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3 **RECOGNITION OF A TRUTH AND HEALING COUNCIL TO HONOR OUR**
4 **COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND TO DISCERN**
5 **WAYS OF REPARATIONS FOR A PATH TO RECONCILIATION**

6
7 **(Sense-of-the-Assembly)**
8

9 **WHEREAS**, as justice is an essential part of God’s nature, manifesting itself as a
10 method of restoration and healing;¹ and

11
12 **WHEREAS**, as people of faith we recognize reconciliation as a biblical principle and a
13 tenet of our faith tradition, understanding that reconciliation is based upon relationships
14 that are reciprocal and respectful, where all parties in the relationship are valued as
15 equal and beloved by God; and

16
17 **WHEREAS**, the history of white Euro-Americans and Indigenous peoples of the
18 Americas has not been a relationship based upon reciprocity, mutual respect and
19 honoring covenantal relationships but sadly has been a settler colonial history of a
20 relationship of power given to white people by U.S. and Canadian nations to hold over
21 Indigenous peoples that has used Christianity and the Church as tools of social control
22 and oppression; and

23
24 **WHEREAS**, the appalling reality of the history of the Canadian residential schools and
25 U.S. boarding schools that sought to assimilate Indigenous children into white society
26 demonstrates the need for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous
27 people as nearly 1,000 unmarked children graves were discovered at former residential
28 schools in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, Canada and over 500 deaths at 19
29 schools in the United States (though the Interior Department said that number could
30 climb to the thousands or even tens of thousands) of children buried in unmarked or
31 poorly maintained burial sites far from their Indian, Inuit, Métis, Native, Alaskan,
32 Hawaiian, Indigenous homes and families, often hundreds, or even thousands,
33 of miles away;² and

34
35 **WHEREAS**, the consequences of federal Indian boarding school policies including
36 intergenerational historical trauma caused by the family separation and cultural
37 eradication of language, traditions, and religion inflicted upon generations of young are
38 undeniable; and

39
40 **WHEREAS**, the idea of boarding schools to provide a basic Western education and
41 Christian indoctrination originated from Christian missionaries of various denominations

¹ Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Dancing Standing Still: Healing the World from a Place of Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 38–40, 87–88.

² NPR, “U.S. report identifies burial sites linked to boarding schools for Native Americans,” May 11, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/11/1098276649/u-s-report-details-burial-sites-linked-to-boarding-schools-for-nativeamericans>.

42 and were approved by government agents before the Bureau of Indian Affairs also
43 founded additional off reservation boarding schools based on the assimilation model in
44 the U.S., it is fitting that as Christians reflect on their institutional structures, historically,
45 they soon learn to recognize instances where these institutions participated in the
46 system of colonization of the Canadian and U.S. landscape; and
47

48 **WHEREAS**, understanding Christian complicity in the destruction of Indigenous familial
49 and community structure gives Christians the moral authority to compel Church and
50 Government(s) to become accountable for acts of colonization, an obligation is inherent
51 and relevant for Christian institutions who have recognized their complicity by
52 repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, like Disciples did by affirming the resolution GA-
53 1722 at the 2017 General Assembly and who proclaim themselves as a “movement for
54 wholeness in a fragmented world,” and
55

56 **WHEREAS**, becoming institutionally accountable to the Indigenous landscape allows
57 Christians to move beyond statements of apology, confession, or solidarity to become
58 more accountable to the landscape shifting Christianity theology to include a
59 hermeneutic of Indigeneity where Indigenous well-being is valued over agendas and
60 outcomes, where Christian institutions publicly name their participation in the evil of
61 colonization, and where the Indigenous landscape is known as family; and
62

63 **WHEREAS**, by recognizing there are stages between truth telling and reconciliation: 1)
64 reparative work must be done to prepare mindsets and institutional governance for
65 change; 2) once reparative work is well along in changing minds (but before completed),
66 institutional reparations—substantial institutional changes in governance, restitution,
67 and finances—begin; 3) when reparative work and reparations have occurred for some
68 time, then the work of restoration begins and restorative work brings about right
69 relationship to that which was once natural and created; and 4) after
70 years, if not generations, of reparative work, reparations, and restorative work,
71 reconciliation can then begin;
72

73 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the General Assembly of the Christian Church
74 (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, meeting July 29-August 1, 2023,
75 in Louisville, Kentucky, offers its support of the work by the Center for Indigenous
76 Ministries (DOC) who believes such justice work is possible by collaborating with the
77 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to support the Truth and Healing Council who will:
78 1) openly listen to Indigenous voices; 2) hear how the Christian Church (Disciples of
79 Christ)’s work impacted Indigenous lives, the lives of their ancestors, and the lives of
80 their children; 3) gather historical and current Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
81 institutional documents authenticating Disciples colonial-settler relationship with the
82 Indigenous landscape and her People(s); 4) document and record the haunting stories
83 and histories arising from colonial-settler relationship; and 5) create a generational
84 restorative and reparative path toward harmony; and
85

86 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that local, regional, and General expressions of the
87 Church discern paths toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in the United States
88 and Canada; and

89
90 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that working collaboratively to advance reconciliation in
91 North American society might include acts of reparation such as: 1) the Christian
92 Church (Disciples of Christ) in all its expressions which have accumulated financial
93 sustainability working within a North American construct that has also provided wealth
94 to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), are encouraged to begin a formal process
95 of review of that history to begin reordering wealth and power towards Indigenous
96 healing within and without the church; 2) all Disciples related colleges and seminaries
97 who have benefited from the generational wealth acquired from Indigenous removal and
98 the land on which their institutions reside, and from the wealth of their constituents and
99 alumni who also benefited from the generational wealth accrued from Indigenous
100 removal, are encouraged to review their financial legacies in light of generational
101 Indigenous injustice and to consider reallocating annual funds and/or a percentage of
102 the annual budget to Indigenous work under the management of Indigenous guidance
103 who are not accountable to their institutional structure; 3) regions and individual
104 congregations are encouraged to begin to examine their historical context of complicity
105 in settler colonialism and find avenues to support issues of social justice for Indigenous
106 peoples; and

107
108 **FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Office of General Minister and President shall
109 work with the Center for Indigenous Ministries to discern and propose the most faithful
110 and effective way to recognize their ministry in the life of the church.

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112
113 Yakama Christian Mission, White Swan, Washington
114 Englewood Christian Church, Yakima, Washington
115 Bethany Christian Church of Farmington, New Mexico

**The General Board recommends that the General Assembly REFER GA-2337 to
the Office of General Minister and President for further study.
(Discussion Time: 12 minutes)**