

1 EMBRACING CULTURAL AND 2 RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

3 WHEREAS, the Northern Plains historically welcomed a broad and diverse base
4 of ethnic, cultural and religious heritages for its settlement and already was home
5 to a number if distinctive native indigenous cultures;

6 WHEREAS, the Northern Plains has sought to live out its pioneer spirit in which
7 people were to be judged not by their backgrounds, but by the quality of their
8 character and their contributions to the community and the broader society;

9 WHEREAS, Northern Plains communities should be places where each person's
10 heritage, culture, and religion can be upheld with dignity and respect, and where
11 people of all backgrounds can raise their families and build their dreams without
12 fear or intimidation;

13 WHEREAS, human rights should encompass the essence of our state and
14 national ideals concerning democracy, as expressed in the spirit of the
15 Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution as amended, and its Bill of
16 Rights;

17 WHEREAS, the future prosperity of the Northern Plains is dependent upon
18 developing opportunities that fully utilize the broad base of talents, skills,
19 aspirations, and hopes of all its people;

20 WHEREAS, the future prosperity of the Northern Plains will also be shaped by its
21 capacity to welcome people of all ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds;

22 WHEREAS, despite the great progress that has been made in recent decades in
23 our society, racism, prejudice, and stereotyping, continue to be deeply imbedded
24 in the Northern Plains and national economic, social, and political fabric, and
25 continue to impede minorities and the broader society from reaching the full
26 potential of human endeavor and possibilities;

27 WHEREAS, periodic acts of violence, vandalism, intimidation, discrimination, and
28 name calling surface in communities throughout the Northern Plains and such
29 incidents are an outgrowth and provide evidence of such continuing racism,
30 prejudice, and stereotyping, indicating the need for people of faith to speak out
31 and to take action;

32 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ and its predecessors have historically
33 been in the forefront of overcoming racism and sexism, and in the struggle for
34 civil rights and human dignity; and,

35 WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ entered into a Sacred Conversation on
36 Race on May 18, and its Collegium of Officers has issued a Pastoral Letter on
37 Racism, inviting its congregations and others to engage in an ongoing dialogue

38 to ensure that we do not betray or backtrack on the progress that has been made
39 towards a more just society;

40 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Northern Plains Conference of
41 the United Church of Christ calls upon its churches and their members,
42 ecumenical bodies, and other faith communities to continue the Sacred
43 Conversation on Race that has been started and to follow up with educational
44 activities and community programs, and to develop other opportunities to
45 address these issues and overcome the systemic and destructive nature of
46 racism and cultural and religious intolerance within our society;

47 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northern Plains Conference of the United
48 Church of Christ calls upon both public and private institutions and authorities at
49 local, state and national levels to develop programs to confront and overcome
50 individual and institutionalized racism, prejudice, and stereotyping;

51 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northern Plains Conference of the United
52 Church of Christ calls upon local, state, and federal authorities to proactively
53 initiate prevention programs and to prosecute bias-motivated crimes and acts
54 against individuals and groups; and,

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Northern Plains Conference of the United
56 Church of Christ rejects and condemns bigotry, racism, and religious or cultural
57 intolerance, and calls for replacing such negativity with dignity and respect for all
58 human beings, their ethnicities, cultures, and religions,

59 RESOLUTION AS AMENDED AND RECOMMENDED BY NPCUCC Resolutions
60 Committee.

61 Amended and adopted by 2008 Annual Meeting of the Northern Plains
62 Conference of the United Church of Christ – Hankinson, ND, June 6 – 8, 2008.