



Native American International Caucus of the United Methodist Church

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The Native American International Caucus (NAIC) applauds the celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day on October 10, 2022, and President Biden's proclamation recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day as a federal holiday for the first time starting in 2021. At this time, many states and cities have joined in this recognition, but it has yet to be approved by Congress through House Bill 5473, and Senate Bill 2919 is still under consideration.

This year, we call on all members of Congress to publicly recognize Native people's human dignity and sacred worth by voting to approve Indigenous Peoples Day as a time to celebrate our culture, affirm our human rights as sovereign tribal nations, and continue the work of repairing the damaging legacy of Colonialism and racism.

While we respect the ethnic community of American Italians, we cannot accept or support the continued state-sponsored, public recognition of Christopher Columbus as a symbol of discovery, exploration, and conquest. Since it continues to harm all Native people significantly, both those within and outside the 570+ Native American tribal nations in the United States, who continue to live with the impact of systemic injustices and abuse began by settler colonialism.

The violence and theft inflicted by Christopher Columbus and European occupation of the land, including the enslavement, genocide, dislocation, and relocation of Native people, perpetuated an unjust system of capital accumulation at the expense of generations of Native lives.

We loathe all violence and genocide especially sanctioned by the state and blessed by the church in the form of the "Doctrine of Discovery," and stand firm in our United Methodist Resolution that unequivocally affirms: "The establishment, enactment, and progression of the Doctrine of Discovery influenced law and behavior, perpetuated a climate of violence against Native people through colonization, forced removals, enactment of treaties that were then regularly violated, killings and the "Indian Wars" continuing today in a subtler but in a no less violent and invasive manner." (2016 UM Book of Resolutions, 3321)

To continue to celebrate this inequity is contrary to the Gospel; "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1). Consequently, our United Methodist baptismal vows commit us to, "resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves."

We further call on our Congressional and State legislators and President Joseph Biden's Administration as an act of good faith to finally abandon and abolish the federally recognized celebration of Columbus Day and to repudiate our nation's too often unchallenged allegiance to the "Doctrine of Discovery."

NAIC Board of Directors