

Disciples group cancels South Carolina meeting in Confederate flag dispute: In support of an NAACP boycott

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African-American members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are joining other church bodies in boycotting the state of South Carolina for displaying the Confederate flag on the state capitol grounds.

The National Convocation, a Disciples group of some 1,000 African Americans, had scheduled its 2010 biennial session in Charleston, South Carolina, but it dropped plans to meet there at the request of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The NAACP is calling for a national boycott of South Carolina until the state removes the Confederate flag from a state memorial site in Columbia. For years the flag had flown above the statehouse, and after heated controversy and as a compromise between critics and supporters of the flag, it was moved to a memorial site in front of the capitol that honors South Carolina history.

Supporters of the flag, flown by the Confederacy in the U.S. Civil War, say it symbolizes a part of history that should be honored, while critics say it is a potent symbol of the painful legacy of slavery and racial segregation.

The convocation's decision to join the boycott was made during the denomination's General Assembly July 29 to August 2 in Indianapolis. Church officials said the NAACP will help the denomination recoup the \$30,035 cancellation fee for the hotel reservations.

The Disciples organization thus joined others, including groups in the Catholic Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the United Methodist Church, that have supported the NAACP boycott, according to *DisciplesWorld*, a magazine

and news service that covers the Disciples. -*Ecumenical News International, Religion News Service*