



CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
COUNCIL

CONSEIL
UNITARIEN
DU CANADA

Resolutions – 1964 – 1995 – First Nations, A Summary

There were eight resolutions adopted between 1964 and 1995. Overall, these fell into two general categories.

1. Resolutions directed at government on behalf of First Nations peoples including:

- a. extension of all citizenship rights to Canadian Natives, without loss of benefits obtained under any treaty or agreement with the Canadian government or local authorities;
- b. ending discrimination against Indians and Eskimos (sic) in employment generally;
- c. limitation of the power and scope of the Indian Affairs Branch, and an increase in the power, responsibility, and resources of the Indian people through:
 - i. recognition and financial support of native organizations,
 - ii. practical support of the principle of self-government and self-determination by the Indian people, and
 - iii. recognition and financial encouragement of economic and social development projects under the control of native people;
 - iv. establishment of migration centres for native people in urban areas to provide assistance in areas of housing, finances, education, skills and employment, and in access to social services;
 - v. recruitment and employment at all levels of the criminal justice system, including the Penitentiary Service and the National Parole Service; that sensitivity to native concerns and culture be a requirement for all non-native staff working with native people; that there be development of institutional programs oriented to the needs of native people.

2. Resolutions which urge congregations to establish contact with First Nations communities.

In 1968, for example, the resolution notes that “there is a gulf between the native peoples of Canada and the immigrant peoples and the CUC urges its member societies to make a beginning at bridging that gulf themselves, undertaking programs of mutual discovery through individual and group face-to-face interactions between whites and Indians.”

In 1970, when a “red paper” discussing First Nations issues was expected, congregations and communities were urged “to give highest priority to the initiation and/or encouragement of discussion of significant issues at stake to explore together how to create opportunities to become involved in applying the wisdom of the Indian heritage to the most important work



of this decade – creating a society in which cultural diversity will be honoured, the environment will be appreciated and protected, and there will again be ‘a place in the sun for all living things’ as there was in this land before the white man arrived.”

This concern was reinforced **in 1972**, when each society was urged to seek to establish effective channels of communication with native people organizations at the local and provincial level in order to assist native organizations in making known their points of view to the wider community in whatever manner deemed mutually appropriate.

In 1995, material was circulated to congregations for study and response on issues related to First Nations. A resolution was developed from this study which incorporates both concerns. It contains a commitment to work with First Nations peoples in their struggles to achieve justice, particularly in relation to land rights, treaties and ending policies of assimilation and attempted extinguishments of aboriginal rights. It also encourages congregations to establish contact with First Nations communities with a view to learning more about the richness of their heritage, and to work with other groups and First Nations communities to advance the struggle for justice, and to provide programs for their members about issues facing indigenous peoples.

This resolution was adopted at the **1995 Annual Meeting**. It allows the CUC to make representation to government on issues of land rights, treaties and assimilation, and to support the development of a new relationship between First Nations peoples and Canada and encourages continuing direct contact and cooperation between our congregations and First Nations groups. Most of the recommendations in the previous resolutions are subsumed in this statement. A working committee has been monitoring this issue and periodically recommends actions or activities to the CUC Board or staff, or directly to congregations.

This summary is based on resolutions from 1964, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1978, and 1995.