

December 2, 2019

To: Boise UU Fellowship
From: Racial Justice Ministry
Re: Social Justice Resolution on Dismantling Racism

Dear Friends,

The BUUF Racial Justice Ministry (RJM) proposes that the congregation approve the “Social Justice Resolution on Dismantling Racism” and, thereby, adopt the proposed 8th UU principle, which asks us to

“...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.”

This letter is offered to provide additional background and explanation for the resolution.

The RJM proposed the resolution during July, 2019. We believe it’s a timely issue for BUUF and for the UUA. The UUA has describe racism as “fundamental to U.S. social systems” and “the nation’s most toxic export, shaping policies and practices that do profound harm to the Earth and all living things” (<https://www.uua.org/action/process/csa/undoing-intersectional-white-supremacy/2018-2022-csai-undoing-intersectional>).

During October, 2019 the BUUF Social Justice Council held a feedback session in which participants shared their thoughts and feelings about the resolution and the 8th principle. The RJM also talked with others outside of this feedback session. People often expressed support for the ongoing work against racism described in the resolution. At the same time, people expressed 3 broad concerns about the 8th principle:

1. The wording is not consistent with the wording of the existing principles.
2. The content is already covered in the existing principles.
3. It is a goal or objective rather than a principle.

We are deeply grateful to all those who shared their heartfelt comments and concerns. The RJM considered these concerns at length and wrestled with our responses. While we decided not to include all of the suggested changes, we offer the following considerations.

1. The existing principles were written in style, language, and length that was suited to the UU membership at the time (1985). They have been in place for almost 35 years and are familiar and we are accustomed to their current form. However, the principles are not meant to be static. The UUA Bylaws describe a process for periodic review and possible amendment that is intended to keep the principles up-to-date with changes in the cultural environment. We believe the current environment calls for more explicit racial inclusion as described in the 8th principle.

2. The 8th principle was written by members of Black Lives UU (BLUU) in 2013 in language that is a meaningful expression of their vision of a racially inclusive UU community. We believe it is important to honor this vision and to join in the work of dismantling racism. We believe this echoes the earlier push by UU women for a revision of the original 6 UU principles, written in 1961, to remove the male-centered language and more explicitly include women.
3. The 8th principle is aspirational. As “strong values and moral guides” (<https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles>), we believe all of the UU principles are, and should be, aspirations. They describe what we want for our denomination and for the world community.

We hope this letter provides enough information to allow you to vote on the resolution. Thank you for your consideration.