

READ Luke 17:3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them."

REPENT During the 2012 United Methodist General Conference we were told one of the Worship Services would be an "Act of Repentance Toward Healing Relationships with Indigenous Peoples." As a delegate I was unsure exactly what this worship service would entail. As a white woman from the United States I will admit I felt a little (actually a lot) uncomfortable.

During any worship service I strive to be open to God's presence and leading; this was no different. The service began in silence with the lights dimmed. Then the sounds of nature and a flute ushered us into God's presence.

As I listened to the story of Native Americans being hurt in the name of Christ I was transported back in time when the ancients of our faith kept history alive through stories.

Why a story? Many stories are told for us to remember past wrongs so that we will not repeat them in the future. Stories give us opportunity to be part of the whole – like Christ referring to himself in Revelation 22:13
"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

We then joined together repenting of the sins of our past and asking God and those that had been hurt to forgive us.

RECEIVE

At the end of the service, light was restored highlighting a symbolic river scattered with river stones meandering through the conference center. Delegates were encouraged to go to the "river of life" and reflect and pick up stones to take home as a covenant to listen and walk the journey of healing with one another.

REMEMBER

I left the conference with the deep sense that these wrongs to Native American brothers and sisters cannot be made right in the sense of day-to-day ways of righting a wrong, what we call restitution. In Exodus 22:1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep."

What was done cannot be undone no matter how I wish it could be made right. This can only be accomplished:

- by an act of God

- through the work of the Holy Spirit
- by the blood of Jesus
- through repentance and forgiveness

RESPOND

Join me by asking God to forgive us of our sins toward Indigenous People. And in repentance, covenant to make it more than “I’m sorry,” but turn it into a transformed heart to never repeat these wrongs. Accept God’s forgiveness and move into new life, bringing healing and wholeness to all of God’s people.

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