

Minute on Right Relationship with Indigenous People

Minute approved June 2022

Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends repudiates the Doctrines of Discovery, the basis for European colonization around the world. We must understand and lament Friends' complicity in the genocide, land theft, and forced assimilation of the peoples indigenous to Turtle Island (also currently known as North America) and worldwide, including Friends' role in operating and legitimizing compulsory residential schools for Indigenous children. We will seek out opportunities to apologize and work toward repair of these atrocities. We affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We commit to courageously and compassionately listening and facing the learning required to comprehend settler colonialism and do what it takes to heal relationships with Indigenous people. We intend that relationships and feedback from Indigenous people will guide development of thoughtful, grounded actions to oppose ongoing systemic dehumanization and material dispossession of the original peoples of the land on which we live and worship. We will work toward the co-creation of a community that values Indigenous people, wisdom, and practices as essential to healing the land and other relationships.

This Minute was drafted by North Pacific Yearly Meeting and adapted by SCYMF's Equity & Inclusion Committee, with the mutual goal of collaborating in this work with other Friends in the Pacific Northwest.

With support from the Equity and Inclusion committee, and guided by feedback from Indigenous people in and outside SCYMF, we suggest the following starting points for our Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting to cultivate readiness to engage in healing from colonization and toward right relationship:

- To self-educate about the varied, diverse, and extraordinary history, cultures, and ecological practices 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 Indigenous people who provide us with their expertise, and to learn how to interrupt anti-Indigenous behavior and language.
- To self-educate about the transgenerational trauma that Indigenous families continue to suffer, stemming from Indigenous boarding schools where children were forcefully removed from their families and subjected to brutal physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse.
- To acknowledge and repent of the harm that Quakers inflicted on Indigenous children and their families by operating Indigenous boarding schools and day schools and by promoting the federal policy of forced assimilation of Indigenous children.
- To provide space for collective lamentation: a time and/or space to acknowledge, grieve, and integrate these truths, with the guidance of the Spirit.

- To recognize that integrity requires us to uphold the self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous nations, including those not federally recognized. 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 defend 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 Indigenous-led healing work.
- To explore the sources of its property and wealth, and to invest in Indigenous nations or Indigenous-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 movements 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 begin healing the damage done by colonization by collaborating and conspiring with people, other living beings, and the land. Consider how our meetings and members can uphold treaties made with Indigenous people with integrity, ensuring the land and the community of all life are cared for and available for current and future generations.
- To identify ways in which the commitments made in SCYMF Minutes regarding racism and Indigenous sovereignty are finding life in our Meetings, and to listen with humility and be open to Spirit's leading for actions not on this list, with the understanding that the work of living into this Minute will be ongoing, responsive, and intergenerational.

This Minute aspires to be generative, not prescriptive, a starting place that names the direction the Spirit is currently calling our community.

Resources

For more information, please see: [Resources to Support Coming into Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples](#).