



Selected Report Excerpts with Summary Comments from  
Presenters at August 5, 2020 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Inter-Domination Zoom Call  
with 106 participants

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# Preface

At a gathering convened by Unitarian Universalist Association co-presidents Rev. Sofia Betancourt, Rev. William Sinkford, and Dr. Leon Spencer in Atlanta in 2017, Unitarian Universalist leaders of color were asked to share their insights into how the Association could continue moving forward in the midst of another racially charged moment.

Among the lamentations and learnings the assembled Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color identified were these:

- Addressing the perennial problem of race in Unitarian Universalism is not broadly seen as a theological mandate.
- No shared accountability structures and processes are in place to hold people accountable for the continued harming of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color among us.
- The diffused nature of our organizations, each with their own accountability structures, means that ignorance and aggression are experienced again and again in different leadership contexts and as leadership changes.
- Our faith seems to have no room for repentance and saying when we have failed.
- We need new definitions of competency for religious leadership, and multicultural competency has to be part of those new standards.
- We need to both learn the lessons of history and acknowledge that these are new times.
- We need to be intentional in our support of people of color in our congregations and encourage them to be connected to national and regional communities of support and others within their congregations.
- We need to center the experiences of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color.



- Regional staff, good officers, and others key to crisis response need to be comfortable with productive conflict and multiculturally competent.
- Too few white people are engaged in intentional anti-oppression work.
- We lack a consistent analysis of how power works among us and how that power is centered around white, cisgender, heterosexual, and temporarily able-bodied people with means.
- We need resources for ritual and worship that sustain the souls of people of color and other oppressed folks in these times.

“Three years later, much has changed, and much has remained the same.”

And what remains the same?

- In 2020 as in 2017, religious professionals of color struggle to maintain their jobs, and many end up deciding to leave or being asked to leave.
- Efforts to focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion are met with derision, false news, and shoddy research masquerading as truth.
- A disturbing new trend is that white leaders who openly speak out about white supremacy culture and the need for change are also finding their employment ended or affected.
- We still too often confuse social customs among us with theology.
- People of color and others targeted and endangered in this world come into our congregations seeking solace, only to discover that while our beliefs are grounding and life-giving, the ways they are practiced in too many of our communities cause harm, confusion, and pain.
- We still lack the systemic resources to support Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and other marginalized people or an analysis of power among us.
- We continue to overlook the special gifts and intelligences of people who already know how to resist and survive in these times, when these skills are needed more and more.

What was asked for at the Atlanta gathering was a process of truth and reconciliation. The Commission on Institutional Change has served as the beginning of that process. This is a summation of *some* of our findings and recommendations. If it is received as nothing more than a document, that will be a travesty and fresh source of injury to all who participated in offering and compiling the wisdom found here. Though we have no doubt not captured all that was shared, we have made an attempt to capture that which was heard repeatedly or which seems particularly important to creating systemic change.

## “Final Thoughts”

In 1989, a report titled “We Have No Problem . . . Again,” from the Black Concerns Working Group,<sup>39</sup> included the following words:

That the white majority refusal to acknowledge and accept the firsthand knowledge that people of color, indigenous and other marginalized groups face within our frames is maddening to those who experience it over and over among us.

These words still resonate three decades later. This lack of regard and respect is what leads to an evolution from accusations of “racial bias” to “racism” to “white supremacy culture.”

In spite of the promise of our movement, we still need to address the bias and oppression within our systems to build resilience in our living tradition for the times we are in and strengthen it for future generations. Making these changes will allow us to stay relevant. Addressing these issues will allow us to live into the theology we profess. Furthermore, if we are committed to this work as central to our faith, we will create the conditions in which all who are attracted to the theological premises of our faith can thrive.

This form of creative, faithful engagement is *joyous* when it is done in a spirit of aspiration to deepening our spiritual commitments. It can also be heartbreaking. Much of that heartbreak comes from the fact that we spend most of our time talking about whether we have a problem . . . again. As a faith, we have struggled



to engage this question decisively, putting into relief our investment in maintaining the structures that create and perpetuate unequal arrangements.

As a Commission, we do not believe that a single path exists that will work for every UU individual or group or evenly across the current fragmentation among Unitarian Universalists. We have offered here, in good faith, and in carrying out the charge we received during the 2017 General Assembly, our best synthesis of the ideas and recommendations developed from this collective work and the work and ideas of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color who have offered them to no response generation after generation. These ideas and recommendations are a distillation of many conversations, laments, arguments, written testimonials, focus group interviews, gatherings, reports, and institutional data that we have been privy to over these years of service as your Commission on Institutional Change. As our work comes to a conclusion, we feel confident that there is much wisdom within these pages that comes not from our perspectives as Commissioners but from the cumulative lived experiences and ideas that have been fermenting for many decades among us.

As we prepare to close, we would offer one further distillation of all of that is contained within these pages. We affirm that, ultimately, what we have been talking about for these years are basic commitments that grow out of our theological legacy. Retailored for our time, these are the commitments:

**Hospitality**—the willingness to welcome all who would find solace, comfort, and inspiration in the values that we hold.

**Common sense**—the idea that we can often just do things in a more simple and basic way that makes sense rather than make things unnecessarily convoluted.

**Empathy**—the ability to perceive and care about another's sore struggle even if it is not your own, recognizing that it is part of ours and that we are bound together through the interdependence that is part of our faith.

**Compassion**—the ability to walk with another and to be caring toward that one as if they were ourself.

**Self-awareness and mindfulness**—recognizing the power we have over one another, simply allowing ourselves to wake up to that, not to be shamed or made guilty, rather simply to allow ourselves to prepare our own hearts for transformation.

**Continuity**—the recognition that we would not be having these conversations in 2020 if we had kept them going in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, for commitment and continuance are what will allow real progress.

**Humility**—knowing we don't know the answers, especially in these times; offering to one another those glimpses of what we do know and so, together, creating a clearer sense of where we are going.

In the spirit of that humility, we acknowledge that we have no doubt forgotten some ideas and recommendations that should be included and have perhaps misformulated others. And once again we acknowledge the debt to our ancestors: much that is written here is the collective wisdom of those who have travelled in the valley places of our faith. With this we pass the baton for others to pick up and carry.

**Restoration**—understanding that where harm has been done, effort must be expended to provide address and redress.

**Prioritization**—Many of our recommendations are about focus and emphasis, rather than money. Though investments are needed in specific areas, much can be accomplished through education and attention.

**Paula Cole Jones:** I think this report can become a blueprint or a set of instructions for how to have the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle come alive in our congregations.



## Recommendations in Table Form

## Congregational Actions?

### Theology

**RECOMMENDATION:** Re-engaging with our theological legacy and its use today will both ground our efforts to welcome all who are drawn to our faith and provide resources for resilience for Unitarian Universalists in these difficult times.

**Action** Center the theological work of Black scholars, Indigenous scholars, and scholars of color, both professional and lay, whose knowledge is resonant for our times.

**Action** Provide more resources for lay leaders who wish to engage in theological conversation.

**Action** Equip our theological schools to engage in the work of continued education.

**Action** Form collaboration between our theological schools, Association of congregations, and professional associations to develop resources for professionally applicable theological training.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Reinterpretation of our theological legacies in these times should be liberatory and articulate our commitment to affirming and welcoming those who have been marginalized in our larger society and within our communities and organizations.

**Action** Resource multigenerational efforts within Black/Indigenous/people of color communities to develop rituals of healing and other worship materials to be used in congregations, regions, and national gatherings.

**Action** Direct resources toward UU theological schools and scholars engaged in theological exploration focused on an understanding of the need for the affirmation and protection of all.

**Action** Provide ministers, religious educators, and other religious professionals with access to continuing education that helps them take in and teach new theological concepts.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Acknowledgment of anti-oppression work as a theological mandate is essential. We need to resurrect, research, document, and teach the words of Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, women, and others who have been largely lost though their presence has been with us throughout history. These constitute a valuable tool for our times.

**Action** Further incorporate and reclaim accounts of Universalist, Unitarian, and Unitarian Universalist leaders of color and Indigenous descent in Tapestry of Faith resources to serve a more diverse children and youth population.

**Action** Encourage collaboration between the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries, and Liberal Religious Educators Association on a virtual library of resources for liberatory worship anchored in cross-cultural competency.

**Action** Develop standards for ethical cross-cultural uses of worship materials from other traditions, and those previously developed by the Council for Cross-Cultural Engagement should be updated and discussed by religious professional associations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Education about the covenantal nature of our faith will allow communities to support and nurture one another as the overall US climate becomes more hostile to and disinterested in a life of faith.

**Action** Provide support from regions to prioritize developing congregational covenants tied to mission and goals and including aspirations for equity, inclusion, and diversity.

**Action** Spread promising practices around addressing disruptive people and microaggressions as a barrier to covenantal community.

**Action** Develop resources for training on engagement with, rather than avoidance of, conflict as a part of change and transformation.



Summary comments presenter not in attendance.

## Governance

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Board of Trustees and the president of the Association should articulate clear goals, plans, and measures toward a liberatory Unitarian Universalism for our times.

**Action** Review the regional system to see which regions are working well and address those that are not, as this structure is critical to efforts to spread best practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Action** Complete the Article II review as mandated by the UUA bylaws with the call for diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lens used.

**Action** Adopt an implementation plan toward the areas of this report with annual targets and outcomes through 2025, with an annual review of progress toward these goals, with these goals reported at General Assembly and to the congregations.

**Action** Articulate the tools for power analysis that enable leaders to understand and rebalance power at all levels of Unitarian Universalism. Build on the existing work of the Unitarian Universalist Association's Board of Trustees and develop a methodology that can be used at all levels of Unitarian Universalism.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Governance within the Association needs streamlining, as outdated and duplicative structures exist. The unnecessary complexity of the current Unitarian Universalist governance structures is biased toward the more privileged, who have the time and resources for extensive volunteerism.

**Action** Reexamine the current governance structure and identify changes that will allow a more agile and flexible structure that can meet the challenges of a rapidly changing religious landscape. The review should include a reexamination of the recommendations around the roles of the president and the moderator that were contained in the 1993 report by the Commission on Governance, chaired by Rev. Dr. Wayne Arnason.

**Action** Form an alliance of UU organizations, including professional associations and affiliated groups, committed to creating equitable, inclusive, and diverse practices to allow learning, collaboration, and development of a common set of standards.

**Action** Establish covenantal agreements with affiliate organizations that also understand the need for accountability, adaptability, collaboration, faith grounding, and continued education toward equity, diversity, and inclusion.

**Action** Repurpose the resources of the JTWTC toward the anti-oppression goals of this report. (The JTWTC should not be disbanded *until* a new structure is approved.)

**Action** Provide an expanded opportunity for youth and young adult leadership development and programming at the Associational level, with a grounding in equity, inclusion, and diversity and responsive to the challenges these generations face today.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Misconceptions about the nature of our congregational polity should be addressed as they are used to empower individual ministers and lay leaders to maintain a stagnant and exclusionary status quo.

**Action** Promote a more accurate understanding about what congregational polity is, especially its covenantal nature and its relationship with our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of people and their ability to participate in decision making through a values frame.

**Action** Audit leadership experiences, including online spaces tooled for accessibility across income levels, and make strategies for equity, inclusion, and diversity a part of these, as well as accurate information about the covenantal nature of congregational polity. Make practical education in anti-oppression work part of all UUA regional gatherings.

**Action** Incorporate principles of covenant into anti-oppression work across all UU organizations.

### Summary of comments by past president of the Richmond congregation:

Governance has been based on core theological principles. From Unitarianism one thing we have received is the task of searching for truth and meaning, and from a governance perspective one thing we have been left with is a reliance on central hierarchical bureaucracies. From Universalism we have received the task of building heaven on earth open to everyone. With respect to governance, we have non-hierarchical models with dispersed and often disconnected leadership. This dissonance is important to understand.

Base issues: 1) reliance on congregational polity and our misunderstanding of congregational polity. It does not mean that I or we can do or believe whatever I or we want, rather we must do these things within accountable relationships to each other. 2) Recent reliance on policy governance and a question related to the 8<sup>th</sup> principle. Governance is rooted in the 5<sup>th</sup> principle, the light of conscience and the use of the democratic process, which raises some knotty issues we need to think about (*e.g., minority vs. majority power*).

Informal governance processes have a tendency to privilege those in power. However, formal processes, unaccountably implemented also have a tendency to privilege those in power. Thus, we have to focus on how people are empowered and marginalized in the way we implement governance. Both structures and processes need to be examined.

The three recommendations and multiple actions are listed in the report (*see above*). Some of the actions relate to the UUA and some to our congregations. One thing we need to keep in mind is how UUA actions influence actions we take within our congregations. For example, one thing that has been very frustrating is that the UUA has a history of dismantling bodies without replacement.



## Congregations and Communities

**RECOMMENDATION:** Covenant and commitment, not comfort, should be the binding fabrics of UU congregations and other communities.

**Action** Prioritize workshops on covenants of right relationship and curate models of covenants for congregations and communities of different sizes and demographic profiles.

**Action** Equip leadership development efforts at the Associational or regional level with information on how to facilitate needed conflict and how to promote racial equity.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The UUA Board and the president and administration should continue to prioritize efforts to create communications channels and strengthen regions, clusters, and other structures in which congregations can live into true congregational polity, the lack of which has exacerbated conflicts and created unnecessary distractions from mission.

**Action** Continue to develop new channels for communication with congregational leaders, including enhanced or regular virtual convenings for those interested in learning best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Action** Work to make regional gatherings and structures possible and to regularize them across the country so that there is some consistency and they can be used to provide a common framework for anti-oppression work and other needed changes.

**Action** Send an annual communication to all congregations about the number of congregations, with membership data, including the number of congregations with fewer than thirty people, as this is the number of people required to charter a congregation today. Also include the number of intentional and alternative communities serving those historically unable to thrive in our mainstream congregations, such as people of color, LGBTQ people, and young adults.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Development of a common frame of anti-oppression training and multicultural competency is needed for all regional staff, those trained to advocate for UU professionals during times of conflict, and regional boards and entities to help prevent injury and wrongdoing.

**Action** Begin a “Promising Practices” program to recognize congregations that have made progress in becoming more equitable, inclusive, and diverse.

**Action** Identify and curate anti-oppression resources that are appropriate for congregations of different sizes, geographies, etc.

**Action** Create methods of interaction between congregations to promote sharing of learning and promising models for equity, inclusion, and diversity work as well as models for accountable justice work. Ensure that all regional staff are trained in this work to be able to seed best practices.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The UUA Board should look at the best way to provide ongoing active governance for congregations as the current General Assembly system is too costly and cumbersome for many to participate, as this disproportionately affects people of color.

**Action** Make caucusing for people of color standard, and offer administrative support at regional and cluster events to allow more space, contact, and support for those who are often “the only one” at the congregational level.

**Action** Fully implement the regional system, making space for clusters of congregations interested in equity to form.

**Action** Convene General Assembly as a biennial gathering and on the off years, set and keep a schedule of regional meetings, with these meetings occurring at least biennially and perhaps more frequently by teleconference.

**Action** Ensure that regional/district staff are fully trained and demonstrate multicultural, antiracist, and anti-oppression competency to act as a resource for congregations and lay leaders in their antiracism work. Continuing education work in anti-oppression techniques should also be required.

**Action** Explore providing delegate status to members of alternate covenantal communities serving those less welcomed by current congregational cultures.

**Summary of comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Honolulu:**

**(With Rose Sokol-Chang E4C member contribution):** UU congregations have been facing dwindling memberships, member participation and financial contributions, reflective in part of a trend for younger generations to attend churches less in general. *Given that multi-cultural congregations are on the rise, moving away from the goal of diversity and focusing more on equity*, UU congregations need to provide clear alternative and virtual activities to traditional services, and provide anti-oppression and multi-cultural trainings for all staff to prevent injury and wrongdoing to members of oppressed groups. UUA should curate, update, and communicate resources related to this training.

The relationships among congregations, and with the UUA, are often disconnected and not necessarily positive. Unfortunately, curated models from the UUA are often implemented within congregations without much UUA support. Congregations that wish to implement anti-oppression measures are largely on their own.



## Hospitality and Inclusion

**RECOMMENDATION:** New structures to provide leadership education to UU leaders are needed and should include multicultural hospitality practices as foundational.

**Action** Include scholarship funds in congregational budgets to allow leaders of color, Indigenous leaders, and other leaders under-represented in the congregation to attend affinity groups and national meetings where they will be able to connect with others who share their identity and Unitarian Universalist faith.

**Action** Curate and amplify best practices for training ushers and greeters, board members, worship assistants, and other lay leaders in intercultural competency.

**Action** Contract with the identity-based groups such as DRUUMM, TRUUsT, and EqUuAl Access to develop a new certification program for congregations ready and willing to take on the work of being diverse, inclusive, and equitable. Such a process could make sure there is congregational dialogue about these issues as educational experiences to help create a common vocabulary and analysis of what is needed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Convening for volunteer leaders at the regional and cluster level should be emphasized to allow support for marginalized groups, including people of color.

**Action** Develop a curriculum for multimedia presentation that provides resources to document contributions of people of color and Indigenous people to Unitarian Universalism and also traces the history of the involvement of these marginalized people who have contributed to Unitarian Universalism since its earliest decades on this continent. Building upon and also tracing the histories found in the writings of Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed and others, these resources should be in an accessible format that allows for easy delivery to congregations.

**Action** Provide support for DRUUMM to continue the work they have begun to connect people of color caucuses and encourage caucusing at the congregational level. A list of all congregations who are engaged in caucusing and who have ongoing people of color or other identity caucuses should be maintained by the UUA as another way to communicate with vital populations within and across our congregations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Providing resources to promote young adult and youth convenings that include support and caucusing for those with marginalized leadership is essential.

**Action** Provide funding for an annual convening of youth and young adults of color across Unitarian Universalism that builds on and expands the reach of the Thrive program, including virtual gatherings to provide ongoing support.

**Action** Invest in concurrent convenings of white youth and young adults interested in sharpening their skills at supporting and co-journeying with youth and young adults who are of color or Indigenous.

**Action** Include funding for youth and young adults, Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, disabled people, transgender people, and others of limited financial means to attend Associational events in congregational budgets as this will allow them more contact with people who share their identity.

**Summary comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Honolulu:**

New practices are needed to ensure that all voices are heard and that the experience of POC are valued as new wisdom to enrich multiculturalism vs. to enhance comfort of white majorities within congregations. Some congregations have implemented multicultural audits to evaluate how they are doing, and this is a promising practice.

Congregations that are working towards a more multicultural beloved community should be connected in a virtual learning network. The 2020 virtual GA permitted a greater representation of members in different income brackets and people of color.

**Living Our Values in the World**

**RECOMMENDATION:** A liberatory faith will remember the mandate from our theological legacy: to privilege those most affected in our justice work, which should follow the voices of those most at risk.

**Action** Study income inequality and racial history in areas served by Unitarian Universalist communities as well as the impacts of injustice on Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities.

**Action** Expand accountable service-learning and action-education trips to allow real-life contact with difference and a hands-on experience of inequalities as this kind of action learning reflects generational learning norms. Screen justice trips to ensure that they are not tourism but rather actual service-learning experiences with an action-reflection model that includes preparation in anti-oppression practices for every trip that will cross cultural barriers and boundaries. Encourage legacy trips such as the Living Legacy tours and border trips.

**Action** Develop and apply antiracism and anti-oppression approaches for Unitarian Universalist justice organizations, including state advocacy networks. This will allow for accountable partnerships at the international, national, and state levels.

**Action** Consult with identity-based groups on justice issues that affect their demographics disproportionately. This will allow the UUA and other UU communities to be in accountable relationships with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. Ground accountability in organizations rather than individuals.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Through its regional structures, the UUA should promote education for those who would accompany and co-journey with Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities and their leaders and groups to ensure more competency in this area.

**Action** Identify and spread partnerships that illustrate how to be allied across lines of race and class so that this can become a standard practice in Unitarian Universalist justice work.



**RECOMMENDATION:** Develop more theological resources to center our justice work in our faith and make clear the interconnection between action in the world and spiritual development.

**Action** Articulate the faith basis for our justice work both within our communities and to the larger world. If we can engage our theological schools and other theologians in doing this, it will offset the tendency to approach justice efforts from a paternalistic basis.

**Action** Support theological schools that articulate a Unitarian Universalist liberation theology that calls for accountability and reparations, deepening our approaches to inequities.

**RECOMMENDATION:** As people of faith, our call to collective justice work, through accountable partnerships, is our salvific path.

**Action** Amplify models of effective and accountable partnerships with organizations led by people of color as well as other marginalized leaders as part of the Promising Practices Congregation recognition at each General Assembly.

**Action** Learn from and take note of the work of organizations led by Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color on the issue of climate change, as these communities have been (and are now) feeling the effects of these issues for generations.

**Action** Deepen and strengthen connections with Black, Indigenous, and people of color-led organizations in the area of immigration.

**Action** Encourage donations to organizations led by people of color and Indigenous people who are working on justice issues critical to our faith beliefs at the congregational level.

**Summary comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Baltimore:**

Accountable justice work is not possible if we are not able to remain in good relationship with those most affected by conditions of injustice. A key to be in accountable justice work is to be able to think in inclusive ways that are not binary. The recommendations and action items were then summarized.

## Religious Professionals

**RECOMMENDATION:** We need to reduce the barriers to entry for those who seek to serve as religious professionals. This is true for all people, but these barriers are especially damaging for Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and other marginalized people, who tend to have fewer financial resources due to historic and continuing patterns of discrimination.

**Action** Create alternative paths to religious leadership, including certification in spiritual direction, ministerial apprenticeship, and scholarship funding for credentialing in non-ministerial professions.

**Action** Allow for ordination at the Associational level rather than only in congregations, to honor the diversity of ministries that exist but may not be easily supported at the congregational level.

**Action** Continue the practice of reporting on diversity and inclusion in hiring at the UUA, and an annual report on the demographic data of employment at the congregational level, collected as part of the annual certification process, should be made to the Board of Trustees and the General Assembly each year as a benchmark for the willingness of congregations to engage directly with these issues in a national context that is increasingly diverse.

**Action** Maintain a database of all religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, and consider maintaining it for other identity groups struggling within our professions. Track time for completion of certification, pay levels, and length of tenure.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Improving the quality of livelihood for religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color should be an ongoing goal, recognizing the particular demands of serving a predominantly white Association and its congregations and communities.

**Action** Continue the investment in gatherings and professional development for religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Consider ways to maintain these by job type online every quarter as a way to provide more effective support.

**Action** Provide resources for those who struggle with the impacts of emotional and spiritual harm as a result of serving as religious professionals in Unitarian Universalist settings.

**Action** Codify that all interim ministers will have anti-oppression training based in experience and not just literature review and that multicultural competency will be part of accreditation as an interim minister. (For example, invest in strengthening the UUMA's Committee for Antiracism, Anti-oppression, and Multiculturalism.)



<p><b>Action</b> Implement the UUA Conflict Transformation Team, which can intervene when issues of racism or other forms of oppression are part of the narrative. This team needs to be consistently trained and available throughout the country now as religious professionals of color continue to face traumatic situations without needed support.</p>	<p><b>Action</b> Refine and use consistent hiring and firing processes for UUA staff and promote models to recommend them to congregations seeking to hire religious professionals of color. Offer resources to ministers and other religious professionals of color when conflicts arise at the congregational level as well.</p>	<p><b>Action</b> Identify resources to treat the trauma associated with encountering racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia as religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color.</p>
<p><b>Action</b> Re-examine the compensation guidelines to look at the differential between ministry and other professional positions. While recognizing the higher costs of obtaining a master's in divinity, compared to other forms of credentialing for religious professionals, and differences in authority and responsibility, huge differentials should be addressed in this era of income inequality.</p>	<p><b>Action</b> Maintain a list of congregations that have had unsuccessful ministries with religious professionals who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color or ministers with other identities marginalized among us. Identify congregations that allow lay leaders or religious professionals to misconduct repeatedly in a transparent fashion and as part of the search process and make this information available to those in search.</p>	<p><b>Action</b> Continue the development of a Common Code of Ethics for all religious professionals and conduct training for congregational boards, personnel committees, and other leaders to spread understanding of best practices.</p>

**RECOMMENDATION:** Lifelong learning is the standard for all religious professionals, and this learning should address generational and multicultural awareness.

**Action** Develop a fund to support the development of resources for ongoing education on anti-oppression practices and learning modules as part of the continuing education required for all ministerial candidates and ministers to combat white supremacy culture, racism, and other systemic oppressions as well as for other religious professionals.

**Action** Allocate resources to retool and update the Beyond Categorical Thinking program, which helps congregations assess their readiness for more diverse ministries. It has not been updated to reflect current issues and needed competencies.

### Summary comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Baltimore:

The Commission was also asked to examine the events surrounding the hiring of the Southern Regional League in 2017. It was noted that there were patterns of inequities and abusive conditions in which ministers who were black, indigenous or people of color worked. The recommendations and actions were then summarized.

## Educating for Liberation

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Unitarian Universalist Association and other national UU organizations should prioritize the development of resources that allow Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and other targeted groups to address the effects of today's racism and other oppressions on their minds, bodies, and spirits.

**Action** Continue to prioritize support for gatherings of lay leaders of color and religious professionals of color, including continued funding for the Finding Our Way Home gathering for religious professionals and regional and national DRUUMM events. Resource efforts to address physical, emotional, and spiritual injuries caused by systemic racism.

**Action** Curate new online resources to address the impacts of systemic oppression and white supremacy culture. These resources, including worship resources, inSpirit meditation manuals, video archives, and other tools should be made available and funded to allow for easier distribution.

**Action** Develop peer networks to collect and create trauma-informed resources for Black/Indigenous/people of color to address the spiritual issues of systemic oppression, to be used at the annual gathering of religious professionals of color and in online settings.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Resources and tools to ensure a variety of entry points into the spiritual work of embracing one's own identity and the identity of others should be curated and, where not available, developed. Resources on healing religious wounds and productive conflict engagement are also needed as a core part of faith development.

**Action** Offer resources to address the healing of religious wounds, which many Unitarian Universalists bring in from past religious experience and which sometimes restrict the deepening of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith.

**Action** Include funds to purchase equity, inclusion, and diversity resources in congregational budgets, since many existing curricula are fee-based to allow the developers, often people of color, to be supported in this work.

**Action** Develop training in inclusion, equity, and diversity for boards, nominating and membership committees, and other key leaders at the regional level, both in-person and virtually.

**Action** Promote intergenerational partnerships within Black/Indigenous/people of color communities to provide mutual mentorship and support to address wounding because of systemic oppression.

**RECOMMENDATION:** A comprehensive path to understanding the work of equity, inclusion, and diversity should be developed and maintained as part of faith development.

**Action** Increase the repositories of worship resources that center the voices of people of color as well as others marginalized within our Unitarian Universalist culture.

**Action** Develop tools that allow congregations to hold conversations across generations about issues of inclusion, with the goal of recognizing the evolution in our Living Tradition and that spiritual developmental needs change over time.

**Action** Begin a renewing certification program similar to the Welcoming Congregation program for congregations, emphasizing lifespan learning in diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression similar to the Our Whole Lives curriculum.



**Summary comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY:**

This chapter and the next chapter are in many ways the answer to the question how do we move forward together? This question has been unresolved for many years, and these two chapters provide us some real answers. Moreover, for the 100<sup>th</sup> time, but now it is here for real, there is a clear call for a congregational certification, similar to a welcoming congregation and a lifespan faith development program, similar to OWL, to foster conversation and healing across generations regarding racial diversity and inclusion. This will help leaders of color to discern where their service can most thrive if their congregations are making a commitment and that is explicitly open for people seeking to do ministry in our different congregations.

How we go forward will not be in a shame-based way but rather implemented in a way that promotes healing. An important point picked up in the reading of this chapter is that there is more of a pastoral vision for education and leadership. It’s not going to be pointing fingers and throwing people out. There is an emphasis on the pace and the place for education and training that is needed for a particular congregation. We need to analyze where we are and where we are going to ensure multiple entry points in our system.

**Innovations and Risk-Taking**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Unitarian Universalist Association should fund, spread, and curate the ideas of those congregations working for many decades now to become more inclusive, equitable, and diverse and amplify this work at the General and District Assemblies.

**Action** Work with funders to establish grant programs for those developing practices and technologies for inclusion.

**Action** Provide learning circles and virtual learning circles for groups of white people interested in learning how to be accountable to Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color and co-journeying with them.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Assistance to congregations supporting circles or caucuses involving Black people, Indigenous people, or people of color as well as young adult groups within their local context should be prioritized.

**Action** Amplify community practices building diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces throughout General Assembly as “Promising Practices.”

**Action** Develop a new annual award to be presented at General Assembly to individuals, congregations, or other groups or communities for innovation in counter-oppression work.

**Action** Provide resources and a coaching program for congregations interested in retooling their forms of worship, leadership, and accountability. This can include small and shrinking congregations willing to redirect existing resources toward new groups such as young adults, LGBTQ people, or Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Funding is needed to ensure that Black leaders, Indigenous leaders, leaders of color, and leaders from other marginalized groups with lower financial resources can be engaged and provide leadership into a more inclusive future. We need to continue to figure out ways to use the leadership, expertise, and life experience of Unitarian Universalists who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color or have other marginalized identities, as they are very valuable in designing faith-based experiences that speak to resilience and inclusion in an increasingly diverse context.

**Action** Examine the ability of volunteer leaders in certain key positions—such as moderator, General Assembly Planning Committee members, and UUA Board of Trustees members—to recoup lost income on a needs basis and to pay for child care and other service-related expenses.

**Action** Fund leaders who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color to develop new worship materials, including curation of music with guidelines for how to use music in a culturally competent manner.

**Action** Revive a focus on cultural competency and cultural borrowing in all religious professional associations to counter the cultural appropriation that can come with efforts to become more equitable, inclusive, and diverse.

**Action** Continue to prioritize resources about inclusion, equity, and diversity written by Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color in Unitarian Universalist publications, including Skinner House books.

**Action** Provide funding in congregational budgets to allow leaders who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color; younger leaders; and those without means access to funds for child care, travel, and other expenses so they can participate in leadership and decision making in all aspects of our Association.

**RECOMMENDATION:** New settings and structures for worshiping and convening for Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and youth and young adults should be funded, including new communities.

**Action** Convene a learning group for people of color, youth and young adults, and other marginalized groups interested in experimenting with new ways of worshiping and convening that better suit their cultural norms.

**Action** Provide learning circles and virtual learning circles for groups of white people interested in learning how to be accountable to Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color and co-journeying with them.

**Summary comments by member of the First Unitarian Church in Rochester, NY:**

This chapter comes from the context of the changing landscape of the United States, and the need for change if UUism is going to remain in business and relevant. We need to elevate, invest in, share out, and journey with other congregations who have already been leading the way for inclusion and diversity. Especially important are congregations that are intentionally providing caucus or circle spaces for black people, indigenous people, and all people of color. We need to learn from the people who are doing the work out front and spread that out really wide so all of us can learn in all the different ways that is happening.

We need to redirect shrinking congregational resources towards new inclusive groups so there is a vision for the future. The white counter narrative piece in the chapter gives us an idea of the challenges that will be faced. We need to highly value our differences, rather than minimize them, so that our differences can thrive in our UU communities.



## Restoration and Reparations

**RECOMMENDATION:** As an act of reparations, funding and administrative support for groups that allow Black/Indigenous/people of color and other marginalized groups to convene and gain the support necessary to worship and serve in predominantly white communities should remain a priority.

**Action** Establish a position to provide increased ongoing administrative and travel support to DRUUMM, BLUU, TRUUSt, and EquUal Access, the organizations currently representing many of the people whose identities are marginalized in Unitarian Universalism. This would allow the leadership of these groups to devote their time and effort to advocacy and programs that are necessary for their communities' sustainability and would ensure that important administrative functions, such as mailing lists, membership lists, and donation lists, are maintained for the long-term survival and growth of these vital organizations.

**Action** Maintain a list of all congregations that are engaged in caucusing and that have ongoing people of color or other identity caucuses at the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations as another way to communicate with vital populations within our congregations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Methods for encouraging and channeling productive conflict should be established and promoted to decrease harm.

**Action** Develop and curate resources for skill building in dealing with conflict and require competency in these skills of all regional staff to promote engagement with conflict rather than shutting down conflict, which often continues oppression.

**Action** Prioritize and report on the progress of the UUA's Conflict Transformation Team and document it as a model for congregational teams.

**Action** Ensure that those serving as mediators or good officers for all professional associations are educated about and skilled in conflict engagement.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Channels and procedures for identifying harm, making amends, and financial reparations should be established.

**Action** Provide funds to Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color for travel to and registration for General Assembly, regional assemblies, and other key gatherings such as youth and young adult programs, as well as to members of other groups that face marginalization, and frame this as an act of congregational reparations.

**Action** Develop the capacity to work with congregations with fewer than twenty-five members or that are closing their doors to accomplish redirecting their resources to the Association in some manner rather than making donations to their local community. Reserve these resources to fund next-generation communities and practices.

**Action** Study the reparations movement, and examine implications for institutions at all levels of Unitarian Universalism.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Widespread practices of acknowledging Unitarian Universalism's foundational complicity with racist practices, especially against Indigenous and Black people, are essential to understanding the need for continued support.

**Action** Develop an Associational fund for scholarships and travel funds for people of color, Indigenous, and other marginalized groups, especially transgender and disabled people, and those living below their area's median income to allow a greater diversity of people to be sustained while working toward credentialing as religious professionals and to provide support for a diversified religious leadership.

**Action** Support religious educators of color pursuing credentialing with financial assistance to enable these invaluable role models to be present for families in an era when a higher percentage of children in our nation than ever are of color or multiracial.

**Summary comments by member of the congregations in Shelter Rock NY and Boca Raton FL:**

Reparations are imperative within the UUA. Restitution is also important for those who have borne the burden of discrimination within our UUA communities. The report recommends researching models from other countries (e.g., South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission) for how best to proceed. It calls for an official recognition and apology for past and present harms, education about these harms, and compensation for the family members, descendants, and communities that have been adversely affected.

Congregations need resources for skill building to constructively deal with conflict (e.g., identification and resolution) rather than "shutting down" conflict which often continues oppression. A responsive resolution on this issue at the last GA received only 55% support, not enough to pass, indicating that many UU's remain conflict avoiders.



## Accountability and Resources

**RECOMMENDATION:** Accountability should be embedded in the structure of the Boards of the Association and other key organizations, including all affiliated and professional organizations.

**Action** Include in the bylaws of the Unitarian Universalist Association an explicit commitment to become anti-oppressive and equitable and to serve the full diversity of those who resonate with our theological tradition.

**Action** Initiate a Board-driven process to develop such a statement and present it to the General Assembly of Congregations for inclusion in the bylaws of the UUA no later than 2022.

**Action** Request that all Unitarian Universalist-related organizations examine their commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity work and include such a commitment in their bylaws.

**Action** Using the example of congregations who have already adopted such statements, develop a sample statement for inclusion in congregational bylaws.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Ongoing monitoring is needed to ensure that work to counter bias and oppression is not interrupted again.

**Action** Adopt goals by 2021, report progress on these goals at GA each year, and codify this requirement in the bylaws.

**Action** Provide annual report to the General Assembly of Congregations by the UUA president on goals and progress toward those goals of equity, inclusion, and diversity.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The UUA should establish an ongoing independent body to identify systemic changes and monitor accountability on work toward equity, inclusion, and diversity. This body should be based on representatives of groups of oppressed people and should have direct representation on the Association Board.

**Action** Establish an independent body through a vote at General Assembly to consist of one representative and one alternate from identity-based groups, including DRUUMM, BLUU, TRUUst, and EqUUal Access if they are willing to participate. Membership for this panel should be reviewed every two years to include all relevant groups and to make sure the groups that are included have membership lists and at least one membership meeting a year. In addition, the Nominating Committee should appoint two at-large members and the UUA Board of Trustees should appoint one member who will represent the group on the Board. This representative should be confirmed by a vote of the new body focused on accountability and systemic change.

**Action** Recognize accountable congregational partnerships for purposes of equity, inclusion, and diversity at the local congregational and community levels. Amplify practices that include long-term investments in relationships with and regular donations of financial resources to partners serving in communities that are under-resourced.

**Action** Provide a report to the Association annually at GA on a set of metrics to be submitted no later than the 2021 GA. Metrics could include the percentage of UUA employees who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, or who hold other marginalized identities, the percentage of the budget that is devoted to our work on an annual basis, the number of complaints received around racial concerns, and the number of new intentional communities that have been created to support the values of new generations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Those responsible for managing and negotiating in times of change and conflict should have training in anti-oppression work.

**Action** Identify best practices for inclusion, equity, and diversity for congregational nominating committees and make them available through all communications means and through leadership events.

**Action** Include training in anti-oppression practices as a standard part of interim minister training because of the opportunity to address issues of systemic bias during interim times.

**Action** Develop capacity within all good officer (and UUA regional staff) teams to lead and facilitate conversations around harm, injury, and conflict in anti-oppression practices.

**Action** Curate models of how to audit for oppressive practices at the congregational level.

**Summary comments by member of the congregations in Shelter Rock NY and Boca Raton FL:**

Given the remaining time, the recommendations and actions above were briefly summarized.

**Paula Cole Jones:** Thanked all the presenters, and hoped the summaries would “wet our appetites” to review the chapters in detail that most interested us. She also suggested that the full report could serve as the common read for next year.