

Why We Are Offering This Resolution at General Assembly 2012

This resolution has been placed on the General Assembly agenda in keeping with our charge to be accountable to migrant communities and partner organizations in Arizona. In preparing for General Assembly, some of the partner organizations with whom we are working in Arizona asked us specifically to take up this resolution. Coalitions of indigenous peoples and their allies (including many Unitarian Universalists) have been working for many years to get religious groups to repudiate the DOD and to ask the United States to fully implement the tenets of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Episcopal Church of the United States did so in 2009.

The DOD--and the legal ramifications of it to this day--have profound effects on the issues of migration, racial and economic justice, the focus issues of this Justice General Assembly. For example, laws restricting the migration of indigenous peoples across national borders are a direct consequence of a legal system that allowed European colonizers the right to draw those borders through the lands of others. The DOD is also central to the construction of the category of race--and thus the development of racism--in the Western world.

This resolution is being offered as a Responsive Resolution because the UUA By-Laws prevent us from making justice statements through normal business resolutions (and because the 2011 General Assembly passed by-law amendments to remove Actions of Immediate Witness from the General Assembly agenda in 2012). The Board feels that this is an issue that our congregations will need to study and discuss prior to General Assembly, so we are taking the unusual step of submitting it to you in advance for this consideration.

A Responsive Resolution to the Report of the Board

WHEREAS the delegates of the 2010 General Assembly instructed the UUA Board to create a “Justice General Assembly” in 2012, whose business is accountable to partner organizations doing human rights work in Arizona; and

WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association has been asked by partner organizations working with the Arizona Immigration Ministry to educate our member congregations about the Doctrine of Discovery and to pass a resolution repudiating it; and

WHEREAS the UUA Board of Trustees has submitted to the member congregations a report explaining the Doctrine of Discovery and why the Board believes it to be contrary to Unitarian Universalist principles;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates of the 2012 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery as a relic of colonialism, feudalism, and of religious, cultural, and racial biases having no place in the modern day treatment of indigenous peoples globally, and American Indians nationally; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the leadership of the Unitarian Universalist Association to make a clear and concise statement repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery and its current use in U.S. laws and regulations, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage other religious bodies to reject the use of the Doctrine of Discovery to dominate indigenous peoples, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we call upon the United States to fully implement the standards of

the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in U.S. law and policy without qualifications. In doing so, we support the establishment of commissions that include accountable representatives of American Indian nations.