

# GUIDE TO VOICES TOGETHER SONGS AND RESOURCES WITH CONNECTIONS TO Indigenous Communities IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Singing and praying together in worship expresses and forms our faith. Our songs and prayers are closely connected to our identities as individuals and communities. Through giving and receiving words and music across cultures we can foster mutual understanding, solidarity, and action.

This guide addresses songs and resources with connections to Indigenous communities in the region that is often now called Canada and the United States. This is the land where Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA are based and where most congregations that use *Voices Together* are located.

The focus is songs and resources that emerge from Indigenous traditions of music and worship. Indigenous Mennonite congregations, like other Christian communities, sing songs in worship from a variety of sources including classic hymns, contemporary worship music, gospel songs, and songs from around the world, as well as material emerging from their distinct cultural traditions. Songs may be written or translated into Indigenous languages, sung in English, or sung in other languages.

## Challenges

While Mennonites in Canada and the United States have embraced songs from the church worldwide for decades, many congregations have been slower to receive songs from nearby Indigenous communities.<sup>1</sup>

This may partly be a result of the resources available. *Hymnal: A Worship Book* includes four songs with connections to Indigenous communities,<sup>2</sup> in contrast to fourteen songs from Africa and fifteen songs from Asia and the Pacific, for example. However, there are likely other factors.

There is a deep history of colonial Christian missionaries maligning and repressing Indigenous music and ritual. This stigma may linger in some white Christian contexts and this legacy may make Indigenous Christians more hesitant to embrace and share traditional forms of music in worship beyond predominantly Indigenous worshiping communities. Furthermore, there is also understandable resentment toward Christians among many Indigenous communities who may be unwilling to share resources.

In addition, some settler Mennonite communities fear misappropriating resources with Indigenous connections to the extent that they refuse to engage them at all. This may be rooted in legitimate concerns associated with the harmful extracting and decontextualizing of Indigenous music in the past. However, it can become problematic when this fear is associated with a desire for perfection rather than concern for harm done to one another.



- 1 Geraldine Balzer, "Singing New Stories: Provoking the Decolonization of Mennonite Hymnals," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 33, no. 2 (2015): 282–90.
- 2 *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing House, 1992): "Many and great, O God" (35); "Ehane he'ame (Father God, you are holy)" (78); "Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome (Jesus Lord, how joyful you have made us)" (9); "Twas in the moon of winter-time" (142). Of note, there are also translations in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*: "What a friend we have in Jesus" (574) includes a Cree translation; "Amazing Grace" (143) includes Northern Ojibway and Cheyenne translations. *Sing the Journey* (Scottsdale: Mennonite Publishing Network, 2007) includes one song with a connection to Indigenous communities: "Creation Is a Song" (24).

**Anyone singing songs from a culture other than their own needs to recognize that they will make mistakes; however, this must not lead to either avoidance or carelessness.**

Furthermore, songs emerging from Indigenous settings may be musically and linguistically difficult for worshipers accustomed to musical expressions based in European traditions. Because singers may be required to sing unfamiliar rhythms and both higher and lower notes than in European-style hymns, some may experience the songs as uncomfortable or even unpleasurable, at first. However, as singers become familiar with them, they will likely find these songs to be accessible and worshipful. Assumptions about how music should feel upon first encounter challenge communities to confront deeper biases against non-Western sounds and the problematic elevation of certain expressions of music in worship.

Limited resources, colonial history, fear of misappropriation, and musical difficulty are challenges that can be overcome. It is worth facing these challenges and embracing the opportunity to sing and pray with Indigenous communities.

## Opportunities

In order to fully embrace the cultural diversity of the church and to live into God's reign of justice and peace, it is necessary to sing and pray with Indigenous Christians. Songs are a force for solidarity. Solidarity is a source of action. Action in solidarity with one another, with insight and leadership from Indigenous communities, is needed to address the ongoing harm of colonialism and to live into God's vision of liberation for all people.

*Voices Together* provides new opportunities to raise our voices in worship with a diversity of Indigenous communities in Canada and the United States. The thirteen songs and five worship resources in *Voices Together* with connections to Indigenous communities include three songs and one prayer written by Indigenous Mennonite musicians and leaders, as well as a land acknowledgment developed for this hymnal.

**These songs and prayers with connections to Indigenous communities have been offered as gifts to the wider church. To receive them as gifts, it is necessary to sing them rather than set them aside.** To sing these songs respectfully, with attention to the contexts from which they come, is not misappropriation—it is the intention of those individuals and communities who gave permission and encouragement to share these resources in *Voices Together*.

Each of these songs was selected in consultation with a group brought together because of their experience and expertise in relation to Indigenous justice.<sup>3</sup> This group of consultants provided general guidance and evaluated and offered recommendations regarding specific songs and prayers.<sup>4</sup> The committee then sought permission directly from Indigenous individuals and communities to include these resources in *Voices Together*, in addition to standard copyright processes.

Learning to love these songs and to pray these prayers, to know them in our hearts and bodies, to let them change who we are as individuals and communities, is the best way to receive these gifts. **Our denominational, congregational, and personal commitments to Indigenous justice must be expressed in worship because worship forms our faith and action.**



<sup>3</sup> Geraldine Balzer, Willis Busenitz, Steve Heinrichs, Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone, Tamara Shantz.

<sup>4</sup> For example, with their guidance, the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee decided not to include "Twas in the moon of wintertime" (Huron Carol) in *Voices Together*. Blog post: <http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/2019/12/17/twas-in-the-moon-of-wintertime-not-included-in-new-mennonite-hymnal/>.

Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone speaks from her context as a Cheyenne Mennonite, and describes giving and receiving songs as a process of forming relationships through giving and receiving gifts: “I’m offering you a gift. I’m sharing these songs with you as a gift. And that makes us bonded—in relationship. And in that relationship, I trust you to honor the songs that we’re sharing. You’re not going to get it perfect; it’s not going to sound just right.... I trust you to hold that song with respect and with honor, to say, ‘I’m going to carry this, and that makes us brothers and sisters, we’re connected in that way.’ And so when white Mennonites approach this, I want them to approach it with respect and with a level of understanding.”<sup>5</sup>

## Practical Suggestions

1. Connect with Indigenous individuals and leaders in your congregation, church conference, and local community. Join in the good work they are doing. Empower them to give leadership in worship.
2. Learn some of the songs in *Voices Together* yourself as a pastor, worship leader, song leader, or worshiper. Listen to recordings, paying attention to pronunciation and instrumentation. Read the notes in the *Accompaniment Edition* and *Worship Leader Edition*.<sup>6</sup> Research the context, beginning with the ascription line at the bottom of the hymnal page and resources provided in this guide.
3. Choose to learn a song by heart as a community by including it in worship every Sunday for six weeks, and once a month for the following year. Connect the content of the song to your worship life in relation to Scripture readings, preaching themes, and prayers. Teach it to children in faith formation classes.
4. Tell the stories of songs and prayers in worship, print them in the bulletin, include them in a newsletter or in social media posts. Learn about and pray for the communities the songs come from. Keep each song or prayer connected to the community it comes from, while also building deep connections with it in your own community, and entering into it as a way to connect with God.
5. Embrace vocables (non-lexical syllables), a common practice among some Indigenous communities to structure a song, to frame other text, or as an expression of praise.
6. Consider carefully when to use drums. Not all songs with connections to Indigenous communities should be accompanied by drums. Read the notes on individual songs in the *Accompaniment Edition* and listen to recordings from the context of origin as a guide.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day (June 21 in Canada, the second Monday in October in the United States) and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30 in Canada) may be particularly suitable occasions for incorporating songs and resources with connections to Indigenous communities in worship. However, it is important to sing and pray with these materials throughout the year so that they are known and loved and become part of an ongoing journey toward truth and reconciliation.



<sup>5</sup> Quote from Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone, taken from the Anti-Racist Worship and Song: Part Two webinar (28:04–29:18), hosted by MennoMedia as part of the launch of *Voices Together*. The recording is available online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhQsXn-luNjQ&ab\\_channel=MennoMediaInc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhQsXn-luNjQ&ab_channel=MennoMediaInc).

<sup>6</sup> Reference notes from the *Accompaniment Edition* are available online: <http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Reference-notes-combined.pdf>.

## Mennonite Resources Related to Indigenous Justice

The Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery: <https://dismantleddiscovery.org/>

Mennonite Church Canada Indigenous Relations:

<https://www.mennonitechurch.ca/indigenous>

Mennonite Church USA Racial Ethnic Council - Native Mennonite Ministries:

<https://www.mennoniteusa.org/who-are-mennonites/church-structure/racial-ethnic-council/>

Mennonite Central Committee Indigenous Neighbors:

<https://mcc.org/what-we-do/initiatives/indigenous-neighbours>

## Resources Related to *Voices Together*

The following sources are referred to throughout this guide:

- *Voices Together* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020).
- *Voices Together: Accompaniment Edition* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020).
- *Voices Together: Reference Notes* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020). Available online: <http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Reference-notes-combined.pdf>.
- *Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020).
- *Voices Together: Audio Recordings* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020). Available at <https://www.mennomedia.org> (search “audio cd”).
- Anabaptist Worship Network Video Series: <https://www.anabaptistworship.net/awn-voices-together-videos>.
- *Voices Together* website: <http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/>.
- *Hymnal: A Worship Book Companion* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press; Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press; Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1996).

## Authors and Consultants

This guide was written by Katie Graber, Sarah Kathleen Johnson, and Anneli Loepp Thiessen with research support from Cynthia Neufeld-Smith.

We are grateful to the following consultants who offered feedback on and support for the guide:

- Sarah Augustine, co-founder and executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery
- Jonathan Neufeld, Indigenous relations coordinator for Mennonite Church Canada
- Geraldine Balzer, moderator of Mennonite Church Canada and Associate Professor of Curriculum Studies at the University of Saskatchewan with a specialization in decolonizing pedagogies
- Tamara Shantz, spiritual director

The committee that worked with songs and resources with connections to Indigenous communities throughout the process of shaping *Voices Together* included Geraldine Balzer, Willis Busenitz, Steve Heinrichs, Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone, Tamara Shantz, Katie Graber, Sarah Kathleen Johnson, and Bradley Kauffman.



We recognize that there are many perspectives on and experiences of this material. This guide is part of an ongoing process of learning and relationship. We welcome further insights, especially from Indigenous communities with connections to these songs and resources. The authors can be reached at [awn@ambs.edu](mailto:awn@ambs.edu) with questions or feedback.

“Thank you so much for your careful and detailed work. I am so thankful for the care you put into research, and providing supplemental materials as well. What an amazing resource! I am impressed!” —*Sarah Augustine*

“Overall, I found this to be an in-depth and super-helpful resource. I appreciated how it spoke to the many nuanced reasons that singing these songs might present challenges to our communities, from reactions arising from internalized supremacy, to fears of misappropriation.” —*Tamara Shantz*

“What an honor and privilege to receive all the time and consideration that has gone into this review of *Voices Together* resources. I have no significant editorial reflections to offer, but rather affirm what you have done: 1) You modeled consent and self-determination; 2) you tenderly and honestly acknowledge that permissions/sources have changed since you first completed the song selections, modeling that we can continue to learn how to walk in a good way with other traditions/composers/knowledge keepers; 3) you nuance the concern about misappropriation, helping people learn more about the difference between appropriation and appreciation. I appreciate the first-person voices of contributors, letting the creators speak to the church in their own words.” —*Jonathan Neufeld*

“This is an impressive work.” —*Geraldine Balzer*



# Companion Resources for Songs and Prayers

The sources, background information, leadership suggestions, and recordings below are intended to support local leaders in providing context for songs and resources and incorporating this material into worship in respectful ways. This information is not exhaustive; it is only a starting point. There is always more that can be learned about where a song comes from, how it is sung today in different settings, and what it means to a diversity of worshipers who sing it. As we learn more, our practices related to songs and resources may change.

## Songs

### Creation Is a Song / Ho'è enemeohe, 181

#### Ascription:

Text: English and Cheyenne; based on Psalm 19; Doug Krehbiel (USA) and Jude Krehbiel (USA); inspired by the writings of Lawrence Hart (Cheyenne, USA); Cheyenne trans. Lenora Hart Holliman (Cheyenne, USA) and Wayne Leman (USA)

Music: Doug Krehbiel and Jude Krehbiel in consultation with Lenora Hart Holliman; inspired by *Cheyenne Christian Songs* given to Maude Fighting Bear (Cheyenne, USA) and *Tsesé-Ma'heone-Nemeotótse* (*Cheyenne Spiritual Songs*)

© 2003 Doug Krehbiel and Jude Krehbiel

#### Context:

The lyrics for this song were inspired by the writings and teachings of peace chief and Mennonite pastor Lawrence Hart. Hart has long been a strong inspiration for Mennonite peacemakers and earthkeepers. The concept for the phrase “creation is a song that we can see” is from his interpretation of Psalm 19, which is included in his chapter “The Earth Is a Song Made Visible” in the book *Creation and the Environment*.<sup>7</sup> This book was compiled by the Mennonite Environmental Task Force and published in 2000. Doug Krehbiel was staff liaison to this task force, and also took youth on a cultural exchange event to meet and learn from Hart at the Cheyenne Cultural Center (CCC) in Clinton, Oklahoma, around this time.

As founder and director of the CCC, Hart calls us to nurture “an intimate, spiritual, and personal relationship to the earth” and implores us to join the Native American perspective that maintains that “there is a sacredness about the earth and, when any part of . . . the earth is mistreated, all forms of life within the circle, including humankind, are mistreated.” Thus, the song lyrics celebrate the sacredness of creation and urge us to “join the harmony.”

Doug Krehbiel and his spouse Jude listened to recordings of original songs that were received by Maude Fighting Bear, reviewed scores from the songbook *Tsesé-Ma'heone-Nemeotótse*



<sup>7</sup> Calvin Redekop, ed., *Creation & the Environment: An Anabaptist Perspective on a Sustainable World* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2000).



(*Cheyenne Spiritual Songs*), and analyzed field recordings of Cheyenne drum circles to get a sense for the kind of song they would write. They were taught by Cheyenne mission workers how to make and play a Cheyenne shaker.<sup>8</sup>

Hart's sister Lenora Hart Holliman translated the refrain lyrics into Cheyenne and patiently taught Jude Krehbiel how to say the words. She also coached Jude in the Cheyenne way to sing the words. Cheyenne linguist Wayne Leman reviewed and updated the translation in 2020.

Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone, a friend of Doug and Jude and a Cheyenne Mennonite, comments on the origins of this song, and its reception in Mennonite communities: "It's been long thought that it is disrespectful to sing this song or to honor this song as a Cheyenne song because it was written by white folks, but the way that Cheyennes have come to view this is through relationships. So Doug and Jude received this song from Creator, the way Cheyennes receive songs, after building a relationship with Cheyennes both in Oklahoma and in Montana, where I'm from, including with myself."

She continues: "To me, that basis of relationship—because Cheyennes are extremely relational. . . . the relationship opened up their ability to receive this song from Creator, and put it to a tune that was received by an elder from our community that has long passed, named Maude Fighting Bear. So the tune comes from that, and then [they received] help with translation. They didn't just try to figure it out on their own using Google; they went to the sources for the translation. And so with that relationship, and that back and forth, that makes it a very respectful song, and I absolutely enjoy this song."<sup>9</sup>

### Leading the Song:

This hymn may be accompanied by a low drum and shaker played on each quarter note. The traditional Cheyenne shaker was made by putting pebbles in a tin can, taping a lid on it, punching holes in either end, and running a dowel through it; but any large drum and shaker works if desiring accompaniment.

### Related Resource:

Video of Doug and Jude Krehbiel discussing and performing the song:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LaLo3dhZ0g&ab\\_channel=MennoMediaInc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LaLo3dhZ0g&ab_channel=MennoMediaInc).



<sup>8</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 181.

<sup>9</sup> Quote from Keshia Littlebear-Cetrone, taken from the Anti-Racist Worship and Song webinar, part II (45:25–47:19), hosted by MennoMedia as part of the launch of *Voices Together*. The recording is available online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hQsXnluN-jQ&ab\\_channel=MennoMediaInc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hQsXnluN-jQ&ab_channel=MennoMediaInc).

## Dawk'yah towgyah thawy báht-awm (Take the Saving Word of God), 400

### Ascription:

Text: Kiowa; Pawltay (Kiowa, USA); English trans. John Thornburg (USA), English stanza © 2008 General Board of Global Ministries

Music: Kiowa traditional; transcr. Carlton R. Young (USA), 2008

### Context:

This piece comes from the Kiowa community, an Indigenous group from the Great Plains of the United States. The text was written by Pawltay, and is enlivened with a traditional tune from the Kiowa people, which was passed down through oral tradition. It is regularly sung at historical churches across Oklahoma.

In response to federal allotments of land in the late 19th century, the Kiowa decided that the chieftainship would not be passed down between generations. Chiefs such as Kicking Bird, Wooden Lance, and Lone Wolf were thus the last generation of chiefs, with none of their authority passed on to their children. Kicking Bird was also considered to be the first lay preacher among the Kiowa.

Instead of becoming chiefs, many of the chief's descendants became ministers, who subsequently were granted much of the respect that the priests had carried. This song is a reminder that the authority of the ministers comes from their grasp of the scriptures, and as such it is often sung before the sermon.<sup>10</sup>

The original publication date is unknown, but this transcription comes from *With Our Voices: Singing Our Historical Witness of Faith*, a CD made by the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2001. The English translation features different text in each phrase in order to portray the original meaning, but the original Kiowa text has the same text repeated in each phrase, with only the final words differing.

### Leading the Song:

This song is effectively sung before the sermon or surrounding the reading of scripture. It should not be accompanied with drums or other percussive instruments, but instead can be supported by establishing a drone on F, either sung or played on an instrument. This drone can be re-established at the beginning of each phrase.<sup>11</sup> The piece should be repeated two or three times, which could include singing in both languages presented.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Carl P. Daw Jr., *Glory to God: A Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 454.

<sup>11</sup> *Voices Together: Accompaniment Edition*, 400.

<sup>12</sup> Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church, "Dawk'yah towgyah thawy báht-awm (Take the Saving Word of God)," *Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native American Communities*, ed. Alvin Deer (New York, 2008), 32.



**Related Resources:**

Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church, “Dawk’yah towgyah thawy báht-awm (Take the Saving Word of God),” *With Our Voices: Singing Our Historical Witness of Faith*, compact disc (Nashville, 2001).

Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference of the United Methodist Church, “Dawk’yah towgyah thawy báht-awm (Take the Saving Word of God),” *Singing the Sacred: Musical Gifts from Native American Communities*, ed. Alvin Deer (New York, 2008).

A recording of the song sung in Kiowa is available from Austin Mennonite Church:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J98IE5Uepts&ab\\_channel=AustinMennoniteChurch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J98IE5Uepts&ab_channel=AustinMennoniteChurch).



## Dooládó' Shi Diyinda (What a Wonderful Savior), 562

### Ascription:

Text: Navajo; Daniel Smiley (Navajo, USA)

Music: Daniel Smiley

© 1997 Daniel Smiley

### Context:

This song was written in 1997 and is well known in Navajo Christian communities. It was first translated into English by the author Daniel Smiley for publication in *Voices Together*.

Smiley is a pastor at Black Mountain Mennonite Church in Arizona, where he serves his community in both Navajo and English. Smiley was raised by his grandmother, since his own mother's Christian faith caused her to be rejected and considered evil by their community. He felt called to become a pastor at the age of 10, and preached for the first time at the age of 11. As a teenager, Smiley attended a church that taught it was wrong for him to engage with any aspects of his Navajo culture as a Christian. This caused him to cut the knot from his hair and try to remove aspects of the Navajo community from his life. Today, Smiley has been preaching and embracing his Navajo culture and heritage with the Black Mountain Mennonite Church for years, and says he is teaching his congregation, above all, to follow Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

In response to receiving the final English translation of "Dooládó' Shi Diyinda!" created for *Voices Together*, Smiley said in an email, "I just got through singing the song for a crowd of young Navajos, there are tears and lots of joy!! Wow, the song has come together very well, I am satisfied with the translation. Very close to what it says in Navajo . . . thank you for your help."

### Leading the song:

Daniel Smiley leads this song with accordion in the video linked below. It can also be accompanied by guitar or other instruments.

### Related Resource:

Daniel Smiley singing "Dooládó' Shi Diyinda!" at Tsaille Community Church's Spring Revival series in Tsaille, Arizona, in 2010:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt6bUtn5UM8&ab\\_channel=TsaileCommunityChurch](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt6bUtn5UM8&ab_channel=TsaileCommunityChurch).



<sup>13</sup> "Mission Trips Blog - Daniel's Story from the Navajo Reservation," *Experience Mission* (blog), accessed June 5, 2023, <https://experiencemission.org/blog/blogdetail.asp?recordkey=BA63F42B-5C80-4238-A8E7-B9A90CC62232>.

## Ehane he'ama (Father God, You Are Holy), 59

### Ascription:

Text: Cheyenne; Harvey Whiteshield (Cheyenne, USA), *Ehane He'ama Vovoaheto*; trans. David Graber (USA) and others, *Tsesé-Ma'heone-Nemeotótse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)*, 1982, © 1982 Mennonite Indian Leaders' Council

Music: Plains Indian traditional

### Context:

This song was originally received in Cheyenne by Harvey Whiteshield (Cheyenne name Heskovetseso, which means Little Porcupine), who was a mission worker in the General Conference Mennonite mission to the Southern Cheyenne people.

In the early twentieth century, Cheyenne Mennonites were largely singing Cheyenne translations of English or German hymns. In the 1930s, Whiteshield began collaborating with John Heap of Birds in an effort to promote hymns with traditional Cheyenne music and words in the first major effort to integrate Cheyenne culture with Christian community.<sup>14</sup>

Whiteshield received this piece based on the scripture "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," found in Isaiah 41:4 and Revelation 22:13. The song is copyrighted with the Mennonite Indian Leaders' Council, although traditionally Cheyenne poets and musicians were not considered to own their creations as they were viewed as gifts from God. Printed words were justifiably not trusted because of many broken treaties, so the Mennonite Indian Leaders' Council (now administered by Native Mennonite Ministries) is to be contacted with any reprint requests.<sup>15</sup>

The song is included in *Tsesé-Ma'heone-Nemeotótse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)*, a collection of Indigenous tunes and translations of English hymns published by Faith and Life Press in 1982. Today, the song is sung and beloved by White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church in Busby, Montana.

### Leading the song:

Songs from the *Tsesé-Ma'heone-Nemeotótse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)* collection are not typically accompanied by drums or melodic instruments in worship. For this structure of three phrases, each repeated, a soloist may sing the first statement, with the congregation joining in on the second. The vocable "he-e," pronounced "hay-ay," is an expression of affirmation. Its second syllable should be partly sung, partly spoken. A line is drawn between the first two pitches of the third phrase (on the word "Jesus") to indicate a slide between the printed pitches.<sup>16</sup>

### Related Resource:

A video of members of the White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church sharing about their music; "Ehane he'ama" is the first song sung in this video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym3lj4k8umI&t=36s&ab\\_channel=dnbarg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym3lj4k8umI&t=36s&ab_channel=dnbarg).



14 Lois Barrett, "Whiteshield, Harvey (Heskovetseso) (1860-1941)," in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1989, accessed September 13, 2023, [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Whiteshield, Harvey \(Heskovetseso\) \(1860-1941\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Whiteshield,_Harvey_(Heskovetseso)_ (1860-1941)).

15 *Hymnal Companion*, 84.

16 *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 59.

## Heleluyan, 85

### Ascription:

Text: Muscogee (Creek, USA); Hebrew traditional; הללו יה (Hallelujah) (Mediterranean), ca. 4th c. BC

Music: Muscogee (Creek) traditional; transcr. Charles H. Webb (USA), © 1989 United Methodist Publishing House (admin. Music Services)

### Context:

Heleluyan is a traditional Muscogee song and one of the most well-known hymns among people of the Muscogee (Creek) nation. It's suggested to be like the Creek national anthem. It was sung on the Trail of Tears, the forced relocation of 100,000 Indigenous people from Cherokee, Creek, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, and other nations to areas now called Oklahoma. This brutal displacement process resulted in disease, starvation, and at least 4,000 deaths.<sup>17</sup> When the Muscogee were forcibly displaced in the 1830s, Christianity had already been among them for a century, as it is believed that John Wesley acted as a missionary to the Muscogee people when he arrived in Georgia in 1736.

In additional texts in the original language, the song includes references to the idea of being “there,” or at the end of the trail, either on earth or in heaven. The singing of “Heleluyan” on the Trail of Tears was a bold testament to the importance of Christian faith for the Muscogee people, demonstrating that their faith was more powerful than their abuse by the U.S. government.<sup>18</sup>

### Leading the Song:

Today, this hymn is sung as an expression of praise and is widely popular among the Muscogee people in Oklahoma: “heleluyan” can be translated to “hallelujah.” The melody can be first taught by just singing the notes on vocables, with the words added once the melody is comfortable. The piece should not be accompanied with instruments, and can be sung at varying tempos but should be done briskly enough to maintain momentum.

### Related Resource:

A recording of “Heleluyan” sung by a predominantly Choctaw congregation at Mary Lee Clark United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City, from the album *Chahta Uba Isht Taloa*, no. Three by Clelland Billy and others from 1976:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIwkzUZUMIk&ab\\_channel=NitaNokose](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIwkzUZUMIk&ab_channel=NitaNokose).



<sup>17</sup> Alexandra Mandewo, “A Brief History on the Trail of Tears,” The Indigenous Foundation, accessed June 5, 2023, <https://www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/a-brief-history-on-the-trail-of-tears>.

<sup>18</sup> Carl P. Daw Jr., *Glory to God: A Companion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 642.

## Hey ney yana (I Walk in Beauty), 836

### Ascription:

Text: Ute children's song (First Nations, USA); as taught by Brooke Medicine Eagle (First Nations, USA)

Music: Ute children's song; as taught by Brooke Medicine Eagle

### Context:

This song was published in United Church of Canada's supplement *More Voices* in 2007, and at that time Brooke Medicine Eagle was credited as the writer and copyright holder. For that publication, *More Voices* committee member Bruce Harding transcribed a version sung by Leonard Howell, a Metis singer and song leader who works with Harding in the Vancouver area.

When the *Voices Together* committee contacted Medicine Eagle for permission to share the song, she told us, "The song came from Ute Indian children, I was told." Because of this information, we made clear in the *Voices Together* ascription that Ms. Medicine Eagle did not write the song but has been instrumental in recording and sharing it.

After the publication of *Voices Together*, committee members were informed that Medicine Eagle has faced controversy over misrepresentation of Indigenous spirituality and her Indigenous heritage.<sup>19</sup> Her personal website has a statement against appropriation and says that she has "ancestry in six native tribes (Crow, Nez Perce, Lakota, Cree, Piegan and Cherokee) as well as European blood from Scotland, Ireland, and Denmark. She is a non-traditional member of the Crow Indian tribe in Montana, where she grew up in a half-breed rancher family, homesteading in the beautiful high country of the reservation."<sup>20</sup>

### Leading the song:

**Note:** This song was published in *Voices Together* with the understanding that Brooke Medicine Eagle was granting permission to sing it. We have since been informed that Medicine Eagle has faced serious allegations that she has misrepresented Indigenous spirituality and heritage, and this made us wonder whether she has significant relationship to this song and to Ute people as we had believed. At this point, we advise that communities only sing this song if they learn new information about its background or are led to sing it through relationship with Indigenous communities. Otherwise, we advise communities not to sing this song and instead to worship with other material discussed in this guide.

This song uses vocables (undefined syllables) as an expression of praise. The English text's repetition is also reminiscent of vocables, allowing singers to experience the feel of the music rather than focusing on many layers of lexical meaning. This song has been recorded unaccompanied or with a hand drum accenting the beginning of each measure.

### Related Resources:

Recording of the song on Robert Gass' 1992 album *Medicine Wheel*:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5ScsYUY3s4Q&ab\\_channel=Robert-Gass%26OnWingsofSong-Topic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5ScsYUY3s4Q&ab_channel=Robert-Gass%26OnWingsofSong-Topic).

<sup>19</sup> One example is from 2012, "Alert – Re: Brooke 'Medicine Eagle' Edwards: Abuse and Exploitation of American Indian Sacred Traditions, A Statement from the Center for the SPIRIT," accessed on September 14, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120528144422/http://www.sonomacountyfreepress.com:80/features/brooke-edwards.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Brooke Medicine Eagle's website, accessed on September 14, 2023, <https://www.medicineeagle.com/meet-brooke>.



Brooke Medicine Eagle's introduction to "Hey ney yana":

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dRBKJ\\_-ZP4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dRBKJ_-ZP4).

For more on Indigenous identity fraud, see this statement from the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA):

<https://naisa.org/about/documents-archive/previous-council-statements/naisa-council-statement-on-indigenous-identity-fraud/>.

For a statement on Brooke Medicine Eagle's "abuse and exploitation of American Indian Sacred Traditions," see this statement from the Center for SPIRIT:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120302004752/http://www.sonomacountyfreepress.com/features/brooke-edwards.html>.





## I Have Decided to Follow Jesus, 443

### Ascription:

Text and music: Simon Kara Marek (India)

Formerly attributed:

Text: anon. (India); adapt. Paul B. Smith (Canada); Navajo, Cantonese, Thai trans. anon.

Music: Indian traditional; adapt. Paul B. Smith; harm. Norman Johnson (USA)

© 1963 New Spring Publishing Inc. (admin. Capitol CMG)

### Context:

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" is a widely known and popular hymn, though its origins have often been incorrectly ascribed—including in *Voices Together*. In the years since the publication of *Voices Together*, researchers have been able to trace its likely origins and can offer a more correct ascription. It is likely that Simon Marak, a pastor, schoolteacher, and missionary from the Assam region of India, wrote the song sometime in the 1930s and 1940s. Though Marak's first language was A-chik (Garó) he later learned the Assamese language through his work, and the song was written first with two verses in Assamese.<sup>21</sup>

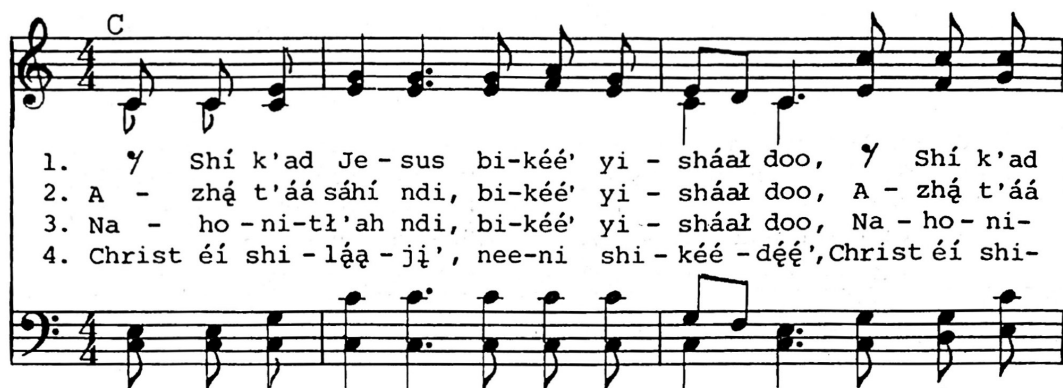
"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" is included in *Voices Together* in several languages: English, Navajo, Cantonese, and Thai. The Navajo text is taken from the hymnal *Navajo Hymns of Faith*, published in 1979. Phil Rosenberger, pastor of Light of Life Mennonite Church in Farmington, New Mexico—a congregation that brings together both Navajo and English-speaking congregants—describes the hymn as one of their most familiar songs. This prompted the inclusion of the Navajo translation in *Voices Together*.

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Shí K'ad Jesus Bikéé' Yisháał Doo  
I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Faye Edgerton

Harry D. Loes



1. ʔ Shí k'ad Je - sus bi-kéé' yi - sháał doo, ʔ Shí k'ad  
2. A - zhá t'áá sáhi ndi, bi-kéé' yi - sháał doo, A - zhá t'áá  
3. Na - ho - ni-tł'ah ndi, bi-kéé' yi - sháał doo, Na - ho - ni-  
4. Christ éi shi - lăă - jî', nee-ni shi - kéé - dĕĕ', Christ éi shi-



21 C. Michael Hawn, 'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus,' *History of Hymns* (blog), June 10, 2020, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/history-of-hymns-i-have-decided-to-follow-jesus>.

**Leading the Song:**

Marak's youngest daughter suggests that he hoped the song could be sung "whenever the good news or the gospel was preached."<sup>22</sup> It works well sung at baptisms or other times of affirming belief, and can be sung a cappella or accompanied by instruments.

**Related Resource:**

This informal video from the Ladies of Two Grey Hills can help non-Navajo singers with pronunciation:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNY3VGRM-Xg&ab\\_channel=AnastaciaManess](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNY3VGRM-Xg&ab_channel=AnastaciaManess).




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22 Sengbat G. Momin, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back," *Garó Baptist Convention Sesquicentenary Souvenir*, trans. Amanda Aski Macdonald Momin (A-chik Baptist Dal'gipa Kríma (ABDK) Sobha, 2017), 85. Quoted in Hawn, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus."

## Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome (Jesus Lord, How Joyful), 8

### Ascription:

Text: Cheyenne; John Heap of Birds (Cheyenne, USA), 20th. c; trans. David Graber (USA) and others, *Tsese-Ma'heone-Nemeotôtse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)*, 1982, © 1982 Mennonite Indian Leaders' Council

Music: Plains Indian traditional (USA)

### Context:

Cheyenne Mennonite churches have existed for over a century. In their beginning, European-American Mennonite missionaries disallowed their traditional music in worship services. Throughout the twentieth century, however, Cheyenne Christian songs came to be accepted and valued at social gatherings and then in worship services. In 1984, *Tsese-Ma'heone-Nemeotôtse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)* was published, a collection of songs that includes Cheyenne translations of English songs and Indigenous Cheyenne texts and melodies. This book is used along with English songbooks in many Cheyenne congregations. "Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome" is the first song in this book.

This song was also included in the 1992 Mennonite *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. The Companion to that volume gives this background:

This hymn, often used to begin worship services when Cheyenne Christians gather, is one of the best known and loved of the hymns of John Heap of Birds. It is sung reverently and slowly as a processional, unaccompanied by any instruments. "In a few words we are drawn to focus deeply on Jesus. Our joy at gathering with him, because of his invitation, helps us pray with confidence, 'Lead us well in your way!'" (*Tsese-Ma'heone-Nemeotôtse [Cheyenne Spiritual Songs]* 1982).

The first line is repeated at the end, an octave lower, a common melodic structure in Plains Indian music. The sweeping range of the melody, from high to very low, is also common and is sometimes called a terrace melodic profile.<sup>23</sup>

### Leading the Song:

Songs from the *Tsese-Ma'heone-Nemeotôtse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)* collection are not typically accompanied by drums or melodic instruments in worship. The single verse is usually sung either two or four times (the latter in reference to the four directions), allowing the Spirit of Jesus to enter the awareness of the congregation. Singers should not switch octaves for ease of singing, as this style of music brings together in one gesture the high (a symbol for heaven or the divine) and the low (a symbol for earth or the human). Bringing God and humankind together is the point of the hymn.<sup>24</sup>

### Related Resource:

In this video from White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church, at 1:48, Pastor Willis Busenitz says "Let's start with number 1." He is referring to this song's placement in *Tsese-Ma'heone-Nemeotôtse (Cheyenne Spiritual Songs)*. Following his brief spoken introduction, he and other members of White River Cheyenne Mennonite Church sing "Jesus A, Nahetotaetanome": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ym3lj4k8umI>.



<sup>23</sup> *Hymnal Companion*, 179-80.

<sup>24</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 8.

## Lord, Have Mercy (Moosonee), 651

### Ascription:

Text: from Greek liturgy Κύριε, ἐλέησον (Kyrie eleison) (Eastern Mediterranean), 4th c.; English trans. traditional; vocable stanza traditional (Cree, Ontario)

Music: David Buley (Canada), composed for the consecration of Bishop Tom Corston (Chapleau Cree, Ontario) as bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee, © 2010 RUBLEMUSIC

### Context:

This kyrie (or prayer) is a part of a larger mass composed for the consecration of Anglican Bishop Tom Corston (Chapleau Cree, Ontario) as bishop of the Diocese of Moosonee. This diocese, which includes people of British Canadian, French Canadian, and Indigenous cultures, continues to use these musical settings.<sup>25</sup> According to the *Anglican Journal*, “Corston was a long-serving member of the Anglican Council of Indigenous People” and served as the ninth bishop of the diocese of Moosonee from 2010 to 2013.<sup>26</sup>

Composer David Buley wrote in an email, “I want to acknowledge that I am not of Indigenous heritage. I have however been gifted with many teachings and also gifted with my spirit name—Biboon Nibiish—by an elder—the same person who helped me create my grandmother drum, which is featured in the Moosonee service music. When Bishop Tom Corston was Bishop-elect of the Dioceses of Moosonee he was also the parish priest of the church where I was the Music Director at the time (Church of the Epiphany, Sudbury, Ontario) and so I humbly offered to create a mass setting for his consecration as Bishop.”<sup>27</sup>

### Leading the song:

Once familiar, encourage singers to improvise tone clusters and dissonances on the third melodic statement, embodying a cry of lament. The composer suggests that the petitions (“Lord, have mercy” and “Christ, have mercy”) be sung a total of seven times as an acknowledgment of seven teachings of humility, love, bravery, truth, respect, honesty, and wisdom.<sup>28</sup>

### Related Resource:

A recording of this song from the Conrad Grebel University Chapel Choir is available through the Anabaptist Worship Network Videos for Worship:

<https://www.anabaptistworship.net/awn-voices-together-videos>.



<sup>25</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 651.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Puddister, “Remembering Tom Corston: Moosonee Bishop Founded Influential School of Ministry,” *Anglican Journal*, February 11, 2022, <https://anglicanjournal.com/remembering-tom-corston/>.

<sup>27</sup> Personal correspondence with Josh Zentner-Barrett, Sept. 1–2, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> *Voices Together: Accompaniment Edition*. This entry also includes a suggested drum pattern.

## O Great Spirit, 51

### Ascription:

Text: adapt. Doreen Clellamin (Nuxalk, Canada), from a song of Nuxalk young people (Canada)

Music: adapt. Doreen Clellamin, from a song of Nuxalk young people; transcr. Pablo Sosa (Argentina)

© 1994 David Clellamin

### Context:

The first printing of *Voices Together* gives copyright credit to Doreen Clellamin. Later printings reflect the fact that copyright fell to her nephew David Clellamin after Doreen passed away. In an exchange between committee members and David's lawyer about including this song in *Voices Together*, the latter wrote that "David is a family historian of sorts, and keepsakes a number of documents and objects associated with his Nuxalk family and history." He asked for a copy of *Voices Together* as a part of this record of his aunt Doreen's legacy.

The Nuxalk people are located on the Pacific coast north of Vancouver, British Columbia. Doreen Clellamin was a Nuxalk elder from Bella Coola, British Columbia, and had connections to the United Church. A United Church Intercultural Hymn Festival document states that "Pablo Sosa, the Argentinian song leader, composer, and hymnologist, heard Doreen's song at a workshop on First Nations spirituality at the Vancouver School of Theology in the summer of 1993. He recognized the heartfelt spirituality of this song to the Great Spirit, transcribed it, and with Clellamin's blessing began sharing it widely in his ministry around the world."<sup>29</sup> Clellamin gave Sosa permission to share the song, which she had adapted from young people's singing in her community.<sup>30</sup>

### Leading the song:

Try singing this song a cappella in a very free time, or with a gentle, steady pulse on a frame drum or other hand drum.

### Related Resources:

There are no easily accessible recordings of this song sung by Nuxalk people, but you may learn more about Nuxalk people and music by searching YouTube.



<sup>29</sup> "A *Voices United* Intercultural Hymn Festival" with hymns selected by Bruce Harding, 2014, access on July 1, 2023, available online: [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Funitd-church.ca%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fworship-ideas\\_cultural\\_hymn.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Funitd-church.ca%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fworship-ideas_cultural_hymn.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

<sup>30</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 51.

## There's a River of Life, 24

### Ascription:

Text: based on Revelation 22:1; Jonathan Maracle (Mohawk, Canada)

Music: Jonathan Maracle

© 2007 Jonathan Maracle, SOCAN

### Context:

Jonathan Maracle is a member of Broken Walls, a band that has released more than ten albums featuring songs influenced by Indigenous songs, rock, Latin, R&B, and other music. Their website features the description: "Breaking walls of separation: Communicating a message of restoration, dignity, self respect, and the Creator's Love to all cultures."<sup>31</sup>

When the *Voices Together* committee contacted Maracle to ask permission to include "There's a River of Life," the Broken Walls office administrator replied, "It is nice to hear from you. Jonathan would be honoured if you were to use his song."

### Leading the song:

This song is meant to be sung in as high a key as is comfortable for your group, in unison without chordal accompaniment. An unaccented quarter-note drum and shaker accompaniment is appropriate. This song uses vocables (non-lexical syllables), a common practice among some Indigenous communities to structure a song, to frame other text, or as an expression of praise.<sup>32</sup>

### Related Resource:

Broken Walls singing "River of Life":

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_JG2Tqrc3c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_JG2Tqrc3c).



<sup>31</sup> <https://brokenwalls.com/>.

<sup>32</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 24.



## Wakantanka (Many and Great), 128

### Ascription:

Text: Dakota; Joseph R. Renville (Dakota, USA), *Dakota Dowanpi Kin* (Odowan Wowapi, USA), 1846; paraphr. Philip Frazier (USA), 1929, alt.

Music: Plains Indian traditional, *Dakota Odowan*, 1879.

### Context:

Joseph Renville, who had French and Dakota parents, wrote over fifty hymns. Several, including this one, are in the collection *Dakota Odowan*, a Dakota language songbook still in use today. Dakota minister Philip Frazier translated the text to English in the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup> This song also appears in the Mennonite 1992 *Hymnal: A Worship Book*; the *Companion* volume notes that the original text, with seven stanzas, is based on Jeremiah 10:12-13. It explains that the tune LACQUIPARLE (which means ‘lake that speaks’ in French) includes an “octave leap in the B section [that] provides a tonal arch for the ‘heavens with stars,’ creating a musical description of God’s expansive work.”<sup>34</sup>

Another layer to the history of this song emerged in 1862, around the largest mass execution in U.S. history when thirty-eight Dakota men were hung without fair trial. Many sources, such as the article “US-Dakota War of 1862” from the Minnesota Historical Society, include the detail of the men singing on their way to the execution: “As the men took their assigned places on the scaffold, they sang a Dakota song as white muslin coverings were pulled over their faces.”<sup>35</sup> Many believe that song was “Wakantanka,” as described in the documentary *Dakota 38 + 2*.<sup>36</sup>

Some scholars note that we cannot know for sure whether the Dakota 38 sang the exact combination of text and tune that appears in *Dakota Odowan* or in current hymnals. However, the reality that “Wakantanka” (LACQUIPARLE) has come to be connected with this horrific event is significant.

### Leading the song:

This song was likely not sung with drums when it was first composed, but many arrangements have been published and recorded since that time. It may be sung unaccompanied or with an unaccented drum beat.<sup>37</sup>

### Related Resources:

Michael Hawn, *History of Hymns* (blog), “Many and Great”:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-many-and-great>.

Rev. John Snow, Indigenous Minister, Pacific Mountain Regional Council, offers a reflection and sings “Wakantaka” as “a song of lament, a song of remembrance, a song of reconciling with Creator.” See “Reflection ~ Upon the Revealing of Graves on Indian Residential School Site Grounds,” June 27, 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TeHlDe7fJc>.



<sup>33</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 128.

<sup>34</sup> *Hymnal Companion*, 224-5.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.mnhs.org/lowersioux/learn/us-dakota-war-1862>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLjzUNXMbhm>, see around 1:04:15-1:05:30. The “+2” of the documentary’s title refers to two additional men who were “mistakenly” executed that day.

<sup>37</sup> *Voices Together: Reference Notes*, 128.

This article includes an embedded video from *Dakota 38 + 2* that plays a version of LACQUIPARLE along with names and images of people who were killed that day. "On this day in 1862, 38 Dakota warriors were hanged in Mankato, largest US public execution," *Bluestem Prairie*, December 26, 2015:


<https://www.bluestemprairie.com/bluestemprairie/2015/12/on-this-day-in-1862-38-dakota-warriors-were-hanged-in-mankato-largest-us-public-execution.html>.

The image below is from the 1879 edition of *Dakota Odowan* and can also be found here: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcmassbookdig.dakotaodowandako00will/?sp=104&r=-0.69,-0.061,2.381,1.48,0>.

98 DAKOTA ODOWAN.

LACQUIPARLE. DAKOTA NATIVE AIR. HAR. BY J. R. MURRAY. 1877.

*Fine.*



1. Wa-kan-tan-ka ta-ku ni-ta-wa Tan-ka-ya qa o-ta;  
D. C. Mni-o-wan-ca šbe-ya wan-ke cin, He-na o-ya-ki-hi.


*D. C.*

Ma-ŋpi-ya kin e-ya-hna-ke ɕa, Ma-ka kin he du-o-wan-ca;

141. Jeremiah 10 : 12, 13.

<p>1. WAKANTANKA taku nitawa Tankaya qa ota; Maŋpiya kin eyahnake ɕa, Maka kin he duowanca, Mniowanca šbeya wanke cin, Hena oyakihi.</p> <p>2. Nitawacin wašaka, wakan, On wawicaŋyaye; Woyute qa wokoyake kin, Woyatke ko iyacinyan, Anpetu kin otaiyohi Wawiyohiyaye.</p> <p>3. Adam ate unyanpi kin he, Woope wan yaqu; Woope kin awahtani qon, Miye dehan tehiya waun, Jesus onšimayakida qa Miyecicajuju.</p> <p>4. Anpetu wan en yahi kin he Wootanin tanka,</p>	<p>Oyate kin ŋiyeye cin he Iyoyanpa wiɕayaya; Jesus waonšiyakida kin Unniyatanpi kta.</p> <p>5. Wicohan wan unyaqupi kin Jesus amatonwan; Woyute wan woyatke ahna Mayaqu kin yuwašte wo; Unnaŋipi untancanpi ko Unyuecetu po.</p> <p>6. Micehpi kin woyute yapi. Itancan kin dee, Mawe kin he woyatke wakan, Ehe ciqon, wacinwaye: Nitatiyopa kin he wacin, Jesus onšimada.</p> <p>7. Woehdaku nitawa kin he Minagi kin qu wo; Maŋpiya kin iwankam yati, Wicowašte yuha nanka, Wiconi kin he mayaqu nun, Owihanke wanin.</p>
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J. R.



## Way way way, 742

### Ascription:

Text: Ojibwe traditional (Red Lake Nation, USA), *Chippewa Music*, 1913; additional phrases as suggested by Mark MacDonald (First Nations, Canada), as sung in Ojibwe communities (Minnesota, USA)

Music: Traditional Ojibwe lullaby; transcr. Frances Densmore (USA), *Chippewa Music*, 1913

### Context:

This song was a lullaby among Ojibwe people; the version in *Voices Together* comes from a transcription by ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore in her 1913 study *Chippewa Music*. Her description notes that “this is one of few songs composed by women,” and explains that the repeated words “way, way” (or “wewe,” as she spells it) “implies a swinging motion” (image and link below).

Densmore did important work recording stories, songs, and contexts. At the same time, as was typical in the early twentieth century, Densmore’s description of the song and Ojibwe mothering practices has a patronizing air with descriptions such as “crudely” and “primitive” (see image and transcription of footnote 2 below). This is part of the heritage we can resist when we approach this song with reverence and sing it with respect.

In more recent years, Mark MacDonald, former Archbishop of the National Indigenous Anglican Church of Canada, has led the song in Ojibwe Anglican communities in Minnesota.<sup>38</sup> In those contexts, the tender feeling of the melody was paired with additional liturgical phrases as indicated in *Voices Together*. In email communication with Mark MacDonald and members of the Red Lake Nation, people expressed that sharing this song “is a great way to honor and provide a measure of reconciliation.” Another, while not opposing the practice, mused, “I wonder what would first speakers hear when they hear that first part is ... a remnant to [an] old song.”

Image transcription, footnote 2: *Wewe* is a root, the meaning of which implies a swinging motion; thus, *wewe’bizun* signifies a child’s swing or hammock. The writer has frequently seen a Chippewa mother put her baby, still fasted in its cradle-board (*atik’ana’gûn*), plate 39, into a hammock crudely made of a blanket stretched open with a stick, which she swung back and forth until the baby fell asleep. Still more primitive is the method also shown in the same plate; here the woman is seated on the ground with feet extended in front and the cradle-board resting against them, enabling her to move the cradle-board slightly back and forth by a motion of the feet.

These images (next page) are from Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Music* (Government Printing Office, Washington: 1913), 240-41. The book is available to download: <https://repository.si.edu/handle/10088/15520>.



<sup>38</sup> Mark MacDonald falls into the “Non-Status Indian” category in Canada and is considered an Indigenous person. He resigned his position as Indigenous archbishop in 2022 following allegations of sexual misconduct. For more on this, see: “Public Announcement of the Resignation of Archbishop Mark MacDonald,” by General Synod Communications, April 20, 2022, <https://www.anglican.ca/news/public-announcement-of-the-resignation-of-archbishop-mark-macdonald/30039033/>. While Mark MacDonald did not write this music nor the English text, communities may take this opportunity to explore questions about taking a survivor-centered response to worship planning; see Hilary Jerome Scarsella, Carolyn Heggen, Katie Graber, Anneli Loepp Thiessen, Sarah Kathleen Johnson, and Bradley Kauffman, *Show Strength: How to Respond When Worship Materials Are Implicated in Abuse* (Harrisonburg: MennoMedia, 2020). Available for download: <http://voicestogetheryhmnal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Show-Strength.pdf>.





CHIPPEWA CRADLE-BOARDS

SONG FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF CHILDREN <sup>1</sup>

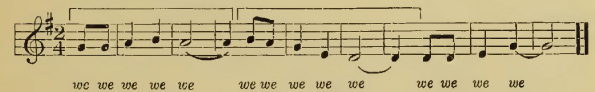
No. 127. Lullaby

(Catalogue No. 447)

Sung by O'GABEÄ'SİNO'KWE

VOICE  $\text{♩} = 96$

Recorded without drum



*Analysis.*—The only two songs which the Lac du Flambeau Chipewas were found to have in common with the White Earth Chipewas are the lullaby and the song accompanying the folk tale of We'na'jo and the ducks (Bulletin 45, No. 197). This lullaby was first recorded at White Earth, Minnesota (see *ibid.*, p. 193). On comparing the two transcriptions it will be seen that the first four measures are identical and that the latter parts differ, though both renditions end on the same tone. This is one of the few songs composed by women (see Nos. 31, 39, 40, 112, 151, 177, 178). No words are used in this song, *wewe?* being continuously repeated.

<sup>1</sup> See also songs Nos. 51, 52, 53, 179, 180.

<sup>2</sup> *Weve* is a root, the meaning of which implies a swinging motion; thus, *weve'ch'ien* signifies a child's swing or hammock. The writer has frequently seen a Chippewa mother put her baby, still fastened in its cradle-board (*nik'and'gan*), plate 39, into a hammock crudely made of a blanket stretched open with a stick, which she swung back and forth until the baby fell asleep. Still more primitive is the method also shown in the same plate: here the woman is seated on the ground with feet extended in front and the cradle-board resting against them, enabling her to move the cradle-board slightly back and forth by a motion of the feet.

67996°—Bull. 53—13——16

## Leading the song

Densmore's notes say, "Recorded without drum," and notes the tempo of 96 bpm. As a lullaby, it was likely to be sung by one person, which could be represented by unison a cappella.

**Related Resource:**

The Densmore Repatriation Project ([lakotasongs.com](http://lakotasongs.com)); although “Way, way, way” is not included among the songs recently re-recorded (<https://www.lakotasongs.com/songs>), this list gives a sense of how Lakota people sing and the current efforts to repatriate and update historical recordings.



# Worship Resources

## Peace be with you, 850

### Ascription:

Mennonite Worship and Song Committee, 2020; illustration by Merrill Miller (USA)

### Context:

Navajo is one of twenty-two languages included in this worship resource that invites communities to greet one another with the phrase, “Peace be with you.” Phil Rosenberger, pastor of Light of Life Mennonite Church in New Mexico, was consulted regarding the Navajo translation. Navajo is one of several Indigenous languages used in Mennonite worship and is one of over a thousand Indigenous languages spoken in the Americas. Consider learning the phrase “Peace be with you” in an Indigenous language local to your community.

### Leading the Resource:

A resource in the *Worship Leader Edition* (26) outlines how this resource can be used in connection with various acts of worship, with framing words, and in different spoken arrangements.

It may be particularly appropriate to greet one another with the phrase “Peace be with you” in Navajo or another Indigenous language at the beginning of worship in connection with a land acknowledgment.

Framing words for the greeting in an Indigenous language could include:

- “As we acknowledge the original peoples of the land on which we gather, we extend peace to one another in the native language of this land...”
- “As we repent from the violence of colonialism, and strive for right relations with all peoples and all creation, we extend peace to one another in the language of this land...”

While it could be appropriate to learn this phrase at any time, particularly suitable occasions include Indigenous Peoples’ Day (June 21 in Canada, second Monday in October in the United States) and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30 in Canada).

### Related Resource:

*Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 26.



## Creator, we give you thanks, 861

### Ascription:

Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (Canada), 2017

### Context:

This is the gathering prayer from *A Disciple's Prayer Book* developed by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. This is the prayer book of the Gospel-based discipleship movement, a growing movement among Indigenous peoples within the Anglican Church of Canada:

The Gospel in the Centre of our Sacred Circle has become an important and dynamic part of the growing spiritual movement among Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island. Any event or meeting is organized and carried out with the Gospel in the centre.<sup>39</sup>

Gospel-based discipleship is an Indigenous-led way of life and prayer:

We must give special honor to the American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian elders who insisted that we all keep the Gospel in the center of everything we do. They said that we must gather in circles of love and prayer and place that which is most sacred to us in the center – the Gospel. This discipleship – listening to the Gospel and living it out in the circle of love and prayer – is our great joy and give us a horizon that many of us thought unobtainable.<sup>40</sup>

The gathering prayer included in *Voices Together* opens each time of prayer in *A Disciple's Prayer Book* when a rhythm of prayer and gospel reading is practiced throughout the day. It also opens each communal practice of reflecting on the gospel together.

### Leading the Resource:

This prayer is suitable for recognizing the presence of God within and around us at the beginning of worship on almost any occasion.

The prayer may be prayed by one leader on behalf of the community, or aloud together by all who choose to participate.

The prayer could be framed by a leader to acknowledge the source, for example:

- “We pray together with words from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, ‘Creator, we give you thanks . . .’”
- “We open ourselves to the presence of God with a prayer that comes to us from the gospel-based discipleship movement that emerged and is flourishing among the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, ‘Creator, we give you thanks . . .’”

### Related Resources:

*A Disciple's Prayer Book* is available online:

<https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Disciples-Prayer-Book.pdf>.

More information on gospel-based discipleship from the Anglican Church of Canada:

<https://www.anglican.ca/im/introgbd/>.



39 The Anglican Church of Canada, “Indigenous Ministries: Gospel-based Discipleship,” <https://www.anglican.ca/im/introgbd/>.

40 *A Disciple's Prayer Book* (Minneapolis: Indigenous Theological Training Institute, 2017), <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Disciples-Prayer-Book.pdf>, II-III.



## We offer thanksgiving to our Creator, 864

### Ascription:

adapt. from an Ojibwe six directions prayer by Barb Daniels (Manitoba, Canada) and Neill von Gunten (Manitoba, Canada) for Riverton Fellowship Circle, 2002

### Context:

This prayer of thanksgiving was used at the beginning of each Sunday service at Riverton Fellowship Circle. Cree leader Barb Daniels and former pastor Neill von Gunten describe the significance of the directions in the *Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*:

Balance in life in these four quadrants is central to Ojibwe teachings. In this prayer we recognize what God has given us in the whole of creation that enables us to live a balanced life—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Our response to God is one of profound thanks.<sup>41</sup>

They expand on the significance in an email exchange with committee members:

The Prayer of Thanks was adapted from an Ojibwe 4-direction prayer and added to because we thought that it was important for the church people to also be reflective and introspective about ourselves and our relationships to God and others as we commit ourselves to follow life this way.<sup>42</sup>

Riverton Fellowship Circle was a Mennonite congregation in Manitoba that was initiated by a group of Indigenous people who approached a Mennonite couple about starting a church. The congregation closed in 2020 after 35 years. The congregation consisted mainly of First Nations and Métis members from different denominations and worshiped around a centerpiece of sweetgrass, a candle, and a Bible, and sharing stories instead of sermons.<sup>43</sup> Their legacy lives on in many ways, including in this prayer of thanksgiving that draws on Ojibwe spirituality.

This prayer has been used in a variety of congregations that people connected to Riverton have visited over the years. The Indigenous delegation from North America also led the prayer on the floor of the 2009 Mennonite World Conference gathering in Asuncion, Paraguay. Barb Daniels reflects on this experience: “When we hear that they use it at different assemblies and even at World Conference, it is amazing to know that we’ve done something that everyone can be part of.”<sup>44</sup> The authors collaborated to adapt the prayer for *Voices Together*.

### Leading the Resource:

The community may begin by standing and facing a central Christ candle and may then be invited to turn toward the east, south, west, and north, before returning to the center, as was common practice at Riverton Fellowship Circle.



<sup>41</sup> *Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 32.

<sup>42</sup> Personal correspondence between committee members and Neill von Gunten on behalf of Barb Daniels, March 7, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, “Riverton Fellowship Circle’s legacy lives on,” *Canadian Mennonite* 25, no. 1, December 30, 2020, <https://canadianmennonite.org/stories/riverton-fellowship-circle%E2%80%99s-legacy-lives>.

<sup>44</sup> Quote from Barb Daniels, taken from a video of Daniels and Neill von Gunten sharing the story behind the resource (1:30–1:47): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjY8GG9Xa3U&ab\\_channel=MennoMediaInc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjY8GG9Xa3U&ab_channel=MennoMediaInc).

The prayer may be used as part of gathering for worship, as at Riverton Fellowship Circle. The celebration of American or Canadian Thanksgiving may be an especially fitting occasion to incorporate this prayer.

**Related Resources:**

*Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 32.

A video of the authors describing the history of the prayer, and voicing it aloud:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjY8GG9Xa3U&ab\\_channel=MennonMediaInc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjY8GG9Xa3U&ab_channel=MennonMediaInc).

Another version of the prayer is available on CommonWord. This version was the starting point for the form of the prayer adapted by the authors for inclusion in *Voices Together*:  
<https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/13184>.

Riverton Fellowship Circle in the Global Mennonite Encyclopedia Online: [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Riverton\\_Fellowship\\_Circle\\_%28Riverton%2C\\_Manitoba%2C\\_Canada%29](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Riverton_Fellowship_Circle_%28Riverton%2C_Manitoba%2C_Canada%29).



## We acknowledge that we are gathering, 878

### Ascription:

Mennonite Worship and Song Committee, 2019

Geraldine Balzer is the primary author of the companion resource in the *Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 64.

### Context:

Land or territorial acknowledgments recognize that the Americas were already inhabited when European explorers and settlers arrived on these shores. A land acknowledgment names the original inhabitants of the land, the treaties that were negotiated in good faith by Indigenous peoples, and the lands where treaty negotiations are ongoing or incomplete. Communities are encouraged to research the specific peoples and treaties in their local context by connecting to local Indigenous organizations and using online maps and resources.

Territorial or land acknowledgments have become common practice in Canadian communities in the twenty-first century and are becoming more common in the United States. For Christians in the Anabaptist tradition committed to a just peace, a land acknowledgment grows out of our commitment to recognize the geographic displacement and cultural destruction resulting from settlement and to live into right relationships with Indigenous neighbors. It also grows out of a desire to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, a fifteenth-century philosophical and legal framework that gave European rulers the right to claim lands not governed by Christian monarchs, beginning the age of exploration, colonization, and settlement.<sup>45</sup>

In an Anti-Racist Worship and Song webinar in 2021, Cheryl Bear, a songwriter, speaker, and teacher from the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation community (Bear Clan) in northern British Columbia, spoke of the importance of land acknowledgments:

I think that the land acknowledgment is very important to me as an Indigenous person. . . . When I hear the land acknowledgment, it doesn't have to be mine—on my land—and anywhere I am, and especially if I'm in a Christian setting, I'm really happy. Because I sit there and I feel like I'm not invisible. I'm not a ghost. I'm a human being. And so it's very important. But it's also, in my mind the limitations are that people can think that it's the end-all, be-all of reconciliation. Whereas, it's actually a first step... like a baby's first step. To be celebrated, yes, you take some pictures, you know, you're happy about it, but it's that baby's first step in the lifetime journey of reconciliation. We have a lot more to talk about.<sup>46</sup>

### Leading the Resource:

Including a land acknowledgment when gathering for worship is one way to affirm a commitment to live justly and in harmony with all peoples and all creation in the presence of God and one another as an act of worship.

A land acknowledgment statement can take many forms: it can be printed in the order of service, it can be displayed on church signage, and it can be read as part of the order of worship.



<sup>45</sup> *Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 64.

<sup>46</sup> Quote from Cheryl Bear, Anti-Racist Worship and Song: Part One webinar (7:40-9:39), hosted by MennoMedia as part of the launch of *Voices Together*. The recording is available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-n8P3lounc&list=PLhXhOFvkCzox1hg-0bOnYdsl6FAePNWZNp>.

However, more than a statement that connects to historical wrongs, it needs to be a commitment to righting those wrongs and seeking a better future for all community members, including Indigenous and immigrant.

The same land acknowledgment may be spoken at the beginning of each worship gathering. Rather than being perceived as rote, repetition can be embraced as an opportunity to allow the significance of the words to sink in and shape action over time.

Communities may also choose to vary the way land is acknowledged, making connections to current events, the concrete commitments and activities of the community, or the experience of the specific worship leader.

The words included in *Voices Together* are a starting point and may be revised or expanded. The practice of acknowledging the land is continually evolving. A commitment to ongoing learning in conversation with local Indigenous people and communities is essential.

### **Related Resources:**

*Voices Together: Worship Leader Edition*, 64.

One online starting point for researching the land where you live, work, or worship:

[Native-land.ca](http://Native-land.ca).

The Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery has developed a Land Acknowledgment Guide:

<https://dofdmennonite.org/resources/land-acknowledgement/>.

KAIROS Canada, of which Mennonite Central Committee is a member, has a resource on territorial acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation, among other related material:

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/territorial-acknowledgment>.

Search “Land Acknowledgment” on CommonWord.ca for additional resources:

<https://www.commonword.ca/Home>.



## May the warm winds of heaven, 1061

### Ascription:

anon. Cherokee blessing (USA), 20th c.

### Context:

How do we conceive of the origin of things? A story shared over email by Matthew Anderson, Entrepreneurial Development Cultural Specialist at the Cherokee Arts Center, is offered here with his permission:

There is a grain that has a hollow core that makes for a perfect bead. It has a hard exterior and is very durable. The hollow center allows for ease of a string and makes for an attractive necklace. This grain has several common names and one is Cherokee Tears of Corn. It is said that our ancestors wept along the route of removal from our homeland and where their tears fell, these plants grew. Horticulturalists however will tell you that the plant is of Asian origin and did not arrive here until after the Vietnam War. So when there is discussion about corn beads, I also share that another common name is Job's Tears and it was used as a rosary by monks as early as the 14th century and although it is unlikely that it was here during the removal of 1838, it could possibly have been.<sup>47</sup>

Consider this story alongside the prayer, "May the warm winds of heaven."

"May the warm winds of heaven" was first considered for *Voices Together* when a worship resources screening team highlighted it in an edited collection of resources by Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community*, published in 1995.<sup>48</sup>

*Gifts of Many Cultures* describes the prayer as an "anonymous Cherokee blessing" and attributes it to the *United Methodist Book of Worship* (1992), where the text is included with a slight variation in one spoken and two musical settings.

May the warm winds of heaven blow softly on your house.  
May the Great Spirit bless all who enter here.<sup>49</sup>

In the *United Methodist Book of Worship*, it is called a "traditional Cherokee Nation prayer." The prayer is not included in the acknowledgments of the book because it is not copyrighted or because the publisher could not trace a copyright. A member of the group who edited the book suggests that the prayer was likely submitted by a committee member with no more information than it was a traditional Cherokee blessing.<sup>50</sup>

Personal correspondence with Maren Tirabassi, one of the editors of *Gifts of Many Cultures*, revealed that the blessing came from a collection of worship resources compiled and edited by Juanita Helphrey for the Council for American Indian Ministry of the United Church of Christ in 1991.<sup>51</sup> In addition to Helphrey, this collection was compiled and shared by a council of thirteen Indigenous leaders. In that publication, the words appear as they do in *Voices*



<sup>47</sup> Personal correspondence with Matthew Anderson, May 18, 2023.

<sup>48</sup> Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995), 59.

<sup>49</sup> *United Methodist Book of Worship* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992), 198, 200, 458.

<sup>50</sup> Personal correspondence with *United Methodist Book of Worship* committee member, May 18, 2023.

<sup>51</sup> Juanita Helphrey, ed., *Worship Resources* (Minneapolis: Council for American Indian Ministry, 1991), 14.

*Together*, and the source is listed simply as “Cherokee blessing.” Helphrey — “Maaodagabagi Oxaadish” or “White Flower” — (1941-2018) was a member of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara Nation, the three affiliated tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota. Helphrey was a long-time social and racial justice activist. Among many other leadership roles, she helped develop the first United Church of Christ resource that focused on ways to become an anti-racist congregation and led the United Church of Christ movement against the use of Native Americans as sports mascots and team logos. Juanita was also an author, preacher, and mother of five sons.<sup>52</sup> Clearly, Helphrey and the Council are interested in representation and justice; at the same time, we do not know where or how they sourced this “Cherokee blessing.”

Due to the description of the prayer as a “Cherokee blessing,” members of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee initially reached out to the Cherokee Arts Center as part of the permissions process prior to the publication of *Voices Together* to inquire whether and how we might respectfully and responsibly use the blessing in the collection in ways that honor its origins.<sup>53</sup> Although we did not hear back, we trusted the published source since this was the information available to us during the tight timeline toward publication.

Several years later, when creating this guide, members of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee reached out to the Cherokee Arts Center again and received a very helpful response. Matthew Anderson raised questions about the Cherokee origins of the prayer by email:

As Cherokee Christians do not historically refer to God as the great spirit, it is my opinion that this is simply a romanticized rendering that is not at all associated with us. Most Cherokee songs or prayers call God Father, Creator or are simply in Cherokee. Perhaps there are worse things to be credited for.<sup>54</sup>

He emphasized the importance of recognizing the diversity among Indigenous nations: “Each Indigenous Nation finds it important to help others understand that we are as different as neighbors in Europe.”<sup>55</sup>

Sarah Fite James, Archival Coordinator at the Cherokee National Research Center,<sup>56</sup> gave permission by email to share her similar insights into the origin of the prayer:

Unfortunately, we could not find any information on this “Cherokee blessing.” We believe that this might be misattributed to the Cherokee tribe, and alas we have no way of knowing its origin, or whether or not this was an actual Cherokee blessing.<sup>57</sup>

This prayer may or may not have Indigenous origins, and seems unlikely to be Cherokee. Its origins may never be fully known.

Matthew Anderson emphasizes the importance of the intentions behind our actions, but also cautions against using the prayer in worship:



52 Connie Larkman, “UCC mourns justice advocate Juanita Helphrey,” United Church of Christ, 9 January, 2018, <https://www.ucc.org/ucc-mourns-justice-advocate-juanita-helphrey/>; “Juanita Helphrey of New Town, North Dakota, 1941-2018, Obituary,” Langhans Funeral Homes, <https://www.langhansfuneralhome.com/obituary/juanita-helphrey>.

53 Cherokee Nation, Cherokee Arts Center, <https://artscenter.cherokee.org/>.

54 Personal correspondence with Matthew Anderson, May 16, 2023.

55 Personal correspondence with Matthew Anderson, May 18, 2023.

56 Cherokee National Research Center, <https://visitcherokeenation.com/attractions/cherokee-national-research-center>.

57 Personal correspondence with Sarah Fite James, May 22, 2023.



I was taught that it is not the thing that makes something wrong but rather why you do what you do. Scripture states that “to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” It is simply my opinion but I would not use something that is questionable even if it is in print. Maybe it can be replaced with something less questionable when the next publication comes out or you could note to see additional information regarding the song. . . . Then again, maybe you sing the song with the disclaimer that it is in fact not Cherokee in origin but that the intentions were pure.<sup>58</sup>

While it was not the intention of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee to misrepresent the Cherokee Nation through the inclusion of this resource in *Voices Together*, now that we are aware of this context, we advise against using this prayer as a representation of Cherokee tradition and spirituality. While this blessing is affirmed and prayed in broader Indigenous contexts, its Cherokee origins are questionable. If leaders choose to use this resource, it is important to recognize the varied understandings of its origins.

We are on an ongoing journey of learning how to sing and pray through songs and resources with connections to Indigenous communities in ways that foster understanding, solidarity, and justice.

### Leading the Resource:

In light of this context, there are multiple ways to approach this blessing.

Communities may choose to pray this blessing, recognizing the thorough work of Juanita Helphrey and the Council for American Indian Ministry that compiled the collection from which it was sourced, while at the same time acknowledging that it may not represent Cherokee spirituality and tradition.

Communities may also choose not to offer this blessing, and may instead draw on other resources included in *Voices Together*, or explore material through relationships in local communities.

Words of blessing written by Juanita Helphrey:

God is  
 a cloud forming,  
 an eagle soaring,  
 a voice from the wilderness,  
 echoing through your ear.  
 Whispering, encouraging –  
 keep going, seek My glory,  
 don’t worry, I’ll keep  
 your fears.<sup>59</sup>



<sup>58</sup> Personal correspondence with Matthew Anderson, May 18, 2023.

<sup>59</sup> Juanita Helphrey in Juanita Helphrey, ed., *Worship Resources* (Minneapolis: Council for American Indian Ministry, 1991), 17; also found in Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy, *Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995), 207. The Council for American Indian Ministry granted permission for this prayer to be included in this resource and for it to be used by congregations during worship.