

UUA General Assembly Article 2 Revision Submitted by Steve James

The UUA's Bylaws govern the association's policies and procedures through 15 Articles. Article 2 is about principles and purposes. Article 2's first section is about the Association Principles. This section was changed in this year's GA. It was changed in the ways Lane talked about repeatedly in the last church year.

Some people were concerned that these changes would change the relationship between the UUA and the congregations. They do not, since Article 3 defines that relationship and it was not changed.

Many people who spoke out against the new version were concerned that we were losing the seven principles. Congregations can keep the seven principles for their own purposes and present them alongside the new Article 2. The section on principles was last changed in 1984, when the 7 principles were introduced. The original principles, from 1961, included lines like, *"...To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man...To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace...To encourage cooperation with men of good will in every land."* I'm sure some found it hard to let go of those words.

I voted for the new version of the principles section because it speaks to new generations. It was very clear to me in the discussions that were had both during the general assembly business meetings, as well as in other virtual venues provided during GA, that younger generations are more attracted to the kind of language and even the infographic that is part of the new Article 2. I didn't understand how strongly they felt about those things until I witnessed those discussions. I also observed proponents representing demographics (race, sex, and gender) we've been talking about attracting in greater numbers.

Some folks were concerned that the language of the new version has problems. I share the concern. I find it a bit vague, schmaltzy in a PC kind of way, but I have come to believe that this is a reflection of what I'm familiar with and what I'm nostalgic about in the old language. But that's also a reflection of my not having kept up with the natural changes in our language, contemporary oratory, and the perspectives of younger liberal and progressive people. So, while I have a problem with the language, I am aware it's my problem. Hearing young, diverse people talk in those terms was eye-opening for me. I want to respect their need to see themselves in the Bylaws of the UUA. As long as they stay off my Oxford commas.