

## **Draft 2.0 Operational Interpretations of Sources of Authority & Accountability**

### **Our Member Congregations**

As the legal owners of our Association of Congregations, our Member Congregations are the board's most direct source of authority and accountability. Through our UUA bylaws the board's relationship with member congregations is not just legal and fiduciary, but also covenantal so that our UU religious heritage underpins this relationship. We formally link to Member Congregations through their elected and called leaders including their delegates to General Assembly. In this way, we honor our congregations' democratic process, connecting to the leaders elected and called to represent their congregations. Member Congregations are currently the primary instruments of the Association's mission, offering a comprehensive range of perspectives to their role as owner. In linking with this Source, we intentionally hear those perspectives through such methodologies as surveys, focus groups, issues forums, interviews, and through their resolutions and debates in GA plenary sessions and mini-assemblies.

### **Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists**

Reminding us of our obligation to all Unitarian Universalists, and calling us to the future of Unitarian Universalism, current and future generations of Unitarian, including those generations not yet living. Universalists complements and expands the authority and accountability we receive from our member congregations. At any time "current generations" of Unitarian Universalists includes 4-5 actual generations from children to seniors, including those who are isolated due to mobility or impairment. Nonetheless, we expect the board's most significant focus for this source of authority and accountability will typically be children (or their proxies), youth and young adults because they are the generations most likely to:

- Be at the forefront of cultural movement and technological change.
- Offer, by their less inhibited, group-centered, idealistic, exploring approach to life, vivid expressions of UU ideals and the quality of our beloved community.
- Represent, by virtue of their procreative power, how our heritage might be lived in next generations.

The Board will intentionally link with youth and young adults through caucuses or other formal gatherings at GA, cons and rallies, the Youth Observer and Trustee, regional or district events, and/or campus organizations and other Youth and Young Adult groups, as well as through social media. In addition to congregational

settings; children, Youth, and Young Adults might be reached through extra-congregational gatherings such as camps and conferences.

Former and/or unaffiliated Unitarian Universalists are also part of this Source. We will link with them through surveys, both one-off and longitudinal, and through focus groups.

### **The heritage, traditions and ideals of Unitarian Universalism**

This Source reminds us that ours is a living tradition in which revelation is not sealed, grounds us in what it has meant to be a Unitarian Universalist in both its strengths and failings, and helps us to evolve that understanding for the future. We link to this Source through our study of:

- The collective voice of our movement and its history as recorded in the minutes, the resolutions and the actions of the UUA Board, the Administration, the board and administration of the organizations that preceded the UUA, and the General Assembly.
- The writings of our historical figures, ministers, denominational leaders, and UU historians, including greater access to correspondence, diary and journal entries.
- The works published by Beacon Press, particularly those that take controversial positions in the public square that live up to our ideals.
- Congregational data and writing
- Our hymnals.
- Our bylaws.
- Photographs, art, and other non-text voices including recordings and interviews.
- The actions of those who are trying to live up to our heritage, traditions, and ideals.

In linking with this Source, we will select elements from among these voices that are most instructive and articulate how our faith's heritage, traditions and ideals speak to the question at hand.

### **The vision of Beloved Community**

This Source calls us back to our covenant and principles, our best selves, and our community and forward into an aspirational vision of how we would like to be together. The voices of the vision of Beloved Community include justice-seekers, justice-makers, and stories of oppression and counter oppression, speaking to us through stories about their lives, their work, and their successes and failures in building and living Beloved Community. We hear these stories:

- Directly in our visits with justice-seekers, justice-makers and stories of oppression and counter oppression.
- In sermons and sacred texts from all faith traditions that remind us of love, connectedness, relationship and community.

- Through the arts including literature, poetry, theater, music, and stand-up comedy.
- DRUUMM and other UU communities that might have a specific vision of the Beloved Community.
- Witness events or opportunities for cross-cultural engagement
- Wisdom from non-dominant cultures
- Worshipping
- Conversation with communities and their leaders which approach the ideal of Beloved Community.
- Our stories of times our communities have approached Beloved Community
- Writing/studies on relationships, conflict resolution, and models such as Ghandi

In linking with this Source, we will systematically and intentionally choose a variety of ways to hear these stories to make sure this Source informs our board's work.

### **The Spirit of life, love and the holy**

The Spirit of Life, Love and the Holy is the most personal of the Sources and also the most universal and accessible. It is the Source that links the Board to what gives life – to what is greater than us – to what is ultimate. This Source speaks to us through direct experience, spiritual texts and teachings of world religions, science and reason, Native American and pagan traditions, the arts and literature, and in acts of reconciliation, wholeness, and love. We will link to this Source both as individuals through applying our individual spiritual practice in contemplation of the question at hand, and collectively as a Board in group meditative reflections, prayer, singing and music, story-telling, experiences of witness, worship, ritual, and through other means, remaining open to a variety of spiritual practices.

## ***Sections of UUA Board policy relevant to the Linkage Project and the draft interpretations of Sources***

### **3.0 Global Governance Commitment**

The purpose of the Board, on behalf of the Sources of Authority and Accountability, is to ensure that the Unitarian Universalist Association (a) achieves appropriate results for appropriate persons at an appropriate cost, and (b) avoids unacceptable actions and situations.

The Board will inspire, direct and hold accountable the administration and itself through the careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting Unitarian Universalist values and perspectives.

Our Sources of Authority and Accountability are defined as:

1. Our member congregations
2. Current and future generations of Unitarian Universalists
3. The heritage, traditions, and ideals of Unitarian Universalism
4. The vision of Beloved Community
5. The Spirit of life, love, and the holy

### **3.2 Board Job Description**

As informed and elected leaders of our Association of member congregations, the UUA [Unitarian Universalist Association] Board of Trustees assures organizational performance by creating, communicating, and monitoring organizational systems and performance, in accord with established Board policy.

Accordingly, the Board has responsibility to:

1. Create and maintain linkage between the Board and the Sources of Authority and Accountability defined in Policy 3.0.
  - a. Linkage shall mean
    1. Formal, intentional dialogue with the Sources of Authority and Accountability for the purpose of understanding the Sources' values and the benefits the Association should produce
    2. Connections with the Sources of Authority and Accountability that ensure the board governs accountably on their behalf.
  - b. No task shall have a higher priority.
  - c. In linking with any particular Source, the Board will listen to multiple voices.
  - d. The Board will collaborate with communities and organizations outside the Board in identifying the voices invited to speak on behalf of these Sources.
  - e. The Board will report on its linkage activities with these Sources, identifying not only the methodology but also the values discerned, and the impact of those values on Board actions.

### **Matrix Showing Key Concepts Worked Into the Operational Definitions**

To develop the key concepts we wanted to incorporate into the draft interpretations, we first had conversations around five questions about each of the five Sources:

1. What are the voices for this Source?
2. How do they speak?
3. What are their perspectives?
4. What type of power do they have?
5. What are the theological and theoretical underpinnings of this Source?

The matrix on the next five pages shows each question on a separate page and the key concepts we developed to include in the interpretations for each Source. We offer it as background material to the interpretations themselves.

Working Definitions

	<b>Congregations</b>	<b>Current and Future Generations of UUs</b>	<b>Heritage, traditions and ideals of UUism</b>	<b>Vision of Beloved Community</b>	<b>Spirit of Life, love, and the holy</b>
<b>Voices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Called and elected leaders</li> <li>• General Assembly delegates</li> <li>• Congregation-designated spokespersons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Young adults</li> <li>• Children or their proxies</li> <li>• Generations not included above, esp. seniors isolated through impairment or mobility</li> <li>• Unaffiliated Unitarian Universalists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical figures in Unitarian Universalism</li> <li>• Proceedings of UUA Board, Administration and General Assemblies</li> <li>• Ministers, denominational leaders, Unitarian Universalist historians and theologians who interpret and evolve our understanding of our heritage, traditions and ideals.</li> <li>• By-laws</li> <li>• Hymnals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voices that call us to our better selves</li> <li>• Voices of compassion and empathy</li> <li>• Martin Luther King Jr., Ghandi, and other prophetic voices with global vision of justice and equality, a society based on community.</li> <li>• Stories of oppression and counter-oppression</li> <li>• Wisdom from non-dominant cultures</li> <li>• DRUUM and other UU communities with a specific vision of Beloved Community</li> <li>• Witness events or opportunities for cross-cultural engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources</li> <li>• Our own voices when we are at our very best</li> <li>• Native American and Pagan traditions</li> </ul>

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<b>How they speak</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one-on-one conversations</li> <li>• surveys</li> <li>• interviews</li> <li>• focus groups -- this approach puts loud voices into larger perspective</li> <li>• General Assembly votes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Youth</b> -- congregational and district level through cons, youth caucuses and other programs at GA, district and regional level in conversations with district leaders through social media, Youth Trustee and Youth Observer, camps and conferences</p> <p><b>Young Adults</b> -- through CAYAN, in campus groups, with Young Adult observer of the Board and through UUA staff connections, through social media, camps and conferences</p> <p><b>Unaffiliated UUs</b> -- through surveys, focus groups, and one on one conversations; from activities that have trustees consider actions as if they were already in future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The writings of our historical figures</li> <li>• The writings and speaking of the ministers, denominational leaders, and UU historians who interpret and evolve our understanding of our heritage, tradition and ideals.</li> <li>• The works published by Beacon Press, particularly those that take controversial positions in the public square that live up to our ideals.</li> <li>• Our hymnal.</li> <li>• Our bylaws.</li> <li>• The actions of those who are trying to live up to our heritage, traditions, and ideals.</li> <li>• Congregational data and writing</li> <li>• Photographs, art, and other non-text voices including recordings, interviews, and websites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories from justice-seekers, justice-makers and oppression about their lives and their work, of their and our successes and failures in building and living beloved community. We can find these stories in the arts (literature, poetry, theater, music, stand-up comedy), in sermons and sacred texts, anywhere someone is trying to highlight injustice and call us to our better selves.</li> <li>• Our principles</li> <li>• Stories of times when we have approached Beloved Community</li> <li>• Conversations with DRUUM and other communities with a specific vision of Beloved Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Texts and teachings of the world religions, including Pagan and Native American</li> <li>• Direct experience and individual intuition of wonder, mystery, gratitude, and the unity of creation, especially as revealed through meditative, reflective, worshipful preparation.</li> <li>• Science and reason.</li> <li>• The arts, including music and poetry.</li> <li>• Acts of reconciliation, acts of wholeness, acts of love</li> <li>• The Spiritual</li> </ul>

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<b>Perspective</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both beneficiary of services and “moral owners” of Association</li> <li>Bring reality -- what's happening on the ground</li> <li>Experiences, with regional and local distinctions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Youth and Young Adults</b> -- they live with the consequences of what we do today. Youth are more likely to work together as part of a team, they are likely to be more idealistic, less jaded, they use the power of social media</li> <li><b>“Wandering children”</b> -- there are two groups here -- birth or longtime UUs and those who do not have a connection to a congregation – [why did they leave? what exhausted them?]</li> </ul>	<p>Ours is an evolutionary faith. We stand in a stream of history that is legitimately reinterpreted for our use and understanding today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspirational, something on the horizon, a vision of how we would like to be.</li> <li>The I-Thou relation that Buber describes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are varied and sometimes contradictory and yet, if we can step back far enough and open ourselves to see it, this Source gives the perspective of the whole.</li> <li>Name our ultimate concern (James Luther Adams)</li> <li>Can be accessed continuously if we keep our minds open to learn that new bit of insight, that new bit of grace.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Power</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct power, through UUA Bylaws</li> <li>• Primary source of funding</li> </ul>	<p><b>Youth</b> -- symbolic power, representing the future, they are consultative in decision-making, they use consensus more often</p> <p><b>Young adults</b> -- procreative power; organizational skills and technical skills of the day; very big time pressures; need the company of other young adults; they influence their peers and listen to each other</p> <p><b>Wandering Children</b> - - withholding power, withholding money, experience, and wisdom; potential insights from their experiences; insight into the Beloved Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To remind us that we're situated in a living tradition.</li> <li>• To give us authority to speak as Unitarian Universalists, once we're grounded in our history.</li> <li>• To make us uncomfortable about aspects of our past about which we are not proud.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Back</i> to our covenant, our best selves and our community.</li> <li>• <i>Forward</i> to a future vision in which we are moved to change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide moral guidance and persuasion.</li> <li>• Make space for a variety of theological beliefs.</li> <li>• Hold us accountable to the transforming power of love.</li> <li>• Put people in a reverential state, thus changing the quality of attention they bring.)</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Theological, Theoretical Underpinning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covenantal relationship underlines theological relationship</li> <li>• UUA is Association of Congregations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building of human capital</li> <li>• Heritage of what we pass on</li> <li>• Your children are not your children, they are themselves</li> <li>• Sustainability of any system requires the continuity they provide</li> <li>• Wandering Children are wanderers who are keepers of wisdom and insight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our understanding that we have the power to decide in community, that in which we will have faith, that which is sacred to us.</li> <li>• Historical, sociological and communication theory and methods used to understand our heritage, traditions and ideals.</li> <li>• Legal theory used to develop our bylaws.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Our principles</li> <li>• Quantum physics, relativity, and other scientific principles about our connectedness.</li> <li>• Religious teachings about how we treat each other and the importance of community (Golden Rule, Jesus’ teachings)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The understanding of God’s love as inclusive and transforming</li> <li>• Reconciliation and wholeness: seeing the Spirit of Life, Love and the Holy as reconciliation to bring together things that appear to be opposed to find sense of wholeness.</li> <li>• Each individual has the capacity to have a “direct experience of the holy” (Emerson) without the necessity of mediators.</li> <li>• “Who or what is in charge?”</li> </ul>
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