living...?

In 2020 (when everyone presumably will have perfect vision), our current Principles and Purposes may also be perceived to have inadequacies that demand radical rewriting. And therein lies our genius. It's a process that is rightly called renewal or regeneration. And that is what has not changed and, let us hope, will remain unchanged 20 or even 100 years from now

--Warren R. Ross

Shared Values, UUWorld, May 2006



What's Next?

- In light of the social justice issues facing today's Unitarian Universalism, how can we think about the 7 principles given their nature as a living document?
- How could we interpret them now?
- What could they look like in the future?



Looking Forward

Can Unitarian Universalism be
the faith to bring liberation to all
people?



The 8th 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.



Sources for this presentation...

- [Racial and ethnic diversity of Unitarian Universalists](#)
- [The UUA's Principles and Purposes \(1985\)](#)
- [Reexamination of UUA Principles announced](#)
- [How the UU Principles and Purposes were adopted](#)





Thank you for attending!!!