

TRAIL OF REPENTANCE AND HEALING  
Resolution Passed at General Conference 2012

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church and its predecessors have acknowledged an historic desire to spread the good news of the gospel yet in many cases have caused indignities, cultural genocide and atrocities against tribal persons, and

WHEREAS, God has been present with all persons since creation, and through prevenient grace has been a living and moving Spirit among the world's diverse cultures; and in many parts of the world, to become a Christian may mean one is expected to abandon one's culture and traditional religion, resulting in tension and division within families and tribes, and the loss of the unique identity associated with family and clan, including in some places: the requirement to stop speaking one's own language, to change one's clothing and hair, to discontinue participation in native prayer ceremonies and many cultural activities such as music and dance, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church adopted Resolution 3322 [Confession to Native Americans] in 1992 and readopted the same in 2004 and 2008 recognizing the worth and dignity of all persons and our church's participation in the destruction of Native American people, culture and religious practices, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church adopted Resolution 135 [Support Restitution to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma for the Sand Creek Massacre] in 1996 acknowledging the genocide of almost 200 persons, mostly women and children, at a U.S. peace camp in an attack led by a Methodist preacher, Col John Chivington, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church adopted Petition 80158 [Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Support] in 2008 to contribute \$50,000 toward the development of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Research and Learning Center for promoting awareness of the site and for its use for Native American services of remembrance and commemoration, and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church adopted Resolution 121 [Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons] in 2000, readopted as Resolution 133 in 2004, and revised and readopted as Resolution 3323 in 2008 that recognized that the history of Christianity's spread across the world often accompanied by actions which damaged the culture, life ways and spirituality of indigenous persons, and

WHEREAS, Resolution 3323 directs the 2012 General Conference of The United Methodist Church to hold an Act of Repentance Service for the Healing of Relationships with Indigenous Persons which would launch study, dialogue, and acts of repentance in all conferences over the following quadrennium, and

WHEREAS, an Act of Repentance service is a first step in launching a process of healing relationships with indigenous persons throughout the world in order to be the living and resurrected body of Christ in the world, and

WHEREAS, a call to repentance is followed by confession, and confession is followed by a call for a change for the better as a result of remorse or contrition for one's sins, and

WHEREAS, the General Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns (GCCUIC) was charged in Resolution 3323 with the responsibility of planning the 2012 General Conference event; the necessary study; development of resources, models and guidelines for building relationships with indigenous persons in preparation for a process of listening, repentance, and healing; and making such resources available to conferences and local congregations,

*Therefore, be it resolved,* that The United Methodist Church begin a process of healing relationships with indigenous persons to continue throughout the quadrennium and beyond that necessarily includes such activities as using study guides and resources; self-examination, discovering the ongoing impact of historic traumas; confessing our own participation in the continuing effects of that trauma; building relationships with indigenous persons wherever we, the church, are; building those relationships through listening and being present with indigenous persons; working beside indigenous persons to seek solutions to current problems; advocating and resourcing programs which are self-determined by native and indigenous persons to be part of the healing process; and holding an Act of Repentance Service for the Healing of Relationships with Indigenous Persons in each conference, and

*Be it further resolved,* that every conference, and every local congregation of The United Methodist Church develop and nurture relationships with the indigenous persons of the place where that conference resides through a process of deep listening and learning, and

*Be it further resolved,* that every conference, and every local congregation of The United Methodist Church is encouraged to implement specific actions to demonstrate a genuine attitude of repentance such as 1) encourage and resource the education and training of indigenous leadership including laity and pastors, by providing culturally sensitive learning environments, 2) wherever the church is holding land and/or property in trust, consider transferring a portion of that land and/or property or its income to indigenous persons' projects, and 3) in conjunction with ¶2547.2, whenever a conference entity is closing a charge or holds excess land, consider transferring any land and property to an indigenous community, and

*Be it further resolved,* that full implementation of the recommendations in this resolution be proposed to the Council of Bishops for consideration, and

*Be it further resolved,* that Bishops of The United Methodist Church shall provide spiritual leadership and pastoral guidance for the fulfillment of this essential work to heal the soul of our church, our people and the land.

Rationale: This Resolution is the fruit of the General Conference's direction in Resolution 3323, "Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons." The provisions within are created to ensure that the 2012 Act of Repentance will be followed with tangible results.

*General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns*