

Dear Friends,

I read a story about how Africans traveled to the “Americas” centuries before Columbus and brought back corn with them to plant in Africa. The coming Monday is an official holiday in our nation called, “Columbus Day,” based upon the mythology that Christopher Columbus, funded by Spain, went West to find a route to Asia and ‘prove’ that the world was round. He instead ‘discovered’ America and brought civilization to the Native people and much prosperity to Europe. They then began to exploit the resources and the people on these two continents. Most states now call this “Indigenous People’s Day” because America wasn’t discovered or civilized, but invaded and cultural genocide was the goal up until recently. Laws and attitudes are changing, but not quite there yet.

This started with a papal bull in 1495 called the “Doctrine of Discovery” which basically said if explorers, armies, and countries ‘discovered’ land that wasn’t occupied by Christians, it could be claimed by the country and the people living on the discovered land had no rights. This allowed Christopher Columbus and all who followed to exploit, enslave, and destroy what the First Nations have developed and built. This became of a part of the United States mythology and law as it was cited in Supreme Court cases that our nation had rights over any non-Christian, i.e. First Nation communities or people.

The United Church of Christ voted on a [resolution](#) to repudiate this “Doctrine of Discovery” at the 29<sup>th</sup> General Synod. This happened in the last 20 years and sponsored by the Dakota Association in the South Dakota Conference which has 13 churches on 4 reservations in the state. Many of the members grew up going to the boarding schools that took Dakota/Nakota/Lakota children away from their parents, families, and communities so that they may “kill the Indian” to save the man and his soul.

We are clearly seeing the true history and the false myths that have pervaded our country and religion. We have only just started in repenting our sins against the First Nations and the land on which we live.

Peace

Pastor Enno