

## Got Principles? A Corporate Response from CUUPs

The Commission on Appraisal of the Unitarian Universalist Association has requested feedback on its Proposal concerning our UU Principles and Sources. This response is respectfully submitted by the Board of Trustees, Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, on the 16 October 2008.

- Michael Walker, Recording Secretary

1. COA proposes a substantial, explanatory expansion of Article II of the UUA Bylaws, wherein the Principles and Sources are found.
  - a. Recommendation: Article II should reference the UU Covenant, as a *separate* document that discusses our Principles, Sources, and explanations thereof.
2. There has been some movement towards shortening the Principles and/or Sources.
  - a. Recommendation: This is not in the best interest of the movement. Each Principle and Source has a substantial stakeholder base within the UUA, all of whom will be unwilling to give up the Principle or Source that interconnects us all to the UU movement.
3. Specific Principles and Sources of direct concern to CUUPs
  - a. We will discuss all below, but begin with the last first, due to the nature of the Principle and Source in question, and CUUPs' relationship to same.
  - b. For as long as we and they have existed, CUUPs has always supported the Seventh Principle and the Sixth Source. These two items, above all, convey much of the theological justification for our inclusion in the wider UU community. This is important, as the UU movement has a growing, active and loving community of Earth-centered UUs. To eliminate either, as some have suggested in recent online discussions, would disenfranchise a huge population of UU laity, and a substantial segment of UU clergy.
4. Commentary:
  - a. **Sec. C-2.1 Purposes**
    - i. We support this, as proposed.
  - b. **Sec. C-2.2 Identity**
    - i. Add one statement concerning the fact that there is something besides the two U denominations, which have substantially molded our history. (Specifically, over time, the Transcendentalists, the Humanists, the Buddhists, the Pagans and others, have all brought substantial influences to the table.)
  - c. **Sec. C-2.3 Sources**
    - i. CUUPs worked for several years, lobbying UUs throughout the movement, to vote the Sixth Source into being at the 1995 General Assembly. This Source speaks to all UUs with an Earth-centered focus, regardless of their relationship to CUUPs. For the record, CUUPS does NOT support the truncation of this Source.

- ii. To give due credit to our Buddhist sisters and brothers, Buddhist theology has had a profound effect on our collective theology. It would be appropriate to name them in the third sentence: "...Abrahamic religions, Buddhist philosophy, Earth-centered spirituality and other world religious traditions."
- iii. As both UU and Pagan communities have struggled with the concept of misappropriation, we go on record supporting this general statement of our intention to respect traditions, giving credit where it is due, and declining to claim the traditions of others as originating with us.
- iv. We support the inclusion of artistic, creative, mystical and even skeptical sources.

**d. Sec. C-2.4 Principles**

- i. First Principle: Some of our members have expressed concern about the inclusion of the words "across the lifespan," as some fear that this may lead to an Anti-Choice (aka Pro-Life) effort that could be divisive within the wider UU community.
- ii. Second Principle: We support this principle and explanation.
- iii. Third Principle: We support the revision of this principle.
- iv. Fourth Principle: We are particularly pleased with the addition of the concept of Unitarian Universalism as "an evolutionary religion," as this respects our historical development and inherently affirms multiple sources.
- v. Fifth Principle: We do not feel that society is served by the truncation of this principle, omitting the words "in our congregations and society at large." This omission can lead to a tunnel-vision approach that ignores our responsibility to humanity, and especially American society, as we share our UU values with the world.
- vi. Sixth Principle: We support this principle and explanation.
- vii. Seventh Principle: In addition to the verbiage added within the explanation, we feel that acknowledgement of our mystical relationship with Nature is missing. Yes, we are inspired by the holiness of Earth, but it is more than that – for the Transcendentalists, the modern UU Pagans, nature mystics and many other UUs.

**e. Sec. C-2.5 Inclusion**

- i. We support this section. While not explicitly naming UU efforts for Anti-Oppression / Anti-Racism / Multi-Culturalism (AO / AR / MC), this section definitively describes our intention to strive for improvement in all of these areas.

**f. Sec. C-2.6 Freedom of Belief**

- i. We support this concept.