TITLE: A Resolution Regarding Establishing of Ongoing Relationships with Minnesota Native American Communities

DATE SUBMITTED: March 2, 2009

JOINTLY SUBMITTED BY: Justice and Witness Team of the Minnesota Conference UCC
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SUMMARY OF INTENT: The 2008 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ passed a resolution to mark the 150th anniversary of the State of Minnesota as a year to acknowledge the history of the relationship between European-Americans and Native Americans, repent of the injustices that are part of that history and their continuing legacy, and begin a new relationship by U.S. federal and state governments and non-Native peoples with Native American governments and Native peoples. During this year, the Conference has only begun to acknowledge the history. This resolution would continue the process of historical acknowledgement that could lead to repentance and establishing new relationships. The goal of the process would be to have a significant portion of the work accomplished by 2012, the 150th anniversary of the Dakota War of 1862.

FUNDING IMPLICATIONS
Funding will come out of the budgets of Conference Office, the Justice & Witness Team, and the Emmaus Antiracism Leadership Team.

WHEREAS the State of Minnesota recognized its 150th anniversary in 2008; and
WHEREAS members of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ are also citizens of the State of Minnesota; and
WHEREAS the history of the relationship between the Native American and European American communities is rife with injustices visited upon Native American nations and attempts to destroy or dominate Indian peoples, families, resources and cultures, along with resistance by Native Americans to this destruction and domination; and
WHEREAS Christians believe, and try to live by, the words of Jesus Christ that “The truth shall make you free;” (John 8:32b) and
WHEREAS Christians believe that we are called to repentance; (Acts 2:38; Romans 2:1-11) and
WHEREAS Christians are called by the Gospel to show evidence of our repentance; (Matthew 3:8, 10; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:22-32) and
WHEREAS Christians are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; (Mark 12:28-32; Luke10:25-28) and
WHEREAS the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls Christians to reach out to each other and our neighbors in love and compassion, with justice and in peace; (Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:14-26) and
WHEREAS citizens of the State of Minnesota have access to resources to learn the history of the European American and Native American relationship:
BE IT RESOLVED that the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, call on all congregations, members, and other bodies of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ to
- become knowledgeable about the history of the relationship between the Native American and European American communities,
- engage in discussions within congregations and communities regarding that history,
- form antiracist, justice-seeking relationships in support of Native American governments and communities including seeking to understand the significance of, the nature of, and the responsibilities involved in extending apologies for the unjust treatment of Native Americans by European Americans;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that during the upcoming years the Justice & Witness Team and the Emmaus Anti-Racism Team will request the assistance of all congregations and other bodies of the United Church of Christ in Minnesota in sharing local and Conference-wide experiences building relationships and becoming more trust-worthy allies with Native American governments, communities and individuals. After becoming mutually trustworthy allies to Native American governments, communities and individuals, the Conference and individual congregations will be in a better position to consider the need for apologies to Native American nations and communities. The Justice & Witness Team and the Emmaus Anti-Racism Team will report semi-annually to the Board of Directors on this effort and the Conference shall explore this effort in depth at its subsequent Annual Meetings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ, call upon our partner communions in and through the Minnesota Council of Churches to join the Minnesota Conference in the various actions described in this Resolution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Justice and Witness Team and Emmaus Anti-Racism Team continue working together to provide resources and opportunities for congregations and individuals of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ to learn the truth about this aspect of our State’s history, to develop an educational model that builds trust between Native American governments, communities and individuals and non-Native Americans, and to be in antiracist, justice-seeking relationships with Native American nations and communities located within the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when individuals and congregations of the Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ have learned more about the history of Native Americans in Minnesota and have reached clarity about appropriate actions in support of a new relationship between Native American and European American Communities, the Justice and Witness Team and the Emmaus Anti-Racism Team will return to the Annual Meeting for commitment to these transformative actions.