

Report & Proposal from the “Principles” Working Group
(DRAFT — from 20 Feb 2019 meeting)

We suggest that four people be appointed (through the normal Appointment process) to this Commission. Prior to this, we need a loud and wide announcement to UUs about the goal, to invite people to apply, and to encourage people to invite others who they think *should* apply to do so.

We need to provide instructions to the Appointments Committee that we want proposed appointments who had a breadth and depth of experience and who—as a body—represent a diverse set of different identities. We recognize that no body (and not one this small) can represent all identities, but expect the group to collectively be aware and sensitive to the wide range of identities.

We further propose that that while these four are appointed to the Commission, we should also appoint and charge *ALL* UUs as supporting members of the Commission, who are expected to educate themselves, engage with the regular reports along the way, provide feedback to developing ideas and proposals, and send delegates to GA who are familiar with the final proposal.

We believe that we should also identify and organize a larger body of experts who the commissioners can turn to for their insight, advice, and experience.

Once appointment and charging, the commission would have two years (per the bylaws) to do their work and bring it to the GA. (It would seem wise to carefully choose the time of the formal appointment so that the group has the longest time to do the work before having to set a final (draft) proposal before the Board.

And we remind ourselves that their final report is a proposal to the Board that the Board will have to approve (perhaps with modifications) and put before the Assembly (at two consecutive GAs).

We *suggest* that the Commission be invited and encouraged to bring back a proposal to the Board that removes the contents of Article II so that our covenant stands alone as a separate and distinct expression of the faith—our *covenant*—and does not remain ‘just’ a part of the non-profit religious corporation’s bylaws.

Charge and Directions:

That the Commission review **all** of Article II; revising, rewording, amending, editing, and adding to it as they find necessary.

They are invited and encouraged to develop a document that expresses the currently understood meaning(s) of the principles (an ‘unpacked’ version), understanding that this will go

forward as a guide, not as an absolute commitment that those and only those are the meanings we will find in those words in the future. They are instructed not to treat the current language as in any way sacrosanct. Their task is to best phrase and represent the deeper commitments of the faith as it exists and is understood now, and our aspirations for its future.

They are urged to create reviewable documents online of the content as it is developing (in process) so that the commission of the whole can — and should — offer recommendations, suggestions, and concerns.

The commission will report to the Board no less than quarterly, providing an update on the process and the state of the proposal as it is being developed. The Board will assist in making this report as public as possible, to encourage UUs to be engaged, educated, and prepared to act on the final report. and

We specifically recommend to them the materials from the Commission on Appraisal's proposal that was so narrowly defeated at GA Minneapolis (year), and suggest that they see this as a particularly rich source of material. We urge them to engage and consider the concerns presented to the Assembly at GA in New Orleans (2017), around how our concern and respect for all beings should be expressed, and also how our commitment to being an actively anti-racist, anti-oppressive faith movement should be articulated. We further encourage them to reconsider how the existing freedom of belief clause might be expressed today, understanding and remembering that the covenant it is attached to is between congregations.

The Commission is free to organize itself, and may hold meetings, focus groups, and other such events at GA, at regional gatherings, online and whatever other events help them elicit such feedback and engagement as they see being needed.

The Board and Administration will ensure that appropriate funding and staff support for this effort is made available.