

Cobscook Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends joins with our sisters and brothers of Faith to recognize the injustices that have been and continue to be perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples everywhere. As was first initiated by the Episcopal Church of the United States in July 2009 and has since been supported by the Indian Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, New York Yearly Meeting Indian Affairs Committee, Syracuse Monthly Meeting, Butternuts Monthly Meeting, and others, we repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and call upon others to do the same.

The impact of the Doctrine of Discovery on the lives of Indigenous Peoples in what we now know as the United States cannot be overstated. As the Doctrine of Discovery website (www.doctrineofdiscovery.org) states, "Papal Bulls of the 15th century gave Christian explorers the right to claim lands they 'discovered' and lay claim to those lands for their Christian Monarchs. Any land that was not inhabited by Christians was available to be 'discovered', claimed, and exploited. If the 'pagan' inhabitants could be converted, they might be spared. If not, they could be enslaved or killed." This Doctrine has legitimized the confiscation of Indigenous lands and the immoral treatment of Indigenous Peoples for approximately 600 years.

As was noted by the Indian Committee of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, "under this discovery doctrine, English, Canadians, and Americans, including Friends, settled in the lands of Indigenous Peoples, removed them from their homelands, broke treaties made with these peoples, [and] aided in multiple ways in the destruction of their sacred cultures, languages, and spiritual practices." We, too, see the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery as providing a path "toward reconciliation and healing justice between Native and non-Native peoples." Cobscook Friends Meeting House sits on the coastal waters of Eastern Maine and is on land that was once tribal territory of the Passamaquoddy Indians. We recognize that Western Europeans, which included early Quakers, perpetrated grave injustices against Indigenous Peoples.

As Minuted by the Indian Committee of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, "We find this doctrine to be fundamentally inconsistent with the teaching of Jesus, with our understanding of the inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God, and inconsistent with Quaker testimonies of Peace, Equality, and Integrity." Cobscook Friends resoundingly believe that these Friends "speak our minds." In like spiritual discernment, we affirm and support the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our faith and our belief that there is that of God in everyone necessitate our joining "this evolving path to peace, justice, and an earth restored."