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2 *The 'First Nation' Peoples and the Doctrine of Discovery*  
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4 WHEREAS, "The Doctrine of Discovery" (the Doctrine) was a principle of international law  
5 developed in a series of 15th century papal bulls and 16th century charters by European  
6 monarchs; and  
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8 WHEREAS, the Doctrine was essentially a racist philosophy that gave white Christian Europeans  
9 the absolute permission to go forth and claim the lands and resources of non-Christian peoples  
10 and kill or enslave them (if other Christian Europeans had not already done so); and  
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12 WHEREAS, the Doctrine institutionalized the competition between European countries in their  
13 ever-expanding quest for colonies, resources and markets, and sanctioned the genocide of the first  
14 nation (indigenous) people in the "New World."; and  
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16 WHEREAS, Johnson vs. McIntosh, an 1823 U.S. Supreme Court case, held that because of the  
17 Doctrine indigenous people in the Americas (a.k.a. American Indians) have a "mere right" of  
18 occupancy to their lands; and  
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20 WHEREAS, this ruling is foundational to the historical adoption of federal Indian law and has  
21 neither been overturned nor repudiated; and  
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23 WHEREAS, the incredible destruction fomented upon the indigenous people via the Doctrine can  
24 never be fully appreciated by non-indigenous people, and the restoration of sacred land, spiritual  
25 practices and social structures can never be fully repaired nor recovered; and  
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27 WHEREAS, symbolic gestures can often be dismissed as merely symbolic and there is a strong  
28 tendency of those who have benefited from the Doctrine to wish not to have any accountability  
29 for the actions and attitudes of their ancestors; and  
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31 WHEREAS, symbols do matter and do have the power to increase awareness and engender some  
32 level of empathy toward those who have reaped the chaos caused by the past Christian arrogance  
33 and ignorance of our forebearers; and  
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35 WHEREAS, the Doctrine is fundamentally opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and our  
36 understanding of the inherent rights all individuals and peoples have received from God,  
37 regardless of their spiritual practices and beliefs; therefore be it  
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39 RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod meeting in assembly urge its officers and bishop  
40 to forward copies of this resolution to the state and national leaders elected to represent the people  
41 of the Minneapolis Area Synod requesting their initiation of state and federal legislation for the  
42 purpose of immediately overturning and repudiating the "Doctrine of Discovery"; and be it  
43 further  
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45 RESOLVED, that the Minneapolis Area Synod meeting in assembly urge its officers and bishop  
46 to be intentionally involved in encouraging such state and national leaders to advocate for the  
47 U.S. government's endorsement of the "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous  
48 Peoples," which the United States has refused to endorse.  
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54 **Reference Policies:** **Background information available upon request or you may visit**  
55 [www.ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm\\_art.html](http://www.ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm_art.html)