

The Doctrine of Discovery

2012 Responsive Resolution

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 religious, cultural, and racial biases having no place in the modern day treatment of indigenous peoples; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Unitarian Universalist Association and its member congregations to review the historical theologies, policies, and programs of Unitarianism, Universalism, and Unitarian Universalism to expose the historical reality and impact of the Doctrine of Discovery and eliminate its presence in the contemporary policies, programs, theologies, and structures of Unitarian Universalism; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Unitarian Universalist Association to invite indigenous partners to a process of Honor and Healing (often called Truth and Reconciliation), and if one or more partners agree, to undergo such a process about Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist complicity in the structures and policies that oppress indigenous peoples and the earth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon 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 that the UUA collaborate with these groups to propose a specific Congressional Resolution to repudiate this doctrine; 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 the U.S. law and policy without qualifications. In doing so, we support the establishment of commissions that include accountable representatives of the indigenous nations of North America and the Hawai’ian Kingdom.