

## **2013: A Minute to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and to Affirm the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

In solidarity with initiatives led by Indigenous leaders and a growing number of religious organizations, the Boulder Friends Meeting repudiates the "Doctrine of Discovery." For centuries, this doctrine of domination has been used to oppress Indigenous Peoples throughout the world and deny them their rights. The Doctrine originated in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century papal bulls that privileged European Christians over all other peoples. The popes authorized European monarchs to "invade, capture, vanquish, and subdue all...pagans and other enemies of Christ...to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery...and...to take away all their possessions and property," (Pope Nicholas V). The Doctrine of Discovery violates Christian teachings, from their foundation in the Ten Commandments to their expression in the life of Jesus. It also violates our Quaker testimonies of equality, peace, integrity, community, and stewardship.

As citizens of Colorado, we occupy lands that were recognized by treaty as the territories of Indigenous Nations including the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute peoples -- and then taken from them. Consciously or unconsciously, we benefit from historical and ongoing injustices committed against the Native peoples of this land.

Because the Doctrine of Discovery was embedded in the legal foundations of the United States and other countries, it continues to be cited as a precedent. Even today it is used to deny Indigenous Peoples their rights. For this reason, we urge our government and all governments to dismantle the legal structures and revoke the laws and policies that are based on the Doctrine of Discovery. We accept our own responsibility to work to dismantle the economic, social, cultural, and educational structures of privilege that are rooted in the Doctrine.

In order to build relationships with Indigenous Peoples founded in equity and justice, we affirm and support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration seeks to ensure that Indigenous Peoples collectively and individually enjoy all the human rights and fundamental freedoms recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights law. The Declaration recognizes Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination and establishes a framework for political and social relationships based on equity and mutual respect. Just as Quakers played a role in promoting the passage of the Declaration by the UN General Assembly in 2007, we acknowledge that we must also labor to implement it.

**BOULDER MONTHLY MEETING**