

## **The U.S.-Dakota (Sioux) Conflict: Reconciliation Communication 125 years later**

Paper prepared for the commission on Peace Communication Program: Intercultural Perceptions of Peace and Conflict Resolution, SCA, Boston, MA, November 1987

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The bloodiest Indian war in American history took place during the summer of 1862 along the Minnesota River in southern Minnesota. Approximately 500 whites and an undetermined number of Dakota (Sioux) Indians were killed. This brief six-week conflict ended with 38 Dakota being publicly hung in Mankato, MN., December 26, 1862, in the largest mass execution in American history. Conditions leading up to the 1862 conflict included a variety of enforced geographical and cultural changes that resulted in exile and the loss of the Dakota (Sioux) traditional way of life. Broken treaties (1805, 1851, 1858), late annuity payments and the refusal to extend credit or provide food and supplies to the starving Dakota preceded the outbreak. Conditions were further inflamed when a storekeeper Andrew J. Myrick, remarked brutally, "If they are hungry, let them eat grass" (Carley, 1974, 6). Several days later, August 17, 1862, four Rice Creek Dakota Indians killed five settlers near Acton, MN. "The Action murders set into motion a series of events that were to have serious consequences for Minnesota and the nation" (Carley, 1976, 9).

One consequence, following what became known as the "Sioux Massacre" or "Sioux Uprising," was the temporary near-depopulation of the frontier area and the expulsion of the Dakota people from their homeland (Meyer, 1968; Carley, 1976). Some Dakota fled west or into Canada. Sixteen hundred Dakota were interned at Ft. Snelling

until May 1863. The surviving 1300 interned Dakota were transported down the Mississippi River and up the Missouri Rivers to Crow Creek in southeastern South Dakota, a "dismal drought-stricken place" where many died/ Survivors were uprooted three years later and moved to the Sante Reservation in Nebraska. The culmination of Indian-white wars over the next twenty-eight years was the massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, December 29, 1890. Not only did the massacre take the lives of many, but it broke the spirit of the Dakota nation as well. Black Elk, Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux stated in the 1930s:

I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream. . .the nation's hoop is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree is dead (Neihardt, 1961, 276).

Over the last 125 years, many of the Dakota have gradually returned to Minnesota. (cf. note 2). Today, however, the residual wounds incurred from these early tragedies are evidence among and between the Minnesota Dakota people and whites in expressed feelings of disharmony, distrust, misunderstanding, frustration, and alienation. As one Dakota man expressed:

On the Dakota side, the feelings of anger, resentment, bitterness and in some cases even hatred of the whiteman. . . .have to be dealt with. And I'm sure on the whiteman's side, the old-timers around Sleepy Eye and New Ulm, it would be the same with them, the feelings of anger, hatred toward the Dakota. . . .and now feelings of guilt. They would have to deal with that (Cavender, 1987a).

The need to begin to address and respond to these issues and concerns has begun in the State of Minnesota. A volunteer bi-racial group the Dakota Studies Committee, issued a formal request to begin reconciliation efforts between the Minnesota Dakota and the non-Indians (cf. 3). In December 1986, Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich responded by proclaiming 1987 as "The Year of Reconciliation" in which the Dakota people will join with others [non-Indians] in appreciation of cultural diversity and human understanding" ("State of Minnesota Proclamation," 1986 (See Appendices A).

This study focused on the phenomenon of reconciliation and specific communicative events and experiences of reconciliation between and among the Dakota (Sioux) and non-Indians in the State of Minnesota. Analysis and interpretation of collected data presented here cover a one-year investigation coinciding with "The Year of Reconciliation" time-frame (December 26, 1986 to December 1987). The "Year of Reconciliation" activities began and ended with a 90 mile memorial relay run, involving both Indians and non-Indians, honoring the 38 Dakota hung in Mankato. The relay runs began at Ft. Snelling near Minneapolis and ended in Mankato, MN. on December 26,

1986 and December 26, 1987, the 125th anniversary of the actual hanging (Moos, 1986a; Parsons, 1986; Moos, 1986b; camp, 1987a; Franklin, 1987a).

Research questions for this project include: (1) What are Dakota and non-Indians perceptions of reconciliation? (2) How is reconciliation communicated among and between the Dakota and non-Dakota in the State of Minnesota? (3) What are the outcomes of reconciliation communication among and between the Dakota people and non-Indians?

## METHODOLOGY

A case study approach was chosen to explore the phenomenon of reconciliation. This exploration process includes efforts to explain the real-life reconciliation interventions that are taking place in the State of Minnesota, describe the real-life context in which interventions have occurred, and explore the potential short-term and long-term outcomes of intervention efforts (Yin, 1984, 25). Individual experiences and major communication events were viewed as embedded cases within the case study project.

Multiple methods were used to "bring together multiple perspectives. . ." (Patton 1980, 157) for the purposes of gaining insight and understanding into the complexities of the Dakota and white reconciliation experience. The use of a multi-method approach served to increase the validity and reliability of the collected data (Patton, 1980, 150). Field research procedures over a twelve-month period included participant observations of informal gatherings, twenty-eight public meetings, fourteen public program events, the collection and examination of program documents, and the collection and

examination of media coverage (e.g., newspapers, radio, television) representing various Minnesota geographical areas.

Formal and informal interviewing procedures were used (Patton, 1980, 207-234). Anonymity was requested in many cases. The fundamental open-ended interview questions used included: (1) Describe what reconciliation means to you individually. (2) Describe what reconciliation means to your people. (3) How would you see reconciliation taking place between whites and the Dakota? between the Dakota? (4) What evidence do you see that suggests reconciliation is taking place? Measures to verify the accuracy of interview data with the interviewee were employed with interviewee confirmation.

Varied interpretations and/or definitions of "reconciliation" were uncovered by the extraction of meaning structure themes emerging from the collected data (Lanigan, 1979, 3-15). A composite list of forty-eight definitions of "reconciliation" was explicated from the data. Two researchers individually clustered the emergent themes from this data into groups of similar common-meaning structures. Researchers then collectively clustered the combined lists and identified six major meaning structure theme categories (See Appendices B). They included:

1. Reconciliation means peace with self, other and world
2. Reconciliation means honor and respect
3. Reconciliation means understanding
4. Reconciliation means restoration and restitution

5. Reconciliation means educating
6. Reconciliation means healing and forgiveness

## DISCUSSION

Arnett's (1980) dialogue of peace framework provides a means for examining the events and perceptions of reconciliation in the State of Minnesota. A key dimension for non-violent peacemaking, according to Arnett, involves the creation of an atmosphere wherein mutual resolution embracing equality and justice can occur. Such an atmosphere requires a willingness by all persons to "negotiate openly rather than to force a resolution by using domineering power tactics" (1980, 126). The use of domination methods to resolve conflict lead to devalued self-esteem and values. As a consequence, persons feel forced to give more than they receive and they often become defensive and less cooperative. Arnett (1980) states:

The main tenet of non-violent action is to act in a way that the needs of both parties are met at least somewhat adequately in a non/win-lose situation (126).

Non-violent peace-making actions confirm both parties' human dignity, values and needs by focusing and working to discover mutually beneficial resolutions.

The 1987 reconciliation events that took place in Minnesota demonstrate Arnett's principles of a dialogue of peace at work. Arnett's (1980) view on non-violent peacemaking emphasizes the need to discover and understand the needs of both

parties (126). Reconciliation events throughout the year sought to create an atmosphere for non-violent peacemaking actions that would lead to open-negotiations for understanding and mutually beneficial resolutions. These events provided opportunities for Minnesotans to discover and more fully understand the needs and concerns of both the Dakota (Sioux) and non-Indians.

This study explored non-violent peace-making efforts of "reconciliation" and its meaning to Minnesota peoples. The following discussion focuses on (1) perceptions of reconciliation (2) forms of reconciliation communication, and (3) outcomes of reconciliation combination efforts.

Reconciliation means peace with self, other and world. Arnett (1980) writes: "The non-violent peacemaker needs to work to create a community of otherness, where individual uniqueness is affirmed in the larger quest toward a peaceful and just world community" (138). Dakota elder and spiritual leader Amos Owen (Sweiger, 1987) commenting on the Dakota way of life and his efforts to share the Dakota ways, echoes Arnett's view:

The world we live in is full of turmoil right now. That's why we try to put peace of mind into most people. I'm at peace with myself and my fellow man, and these things I try to pass on to other people so that they understand our way of life.

Owen's reconciliation efforts share the Dakota way (e.g., sweat lodge ceremonies, memorial ceremonies honoring the 38 Dakota hanged in Mankato, honor dances, oral

histories) with all (Indians and non-Indians) who are interested. The outcome of his inclusive efforts affirm other's uniqueness and seek to build a world community of peace and harmony (1987a, 1987b). (cf. 4).

Dr. Chris Cavender (1987b), another Dakota, provides a similar perspective of reconciliation. He states: "Reconciliation means to restore a harmonious relationship between two parties--individuals, groups--who are estranged." According to Cavender (1987a) the term "reconciliation" embraces four broad areas:

1. Reconciliation within the individual--dealing with one's own feelings of anger, resentment, bitterness, hatred, built;
2. Reconciliation between groups of individuals--the most obvious between Dakota and non-Dakota people and also within the Dakota community;
3. Reconciliation between the individual and his/her environment; and
4. Reconciliation between the individual and his/her Creator--"between the Dakota and Wakan Tanka, between the Christian and his God, or the Jewish man and Jehovah. . . . I guess my feeling is that if it starts there, it will have an impact on the other areas as well."

Cavender's perspective calls attention to multi-levels where peacemaking efforts of reconciliation need to take place.

## Evidence of forms of reconciliation communication and their outcomes

addressing these peace-making concerns for peace with self, others, and world include efforts on a state-wide level, community level, as well as individual levels. A state-wide form of reconciliation communication included a formal proclamation document issued by Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpeich. This official peace-making communicative form, a first in the United States, communicates an attitude of reconciliation that appeals to all three levels (self, other, and world). The issuance of the Proclamation served as a key focal reference for planning individual, community and state-wide programs and activities. Many feel that the issuance of this official document and the activities associated with it may serve as a model for other states as similar Indian-white conflict anniversaries come due. Efforts in Minnesota have caught the attention of neighboring states as well as Canada. One North Dakotan, journalist Harold Iron Shield (Dakota) encouraged his readers in this way (1987);

I also want to encourage other Dakota people to honor our relatives and participate in this year's events or create your own projects locally to commemorate the Dakota warrior relatives.

Iron Shield's comments follow a description of several "Year of Reconciliation" events that took place in Minnesota.

A second example is a commemorative button for the "Year of Reconciliation" issued by the Brown County Historical Society located in the community of New Ulm, the site of one of the major 1862 Dakota-whiteman conflicts ("New Ulm" 1987). (cf 6)

This button displays a drawing of representatives of the two opposing factions, a Dakota (Little Crow) and a white man (Charles Flandreau), standing side by side (See Appendices C). Generally speaking, this community has fostered negative attitudes towards the Dakota over the last 125 years. The issuance of this symbolic button on a local and state-wide level communicates a willingness to initiate reconciliation efforts that can lead to understanding both sides.

Reconciliation efforts to communicate peace between self and other have occurred as well within the Dakota community itself. Several Dakota reported personal reconciliation outcomes as an outgrowth of the year's efforts. Two persons, one a Dakota woman (an elder) and a Dakota youth reported that their involvements in this year's activities brought them back to the traditional ways and a renewed appreciation of their own culture (cf. 7).

Another Dakota man reported his reconciliation efforts with another Dakota. For years, he experienced feelings of anger, betrayal and bitterness towards the other's ancestors because they helped their white friends during the conflict period. His feelings resulted in a decision to not attend a ceremony honoring the other's ancestors in 1986. This decision resulted in increased feelings of separation and anger. As an outgrowth of this year's theme of reconciliation, the embittered Dakota man went to his fellow Dakota and offered his apology for not attending the ceremony. He reported stated to the other:

I've changed my thinking over this last year about those who helped the whites because of my friendships with several whites this year. I've thought, if my white friends were under threat of being killed by others, I would help them too. I'd like to apologize for not attending the honor ceremony and offer my support.

the offended Dakota responded with an acceptance of the apology and offered his hand. These two communicative acts, the apology and the handshake, are evidence of reconciliation efforts taking place on an interpersonal level.

Reconciliation means honoring and respecting others. Arnett (1980, 13) speaks of non-violent peace-making efforts necessitating a recognition of people as persons rather than objects. That is, persons' uniqueness should be acknowledged, honored and respected. According to Rev. Charles Sleeper (1987) (Cheyenne-Arapaho), "Honor and respect" are elements of reconciliation." Honor and respect , in accordance with the spirit of reconciliation in he State of Minnesota, means an acknowledgment of both the no-Indian and Dakota peoples' historical and contemporary experience on an institutional and interpersonal level. On an institutional level, or example, typical Minnesota educational materials have primarily presented non-Indian accounts of Minnesota history. The Minnesota Historical Society is showing honor and respect to the Dakota perspective in the publication of a new textbook and related materials on Minnesota history ("Backgrounder," 1987):

Believing that most people's attitudes toward Native American culture are formed in the early years of schooling, the Minnesota Historical Society is preparing a new textbook and related materials on Minnesota. These new educational materials will present a picture of Minnesota life in which the story of Native American people is told accurately and sympathetically. Native American educators and elders are participating as planners and critics on this project. (4).

The outcome of these efforts will be the introduction and use of these materials in Minnesota schools in 1988.

Honoring and respecting others as a reconciliation act involves acknowledging the past, dealing with it, and then moving on. As Cavender so clearly states (1987a):

One of the concepts of reconciliation, as I have learned from different people, is that what has happened in the past has to be acknowledged, however negative, however painful it might be, has to be confronted, has to be acknowledged, and then we can go from there; then healing and reconciliation can occur.

Reconciliation, as it is defined here, suggests a forward moving effort of demonstrated honor and respect for others' historical and contemporary experience.

Honor and respect for the Dakota people has been demonstrated in the city of St. Peter, MN, the site of the 1851 Traverse des Sioux Treaty signing and the City of Mankato, the site of the 1862 hanging of 38 Dakota warriors. These two communicative

events demonstrated an honor and respect for the Dakota of the past, present and future in artistic commemorative forms. The first honoring event took place in March 1987 when the St. Peter Community Choir and Symphony Orchestra, directed by Sara McKay, dedicated their performance of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's work "Hiawatha's Wedding Feat" to the Dakota people. Representatives from the Indian and non-Indian communities joined in this honoring occasion (cf. 8). The evening performance opened with the singing of a 140 year-old Dakota hymn, "Lac Qui Parle," a hymn that has historical significance to the Christian Dakota. According to some Dakota, "this song was sung by the Dakota people at the hanging of 38 Dakota men (Mankato) who were some of the participants in the 1862 Conflict" ("Upper Sioux," 1987). The outcomes of these efforts were positive. Dakota representatives attending this performance responded with appreciation for the honor and respect extended to them:

Their [St. Peter Community Choir] rendition of the song was beautiful and very meaningful to those Dakota present and familiar with the song. .

.Representatives from the community felt it was an event worth attending and were appreciative of the special attention shown to all the Dakota of Minnesota.

This reconciliation effort demonstrated a sincere interest and desire on the part of non-Indians to show honor and respect.

A second such artistic reconciliatory effort took place in Mankato. In April, Thomas M. Miller, a 27-year-old non-Indian sculptor and native of Mankato, began a

sculpture project of a 6' Dakota Indian warrior out of a 7.5 ton piece of Kasota Limestone. Miller began this estimated nine-month project with no assurance of financial support. Miller stated to a group of visiting junior high students that his motivation for doing this project was to honor the Dakota people. . .” to create a lasting monument to the Indian people’ (Menton, 1987). He sees his work as a bridge between the past and the future: “I think it will reach a lot of people and make them aware of what happened back then” (Moos, 1987). Miller feels this sculpture will symbolize peace and brotherhood amongst the Indians and whites, “and that’s pretty special to me” (Miller, 1987). Miller’s statue was placed on the grounds of the Minnesota Valley Regional Library, the site of the hanging. It was unveiled in a public ceremony (approximately 300 attended) on December 26, 1987, the 125th anniversary of the hanging. The creation of this piece has generated positive interest and support in both non-Indian and Indian communities (“In place,” 1987; Lagerquist, 187; “Ceremony honors,” 1987). One visiting Canadian Dakota elder responded to the project with personal comments to Miller (1987); “You know we talk a lot about peace, but what is needed is something visual to remind us. This sculpture will help to bring the two peoples (Dakota and non-Dakota) together.” Miller’s visual reconciliation form acknowledges the Dakota people and draws attention to the multiple perspectives of historical occurrences that affected all Minnesotans. In this way, all Minnesotans (non-Dakota and Dakota) are shown honor and respect; thus, reconciliation can begin (cf 9).

Reconciliation means understanding. According to Arnett (1980), non-violent peacemaking efforts to achieve understanding require genuine dialogue. It is through

dialogue and re-examination we begin to discover our own prejudices and values as well as others. Deborah Howell, Executive Editor, St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch advocates a process of re-examination: “The State of Minnesota has proclaimed 1987 as the ‘Year of Reconciliation,’ a time to re-examine the causes of the conflict and to reflect on the impact on the state’s history. Publishing these sections is our part of that effort” (Camp and Coleman, 1987b). Historian Gary Anderson (1987), recommends re-examination through dialogue as a means for beginning the process of understanding:

We in a society need to come to a better understanding of our prejudices.

We need to recognize other’s values. Don’t try to change people, rather understand them. Open a dialogue!

Anderson suggests that the possibilities for understanding depend on an open dialogue between Indians and non-Indians so that people can discover and begin to understand and appreciate and accept cultural diversity. Ramona Jones (1987), a Dakota woman, views reconciliation in a similar way. When asked the question: ‘How realistic is this concept of ‘reconciliation?’ she replied, “It’s us. We make it realistic. What we are doing to understand, appreciate and accept differences will result in reconciliation.” The key for reconciliation is dependent upon individual and interpersonal efforts.

Efforts to create opportunities for dialogue and increased understanding have been evidenced during this “year of Reconciliation.” A variety of communication forms include regularly scheduled Dakota Studies Committee meetings which advocate

ongoing dialogue about related issues and concerns. Open invitations were extended to anyone interested in exchanging information and suggestions for reconciliation project ideas. The outcome of these informal discussion meetings provided numerous opportunities for dialogue and cooperative project efforts between Dakota communities, the Minnesota Historical Society, eight county historical societies, the Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota, and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

One clear reconciliation communication example in which dialogue led to understanding took place during a Dakota Studies Committee meeting at Granite Falls, MN., the Upper Sioux reservation site. The purpose of holding the meeting at Granite Falls was “to discuss and suggest ideas to the Yellow Medicine County Historical Society as they re planning on holding or sponsoring a commemorative event for the Year of Reconciliation” (“Dakota Studies,” 1987). This was the first Dakota Studies meeting ever held in the Granite Falls area due, in part, to historically-based negative feelings between the non-Indian and Dakota communities. For the first time in history, Dakota people and representatives from the Yellow Medicine County Historical Society and Museum sat down together and discussed plans to work together. Statements from the historical society people asking for help were heard: “We want to do something here.” “We want to have a day for the Dakota each year. . .” “Can you help us with a program in September?” A Dakota man responded: “I want to establish a better working relationship with this County Historical Society.” The outcome of this encounter and dialogue resulted in several commemorative projects (Cherveney, 1987; “YM

Museum,” 1987). The Yellow Medicine County Museum, for example, held an observance of the Dakota conflict. “In keeping with the theme of reconciliation, it [Yellow Medicine County Museum] will attempt to offer information on the Dakota people” (Cherveney, 1987). Granite Falls journalist Tom Cherveney (1987) reported Cavender’s reaction to this event:

While the event at the museum will be modest compared to some observances set for the conflict, Cavender feels it is one of the most important. . .because of what he saw last August people from the Dakota Studies Committee and representatives from the museum met. ‘It’s the first time I’ve seen both sides really reaching out,’ stated Cavender. ‘The two sides wanted to work together. . . it is one of the nicest things for me all year.’

Yellow Medicine County Historical Society’s response to the theme of a Year of Reconciliation and Cavender’s expressed observations suggests that the process of reconciliation has at least started in the Granite Falls area. This example is only one of several reconciliation events that have taken place during this Year of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation means restoration and restitution. “The way of . . . peacemaking reveals the importance of confirming the other and recognizing his humanity” (Arnett, 1980, 138). According to Cavender (1987a) confirmation of the Dakota people involves restoration and/or restitution.

Some kind of restoration has to be done. In this case, probably its not going to be material, or economic or financial. It will probably be like spiritual, psychological and maybe some other kinds of things that the Mdewakanton Club is involved with and what is going on here this morning concerning the fund raising or the [Dakota Indian] statue. These kind of things I think will bring about healing and 'payment' or 'restitution.'

As Cavender sees it (1987a) , the Dakota people have suffered a kind of “psychological rape” through repetitive reference to them as Sioux. The term Sioux is a translation by the French of an Ojibwe word for the Dakota meaning “snake-like,” or “enemy” (Berg, 1987). Co-authors Camp and Coleman (1987) write: “The names by which they called themselves spoke eloquently of their connection to the lakes and woods of the mid-continent.” (cf 11) One symbolic gesture to restore and confirm the Dakota is to call them by their name “Dakota” which means “ally” or “friend.” Cavender (1987a) comments:

Dakota. . . .that is the name of our people. It is not Sioux. This is the name the Dakota people use to refer to themselves when talking about themselves. That is one of my simple goals, yet it is a very profound goal during this year and hopefully the beginning of a process that the people will start using the name that people refer to themselves. . . .That is something I would really love to see down the road when people start

referring to us as the Dakota people . . . I would really appreciate that very much.

Not only is calling the Dakota people by their rightful name an important reconciliation issue among the Dakota, another important reconciliation communication issue has to do with the redefinition of the 1862 confrontation between the Dakota and whites. Two Lower Sioux Dakota men, John Robertson and David Larson, feel strongly that historians need to redesignate what has been colloquially known as “the Sioux Massacre,” or “the Sioux uprising” of 1862 to the “U.S.-Dakota Conflict” (Cavender, 1987a). The rationale behind this request stems from a point of view that defines the term “uprising” as a kind of lawlessness such as the English people rising up against the country of England. Several Dakota prefer the term “conflict” since in a technical sense the U.S. Government never officially declared war. This conflict is thus compared with the Vietnam and Korean Conflicts.

Throughout this year, observations of the terms chosen in state-wide publications, media coverage, and public program lectures and discussions show a demonstrated effort to refer to the Dakota people by their name as well as concerted efforts to use the U.S.-Dakota Conflict term. These efforts demonstrate a general willingness and interest to help in the Dakota (Sioux) restoration process.

Reconciliation means educating others. Arnett’s (1980) dialogical view for non-violent peacemaking advocates persons taking the perspective of the other, “experiencing the other side.” This kind of self/other education process allows for possible answers to problems or misunderstandings to emerge. As Lee Antell (1987)

(Ojibwe) points out: “When persons who have no reason to be indignant, become indignant, change will take place.” Antell suggests that when a balanced view of historical events is presented revealing the injustices on both sides, persons respond and advocate mutually beneficial change.

Another concerned individual, Arlo Hasse (1987), a man of German descent adopted by the Dakota, speaks of the need to educate Minnesotans about Minnesota’s history from the Dakota perspective. He also advocates measures to encourage a self/other examination of the conditions that led up to the 1862 Conflict: “Just get good information out and let it speak for itself.” As persons begin to encounter, discover and appreciate the complexities of the Indian and non-Indian experience, they will become more willing to engage in “open negotiations” and work towards more mutually beneficial resolutions.

Meyer (1967) stresses the value of perspective-taking as an educating device:

Understanding the Indian’s point of view and his desire to remain an Indian requires knowledge. Hence perhaps the most important way the white man can help solve the Indian problem is to inform himself on the history and present condition of these people about whom he really knows very little. Indifference and apathy are more serious obstacles to true understanding than outright prejudice, if only because they are vastly more widespread (370).

Understanding the Dakota perspective and experience is an essential educational issue. Vine Deloria (1987) emphasizes the need to understand the Dakota people from a social and spiritual perspective. People need to be educated and understand that the treaties entered into were spiritual documents, not simply legal documents. To understand the Dakota then and now, people need to be educated in the social aspects of historical events as well.

Cooperative efforts by the Minnesota Historical Society and the Dakota Studies Committee to begin educating people about the historical Dakota social experience resulted in a series of public educational programs marking the Year of Reconciliation.

In this 'Year of Reconciliation' Dakota and white people are working together in many different ways to educate the public about Dakota history and culture and to further human understanding through a greater appreciation of cultural diversity ("Aspects of," 1987).

Six programs, funded by a Minnesota Humanities grant, were designed to educate and stir Minnesotans out of their complacency and lack of knowledge about the Dakota perspective and contributions to Minnesota, focused on "Aspects of Dakota History and culture." Each of the six programs was presented two times, each at a different geographic location, so as to make it available to a wider audience. Attendance and interest in these programs increased over the scheduled four-month presentation period (May-July) resulting in an overall attendance of 1300. These six educational programs provided important opportunities for individuals to become enlightened by discovering

history through shared academic as well as personal wisdoms and truths. These type of interactions provided avenues for understanding and aided in the defusion of resentments based on lack of knowledge and/or misinformation. The educational event discussed here is one example of several that took place this year. (cf 12)

Reconciliation means healing and forgiveness: This final no-violent perception of reconciliation suggests hope for the future. Arnett (1980, 124) cites Brown's concept of a reconciliation context including both grace and judgment and love and justice. Arnett describes these dual movements as essential reconciliation components for 'caring confrontations' that can lead to peace. The caring confrontations that took place during the Year of Reconciliation set into motion a process for healing and forgiveness. Harold Iron Shield (Dakota) 1987b), disclosed his perspective; "Minnesota is unifying. . . .it is mending the broken hoop." Iron Shield references Black Elk's 1930 words regarding the 1898 tragedies at Wounded Knee and the fall of the Dakota nation. Several examples calling for healing and forgiveness have come from the white community.

The religious world responded admirably both in Minnesota and beyond its borders supporting the theme of reconciliation and going even further. In the US, both the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church issued formal apologies to all Native American people for past insensitivities towards Native culture and in Canada the Federal Council of Churches representing most denominations in Canada, also issued an apology and asked for forgiveness from the native people.

St. Paul Journalist, Nick Coleman (1987) issued a strong appeal to Minnesotans:

It is time for Minnesota to say it is sorry. It is time to put things right, to pardon and to ask to be pardoned. It is time to ask forgiveness and to give it. It is high time. . . .In order for reconciliation to occur, it is necessary to acknowledge injustices and to retract lies. . . . It is time. . . .to seek official pardons from the state and federal governments for the men hanged in Mankato. It is time to acknowledge that they were victims of a blood-thirst for retribution. . . .It is time to acknowledge the past and the wrongs that were done. It is time to bring healing and forgiveness. It is time for reconciliation. It is high time.

Coleman's pleas has been supported and acted upon by his St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch superiors with an official request to Present Reagan and Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich for a pardon for the 38 Dakota hung in Mankato (Finnegan, et. a., 1987) (See Appendices D). Reactions to the pardon idea are mixed among the Dakota people ("Its time," 1987):

. . .the idea of a 'pardon' is resented by at least as many Dakota people as like it. This in the sense of, 'How can you pardon us when we've done nothing wrong?'

The suggestion of a pardon, while controversial, demonstrates efforts to find ways to begin the healing and forgiveness process. "whether formal pardons come or not from on high, it remains for all us Minnesotans--descendants of warriors and victims, soldiers and victims--to pardon one another. To become reconciled" ("It's time," 1987).

There have been many efforts to begin the healing process in Minnesota. These efforts were acknowledged in one St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch editorial (“It’s time,” 1987):

Some marvelous opportunities have been created this year for people of Minnesota to touch hands and hearts in reconciliation for deadly damage done one another in the Dakota Conflict of 125 years ago. It is time for healing.

Media coverage has been instrument in the healing and forgiveness processes. State-wide newspaper, television, and radio coverage has been sensitive and thorough in the reporting of conditions (Indian and white) that led up to the December 24th tragedy (Camp and Coleman, 1987a; 1987b; 1987c; 1987d; 1987e; Flaherty, 1987; Flaherty and Smalec, 1987; Moos, 1987b; Tougas, 1987a). This is of interest when contrasted with the very minimal amount of coverage on the 100th anniversary of these events.

Healing and forgiveness have begun in the City of Mankato. In recent years, many Dakota and whites have felt there was a “dark cloud” hanging over Mankato as a consequence of the 1862 deaths. A Mankato bi-racial group, the Mankato Mdewakanton club, has worked since 1972 to bring about healing between Indians and non-Indians in the City of Mankato (cf 13). An annual traditional pow wow sponsored by this group, now held in the “Land of Memories” park--a Dakota spiritual area given to the Indians by the city of Mankato in 1979--draws hundreds of Indian and white people together. As a consequence of this shared experience, reconciliation is occurring.

Tougas (1987b) reported that Amos Owen (1987), spiritual leader and adviser to the Mdewakanton Club agrees:

As for the spirit of reconciliation, Owen agrees that the circle is complete, and that the 'dark cloud over Mankato' brought on by the mass execution of 38 Dakotas in 1862 is gone as well.'

'I think that went away in 1972 when we first came here,' Owen said regarding the annual Pow Wows in Mankato. 'You could say the reconciliation started then.'

Examples of healing and forgiveness taking place as a consequence of this event are many. Of particular interest, was the first-time visit of a Canadian Dakota contingent attending the September 1987 Pow Wow because of the emphasis on the Year of Reconciliation. Many of the Canadians attending were descendants of those who were hung and those who fled to Canada 125 years ago. Their visit was significant in that their fear of the Mankato community, grounded in historical events, prevented them from coming to the area. One 81-year old Canadian Dakota elder, Eli Taylor, stated (Crawford, 1987c):

Our parents were very much terrified, to the extent where they wouldn't talk about it (1[1862 conflict] for years and years and years. . . .The Year of Reconciliation will help heal that wound . . .It seems to be well-accepted by both sides now. We both have the feeling that we're not being

accepted, he said of whites and Indians. 'So why not work together and find a solution? It's the only way. We're all God-made creatures.'

As many Canadian Dakota participated in the Pow Wow ceremonies and celebrations, they expressed amazement with the number of whites and Indian people (Mdewakanton Club members) working together. This is not their experience in Canada. Returning to their homeland (Mankato) and participating and sharing in inter-tribal (Indian and white) traditional activities seemed to have healing results. Many of the first-time Canadian visitors openly expressed their appreciation to the sponsoring group and vowed they would return next year.

Ron Green (1987), a St. Peter, MN. resident, summarized reconciliation efforts to bring about healing:

What was the purpose for declaring 1987 as the Year of Reconciliation?

Not so much to rehash old history, although it is necessary to know the history to understand the present, but it has more to do with what the word reconciliation suggests, to heal, to bring together, to show interest and concern, to understand and appreciate the achievements of a people. The Dakota, and to rid the Minnesota River Valley of the ancient enmities that resulted from the U.S.-Dakota Conflict of 1862, forever.

The need for healing and forgiveness has been acknowledged in southern Minnesota.

Reconciliation efforts must continue. The possibilities for realizing measurable non-violent peacemaking goals of reconciliation between the Dakota and non-Dakota is dependent upon continued Indian and non-Indian community efforts. Many have voiced

the need to redefine the theme of a “Year of Reconciliation” to “A Time of Reconciliation” and beyond to “A Decade of Reconciliation.” One editorial stated: “

All Minnesota should be interested in the conflict: It’s our past. and in reconciliation: our future” (Pardons,” 1987). Deloria (1987) concurs with his suggestion of the creation of “new ceremonies” to aid the healing process. New ceremonies would include the creation of opportunities for shared experiences that involve Indians, non-Indians and the land.

While many positive steps have been taken, many more need to follow to continue the year’s work. Many feel that the issuance of the official “Year of Reconciliation” document and the activities associated with it may serve as a model for other communities, states and even nations. Betty Radcliff (1988) staff member at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Relations in Minneapolis reports that inquiries from several different states requesting information to model reconciliation activities in Minnesota have been received. On an international level, one letter to the editor suggested (Masur, 1988):

Your December 27 article observing the 125th anniversary of the hanging of the 38 Dakota Indians had striking parallels to the article regarding the beginning of trials of Palestinian protesters in the occupied territories.

Copies of these two articles should be forwarded to the leadership in Israel so that they might learn the lessons that history teaches us. Perhaps further bloodshed could be averted.

Interest in this year's work has extended beyond the Minnesota borders.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study used Arnett's (1980) dialogue of peace framework to examine the non-violent peacemaking efforts of reconciliation between the Dakota people and non-Indians in the State of Minnesota. Complexities of the peace-making concept of "reconciliation," are described in this study as they have been perceived, communicated and experienced by Minnesota peoples during 1987, "The Year of Reconciliation." Varied perceptions and experiences suggest that reconciliation communication efforts provided an atmosphere for "open negotiation" that resulted in peace on multiple levels, honor and respect, understanding, restoration and restitution, educating and healing and forgiveness.

The "Year of Reconciliation" is viewed here as "history-in-the-making," a history that has begun a non-violent reconciliation communication process to help lessen the pain and hurt from the past; a history that promotes the discovery of possibilities that lead to a "time of reconciliation" among and between Indian and non-Indian communities.

Further study will continue through additional observations and interviews to gather additional in-depth data on the impact of the year's activities and continued efforts of reconciliation.



## Notes

### 1. Treaties related to the U.S.-Dakota Conflict (Meyer, 1967):

Treaty of 1805 -- The Dakota (Sioux) ceded 10,000 acres of land at the juncture of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers to Lieutenant Zebulon Pike. The cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis are located on this land. At the time, they received \$200 worth of presents and some liquor. Payment for this land was not negotiated. Rather, the United States government later determined a payment in the amount of \$2,000 (25).

Treaty of 1851 -- The Treaty of Traverse Sioux ceded 20,000,000 acres recognized today as most of Southern Minnesota and parts of South Dakota. The Dakota people were to receive \$1,665,000 in payment, however only \$30,000 was paid at the time of the Treaty. The remainder of moneys due and other provisions (e.g., education, farming supplies) were withheld indefinitely.

Treaty of 1858 -- This was a clarification Treaty dealing with the provisions defined in the 1851 Treaty. The Senate finally ratified these treaties March 9, 1858 at which time the Dakota were allowed \$0.30 per acre. Provisions agreed upon 8 years

earlier were amended leaving the management of all specifics to the discretion of the President. The Indians title to their reservation was not official until 1860 (104). Nearly all of the moneys due went to pay "trader debts" and the Indians received little for themselves.

2. A large number of Dakota live in the metropolitan area and smaller numbers reside on four small Indian reservations, e.g., Lower Sioux, Red Wood Falls; Upper Sioux, Granite Falls; Shakopee, Prior Lake; Prairie Island, Red Wing.
  
3. Dakota Studies Committee: The Dakota Studies Committee was Dr. Chris Cavender's (Wahpetonwan Dakota) project. Cavender served as the coordinator. The first meeting took place in 1977 and since that time, interested Dakota and non-Indian peoples have come together to share and talk about concerns. The stated purpose of this committee is to study, share and preserve the richness and beauty of the Dakota heritage and culture. Participants during the Year of Reconciliation included representatives from the four Dakota communities (, e.g., Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Prior Lake, and Prairie Island), Minnesota Historical Society, many county historical societies, Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, Department of Natural Resources, Science Museum of Minnesota, University of Minnesota, members of the Mdewakanton Club, Mankato, journalists, clergy and other interested parties.

4. Owen's reconciliation efforts were acknowledged with a "coalition-builder" award by the Urban Coalition of Minneapolis (1987c)
  
5. From Cavender's perspective, the 1862 conflict left scars and bitterness among the Dakota people; conflict still exists between the descendants of those who fought against the white man and those who helped the white man.
  
6. The successful defense of New Ulm, the town nearest the Dakota (Sioux) reservation, was a major event in the 1862 U.S.-Dakota Conflict in Minnesota. Charles Flandrau, judge and former Indian agent, led volunteers to New Ulm's rescue after its citizens had been attacked by the Dakota, August 19 and August 23, 1862. Little Crow, the chosen Dakota (Sioux) leader of the Mdewakanton warriors, led the attack on New Ulm. Approximately 34 New Ulm citizens and an undetermined number of Dakota Indians were killed.
  
7. These two Dakota people were participants at a Wo-pi-da Wo-ta-pi ("A meal of Thanksgiving") held on January 14, 1988. this celebration took place near Minneapolis at the home of Mrs. Betty Radcliffe, staff member of the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. The agenda for this gathering was entitled "Reconciliation, Reflection and Re-Commitment." Approximately 55 persons (Indian and non-Indian workers and supporters of the Year of Reconciliation) attended for the purpose of "celebrating and giving thanks to the Creator,' reflecting on the past

year, 1987 -- the Year of Reconciliation, and sharing our thoughts on the question --  
'Where do we go from here?'"

8. Key representatives included: Amos Owen, Dakota spiritual leader of the Wabasha band of the Mdewakanton people, Prairie Island Mdewakanton Dakota Reservation, Dr. Chris Cavender, coordinator of the Dakota Studies Committee, Minneapolis, and Bruce Dowlin, president of the Mahkato Mdewakanton Club, Mankato, Minnesota ("Wedding Feast," 1987).

9. Additional events of honor and respect included:

Circle of Reconciliation painting. An internationally recognized artist from Mankato, Marian Anderson (1987), honored the Dakota in a spirit of reconciliation through her creation of an 24x27 oil painting portrait of Amos Owen, a Dakota spiritual leader. Tougas (1987b) reported Anderson's thoughts at the unveiling of the portrait in Mankato: "Owen is a central focal point of the Spirit of Reconciliation. . . .The work is not so much a painting of Amos, but of the spirit of reconciliation of which. . .Owen is a local center." Tougas (1987b) continued: "The halo-like circle around her subject symbolizes both sides of the historical conflict reaching the full circle of understanding--with Owen as the center." Anderson honored the Dakota with her artistic gift during the Year of Reconciliation. It hangs in the Minnesota Valley Regional Library near the site of the 1862 hangings.

Fort Snelling Marker Dedication: Fort Snelling is the site of the internment camp where 1600 Dakota people were held following the U.S.-Dakota Conflict 1862. Several hundred Dakota people--men, women, children--died while being held prisoners during the winter of 1862-1863. An all night vigil with an opening pipe ceremony, oral accounts of the camp from the Dakota elders and a reading of the names of Dakota people held prisoner took place at Fort Snelling State Park, October 30, 1987. This observance was followed by the dedication of an historical marker that describes the internment experience from the Dakota perspective and acknowledges, by name those who were interned there. The Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Historical Society sponsored this event (Camp and Coleman, 1987c; "Fort Snelling," 1987).

10. Other reconciliation communication events fostering opportunities for understanding during this year included:

Dogs in the Hot Moon, St. Paul -- Great North American History Theater Production. Belville, Lance (1987). This play presented "a fragmented view of the Sioux Uprising of 1862, in which as many as 800 white settlers and soldiers and an undisclosed number of Indians died in a month of mutual butchery along the Minnesota River near New Ulm and Fort Ridgely" (Vaughan, 1987a). Belville explores the Dakota side of the story (Moos, 1987). He concentrates on a few participants in the war:

Susan Brown, an Indian woman married to a white trader, Mattie Williams, a white woman captive, Rev. Stephen Riggs, a white cleric, Otakle, a black who fought with the Dakota and later turned informant for the government, and military opponents Little Crow, and General Henry Sibley. Ron Leith, a direct descendant of Little Crow, played the role of Little Crow. Leith commented: "I think what I'm doing is bringing to light facts and information concerning these events as people should know them" (Vaughan, 1987b). This lay received positive and negative reactions from the Indian community and the public (Vaughan, 1987; "Critics choice," 1987; Willand, 19087; Beleville, 1987).

New Ulm -- Brown County Historical Society commemorative events: "The Brown County Historical Society housed in a city that 125 years ago was soiled with bloodshed from the Dakota Conflict, will sponsor a series of events Saturday to honor the "year of Reconciliation," e.g., tours of conflict sites, children's games, films, craft workshops, guest speakers ("Speakers, films," 1987; "NU settlers," 1987). One 92-year-old New Ulm citizen, Dr. Kurt Bell recalled the embittered settler stories told him by his relatives. However, he recognized both sides: "'I think it's important that those people [whites] be remembered,' but he added, 'I'll be the first to stand up and say the Indians got screwed' (Franklin, 1987).

In January 1988, the Brown County Historical Society was awarded the New Ulm Human Rights Commission award for "raising the community's consciousness about

the U.S.-Dakota conflict of 1862." Commission member Ellen Olson stated: "It seems fitting that our area should be one of the leaders in trying to bring about some kind of reconciliation ("New Ulm/History," 1988).

Ft. Ridgely and Lower Sioux Agency Interpretive Center commemorative programs:

"The Frontier Soldier," (Ft. Ridgely) -- showing the life of a typical soldier on a frontier post in the 1800's; "Cultures in conflict," (Lower Sioux) -- "This program will endeavor to bring about a better understanding of the differences between the Dakota and white cultures which were a direct cause of the Dakota War of 1862" ("Interpretive centers," 1987; Peterson, 1987; "Historical group," 1987).

Monson Lake Memorial Association: presented the "Year of Reconciliation" theme in an August 23rd public program in the form of a People's Court. Participants listened in on two conversations, one conversation of two Scandinavian ladies visiting and describing the recent horrors brought on by the Indian uprising and another conversation by Indians who described their feelings of being cheated and mistreated by the United States government (Bengtson, 1987). This was a significant event in that traditionally over the past 60 years, this annual memorial observance has only recognized the white settlers that were killed.

Chippewa County Historical Society, Montevideo, MN: sponsored an event to commemorate the release of hostages at Camp Release, on September 26th the

exact date of the release. Walking tours of the area where Dakota villages and campsites once existed were scheduled. Dr. Chris Cavender presented the Dakota perspective of activities at Camp Release and representatives from the Torture Victim Center, St. Paul, spoke on the hostage experience ("Chippewa County," 1987).

Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minneapolis: symposium scheduled on November 13-14. The program included major addresses by Gary Clayton Anderson, non-Indian historian and scholar, Vine Deloria, Lakota scholar and educator, Arlo Hasse, adopted Dakota lay--expert on the Minnesota Dakota Treaties, and Roger Buffalohead. The program format included a mixture of general sessions, workshops, opportunities for questions and comments, and "mixing meeting" sessions designed to encourage informal dialogue between participants. General sessions focused on the U.S.-Dakota history, the Treaties of 1805, 1851 and 1858--provisions, negotiations, implementation, and the Aftermath. Constituency workshops focuses on "How 'We' Acted Then and Now." One unique session, a "Reconciliation Session," provided "much opportunity for face-to-face interaction [and opportunities] to discuss ideas about follow-up, [and the] meaning of 'reconciliation'" (Humphrey Institute, 1987). The final session focused on recognizing and claiming current conditions. This reconciliation event provided opportunities to work towards understanding through dialogue and discovery.

11. One tribe called itself "People of the Leaf," or Wahpetons. Another was the "People Who Shoot in the Leaves," or Wahpekutes. There were the "People of the Swamp," or Sissetons, and the "people of the Sacred Lake," the Mdewakantons. Together the Tetons, Yanktons and Santee make up the Dakota nation. The Teton Dakota occupied the Rocky Mountains east to the western edges of North and South Dakota and northern Nebraska; the Yankton Dakota occupied the Missouri River valley in North and South Dakota and northern Nebraska, and the Santee Dakota initially occupied the prairie of southwestern Minnesota and northwestern Iowa.

12. Additional education events include:

The Indian Heritage of the Region (1987, April 29). This program was conducted for the Traverse des Sioux Library System "Staff Day" program covering nine regional library systems, Minnesota Valley Regional Library, Mankato, MN. The purpose of this program was to provide librarians with adequate resource information regarding the role and contributions of the Dakota (Sioux) to Southern Minnesota history. This program was designed with the Year of Reconciliation theme in mind.

Aspects of History and Culture programs include ("Aspects of", 1987):

"Dakota women's roles in the Conflict of 1862." Yvonne Wynde, President of Sisseton-Wahpeton Community College, Sisseton, S.D., May 6 and 7.

"Indian and white perceptions of an expanding republic: Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century." Dr. Reginald Horsman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. May 20 and 21.

"Public reaction to the Dakota Conflict." Nick Coleman, St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch. June 3 and 4.

"A talk with four Dakota elders." Amos Owen of the Prairie Island Community, Elsie Cavender of Upper Sioux Community, Eli Taylor of Sioux Valley Reserve, Manitoba Canada, and Evelyn Prescott of the Lower Sioux community. June 17 and 18.

"What we can learn from the great Dakota." Dr. Gary C. Anderson, Texas A & M University, author of Little Crow: spokesman for the Sioux. June 24 and 25.

"Reservation communities in the Twentieth Century." Dr. Don Fixico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Commentary on Minnesota's Dakota Communities by David E. Larsen, Chairman of the Lower Sioux Community, Morton, July 9 and 10.

13th Mahkato Mdewakanton Pow Wow, Mankato, MN.: A first-time education day during the Mahkato Mdewakanton Pow Wow (September 17) wherein 280 Mankato District 77 third-graders participated at the Pow Wow site in 12 different learning experiences. The purpose of this cooperative effort led to an event designed "to help young children learn more about the people who occupied this area before white settlers arrived. . ." (Pow Wow opens," 1987).

Fry Bread Forum, The Year of Reconciliation. (1987, October 22). "Ethnicity and the U.S.-Dakota Conflict." Lecture and panel reaction. Dr. Gary Anderson, Professor of History at Texas A & M, lecturer. Macalister College, St. Paul, MN.

Memorial Run and Ceremony: On December 26, 1987, a core group of 12 runners (11 Dakota--8 men and 3 women and 1 non-Indian) completed the second 90 mile relay run which started at Ft. Snelling and ended in Mankato. This 12-hour run began at 12:01 a.m. in below zero temperatures. Runners and their supporters were greeted by a crowd of approximately 100 people at the Land of Memories Park in Mankato. The runners and their supporters entered a sacred circle wherein they shared the peace pipe and heard the Dakota prayers offered by Amos Owen honoring the 38 Dakota warriors. A traditional feast and reconciliation program honoring the 38 Dakota and the relay runners and their supporters followed.

Dakota Indian State Unveiling: On December 26 following the memorial service and feast in Mankato, Tom Miller unveiled his large-than-life statue sculpted out of a 7.5 ton piece of Kasota Limestone before a crowd of approximately 300. Mankato Mayor Vernon Carstensen introduced Miller who offered words of recognition and honor to the Dakota people. Miller then presented his work to Amos Owen, (Dakota). Owen and Miller jointly unveiled the statue. One St. Paul reported described this event in the following way (Camp, 1987a): Dakota spiritual leader Amos Owen of Prairie Island and sculptor Tom Miller of Mankato share a grip on a traditional eagle feather staff in front of Miller's statue. . ."

13. The Mahkato Mdewakanton Club is a Mankato based bi-racial group that has been in existence since 1972. Indians and whites work together each year to organize and coordinate a traditional pow wow. The public is encouraged to attend to learn about Dakota ceremonies and traditions. This pow wow is unique in that no reservation is located in the Mankato area. The establishment of this group and the sponsoring of the yearly pow wow event grew out of a long-time friendship between two white men, Bud Lawrence, Manager of a restaurant business in Mankato, Jim Buckley, Real Estate Broker, Mankato and Amos Owen, Dakota spiritual leader, Prairie Island Reservation near Red Wing, MN. (Camp, 1987b).

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