

# Act of Repentance

Forthwith, "The People Called (United) Methodist" are being summoned to substantive dialogue, even "holy conferencing," about a tragic history that resulted in what was described by George E. Tinker as the "cultural genocide" of Native Americans and indigenous peoples throughout the oikoumene, the whole inhabited earth. In short, we are being called to confession. It is incumbent upon us to struggle spiritually with the ecclesiological implications attendant to this Act of Repentance and to provide ample and compelling evidence of demonstrable denominational contrition for our collective responsibility. The Rev. Dr. Stephen Sidorak, GCCUIC General Secretary In the days ahead, we will provide stories and resources for to assist United Methodists in finding ways to undertake Acts of Repentance to Native and Indigenous Peoples. Here are two videos of interviews from Ware's Chapel in Anadarko, Oklahoma. Ginny Underwood is the videographer. These links lead to the GCCUIC YouTube Channel and may contain other items over which GCCUIC has no control and does not endorse. [Listening Session One](#) [Listening Session Two](#) [Oklahoma State Student Interview](#)

Click Next for the Mission and Goals of the GCCUIC Ad Hoc Task Force on the Act of Repentance.

The General Conference 2008 charged the GCCUIC with 1) providing materials to annual conferences and local churches for helping them build relationships with indigenous persons and 2) "with the necessary study and preparation of resources for the process of listening, repentance and reconciliation to occur." These resources will then assist the General Conference 2012 in its Service of Repentance and every annual conference to do the same in the following quadrennium. In order to fulfill Resolution #3323, the GCCUIC appointed an Ad Hoc Task Force for the Act of Repentance. Below is their mission statement and goals.

## Ad Hoc Task Force on Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons

### Mission Statement and Goals

#### Mission

Engage in and facilitate a process of conversation, learning, and healing between the people called United Methodists and Native and indigenous people living in historic and contemporary locations where The United Methodist Church is in ministry.

#### Goals

- (1) Develop and implement a plan to engage The United Methodist Church in a process of healing relationships with indigenous people that will be launched in 2012 and continue through the 2012-2016 quadrennium and beyond.
- (2) Create guidelines for effective listening sessions with indigenous peoples that have the potential for productive collaborative planning and problem solving at all levels of the life of The United Methodist Church.
- (3) Convene an Advisory Council comprised of Native Americans, other indigenous persons and additional members, as called for, to work with the GCCUIC General Secretary.
- (4) Develop and demonstrate models of relationship-building between and among Native and indigenous peoples and people called United Methodists.
- (5) Build a repository of insights and information gleaned from and learned through listening sessions with Native and indigenous peoples that will provide a basis for denominational planning, General Conference legislation and an examination of policies and practices of The United Methodist Church regarding Native and indigenous peoples.

- (6) Create a resource and research data base identified by the Acts of Repentance Task Force, staff and Native and indigenous peoples and others, for use in learning, growth and the development of policies and practices in The United Methodist Church.
- (7) Produce and publish educational resources and materials for use across the church by boards and agencies, local churches, annual conferences, laity and clergy.
- (8) Facilitate the preparation and implementation of an Act of Repentance Liturgy for 2012 General Conference that will launch study, dialogue, and acts of repentance in all annual conferences.
- (9) Develop resolutions to submit to the General Conference session of 2012 and 2016 resulting from listening sessions, emerging processes of healing and reconciliation as well as research and collaborative planning with Native and indigenous peoples.
- (10) Report to the 2016 General Conference a summary of the progress in the healing process inaugurated in 2012, and make recommendations for further actions.

Click Next to read Resolution #3323. Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons from General Conference 2008.

### 3323. Healing Relationships with Indigenous Persons

WHEREAS, historically United Methodism and its predecessor bodies have desired to reach indigenous persons around the world with the good news of the gospel, yet at the same time that Good News has sometimes been perceived as bad news, as Christian efforts have not only introduced Jesus Christ, but in many cases resulted in indignities, cultural genocide, and atrocities against the tribal people, and

WHEREAS, God has been present with all people since creation, and through prevenient grace has been a living and moving Spirit among the world's diverse cultures, and WHEREAS, 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 prayer ceremonies of the tribe and any number of cultural activities such as music and dance, and

WHEREAS, God so loved the world that he sent his son Jesus, and many missionaries have befriended and suffered with indigenous peoples in tragic circumstances and thereby have been a true witness of the love of God, we celebrate and confess the faithful and painful journey of our church's relationship with indigenous peoples, seeking to learn the lessons from our past and to avoid the pitfalls that would hinder the sharing and receiving of the gospel of Christ among indigenous persons, and

WHEREAS, the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns has participated in conversations with persons who practice their indigenous religion and have yet to hear the gospel as good news;

Therefore, be it resolved, that United Methodist churches throughout the world seek ways to build bridges of respect and understanding, that our churches listen and become educated about the history of the relationship between indigenous persons and Christian colonizers in their own geographic location, and that through prayer and relationship building, develop means for reconciliation and celebrate the gifts that indigenous people bring to the body of Jesus in the world, and

Be it also resolved that the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious concerns facilitate and make available to annual conferences and local churches resources to suggest models and guidelines for building relationships with indigenous persons, and

Be it also resolved that the General Conference hold an Act of Repentance Service at the 2012 gathering of the Conference, and that that service will launch study, dialogue, and acts of repentance in all annual conferences over the following Quadrennium, and

Be it also resolved that the General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns be charged with the necessary study and preparation of resources for the process of listening, repentance, and reconciliation to occur.

Adopted 2000 Revised and readopted 2008 Resolution #133, 2004 Book of Resolutions Resolution #121, 2000 Book of Resolutions