

1 **CALLING FOR THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST TO REPUDIATE THE**
2 **DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY WHICH AUTHORIZED THE GENOCIDE OF NATIVE**
3 **PEOPLES AND THE THEFT OF NATIVE LANDS**

4 **Approved As Amended**

5
6 **A Resolution of Witness**

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8 **THE TEXT OF THE MOTION**
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10 *Whereas* from the Crusades through the 16th century the Roman Catholic Church promulgated
11 several Papal Bulls which authorized and justified the destruction, killing and appropriating
12 lands of indigenous peoples. These Papal Bulls formulated the theological base for what became
13 the tragic genocide of American Indians; and

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15 *Whereas* Protestant churches beginning as early as 1609 when English clergy in Jamestown
16 developed a coherent narrative that brought together a legal rationalization for invading America,
17 debasement of American Indians and made a Christian commitment to convert Indians – a
18 commitment which they never delivered; and

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20 *Whereas* the Supreme Court in 1823 in Johnson v. McIntosh incorporated into American law the
21 Doctrine by claiming the United States inherited the American conquest from the English; and

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23 *Whereas* 1845 was the first time the phrase Manifest Destiny was used to affirm the USA was
24 called by Providence to dominate the continent for the free development of America's inevitable
25 growth. Manifest Destiny grew out of, and was based on, the Doctrine of Discovery; and

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27 *Whereas* the United Nations adopted a resolution entitled United Nations Declaration on the
28 Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007 requesting nations to affirm, it took the United States four
29 years before it signed it; and

30 *Whereas* the World Council of Churches called upon its member churches to adopt its Statement
31 on the Doctrine of Discovery Impact on Indigenous Peoples, the UCC has not. The Episcopal
32 Church and the Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church have done so.

33 *Whereas* there is a growing awareness and concern in the United States about the Doctrine, the
34 United Church of Christ, given its commitment to justice, has not yet participated in a formal
35 manner; and

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37 *Whereas* not only has the Doctrine never been repudiated, court decisions against Indians have
38 been made within the past several decades based on the Doctrine.

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40 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
41 Christ repudiates the Doctrine of Discovery.
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43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
44 Christ declares and confesses that the doctrine has been and continues to be a shameful part of
45 United States and our Church's history.

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47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
48 Christ joins with its ecumenical partners to explore ways to compensate American Indians,
49 Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians for lands and resources that were stolen and are still
50 being stolen and which are now the United States of America.

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52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
53 Christ requests that Justice and Witness Ministries join with the Council for American Indian
54 Ministry and others to prepare educational materials for the churches.

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56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of
57 Christ requests that the substantive study materials developed by JWM and CAIM be presented
58 to the Thirtieth General Synod with suggestions for how the UCC might undertake various forms
59 of action. The Episcopal Church provides a model for such follow through.

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61 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Twenty-ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ
62 calls upon the United States government to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

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64 **FUNDING**

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66 The funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the
67 overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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69 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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71 The Collegium of officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities of the
72 United Church of Christ will determine the implementing body.