

Recognition, Repentance, Relationship, Reconciliation: A Toolkit for Acts of Repentance with Native Americans

Bless all those who have gone before, who are here now, and who will come after!

This toolkit will help everyone – individuals through national assemblies – develop acts of repentance that will lead to full reconciliation with Native American peoples. Note that it is written from a white person’s perspective for non-Native people. Consider how it would be read by Indigenous People. Read on and learn more.

The beginning. We have learned many things that touch our hearts, minds, and spirits. We understand now that *Acts* is plural.

Our study took us from a “one and done” single Act of Repentance to recognition of atrocities done to the first inhabitants of an area to a reconciliation with the land and the people by developing relationships with contemporary Indigenous People. After months of prayer and discernment, we propose that people around the world begin each special event with an “Acknowledgement of Being on the Land of Indigenous People.” We have moved from asking a local Native American to *welcome* us to the land taken from her ancestors to a more appropriate *acknowledgment of being on that land*. Recognition, repentance, and reconciliation through relationships. We can do this!

Matthew 5:24 encourages us to “leave your gift at the altar and go. First make things right with your . . . sister and then come back and offer your gift.”

Romans 15:30. “I urge you, ... sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggles by praying to God for me.”

Psalms 51:10-12 KJV: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”

Jeremiah 15:19a NIV: “Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me.’”

Recognition of Need for Repentance

Reflection is the first step toward inspiration.

If part of our purpose is to inspire others to take action to support Indigenous communities, this is a time for reflection on our reasons for repentance. Before we can be authentic in that repentance, i.e., *feel or express sincere regret or remorse about wrongdoing or sin* [Webster definition], we want to know what we are asked to repent for. And how can we regret doing something we had no part of? When we research the factual history of the Indigenous People of

the so-called New World, we learn how Indigenous People, in their generous naivety, were considered lesser beings, not humans.

May we now agree that what happened to Indigenous People of the Americas was not in God's favor? The actions of many, including the United States government, were based on greed and power, e.g., after gold was found on farmland in Georgia, the Cherokee farmers were stopped by legislative decree from plowing their land – in case they turned up more gold - and were soon moved nearly a thousand miles to land west of the Mississippi no one wanted [at the time]. Control by forced removal.

Why am I doing this? If it's out of *guilt* or because *everyone else is doing it*, you might want to reflect on it some more. If it's to take action to support indigenous communities, please continue! And remember to focus on the positivity of who Indigenous People are today.

"I can imagine the difference in behavior and self-concept of Indigenous students if they could see or hear this in their classrooms. Of course, it might cause some [white] people to be angry and say 'We beat those people in war! We won this land!' It would cause Native American students, however, to stand a little taller and be a little prouder." – retired educator

Doctrine of Discovery. According to *Wikipedia*, the concept of Doctrine of Discovery is that colonial powers could claim lands not inhabited by Christians. The explorers and settlers ignored "aboriginal possession of land" and colonized the land. The doctrine is still used in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to deny Indigenous Peoples rights to their own lands. *Manifest Destiny* was used to justify *humanitarian invasions* of other countries, which often end in suppression of women's rights, rape of women and children, and militarizing young boys.

To get an idea of how the doctrine is perceived by Native Americans, read versions from their websites. For instance: "...invade, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans...to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery and to take away all their possessions and property." 1452 from Pope Nicholas V to King Alfonso V of Portugal.- Indigenous Values Initiative, DeWitt, NY. [See ictinc.ca 10/3/2016 for interesting insights.]

Boarding schools. Another tactic used by the government to control Native Americans and their land was to establish non-reservation boarding schools. This was a less expensive alternative to military campaigns in the West and resulted in the loss of land, cultures, language, and traditions – as well as people, which was probably the goal.



We would like to think that the 526 boarding schools that housed hundreds of thousands of indigenous children and youth through the years were established for good reasons. However, the results were not always good. Thousands of

children were buried in unmarked graves on or near the school grounds. Consider researching “Indian boarding schools” in your conference and share that information with your membership, including clergy. Several boarding schools are identified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as being established by and operated by the Methodist Church. A few others were run by Mennonite, Baptist, Quaker/Friends, Catholic, and Presbyterian denominations. The rest were government schools, e.g., Bureau of Indian Affairs.

As of 2019, there are four off-reservation boarding schools: Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, OK; Sherman Indian High School in Riverside, CA; Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon; and Flandreau Indian School in Flandreau, SD. There are three tribal boarding schools: Sequoyah Schools in Tahlequah, OK; Pierre Indian Learning Center in Pierre, SD, and Circle of Nations School in Wahpeton, ND. There are also church-related schools and day schools with dormitories operated by tribal governments.

See Appendix A for a list of Methodist Boarding Schools. Note that McCurdy School, a United Women in Faith National Mission Institution and General Church Advance, is not considered a boarding school for Native Americans. It was started as a day school for Hispanic children in northern New Mexico and eventually became a boarding school that accepted Native American children and youth. McCurdy Mission is now a community center for the Espanola Valley.

Potlatch ban. According to encyclopedia.com, potlatches, translated as “to give away,” were social events celebrating getting a new name or a new house; erecting a [totem pole](#) or other emblem; marriage; a child's coming of age such as first smile and puberty; or as a feast for the dead.



Indigenous People of the Pacific Northwest, from Oregon to the Arctic Circle, observed potlatches. The first non-Natives to see these celebrations were appalled at the giving away of what little they had that put them in poverty, even though it was temporary. Henry Dawes, of Dawes Act of 1887 fame, was mystified by the unselfish sharing without regard for personal wealth. Perhaps the white, male missionaries interpreted the

giving away as ignorant behavior that should be changed so the savage Indigenous People would be more conscious of their wealth, thereby retaining it. Anthropologists saw it differently. Anthropologists saw this practice as a way to maintain social equilibrium, provide for orderly transfer of wealth and power, provide group identity and solidarity, redistribute surplus wealth and achieve economic balances, provide peaceful outlets for competition, and provide an occasion for fellowship and entertainment. The Potlatch Ban of 1885 was expanded to include almost all ceremonies, e.g., Sun Dance, giveaways, tribal dances, and other ceremonies. In Canada, the ban was deleted – not repealed – in 1951.

Indian Removal Act of 1830. Each of the so-called Five Civilized Tribes – Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole – were forced to leave their homes in the southeast to go to undeveloped and unwanted land in Indian Territory. We’ve all heard of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. In truth, nearly every indigenous group in North America had a “trail of tears.” Navajos made the Long Walk from Ft. Sumner in New Mexico Territory to their traditional homelands in the Four Corners area.

- Read Rev. Homer Noley’s *First White Frost* to learn about the forced removal of Choctaws from their traditional homelands. Note that the first Annual Conference west of the Mississippi was in a Choctaw church in southeast Oklahoma in 1844.
- Research some of the hymns sung on those trails of tears, especially the Cherokee hymn “One Drop of Blood.”
- The Five Tribes alone were forced to give up 15 million acres of their land.
- Forced removal didn’t stop until mid-20th century.

Indian Relocation Act of 1956. Many years later, another form of removal was implemented: Relocation from tribal lands to big cities. Starting in 1952, the government began closing reservations and offering incentives to Native Americans to move to urban areas. It was the beginning of the government’s reversing its policy of federal recognition of tribes, which meant it could sell treaty-given land to non-Native people or lease it for commercial purposes.

The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 was presented to the people in such a way that many agreed to leave their ancestral homelands, e.g., Wilma Mankiller’s family [See “Urban Indians” in *Resources* for more information about her journey]. The government provided one-way transportation to Los Angeles and the Bay Area, Dallas, Chicago, Cleveland, Salt Lake City, Denver, Minneapolis, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, Seattle, and Tulsa. Funds for housing, job training, work clothes, and other necessities were promised but weren’t always provided.

Urban Indians are described as people living in urban areas who “may or may not have direct and/or active ties with a particular tribe, but who identify with and are at least somewhat active in the Native community in their urban area.” They may be long-term, forced, or short-term residents, e.g., pursuing an education. [from National Urban Indian Family Coalition].

Learning these things may open your heart to a relationship with a Native American. Be respectful, listen, and accept any gifts offered, tangible or intangible, when considering a relationship. Third Sunday Church, a monthly fellowship in Houston, Texas, is an example of providing a place of worship for urban Indians. Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church has ten churches in the larger cities in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Another current example of United Methodists being in ministry with Urban Indians is the [Congregational Journey Toward Racial Justice](#), North Texas Conference, that was developed to support racial justice work of predominantly white congregations, using vital conversations about racism, “intercultural competence,” and church equity.

In the name of the church. So many terrible things were done to Indigenous People in the Americas in the name of Christianity that attending church became a crime punishable by death for some tribal governments. Because of the severity and intensity of the memories and stories, tribal governments and Native American associations and organizations are saying that there must be “decolonization of the church.” You are encouraged to research this topic further.

Relationship is defined as the way in which two or more concepts or people are connected. It’s how we or our organizations regard and behave toward each other.

A “right relationship” provides a guiding ethic for people wishing to lead fulfilling lives as creative and integrated participants in human society. United Women in Faith members want our chosen relationships to be at this level. Believing that, we remember that relationships are built on **trust, mutual respect, and mindful listening.**

You might hear that Native Americans have the same needs as you – normal employment and family obligations. After trust is established, you might hear they are working to heal their traumas, learn their language, and support their Native communities. You might ask at some point how you can be in ministry *with* them. You might ask what you can do for them. Some will say they need money for groceries or school supplies or gas to get to a doctor’s office. Some are too proud to accept money or groceries. If they offer to make something for you or give you something in return, accept it. Remember the section on potlatches and giveaways?

To begin, identify prominent Native Americans in your area and ask for an informal meeting. Share your goals, e.g., [a] to have a relationship with descendants of original inhabitants of the land and [b] to learn how to be supportive of common goals, e.g., language, traditions, culture, worship. Start by listening. Refrain from offering suggestions. Just listen – and take notes. The quieter you are and the more receptive you appear, the more your guests will talk. All this leads to reconciliation, the ultimate Act of Repentance. In other words, be a friend, a friend who wants to learn. Be gentle in your curiosity, at least until you are sure trust has been established. Listen.

Relationships with Native Americans

Look around at your next church-sponsored event. Are there Native American members present? Spectators or participants? On the team as hosts or presenters? If so, celebrate. If not, ask why not? And then act on what you discern.

Microaggression. In her book, *So you want to talk about race*, Ijeoma Oluo explains microaggression and cultural appropriation and gives real examples. Be alert to microaggressions, whether defined as a statement or as an action that can be regarded as indirect, subtle, or unintentional *discrimination against*, in our case, Indigenous People.

Expecting individuals on the receiving end of microaggressions to forgive without expectation of change or accountability from the offender, in this case the US government and the church, is not realistic.

- Asking “Where are you really from?” invalidates a person as a US citizen.
- “You speak well for a reservation Indian!” Seriously?!
- “Did your parents go to school?”
- “Did you live in a teepee?”
- Please don’t call men Chief or Geronimo unless they ask you to, and please don’t refer to women as *squaws*. That is a disrespectful, vulgar word relating to a specific part of the genital area.
- Please don’t try to “fix” your new friend by focusing on rescuing. This is microaggression in the name of helping.
- Apologize when you make a mistake – or mess up:
 - Provide a clear “I’m sorry” statement.
 - Express sincere regret for what you said or what happened.
 - Acknowledge that societal norms or expectations were violated, e.g., “I didn’t think of the impact my action – or words – would have.”
 - Request forgiveness but don’t insist on it. It may require another visit, perhaps a private one that includes giving a gift.

If you’re lucky enough to attend a powwow, please don’t touch a dancer’s regalia. Don’t sit down at a drum. Don’t walk into the circle or arena. Don’t take photos without permission, especially during a dance contest or Grand Entry. If a dancer does sit or stand for a photo, offer a monetary gift for the privilege of taking the photograph. And please don’t sell any of those photographs!

Cultural appropriation. Oluo defines this as “the adoption or exploitation of another culture by a more dominant culture” that takes attractive bits and pieces, frequently benefiting more financially than the marginalized culture. [See note in previous paragraph.] She states further, “[The] power imbalance allows the culture being appropriated to be distorted and redefined by the dominant culture and siphons any material or financial benefit of that piece of culture away to the dominant culture, while marginalized cultures are still persecuted for living in that culture.” [p.147].

Examples of cultural appropriation:

- “Tomahawk chop” at university and professional sports events
- Native American caricatures as team mascots
- Indian headdresses as casual fashion
- “Indian princess” costumes at Halloween
- “Mohawk” haircuts
- “Navajo” tacos made with “traditional Indian fry bread,” which is not traditional, but the result of Native American ingenuity using poor quality and skimpy amounts of wormy flour given out by Indian agents

Read Oluo’s book, especially chapters 10 and 12 about cultural appropriation and microaggression. And chapter 17, “Talking is great, but what else can I do?” She ends with “All around the country people are effecting *real change with small actions*. Change that improves the lives of people of color in their towns and cities and weakens an oppressive system. Racial oppression starts in our homes, our offices, our cities, and our states, and it can end there as

well. So start talking, not just problems, but solutions. We can do this, together” [page 238]. And then we can move to reconciliation and relationships!

Activities:

- At your next church-related event, look around. Are there Indigenous People there? On the team or as guests?
- If so, celebrate. If not, ask yourself why not.
- And then address it.
- If you do reach out to an Indigenous Person or community for assistance of any kind, compensate them fairly. Too often Indigenous People are frequently asked to perform emotional labor for free.
- Find other suggestions in Appendix H.

Reconciliation

“We can’t *reconcile* because there was never *conciliation*.” – Rev. Jasper Peters, Denver, CO, 7/8/2020

Reconciliation is the restoration of friendly relations, which can lead to friendships based on trust and mutual respect. Granted it may be confusing at times because Native Americans and their cultures are as different as those in Sweden, Brazil, and Kenya!

A pastor in the Mountain Sky Conference was told that “there can be no reconciliation until the treaties are kept.” (Native nations negotiated treaties government to government, believing they were preserving sovereign land, rights, and privileges. *The Book of Resolutions 2020/2024* asks that those treaties be kept.) We can begin the process in our own communities. One way to do this is through acknowledging that we are on land that was originally inhabited by other people, people who held the land sacred. Not worshiped as we all worship Creator but cared for and kept in good health. And healed – as descendants of those massacred at Sand Creek are helping heal the land by their annual run from that site to the Colorado state capitol in Denver. A simple act that can lead to reconciliation is Land Acknowledgement.

Land Acknowledgement can be a powerful way of showing respect and honoring Indigenous People. It can also be an insult. Many Indigenous People resent LA’s because it’s like a white person saying I stole your tv and I’m keeping it. It’s a solemn act that can be a beginning, a door to relationships, and can lead to other Acts of Repentance. It can be presented verbally or visually, e.g., a statement, short dramatic presentation, or graphic art. It is an act of reconciliation that can be instituted immediately and without cost. It shows that we are working on and inviting the truth and becomes more meaningful when coupled with authentic relationship efforts. [See Patty Krawek’s *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future*, a UWFaith selection.]

There are many types of land acknowledgments, so you won’t find a specific formula or template. Land acknowledgments that come from Indigenous and non-Indigenous look different, too.

Begun hundreds of years ago by Indigenous People visiting other groups, it was revived in Canada a few years ago. Many museums, a few churches, and some commercial companies have Land Acknowledgements on their websites. [See Appendix C for examples of Land Acknowledgements.]

To start, remember to begin with good intentions and a good heart.

1. Do your homework by researching the following:
 - People who were indigenous to your area
 - History of the land and related treaties
 - Names of living people from these communities
 - Indigenous place names and language
 - Correct pronunciation of the names of the people, places, and tribes or nations that you're including.

Remember that Indian Land wasn't surrendered voluntarily; it was taken, frequently by devious means. Non-Natives are not guests, which implies they were invited.

2. Reflect again, asking God for guidance and wisdom on the next steps of the Journey of Reconciliation.

The 567 federally recognized tribal nations and Alaska villages have their own history and protocols for welcoming and acknowledging. Because the goal of Land Acknowledgement is to recognize and uplift and not to hurt or cause further division, some organizations can be proud of their commitment to this project of solidarity with Native nations and tribal villages.

Recognition of the Need for Land Acknowledgement

"... they know that the ethic of influence is through action, not talking." From *Noomiping: The cure for white ladies* by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Mississauga Nishnaabeg, 2021, p. 245

Reflection is the first step toward inspiration. If part of our purpose as members of United Women in Faith is to inspire others to take action to support Indigenous communities, this is a time for reflection on our reasons for repentance. However, before we can be authentic in that repentance, i.e., *feel or express sincere regret or remorse about wrongdoing or sin* [Webster definition], we want to know what we are asked to repent for and how a Land Acknowledgement will help with the healing of our indigenous sisters and brothers living among us today. How can we regret doing something we had no part of? When we research the factual history of the Indigenous People of the so-called New World, we learn how they, in their generous naivety, were considered lesser beings, not even human.

May we now agree that what happened to Indigenous People of the Americas was not in God's favor? The actions of many, including the United States government, were based on greed and power, e.g., after gold was found on farmland in Georgia, the Cherokee farmers were stopped by legislative decree from plowing their land – in case they turned up more gold - and were soon moved nearly a thousand miles to land west of the Mississippi no one wanted [at the time]. Control by forced removal.

Caveat: If you're doing this out of guilt or because everyone else is doing it, reflect on it some more. If it's to take action to support indigenous communities, please continue! And remember to focus on the positivity of who Indigenous People are today. And what they've endured and recovered from. It began with the philosophy set out in the Doctrine of Discovery.

The Book of Resolutions 2020/2024 has information about authentic past behaviors and actions that have been hurtful and harmful to Indigenous People and suggestions for actions to take today to help heal our Indigenous Relatives. See Paragraphs 4260-4266 [pp. 616-642]. Check the index for other references to apologies and actions that lead to healing.

Look in Appendix C for the letter from Native American International Caucus for more information on creating appropriate Land Acknowledgements. It explains the difference between "acknowledgement" and "welcome" in a presentation. Another good guide is National Education Association, also in Appendix C.

In the meantime, consider this lesson in listening 😊

Listening Circle Guidelines: Holy Listening with an Indigenous Attitude

In Listening Circles, we agree to be present with one another in a particular way. We receive our circle as a gift. We offer our presence with the hope that in the struggle of listening, there is blessed formation for all.

During Listening Circles,

Be fully present. Set aside distractions, e.g., phones, to-do lists, etc. Be mindful of any baggage that you may have brought with you into this sacred space.

Listen deeply. Listen intently to what is said. Listen for feelings beneath and behind the words. Listen for the still, small voice of God's Spirit, even in silences.

Trust and learn from *Silence*. Silence is a gift in this noisy world. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, pause collectively – reflect without immediately filling the space with more words. In formational work, our presence is needed more than our words.

When the going gets rough, "wonder." If you feel judged or judgmental, wonder to yourself: "I wonder what brought her / me to this belief?" Or "I wonder how she is feeling right now," "I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself." Set aside judgment in order to listen – to others and to your inner self.

No fixing! Listen to the Holy Spirit within you. We are not here to correct others, to give advice or expertise or share our similar experiences – until it's our turn. Give each other the "Grace of Space."

Speak your own truths by using “I” statements. Speak only for yourself, not for someone else. Trust that your voice will be heard and that your contribution will be respected if and when you share.

Share only when and if you’re ready. If you realize your voice is dominating the circle, consider offering more silence, listening, more presence.

If you ask a question, stop at the question mark. Many non-Natives offer the answer they want rather than listen for an answer.

Perfection is not the goal. No Listening Circle is perfect; conflict is a natural part of community building. When conflict arises, take responsibility for your intentions and your impact while releasing the desire to fix, defend, or explain.

Appendix A: Methodist Boarding Schools 1822-1906

See the website for Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition [NABS], 2525 E. Franklin Avenue, Suite 120, Minneapolis, MN 55406; 612-354-7700; boardingschoolhealing.org

We found eight boarding schools operated by Methodist denominations. Other churches involved in owning and operating boarding schools include Mennonite, Baptist, Presbyterian, Catholic, and Quaker/Friends. All others were considered government schools.

Asbury Manual Labor School, near Ft. Mitchell, Alabama, open 1822-30 by United Methodist Missions.

Asbury Manual Labor School, near [Eufaula](#), [Creek Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#), open 1850–88 by United [Methodist](#) Missions.

Colbert Institute, [Perryville](#), [Choctaw Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#), open 1852–57 by the [Methodist Episcopal Church, South](#)

Ft. Coffee Academy, [Ft. Coffee](#), [Choctaw Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#). Open 1840–63 and run by the [Methodist Episcopal Church, South](#)

Harley Institute, near [Tishomingo](#), [Chickasaw Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#). Prior to 1889 known as the Chickasaw Academy; operated by the [Methodist Episcopal Church](#) until 1906.

[Jesse Lee Home for Children](#), originally in [Unalaska](#), [Alaska](#), moved to [Seward](#), [Alaska](#). Founded and run by [Methodist Church](#).

New Hope Academy, [Ft. Coffee](#), [Choctaw Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#). Open 1844–96 and run by the [Methodist Episcopal Church, South](#)

Sasakwa Female Academy, [Sasakwa](#), [Seminole Nation](#), [Indian Territory](#), open 1880–92 and run by the [Methodist Episcopal Church, South](#)

Note: In 1891, Navajo Methodist Mission was established in Farmington, NM, as a boarding school for Navajo children under the auspices of Women’s Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It operated as such until 1991. We aren’t sure why this isn’t included.

Appendix B: From “A Christian Doctrine of Discovery” Workshop 10/2016

We begin by acknowledging, with humility, that the land where we sit and stand today borders the territory of the Nacotchtank people, for whom the Anacostia River is named. The Nacotchtank lived in a thriving, fortified settlement based on agriculture, hunting, and trade. As European colonists moved in, bringing with them European diseases, the Nacotchtank moved briefly to Anacostine Island, which is now Theodore Roosevelt Island. The Nacotchtank moved north and eventually joined the Piscataway Tribe in Maryland, whose population was similarly devastated by disease and war with the Iroquois Confederacy. Many Nacotchtank ended up in Canada, but some remained in Maryland with the Piscataway Indian Tribe.

We honor Chief Turkey Tayac, a Piscataway Indian leader and 20th-century civil rights activist allied with the American Indian Movement, who led the drive to allow American Indians to self-identify. After an arduous 16-year campaign and denials by two previous governors, Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley finally granted state recognition to all three Piscataway tribes in Maryland in 2012. The tribes are still not federally recognized.

Notes from the author: The occasion for the above paragraph was a workshop on the Christian Doctrine of Discovery led by Friend Paula Palmer of Boulder Friends Meeting. For many of us the doctrine was a mere footnote in our high school history texts, and a teaching that many thought was long gone from the modern world. FCNL staff and the Washington Interreligious Staff Community participated last October, sharing in this heart-changing experience.

We stood in a circle. We heard readings from historical figures –some of them were Christian religious leaders from the 15th and 16th century. From time to time, we paused in silence to reflect on the readings and to remember the people who had died by the direct orders of popes, governors, and military leaders.

Today embodies centuries of non-acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples of this continent, attributing its discovery and settlement to a man who personifies the subjugation, devastation, and annihilation of more than 90% of indigenous communities. The three-day “holiday” overlooks – even endorses – this painful history, ignores the trauma still present in Native communities, and minimizes the important contributions made by Indigenous Peoples throughout this continent’s history.

Our task as facilitators of the workshop was to write this paragraph acknowledging the people who had occupied the land before European settlement; I did not know who they were.

As we researched, we found that information was difficult to come across. National Parks in the area made partial nods to former indigenous inhabitants, but overall focused on the Founding Fathers and post-settlement Washington, D.C. The history of the indigenous populations around our present day capital is not privileged in the telling of the national narrative, and almost impossible to find.

For centuries, indigenous cultures have been erased, forgotten, or devalued through naming and re-naming; through the privileging of European survival and dismissal of Indigenous resilience.

Just as the Anacostine Island was renamed Theodore Roosevelt Island, other sites have been officially named with the settlers' story. European settlers even changed Native names to European – often biblical – names, citing that traditional names were too difficult to remember and were antithetical to civilized peoples.

Just this August [2016], the Department of the Interior took important steps to acknowledge the long history of Indigenous Peoples in Alaska by officially re-naming the tallest peak in the United States. The mountain is referred to locally by a centuries-old Koyukon Athabascan name, Denali, and is sacred to many Alaska Natives. However, on national maps the mountain is labeled as Mt. McKinley after a gold prospector named it as an endorsement of the then presidential candidate William McKinley, who had never set foot in Alaska. The Alaska state legislature formally requested to re-name the mountain Denali in 1975; 40 years later the Department of Interior complied.

Across the country, a growing number of cities and states are ceasing to observe Columbus Day – re-claiming the day to instead acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of indigenous communities. South Dakota started observing Native American Day instead in 1990, and in 1992 Berkeley, California instituted Indigenous People's Day. In the past two years more cities have joined; Albuquerque, Pittsburgh, Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland (OR), and Olympia all recognize the second Monday in October as Indigenous People's Day.

[Toolkit note: More than a hundred cities, counties, universities have begun honoring Indigenous Peoples Day, including Lawrence, KS; Anadarko, OK; Alpena, MI; Newstead, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Denver, CO; Oberlin, OH; Bangor, ME. States that have changed their law or changed the practice by proclamation are South Dakota, 1990, Alaska, Oregon, Vermont, Maine, New Mexico, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin. Oklahoma and Alabama have combined the two celebrations.]

It is a first step, not a final one. First, we must join together with Indigenous communities in acknowledging our true shared history, including honoring Indigenous contributions, sorrows, and names. Only then can we all move closer to true justice.

Written by Hannah Graf Evans, a member of Boulder [CO] Friends and former Legislative Representative and lobbyist of Friends Committee on National Legislation [fcni.org]

Is the Doctrine of Discovery still in effect in the US?

The Doctrine of Discovery, a legal and religious justification for the conquest of Indigenous People and lands around the world, continues to hold significant influence in the US. Despite its widespread repudiation, the principles of the doctrine remain embedded in national laws and court decisions, posing formidable barriers to the rights of Indigenous nations and peoples in the US and other countries and islands claimed by the US. The Vatican's repudiation of the Doctrine in 2023 is a historic moment, but the legacy of the Doctrine's oppressive racism and its origins in the Transatlantic slave trade persist in the US. The UMC *BoR* 2020/2024 asks us to abolish the Doctrine of Discovery. [See *Book of Resolutions* 2020/2024 paragraph 3220]

Appendix C: Examples of Indigenous Land Acknowledgements

Permanent plaque in prominent place in every church: “I want to see a plaque near the front door of churches where people will see it every time they enter the church. The name of the tribe and acknowledging that these people lived in this area for millennia.” Eva Johnson, Klamath/Modoc of Southern Oregon, member of Great Spirit Native American United Methodist Church, Portland, OR

Questions and best practices to consider on this journey of healing for the people and the land:

1. What is the history of any land you have access to? What Indigenous People historically or currently inhabit that land, and what is the history of how it was stolen?

2. Who are the Native people/communities where you live or where you are holding the event? What is the political landscape of both recognized and unrecognized tribes where you live? Are there any local efforts that are led by Indigenous People?

3. Start the process of building relationships with Native people where you live. Be patient. This work is relational; and because of colonization, Indigenous People and struggles are often invisible. Are there local events or cultural centers? Are there individuals you are connected to that you can build relationships with?

4. What are the visions and struggles of Indigenous People/tribes in the area you live in or have access to land in? Show up and support the visions and struggles that are ongoing. This might be fundraising for land or other resources or inviting local tribes to utilize land that you have access to. De-commodifying land in the long term and returning lands to disenfranchised and Native people is ideal, and we must be working within the visions and struggles of Indigenous People/tribes, e.g., a United Methodist Church was returned to the Nez Perce in May 2021.

5. Use all available tools for research, e.g.,

- Wikipedia
- Maps of Native land, e.g., <https://native-land.ca/> [a Canadian site]
- Native languages, e.g., <http://www.native-languages.org/>
- Local universities and colleges
- Nearby tribal governments, tribal elders, and culture bearers. Ask what they want to be called, e.g., Navajo or Dine’, and correct pronunciation of their names, e.g., di-NEH

6. Formulate the statement of Land Acknowledgement to be shared at the beginning of public gatherings.

- “We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Choctaw people.”
- “I begin our meeting today by acknowledging that we are on traditional lands of the Ute People and pay my respects to those who have gone before, who are here now, and who will come after.”

Actions.

Help your local and state governments return land. Let them know it is not a new thing. Governments at all levels – and individuals – around the world are returning land to Indigenous People. Land has been returned by individuals in Massachusetts, Maine, Nebraska, Utah, California, Idaho, and Washington. Oklahoma Conference gives closed churches and campuses to the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference when appropriate. You can also

- Donate to any of the ongoing land tax/ land returns struggles.
- Begin building relationships with people and see if there is interest in local land returns.

This is not available for everyone who has access to land, so another way to move toward land repatriation is to sell acres of land and give the proceeds to support ongoing Indigenous-led organizing or land return struggles.

Examples of Land Acknowledgements.

From Northwestern University: “It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.” [from Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition website link]

Ojibwe: “When we talk about land, land is part of who we are. It’s a mixture of our blood, our past, our current, and our future. We carry our ancestors in us, and they’re around us. As you all do.” Mary Lyons (Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe)

Presbyterian church: “As we gather, we pause for a moment of silence that we may contemplate what it means to worship God on land stolen from the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations and other Native Peoples.” This is followed by a full minute of quiet, allowing for contemplation. Rev. Rodger McDaniel, Highlands Presbyterian Church, Cheyenne, WY

Non-Native: “United Women in Faith stand with our connectional church in the ongoing Acts of Repentance, so we reach out in truth and reconciliation and love. We gratefully and humbly acknowledge that we worship today on the traditional homeland of the Ute people.” Ellie Young, FUMC of Grand Junction, CO

Non-governmental organization: “Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgment are critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to

acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We are standing on the ancestral lands of the ____ People [if possible, add specific detail about the nature of the occupied land]. We pay respects to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events.” (usdac.us; note this is a private entity and not an agency of the US government]

A school in Seattle: “When we are at UCDS, we are in the city of Seattle, which is the ancestral land and home of the Duwamish Tribe. The Duwamish people lived here for 10,000 years and still live here today. We at UCDS honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish People.”
University Child Development School, Seattle, WA

Non-Native: “I live on land once occupied by the Eastern Shoshone and at least two dozen other tribes who used this area for trading and ceremonial purposes. It was again stolen from the Northern Arapaho and the Eastern Shoshone in the early 1900’s when Congress passed an act allowing white settlers to come here (Wind River Indian Reservation) and take the land without compensation after it was already a treaty-formed reservation.” – Chesie Lee, April 28, 2021, Riverton Peace Mission and the Wind River Justice Pod in Riverton, WY

Art museum: “The Art Institute of Chicago is located on the traditional unceded homelands of the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi Nations. Many other tribes such as the Miami, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac, and Fox also called this area home. The region has long been a center for Indigenous People to gather, trade, and maintain kinship ties. Today, one of the largest urban American Indian communities in the United States resides in Chicago. Members of this community continue to contribute to the life of this city and to celebrate their heritage, practice traditions, and care for the land and waterways. We embrace our commitment to Indigenous rights, racial justice, and cultural equity not only through this statement but also in our collecting and care of Native American objects, our exhibitions and programs, and our relationships with Indigenous communities.” The Art Institute of Chicago

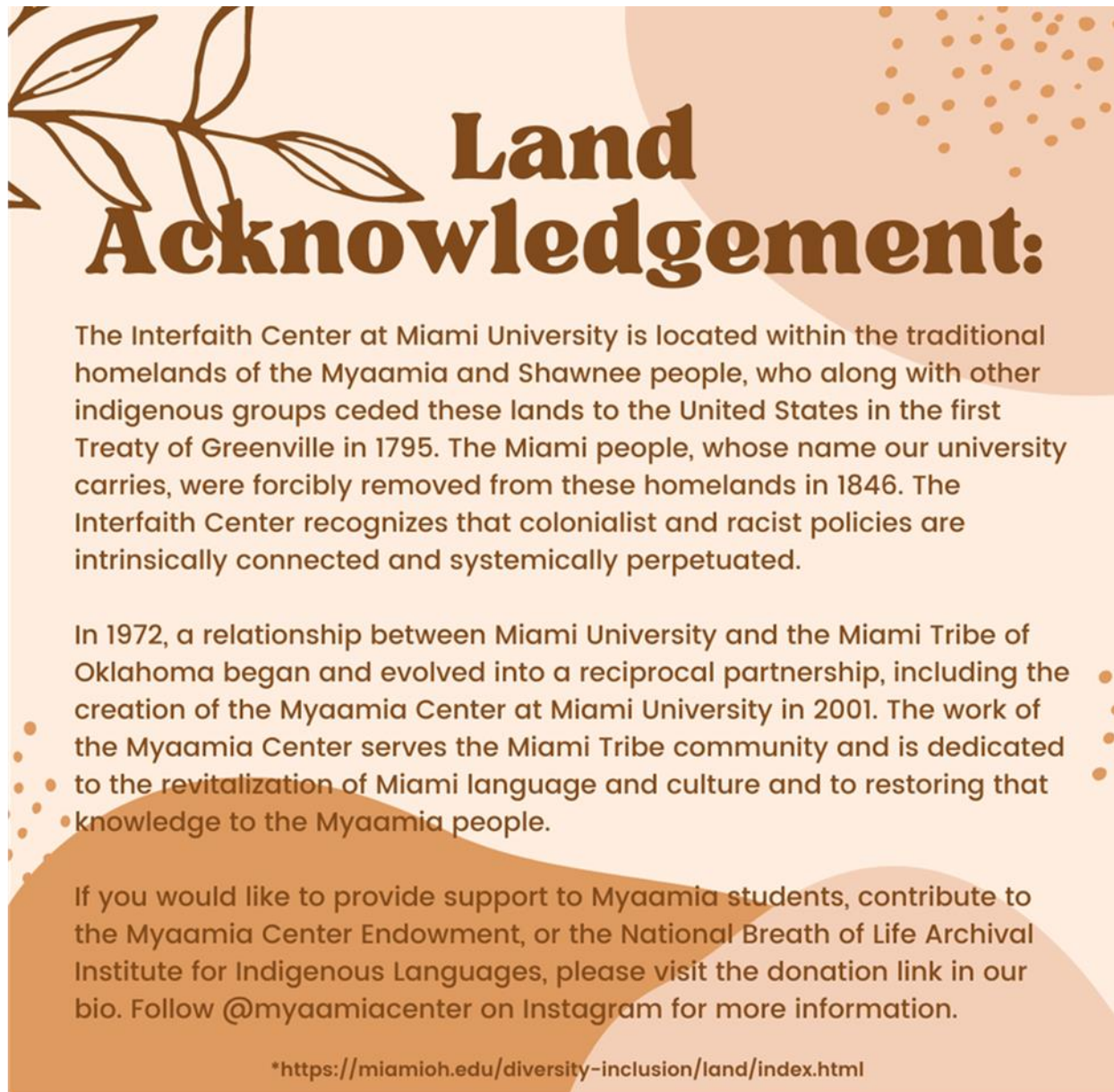
Native Governance Center in the Midwest: “The land that surrounds us is part of who we are; it reflects our histories. Native Governance Center is an organization led by and for Native people. Our organizational roots are in St. Paul near Wakpá Thánka (the Mississippi river), not far from Bdoté, the place where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet. Bdoté, along with Bde Wakan (present-day Lake Mille Lacs), are central to Dakota creation stories. There are many other sacred Dakota sites near St. Paul, including Taku Wakan Tipi (Carver’s Cave) and Ehánja Wičháhapi (Indian Mounds Park burial mounds). We need to protect and honor the history and people of these places. Mni Sota Makoce (Minnesota) is the homeland of the Dakota people. The Dakota have lived here for many thousands of years. Anishinaabe people reside here, too, and reached their current homelands after following the megis shell to the food that grows on water (manoomin, or wild rice). Indigenous People from other Native nations also reside in Minnesota

and have made innumerable contributions to our region.” Native Governance Center, Minneapolis, MN

Native group in a communications company: “Let us pause for a moment to acknowledge the traditional stewards of the lands that we now reside on, and especially our ancestors, descendants, and all Indigenous People who live now and have ever lived in our regions of Turtle Island.” ICAE of AT&T

Note: The Inter-Tribal Council of AT&T Employees (ICAE) has proposed that a Land Acknowledgment be implemented initially before employee events. The hope is to share efforts with receptive businesses. Please know, however, that this hasn’t been adopted at the corporate level – but it’s definitely a start!

From a Native Hawaiian. I acknowledge I occupy space here in Colorado, where Native Americans, the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Plains Apache, and Ute have a familial connection and relationship to this land—their ancestral lands. S/he is their grandparent, their mother, who has provided for them and for us, and whom we all are obligated to aloha and care for in return. I acknowledge I am able to occupy this land because of historical events that occurred to the detriment of Native Americans, which caused loss of health, life, language, culture, sovereignty, and the attenuation—if not outright loss—of the familial connection between the Indigenous Peoples and this land. Therefore, in the spirit of healing and beginning to make things right, I acknowledge I am able to live on these homelands originally occupied and tended by the Native People of these places only at a great (and continuing) cost to the Native Peoples of this land. – Puahau Aki, Hawaiian/Chinese/Japanese, Mountain View UMC, Boulder, CO



Land Acknowledgement:

The Interfaith Center at Miami University is located within the traditional homelands of the Myaamia and Shawnee people, who along with other indigenous groups ceded these lands to the United States in the first Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The Miami people, whose name our university carries, were forcibly removed from these homelands in 1846. The Interfaith Center recognizes that colonialist and racist policies are intrinsically connected and systemically perpetuated.

In 1972, a relationship between Miami University and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma began and evolved into a reciprocal partnership, including the creation of the Myaamia Center at Miami University in 2001. The work of the Myaamia Center serves the Miami Tribe community and is dedicated to the revitalization of Miami language and culture and to restoring that knowledge to the Myaamia people.

If you would like to provide support to Myaamia students, contribute to the Myaamia Center Endowment, or the National Breath of Life Archival Institute for Indigenous Languages, please visit the donation link in our bio. Follow @myaamiacenter on Instagram for more information.

[*https://miamioh.edu/diversity-inclusion/land/index.html](https://miamioh.edu/diversity-inclusion/land/index.html)

University of Colorado System: “As we gather, we honor and acknowledge that the University of Colorado’s four campuses are on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute, Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Lakota, Pueblo and Shoshone Nations. Further, we acknowledge the 48 contemporary tribal nations historically tied to the lands that comprise what is now called Colorado.

“Acknowledging that we live in the homelands of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the original stewards of these lands and their legacies. With this land acknowledgment, we celebrate the many contributions of Native peoples to the fields of medicine, mathematics, government and

military service, arts, literature, engineering and more. We also recognize the sophisticated and intricate knowledge systems Indigenous Peoples have developed in relationship to their lands.

“We recognize and affirm the ties these nations have to their traditional homelands and the many Indigenous People who thrive in this place, alive and strong. We also acknowledge the painful history of ill treatment and forced removal that has had a profoundly negative impact on Native nations.

“We respect the many diverse Indigenous Peoples still connected to this land. We honor them and thank the indigenous ancestors of this place. The University of Colorado pledges to provide educational opportunities for Native students, faculty and staff and advance our mission to understand the history and contemporary lives of Native peoples.”
<https://www.colorado.edu/cnais/land-acknowledgment>

Land Acknowledgement by Pearl Thomas, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, 2020

Hensci / Hello, I'm Pearl (Chalakee) Thomas from the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. I am an enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) tribe. I worked and retired from the tribe. Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a self-governed Native American tribe located in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. The Nation is one of the 5 civilized tribes and is the fourth largest tribe in the United States with over 86,000 citizens. The government side of the tribe is made up of an executive branch, a legislative body and a tribal court system.

In the 1980s United States Supreme Court decisions affirmed the Nation's sovereign rights to maintain a national court system and levy taxes. The federal courts have also consistently re-affirmed the Muscogee Nation's freedom from state jurisdiction. We are one of 39 federally recognized tribes in the state.

I am an active lifelong member of the Honey Creek United Methodist Indian Church of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference. Most of our churches are rural and family oriented. I still have two elderly aunts ages 96 and 86, who still speak fluent Creek language. We still sing our native hymns.

My tribe provided many financial services for the tribal citizens and for our native churches. They also provide educational, health, elderly, community programs for our citizens.

My family members and I are products of the tribal and Methodist higher education programs. I was able to obtain my college education through these programs.

Many of our tribes still live on their original allotment land that their great grandparents received when the Indian Removal Act of 1832. This removal was called the "Trail of Tears". Tribes were forced to leave their original homelands to settle in this strange land later to become known as Oklahoma.

Today the OIMC continues to minister to the needs of Indian people. The present membership is approximately 6,000 with 84 churches, several of these congregations being over 100 years old, five fellowships and a Church & Community center. Oklahoma is home to the majority of our congregations; however, we have one church in Dallas, Texas; three churches and one fellowship in Kansas. Presently there are two districts, Northern and Southern, with the conference headquartered in Oklahoma City. All persons are welcome in the work and witness of local congregations of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

I am a proud member of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference [of the United Methodist Church] and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Thank you / Mvto

Land Acknowledgement, Part A of Two Parts

These acknowledgements can be used as part of a program for a unit or congregation that has studied Acts of Repentance and is ready to take the next step on the Journey to Reconciliation.

Acknowledgement of Being on Indian Land

[To be read by a non-Native]:

We gratefully and humbly acknowledge that we meet today on the traditional land of the Ute bands making up the three Ute nations currently recognized by the US government.

We reach out in truth and reconciliation and love.

We acknowledge that Native communities have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violent efforts to separate them from the land, culture, and each other.

We acknowledge that Native Americans remain at the forefront of movements to protect Mother Earth and the life this earth sustains.

We acknowledge that we are beginning to understand that our Acts of Repentance are ongoing and should include reconciliation and relationships, authentic and equitable partners in ministry *with* rather than *to*.

We acknowledge that the Doctrine of Discovery is based on greed and should be erased from current laws. We pledge to learn the true story of the people who were here before.

We acknowledge that “colonization is an ongoing process with Native lands still occupied due to deceptive and broken treaties and practices of eminent domain and other mechanisms intended to benefit government or corporate America.”

We acknowledge that Native Americans have innate gifts of spirituality that they may be reluctant to share because of previous reactions of non-Native people.

We acknowledge that Native Americans want to be respected as productive and contributing human beings.

We acknowledge that Native American villages, tribes, and nations are as different as cities, towns, and villages in Sweden, Brazil, and Kenya.

By acknowledging these things, we seek right relationships with Native people in our area, including honoring their cultures and traditions when in their communities.

Therefore, we pay respects and pray blessings on all those who have gone before, who are here now, and who will come after.

Land Acknowledgement, Part B of Two Parts

Acceptance of Acknowledgement of Being on Indian Land

[Can be read by a Native American, preferably one whose ancestors were indigenous to area]:

We gratefully and humbly accept your acknowledgement of being on the traditional land of my people.

We appreciate that you reach out in truth and reconciliation and love.

We appreciate that you know our communities have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violent efforts to separate us from the land, culture, and each other and that we remain at the forefront of movements to protect Mother Earth and the life this earth sustains.

We appreciate that you are beginning to understand that Acts of Repentance are ongoing and should include reconciliation and relationships, authentic and equitable partners in ministry *with* us rather than *to* us.

We appreciate that you now know that the Doctrine of Discovery is based on greed and should be erased from current laws.

We appreciate that you recognize that colonization is an ongoing process with Native lands still occupied due to deceptive and broken treaties and practices of eminent domain and other mechanisms intended to benefit government or corporate America.

We appreciate that you are aware that many of us have innate gifts of spirituality that we may be reluctant to share because of previous reactions of non-Native people.

We appreciate that you know we want to be respected as productive and contributing human beings.

We appreciate that you know Native American villages, tribes, and nations are as different as cities, towns, and villages in Sweden, Brazil, and Kenya.

By acknowledging these things, we seek right relationships with non-Native people in our area as you honor our cultures and traditions when in our communities;

Therefore, we pray blessings on all those who have gone before, who are here now, and who will come after.

[**Note! If you do reach out** to an Indigenous person or community for help, compensate them fairly. Too often, Indigenous People are asked to perform emotional labor for free.]



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Land Acknowledgement vs. Welcome by the Original People; Suggested Guidelines for the United Methodist Church

Offered by Ragghi Rain, Chairperson
Native American International Caucus Chair, March 2023

Introduction:

Many Annual Conferences and local churches want to acknowledge that they are meeting, worshipping, and living out ministry on land occupied and cared for by Indigenous people long before the Christian Church arrived. This is an honorable intent. In many cases the Original People are still living in those same areas but doing so with the historical impact and trauma resulting from centuries of land dispossession, broken treaties, child abduction, mass genocide, and practices of forced assimilation.

A Welcoming Ceremony by the Original People differs significantly from a Land Acknowledgement. Both practices help non-native people learn more about those who came before them AND help make visible those who have too long been invisible.

A Welcome by the Original People involves inviting and providing genuine hospitality to the Indigenous guests as they share something of their people, culture, and the land on which they or their Ancestors have lived for millennia.

A Land Acknowledgement addresses the injustices experienced by the Original People, both past and present, through truth-telling and a concrete plan of action, walking, and working with Indigenous Communities. A Land Acknowledgement is integral to a Conference's ongoing work, beginning with their Act of Repentance and Reconciliation, of mending the harm perpetuated through centuries of colonization.

In both cases, non-native people need deep humility in recognizing what they do not know and willingly take on the work of learning and listening to shared truths. Any suggestion or attitude that the Original People or their traditional spiritual practices are somehow "less than" or antithetical to Christian faith or practice is simply not acceptable and deeply harmful to all present.

Deciding between a Welcome or a Land Acknowledgement:

There may be uncertainty about when a Welcome or a Land Acknowledgement is more appropriate to open a Church or Conference meeting. The simple guideline recommended is this: if the leadership is willing and has begun its work on working through the research, Truth-telling and action step planning in conjunction with Native partners, then a Land Acknowledgement could be appropriate; if not, then inviting local Tribal representatives to offer a Welcome is best.

A Welcome by the Original People at a Church or Conference meeting:

A Welcome by the Original People involves inviting and providing genuine hospitality to the Indigenous guests as they share something of their people, culture, and the land on which they or their Ancestors have lived for millennia.

Conference staff would be responsible for inviting Indigenous people from the area to open a Church gathering. Ideally, this would happen in consultation with the local CoNAM. The invited guests would stand and welcome the event participants to the land which is their home. They might share whatever else they want that is meaningful or educational, something that is important for the gathering to hear. This sharing might include speaking in the original language or explaining a ceremony like making smoke.

The invitation to make a Welcome must be more than a token expression or checklist item on the gathering's schedule. That would mean that a minimum of 10-15 minutes should be anticipated. A time frame would be communicated to the guests as part of the invitation. Still, interruption of the welcome would be disrespectful if the visitors should inadvertently go beyond the time expected. The responsibility of the Conference leadership is to provide genuine hospitality to the visiting Tribal guest(s). A tangible acknowledgment that they have taken time from their life to come to share with the Conference is necessary. The hospitality would include some compensation for their time and payment for their mileage to the event, and/or an honorarium, and/or sharing in a meal together so that nourishment is offered.

Most often, the Indigenous visitors would come with a gift to present to the gathering as the practice of gift-giving is part of traditional greetings.

Likewise, in recognition of the Indigenous practice of gift-giving and appreciation of the Original People's presence, the Conference leaders should be prepared with a gift to offer the Tribe that has some local meaning. This gift would be beyond and in addition to the actual compensation offered to the individuals themselves.

An Indigenous Land Acknowledgement:

A Land Acknowledgement addresses the injustices experienced by the Original People in that locale, both past and present, through Truth-telling and a concrete plan of action, walking and working with Indigenous Communities. A Land Acknowledgement is an ongoing process involving an ever-widening group of leaders from the Church or Conference. This group must take the time to discuss and define their purpose in writing and living out a land acknowledgment. Why are you doing this? What do you hope to make different? What is your current relationship with the Indigenous people of your area? What do you know about the

original people's history in your area before European arrival and subsequently? What do you know of contemporary contributions, concerns, and problems? What more do you need to learn? How might you walk in a closer way, listening and contributing in ways that the Original People of your area define?

A Land Acknowledgment is NOT

- *a document that one person writes
- *a document written without consultations with Tribal persons from the local area
- *words without actions
- *a once-and-done statement that is used repeatedly
- *a superficial, feel-good effort at including Indigenous People without addressing issues of justice and Equity

An attitude of honesty and respect is necessary to enter this process, acknowledging that the stereotypes of Native people continue a "less-than" status that was begun by early Christian doctrines defining non-Christians as heathens and savages. Christianity has much to repent historically AND is currently devastatingly impacting Indigenous people, culture, and community. Awareness of the harm that has been perpetuated on multiple fronts, both past and present, as well as the impact on future generations, is vital to the successful work of pursuing justice, healing, equity, and relationship building.

A land acknowledgment requires Truth-telling, which is the hard work of facing the harm and pain that has been enacted against and experienced by the Original People. Phrases like "why can't you get over it? It's our land now" or references to "our founding fathers" brings further negativity and disrespect that continue the attitude of Indigenous people as less than human.

A land acknowledgment could create an experience of gratitude by those working on its development as they learned to appreciate the care of the land for the millennia preceding their arrival up to the current day. Likewise, the very real possibility exists that learning from traditional Native spiritual practices will expand, strengthen and deepen non-natives' practice of their Christian faith.

Understand that just because a person is Native, they may not necessarily be engaged in justice work as defined by the Church. Recognize that everything the CoNAM members may offer to the larger Conference reflects either positively to uphold the full humanity of Native people or negatively to reinforce the demeaning stereotypes of Native people. Work carefully with CoNAM teams to ensure that the Original People are fully respected with grace and gratitude.

Guidelines for Writing a Land Acknowledgement:

***Research** - Learn more about the way in which your Conference, as well as other Europeans, acquired the land where your site is. Learn who the First People were who originally lived in your area. <https://native-land.ca/> Learn more about the Indigenous people whose land you now reside upon, and remember, even though generations have passed, your local Indigenous

community still exists in one way or another. Understand that the non-native leadership tasked with the work needs to do the research.

Truth-Telling - Truth-telling includes deep listening and hearing the pain experienced by Indigenous people. When we tell and receive the Truth repeatedly, it becomes a part of us and helps us grow in understanding at deeper and deeper levels. The possibility and promise of Truth-telling are to bring healing to all creation. Truth-telling is an ongoing process revealing greater and broader connections. As such, a Land Acknowledgement is a living document and will need work before and after it is published.

Develop a Comprehensive Action Plan – Consider what more you and your ministry leadership can do to create a circle of friendship and healing with your local Indigenous communities. Listen to your Conference CoNAM leadership about the kinds of actions and activities that would be helpful to local Tribes. Work with them on how best to follow through on possible action steps. Understand and commit to this work as an ongoing effort, with a proactive and respectful approach acknowledging that your timetable may not coincide with how the work unfolds in the Indigenous Community.

Examples of Possible Action Steps:

→Develop land return practices and policies so that Church (es) and church property that is abandoned or closed would first be offered to Tribal communities at no cost prior to sale on the open market;

→Establish mandatory training on Indigenous history and culture for pastors assigned to traditional native churches;

→Provide a significant number of scholarships for children or youth to attend Conference camps; with CoNAM participating in seeking to seek out and send the children, without the required completion of scholarship application processes which are often arduous and off-putting for Indigenous families;

→Maintain a consistent presence and participation by Conference staff with and at Native ministries and events;

→Provide administrative support from the Conference, both of staff time and talent, and in terms of supplies and services, for example, provision of Laptops, printing services, internet cost;

→Implement a real commitment to anti-racism work throughout the Conference, holding Conference staff, pastors, and local congregations accountable for growing in building relationships across racial/ethnic lines and in educating themselves about the history and current conditions;

→Engage in active support for advocacy efforts at the federal and state levels;

→Hold conversations about the challenges of a Christian tendency to forgive without making the wrongs right; strive to come to a respectful understanding of the harm inflicted when non-natives of good will suggest that “it’s time to forgive and forget in Jesus’ name;”

→Commit to twice-a-year meetings between Conference leadership and local CoNAMs to identify, educate and communicate issues of concern to Indigenous communities to the larger conference body, including Mascots, Supreme Court hearing re: ICWA, Native Boarding School, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives and more.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT GUIDE



ACKNOWLEDGMENT GUIDE

KNOWLEDGEMENTS



A Land Acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. - Laurier Students' Public Interest Research Group, Ontario, Canada Land Acknowledgements are a reminder that every major city, town, and municipality benefits from the dispossession of Indigenous land and people. It is a formal recognition of that brutal, violent, and painful reality and history. It's a tiny first step in truth, healing, and reconciliation. A land acknowledgment isn't just a statement; it's an ACTION.

Acknowledgment by itself is a small gesture. It becomes meaningful when coupled with authentic relationships and informed action. But this beginning can be an opening to greater public consciousness of Native sovereignty and cultural rights, a step toward equitable relationship and reconciliation.

WHY WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE LAND

Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. In 2019 at the National Education Association Representative Assembly, delegates passed New Business Item 64 which stated, "At the beginning of ALL NEA convening's, NEA will acknowledge the native people of whom the lands originated from." Current efforts to acknowledge land are designed to:

- Offer recognition and respect
- Counter the "doctrine of discovery" with the true story of the people who were already here.
- Create a broader public awareness of the history that has led to this moment.
- Begin to repair relationships with Native communities and with the land.
- Support larger truth-telling and reconciliation efforts.
- Remind people that colonization is an ongoing process, with Native lands still occupied due to deceptive and broken treaties and practices of eminent domain and other mechanisms intended to benefit the government or corporate America.
- Inspire ongoing action and relationships. **HOW TO ACKNOWLEDGE**

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY/RESEARCH

The first step is identifying the traditional inhabitants of the lands on which you're situated. This task may be complicated by multiple and contested histories of settlement, resettlement, and recognition. Many places are now home to Native people who have called that land home from time-immemorial and also to those relocated from elsewhere. The goal of acknowledgment is recognizing and uplifting, not hurting or causing further division. So it is important to proceed with

care, doing good research before making statements of acknowledgment. In many cases, it is possible to reach out to the specific tribal government of the lands you inhabit. The tribal government office, which includes the elected leadership of the tribe, is a good place to start a conversation about how and what the tribe would like acknowledged in your statement.

In addition to consulting local Native individuals and organizations, the National Congress of American Indians publication, "Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction" seeks to provide a basic overview of the history and underlying principles of tribal governance. This guide provides the information necessary for members of the public at large to understand and engage effectively with contemporary Indian Nations.

STEP TWO: ARTICULATE

Once you've identified the group or groups who should be recognized, formulate the **statement of acknowledgment you'll share at the beginning of public gatherings**. There is no exact script for this. Craft yours after considering several levels of detail you might introduce.

The truth is complicated. Beneath the contemporary surface of any site in the United States, there are histories that have been erased, overlooked, contested and forgotten, all ways to support ideas like "manifest destiny" which justified the conquest of Native lands.

2

Use appropriate language. Don't sugarcoat the past. Use terms like genocide, ethnic cleansing, stolen land, and forced removal to reflect actions taken by colonizers.

Use past, present, and future tenses. Indigenous people are still here, and they're thriving. Don't treat them as a relic of the past.

Finally, your land acknowledgment is NOT a static statement. It should be organic and change over time as your relationships and understanding of the history of colonization deepen. It is an action.

STEP THREE: DELIVER

Once you've identified whom to name and practiced your statement (**including pronunciation of names**), offer your acknowledgment. If in the process of learning about acknowledgment you've built relationships with members of Native communities, consider inviting them to give a welcome before yours. There's a danger that a practice like this becomes just another piece of protocol, delivered flatly and falling on deaf ears.

3

Acknowledgment should not be approached as a set of obligatory words to rush through. These words should be offered with respect, grounded in authentic reflection, presence, and awareness. Consider your own place in the story of colonization and of undoing its legacy.

Statements of acknowledgment don't have to be confined to spoken words. Some artists, scholars, activists, and others have begun to include acknowledgment in email signatures or on websites. **Additional tips and factors to consider:**

- **Don't ask an Indigenous person to deliver a "welcome" statement for your organization.**
- **Build real, authentic relationships with Indigenous people.**

- Compensate Indigenous people for their emotional labor. If you do plan to reach out to an Indigenous person or community for help, compensate them fairly. Too often, Indigenous people are asked to perform emotional labor for free.

- Understand displacement and how that plays into land acknowledgment.

- There are many types of land acknowledgments. Don't expect to find a specific formula or template.

Land acknowledgments that come from Indigenous people vs. non-Indigenous people look different, too.

Take action:

- Land acknowledgment alone is not enough. It's merely a starting point. Ask yourself: How do I plan to take action to support Indigenous communities? Some examples of ways to take action:

- Support Indigenous organizations by donating your time and/or money.

- Support Indigenous-led grassroots change movements and campaigns. Encourage others to do so.

- Continue researching and educating yourself on Indigenous issues.

- Commit to incorporating more Indigenous content by Indigenous people in our curriculum and classroom. – Invite elders and tribal members into your classroom to provide information about the people and lands you inhabit.

- Commit to posting Honor Native Land posters in your school and classroom. Several options are free and formatted for print [HERE](#).

- Commit to completing the NEA “Native Education” micro-credential stack, created in partnership with the National Indian Education Association. This micro-credential stack includes the impact of federal policy on American Indian/Alaska.

<https://nea.certificationbank.com/NEA/CandidatePortal/CategoryDetail.aspx?Stack=NIEA>

Appendix D: Tribal Colleges and Universities

As of 2013, [Montana](#) was the only state with an accredited tribal college on each of the seven reservations. The [University of Montana](#) established dual admission agreements with all of the tribal colleges and as such was the first institution in the nation to actively facilitate student transfers from tribal colleges. Note: Montana is the only state that mandates public schools to teach American Indian history, culture, and heritage to preschool through higher education students.

Fun fact! [University College Cork](#), in [Ireland](#), offers Master's degree scholarships to members of the [Choctaw Nation](#), including tuition and living expenses in recognition of the generous donation given by members of the Choctaw to the [Irish people](#) during the [Great Famine](#) of 1845-52.

Alaska [Iġisagvik College, Utqiagvik](#)

Arizona [Diné College, Tsaile](#); [Tohono O'odham Community College, Sells](#); Navajo Technical University, Chinle & Teec Nos Pas

California [California Indian Nations College, San Jacinto](#); [California Tribal College, Sacramento](#); [Wileety Native American College, Sacramento](#)

Kansas [Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence](#)

Michigan [Bay Mills Community College, Brimley](#); [Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Baraga](#); [Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Mount Pleasant](#)

Minnesota [Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet](#); [Leech Lake Tribal College, Cass Lake](#); [Red Lake Nation College, Red Lake](#); [White Earth Tribal and Community College, Mahnomen](#)

Montana [Aaniiih Nakoda College, Harlem](#); [Blackfeet Community College, Browning](#); [Chief Dull Knife College, Lame Deer](#); [Fort Peck Community College, Poplar](#); [Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency](#); [Salish Kootenai College, Pablo](#); [Stone Child College, Box Elder](#)

Nebraska [Little Priest Tribal College, Winnebago, Nebraska](#); [Nebraska Indian Community College, Macy](#)

New Mexico [Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe](#); Navajo Technical University, Crownpoint; [Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Albuquerque](#)

North Dakota [Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Fort Totten](#); [Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, New Town](#); [Sitting Bull College, Fort Yates](#); [Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt](#); [United Tribes Technical College, Bismarck](#)

North Carolina [University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Pembroke](#)

Oklahoma ~~[Bacone College, Muskogee](#)~~ (closed); ~~[Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal College, Weatherford, Oklahoma](#)~~ (closed); [College of the Muskogee Nation, Okmulgee](#); ~~[Comanche Nation College, Lawton, Oklahoma](#)~~ (closed); [Pawnee Nation College, Pawnee](#)

South Dakota [Oglala Lakota College, Kyle](#); [Sinte Gleska University, Mission](#); [Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sisseton](#)

Washington [Northwest Indian College, Bellingham](#)

Wisconsin [College of Menominee Nation, Keshena](#); [Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College, Hayward](#)

Wyoming [Wind River Tribal College, Ethete](#)

As of 2026, there are 43 TCU's [tribal colleges and universities] in 16 states: Wyoming [1], Wisconsin [2], Washington [1], South Dakota [3], Oklahoma [2], North Carolina [1], North Dakota [5], New Mexico [3], Nebraska [2], Montana [7], Minnesota [4], Michigan [3], Kansas [1], California [3], Arizona [4], and Alaska [1].

Appendix E: Plea for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.” Romans 15:30

Today I ask you to listen to this story, take it in... And walk with my people through the journey of pain, mourning, healing, recovery... and ... then join me in finding justice.

With our Native people we have always held women in a place of respect and honor. They are the life givers and teachers of our morals and they guide us to fulfillment of life.

They are the ones that wipe our tears, tend to our injuries, both mentally and physically. They teach us love, compassion, generosity and so much more. But for so many Native families this strong matriarch is not there. Why? A silent epidemic is in our nation and has been since the beginning of the settler's arrival. We have glorified stories of Pocahontas we've all heard the story or watched the Disney movie, right? A young native woman that was smitten with a white settler, John Rolfe, and married him and travelled to faraway lands and lived happily ever after.

But the truth of Pocahontas, whose real name is Matoaka (maatoka) is that of a 10 year old (by written accounts of the English settlers) held hostage at Jamestown for over a year by the settlers. Stripped from her family and raped by her captors, forced to marry one of her captors, John Wolfe, taken across the ocean to England to use her in a propaganda campaign to support the colony of Virginia, propping her up as the symbol of hope for peace and good relations between the English and the Native Americans. 'Rebecca,' as he renamed her, was seen as an example of a civilized 'savage' and Rolfe was praised for his accomplishment in bringing Christianity to the 'heathen tribes.' She was 21 years old when she died in 1617. There were no fairy tale endings for Matoaka. This isn't a story for the Disney movie goers, so it was changed to a beautiful story of love, not hate and despair for a young girl scared and alone. The movie of the recolored story of Matoaka, *Pocahontas* came out in theaters in 1995 ...378 years after her death... non-Natives still don't tell the true story.

There are so many stories of the atrocities that Native women have faced throughout history and in current times, but they have been silenced or changed to dismiss the truth of the harms that have been committed.

Every Native family has a story of a woman that has been harmed, or even murdered, many times leaving behind young children. My mother is one of those children. When my grandmother was murdered, my mother and her siblings lived in foster homes and orphanages for most of their

childhoods, all being abused physically, mentally and emotionally. That separation from a “normal” family home had repercussions to our family that I faced growing up. To think that we have changed for the better in society isn’t the case for all of society. There are many who are on the fringes of society that we never see, know or hear about. I am one of those. So I am honored to be able to tell the struggles of our people, but it’s not a history lesson, it’s happening today, right now. Our very own Ashley Heavy-runner-Loring is one of those missing; she has been missing for over two years, and the family still searches for her, and fights for the law enforcement agencies to be accountable to her as well as the other MMIW that have been ignored.

Today we are still invisible to society and the government. More than 5700 Native women have been reported missing since 2015, and that’s just an estimated count because we have no way to verify that these numbers are correct. There is no database collection in the US that shows the numbers in our racial category like they do with white, Hispanic, black, or Asian. We have to ask ourselves the hard questions, why aren’t these cases accounted for in the databases? When will the people of the US take action to aid in this problem and cease the destruction of the Native families? When do we as United Methodists stand with the Native people in solidarity and help right the wrongs to our Indigenous People?

We can start today, together we move forward and begin praying, find ways to be active and bring awareness to the epidemic that is in Indian Country. Say the names of those that have been lost and stolen from the tribal communities. Cry for the children who cry for their moms that will never come home again. Speak up and find ways to get involved.

That’s what we do as United Methodists. John Wesley told us all to do no harm, do all the good we can, and love God with our whole hearts. Together we are a mighty force of God; we can make changes for the better for world. It starts with us.

As Paul urged the Romans, I plead to “you brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.”

And let’s become active in making Indigenous People feel our love and prayers.

Written by Sheri Hill, Ojibwe from the Sault Ste. Marie tribe in Michigan, PAG, Mountain Sky Conference, for a Lay Speaking Ministries class in Browning, MT, 2019 and delivered at Western Jurisdiction Assembly 2020

Appendix F: Spiritual Reflections by Native American Women

Prayers

Creator, please give young citizens of our neighboring countries courage to be part of a compassionate, strong leadership to bring peace to their home countries." Prayer from Linda Taylor, Dine' (Navajo), First UMC, Cortez, CO, Mountain Sky Conference

"May the glory of God bless you all and guide your journey." Julie M. Thomas, Navajo Nation, Native Grace United Methodist Church, Cortez, CO, Mountain Sky Conference

"Dear Heavenly Father, we praise you for giving us your breath of life on this earth and eternal life with you after death. Give us wisdom and strength to guide others to your Holy Truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen" – Patsy Eyachabbe, Choctaw-Chickasaw-Irish, St. Paul UMC, Talihina, OK, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

"We praise you Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for setting us free in all circumstances. We praise you for the beliefs and practices of United Methodist Women that are consistent sources of truth. We believe, God, that this truth aligns with Native American beliefs in God and Spirit as Almighty Givers of Life, eternal life that becomes real as the truth of Jesus Christ is accepted as the only way for salvation. Hallelujah! Amen!" Choctaw women at St. Paul UMC, Talihina, OK, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

"Creator, give us wisdom to be open to Your guidance and the willingness to listen to those who try to teach us." Glenna Tidwell Kyker, Choctaw ancestry, First UMC, Grand Junction, CO, Mountain Sky Conference

Advent Devotionals

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/-as-we-wait-for-the-christ-child>

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/preparing-for-christ>

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/blessed-is-she>

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/advent-reflection-hope>

Appendix G: Resources for Reference and Study
Written by or about Indigenous People in North America
(Collected in 2020-2021, 2026)

Council of Bishops Statement. "We Embark on a Journey Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples; Open Letter to All UM Bishops Serving in the US; Three Native American Group Leaders within the UMC letter to all in the UMC; Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery: Moving Toward Justice; Giving Substance to Words.
<www.umwonline.org>

Articles

"A blessing for our people to come back home," Greater NW News, 5/5/2021. Oregon-Idaho Conference of the United Methodist Church gives a church building and property while returning title to the land to the Nez Perce.

"The Enduring Effects of the Doctrine of Discovery" by Kathleen Stone, 10/11/2015, United Methodist Women news

"Trail of Broken Treaties: 20 Point Position Paper" by American Indian Movement

"UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People" (The US is one of four to vote against this when adopted in 2007 and the last of four to reverse it in 2010.)

Articles on colonialism and decolonization:

"Decolonization is Not A Metaphor"

"How to support Standing Rock and confront what it means to live on stolen land"

"Indigenous Environmental Network's Indigenous Principles of Just Transition"

"Resources on connections between stolen land and wealth accumulation"

Literature/Fiction

Alexie, Sherman [Spokane/Coeur d'Alene]. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* [juvenile]; *Smoke Signals*; *War Dances*; *Ten Little Indians*; *Indian Killer*.

Askew, Willa. *Kind of Kin*, 2013, a UMW book selection

Boulley, Angeline. *Sisters in the Wind*, 2025. [One of Glenna's favorite authors]

Brave Noisecat, Julian. *We Survived the Night*, 2025.

Carter, Forrest. *The Education of Little Tree*, 1976. Fiction based on stories told by survivors of government and parochial boarding school. Note: Forrest Carter is not Native American; his stories, however, have been accepted as true by survivors of boarding schools.

Craven, Margaret. *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, 1973. A classic of Native life of the Pacific Northwest among the Kwakiutl. A story of transition. Made-for-TV movie is good.

Curtis, Aaron John. *Old School Indian*, 2025.

Dove, Lori. *Mask of the Deer Woman*, 2025.

Erdrich, Louise [Ojibwe]. *The Round House*, 2012. [2015 UMW Reading Program]. A novel written about life on an Indian reservation in mid-20th century America; violence against women and a son's obsession to exact revenge for the rape of his mother. Sexual assault by a white man on an Indian reservation meant he could not be charged.

Faust, Carson. *If the Dead Belong Here*, 2025.

Good Feather, Doug. *Think Indigenous*, 2021. Lakota.

Hobson, Brandon. *The Devil Is a Southpaw*, 2025.

Nerburn, Kent. *The Girl Who Sang to the Buffalo: A Child, an Elder, and the Light from an Ancient Sky*, 2013. Third book of a contemporary Lakota trilogy; first two are *Neither Wolf nor Dog: On Forgotten Roads with an Indian Elder*, 1994; and *The Wolf at Twilight – An Indian Elders Journey Through a Land of Ghosts and Shadows*, 2009.

Orange, Tommy. *There There*, 2018. "There is no there there any more." Urban Indians in Oakland, CA. Some bad language, but the storytelling is authentic.

Wandering Stars, 2024. See YouTube "Tommy Orange Discusses new book Wandering Stars." March 2, 2024. 6 minutes, 56 seconds.

Pember, Mary Annette. *Medicine River: A Story of Survival and the Legacy of Indian Boarding Schools*, 2025. This is by far the best [to date] recollection and research of boarding school trauma and the resulting behaviors. Pember includes scientific, medical research about different parts of the brain that causes different types of behavior related to intergenerational trauma, e.g., mental health, physical health, alcoholism, poor parenting skills and behavioral factors that cause it.

Ramage, Eliana. *To the Moon and Back*, 2025. A Cherokee woman who vows to be the first Native American on the moon.

Rendon, Marcie. *Where They Last Saw Her*, 2024.

Terry, Jim. *Come Home, Indio*, 2020. A graphic memoir.

Tingle, Tim [Choctaw]. *House of Purple Cedar* [2016 Reading Program]. Set in southeastern pre-statehood Oklahoma [the part of Indian Territory where the government put Choctaws], it's a tale of racism and Christianity.

Crossing Bok Chitto, 2006; based on an actual occurrence that saved a Black community in the mid-1800's.

Walking the Choctaw Road by Tim Tingle, 2003, is a "collection of stories woven from the supernatural, mythical, historical, and oral accounts of Choctaw people living today."

Verble, Margaret. *When Two Feathers Fell from the Sky*, 2022.

Wallis, Velma. *Two Old Women*, 1993. A story of survival in Alaska.

Welch, James. Award-winning Native American author [Blackfeet and Gros Ventre], born in Browning, MT, and raised in Montana. Author of *Winter in the Blood*, *Fools Crow*, and *The Death of Jim Loney*. *Winter in the Blood* was made into a movie in 2014. Sad stories; interviews with First Nations people are interesting.

Weiden, David. *Winter Counts*, 2020.

Other non-Native fiction writers respectful of Native Americans and the culture of the Western US: Dana Stabenow [Alaska]; Margaret Coel [Wind River, Wyoming]; Aimee and David Thurlo [Navajo; look for Ella Clah police procedurals]; James Doss [Southern Ute]; Tony Hillerman and Anne Hillerman [Navajo].

Urban Indians

Blood Struggle, 2006, by Charles Wilkinson, legal scholar and author

Indian Country, LA, 1999, by Joan Weibel-Orlando

Indian Metropolis: Native Americans in Chicago, 1945-75 by James LaGrand, 2002.

Indian No More, 2019, by Charlene Williams McManis and Traci Sorell; 2019 Reading List

Indians on the Move by Douglas K. Miller, 2019.

Urban Indian Experience in America by Donald Fixico, [Shawnee-Sac and Fox-Seminole-Muscogee Creek](#), 2000

[Wilma Mankiller](#), former [Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation](#), is a good example of the Indian professional middle class raised in an urban area. Mankiller and her parents relocated in the 1950s to the San Francisco Bay Area. She states in her autobiography, "We were not forced to do anything . . . our poverty had prompted the move. In 1955, my father first started talking to the Bureau of Indian Affairs officials about the various forms of assistance for Cherokees. Relocation was a possibility." (p. 68-69) Relocation was difficult but Wilma attended San Francisco State College and learned techniques of community organization. She took those skills back to the [Cherokee Nation](#) in Oklahoma and assisted with revitalization.

Nonfiction, history, legal advocacy, sovereignty, and other current issues

A Native American Thought of It: Amazing Inventions and Innovations [2014 Reading Program, Youth]

An Indigenous People's History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, 2015

Bad Indians Book Club, 2025. Patty Krawek. A serious look into “the borderlands of history, science, memoir, and fiction” as they relate to Indigenous People of North America.

Crazy Brave, 2013, by Joy Harjo, first Native American Poet Laureate

Dreaming in Indian – Contemporary Native American Voices [2015 Reading Program, Youth]

First White Frost by Rev. Homer Noley, 1991, a UMW book selection

Giving Our Hearts Away by Thom White Wolf Fassett, Mission u study 2008-2009; available through UMW resource center.

The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee, 2019, by David Treuer

Indian Country Today Media Network is an electronic newsletter with current news and issues. Get current information about education, legal issues, sovereignty, business, women's equality. <IndianCountryTodayMediaNetwork.com>

Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World by Jack Weatherford, 1988. This is the “utterly compelling story of how the cultural, social, and political practices of the Indians have transformed the way life is lived throughout the world.”

Indigenous Peoples in International Law, 2nd edition. S. James Anaya, 2004.

Louis Sockalexis, Native American Baseball Pioneer by Bill Wise & Bill Farnsworth, 2009. [2010 Reading Program, Children]

Medicine River: A Story of Survival and the Legacy of Indian Boarding Schools, Mary Annette Pember, 2025

National Congress of American Indians. Begun in 1944, this is one of the largest advocacy groups for and of Native Americans. Primary goal is to help tribes and nations maintain or regain and keep tribal sovereignty. <ncai.org>

National Museum of the American Indian. This section of the Smithsonian publishes a magazine that is totally focused on Indigenous Peoples of the Western hemisphere. <nmai.si.edu>

National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition [NABS], Boulder, CO. Christine McCleave, Director. Check its website to subscribe for newsletter. <boardingschoolshealing.org>

Native. Identity, Belonging, and Rediscovering God, 2020, Kaitlin Curtice. Curtice, a young woman, comes on strong toward white people. It may be the harshest truth you've ever read.

Powwows.com is always interesting with information about braided hair styles, moccasins, regalia, authors, Native celebrities, events. <powwows.com>

Sand Creek Massacre, books on. *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* by Kelman; *Song of Sorrow: Massacre at Sand Creek* by P. Mendoza
So you want to talk about race by Ijeoma Iluo, 2018, UMW selection

The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee by David Treuer, 2019, is the essential, intimate story of a resilient people in a transformative era.

Unsettling Truths: The ongoing, dehumanizing legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery by Mark Charles [Navajo] and Soong-Chan Rah, 2019. Highly recommended by the Rev. Dr. Allen Buck, Cherokee, pastor of Great Spirit UMC, Portland, OR. Dr. Buck was recently appointed to a different position in the conference.

Uneven Ground – American Indian Sovereignty and Federal Law by David Wilkins and Tsianina Lomawaima, 2001. There have been more sovereignty and federal law issues since the writing of this book, especially about gaming casinos, environmental racism, mascots, sacred lands, and health care, but it's still a good and useful reference book.

"United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples" <UN.org>

What Does Justice Look Like: The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland by Waziyatawin, 2008, Birchbark Books.

Native American Spirituality

First White Frost – Native Americans and United Methodism by Homer Noley, 1991. Rev. Noley tells the story of his Choctaw ancestors who walked their Trail of Tears and of those who became Methodist. This history of the Methodist attempt to evangelize Native Americans is "riddled with failures and successes."

Indian Spirit, edited by Michael & Judith Fitzgerald, 2006. Speeches by Native Americans from the 1800's enhanced by old photos and portraits. MJF Books.

On This Spirit Walk – Voices of Native American and Indigenous People by Rev. Anita Phillips, Keetoowah Cherokee, and Dr. Henrietta Mann, Southern Cheyenne [2014 Reading Program]. Available through Native American Comprehensive Plan; email <nacomp@prodigy.net>

Rescuing Theology from the Cowboys – An Emerging Indigenous Expression of the Jesus Way in North America by Richard Twiss, Sicangu Lakota/Rosebud Sioux. 2012. Indigenous contextualized expression of Christian faith among Native tribes and nations. Twiss was the leader in promoting combining Native culture and Christianity. Vancouver, WA. <www.wiconi.com>

Missions and Ministries of the United Methodist Church related to Native Americans

Blackfeet United Methodist Parish, Browning, MT. Pastor Gail Hoyt, Blackfeet. <bumpmission.com>

Book of Discipline, 2020/2024. Mark the paragraphs that relate to Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, and other Indigenous Peoples. Cokesbury.

Book of Resolutions, 2020/2024. There are about 30 references that relate in some way to Native Americans, e.g., language, sacred sites, worship traditions, culture, employment, economic justice, education, and health care.

General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church

General Board of Global Ministries, Native American & Indigenous Ministries; this includes Native American Ministries Sunday offerings; grants available for funding local missions and ministries. <umcmmission.org>

General Commission on Religion and Race. Archived conversations, e.g., Deconstruction of White Privilege, Realities of Racism. <gcorr.org>

National Mission Institutions in the Western Jurisdiction serving predominantly Native Americans and Alaska Natives – Nome [Alaska] Community Center; AK Child and Family [Anchorage]; Susannah Wesley Community Center, Honolulu [open to Indigenous People]. All ministries are open to everyone; the ones listed here are in Native communities in the Western Jurisdiction.

Native American Comprehensive Plan – Rev. Chebon Kernell, Seminole, Executive Director

Native American International/Intertribal Caucus – Raggatha [Ragghi] Rain Calentine, Chair

Native American Rights Fund. Located in Boulder, CO, near the campus of CU, is one of the best Native American advocate groups in the US. <narf.org>

Native Grace Intertribal Fellowship, Cortez, CO. Pastor Norman Mark, Navajo, began this church in November 2013. During the pandemic of 2020, it became a major distributor of food and agricultural supplies to Navajo families in the Four Corners. It joins Blackfeet United Methodist Parish as the second Native American UMC in the Mountain Sky Conference.

Racial Ethnic Local Church Concerns. Grant applications can be downloaded from the website.
<umcdiscipleship.org>

Third Sunday Native American Worship [United Methodist], Houston, TX, was begun in 2005 to be a place of worship and fellowship to Urban Indians who were taught culture and traditions by Indigenous People. Search YouTube for “3rdSundayNativeAmericanWorshipCONAM.” Contact Rose Brewer at rosebrewer@att.net to learn current activities of this ministry.

Documentaries, Movies, Music

Killers of the Flower Moon, 2023. Based on the nonfiction book by journalist David Grann about the murders of Osage people and the birth of the FBI in the 1920’s

Our Fires Still Burn: The Native American Experience. One-hour documentary by Audrey Geyer, 2013. Stories are from contemporary Native American role models living in the Midwest; includes stories of historical trauma. <OurFiresStillBurn.com>

Rabbit Proof Fence is based on true stories of Australia’s attempts to educate mixed-blood aborigines in boarding schools, similar to US boarding school experiences. Two young aboriginal sisters walk over 800 miles to get back home

Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native American Communities, from Global Praise, GBGMusik Available from UMW resource center

Smoke Signals, 1998. Screenplay by Sherman Alexie. A funny, sad, relevant movie

The Only Good Indian. Wes Studi, Cherokee, stars in this story about boarding schools in the early 1900’s. <theonlygoodindian.com>

Voices - Native American Hymns and Worship Resources from Discipleship Resources. This is out of print but you might try <abebooks.com>

Winter in the Blood, 2014, from the book by James Welch

Museums

National Museum of American Indians. Smithsonian. Films, videos, books, etc;
AMERICANINDIAN.SI.edu/online-programs

TV, radio, blogs

“Are you planning to do a land acknowledgement?” by Dr. Debbie Reese, Nambé’ Pueblo, 3/9/2019 [blog]

New Amsterdam “Radical” Season 3, episode 10, aired 5/4/2021. Features Tantoo Cardinal, Canadian French and Cree [Metis]. [TV]

Uprooted. The 1950s Plan to Erase Indian Country. Episode: Max Nesterak, 11/2019 [radio]

Websites/Online

1851 Dakota Land Cession Treaties (treatiesmatter.org)

“Beyond Territorial Acknowledgments” by Chelsea Vowel, 9/23/2016

Boardingschoolhealing.org. This is the website for Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, the best resource for current activities regarding every aspect of boarding schools.

Doctrine of Discovery, mid-1400’s. Several denominations have publicly and officially denounced the Doctrine of Discovery. See United Methodist *Book of Resolutions 2016*, #333

<https://native-land.ca/> (Native Land Digital) is a Canadian-based non-profit that “strives to create and foster conversations about the history of colonialism, Indigenous ways of knowing, and settler-Indigenous relations through educational resources such as [its] map and Territory Acknowledgement Guide”. . . “where non-Indigenous People can be invited and challenged to learn more about the lands they inhabit, the history of those lands, and how to actively be part of a better future going forward together.”

Intertribal Council of AT&T Employees; [ICAE Admin@att.com](mailto:ICAE_Admin@att.com)

Land Reparations & Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit (Resource Generation)

National Congress of American Indians

Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement; HawaiiHistory.org

Nativegov.org: covers 23 tribes in Mni Sota, North and South Dakota; office in Minneapolis.

Sherrill v. Oneida Nation (2005) Doctrine of Discovery and government treaties brought Oneida land from 6,000,000 acres to 32 acres. When the Oneida Nation bought back a few acres of their original six million, the town of Sherrill taxed it; Oneida Nation refused, pointing out it was a sovereign nation, ergo not taxable.

<https://usdac.us/nativeland> is the website for United States Department of Acts and Culture, a non-governmental entity.

Appendix H: Actions that lead to healing, relationships, and reconciliation

“All these actions can lead to reconciliation, the ultimate Act of Repentance, if we listen first and act afterward.” – Chesie Lee, Advocate, Riverton, WY

Choose some of the following possibilities to inspire your membership to continue Acts of Repentance. Learn about and learn from!

10 Action Steps for Going Beyond Land Acknowledgment in *Book of Resolutions*

1. Acknowledge that the intentions and politicization of Christianity distorted the gospel for the purpose of *colonization* and must be *decolonized*.
2. Affirm that Native American *sovereignty*
 - a. is a historical *fact*, is *significant*, and *cannot be disregarded* in favor of politics
 - b. Native Americans have a *right to self-govern*
 - c. *preserves culture, religious expression, land, and sacred spaces* and
 - d. ensures survival of Native People.
3. *Demythologize* and increase our understanding of Native Americans and Indian country;
4. Affirm the *sacredness* of humankind, affirming *all are equal* in God’s sight;
5. a. Recognize that *natural resources are sacred* and
b. *Speak against practices of exploitation*.
6. *Reject stereotypes* and situations that depict Native Americans in harmful or distorted ways.
7. Recognize that the *belief systems* of Native Americans and non-Natives may be *different and accept those differences*.
8. Use study guides of *On This Spirit Walk* by Henrietta Mann and Anita Phillips and *Giving Our Hearts Away*, Mission u study by Thom White Wolf Fassett, as educational resources.
9. Engage in dialogue with Native Americans in their local area. (Remember characteristics of “Listening with an Indigenous Attitude.”)
10. Wherever the Church holds land and/or property in trust, ... [consider]... transferring [all or] a portion of the land and/or property back to the tribe[s] that are/were indigenous to the area.

Other actions from all kinds of sources!

Do the homework: Learn ways to connect with Native Americans in your area: Read, listen, ask questions, reflect, and listen some more. Use your new skill of “gentle curiosity” and respond appropriately to things you learn.

- In partnering for action, listen to the words of the Indigenous People / Native Americans you meet so you can discern the needs. Don't tell them what they need!
- Listen! Avoid starting with “Would it be okay if we...?” If you truly hear the needs of your guests, ask how a program or project would look to them, rather than telling them what you want to do *for* them. Ask what you can help them with and how they would like that to look. They *expect* you to take over – because that's what non-Natives have always done. Learn to be a worker and not a boss.
- Respond appropriately to things you learn through listening.
- Find ways to connect with Native Americans / Indigenous People in your area.
- Read a book about Indigenous history and share with your unit, church, and community.
- Begin United Women in Faith meetings with a Land Acknowledgement; educate congregations on the purpose and positive impact it will have on the Native community, including children and youth. You might even consider returning land to its original inhabitants.
- Conduct a group study of the Doctrine of Discovery. There are many resources available online. Start with Appendix B in this toolkit.
- Read books by Native American authors. See Resources and Appendix G and check the Reading Program lists for titles to share with your unit, church, and community.
- Host a Spiritual Growth retreat using *On This Spirit Walk: The Voices of Native American and Indigenous Peoples* and / or *Voices of Native American Women*, both of which have been UMW Reading Program selections.
 - Educate your congregation about Native American Ministries Sunday and encourage your church to observe that Special Day; hold a fundraiser to increase the offering.
 - Go on a mission trip or vacation to Indian Country with the goal of developing relationships with Native associations, staff, and individuals. There are several United Methodist missions, e.g., Blackfeet United Methodist Parish in Montana; Native Grace UMC in Colorado and Utah; Four Corners Native American Ministry and Navajo United Methodist Center [New Beginnings] in New Mexico; and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.
 - Support a Native American mission with donations of things it needs in addition to money, prayers, presence, and relationships. Check with the mission before sending anything to make sure there is a need and they have the facilities and personnel to accept it. And please, if you choose to send used clothing, make sure each piece is clean and worth wearing to school or church. Many missions have a list of needs posted on their websites.
- Establish a relationship with a sister church or UWFaith unit that is predominately Native.
- Organize an “act of repentance” focused on a “process of healing relationships with indigenous persons throughout the world to be the living and resurrected body of Christ in the world” (2020/2024). Invite Indigenous People to come and to speak. **Note! If you**

do reach out to an Indigenous person or community for assistance of any kind, compensate them fairly. Too often, Indigenous People are asked to perform emotional labor for free.

- Invite Native Americans to your church for a United Women in Faith meeting or to worship or to share a meal. And listen. In return, you might be invited to a gathering of their choosing, e.g., council meeting, powwow committee, picnic.
- Invite a family to your home for a meal. And listen to their conversation topics. If trust has been established, there will be conversation!
- Learn some words, phrases, or a song in a language indigenous to your area and appreciate the beauty of the language.
- Contact local elementary, middle, and high schools to see if a Native American student needs financial support to join a sports or academic team, whether a school team or club team, e.g., volleyball, basketball, 4H, FFA, STEM and STEAM.
- Ask a local college if there is an Indigenous Studies Center or a Native American Student Association, or equivalent organization. If so, ask how you can partner with the center, department, organization, or school.
- Sponsor a powwow dance, e.g., teen boys and girls “fancy feather” and “fancy shawl” categories, providing the prize money. [Find out the dollar amount before committing as the prize money can be in the thousands. A safe commitment is to sponsor the Tiny Tots, which is usually \$5 for each participant.]
- See if any of the 39 tribal colleges and universities in fifteen states are near you. If so, ask how you can be in ministry with them or what you can do to be supportive, e.g., give a donation, sponsor or mentor a student. [See Appendix D for a list of colleges; do a google search do for location and contact information.]
- Check for local groups or organizations in or near your community and support them, e.g., donate time and money.
- Quietly join their peaceful protests against racism. Be there with them – and listen to the voices of Indigenous People leading grassroots change movements. Most will expect white people to try to take over, “to do it better.” Surprise them by not doing that!
- Create public forums to discuss the history of atrocities against Indigenous People, e.g., Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado led by a Methodist preacher. Include suggestions for healing such as healing runs, giveaways, and potlatches. Consult with tribal members and officials about plans before advertising or implementing.
- Learn about the crisis of Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women [MMIW] and take action, including contacting legislators. Also support VAWA, Violence Against Women Act that was reauthorized in 2021.
- Offer your church building to a local Native American group for meetings. Many American Indians know about the pain resulting from the colonization through the Christians and are reluctant to meet in a church. Offering this space without a fee is an act of repentance. Let it be so.

Take Action for AOR! Turn it up!

Situation #1. Native American children on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming, like children everywhere, enjoy participating in sports. Recently, a grandmother was proud of her

granddaughters because they did so well that they moved to the next level to compete in a tournament. At the same time, they learned about racism, both from name-calling they received from the opposing team and spectators and from referees. The grandmother knows well that this is something they will continue to face throughout their lives so this prepares them to be competitive within the confines of racism.

What?! No child should have to learn how to accept racism gracefully. This is teaching internalized racism. This is systemic racism when it is the norm. Every school needs to have a zero tolerance for all acts of racism. It's possible that each state's athletic association has policies to address – but are they enforced? What can we do?

Insist on policies, training, and enforcement. If the school claims it is not happening, insist on prevention and oversight measures. Lay the groundwork so children will know that they are welcome for sports events at any school. This should also include colleges and club sports. And spectators who use racist language at a game.

Situation #2. The **second** story involves a state Superintendent of Public Instruction who opposed teaching the history of slavery in the United States promoted in the *1619 Project* as being too political. Although this project, begun in 2019, is primarily about slavery, it affects Native American children, too. Does ignorance about our past prepare them for a future without racial bias? For the sake of the children, we must make amends and do what we can to end racism.

As our friend Chesie says, all these actions can lead to reconciliation, the ultimate Act of Repentance, if we *listen first* and *act afterward*.