



UNEXPECTED PLACES

People, Not Mascots

God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature so they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, and, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.” (Genesis 1:26)

In July 1991, the United Church of Christ’s General Synod 18 passed a resolution entitled, “Negative Stereotyping of Native Americans,” which called on members of the UCC to:

- Dialogue with one another and with Native American peoples about the effects of negative stereotyping,
- Write to the teams and schools that use Native American imagery for team mascots and/or logos,
- Organize a boycott, or personally boycott, professional and collegiate games in those leagues which refuse to engage dialogue, and which refuse to commit to a process of movement toward the use of positive images.

At that time, Ferne E. Clements, a white ally, began working as an administrative assistant at the national offices of the UCC in Cleveland, OH. She became involved with the Committee of 500 Years of Dignity and Resistance through her friend and supervisor, Ms. Juanita Helphrey, a member of the Hidatsa Nation and former assistant director of the UCC’s Council for American Indian Ministry.

2015 Neighbors In Need
Special Mission Offering



Ferne Clements

“As a woman of European descent,” Clements states, “I have benefited greatly by being involved with the Native peoples in Cleveland and being accepted as an ally and friend . . . Being accepted has taught me so much about family values, love for the earth and all living things on this earth.”

When asked about her passion for picketing on opening day baseball games in Cleveland, Ferne responded simply, “It’s because of the impact that the racist name and logo of the Cleveland MLB team has on the Native community. I have heard many stories of how Native children are bullied in schools by their peers and teachers as well as how adults are treated at their place of employment. That name and logo teach non-Natives to disrespect Native peoples. It is not

about being politically incorrect; it is morally wrong!”

More than twenty years later at General Synod 29, a resolution was passed “Calling for the United Church of Christ to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery which authorized the Genocide of Native Peoples and the Theft of Native Lands.” The repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery by General Synod 29 provides an invaluable teaching moment for our congregations to understand the systemic and continuous impact of racism on the daily lives of indigenous peoples in the U.S.

For information about the Doctrine of Discovery and the General Synod 29 Resolution of Witness visit: www.ucc.org/dod.

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.