

North Pacific Yearly Meeting Anti-Racism Working Group

Minute of Support for Indigenous People

The North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends repudiates the Doctrines of Discovery. We acknowledge and regret Friends' role in the ensuing land theft, and in the forced assimilation and genocide conducted at residential schools for children indigenous to Turtle Island ('North America'). We affirm the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We commit individually and as meetings to courageously and compassionately face the learning required. We will take thoughtful, grounded actions to comprehend and oppose past and present colonialism, and the ongoing systematic dehumanization and material oppression of the original peoples of the land on which we live and worship.

Action items:

- Each Meeting will self-educate about the history of Indigenous life, the arrival of settler colonial peoples, and the current effects of colonization specific to their land and region. We encourage Friends to pay for Native speakers, and to learn how to interrupt anti-Indigenous behavior and language, e.g. mascots, cultural appropriation, costumes, idioms, touching people's jewelry, etc.
- Each Meeting will self-educate about Quaker involvement in the kidnapping of Native children for compulsory 'residential schools,' where language, religious, and cultural assimilation were violently enforced, and torture and preventable child death were common. Each Meeting will provide space for collective lamentation.
- Friends will look for ways to uphold the self-determination and sovereignty of Native nations. Friends acknowledge that it is not the place of European Americans to define or decide the priorities or realities of Indigenous people, and that 'right relationship' requires respect for Indigenous people's autonomy.
- Each Meeting will find ways to invest in the reinvigoration of local Indigenous cultural knowledge and wisdom. For example: language restoration; land, air, and water stewardship; food and medicine; wildfire management techniques; spirituality; mental and physical healthcare.
- Each Meeting will either 1) give back the land the Meeting House sits upon, or its equal value in nearby land, to the descendants of the Indigenous people who lived there at the time of European contact; or 2) pay fair rent for its use, either to those from whom the land was taken, or to a Native-led project supporting Indigenous rights, health, or autonomy. Example projects include efforts to protect missing and murdered Indigenous relatives; ecological protection movements (e.g. Standing Rock, blocking coal trains); or any Spirit-led project that upholds Indigenous autonomy.
- Each Meeting will submit an annual report about their efforts to support Indigenous peoples to the NPYM's Anti-Racism Working Group. ARWG will offer support to individual Meetings as Way allows, and report collective findings to annual session.

Resources

Please contact us if you'd like support in seasoning this with your Meeting. Mackenzie Barton-Rowlage: mbartonrowlage [at] gmail.com or Laurie Childers: childers [at] peak.org

Definition of 'autonomy'

Merriam-Webster defines autonomy as the quality or state of being self-governing, especially the right of self-government; self-directing freedom and especially moral independence.

Background on the Doctrine(s) of Discovery

What are they?

The Doctrines of Discovery are a collection of 15th to 20th century religious and governmental policies sanctioning the European conquest, theft, and exploitation of Native people and their land. In the United States, the 1452 papal bull is incorporated into federal law. This is still being used to oppress Native people; for example, in 2005 the Supreme Court quoted the original Doctrine of Discovery from 1452 while ruling against the Oneida Indian Nation of New York in a dispute over taxation of ancestral lands. Indigenous groups have been asking for religious and governmental institutions to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery.

<https://www.npym.org/content/doctrine-of-discovery-factsheet>

See also "Doctrines of Discovery", Douglas Lind, *Jurisprudence Review* 13:1 / 2020

https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_jurisprudence/vol13/iss1/5/

What have other Friends said about them?

American Friends Service Committee: [The Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

Baltimore Yearly Meeting: [Background Materials for Minute to Repudiate Doctrine of Discovery](#)

Boulder Friends Meeting: [A Minute to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and to Reaffirm the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

Friends General Conference: [Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery in Your Meeting](#)

Canadian Yearly Meeting: [Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

New York Yearly Meeting: [Minute on the Doctrine of Discovery](#)

Northern Yearly Meeting: [Doctrine of Discovery Resources](#)

Decolonizing Quakers: [Roots of Domination - Decolonizing Quakers](#)

What have other religious groups said about it?

<https://doctrineofdiscovery.org/faith-communities/>

Repudiations by Faith Communities - Doctrine of Discovery

Background on land theft

Two examples: many Quakers moved to Turtle Island after English King Charles II paid his debt to William Penn with the colony of Pennsylvania – land that belonged to the Lenni Lenape people, not the English crown, except for the claims of the Doctrines of Discovery. William

Penn's sons then stole more land from the Lenni Lenape by cheating on the Walking Purchase:
<https://paconservationheritage.org/stories/the-walking-purchase/>

<https://westernfriend.org/media/healing-native-peoples-thru-truth>

Paula Palmer's 2021 keynote speech to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting covers both the original Quaker land theft, and Quaker involvement in boarding schools.

Friend Helena Cobban has a recent series of blog posts that delve into this history in detail:

<https://medium.com/project-500-years/my-january-syndrome-strikes-again-4c1e5b1a24ce>

<https://medium.com/project-500-years/baltimore-quakers-westward-expansion-in-the-early-united-states-95760b2cfdbc>

<https://medium.com/project-500-years/white-settlers-with-good-intentions-48867582426d>

<https://medium.com/project-500-years/quakers-and-settler-colonialism-before-william-penn-dc23ceb18177>

Background on genocide in residential schools

The explicit goal of compulsory residential schools, including those run by Friends, was to strip Native children of their culture. The children were forcibly removed from their families around age 5 and tortured for speaking their language. There was widespread physical, psychological, and sexual abuse at these schools, and many children – sometimes more than half of those enrolled – did not survive.

General resources on the residential schools

The stories of survivors and witnesses are most thoroughly collected in the 2001 report by the Truth Commission on Genocide in Canada

(https://www.barondeschauer.com/uploads/8/4/7/5/84752080/genocide_report_2001.pdf), and in

the 2015 report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200505161532/http://trc.ca/about-us/trc-findings.html>,

<https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>), which compiled 6,000 people's testimonies and some of the historical documentation verifying their accounts. The US government has not done any comparable large-scale research.

Shorter articles/videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGqWRyBCHhw>:

“How the US stole thousands of Native American children” (13 minutes)

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/03/traumatic-legacy-indian-boarding-schools/584293/>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/10/03/stories-of-life-in-indian-boarding-schools>

<https://fanwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/INIC-Statement-on-Boarding-Schools-with-signers-10-20-21.pdf>

A statement from the Interfaith Network for Indigenous Communities, September 2021. (INIC is based in Washington State. <https://fanwa.org/our-network/inic/>)

Resources on Quaker involvement with boarding schools & healing

<https://journeyofhealing.net/indian-boarding-schools/>

This website is part of a ministry originating within New England Yearly Meeting. It's a resource for learning about Friends' involvement with boarding schools, our genocidal history more generally, and all sorts of inspiring present-day possibilities.

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/quaker-indian-boarding-schools/>

Friends Journal article consolidates information gathered by Paula Palmer on Quaker involvement in residential schools.

<https://boardingschoolhealing.org/healing/for-churches/>

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition summarizes the role of religion in harm and healing in the context of residential schools.

<https://www.decolonizingquakers.org/quakers-and-boarding-schools/>

Information about Quakers and Indigenous boarding schools, including links to further reading.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20151025184346/http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/v033/v033p169.pdf>

This article on the missions of the Society of Friends among the Indian tribes of the Sac and Fox Agency offers a history of Quaker boarding schools in Oklahoma.

<https://www.fcni.org/updates/2021-10/quakers-grapple-legacy-indian-boarding-schools>

Brief update of current Quaker efforts to address the legacy of boarding schools.

Background on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Read the full declaration: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the UN General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007, by a majority of 144 states in favor, 4 votes against, and 11 abstentions. The countries who did not ratify it were Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. In 2009 Australia changed its position, followed by New Zealand in April 2010, Canada in November 2010, and the United States in January 2011 (<https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/srgia/154553.htm>).

Further resources related to action items

“Decolonization is not a metaphor,” Tuck & Yang *Decolonization* (journal) 1:1 2012

<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>

Real Rent Duwamish is an example of a reparations project: <https://www.realrentduwamish.org/>

NDN Collective (<https://ndncollective.org/>) is an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to building Indigenous power, and it is one hub of the #LandBack movement

(<https://landback.org/>). Through organizing, activism, philanthropy, grantmaking, capacity-building and narrative change, they are creating sustainable solutions on Indigenous terms.

The movement to protect, find, and demand accountability for the missing and murdered Indigenous relatives is decentralized, and goes by many names. Some primarily focus on women and girls (MMIW, MMIWG), others include Two Spirit people (MMIWG2S) as well as men (MMIP, MMIR, MMI*). This article by the Coalition to stop violence against Native women offers an introduction: <https://www.csvanw.org/mmiw> . The Lakota People’s Law project developed a MMIW Resource Guide: <https://lakotalaw.org/news/2020-05-01/mmiw-resource-guide>, and the Texas Christian University's women and gender studies department also has a thorough resource page: <https://sis.tcu.edu/wgst/initiatives/mmiw/> (scroll down). *Beware that some advocates uphold an anti-sex work stance in their engagement with this issue, which endangers both sex workers and trafficking victims alike. Amnesty International has a decent Q&A on the topic of decriminalizing sex work: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/qa-policy-to-protect-the-human-rights-of-sex-workers/> , and the Sex Workers Outreach Project briefly explains how to fight trafficking by decriminalizing sex work: <https://sacramentoswop.org/2016/10/07/to-fight-sex-trafficking-decriminalize-sex-work/> .*

The Oregon Office of Tribal Affairs is a team committed to all Oregon tribal communities thriving mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Through tribal consultation with Oregon’s Nine Federally Recognized Tribes, ODHS ensures programming, services, and policies meet the needs of Oregon tribal communities.

<https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ABOUTDHS/TRIBES/pages/index.aspx>

The phrase “**collective lamentation**” indicates a creative opportunity with participation by all. It could be a space in each Meeting house (a wall or a notebook) to place or post personal stories, feelings, artwork. It could be a ceremonial event in which Friends speak their hearts about this shared history. It could include what each of us learn about our individual family participation in or experiences of colonization. It is a time and/or space to acknowledge, grieve, and integrate these truths, with the guidance of Spirit.