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CANADIAN UNITARIAN COUNCIL VISION TASK FORCE

Report to the 2016 Annual General Meeting

RATIONALE

The CUC Vision Task Force was formed to shape a vision statement for Canadian Unitarian Universalism. The Task Force worked with this definition: *A vision is an overarching goal for our faith tradition, a vision of the world we wish to live in, one shaped by our UU contributions.* For further background and a timeline of the Task Force's processes, please see Appendix A.

PROPOSED STATEMENTS

The following statements will be presented for affirmation at the 2016 Annual General Meeting, May 20th, in Vancouver.

Vision Statement:

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists:

Seven principles guide our choices,

Six sources nourish our spirits,

Five aspirations help us grow.

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we aspire to be:

Deeply Connected

We strive to foster healthy relationships amongst and within UU communities, with the broader world and with all life.

Boldly Inclusive

We strive to create hospitable, diverse, multi- generational communities.

Actively Engaged

We strive to work joyfully for a just and compassionate society, experimenting with new forms of community.

Theologically Alive

We seek to be ever-evolving in our understanding, open to new knowledge.



Spiritually Grounded

We seek transformation through personal spiritual experiences and shared ritual.

CONTEXT

The vision statement is intended to serve as a beacon of light leading us forward into the future we want. **We are Canadian Unitarian Universalists because we seek to create a world rooted in interdependence, love and justice.** We work for this future by living our principles, striving towards our aspirations, nourished by our sources.

“We are called to *embody* interdependence, to give our principles substance through our actions and the physical world in which we act.” *Keith Wilkinson ~ CUC Board of Trustees*

Our 7th principle calls us to respect the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we imagine a world where we build our relationships, make choices, grow in faith, and live our lives ever mindful of our connection to one another and all life.

In our time and culture, it is easy to think and act as separate, individual units. We know, however, that what touches one of us affects us all. That’s true in our homes, with our neighbours, among our Unitarian Universalist congregations, between nations and with all of life. The challenge is learning to truly live interdependently, to create systems that honour our connections and that are based in love and justice.

The 7 principles wheel points to the way our connection to the web of life frames Unitarian Universalism.



Designed by Rev Ian Riddell, graphic interpretation by Kimberley Debus.



HOW TO USE THESE STATEMENTS

We are working towards *a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.*

This vision is an overarching goal for our faith tradition, a vision of the world we wish to live in, one shaped by our UU contributions.

The vision is not intended to replace the mission statements of congregations but can help congregations live out their missions within the larger context of Canadian Unitarian Universalism. For the CUC Board, the vision provides concrete direction in long-term planning.

This vision may be helpful for individuals in explaining our faith tradition to others.

It may help UU communities and associations create a focus for programs and activities.

The 5 aspirations call us to practical ways we can live our faith. They may be used by the CUC board and staff, congregations, and individuals as touchpoints for decision making.

A single phrase cannot provide all the answers: it is only a guidepost to a future we desire.

We must do the challenging work of learning to truly live out the interdependence that keeps the planet in balance.

We live in a society that operates from a vision of dominance, control and endless growth. We seek a world where love and justice arise from an interconnected society based on equity, responsibility, and resilience.

NEXT STEPS FOR CONGREGATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

The Vision Statement and 5 Aspirations will be presented for affirmation at the 2016 Annual General Meeting in May.

VISION STATEMENT

As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice.

FIVE ASPIRATIONS

Deeply Connected

Theologically Alive

Boldly Inclusive

Spiritually Grounded

Actively Engaged



The Task Force requests that your congregation or community spends some time reflecting on these questions:

1. Can you see your congregation or community's vision and mission within this larger vision statement?
2. If this is affirmed as the vision for Canadian Unitarian Universalism, what are some ways you see your congregation or community living it?

Please provide your feedback by **April 1st, 2016**, either individually or as a group through this survey - https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CUC_Vision.

CLOSING COMMENTS

We are aware that no single statement can capture fully our faith tradition. But we believe that the future we want – the future this planet desperately needs – will emerge when we embody interdependence and live lives of love and justice.

It has been a privilege to work on this process. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the Unitarian Universalists across Canada who have engaged with the task force over the past 2½ years, sharing with thought and passion their hopes for our future. CUC Board members and Staff have also contributed greatly with their insights and invaluable support. Thank you all!

We hope these statements will guide us into a brighter, healthier future.

The CUC Vision Task Force

Rev. Fiona Heath (Chair), Glenda Butt, Rev. Carly Gaylor, Vyda Ng, Keith Wilkinson

January 2016



APPENDIX A

Background

2013

- At the CUC’s Calgary Annual Conference and Meeting, the CUC Board of Trustees was inspired by Rev. Shawn Newton’s Confluence Lecture, [The Risks of Relevance](#), and a UU young adults presentation, [The Church of Our Imagination](#). Inspired by the passion and concern expressed for the future of our faith tradition, the CUC Board took up the challenge of thinking differently.
- The board led a “backpacking into the future” visioning exercise at Regional Fall Gatherings. Results were summarized and used in the November Board retreat.
- The CUC board planned an intensive retreat in November with representation from diverse UU communities - UU Ministers of Canada (UUMOC; Canadian UU Religious Educators (CUURE), CUC staff, Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) staff, and young adults.
- A mission and a vision statement were created to capture a sense of a new way forward for Canadian Unitarian Universalism.

2014

- The mission and vision statements were presented at the 2014 Annual General Meeting in Montreal. Feedback made it clear that these statements did not clearly represent our tradition.
- In review, the task force chose not to continue with a mission statement for the CUC, keeping the focus on crafting a vision statement for the greater national UU community.
- Not wanting to lose sight of the many ideals that were identified as important to UUs, these concepts were crafted into *statements of intention*.

2015

- The Vision Task Force sought more engagement from UU communities. Workshops were held at Fall 2014 regional fall gatherings, at congregations, and on-line with affiliated groups and professional associations of religious educators and ministers. Individuals across the country also looked at the materials and provided feedback.



- Summary results were presented at the 2015 Annual General Meeting, revealing a deep desire for greater spiritual depth and to engage in social and ecological justice.
- Continuing to seek a strong vision for Canadian Unitarian Universalism, the Vision Task Force refined key concepts and consulted at the 2015 Regional Fall Gatherings and regional youth cons, as well with the Canadian UU Religious Educators and UU Ministers of Canada.

2016

- The vision statement and a set of aspirations are finalized by the task force, and sent out for consideration by congregations and professional associations.
- Presented to the May 2016 AGM for affirmation.
- If affirmed, integration and promotion begins and continues into 2017.



APPENDIX B QUESTIONS

Dear Canadian UUs,

The Vision Task Force will present its recommendations to the 2016 May Annual General Meeting in Vancouver of a unified vision for Canadian Unitarian Universalism. The Task Force asks that you and your congregation or community spend some time reflecting on the following two questions, and how you see a fit between the vision and mission of your congregations/communities, and the vision and aspirational statements presented. You can access the Task Force report [here](#).

This Vision Statement and 5 Aspirations will be presented for affirmation at the 2016 Annual General Meeting on May 20th in Vancouver, University of British Columbia.

VISION STATEMENT

"As Canadian Unitarian Universalists, we envision a world in which our interdependence calls us to love and justice."

FIVE ASPIRATIONS

Deeply Connected
Boldly Inclusive
Actively Engaged
Theologically Alive
Spiritually Grounded

These two questions will only take a few minutes of your time. We would appreciate your feedback by **Friday, April 1st, 2016**

Thank you for your patience as we walk through this together.

1. NAME:
2. CONGREGATION:
3. Can you see your congregation and community's mission and vision within this larger vision statement?



4. If this is affirmed as the vision for Canadian Unitarian Universalism, how would you see yourself living it?

5. Please share additional thoughts and comments.

Thank you for taking the time to share your reflections. An update will be provided on the outcome of this after the Annual General Meeting.

Questions or comments? Please email fiona@cuc.ca.