

**MISSIONARY  
CONFERENCES**  
OF THE  
UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES  
**LEADER'S GUIDE**

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*Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church in the United States Leader's Guide*  
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# United Methodist Women Purpose

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

## The Vision

Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

## Living the Vision

We provide opportunities and resources to grow spiritually, become more deeply rooted in Christ and put faith into action.

We are organized for growth, with flexible structures leading to effective witness and action.

We equip women and girls around the world to be leaders in communities, agencies, workplaces, governments and churches.

We work for justice through compassionate service and advocacy to change unfair policies and systems.

We provide educational experiences that lead to personal change in order to transform the world.

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# INTRODUCTION



It is a daunting task to cover the missionary conferences of The United Methodist Church in one study. The three conferences cover diverse areas of the United States. The Alaska United Methodist Conference encompasses about 586,000 square miles of land.<sup>1</sup> The Red Bird Missionary Conference is located in southeastern Kentucky deep in the Appalachian Mountains. The Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference includes congregations in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

While these territories are diverse geographically and culturally, they share a common history with The United Methodist Church. This Leader's Guide offers opportunities for participants to examine different General Conference decisions concerning the missionary conferences. To help participants evaluate whether or not those decisions support true relationship rather than segregation, Session 1 will lead participants to an understanding of the missionary conferences, and Session 4 will look back at the church's relationships with former language and/or ethnic conferences, as well as United Methodist Women's ministries with the missionary conferences.

The populations of all three missionary conferences are struggling with issues of poverty in varying degrees as a result of past and current exploitation of their lands. Sessions 2 and 3 will bring the participants to the natural world of each missionary conference, while also addressing each conference's unique history and relationship with the church. Those sessions will also challenge participants to reflect on the environmental injustice that affects the natural world of the Native Americans in Oklahoma as well as the inhabitants of the Appalachian Mountains and Alaska. Those sessions will invite the church to stand with these sisters and brothers in advocating for the elimination of all forms of systemic discrimination affecting them and their environments.

This Leader's Guide provides a glimpse into the lives of the people from the missionary conferences through prayers, games, music, and other activities reflecting their unique cultural identities. The guide was created with four two-hour sessions in mind. However, you may adapt the material here to fit your needs, such as for a program at a United Methodist Women meeting.

## Materials for Each Session

The following materials will need to be on hand for all sessions:

- Bible
- Painter's tape
- Computer, preferably with Internet access
- Construction paper
- Flip chart
- Markers
- Newsprint
- Index cards
- Missionary Conferences DVD, player and TV or projection equipment
- Participants' journals
- Pens/pencils

## Create a Shorter Program or Adapt to a Single Session

For a 30–45 minute program in a local United Methodist Women unit, the leader may want to adapt a session as follows:

- Begin with the opening worship.
- Lead a short meditation on the Amos passage (assigned to a member in advance).
- Select one of the three missionary conferences to focus on.
- Discuss the needs of the population and how that conference is in mission in the community.
- Share ways United Methodist Women is in ministry with that conference.
- Close with the litany and/or prayer in the section dedicated to that specific conference in the Leader's Guide.

To lead this study in one session as part of a district or a local United Methodist Women unit, the study can be facilitated in three hours with advance preparation:

- Assign reading in advance to specific individuals.
- Begin with the opening worship, including the reflection on the Amos passage.
- Ask each reader to provide an overview of the history of their assigned missionary conference, followed by participants' discussions after each presentation.
- Provide a brief summary of the Central Jurisdiction.
- Lead participants in a discussion that compares the Central Jurisdiction to the missionary conferences.
- View the Missionary Conferences DVD and select segments to view and discuss as part of the session.
- Lift up ways United Methodist Women is in ministry with the missionary conferences.
- End with one of the closing litanies or prayers in the Leader's Guide.

## Endnotes

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1. Alaska United Methodist Conference, accessed May 22, 2016, [www.alaskaumc.org](http://www.alaskaumc.org).

# SESSION 1

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## UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCES

(Chapters 1–3)



### Background

This session is an invitation for the church to reevaluate its historical relationship with the missionary conferences in an effort to increase mutuality in mission with those conferences. It is a plea for the United Methodist family to look back at its participation and/or silence in the face of the injustices perpetrated through the years toward indigenous people in their land, causing the “invasion and cultural decimation” author J. Ann Craig describes in the main study that affects individuals to this day; to advocate for the restitution of land taken from indigenous people, which is greatly responsible for the inherent poverty issues in these conferences; and to advocate as well for the elimination of all kinds of stereotypes and romanticism associated with the indigenous cultures in the United States.

### Preparation

- Communicate with participants prior to the first session. Invite them to come to the first class ready to discuss Chapters 1–3, and request that they bring a Bible and personal journal. (You may want to have some extra journals handy in case some participants did not bring one so everyone may equally participate in the activities.)
- Find out from the registrar if any of the participants is known to have a special need so you can accommodate her or him as you set up the room.
- Gather materials to create a permanent worship center in the space. Imagery may include a cross, an open Bible, Native American religious artifacts, rocks, battery-operated candles, a hymnal, *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016*, etc.
- Bring Native American instrumental music to be played from your computer or a CD player as participants are entering the space.
- Prepare copies of the quote from *Mutuality in Mission* for “Time with the Text: Part 1”; you may also write the quote on a flip chart or plan to project it.
- Cue the Missionary Conferences DVD to the first session and ensure that it can be seen and heard by all.



## Getting Acquainted (15 Minutes)

Ask participants to read the following quote from Chapter 1 of *Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church in the United States*:

As you read this historical and geographical study on our twenty-first-century missionary conferences, think of your own biography and your family's history. Where do you come from? What harms were perpetrated on your ancestors or yourselves because of who you are or where you are from? What harms have you, your family, and your larger community inflicted on others because of who they are or where they are from?

Invite participants to write or draw their answers on a piece of construction paper or newsprint. Tell them not to overthink their answers, but to put down the first image or thought that comes to their mind.

Ask participants to share their answers with the whole group. When everyone who is comfortable doing so has shared, ask them to name any differences and/or similarities in their stories. (Depending on the size of the group, you may choose to have participants share only with their neighbors.) Either way, ask everyone to post their responses for the group to see. If the sharing occurs in small groups, you may suggest that participants read the postings from the other groups during the break, and note the similarities and differences with their own experiences.

## Time with the Text: Part 1

### **RADICAL WELCOME PUSHES US TOWARD MUTUALITY IN MISSION AND MINISTRY (20 MINUTES)**

The biblical foundation for mission is found in Matthew 28:19–20 and is known as the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The Christian church, beginning with the early disciples, took seriously this command to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ to all, to teach them the way of Christ so they can be transformed into becoming disciples for Jesus Christ. However, through the years, obedience to the Great Commission has lost the reliance on the Holy Spirit to do the transformation as well as the understanding that the church is only an agent for God's mission. So, too often Christians “go . . . . teach” but seek to transform those to whom they bring the gospel. Over the past several decades, the Christian church began to realize that this egocentric and paternalistic approach to mission does not meet the standards of God's mission. So, the church began to speak about a new perspective on mission, which is based on mutual respect and partnership with all God's agents for God's mission. In the book *Mutuality in Mission: A Theological Principle for the 21st Century*, published in 2001, co-authors Drs. Glory E. Dharmaraj and Jacob S. Dharmaraj explain that mutuality as follows:

Mutuality makes partners whole and complete. When there is a genuine acknowledgment of the need for the other, a commitment to a long-term relationship fosters a clear identity, promotes staying in touch, and encourages partners to keep their end of the bargain. When one partner becomes especially vulnerable, dedication to maintaining communication and keeping the relationship intact becomes critical. In a trusting relationship, both partners rediscover themselves and strengthen their individual identities. <sup>2</sup>

Provide a summary of Chapter 2: “Paul Was a Home Missionary.” Instruct the group to keep in mind the quote from Mutuality in Mission to guide their discussions.

### Discussion Questions

1. In what way does Paul’s second missionary journey as recorded in Acts 16 meet the criteria of mutuality as described in the above paragraph from *Mutuality in Mission*?
2. What are some similarities and/or differences between Paul’s second missionary journey and the European Christians’ missionary journey in the Americas?
3. How did the women in Acts 16, and Lydia in particular, embody the concept of mutuality in mission as described by the Dharmarajs?

### Video (10 to 15 Minutes)

Watch the first segment off the Missionary Conferences DVD. Invite participants to pay careful attention to the narration in order to reflect on and discuss the questions below.

1. Keeping in mind the exercise you participated in earlier, name and discuss some of the common harms inflicted on the current missionary conferences, the former Rio Grande Conference, and the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church.
2. The Rev. Dale What stated: “We work together in expressing our connectionalism that way, to help that church grow.” Referring back to the segment “Radical Welcome Pushes Us Toward Mutuality in Mission and Ministry,” identify the tangible signs of mutuality in mission between the larger church and the missionary conferences in this video segment.

### Break (10 Minutes)

## Time with the Text: Part 2

### THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCES AND *THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH* (20 MINUTES)

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church determines the criteria for missionary conferences. These criteria are delineated in ¶585 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2016*. The General Conference is the official decision-making body for The United Methodist Church. Those decisions are recorded in *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*. The General Conference prerogative is to “approve, alter, add, or subtract”<sup>3</sup> the content of those two documents. *The Book of Resolutions* provides guidance and suggestions on how the people called United Methodists should live out their faith in the world

as Christians. *The Book of Discipline* mandates how the connectional church interacts with its members at all levels, and provides guidelines for their common mission ministries. Once a decision is made at General Conference, the denomination has to live with it for at least the next four years. It is important to learn about those decisions and analyze their impact on the connection. Therefore, encourage participants, as members of The United Methodist Church, to take a participatory role in future General Conferences in order to challenge those decisions that they believe, although well intended at times, are not a clear response to their missional purpose as Christians.

For this segment:

- Provide a summary of Chapter 3: “Mission and Missionary Conference, A Fluid History.”
- Divide participants in groups no larger than six.
- Assign the disciplinary paragraphs ¶585–588 from Chapter 3 of the main text for group reading and discussions.

### Discussion Questions

1. How do you understand the paragraph(s)?
2. What are the positive aspects of the paragraph(s)?
3. Have you identified any paternalistic and/or limitative language in the paragraph(s)?  
If yes, summarize these occurrences.
4. How would you rephrase these statements? (If any paternalistic and/or limitative language was identified.)

### Preparation for Session 2 (5 Minutes)

Assigned Reading: Chapter 4 and the article “New Challenges in Nome” from **response** November 2012 issue found online at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/new-challenges-in-nome](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/new-challenges-in-nome). Ask two or three volunteers to summarize key points in the chapter and the article to share with the whole group when you meet again.

### Closing Worship (5 Minutes)

#### LITANY

*An adaptation of “The Great Spirit Prayer” translated by Lakota Sioux Chief Yellow Lark in 1887.<sup>4</sup>*

**Left side:** Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds, and whose breath gives life to all the world.

**Right side:** Hear me; I need your strength and wisdom.

**Left side:** Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever behold the red and purple sunset.

**Right side:** Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice,

**Left side:** Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.

**Right side:** Help me to remain calm and strong in the face of all that comes towards me.

**Left side:** Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping others

**Right side:** Help me find compassion without empathy overwhelming me.

**Left side:** I seek strength not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy, myself.

**Right side:** Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

**ALL:** **So when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame. Amen!**

**Leader:** VŎLEFT. (Read phonetically “do-na-da-goh-vi”; plural meaning “good-bye to all” in the Cherokee language.)<sup>5</sup>

**People:** VŬA&T. (Read phonetically “do-na-dag-vhoi”; singular meaning “good-bye to you” only.)

## Endnotes

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1. Omniglot: The Online Encyclopedia of writing systems and language, accessed May 22, 2016, [www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/ Cherokee.php](http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/ Cherokee.php).
2. Glory E. and Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Mutuality in Mission: A Theological Principle for the 21st Century* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2001), 39.
3. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *American Methodism: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012).
4. “The Great Spirit Prayer,” trans. Chief Yellow Lark, Native American Prayers, accessed May 15, 2016, <http://nativeamerican.lostsoulsgenealogy.com/prayers.htm>.
5. Omniglot: The Online Encyclopedia of writing systems and language.

## SESSION 2

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# ALASKA UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE

## (Chapter 4)



### Background

When the Russian explorers arrived in Alaska in the middle of the eighteenth century, there were, about 80,000 indigenous people living in Alaska. Today, Alaska Natives represent about 15 percent of Alaska's approximately 768,335 residents.<sup>1</sup> There are 229 federally recognized Alaskan villages and five unrecognized Tlingit Alaskan Indian tribes.<sup>2</sup> The promise of gold brought a wave of people to Alaska, and with them came the potential for economic growth and agricultural expansion. The massive migration of people to the area and the destructive forces caused by mining resulted in dire consequences for the environment. Alaskan Native groups have had somewhat different historical experiences through their contact with Europeans and Americans. Likewise, The United Methodist Church does not have a great presence among the Alaska Natives. As of June 2016, the Alaska United Methodist Conference membership includes a very small number of indigenous people. The history of the Alaska Conference with The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations differs from the two other missionary conferences as well.

### Preparation

- Decide which game(s) the participants will play and gather needed materials. (See Appendix B.)
- Cue the Missionary Conferences DVD to the second segment.
- Identify Alaskan Native instrumental music to be played from your computer or a CD player as participants enter.

### Greetings

Welcome participants as they enter.

### Opening Worship (15 Minutes)

**SCRIPTURE: AMOS 5:6–24**

### REFLECTION

Ask participants to revisit Amos 5:6–24 and to pay close attention to verse 11. In this passage, God reminds the people of Israel of their transgressions so they might seek opportunity to repent and

reform. Ask participants to keep the content of Chapter 4 in mind as they reflect on the passage and write their responses to the following questions in their journals:

- Instances in which you have learned or been reminded of how the U.S. government acted in an oppressive way toward the indigenous people in general, but particularly toward those in Alaska.
- Ways you believe such actions have made the indigenous people poorer.
- Ways church action and/or inaction contributes to the cycle of poverty.

## SONG

“Dawk’yahee ahdawtsahee (Jesus, Son of God),” *Global Praise 1*, no. 19 (see Appendix F)

## LITANY

*An adaptation of Psalm 15.*

Leader: O Lord, who may abide in your tent?

**People: Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is right, and speak the truth from their heart.**

Leader: O Lord, who may dwell on your holy hill?

**People: Those who do not slander with their tongue, and do no evil to their friends, nor take up a reproach against their neighbors.**

Leader: O Lord, who may abide in your tent?

**People: Those in whose eyes the wicked are despised, but who honor those who fear the Lord who stand by their oath even to their hurt; who do not lend money at interest, and do not take a bribe against the innocent.**

**ALL: Those who do these things shall never be moved.**

## Quick Review (5 Minutes)

Invite participants to share:

- New insights gained from Session 1.
- Any questions Session 1 generated.

## **Time with the Text: Part 1** (30 Minutes)

Ask the volunteers to summarize their reading, lifting up the points of importance to them from Chapter 4 and the **response** article “New Challenges in Nome.”

Divide the class into groups. Invite participants in the groups to review Chapter 4 and share with their groups any key information they found that was different from what they have heard in the whole group. Ask the groups to choose a recorder and reporter. They will record their answers to the following questions on newsprint. In the meantime, the leader will walk around the room to ensure that everyone is participating and that no single person is dominating the discussions. Alert participants ten minutes before the time is up so they all can have time to record their answers and share before the break.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Based on the information provided at the beginning of Chapter 4 as well as the **response** article “New Challenge in Nome,” participants will discuss the following questions:

1. How did the gold rush and other mining impact Alaska’s environment?
2. How does the environmental degradation affect Alaska’s economy today?
3. How can we, twenty-first-century United Methodists, bring changes that will lead to reparation?

## **Break** (10 Minutes)

### **A Glimpse into Alaskan Native Culture** (10 Minutes)

Native games fulfill the native cultural values of sharing, promoting cooperative teamwork, hard work, respecting others, and encouraging positive self-esteem. A couple of games from the Yupik and Aleut tribes were selected for this session. While the invention of those games are attributed to those specific groups, it is worth noting that other native groups may have played them in various forms. Choose one or two from the list provided in Appendix B to help participants get a taste of the Alaskan Native culture. More games from different native groups are available on the Alaska Native Knowledge Network webpage.

### **Video** (15 Minutes)

Watch the second segment off the Missionary Conferences DVD and reflect on the questions below.

1. Reflect on Rev. Brower’s statement, “The missionaries came thinking that their way was really the only way to get to know Christ.” Then discuss the statement based on your understanding of Matthew 28:19–20.
2. Toward the end of this video segment, the narrator stated: “For the Alaska United Methodist Conference, serving in mission is both inside the church and outside . . . in the wide open spaces of the communities who are in need.” How do Nome Community Center and AK Child & Family embody that definition?

## **Time with the Text: Part 2** (35 Minutes)

Using the denominational merger chart for Alaska in Appendix A of the main text, discuss the changing status of the Alaska Conference from 1904 to date.

Then, invite participants to reread the Petition Number 60529-MH-¶415.4-G to the 2016 General Conference found in the section titled “Alaska Conference or Missionary District?” in Chapter 4 of the main text. Provide the following background:

During the 2012–2016 quadrennium, there were conversations regarding the possibility of eliminating the missionary conference status in the United States. In addition, a joint petition submitted by the Committee on Central Conference Matters and the General Board of Global Ministries to the 2016 General Conference sought to amend ¶580 of *The Book of Discipline* dealing with provisional annual conferences in the central conferences. In the rationale for the amendment, the authors of the petition stated: “Provisional was intended to be a transitional status in a missional development towards an annual conference.”<sup>3</sup> The amendment limits the life of a provisional annual conference to up to twelve years. In an effort to be proactive in the event missionary conference status was no longer an option, the leadership of the Alaska Conference submitted a petition to the 2016 General Conference asking the official body of the church to allow the creation of a mission district with the support of the annual conference, as a potential backup option to maintain a missionary status.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that “non-permanent status” for a missionary conference is not mentioned anywhere in *The Book of Discipline*.

Both the Committee on Central Conference Matters/Global Ministries and the Alaska leadership petitions were approved. The first one was passed in committee with 51 votes in favor, 12 votes against and one person did not vote. The Alaska petition did pass in Legislative Committee and was approved in the plenary session with 761 votes in favor and 21 against. Although approved in Committee, the petition from the Committee on Central Conference Matters/Global Ministries was not discussed during the plenary, therefore is not in effect.

### **Small Group Activity**

Divide participants into five groups. Assign one of the testimonies found at the end of Chapter 4 to each small group as follow: Charley Brower, Larry Hayden (see “Sheldon Jackson and His Mission to Alaska Natives”), Thom White Wolf Fassett, Fran Lynch, and the story of the late Della Singigpaghmi Waghiyi.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Based on the information in each testimony as well as the information from petition 60529-MH-¶415.4-G, discuss the following:

1. Where have you seen signs of partnership that could meet the criteria of mutuality in mission both between the Alaska Conference and the larger community, and between the general church and the Alaska Conference?

2. Do you think that the Alaska Conference could best fulfill its missional engagement as a mission district of the Northwestern Annual Conference as opposed to being an autonomous annual conference? Explain why.
3. What do you think might be the most important reason(s) The United Methodist Church might discontinue the missionary conference status? Provide specific example(s) to support your opinion.

### Preparation for Session 3 (5 Minutes)

Assigned reading: Chapters 5 and 6; “Singing the Faith” article from **response** December 2010 issue found online at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/singing-the-faith](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/singing-the-faith); and the “May 2014 Open Letter from Native American Leadership to the Five Jurisdictions” (Appendix C). Ask two or three volunteers to summarize key points in the chapter and the articles to share with the whole group when you meet again.

### Closing Prayer (5 Minutes)

Ask participants to be in an attitude of prayer as they listen to the Lord’s Prayer sung in Yup’ik by the choir and congregation at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church in Chefornak, Alaska. The prayer can be found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_bkmAwYMuhQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bkmAwYMuhQ).

Atamtaa qilit qaingatelnguq  
 tamaaten tanqignaurtug atren elpet  
 tamaaten tutnaurtuq angayugaucin,  
 tamaaten piyunaurtuq picirkiucin,  
 nunam qaignani qilit qaingatelngucimitun.  
 Neqkamek nuuqekngamtenek cikirkut ernerpak,  
 cali pellugcellaqiki assiilnguput,  
 wangkuta pellugcilaucimcetun cangayugcetaartemtenek,  
 cali assiilngircetengnaqumallemteni assiilngircetaanrilkuk,  
 taugaam aviuskut iqlum tungiinek.

**Amen.**<sup>5</sup>

### Endnotes

1. “Alaska Population 2016,” World Population Review, accessed May 22, 2016, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/states/alaska-population>.
2. “Alaska Native Tribes,” Alaskan Nature, accessed May 22, 2016, [www.alaskannature.com/natives.htm](http://www.alaskannature.com/natives.htm).
3. “Provisional Annual Conferences,” Petition Number: 60278-CO-¶580-G, *The Advance Daily Christian Advocate: The General Conference of The United Methodist Church 2016*, vol. 1, May 2016, 457.
4. “Mission District,” Petition Number: 60529-MH-¶415.4-G 2016, *The Advance Daily Christian Advocate: The General Conference of The United Methodist Church 2016*, vol. 1, May 2016, 1156.
5. “Christus Rex,” accessed May 27, 2016, [www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/JPN-yupik-kuigpaq.html](http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/JPN-yupik-kuigpaq.html). Used with permission.

## SESSION 3

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# TWO CONTEXTS AND A COMMON HISTORY: APPALACHIA RED BIRD AND OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCES

(Chapters 5 and 6)



### Preparation

- Gather the material needed to make the corn husk doll (Appendix D).
- Cue the Missionary Conferences DVD to the third segment.
- Identify traditional mountain songs to be played from your computer or a CD player as participants enter the room.

### Background

Red Bird and Oklahoma Missionary Conferences share a common history in the sense that the inhabitants of both live in dire poverty due largely to the exploitation of their lands by privileged groups. Both conferences are located within the boundaries of other conferences with predominantly European-American membership with whom they share episcopal leaders while they function as independent entities. In addition, Native Americans once inhabited the area where the Red Bird Missionary Conference is currently located.

### RED BIRD MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

The Red Bird Missionary Conference, located in eastern Kentucky and part of Central Appalachia (often known as the region's core), is a product of all three predecessor denominations to The United Methodist Church. The Board of Mission of the Evangelical Church began Red Bird Mission in 1921 in Bell County as a worship place that was followed by an educational endeavor in 1922.<sup>1</sup> Later, the mission became Red Bird Mission District of the Evangelical Church. In 1925, the Board of Mission of the Methodist Church established a mission among the valley's people, which later became the Henderson Settlement. Soon, the Church of the Brethren became established in the Cumberland areas of the Cumberland Mission District, which became the Kentucky Missionary Conference. Upon the merger of the Evangelical Church and the Church of the Brethren to become the United Church of the Brethren in 1955, and the merger of the United Church of the Brethren and the Methodist Church to become The United Methodist Church in 1968, the mission was granted

missionary conference status and received its current name, Red Bird Missionary Conference. The membership of the Red Bird Missionary Conference spreads across the rural mountain communities. This region of eastern Kentucky has been devastated by dire poverty as a result of the method of coal mining known as mountaintop removal. The Red Bird Missionary Conference continues to meet the needs of the impoverished Appalachian families through ministries in “Education, Health and Wellness, Community Outreach, Economic Opportunities, and Community Housing Improvement”<sup>2</sup> as well as addressing their spiritual needs through twenty-eight congregations.

## **OKLAHOMA INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE**

The original inhabitants of Oklahoma were comprised of seven groups: The Plains Apache, the Arapaho, the Caddo, the Comanche, the Kiowa, the Osage, and the Wichita tribes. As part of the American policy of Indian removal, the U.S. government designated Oklahoma as “Indian Territory.” Consequently, a significant number of tribes moved to Oklahoma either “voluntarily” or forcibly. The wave of indigenous people moving to Oklahoma included some missionaries who were quick to spread Christian practices. The 1844 General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) created the Indian Mission Conference (IMC) in the episcopal area of Arkansas and Missouri. Following the schism of MEC over the issue of slavery, the IMC decided to join the MEC (South) because, in addition to being part of the Arkansas and Missouri conferences, the IMC had “many ties to Tennessee and Mississippi Methodism.”<sup>3</sup> The northern church created its own Indian Mission in 1880 and gave it mission conference status in 1889 and reorganized it into the Oklahoma Annual Conference in 1892. In 1972 The United Methodist Church General Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, granted conference status to the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference (OIMC) with two limitations: 1) elders and deacons ordained in the OIMC could only serve within that conference and 2) its delegates did receive voice but not voting rights in the church decision-making body. The 1976 General Conference lifted both of those unfair limitations. Today, OIMC continues to minister to Native American people not only in Oklahoma but also in Kansas, Missouri, and Texas through eighty-five churches and fellowships. Several of those congregations have been in existence for more than 150 years.

## **Greetings**

Welcome participants as they arrive.

## **Opening Worship (10 Minutes)**

**SCRIPTURE:** AMOS 5:6–24

## **REFLECTION**

Ask participants to reread Amos 5:6–24. In verses 12–13, the prophet reminds the people of Israel that by their silence, they are complicit in the injustices perpetrated against the innocent ones. As participants reflect on their reading of Chapters 5 and 6 of the text, ask them to note in their journal instances where the church kept silent when injustice was being perpetrated against the indigenous people and/or the people in the Appalachian region.

## SONG

“We n̄de ya ho (The Cherokee Morning Song),” *For Everyone Born*, no. 3 (see Appendix F). Watch this YouTube video to hear the tune and how the song is sung: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk).

## PRAYER: ADAPTED FROM THE CHOCTAW SPIRITUAL PRAYER<sup>4</sup> (UNISON)

Oh Great Spirit Father, who sits on high beyond the heavens, grant me the vision to see beyond tomorrow’s horizon, yet still accept my daily trials that must and will be faced to survive. Let the trails that bore my ancestors blood and tears, and the chains that bound their freedom, serve as reminders to all of our hate and savagery against one another, and ensure its trust that we as a people choose never to repeat such ignorance. Guide my feet down the passage of forgiveness of those who have severed my tribal ties, and help me to bind them once more. May your spirit continue to heal and instill within me the meaning of this spiritual prayer, and trust that I use it to serve you well. **Amen!**

## Quick Review (10 Minutes)

Invite participants to share:

- New insights gained from Session 2.
- Any questions Session 2 generated.

## A Glimpse into Appalachian Culture (10 Minutes)

Traditional Appalachian culture has been preserved mostly by families and churches that pass down traditional arts and crafts, music, foods, and customs. Many traditions continue to survive, although many people who grew up here try to distance themselves from the “hillbilly-ness” that is associated with the inhabitants of this region. “Many young people try to forget the traditional ways and notions and adopt the new ways of thinking.”<sup>5</sup>

## Activity

Discuss the **response** article “Singing the Faith” found online at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/singing-the-faith](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/singing-the-faith). Then choose one of the following activities:

1. Make a corn husk doll. (If selected, provide participants with the material necessary to complete the work before the final session. See Appendix D.) The corn husk doll is a 300-year-old tradition passed down to the Appalachian people by the American Indians. These dolls are a popular form of folk art.
2. Play one or two videos about the history of Appalachian musical instruments such as dulcimers, fiddles, washboards, spoons, jugs, and banjos. This is a YouTube video of a dulcimer being played [www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8nnPrGSUBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8nnPrGSUBs). However, there are many videos about Appalachian instruments to choose from. Be sure to obtain appropriate permission before showing them in the session.

## **Coal and Climate** (10 Minutes)

Watch “Appalachian Mountaintop Removal” at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiSzOiGFa-0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiSzOiGFa-0) (4:27 minutes).

1. Ask participants to enter their zip code on Google Maps to find out whether or not their neighborhood uses coal for electricity. This activity may be assigned to participants before the event by asking them to visit <http://ilovemountains.org> and familiarize themselves with the issue. If pre-assigned, they should be asked to share their findings at this point in the session. If not, make sure to check with the dean if wireless Internet will be available on-site so the activity can be assigned as homework after viewing the video. In that case, the sharing can occur at the next session.
2. Discuss the impact of climate degradation on the Appalachian region.

## **Time with the Text: Part 1** (20 Minutes)

### **LARGE GROUP REVIEW**

- Ask the volunteers to summarize their reading from Chapter 5.
- Invite participants to discuss/share any additional points.

### **SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

Divide the class into four groups. Assign one of the three vignettes (Betty Letzig, found under the headline “On Becoming a Missionary Conference,” Marilyn Osbourne, and Farley Stuart) to each group. NOTE: Two groups will work on Betty Letzig’s story.

#### **Betty Letzig** (Groups 1 and 2)

Letzig stated: “The fate of Red Bird Mission hung in the balance when the union between the Evangelical United Brethren (EUB) and the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) took place.”

Upon reading her story and in light of the information provided in the chapter in general, but particularly that which retraces the history of Red Bird, one group will argue why they believe the mission of The United Methodist Church with the Appalachian people would be best fulfilled if the next General Conference were to decide to discontinue the missionary conference status of Red Bird and integrate the churches and missions into the surrounding districts and/or conferences. Ask the other group to argue why they believe the mission of The United Methodist Church would be hindered if the Red Bird Missionary Conference were no longer a presence in the Appalachian Mountains.

#### **Marilyn Osbourne** (Group 3)

In her conversation with Craig, the author of the study, Osbourne made the following statement referring to the missionaries and volunteers at Red Bird Missionary Conference: “They exemplify true mutuality in mission by forming deep relationships and partnerships.” Based on the story and information from the chapter, discuss the evidence of mutuality and partnership between the missionaries and volunteers with Red Bird; and Red Bird with the Appalachian community.

### **Farley Stuart** (Group 4)

Stuart began by describing the Red Bird Missionary Conference as “one of the most comprehensive mission efforts of The United Methodist Church in the United States,” and he concluded with the statement: “It takes the support of the entire United Methodist Church to meet our needs.” Discuss ways your specific annual conference can be in a covenantal relationship with Red Bird Missionary Conference.

### **Break** (10 Minutes)

### **Trail of Tears** (15 Minutes)

Watch a video related to the Trail of Tears or the Indian Removal Act. There are many videos telling the Trail of Tears story on YouTube; some are longer than others. Be sure to obtain the appropriate permission to show the video in the classroom (the owners of the videos listed below have granted permission to show their videos in the classroom). If a longer video is chosen, it is suggested, as part of the advance preparation, to preview the entire video and select appropriate segments to play, as time is limited.

**Suggested list of videos:** This is only a partial list.

- “The Trail of Tears: They Knew It Was Wrong” (16:39 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalhDKLrWEQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalhDKLrWEQ)
- “The Trail of Tears as told by Johnny Cash, Part I” (7:40 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW8rIM2INN8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qW8rIM2INN8)
- “The Trail of Tears as told by Johnny Cash, Part II” (7:27 minutes)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RIJ\\_hFPDFE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RIJ_hFPDFE)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

After discussing the video content, ask participants to reflect on the following question: How can we, twenty-first-century United Methodists, bring changes that will lead to reparation?

### **Time with the Text: Part 2** (25 Minutes)

Craig wrote, “. . . sometimes the larger church makes decisions without understanding its own history. On the face of it, OIMC cannot really afford its ministries, but The United Methodist Church cannot afford to live without the OIMC.”

Divide participants into six groups, and assign one of the three testimonies in Chapter 6 to each group: David Wilson (groups 1 and 2), Anita Phillips (groups 3 and 4), and Jalisa Ross (groups 5 and 6).

In light of the information provided in both Chapter 6 and the 2014 Native American Leadership letter (Appendix C), for each vignette, one group will argue why they believe the mission of The United Methodist Church with the Native Americans would still be effective if the next General

Conference were to decide to change the status of OIMC and integrate the churches into the surrounding districts/conferences. While the other group will argue why they believe the mission of the church with the Native Americans would suffer if OIMC was no longer an “autonomous conference” making the decisions for its ministry among the native community.

Ask each group to select two people, one to record their main arguments on newsprint, and one to debate the opposing group.

### **Preparation for Session 4** (5 Minutes)

Assign reading: Chapter 7; “It Takes a Village” from **response** February 2012 issue, found online at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/it-takes-a-village](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/it-takes-a-village), and “Help for New Moms in Kentucky” from **response** December 2014 issue, found at [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/help-for-new-moms-in-kentucky](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/help-for-new-moms-in-kentucky).<sup>6</sup>

Ask two or three volunteers to summarize key points in the chapter and the articles to share with the whole group when you meet again. Additionally, ask three other volunteers to share, in two minutes or less, a summary of their biblical reflections during the closing commitment service.

### **Video** (15 Minutes)

Watch the third segment off the Missionary Conferences DVD and reflect on the questions below.

1. Lilla stated: “Those who live and work in the Red Bird Missionary Conference know that a lack of opportunity can be turned into an abundance of possibility.” What evidence have you found, whether in this video segment or in the text, that supports such a statement?
2. The Rev. Stigall stated: “The purpose of the Red Bird Missionary Conference is to make disciples in the heart of Appalachia.” How is The United Methodist Church fulfilling the Great Commission through the presence of the Red Bird Missionary Conference in the Appalachian Mountains?

### **Closing Worship** (5 Minutes)

Play Appalachian instrumental music and conclude with the closing prayer.

#### **CLOSING PRAYER: A PRAYER FOR THE MOUNTAINS<sup>7</sup>**

by Mary Jane Hitt, a West Virginia native

O Divine Spirit,  
Spirit of wind and water,  
of mountain and majesty,  
of all creatures great and small:

Hear our prayer of thanksgiving  
for the world that we take for granted,  
for your gracious gifts that we do not earn,  
for the daily blessings that we do not merit;

Hear our prayer of confession  
as we acknowledge our self-absorption,  
our short-sightedness;  
our failure to care for all creation;

Hear our prayer of supplication  
for the mountains, and those who love them;  
for the mountains, and those who live in them;  
for the mountains, and those who work to preserve and protect them;

Bring us to that day when  
the rivers will clap their hands  
and the mountains will sing together for joy.

**Amen.**

## Endnotes

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1. "Guide to the Red Bird Mission Records," Berea College, accessed August 4, 2016, <http://community.berea.edu/hutchinslibrary/specialcollections/saa44.asp>.
2. Red Bird Missionary Conference, accessed August 4, 2016, [www.redbirdconference.org/index.php](http://www.redbirdconference.org/index.php).
3. Tash Smith, "The Indian Roots of Oklahoma's Methodism: 'We may not be the same color, but we are the same in heart,'" General Commission on Archives and History, accessed August 3, 2016, <http://archives.gcah.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10516/3045/Methodist-History-2012-01-Smith.pdf?sequence=1>.
4. Jacqueline Williams Rippy, "Choctaw Spiritual Prayer," accessed May 25, 2016, [www.jayepurplewolf.com/PHOENIX/choctawspiritualprayer.htm](http://www.jayepurplewolf.com/PHOENIX/choctawspiritualprayer.htm).
5. "Appalachian Culture," North American Mission Board, accessed June 7, 2016, [www.namb.net/send-relief/arm/appalachian-culture](http://www.namb.net/send-relief/arm/appalachian-culture).
6. Annette Spence, "Help for New Moms in Kentucky," **response**, December 2014, [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/help-for-new-moms-in-kentucky](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/help-for-new-moms-in-kentucky).
7. Mary Jane Hitt, "A Prayer for the Mountains," iLoveMountains.org, accessed May 25, 2016, <http://ilovemountains.org/prayers/94>.

## SESSION 4

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# **DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN LANGUAGE CONFERENCES: THE CENTRAL JURISDICTION AND THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCES**

(Chapter 7)



### **Preparation**

- Gather the needed materials for the commitment service: index cards (three per participant), pens/pencils/markers, and basket.
- Cue the Missionary Conferences DVD to the fourth segment.

### **Background**

The Central Jurisdiction was a segregated jurisdiction that existed from 1939 until the union in 1968. It was formed through the “union” of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North and South)—a church that earlier split over slavery. The unification created five jurisdictions based on location, except the Central Jurisdiction, which was made up of the black conferences. Very early in the history of American Methodism, congregations were formed and are still begun today according to language and ethnic affinities. Separate language conferences continued to be a part of American Methodist traditions until the Rio Grande Conference, the most recent separate language conference, was disbanded and absorbed into annual conferences in Texas and New Mexico in 2014.

It is important to understand that there is a great difference between missionary conferences, language or ethnic conferences, and the Central Jurisdiction. Although all three entities are tinted with racism and economic injustice, they should not be looked at through the same lenses.

The language conferences came to existence as a means to keep congregants who worshiped in the same language together and to help preserve their cultural identity, which is also true for the denomination’s ethnic minority churches today. It is believed that in the United States, United Methodist members worship every week in about twenty known languages. In most instances, those congregations are served by a pastor who shares their language and culture. Just like the ethnic congregations, in most cases the language conferences were either created at the request of the congregations or interested parties, or such a decision was welcomed by the membership of those

conferences. For example, the Rio Grande Conference was given the option for the Hispanic/Latino churches to merge with Anglo conferences or to exist as a separate entity before their merger. They chose to remain a language conference.

In contrast, the Central Jurisdiction was imposed on the black membership as a compromise between the white membership for the union of the MEC (South) and the MEC (North). The black membership had no say in the racist decision to create the Central Jurisdiction. They wept on the floor of the General Conference as the white leadership sealed the deal as if they were invisible, as recorded in *American Methodism: A Compact History*:

For African Methodists, the creation of a racially segregated Central Jurisdiction was an especially humiliating disappointment... It began the campaign to end its own life virtually with its own creation, and continued it as a quest for a fuller affirmation of Methodist inclusiveness throughout the 1950's and 1960's.<sup>1</sup>

It wasn't until the 1968 union with the Evangelical United Brethren Church that the segregated Central Jurisdiction was abolished.

The former Rio Grande Conference and the three current missionary conferences, although serving communities that share a history, language, and to some extent a cultural identity, were created under different circumstances than the Central Jurisdiction. Those conferences are, rather, a part of the missional and historical work for social justice of The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations. The existence of the missionary conferences serves as a constant reminder that we must be a welcoming church, practicing radical hospitality not only with our words but also by our actions. Their existence is indeed in contrast with the Central Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church.

## **Opening Worship** (10 Minutes)

### **SCRIPTURE**

Reread Amos 5:6–24.

### **REFLECTION**

Ask participants to reread the Amos scripture. In this passage, the people of Israel are told of their duties and to be honest, just, and serious in the applications of these duties. The Israelites also received great encouragement to be earnest in their dealings with humankind. Each of these duties is pressed upon them with proper arguments to enforce the exhortation.

In this session we will deepen our understanding of the assimilation, acculturation, and oppression that indigenous people have experienced throughout their history. This history is also related to The United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations in relationship with the missionary conferences. Invite the participants to reflect on the Amos passage and note in their journals

specific examples supporting whether or not they think The United Methodist Church, through its agencies, including United Methodist Women, is fulfilling the duties set by God in dealing with the missionary conferences.

## SONG

“We nde ya ho (The Cherokee Morning Song),” *For Everyone Born*, no. 3 (see Appendix F). Watch this YouTube video to hear the tune and how the song is sung: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk).

## READING: PSALM 56:8–13 (UNISON)

You have kept count of my tossings;  
put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not in your record?  
Then my enemies will retreat  
in the day when I call.  
This I know, that God is for me.  
In God, whose word I praise,  
in the Lord, whose word I praise,  
In God I trust; I am not afraid.  
What can a mere mortal do to me?  
My vows to you I must perform, O God;  
I will render thank offerings to you.  
For you have delivered my soul from death,  
and my feet from falling,  
so that I may walk before God  
in the light of life.

## Quick Review (15 Minutes)

Invite participants to share:

- New insights gained from Session 3.
- Any questions Session 3 generated.
- The results of the coal survey exercise if this was not done in the previous session.
- When it comes to alternative sources of energy, how can we balance what’s good for the environment with what’s good for people’s livelihoods?

## Time with the Text (30 Minutes)

Ask some volunteers to summarize their reading of Chapter 7 and invite participants to share any additional points that were not already shared.

Divide the class into small groups, no larger than six people. Ask the groups to choose a recorder and a reporter. They will record their answers on the flip chart. Invite the groups to reflect on Chapter 7 and to answer the following questions.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Craig wrote in Chapter 7: “Today, virtually all churches are struggling for members and money, but African Americans were hit hardest by the great recession in 2008 brought on by deregulation of banks and mortgage industries.” Do you think the African-American churches would have a greater chance of survival if they had been organized as a missionary conference during the time of the 1968 union?
2. Focusing on the history of the former Rio Grande Missionary Conference as described in Chapter 7, as well as the current debate regarding the state of the missionary conferences, discuss the similarities between the former Rio Grande Conference and the current missionary conferences.
3. Read Barton’s recount of the church’s attempts to merge the Rio Grande Conference prior to 2006, found at the end of the section titled “Rio Grande Conference” in Chapter 7 of the main study. What do you think The United Methodist Church lost or gained by merging the Rio Grande Conference with other conferences? Discuss.

## Video (15 minutes)

Watch the fourth segment off the Missionary Conferences DVD and reflect on the questions below.

1. Reflecting on the General Conference “Act of Repentance” services, what actions/steps do you believe should/could be taken to make these services more than an exercise in support of Native Americans, but rather a step toward reparation?
2. What is your understanding of Rev. Wilson’s statement: “Reconciliation, it’s not a one-step process; it sometimes takes a lifetime”?

## Break (10 Minutes)

### United Methodist Women’s Ministries with the Missionary Conferences

United Methodist Women have been in ministry with missionary conferences for over a century. The partnership is still very tangible through the United Methodist Women–supported National Mission Institutions serving the needs of women, children, and youth and their families in the United States (Appendix E).

There are two United Methodist Women Mission Giving–supported National Mission Institutions in Alaska and three in Red Bird. The two National Mission Institutions in Alaska are AK Child & Family located in Anchorage, and Nome Community Center located in Nome. Nome Community Center has been in existence for over 100 years and was “born from the hearts of United Methodist women to address the needs of the community.”<sup>2</sup>

The Red Bird Mission began in 1919 by the Woman’s Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church, one of United Methodist Women’s predecessor organizations. Red Bird Clinic and Red Bird Mission Schools have been in operation in the Appalachian Mountains since 1921. United Methodist Women’s relationship with Henderson Settlement began at its earliest state in 1925 with the assignment

of Deaconess Berta Rell as the first teacher at the school. Today, United Methodist Women continues the partnership with Red Bird Missionary Conference through the conference's two National Mission Institutions: Henderson Settlement and Red Bird Mission.

Through these National Mission Institutions, United Methodist Women members are turning their faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of children, women, and youth with their Mission Giving, their prayers, and their time through volunteers' hours.

### **Activity** (20 Minutes)

Choose one of the activities below or, if you have a large class, divide the class into groups and do all three activities.

A. Watch the first twelve minutes of the Nome Community Center's former executive director David Elmore reflecting on the importance of the presence of the community center in Nome, and United Methodist Women's contribution and commitment to this ministry: <https://vimeo.com/48205495>. Discuss how the Nome Community Center seeks to help the community to become whole.

B. Ask the selected participants to summarize the two assigned **response** articles: "It Takes a Village," about the work of the Wesley Community Center, a United Methodist Women-supported Mission Institution of the former Rio Grande Conference in Amarillo, Texas, and "Help for New Moms in Kentucky," showcasing the volunteer work of United Methodist Women members with one of the Henderson Settlement Center programs, in partnership with Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ask participants to brainstorm, in their groups, ways their local units can get involved in the ministries of these National Mission Institutions in general, but particularly ways they can get involved in the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) Program.

C. Ask participants to read the sections in Chapter 4 of the study text on the Nome Community Center, Jesse Lee Home and AK Child & Family as well as the sections in Chapter 5 titled "Red Bird Missionary Conference Serving the Community," "The Red Bird Christian High School" and "The Red Bird Community Clinic and Outreach" and discuss the following question:

How does United Methodist Women partnership with the missionary conferences through National Mission Institutions reflect the concept of mutuality in mission?

### **Commitment Service** (20 Minutes)

Prior to the commitment service, give three index cards to each participant, allow them up to two minutes to write anonymously on one card something they want to ask God forgiveness for (it might be personal or communal). On the second card, they will write at least one action they want to make to bring changes for God's people living on the boundaries of society in the missionary conferences (it might be in the church or society). On the third card, they will copy what they wrote on the second card. They may choose to put their names on those cards.

## MEDITATION

Invite those previously asked to share their journal reflections.

### SCRIPTURE: AMOS 5:21–24 FROM *THE MESSAGE*

I can't stand your religious meetings.

I'm fed up with your conferences and conventions.

I want nothing to do with your religion projects,

your pretentious slogans and goals.

I'm sick of your fund-raising schemes,

your public relations and image making.

I've had all I can take of your noisy ego-music.

When was the last time you sang to *me*?

Do you know what I want?

I want justice—oceans of it.

I want fairness—rivers of it.

That's what I want. That's *all* I want.

## HYMN

“Help Us Accept Each Other,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 560

During the hymn, participants will place the first anonymous card asking for forgiveness in the basket at the front of the room.

## PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Invite participants to stand in a circle and lift up the basket as each person says a one-sentence prayer as the Holy Spirit leads them. Once everyone who feels led to do so has prayed, the group will respond:

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen**

Participants will keep one of their repeat cards and then choose another person to exchange the second card with. The pairs will enter into a covenant to keep each other accountable to their promises to work for changes. (Allow two minutes for the exchanges.)

## CLOSING HYMN

“Here I Am, Lord,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 593

## Endnotes

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1. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *American Methodism: A Compact History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), 177.
2. “About Us,” Nome Community Center, accessed May 22, 2016, [www.nomecc.org/about-us.html](http://www.nomecc.org/about-us.html).

## APPENDIX A



### COVENANT



From *The Journey: Forgiveness, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation*.<sup>1</sup>

We covenant to prepare prayerfully and carefully for the study.

Speak with respect.

- Be honest—saying what you think, not what you think you should say.
- Speak only for yourself.
- Speak in a way that encourages dialogue.
- Be brief and to the point.

Listen with respect.

- Listen for understanding the text and one another.
- Try to understand perspectives that differ from yours and respect the fact that the goal is not consensus on the meaning of a text but learning and sharing.
- Carefully hold all the differences together.
- Be open to new viewpoints, new ideas—to being transformed.

Keep confidential those personal stories shared in the group.

#### Endnotes

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1. Stephanie Hixon and Tom Porter, *The Journey: Forgiveness, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation* (New York: Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2011), 16.

# APPENDIX B

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## ALASKAN NATIVE GAMES<sup>1</sup>



### Yupik Games

#### 1. ANGKALUTN (KEEP AWAY) (AGER)

**Materials:** A ball.

**Players:** Any number from three on up.

**Procedures:** A ball is used as the object which one team attempts to toss back and forth to each other without letting any member of the opposite team catch it. If a member of the opposite team succeeds in catching the ball, the teams switch roles. No score is kept and there are no readily apparent field lines or boundaries.

#### 2. CHUKI-CHUKI (AGER)

**Materials:** None.

**Players:** Even number of players.

**Procedures:** This is a rhyming game, which also involves physical coordination. A pair holds hands facing each other and chants “chu-ki, e-mak-o-chuk, tal-le-o-chuk.” At the same time, they move their linked arms in a prescribed pattern. To the first four syllables (chuki, chuki) the first player pushes his

right arm forward, so that the second player’s left arm goes back, and at the same time pulls his left arm back, bringing the second player’s right arm forward. This is done four times. To “emakochuk,” one pair of arms is crossed over the other, and to “talleochuk,” the second pair of arms is crossed over the first. The players attempt to do this faster and faster, testing both verbal fluency and physical coordination.

### Aleut Games

#### 1. QUILTS GAME #2

**Materials:** Green cloth mat, wooden rings, and counters.

**Players:** Two players or two teams.

**Procedures:** A green cloth mat with a colored stripe represents the mat (traditionally a seal’s skin was used for a mat). Players toss wooden rings toward the stripe while sitting or squatting on the ground. Points are scored for those rings that land closest to the stripe.

### Endnotes

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1. “Alaska Native Games: A Resource Guide,” ANKN, accessed May 22, 2016, [www.ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/NativeGames/resource.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/NativeGames/resource.html). Used with permission.

## APPENDIX C

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### **MAY 2014 OPEN LETTER FROM NATIVE AMERICAN LEADERSHIP TO THE FIVE JURISDICTIONS<sup>1</sup>**



May 22, 2014

The United Methodist Church of the Five  
U.S. Jurisdictions, United States of America

Dear Sisters and Brothers of the United Methodist Church:

It is with the greatest urgency that we, the Executive Director of the Native American Comprehensive Plan, the Chairperson of the Native American International Caucus and the Executive Secretary of Native American and Indigenous Ministries of the General Board of Global Ministries, write this open letter to our denomination, to share with you our critical concern for the life of Native American and Indigenous ministries of The United Methodist Church (UMC) in the United States.

We testify to you the wonderful and gifted presence of our many Native American tribal communities, each unique in culture and language, many with a historic Methodist presence and witness spanning over 200 years. Many of these Native nations brought Methodism with them as they made their tragic death marches during the “Trails of Tears” and other historic Native removals. We have watched them faithfully serve the call of Christ Jesus, oftentimes in the face of great obstacles as they sought recovery from historical trauma.

Over the course of our service to the church, we have labored diligently to listen, enact, encourage and fulfill our calling to our Native community, celebrating both our indigenous and Christian identities. In recent years we have witnessed demanding and destructive burdens placed upon Native American churches, fellowships and ministries which threaten the survival of a Native American presence within the UMC.

Ministry with poor people in the U.S. most assuredly includes the ministry *of* Native American disciples and ministry *with* Native American communities. In some cases, clergy and lay ministers have devotedly served pulpits while receiving only love offerings that would not provide even a

tank of gas. This happened not only in the past, but continues today. We walk in the footsteps of our grandmothers and grandfathers who served and continue to serve as Sunday school teachers, lay leaders and vacation Bible school leaders, giving every penny and every ounce of strength to their churches and ministries. They do so as a way of honoring the Creator and ensuring that their ministry survives into future generations. More directly put, our ancestors lived sacrificial lives for the sake of the Gospel, and for the survival of the Native American presence in this denomination.

At the same time we have witnessed faithful leaders coming forth to serve, only to be disillusioned by the systemic pressures of the institutional church. These pressures are rooted in the dynamics of what constitutes being “church” in United Methodism. The church institution seems to define who is worthy of being part of the UMC as measured against financial reports, apportionment figures and year-end reports. Our presence in the UMC is in danger of being extinguished because we cannot meet certain criteria and vital definitions required by our denomination. Additionally, Christianity, as missionized to indigenous peoples across the centuries, continues to exist in a historical vacuum without acknowledgement of the cultural backdrop documenting its evolution and relevance to most Native Americans today. These burdens have squeezed Native Ministries to the point of erosion and have destabilized the effectiveness of the UMC to witness to the power of the Gospel.

We write this letter now with hope of awakening our church from its slumber. Today, environmental, cultural and economic injustice threaten the ongoing survival of indigenous peoples throughout the world and clearly represent a threat to Native peoples in the U.S., and the presence of Native peoples in the UMC. We are the peoples to which our Creator saw fit to entrust this sacred land. We are the nations John Wesley believed were worthy sons and daughters of God when he began his ministry in Georgia. While we are concerned with our continued presence in this country, we are also concerned about our long-term presence in United Methodism.

This is a crucial time in the life of The United Methodist Church. We have now recognized that sometimes slowly, and sometimes by leaps and bounds, our numbers in the U.S. have dwindled. We, as Native Christians, also know how it feels to see our people in decline. We believe this is a time when our UMC can make a vital difference in the lives of our families, communities and nations; and we, your indigenous brothers and sisters, can offer our wisdom and gifts to the UMC, if we cultivate and tend our partnership.

As you are aware, our denomination has entered a time of working toward healing relationships with Native American and indigenous peoples through an Act of Repentance (AOR) at the 2012 General Conference. It is our denomination’s attempt at correcting the harms and trauma that have been and continue to be inflicted upon indigenous communities. We have had conversations and questions from some of our brothers and sisters in annual conferences who are earnestly working on their own journeys toward services of repentance. We have also heard of unreasonable pressures related to AOR activities being placed upon some of our annual conference Committees on Native American Ministries (CONAMs), Native American clergy and laity, and Native American Ministries

in general. Because we feel this is an urgent matter, we are sharing these recommendations with the UMC for its work surrounding AOR activities and the work related to Native American Ministries:

1. An AOR Service of Repentance is only a starting point for annual conferences, not the end. Bishops, Cabinets and annual conferences must realize that there can be no timeline to “complete” this work. This will be an ongoing task of The United Methodist Church.
2. Any AOR actions must be conducted in communication with Native American peoples within each annual conference. This can be done with CONAMs, Native American fellowships, Native American organizations and/or local tribal communities. (It is inaccurate and insufficient to say, “We have no Native Americans in our conference.”) Annual conference commissions on archives and history should provide leadership in this effort as well.
3. It is inappropriate and even sinful to insist that the Native American community plan this W01k for the annual conferences. Any actions of repentance must be led by the non-Native American leadership of the annual conference, including the provision of financial support for meetings, trainings, publications, etc. that the conference deems necessary,
4. The structures and organizations of the church must recognize it is inappropriate to telescope Native American Ministries under the broader umbrella of “Racial-Ethnic Ministries,” assigning this crucial ministry to a single person who in many cases is not a Native American. It is the purpose of conference CONAMS to determine the distribution of the Native American Ministries Sunday Offering, coordinate the promotion of Native American Ministries Sunday, and monitor Native American ministries with the annual conference (§654). If the work of the CONAM is relegated to a single person under the umbrella of “Racial-Ethnic Ministries” or “Connectional Table” structures, how can the Disciplinary directive be appropriately carried out? It is particularly important that Native American United Methodist persons be engaged in this work or we find ourselves back in all-too-familiar situations where non-Natives make decisions for Native people related to the creation and conduct of Native ministries.

Additionally, it is outside the letter and intent of *The Book of Discipline* to combine gifts given through the Native American Ministries Sunday Offering with the wider field of Racial-Ethnic Ministries or Connectional Table funding decisions, or to insist that these funds be used for AOR work in annual conferences. In many conferences this offering constitutes the entire budget for ministry with Native Americans. Annual conference participation in the promotion of Native American Ministries Sunday is essential for both the actual realized funding that it provides, but also symbolically for the sense of affirmation offered to Native Americans inside and outside of the UMC.

5. Engaging in repentance for historic and contemporary actions against indigenous peoples must include a plan for restoration of right relationship with Native Americans in each conference. Examples of what might be included in such a plan are:
  - to work toward fully implementing §654 including the identification of a representative to advocate for Native American awareness within the local church/charge;
  - encouraging churches to give to Native American Ministries Sunday; in this way, there are funds within the conference to strengthen and initiate new Native ministries;

- investing in resources related to Native Americans which may enrich the conference’s “lending library” for local churches;
  - including Native American representation from conference boards and committees;
  - and when a local church is closed by the conference, explore all the ways the physical property may be used to benefit Native Americans, such as leasing properties to CONAMs or other Native groups, designating proceeds of property sales for new or existing Native churches/ministries and/or deeding property back to indigenous nations, etc. Conference Native Americans must participate in these critical discussions and decisions.
6. Annual conferences must develop a process for the education of local churches regarding Native Americans and the related history within their conference boundaries. Annual conference commissions on archives and history should provide leadership in this effort. Archivists and historians found in universities and colleges and resource persons from Departments of Native American Studies can also provide valuable information.
  7. The United Methodist Church must acknowledge and respond to the real and recurring trauma experienced by Native American communities, honoring the continued hope we maintain in our People, in our call and in our Creator.

We pray that our letter and our recommendations are received in the same Spirit with which they are offered—the Spirit of Hope. It is our greatest fear that this repentance movement will be only token in nature, not producing any tangible change and resulting in the continued erosion of our presence, even until our light as part of the United Methodist Church is extinguished.

A more detailed document related to many of the issues raised in this letter, *The Study on Native American Evangelism and Discipleship*, is planned for publication in the fall of 2014, written by the Rev. Anita Phillips. Ms. Cynthia Kent is available for consultation related to advocacy and organization of CONAMs within conferences and jurisdictions. Additionally, the Rev. Chebon Kernell has the specific responsibility to work with Bishops and annual conferences in the work of AOR and is available for consultation. A tool kit for AOR is available through his office.

With the sincerest blessings for the work at hand,

*Anita Phillips*  
Anita Phillips

*Cynthia Kent*  
Cynthia Kent

*Chebon Kernell*  
Chebon Kernell

## Endnotes

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1. Anita Phillips, Cynthia Kent, and Chebon Kernell, “An Open Letter to All United Methodist Bishops Serving in the United States,” May 22, 2014, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website\\_Properties/news-media/documents/open\\_letter-on\\_act-of-repentance.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/Website_Properties/news-media/documents/open_letter-on_act-of-repentance.pdf). Used by permission.

## APPENDIX D

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# HOW TO MAKE CORN HUSK DOLLS<sup>1</sup>



### Materials:

String or twine

Scissors

Bowl of warm water

9–12 pieces of green corn husk\*

\*The corn husk you use to construct your doll should be green and not dried. Green corn husk can be purchased from any craft store. You can also use green corn husk you peel from a corn cob yourself. If you must use dried husks, before beginning the construction phase, soak all corn husks in a large bowl of warm water to make them more pliable. Green corn husks which are purchased or fresh can be treated in this manner also, though it isn't usually necessary.

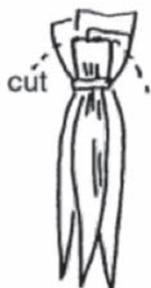
### DIRECTIONS



1. Take four cornhusks and arrange them in as shown.



2. Using a small piece of string, tie the straight ends together tightly.



3. Trim and round the edges with scissors.



4. Turn upside down and pull long ends of husks down over the trimmed edges.

5. Tie with string to form the "head."



6. Take another husk, flatten it, and roll into a tight cylinder.



7. Tie each end with string. This forms the doll's arms.



8. Fit the arms inside of the long husks, just below the "neck."



9. Tie with string, as shown, to form a "waist."



10. Drape a husk around the arms and upper body in a criss-cross pattern to form "shoulders."



11. Take four or five husks, straight edges together, and arrange around waist. These form a "skirt" for the doll.



12. Tie with string.



13. If desired, follow the diagram at right to form legs for the doll. Tie legs with small strips of husks as indicated. Finish off the doll by tying small strips of husk around the neck and waist to hide the string. Small scraps of cloth may be used to dress the doll.



## DECORATING YOUR DOLL

**Traditionally** an Indian child would fashion clothing for her doll similar to what was worn by her own culture. Hair would be made from horse hair or animal furs. The doll would have no facial features. To learn why, read “Seneca Story of the Corn Husk Doll” at [www.nativetech.org/cornhusk/dollstry.html](http://www.nativetech.org/cornhusk/dollstry.html).

However, you may decorate your own corn husk doll however you like. Small children will be able to decorate with colored construction paper, crayons, and markers. You can attach paper clothing, jewelry, facial features, and other items with a small dot of household glue. Older children can make clothing from fabric, additional pieces of corn husk or many other items.

**Facial features** such as eyes, ears, noses, and mouths can be drawn on with permanent markers or crayons. Craft eyes, yarn mouths, and more can also be attached to your doll with glue.

### MODERN DECORATING IDEAS

**Make a skirt** for your corn husk doll out of a fresh piece of husk. Simply wrap around the waistline and tie off with a piece of twine or colored yarn. You can decorate your skirt beforehand with markers or crayons.

**Colored yarn** can be bent in the shape of a smile or ears and glued into place for instant facial features on your corn husk doll.

**Color your corn husks** by soaking them in food coloring to make colored clothing or skin

for your corn husk doll. Soak husks for thirty minutes in a large bowl containing warm water and several drops of your desired color. To make vibrant browns, soak husks in a large bowl of coffee or tea.

**Make shoes** by dipping the feet of your corn husk doll into a small bowl of acrylic paint. Allow to air dry and repeat, if necessary.

**Use small doll clothes** to decorate your corn husk doll.

**Sequins, buttons, glitter** and other craft supplies can be glued to your corn husk doll to make jewelry, eyes, colored clothing, and more.

**Insert a pipe cleaner** into the back of your corn husk doll to put it on display, help it bend into a variety of positions, or to hang it.

**Instant hair for your corn husk doll** can be made with more corn husks, or corn silk, yarn, or twine. Attach with glue.

**Watercolor paints** will soak into corn husks, and give a deep, rich color to your doll.

**A doll hat** can be made from a plastic bottle cap.

**A perfectly round head** can be made for your corn husk doll by placing a few cotton balls inside a piece of husk, instead of rolling husks. Decorate first, and then attach to the body using the above instructions.

### Endnotes

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1. “How to Make Corn Husk Dolls,” Snowwowl.com, accessed June 29, 2016, [www.snowwowl.com/naartcornhuskdollPF.html](http://www.snowwowl.com/naartcornhuskdollPF.html).

## APPENDIX E

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# UNITED METHODIST WOMEN–SUPPORTED NATIONAL MISSION INSTITUTIONS IN THE MISSIONARY CONFERENCES



Alaska United Methodist Conference: <http://alaskaumc.org>

### 1. AK Child & Family

4600 Abbott Road, Anchorage, AK 99507

Denis McCarville, Executive Director, [dmccarville@akchild.org](mailto:dmccarville@akchild.org)

Phone: 907-346-2101 – Fax: 907-348-9230

[www.akchild.org](http://www.akchild.org)

**Program/Mission:** youth leadership, counseling, food, family services, children and youth with disabilities, summer camps.

[www.akchild.org/for-families/what-we-do/community-based-treatment.html](http://www.akchild.org/for-families/what-we-do/community-based-treatment.html)

### 2. Nome Community Center

P.O. Box 98, Nome, AK 99762

Rhonda Schneider, Executive Director, [rschneider@nomecc.org](mailto:rschneider@nomecc.org)

Phone: 907-443-5259 – Fax: 907-443-2990

[www.nomecc.org](http://www.nomecc.org)

**Program/Mission:** family services, substance abuse, youth leadership and development, food, senior and elderly services, housing

[www.nomecc.org/about-us.html](http://www.nomecc.org/about-us.html)

**Red Bird Missionary Conference:** [www.redbirdconference.org](http://www.redbirdconference.org)

**1. Henderson Settlement**

P.O. Box 205, Frakes, KY 40940-0205

Mark D. Lemons, Executive Director, [execdir@hsumc.org](mailto:execdir@hsumc.org)

Phone: 606-337-3613 – Fax: 606-337-2225

[www.hendersonsettlement.com](http://www.hendersonsettlement.com)

**Program/Mission:** food, senior services, clothing services, adult education, health services, day care, summer camp, housing

[www.hendersonsettlement.com/#](http://www.hendersonsettlement.com/#)

**2. Red Bird Mission**

70 Queendale Center, Beverly, KY 40913

Kari Collins, Executive Director, [kcollins@rbmission.org](mailto:kcollins@rbmission.org)

Phone: 606-598-3155 – Fax: 606-598-3151

<http://rbmission.org>

**Program/Mission:** child literacy, health services, senior services, family services, clothing services

<http://rbmission.org/ministries>

# APPENDIX F



## SONGS



### “Dawk’yahee ahdawtsahee,” *Global Praise 1*, no. 19

Kiowa prayer song and call to worship.

Daw - k'yah - ee ah-dawt - sah - ee ahn, Daw - k'yah - ee

ah - dawt - sah—ee ahn, Ahm do gyah - daw, Ahm khee dah - day,

do ahn, Ah - tsahn do gyah - t'ah - awm.

**English paraphrase:** Jesus, son of God, we come to you to pray. To your house of worship we come in this time of need (We come to pray because it is your day). We come to you, help us.

Phonetic translit., music transc. ©1992 Marilyn Hofstra (Choctaw, Chickasaw);

English paraphrase © 1992 Dorothy Gray (Kiowa). Used by permission.

# SONGS



## “We n’deyaho,” *For Everyone Born*, no. 3

You can listen to a recording of this music at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhcgX1VHsgk).

We n’ de ya ho, We n’ de ya ho,

Wen’ de ya, Wen’ de ya, Ho, ho, ho, ho,

He ya ho, He ya ho, Ya ya ya.

**English paraphrase:** I am of the Great Spirit. I am of the Great Spirit. It is so!

WORDS & MUSIC: Trad. Cherokee. Used by Permission.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson** is a native of Haiti and a member of Miramar United Methodist Church in Florida, where she serves as the co-lay leader. Pierre-Okerson is an educator and frequently teaches mission studies. A longtime United Methodist Women leader, Pierre-Okerson has served as assistant dean and dean of Mission u (formerly School of Christian Mission); she has led retreats, workshops, training events, and Bible studies at the national, conference, and district levels. While serving as a United Methodist Women director, Pierre-Okerson chaired the Governance Committee. Pierre-Okerson provided leadership to the general church as a member of the General Board of Global Ministries, UMCOR, and the General Commission on Religion and Race. She is currently serving on the Florida Conference Mission and Justice Ministry Team and is the Southeast District lay leader and the vice chair of the Conference Board of Lay Ministries.

Pierre-Okerson earned a diploma in sociology, a bachelor of arts in interpersonal and group communications, a master of arts in religion, a master of science in special education, and a doctor of philosophy in education. She teaches and advocates for students with autism and their families in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Pierre-Okerson is currently a candidate to the Deaconess and Home Missioner Order of The United Methodist Church.