

UUA Statement of Conscience (SOC)

Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action

Seeking universal justice and equity, we call upon the Unitarian Universalist Association and Unitarian Universalist individuals and congregations/groups to actively engage in undoing systemic white supremacy in all of its manifestations. Systemic white supremacy refers to the embedded, institutional, and pervasive nature of racism, white privilege, and racial bias and oppression in our society. We acknowledge the impact of systemic white supremacy is intersectional, meaning it impacts people differently across race, income/class, gender, age, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and more.¹ As Unitarian Universalists, we decry the ways in which the intersectional impact of systemic white supremacy divides our human family by privileging some groups over others and thereby generating resistance to the common goal of universal equity and justice. Systemic white supremacy is a direct affront to every one of our principles.² Most egregious, we are losing lives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color all across this nation—from long-standing ills of police violence, to hate crimes, to emerging crises of the pandemic—due to the evil of systemic white supremacy. Therefore, as Unitarian Universalists we must engage in urgent action to confront the moral crisis of our time:

- **Engage with the movement, in our communities and nation, to heal the evil of racism.** A vital and dynamic movement to overcome racism and dismantle systems of supremacy is rising across our nation, and as Unitarian Universalists we must contribute to this momentum. We can fortify this movement for justice by participating in and organizing social action to denounce injustices such as police brutality, theft of native lands, environmental racism, mass incarceration, cruel responses to immigration, ableism in all its forms which discriminates and harms disabled people (with variations of body and mind), fat discrimination, criminalization of poverty, restricted reproductive rights, transphobia, lack of health care and education, and more. We can join in action outlined in the GA 2020 Actions of Immediate Witness ([“Address 400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism”](#) and [“Amen to Uprising: A Commitment and Call to Action”](#)). Acting for justice in these important movements, we must be vigilant to the manifestations of systemic white supremacy. We must not only observe and affirm this

¹ Intersectionality was coined by Dr. Kimberle’ Crenshaw to mean “a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other.” Words of Kimberle’ Crenshaw *in* “She Coined the Term ‘Intersectionality’ Over 30 Years Ago. Here’s What It Means to Her Today,” by Kathy Steinmetz, *Time*, 2020.

² The harms of systemic white supremacy defy the inherent worth and dignity of every person; deny justice, equity, and compassion; reject acceptance of one another with encouragement to spiritual growth; prevent free and responsible meaning-making; undermine democratic participation and rights of conscience; mock the goal of world community with peace and justice; and disrespect our interdependence. In short, they are a direct affront to every one of our principles.

movement, but engage in bold action with and support of people on the front lines. Actions can include street protest; advocacy; resource sharing; local, regional, and national campaigns; letter-writing; community asset building; and more. The key is organizing with strategic accountability while building sustainable communities of resistance.

- **Carry forward the recommended healing actions conveyed in “Widening the Circle of Concern”**: As with other complex and embedded social problems, undoing systemic white supremacy requires multifaceted, long-term efforts for change. This includes not only engaging in action beyond the denomination, but also internal work within the denomination to overcome the ways in which systemic white supremacy is woven into our group cultures, interpersonal relationships, and individual ingrained biases. This call affirms the wealth of knowledge and vital guidance detailed in the UUA Commission on Institutional Change report, [“Widening the Circle of Concern”](#). Unitarian Universalist organizations and individuals are called to implement the recommendations in this report as a means to release ourselves from the limits of systemic white supremacy, which are embedded in our structures and habits, so as to allow Unitarian Universalists to live our shared values more fully and freely.
- **Build relationships across boundaries of privilege and oppression**. Through the lens of intersectionality, we understand how systemic white supremacy breeds the lie of division. From unequal access to housing, to poverty, healthcare barriers, and environmental degradation, we all suffer. When one group seeks help for a problem such as racism, another oppressed group that is a member of the dominant race may feel that the roots of their own suffering will not be addressed. Unitarian Universalists must forge relationships beyond boundaries of privilege and power as we struggle for justice for all oppressed people while continually focusing on the vital work of undoing systemic white supremacy. We believe systemic white supremacy is embedded in all oppressions in the U.S. United States. There are myriad groups to partner with on anti-racism, including groups like Black Lives Matter, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU), Black Youth Project, Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM) including the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Movement for Black Lives, the NDN Collective (an Indigenous-led organization), the Poor People’s Campaign, and Standing Rock nation.
- **Fulfill our UU role as a spiritual anchor to BIPOC UUs**. Our UU role as a spiritual anchor to BIPOC UUs requires the financial and administrative support of the spiritual healing systems within the UUA infrastructure and programming that serves goals of BIPOC-only efforts. With the concept of reparations still in discussion nationwide, we can be a model for how to consider, with each social justice gesture, how to always consider the singular healing needs of BIPOC UUs when planning any event or effort.

As Unitarian Universalists living in a time of racialized violence, environmental crisis, and a democracy on the precipice of disaster, we must urgently engage in relationship building, internal growth and transformation, and wider justice action to undo systemic white supremacy

and promote universalist equity and justice in our world. May the inspiration and connections on this website serve as a catalyst for your ongoing journey in this vital work.