

NEWS ABOUT PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARTICLE II

OUR BELIEF IN THE “INHERENT WORTH AND DIGNITY OF EACH PERSON” CHANGED.

On the Need for “Inherent Worth and Dignity” in Article II

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A recently proposed version of the “Equity” paragraph read as follows:

“We declare that every person has the right to flourish with dignity and worthiness.”

However, the final proposed Equity paragraph now says:

“We declare that every person has the right to flourish with **inherent** dignity and worthiness.”

I believe the Article II study commission inserted the word “inherent” into a place that made the meaning of the sentence ambiguous. As I read it, the final wording of the Equity paragraph is very confusing, and it clearly does not say people have inherent worth and dignity. One possible meaning implies that a person has the right to be treated as though they have inherent dignity and worthiness.

That possible meaning implies that it is the right that is inherent, and not the dignity and worthiness in a person. In any case, the meaning of the proposed paragraph is unclear, and the commission apparently

does not want article II to say unequivocally that everyone has inherent worth and dignity.

I cannot count the number of times I have sat writing a sermon, struggling to find a meaningful, time-tested approach to solving the world's countless problems. Then the answer comes to me, and it is the wisdom of our 1st principle that clearly says no person is irredeemable. It is that heartfelt belief that allows us to treat our enemies with dignity, and only that loving approach gives us a chance to change them. Without our current belief in the inherent worth and dignity of each person, our enemies become the "evil other," making discord, even war, likely or even inevitable. I believe that our present first principle, that unequivocally says people have inherent worth and dignity, is vital to our faith, and our ability to bring healing and justice to the world.

The proposed statement, with the word "inherent" inserted seemingly as an afterthought, has no power to help our troubled world, or help future UU ministers searching for the right words.