

**FINAL REPORT FROM THE  
CUC STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES TASK FORCE**

**MAY, 2008**



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TO THE CUC BOARD**

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## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES & SOURCES

**Adopted at the 2002 CUC ACM, Kelowna, B.C.**

*We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote:*

- the inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- a free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

*The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:*

- direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbours as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- spiritual teachings of Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

*Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.*

## **SUMMARY**

This is the final report of the Statement of Principles Task Force. The mandate of the Task Force is considered by the CUC Board to have been completed, effective as of the 2008 CUC Annual Meeting.

Over the past 5 years, the Statement of Principles Task Force engaged Canadian U\*Us in a dialogue regarding our Statement of Principles. During 2006-2007, congregations participated in the third in a series of congregational workshops. Participants were encouraged to complete a questionnaire on the current Statement of Principles and Sources. The results were presented in a preliminary form at the 2007 CUC ACM in Vancouver. During the summer and fall of 2007, the Task Force completed its analysis of the results of the 3rd Workshop and also reviewed the material from the 1st and 2nd Workshops.

After reviewing all of the data and doing some additional research, the Task Force presented an interim report and recommendations to the CUC Board in February 2008. This final report is a compilation of the Task Force's findings and our recommendations, together with the Board's decisions.

**We are pleased to report that, through the Task Force process, Canadian U\*Us have affirmed the wide acceptance of the current Statement of Principles & Sources.**

Overall, the Task Force concluded that there was no clear call to re-write the Statement at this time. Instead, there were a few areas of concern that merited further investigation.

The full history of the Task Force's activities and associated documents can be found on the CUC website at [cuc.ca/statement](http://cuc.ca/statement).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the Task Force concluded that there was no clear call to re-write the Statement at this time. Instead, there were a few areas of concern that merited further investigation.

### Principles

In general, there was strong affirmation of the Principles as they stand. The one area that showed some impetus for change was that a significant number of respondents indicated that the current Statement did not articulate strongly enough the need for **environmental stewardship**.

### Sources & “Envelope” (the covenant text surrounding the statement)

Again, people’s general affirmation of the current Sources statement was strong, but not as strong as for the Principles. Among the comments received there was significant concern expressed regarding the explicit naming of certain religions and philosophies (namely Judaism, Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Humanism) and not others. Some workshop attendees struggled with the “purpose” of the Sources section with regards to its role in conveying the history of the movement and in identifying current sources of inspiration for our living tradition. The Task Force shared this struggle and undertook additional research and reflection.

The Task Force offered the following **recommendations** that were **accepted** by the CUC Board:

1. That the CUC orchestrate further exploration of, and education about, the Sources within our congregations. The process should emphasize a both/and approach to the ambiguities caused by the inherent tensions that exist within the Sources. (This includes the tension resulting from the sources’ being used for more than one purpose – both individual faith development and associational identity—and the tension that arises between the different definitions of the sources – i.e. are they a historical account of our sources or are they contemporary sources of inspiration?)
2. That the CUC defer further discussion of the issue of naming of specific sources until after the education and exploration processes above and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.

The Task Force also offered several **recommendations** that were **deferred** by the CUC Board until after an education and exploration processes regarding the Sources, and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.

- That the CUC pursue a consultative process to determine the extent to which an increased emphasis on environmental stewardship in the Principles would be welcomed.

- That the CUC engage Canadian U\*Us in considering the text that introduces the Sources (Envelope Text) with the objective of clarifying the context of the Sources.
- That the CUC consider the inclusion of a “Call to Action” in the envelope text.

Documents pertaining to the entire Task Force process are available on the CUC website ([cuc.ca/statement](http://cuc.ca/statement)), including workshop topics, data collected from workshops, reports, graphs, and a historical outline of the process.

On behalf of the Statement of Principles Task Force, I wish to express our appreciation and thanks to all those who have supported, assisted, and/or participated in this process. This includes (but is not limited to) individuals and members of congregations across Canada who offered their comments, suggestions and questions; congregational facilitators who helped lead workshops; ministers who gave time to the project both in their congregations and as a group; theologians and historians who were consulted by the Task Force; and successive CUC Boards of Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rev. Wendy McNiven, Chair*

Task Force members during period 2003-2008:

- Denis Barsalo
- Calvin Drake
- Karen Fraser Gitlitz
- John Hopewell
- Wilf Innerd (2003-2007)
- Samantha Magnusson (2003-2004)
- Rev. Wendy McNiven
- Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed (2003-2004)
- Mary Bennett, CUC Executive Director, ex-officio

## THE TASK FORCE PROCESS

In parallel with its decision to take over responsibility for the provision of most services to Canadian congregations, the CUC voted in 2002 to adopt the **Seven Principles and Six Sources** of the Unitarian Universalist Association (“UUA”) - modified to refer to the Canadian organization and to reflect differences in Canadian and American English\*.

At that time, the CUC Board initiated a formal process to examine whether or not this statement truly represented the current Canadian U\*U movement. During the winter of 2002/2003, a **Board task force** was assembled consisting of eight U\*Us from across Canada, balanced for geography, generational representation, and skills.

The Task Force was given the following **mandate**:

**The Task Force will:**

1. Choose a process for reviewing the principles which will allow consultation in all Canadian congregations.
2. Design and publish materials, discussion papers and curriculum as needed to promote a national conversation on our Unitarian & Universalist principles.
3. Assist congregations in presenting these materials and facilitating congregational discussions of the principles.
4. Using feedback from these discussions, the Task Force will propose either:
  - a) To reaffirm the present Statement of Principles and Sources, or
  - b) To affirm the current Statement with some revision, or
  - c) To propose a new Statement for consideration, or
  - d) Some combination thereof.
5. Circulate such draft(s) to congregations at least three months before the annual general meeting at which the proposed principles will be discussed.

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\* Reference to the “Unitarian Universalist Association” in the preamble was replaced with “Canadian Unitarian Council”, “neighbor” was modified to “neighbour” in the fourth source, and “Earth-centered” was modified to “Earth-centred” in the sixth source.

During the spring of 2003, the Task Force met face-to-face for the first time. The Task Force developed a process to lead Canadian congregations through a “national conversation” regarding the current Statement of Principles. Articles were written, background material was compiled, and the Task Force’s plans were publicized. A Task Force website was created ([www.cuc.ca/statement](http://www.cuc.ca/statement)). In the winter of 2003 and spring of 2004, Congregational Workshops (the “1<sup>st</sup> Workshop”) were held across the country, inviting Canadian U\*Us to articulate their values and aspirations. Responses from the workshops were sent to the Task Force for analysis.

The results of the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop were presented at the 2004 CUC ACM in Edmonton. The presentation included a list of **key themes** (Appendix 1) that emerged from the workshops. The Task Force held a workshop at the ACM to discuss the findings in more detail and to invite participants to comment and add what they thought the Task Force might have missed.

During the summer of 2004, the Task Force completed its analysis of the data received from the first round of Congregational Workshops by comparing the key themes that appeared consistently in the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop with the current Statement of Principles. Based on the “gap analysis” between the two documents (Appendix 2), the Task Force issued a **recommendation** to explore potential revisions to the current Statement of Principles.

In December 2004, the Task Force created a **first draft** of a potential new Statement of Principles and Sources using the key themes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop. This first draft (Appendix 3) and an accompanying document that explained the rationale behind the wording were circulated to member congregations in January 2005 to prompt discussion and interest in the upcoming next round of congregational workshops (the “2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop”).

In the winter and spring of 2005, these workshops were held across the country and feedback sent to the Task Force via the website.

The Task Force’s analysis of the feedback from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop was presented at the 2005 CUC ACM in Hamilton. In preparation for the ACM, the Task Force learned that it was engaged in a highly emotional process because people are very attached to the current statement. Therefore, the Task Force realized that it needed to pay closer attention to communication, slow the whole process down, and engage ministers more fully in the process. The Board confirmed that nothing of the current statement would be changed without broad consultation and agreement, and added a clarification to the mandate of the Task Force:

*"Given that one of the most important criteria for success for a Statement of Principles is a broad level of acceptance, the mandate of the Statement of Principles Task Force will be extended by the Board annually, pending satisfactory progress."*

In response to the feedback received, the Task Force prepared a third congregational workshop (the “3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop”) to guide congregations in reviewing the *current* Statement of Principles. An abbreviated trial workshop was conducted at the 2006 ACM in Saint John. The Task Force also facilitated workshops at the 2006 Regional Fall Gatherings in the hope of encouraging congregations to hold their own workshops.

During 2006/7, congregations participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop. Some congregations chose to use an alternative "workshop" format that combined elements of both a workshop and a more traditional worship service. In the workshops, participants were encouraged to complete a questionnaire on the current Statement of Principles and Sources. The results were presented in a preliminary form at the 2007 CUC ACM in Vancouver.

During the summer and fall of 2007, the Task Force completed its analysis of results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop and also reviewed material from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshops in compiling this report.

During the fall and winter of 2007-08, the Task Force completed its analysis of the results of the Questionnaire on the Current Statement of Principles. As the Task Force wrestled with issues raised by the analysis, we realized the need to consult with ministers and theologians in Canada and in the wider movement (and did so).

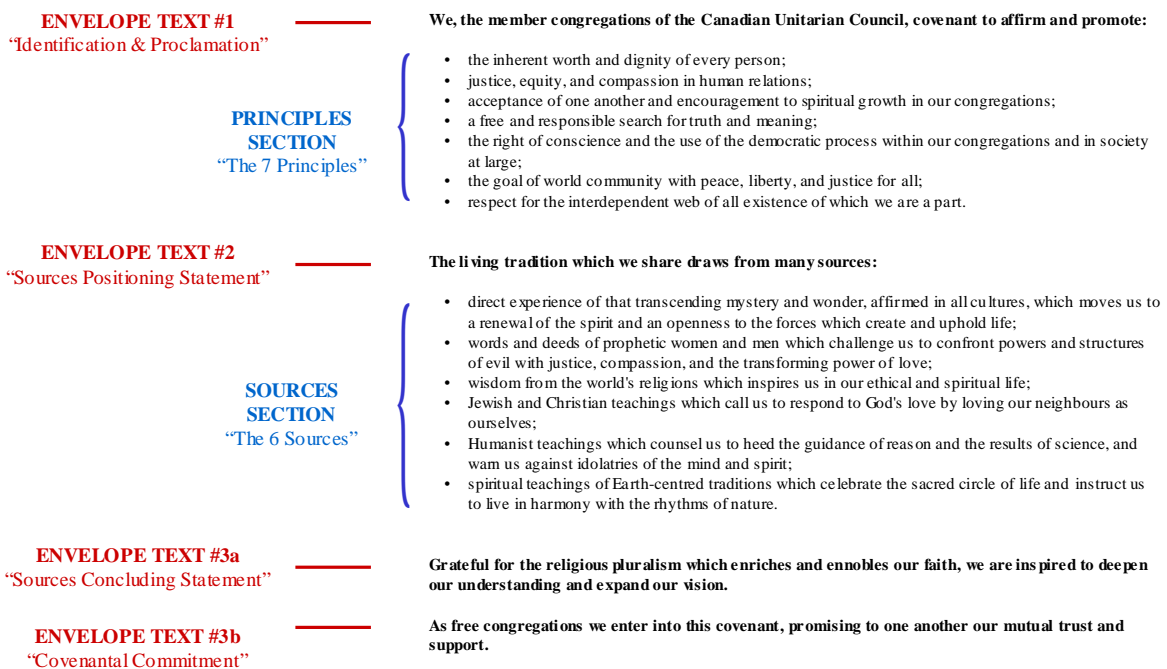
In February of 2008, the Task Force presented its findings from the workshops on the current Statement of Principles to the winter meeting of the CUC Board. The Board acknowledged that the Task Force has fulfilled its mandate, and expressed its gratitude for the work undertaken.

The final report was received by the 2008 CUC ACM in Ottawa.

## THE 3 PARTS OF THE CURRENT STATEMENT

The current Statement of Principles is actually comprised of 3 elements:

- The **Principles** section;
- The **Sources** section; and
- The **“Envelope”** - Surrounding text that provides context for the Statement and frames it as a covenant.



### The Components of the Current Statement of Principles & Sources

According to the responses to the questionnaires, congregations currently use these elements to differing degrees:

- The **Principles** are used more than **Sources**, and
- The **Envelope** is seldom recited or even printed.

The Task Force’s review of the current Statement has therefore examined these three elements separately as well as in whole.

## PRINCIPLES SECTION

Many individual observations were made and many text edits were proposed. While there were few common threads, one theme did arise:

- **Environmental Stewardship.** A significant number of respondents indicated that the current Statement did not articulate strongly enough the need for environmental stewardship. There were suggestions that more emphatic and active encouragement to environmental stewardship and justice be added. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop, many people referred to the place of “Nature” as a source of spiritual sustenance for them. Now, nearly four years later, it is clear that, for U\*U’s in Canada, the global crisis related to the Earth’s environment calls us to take a proactive and principled stance.

While it was acknowledged that the 7<sup>th</sup> Principle called on us to “affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of life of which we are a part”, this statement was seen by some as somewhat weak and passive.

There were also suggestions that this 7<sup>th</sup> Principle be put first in the list, to show its importance, and to reflect its position as the natural base on which all else depends.

## TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION & BOARD DECISION

The Task Force recommended that it continue with the consultative process to determine the extent to which an increased emphasis on **environmental stewardship** in the Principles would be welcomed.

- The CUC Board decided to defer this item until after the recommended education and exploration processes regarding the Sources (see below), and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4It! strategic planning process.

## SOURCES SECTION

The discussions that occurred during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshops indicate that the Sources section is more controversial than the Principles section. As with the Principles Section, many individual observations were made and many text edits were proposed. For example, some specific words or phrases triggered strong responses: words and phrases such as “prophetic”, “God” (especially capitalized), “idolatries of the mind and spirit” and “evil” (as a noun). Again, there were few common threads.

However, the 4<sup>th</sup> Source (“Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbours as ourselves”) received the greatest number of responses wishing to reword or omit it (as shown in the above chart). Concern was expressed regarding the explicit naming of certain religions and philosophies (namely Judaism, Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Humanism)

Congregations (12) / Individuals (167)				
Text	I like this just as it is	If it were up to me, I would omit this	I would find this more relevant if it was reworded	
<b>H. SOURCES</b>				
P.	<i>The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:</i>	80%/83%	0%/3%	20%/14%
1.	• direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;	67%/59%	0%/8%	33%/33%
2.	• words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;	83%/50%	0%/6%	17%/43%
3.	• wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;	83%/70%	0%/3%	17%/27%
4.	• Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbours as ourselves;	17%/27%	17%/34%	67%/39%
5.	• Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;	67%/44%	0%/12%	33%/44%
6.	• spiritual teachings of Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.	80%/71%	20%/11%	0%/18%

Results of the Survey regarding the Current Statement of Principles

and not others. Some regard this practice as discriminatory and exclusionary. There were suggestions to remove these explicit references by perhaps combining certain clauses of the Sources or perhaps re-phrasing the entire section to identify the wisdom and other gifts we glean from the “great traditions” without naming individual traditions.

Some workshop attendees struggled with the “purpose” of the Sources section with regards to its role in conveying the history of the movement and in identifying current sources of inspiration for our living tradition. The Task Force shared this struggle and undertook additional research and reflection.

Here is a summary of our findings:

1. The issue of explicitly naming “Jewish and Christian teachings” evokes passionate responses.
2. The thought of removing “Jewish and Christian teachings” also evokes passionate responses.

3. The question of the extent to which we are or are not Christian has been with us for a long time. Indeed, the current wording of the Sources is a result of a series of compromises reached by previous generations. (See insert following.)
4. In naming Jewish and Christian teachings, and not others, we risk alienating potential members who do not want to be affiliated with a “Christian church”.
5. A sense of alienation among some Christian U\*Us may be compounded by removing the reference to Jewish and Christian teachings.
6. If no specific religions are named, it may look like we don’t have any heritage at all, and that we lack roots and therefore depth.
7. There is ambiguity regarding the meaning of the word “Source”, which can refer to the history of the movement and/or to a current source of inspiration.
8. Another ambiguity arises because what originated as a covenant among congregations has become, for many, an individual statement.

As can be seen from these points, this is an issue of Identity: *Who are we? Where did we come from? From where do we draw our inspiration? And, by implication, Where are we going?*

How we choose to acknowledge these ambiguities must be handled with sensitivity; we don’t want needlessly to create division.

## TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS & BOARD DECISIONS

1. The Task Force recommended that it orchestrate further exploration of, and education about, the Sources within our congregations, regardless of any decisions made by the CUC to change the wording of the Statement. The process would emphasize a both/and approach to the ambiguities caused by the inherent tensions that exist within the Sources (individual/institutional purposes and historical sources/sources of inspiration).
  - **The Board accepted this recommendation (amended to say that the “CUC” will orchestrate this process, rather than the Task Force)**
2. The Task Force recommended that it engage Canadian U\*Us in considering the text that introduces the Sources (Envelope Text #2) with the objective of clarifying the context of the Sources.
  - **This recommendation was deferred by the CUC Board until after an education and exploration processes regarding the Sources, and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.**
3. The Task Force recommended that the CUC defer further discussion of the issue of naming of specific sources until after the education and exploration processes above and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.
  - **The Board accepted this recommendation.**

## **A HISTORY OF COMPROMISE**

Ever since the Transcendentalist controversy, Unitarians (and Unitarian Universalists) have struggled with the tension between those who identified themselves as Christian and those who found their inspiration and authority in other places. Our present pluralist position, which welcomes U\*Us of varied theological stripes, is the result of a series of compromises worked out at times when the tension erupted in conflict. Here are three such moments from our history:

1. In the late nineteenth century the influence of Transcendentalism, evolutionary Darwinism, and the growing awareness of other religious traditions from around the world all played a role in the development of Unitarians who thought of themselves as having a vision wider than or beyond Christianity. Thus during the creation of the National Conference in the United States in 1865, much work was required to bring together those who thought it suitable to include a reference to “the Lord Jesus Christ” in the new organization’s constitution and those who found such reference inappropriately stifling (Robinson, 90-92 and 107-108).

2. Significant debate about the role and place of Christianity within a joint Unitarian and Universalist movement was also a factor at the time of the creation of the first set of UUA principles. In attempting to find appropriate wording for jointly held principles, the Merger Committee suggested that the separate Unitarian and Universalist meetings agree “to cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in their essence as love to God and love to man.” Many Unitarians found this unsatisfactory, for different reasons. While Unitarian Christians had hoped to keep the language of the old AUA bylaws, which included the phrase “which Jesus taught as love to God and love to man” there was also a movement on the part of Humanists to remove that clause entirely. Eventually, after much debate, the Unitarians passed the phrase “immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man”—having reached agreement by speaking of “the Judeo-Christian heritage” instead of “our Judeo-Christian heritage” (Ross, 19-20).

3. A generation later, during the 1970s and 80s, when the Women in Religion conference spurred UUs to review the old principles, the relationship of Judaism and Christianity to Unitarian Universalism was again on the table. This time, a compromise was reached by separating the Principles and the Sources, so that the Jewish and Christian heritage could be included as a source of our living tradition—interpreted as one wished.

For more information, see Edward A. Frost, “Introduction” and “From Grailville to Atlanta: A Delicate and Dangerous Path” in Edward A. Frost, ed., *With Purpose and Principle: Essays about the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism* (Boston: Skinner House, 1998) pp. 1-8 and 9-22; David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985), Chapters 7, 8 and 9; and Warren Ross, *The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association* (Boston: Skinner House, 2001), pp. 18-28.

## THE “ENVELOPE”

### ENVELOPE TEXT #1: IDENTIFICATION & PROCLAMATION

*We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote...*

This text provides the context for the Statement. It explains *who* is agreeing to the statement (“member congregations”) and summarizes *what* this group of people agrees to do (“covenant to affirm and promote”).

There are three issues here: a *polity* issue, an *ownership* issue, and an *action* issue.

The **polity** issue poses the questions, “*Who are the constituent members of the Council?*”, and “*How do they relate to each other?*”

Organizationally (and legally!) the *members* of the CUC are primarily *congregations*, however there are also Individual Members of the CUC\*. These individuals are not currently recognized in the statement. The Task Force recommends no change at this time.

The second issue is one of **ownership**. Although the Statement is an agreement among *member congregations*, it is *individuals* who read it, use it, and make it a part of their daily lives. The response to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop (Draft Statement) makes it clear that the current Statement is important to many people as a personal statement. **Any future process to change the Statement should take the issue of ownership into consideration.**

One of the themes in the feedback from all three workshops was an interest in “walking the talk”. Several respondents suggested that U\*Us need to be more focused on *actions* rather than *words*. The Task Force concludes that it is not sufficient to speak of *affirming* and *promoting* the principles without a commitment to act.

### Task Force Recommendation & Board Decision

The Task Force recommended that it lead a process to include a “**Call to Action**” in the envelope text.

- This recommendation was deferred by the CUC Board until after an education and exploration processes regarding the Sources (see above), and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.

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\* The UUA deals with this issue by offering individuals membership in an umbrella congregation, the *Church of the Larger Fellowship*.

## **ENVELOPE TEXT #2: SOURCES POSITIONING STATEMENT**

*The living tradition which we share draws from many sources...*

This text is discussed in the review of the Sources above.

## **ENVELOPE TEXT #3A: SOURCES CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

*Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision.*

This text underscores the importance of religious pluralism as a catalyst for religious exploration and deepening. It supports the Task Force's recommendation to deepen our understanding of the Sources.

## **ENVELOPE TEXT #3B: COVENANTAL COMMITMENT**

*As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.*

This text re-iterates that it is congregations that are entering into this covenant.

The level of mutual trust and support depends on how much effort goes into putting these written principles into action.

## **Task Force Recommendation & Board Decision**

As indicated under Envelope Text #1, the Task Force recommended that it lead a process to include a "Call to Action" in the envelope text.

- **This recommendation was deferred by the CUC Board until after an education and exploration processes regarding the Sources (see above), and the Identity discussion that is part of the Go-4-It! strategic planning process.**

## **APPENDICES**

1. Statement of Principles & Sources
2. Key Themes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Workshops
3. Matrix mapping the Key Themes from the 1st Workshop against the Current Statement of Principles
4. First Draft of a Potential New Statement of Principles & Sources (2005)
5. Workshop Statistics

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES & SOURCES

**Adopted at the 2002 CUC ACM, Kelowna, B.C.**

*We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote:*

- the inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- a free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

*The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:*

- direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbours as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- spiritual teachings of Earth-centred traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

*Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.*

## KEY THEMES FROM THE 1<sup>ST</sup> CONGREGATIONAL WORKSHOPS

(Without asterisk denotes suggestions from the Edmonton workshop.)

### 1. What are your deepest yearnings?

- \* Peace for my Self
- \* Peace for my family
- \* Peace in my community
- \* Peace in the world
- \* Community/Connection with the Self
- \* Community/Connection with others
- \* Community/Connection with creation/Spirit/the divine
- \* To love and be loved
- \* To find purpose and meaning
- \* To be of use / make a positive change in the world
- Celebration
- To "Be"
- Acceptance
- Sustainable world
- Spiritual/religious community

### 2. How would someone know that a given value was a value of yours?

- \* A life of integrity (interpreted as: walk the talk; live your values; conscious living)
- \* Working for peace and justice locally, globally
- \* Generosity, compassion, honesty

### 3. What is your personal ministry?

- \* Helping/supporting other people ~ emotionally, spiritually, practically & financially
- \* Teaching
- \* Environmental stewardship
- \* Promoting, building, fostering healthy, sustainable communities
- Ministry to Self
- Evangelism
- Passion

Key Themes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Workshops (cont'd)**4. What would be missing from your life if there was no U\*Uism or if you had not encountered it?**

- \* A religious/spiritual community
  - \* A community and a deep sense of belonging
  - \* Safe opportunities for personal growth ~ spiritual, intellectual, social (e.g. leadership)
  - \* A place of common values that honours diversity and inclusiveness
- Freedom to risk  
Humanism  
Reason  
Understanding/thinking

**5. What can U\*Us do for Canada and the World?**

- \* Radical acceptance of all
  - \* A celebration of diversity
  - \* An alternative to the mainstream religious / spiritual path
  - \* A commitment to act for justice & peace
  - \* A commitment to collaborative processes
- Spiritual home  
Personal responsibility

Comments: "Core of all Religion" & "Our saints are their heretics"

**6. What are the shared values and loyalties that bind us together as U\*Us in Canada and make us unique?**

- \* Our commitment to being an inclusive and tolerant spiritual community (Beyond "tolerance" to "acceptance, welcoming and celebration" or "positive appreciation")
  - \* Affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of everyone
  - \* A worldview with global responsibilities & a preference for action
  - \* A commitment to democracy and the democratic process
  - \* An approach to truth as being fluid and evolving
  - \* Freedom to question, to believe and to act
  - \* Drawing inspiration from many sources
  - \* Valuing of the "good of the greater whole" (more than individualism)
  - \* Connection with / reverence for the natural world (environment)
- "Communitarian"

## MATRIX MAPPING THE KEY THEMES FROM THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WORKSHOP AGAINST THE CURRENT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

**Legend**

The theme is reflected TENUOUSLY in the Principle.
The theme is reflected IN A LIMITED FASHION in the Principle.
The theme is reflected SIGNIFICANTLY in the Principle.

1. What are our deepest yearnings?								
Key Themes	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
Peace for my Self			Low	Low				
Peace for my family		Med			Low			
Peace in my community		Med	Low		Low	Med		
Peace in the world		Med			Med	High		
Community/Connection with the Self							Med	Med
Community/Connection with others			Low			Med	Med	
Community/Connection with creation/Spirit/the divine							Med	Med
To love and be loved			Low					
To find purpose and meaning			High	High				High
To be of use / make a positive change in the world						Med		

<b>2. How would someone know that a given value was a value of yours?</b>								
	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
<b>Key Themes</b>	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
A life of integrity (interpreted as: walk the talk; live your values; conscious living)	Med	Med	Med	Med	Med	Med	Med	
Working for peace and justice locally, globally		High	Low		Med	High		
Generosity, compassion, honesty	Low	High	Med					
<b>3. What is your personal ministry?</b>								
	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
<b>Key Themes</b>	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
Helping other people - emotionally, spiritually, practically & financially	High	Med	High			Med		
Teaching			Med	High	Low			
Environmental stewardship				Low	Low	Med	High	
Promoting, building, fostering healthy, sustainable communities	High	High	High	High	Med	High	High	

**4. What would be missing from your life if there was no U\*Uism or if you had not encountered it?**

	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
<b>Key Themes</b>	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
A religious community		Low	High	High		Low		High
A community and a deep sense of belonging		Low	High	Low		Med	Low	
Safe opportunities for personal growth - spiritual, intellectual, social (e.g. leadership)	Low		High	High	Low			Low
A place of common values	High	High			High	High	High	High
A place of common that honours diversity and inclusiveness	Low	Low	Low			Low		Med

**5. What can U\*Us do for Canada and the World?**

	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
<b>Key Themes</b>	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
Radical acceptance of all	High	Low	Med					
A celebration of diversity	Low	Low	Low			Low		
An alternative to the mainstream religious / spiritual path			Low	High				
A commitment to act for justice & peace		Low			Low	Med		
A commitment to collaborative processes					Low	Low		

**6. What are the shared values and loyalties that bind us together as U\*Us in Canada and make us unique?**

	Principle #1	Principle #2	Principle #3	Principle #4	Principle #5	Principle #6	Principle #7	Sources
<b>Key Themes</b>	<i>The inherent worth and dignity of every person</i>	<i>Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations</i>	<i>Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations</i>	<i>A free and responsible search for truth and meaning</i>	<i>The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large</i>	<i>The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all</i>	<i>Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part</i>	<a href="#">See below</a>
Our commitment to being an inclusive and tolerant spiritual community	High	High	High		Low	Med		Low
Affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of everyone	High	High	Med	Low	Low	Low		Low
A world view with global responsibilities & a preference for action	Med	Med	Low	Low	Low	High	Med	Low
A commitment to democracy and the democratic process	Med	Med	Low	Low	High	Low		
An approach to truth as being fluid and evolving			Low	High	Low			Low
Freedom to question, to believe and to act	Low	Low	Low	High	Med			Low
Drawing inspiration from many sources				Med				High
Valuing of the "good of the greater whole" (more than individualism)		Med	Low		Low	Med	Med	
Connection with / reverence for the natural world (environment)							High	Low

FIRST DRAFT

*The Congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council covenant to proclaim and promote the shared values and aspirations of their members as represented herein.*

**STATEMENT OF SHARED VALUES & ASPIRATIONS**

Affirming the power of religious community, we come together in our congregations to:

- Celebrate the unity and interdependence of all existence within which we are called to be true to our own conscience and experience;
- Engage in our individual search for truth and meaning as part of a spiritual mosaic;
- Love and be loved, to support each other in our spiritual growth and to bring peace into our lives and the world.

Giving life to our shared values, we strive to make a positive change in the world by:

- Honouring the inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Acting with compassion, generosity and integrity in all relations;
- Ensuring that all people have a voice and a role in matters that affect them;
- Fostering a fair, diverse and sustainable global community.

From our historical roots within Protestant Christianity, we have drawn on the Unitarian challenge to Church doctrine and the Universalist belief in unconditional divine love. Today, we find insight and inspiration from many and varied sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder that moves us to renew our spirit and connect with the forces which create and uphold life;
- Wisdom from the world's humanist and spiritual traditions which guides us with reason and teaches us to live in harmony with our neighbours and the rhythms of nature;
- Prophetic words and deeds that challenge us to confront injustice and cruelty with conviction and the transforming power of love;
- The legacy of those who have served and will serve this, our living tradition.

*First Draft by the CUC Statement of Principles Task Force, pending feedback from the member congregations and subsequent literary refinement. January 2005.*

## WORKSHOP STATISTICS

### WORKSHOP #1

The process of revisiting our Statement of Principles started off by encouraging members of every congregation to hold a workshop during the winter of 2003/4 and to individually and/or collectively answer the following six questions:

1. What are your deepest yearnings?
2. How would someone know that a given value was a value of yours?
3. What is your personal ministry?
4. What would be missing from your life if there was no U\*Uism or if you had not encountered it?
5. What can U\*Us do for Canada and the World?
6. What are the shared values and loyalties that bind us together as U\*Us in Canada and make us unique?

At the time of the ACM in 2004:

- 30 congregations had engaged in a workshop;
- 21 congregations had submitted their responses;
- 7 congregations had been unable to participate;
- 66% of congregations had participated in some way;
- Approximately 400 individuals had taken part in workshops;
- Over 500 responses had been received; and
- Close to 10% of all Canadian U\*Us had participated.

### WORKSHOP #2

Second congregational workshops were held across the country to discuss a draft Statement of Principles that the Task Force had created from the feedback of Workshop #1. Participants were asked to evaluate how this text resonated with, or irritated, them by completing an on-line questionnaire.

At the time of the ACM in 2005:

- 168 responses had been received via the on-line questionnaire;
- 81 e-mails had been received, some with large attachments;
- 16 “hard copy” responses had been mailed to the CUC office in Toronto; and
- In all, we had received 256 responses, some of which represented the opinion of more than one person.

### WORKSHOP #3

The third workshop was in response to individual comments following Workshop #2. Workshop #3 allowed participants to take a closer look at, and review the text of, our current Statement during congregational workshops or “workships” held across the country. Participants were encouraged to complete paper questionnaires during the workshop.

At the time of the ACM in 2007:

- 13 congregational responses had been received;
- 167 individual responses had been received; and
- All regions had been represented.