

## Minute of Support for Indigenous People

The North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends repudiates the Doctrines of Discovery, the basis for European colonization around the world. We acknowledge and regret Friends' role in the ensuing genocide, land theft, and forced assimilation of the peoples indigenous to Turtle Island ('North America'), including Friends' role in operating and legitimizing compulsory residential schools for Indigenous children. We affirm the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We commit to courageously and compassionately listen and face the learning required to comprehend settler colonialism and grow relationships with Indigenous people. We intend that these relationships will guide us to develop thoughtful, grounded actions to oppose the ongoing systemic dehumanization and material dispossession of the original peoples of the land on which we live and worship.

We see this Minute as one expression of the 2019 NPYM Uprooting Racism Minute.

### **NPYM calls on our Meetings to commit to the following actions:**

- To self-educate about the history of Indigenous life before European contact, the arrival of settler colonial peoples, and the current effects of colonization specific to their land and region. We encourage Friends to compensate Native people who provide us with their expertise, and to learn how to interrupt anti-Indigenous behavior and language.
- To 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.
- To provide space for collective lamentation: a time and/or space to acknowledge, grieve, and integrate these truths, with the guidance of Spirit.
- To recognize that integrity requires us to uphold the self-determination and sovereignty of Native nations. Friends 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. For example: language restoration; land, air, and water stewardship; food and medicine; wildfire management techniques; spirituality; mental and physical healthcare; programs for youth; and Native-led healing work.
- To explore the sources of its property and wealth, and to invest in Native nations or Native-led projects that support Indigenous rights, health, or autonomy. These investments could include sharing property, paying rent as suggested by tribes, or returning the land. Example projects include efforts to protect missing and murdered Indigenous relatives; ecological protection movements like Standing Rock or coal train opposition; or any Spirit-led project that upholds Indigenous autonomy and leadership.
- To identify, within each annual State of the Society report, ways in which the commitments made in NPYM Minutes are finding life in our Meetings.

## Resources

Please contact us if you'd like support seasoning or implementing this with your Meeting. Laurie Childers: [childers@peak.org](mailto:childers@peak.org) or Mackenzie Barton-Rowledge: [mbartonrowledge@gmail.com](mailto:mbartonrowledge@gmail.com)

### 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 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/](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>

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

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

## **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](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**

Examples of anti-Indigenous behavior and language include racist idioms, touching people's jewelry, and cultural appropriation, such as disrespectful sports mascots and treating cultural symbols as a party costume.

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/> .*

Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians (ATNI): <https://atntribes.org/>

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>

Eloheh Indigenous Center for Earth Justice: <https://www.eloheh.org/the-center-for-earth-justice> and Great Spirit Methodist Church in Portland <https://greatspiritpdx.com/> are further Oregon resources. One of the hosts of Eloheh, Randy Woodley, recently wrote the book *Becoming Rooted: One Hundred Days of Reconnecting With Sacred Earth*, which a Friend recommended.

*Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, is a book by a Potawatomi author that has moved many Friends deeply.

Several Friends in different cities and states note that their local university is a hub of Indigenous-led organizing, and could be a resource for their Meeting.

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.