

Minute of Support for Indigenous Peoples

The Asheville Friends Meeting with leading from Spirit adopts this Minute. Spirit calls us toward truth, racial healing, and transformation, following the Indigenous wisdom of respect for the earth and all its beings.

We affirm the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We repudiate the Doctrines of Discovery, the religious basis for European colonization around the world. We endorse the formation of a federal Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies.

We commit to the following actions and call upon the Meetings and Worship Groups of SAYMA to similarly commit as led:

... to uphold the self-determination and sovereignty of Native nations. We acknowledge that it is not the place of non-Indigenous people to define or decide the priorities or realities of Indigenous people, and that "right relationship" requires respect for Indigenous people's autonomy and leadership.

... to act in solidarity with the reinvigoration of local Indigenous cultural knowledge and wisdom, such as: language restoration; environmental stewardship; Native craft and art; food and medicine; wildfire management techniques; spirituality; mental and physical healthcare; programs for youth; and Native-led healing work.

... to create awareness and advocate for missing and murdered Indigenous women.

... to support Native treaty rights, ecological protection movements, and legislation repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery.

... to compassionately listen to and establish rapport with Indigenous people.

... to establish relationships that guide us to thoughtful, grounded actions opposing the ongoing systemic dehumanization and material dispossession of the original peoples of the land on which we live and worship.

... to courageously face the learning required to comprehend settler colonialism.

... to provide opportunities for collective lamentation: times and/or spaces to acknowledge, grieve, and integrate these truths, with the guidance of Spirit and our Indigenous advisors.

... to compensate Native people who provide us with their expertise from our Reparations Fund.

... to study, learn, and thoughtfully consider the following queries:

- What was the history of Indigenous life before European contact?
- How was indigenous life affected by the arrival and incursion of settler colonial people?
- What was the nature and extent of Quaker involvement in the ensuing genocide, land theft, and forced assimilation of the peoples indigenous to this continent?
- What was the nature and extent of Friends' role in operating and legitimizing compulsory day and boarding schools for Native children, where language, religious, and cultural assimilation were violently enforced, and where kidnapping, torture, and preventable child death were common?
- What are the current effects of colonization specific to our region?
- To what extent is our current property and wealth derived from land and resources appropriated from Native peoples? To what extent are we led to compensate Native peoples through investment in Native nations or Native-led projects that support Indigenous rights, health, or autonomy, such as sharing property, paying rent as suggested by Native people, or returning the land?
 - How do we interrupt anti-Indigenous behavior and language?

... to identify ways in which these commitments are honored within each annual State of the Meeting report.