

1990

RESOLUTION: NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE COLUMBUS SEMI-MILLENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

WHEREAS, God our Maker warns us of "Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room..." (Isaiah 5:8a), and "Woe to you, destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed..." (Isaiah 33:1a); and

WHEREAS, Jesus our Redeemer warns us that "All who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52b) and promises us that, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21); and

WHEREAS, The Holy Spirit our Counselor comes "to convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment...because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8-11); and

WHEREAS, When strangers and sojourners first came to these shores the people native to this land welcomed them and shared with them the fruit of the earth and the love of their hearts, and yet this welcome was spurned, this people being killed or driven off the land, their faith and culture destroyed, and the fruits of the earth which long they had loved plundered to exhaustion; and

WHEREAS, These newcomers, our ancestors in faith, brought much that is good in faith and culture, hearing and proclaiming the voice of God in the Crucified One, yet disobeyed that voice in destroying and murdering the people they found already in this land, choosing not to hear the voice of God as speaking also in the Giver of the Pipe; and

WHEREAS, Still today we, the spiritual descendants of these strangers and sojourners, ignore as they did the teachings of God by still breaking our word given in solemn treaty, still stealing land, still teaching historical falsehood, still doing virtually nothing to prevent Native people from living in chains of ignorance, poverty, and hopelessness, still denying to those whose forebears were once the only inhabitants of this land any willingness on our part to learn about, understand, value, and nurture their faith and culture, or to recognize our shame before God for disobeying God's will and not loving our neighbor as ourselves;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, recognize and express our shame before our - common God to the Native people of this continent for all sins of omission and commission against them by our ancestors in faith and still by us today, asking both them and our common God to forgive us; and -

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we at least will keep the semi-millennial anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in this hemisphere as not only a celebration but also an expression of repentance for the wrongs of the past and of resolution to do right in the future; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon our churches, with Conference leadership, to plan in partnership with Native Americans for 1992 activities for young and old - including storytelling, dramatics, paintings, sermons, symposiums, and public statements - which will move us in Christ's way toward respect for and reconciliation with the Native Americans of this land; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is our will that this Resolution be properly modified according to form and submitted to General Synod XVIII for consideration by the whole United Church of Christ.