

Doctrine of Discovery for SCYM

Bayou Quarterly Meeting would like to bring to South Central Yearly Meeting their concern for repudiating and revoking the Doctrine of Discovery.

Background information

Papal Bulls issued in the 15th and 16th century expressed the doctrine that certain human beings, because they were not Christian, were not entitled to the right to control their ancestral homelands, to self government and civil organizations, and even the right to life itself. This Doctrine of Christian Discovery stated that any Christian Prince who discovered land inhabited by non-Christians was entitled to own and control those lands and to displace, kill, or enslave the inhabitants.

The Doctrine of Discovery has been used as justification for exploitation, discrimination, and genocide carried out against many peoples of this earth, including in the United States, where it has been formally incorporated into the law of the land. It continues to cause harm and suffering to indigenous peoples in the United States and around the world.

Current actions

Over the past five years a number of faith groups have officially called for repudiation and revocation of the Doctrine of Discovery. These include the World Council of Churches, the Episcopal and Methodist Churches, Unitarian Universalists of America, United Church of Christ, and a number of Catholic groups. A number of Quaker Meetings, including Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Canadian Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, and some Quarterly and Monthly meetings, have approved minutes repudiating the doctrine of discovery and calling for instituting the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the law of the land. Bayou Quarterly requests South Central Yearly Meeting to consider doing likewise.

BQM Minute

Bayou Quarterly Meeting joins with other Quaker Meetings, including PYM, BYM, CYM, NEYM, NYYM, Boulder Monthly Meeting, and others in minuting their support for repudiating and revoking the Doctrine of Discovery and instituting the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007 as a basis for the law of the land.