

Methodists give \$50,000 for massacre memorial

by [Chris Herlinger](#) in the [May 31, 2011](#) issue

The United Methodist Church is making good on a pledge to support a learning center at the western site of an 1864 massacre of Native Americans led by a Methodist minister.

The UMC's General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns announced a \$50,000 donation to the National Park Service for developing a center at the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, near Eads, Colorado. The donation will be used to fund research materials and other public education initiatives.

The donation is the latest in a series of acts by which Methodists have apologized for the actions of Col. John Chivington, a Methodist minister who led an 1864 attack against members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes along the banks of Sand Creek. Some 165 people—mostly women, children and the elderly—were killed in the attack.

"This effort is only a single step in a very complex and emotional journey for our church," said Stephen Sidorak Jr., the Methodist agency's general secretary. "We have played an unfortunate role in history in regards to Native Americans, and our recognition of our involvement is long overdue."

The UMC is preparing a formal "Act of Repentance to Indigenous Persons" during its 2012 General Conference meeting in Tampa, Florida. In 1996, General Conference delegates formally expressed regret for the Sand Creek massacre and issued a public apology for the "actions of a prominent Methodist."

Chivington

is reported to have said: "Damn any man who sympathizes with Indians. I have come to kill Indians, and believe it is right and honorable to use any means under God's heaven to kill Indians." —RNS/ENInews