

TRUTH AND HEALING: QUAKERS SEEKING RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Purpose:

To build a common awareness and understanding of the injuries inflicted upon Indigenous Peoples and the ongoing trauma to which Indigenous Peoples are subjected. To bring Quakers under the weight of the genocidal enterprise in which white settler Quakers actively participated, particularly in the United States as Indian agents and through Quaker-run Indian Boarding Schools. To inspire and enable Quaker conferees to carry this education and truth-telling into their meetings, Quaker organizations, and communities as a step on the road to healing justice. To consider together what the shared Truth of our history and the Truth of our common humanity calls us to do corporately toward healing justice in the various communities in which Quakers live. To imagine what next steps beyond acknowledging and apologizing might be in terms of healing justice with Indigenous Peoples. To prepare Quakers to move forward on healing steps at the local, yearly meeting, and Religious Society of Friends levels in relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

Audience:

- (1) Quakers already working under the weight of a concern for healing between Quakers and Indigenous Peoples.
- (2) Quakers awakened to a concern about our historical involvement with Indigenous Peoples but not fully informed about the harmful intergenerational traumas caused by Quakers, among others.
- (3) Quakers generally carrying a concern for racial justice and equity and increasingly aware that White Supremacy has deeper roots in our country's history and collective consciousness stemming from the European-Christian Doctrine of Discovery and its ideology of exploitation and domination.

Outcomes:

Affective:

- Fully engaged activists will feel more unified, focused, and supported.
- Less involved supporters will feel clearer, better connected, and more courageous.
- All feel more hopeful, connected, committed, and skilled in taking next steps in their Quaker meetings and local communities.

Cognitive:

- Understand the long history and ongoing effects of the genocide of Indigenous Peoples.
- Increase awareness of how our processes and assumptions – taken as truths – are reflections and projections of our own colonized minds.

- Learn what steps Quakers and other religious organizations have taken/are taking towards healing their relationships with Indigenous Peoples.
- Grasp the possibilities inherent in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including possibilities for accompanying Indigenous Peoples in their struggles and our mutual struggles.

Social/Active:

- Commit to the work of “decolonizing our minds” as part of the internal transformative work that we each need to do for healing and reconciliation on a larger scale.
- Connect with other Quakers similarly concerned and engaged and form informal networks for support in the work.
- Connect with leaders among Indigenous Peoples’ rights advocates for further work.
- Commit to take next right actions in small groups and plenary session.
- Epistle to all Friends everywhere reporting on the conference and sharing right actions forward that have arisen.

Pendle Hill Vision

To find ways for Quakers in meetings corporately (and individually in their communities) to acknowledge our complicity in a white supremacist system that brought genocide on Native peoples. That collectively we see this as a part of a domination/ exploitation/ extraction and commodification of Nature and Earth’s peoples that is fundamentally and morally wrong. That despite a genocide waged against them, Indigenous Peoples have struggled to maintain and pass on their culture, traditions, and relationship with Nature as a living, breathing unity of which humankind is but a part. That the Earth cries out for healing and wholeness, and all humans are called back into right relationship with Earth and our fellow creatures if we are to survive and thrive as a species. That part of right relationship is setting aright our relationship with Indigenous Peoples, whose ancestors were killed, whose culture white people have tried to obliterate, and whose enduring values white people have desecrated, marginalized, and/or commodified. That yesterday’s wounds live on today in the form of intergenerational trauma that manifests in a variety of debilitating ways.

To own these truths and to embody them. As we own them, does not Truth require us to publish them, acknowledge them publicly? From acknowledgment, are we not moved to apologize for the harms our European ancestors and their descendants have caused and the benefits all non-Native people have reaped from the land theft, murder, and other genocidal acts against Indigenous Peoples? Beyond acknowledgment and apology, what else does Truth (Spirit) demand of us today?