

Charter of Principles in Social Justice of the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu

We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, believe firmly in the dignity and worth of every individual and are dedicated to the development of the individual personality to its fullest capacities. This is our aspiration for all people and one of our primary loyalties as a religious society. We believe that individual dignity is respected and individual potentialities are developed only in an atmosphere of freedom. We therefore believe that freedom is a vital necessity for all individuals. Believing further that the individual potentialities of people are strengthened and developed most fully in community, we maintain this church as an instrument for the achievement of the principles stated in Article II of the Constitution of our Church.

"The Unitarian Church of Honolulu is a religious society of seekers after truth, bound by no dogma, restricted by no creed. The purposes shall be the furthering of individual freedom of belief, the acceptance of advancing truth, the democratic process in human relations, and the support of humanity undivided by race, creed, or nation. "

We believe that it is not enough for the members of this church to practice these principles and work for their wider recognition and application as individual citizens. We believe our church itself must stand for these principles and be a responsible and effective representative of them in our community. We have therefore devised this Charter as a means of interpreting to the community and to ourselves our understanding of the principles to which we have pledged ourselves. While we may from time to time revise its statements, its adoption now reflects our intent that our church itself shall have a means whereby it can openly and responsibly act on behalf of our shared convictions.

PRINCIPLES

I. Furthering of Individual Freedom of Belief

We are concerned with maintaining Constitutional guarantees of freedom of belief for all individuals and groups. We are concerned with upholding this principle especially in the fields of religion (including separation of church and state), academic freedom, and freedom of speech and assembly. We believe that freedom entails the responsibility to work for a social and political climate in which freedom can exist, grow and come to full fruition. Since a responsible and disciplined freedom is one of our highest values, we intend to act on clear violations of this principle and on opportunities for strengthening it.

II. Acceptance of Advancing Truth

We recognize "truth" as being provisional and tentative and therefore recognize no single authority or institution as being a custodian thereof. Believing as we do that only through the possession of knowledge can people mold their futures wisely and responsibly, we hold that free access to information and knowledge is vital to responsible world citizenship. Believing that the public is entitled to all information up to the point of hazard to national security, we will specifically resist the practice of censorship by the various agencies of government, the church, the school, or the press and will equally resist the irresponsible uses of freedom by those agencies. Therefore we intend to act to maintain the widest possible access to and dissemination of all knowledge, whether scientific, economic, political, social or religious.

III. The Democratic Process in Human Relations

We are committed to defend, promote and uphold the democratic process in human relations. Our allegiance to this principle clearly implies our support of the widest possible right of franchise, and the principle that every individual must be treated as a person of dignity and worth. We shall resist manipulation of persons and all authoritarian and totalitarian practices, whether economic, political, ideological or religious. We intend to act on opportunities to strengthen this principle and its practice and to act when encroachment upon it demands that our influence be exerted in its defense.

IV. The Support of Humankind Undivided by Race, Creed, or Nation

We pledge our support to the principle of equity throughout our community, our nation and our world. Specifically we favor the extension of equality of economic and professional opportunity to all, the right to choose one's place of residence, to be admitted to hospitals, schools, and places of public accommodation and amusement without regard to creed or to racial or national origin. We will work for a united world community, one that will be able to resolve its differences without resort to war. We will foster understanding and support of the United Nations in its evolution into an instrument of world law and order. We recognize that achievement of a united world community involves greater effort by all nations toward raising living and educational standards throughout the world, and that attainment of this goal involves continued progress toward the realization by all people of the rights specified in the United Nations "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

We intend to act whenever a denial of these principles appears and whenever an opportunity for their strengthening is present.

IMPLEMENTATION

I. To carry into effect this Charter of Principles in Social Justice of the First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, a Social Justice Council is hereby authorized and created. It shall be an agency of the congregation and shall be responsible to the congregation for implementing the Principles stated in this Charter.

II. We direct the Social Justice Council to consider action on any matter concerning those Principles either in their broadest application to major concerns requiring long-range study and programs or in an immediate or limited issue.

III. We believe that all action by the Church should be directed to issues, problems, or proposals. To endorse or oppose candidates for public office would be destructive to our purpose.

IV. This Charter may be amended by any legal meeting of the membership of this Church in the same manner as is provided for amending the Bylaws of the Church.