

# **TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION—HEALING THE PAST AND LOOKING FORWARD**

**Compiled for UU General Assembly, Spokane, WA, June 20, 2019**

## **ReconciliACTION Getting into Action on Truth and Reconciliation**

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## **EXPLORE: Truth and Reconciliation Documents and Websites**

### **Documents:**

- [WA Proclamation of Support for Truth and Reconciliation in Washington State](#)
- Canadian Unitarian Council [An Expression of Truth and Reconciliation](#)
- [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [The Final Report \(and other documents\) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- [Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship, Truth and Reconciliation Resolution, 2019](#)

### **Websites:**

- [Doctrine of Discovery](#)
- [Truth, Repair, and Reconciliation: Unitarian Universalist 2007 Responsive Resolution](#)
- [Unitarian Universalist Grounding & Policy: Justice For Native Peoples](#)
- [Whiteswan Environmental](#)
- [JUJustice Washington, First/American Indian Nations Solidarity, Truth and Reconciliation](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#)

## **ACTIONS TO TAKE**

**HONOR** and acknowledge the traditional territories and the first inhabitants of the lands and waters at the beginning of services, meetings, meals, community gatherings...

## **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS**

- with willing Tribes/Nations or Indigenous organizations (e.g. urban Indian Centers, University Indian student organizations, and other organizations that serve or represent Indian issues or culture)
- and commit to the long-term nature of the relationship and the healing process

## **BECOME FAMILIAR WITH AND STUDY:**

- the Doctrine of Christian Discovery (DOD) [Doctrine of Discovery](#)
- the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP)
- the Indian history in your town and State
- the Indian treaties that apply in your area
- the boarding school era and the resulting cultural and historical trauma
- resource mining's or fossil fuel projects' pollution effects on the quality of water, air, soil, and health and its impact on indigenous peoples worldwide.
- Dr. Lynn Gehl's "[The Allies' Bill of Responsibilities](#)"

## **FORM**

- a Native American Connections Committee in your congregation to support, honor, appreciate and work with indigenous peoples locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. (invite guests, learn about issues, put on workshops, participate in social action, hold seminars, attend culture events, put on or host fundraisers... See file "Work of UU Congregations and Organizations")
- a "Learning Right Relations" group with monthly speaker, activity, social action, and breaking bread together (see UU Congregation, Olympia WA in "Work of UU Congregations and Organizations file)

## **ASK**

- Native Americans in your region what issues are currently of greatest concern to them. Ask them if there are ways you can be helpful as an ally.

## **LEARN**

- about the history of your own region and its Native Peoples, past and present
- about informational resources. Commit to act.
- about Native-language place names in your area (towns, rivers, mountains, and other landmarks that derived from Indigenous experiences and language)
- about former federal Indian policies and acts, e.g. Indian removal, termination, and allotments.
- about the important cultural challenges currently faced by indigenous people today: sexual abuse, violence against women, sex trafficking, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs, housing shortage, unemployment, education, economic , nutrition, and health services, climate change impacts...

## **ATTEND**

- lectures, panels, discussions, workshops led by, or including Native American speakers.
- and support public cultural events open to the public: pow-wows, canoe races, water festivals, Indian College Graduations, local native teams, First Salmon Ceremony, movies, art exhibits....

## **INITIATE**

- Indigenous Peoples day vs Columbus Day
- nominate indigenous individuals, for office, school boards, peace and justice awards...
- and present the workshop, "Seeds of Injustice, Roots of Change: Seeking Right Relationship with America's Native Peoples." Contact [paularpalmer@gmail.com](mailto:paularpalmer@gmail.com), or Indigenous Peoples Concerns Committee, Boulder Friends Meeting, 1825 Upland Ave., Boulder CO 80304. A fantastic and visceral 2-hour workshop, that Paula and trained facilitators have taken around the country and to events like The Parliament of World Religions, congregations, and communities

## **READ**

- books and watch films by Native American authors and film makers. If there are film festivals in your region, ask for Native American feature films or documentaries.
- Native American newspapers and magazines, subscribe to “Indian Country Today” <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/> A fantastic source of up to date information from Indian Country.

## **VISIT**

- local history or art museums with indigenous history or art exhibits  
Encourage the staff to develop exhibits about the Native peoples of the area—past and present—with the participation of Native American scholars
- the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC
- travel and visit reservations, find guides who can guide you
- “Partnerships with Native Americans” website:  
[http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pwna\\_native\\_resources](http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pwna_native_resources)

## **SUPPORT/ADVOCATE FOR**

- the U.S. to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- changing offensive Indian words (squaw) and offensive team logos.

## **WORK**

- to understand sovereignty, treaties, tribal governments, and the relationship of tribal nations to the Federal government.

## **ENCOURAGE**

- your community to always consult with native nations in matters that concern them.
- your public library to acquire more publications and films by Native Americans.

## **SHOW**

- native produced films and documentaries followed by discussion.

## **INVITE**

- Native Americans to speak at services, forums, events

## **FUNDRAISE...**

- at least one special collection by your congregation for a Native American program or organization.
- share your space to host indigenous fundraisers, or programs

## **PROTEST...**

- and stand with Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, proposed pipelines, extractive industries....

## **LOBBY...**

- Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)  
<https://www.fcnl.org/about/policy/issues/native-americans> FCNL's multi-faceted approach draws on the expertise of registered lobbyists in Washington, DC, the commitment and passion of people around the country in our advocacy network, and the relationships we cultivate with elected officials and community leaders.

Since 1976, FCNL's Native American advocacy program has worked to restore and improve U.S. relations with Native nations so that our country honors the promises made in hundreds of treaties with these groups. FCNL provides information to Congressional offices and to national faith groups about the continuing struggles of Native people and advocates support the resilient and inventive solutions proposed by tribal governments and Native American organizations. <https://www.fcnl.org/about/policy/issues/native-americans>.

- Watch your State and Federal legislatures to see what legislation may be making its way through committees or onto floors for votes. Write your senators and legislators asking them to vote for legislation that has a positive impact on Indian communities and oppose those that don't.

## ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT

Visit websites of national and international Indigenous Peoples' organizations. Find out what they do and support their programs financially and as an advocate. Start with these, and add others:

- [Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian](#).
- [American Indian College Fund](#). Support individual area tribal colleges in your state or region.
- [Native American Rights Fund](#). Founded in 1970, the Native American Rights Fund is the oldest and largest nonprofit law firm dedicated to asserting and defending the rights of Indian tribes, organizations and individuals nationwide.
- [Seventh Generation Fund](#). Seventh Generation Fund promotes and maintains the uniqueness and sovereignty of our distinct Native Nations by offering advocacy, small grants, trainings and technical assistance to Indigenous communities.
- [Indigenous Environmental Network](#). IEN is an alliance of grassroots Indigenous Peoples whose mission is to protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from contamination and exploitation by strengthening, respecting, and maintaining traditional teachings and natural laws.
- [Indian Law Resource Center](#). The Center provides legal assistance to Indigenous Peoples of the Americas to combat racism and oppression, to protect their lands and environment, to protect their cultures and ways of life, to achieve sustainable economic development and genuine self-government, and to realize their other human rights.
- [First Peoples Worldwide](#). First Peoples Worldwide funds local development projects in Indigenous communities all over the world. They create bridges between communities and corporations, governments, academics, NGOs and investors in their regions, and use traditional Indigenous knowledge to solve today's challenges.
- [Native Harvest](#). Native Harvest works to continue, revive, and protect our native seeds, heritage crops, naturally grown fruits, animals, wild plants, traditions and knowledge of our Indigenous and land-based communities, for the purpose of maintaining and continuing Native culture and resisting the global, industrialized food system.

## DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN DISCOVERY RESOURCES

- [Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery and its Enduring Impact on Indigenous Peoples](#). Issued by the World Council of Churches Executive Committee, Bossey, Switzerland, February 17, 2012.
- [2012 Unitarian Universalist Association Resolution to Repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery](#).
- [Unitarian Universalist Doctrine of Discovery and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (lots of stories and articles).
- [Pagans in the Promised Land, Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery](#), Steven T. Newcomb (Shawnee/Lenape), 2008. Film: The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code. \$21.50
- [500 Years of Injustice](#): The Legacy of 15<sup>th</sup> Century Religious Prejudice, by Steve Newcomb:
- [Doctrine of Discovery](#) (study group of American Indian Law Alliance),
- Unitarian Universalist "[Discussion Guide for Considering the Report and Responsive Resolution from the UUA Board on the Doctrine of Discovery](#)."

## UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

- [Read the UNDRIP Declaration](#)
- [Website of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#). The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is a high-level advisory body to the Economic and Social Council. The Forum was established on 28 July 2000 by resolution 2000/22, with the mandate to deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

## MOVIES/DVDS, ARTICLES, and RESOURCES

### MOVIES

- The [Doctrine of Discovery, Unmasking the Domination Code](#): A story of historical truth, spirituality, and resistance, told on behalf of the original nations and peoples of Great Turtle Island, and elsewhere on Mother Earth. We are still here, and still rightfully free. Directed by Sheldon P. Wolfchild, Co-Produced by Steven T. Newcomb. Narration by Buffy Sainte-Marie. 38 plus 2 productions and Steven T. Newcomb. The film cost \$21.50. To order send a check or money order to: 38 Plus 2 Productions, 40163 Reservation Hwy 3, Morton, MN, 56270.
- [Two Rivers](#). This documentary traces the moving journey of unexpected discovery, connection, reconciliation and lasting social change in Twisp, WA when non-natives connected with the "host people" As they came together, they drew in other Native and European Americans from the Methow Valley area for dinners and discussion. Call 509-997-4904 (Carolyn Schmekel) or [mvinterpretivecenter@methownet.com](mailto:mvinterpretivecenter@methownet.com) \$20 (includes shipping and handling) Methow Valley Interpretive Center: PO Box 771, Twisp, WA 98856.

[Two Rivers Film and Discussion Guide](#). This 1-hour documentary film tells the story of a rural community in Washington state that undertook some significant actions toward reconciliation with the area's Indigenous peoples. Following the film, a facilitated discussion will focus on your community: Who are the Native peoples who have lived and are now living on the land that you call home? How can you learn your region's real history? What would right relationship with Native peoples look like in your community? What steps can you start taking in that direction?

- "[Dakota 38+2](#)," is posted at: A beautiful film about reconciliation and healing. (1 hour and 18 minutes) The Dakota 38 execution was the largest mass execution in the United States and took place on December 26, 1862. On the day after Christmas in 1862, 38 Dakota men were hanged under order of President Abraham Lincoln. The hangings and convictions of the Dakota 38 resulted from the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 in southwest Minnesota.
- [Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation project](#). The Maine-Wabanaki State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission, also known as the MWTRC was a commission looking at events relating to Wabanaki children and families from 1978, when the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was passed, until now.

[Dawnland](#) (film about the Maine Truth and Reconciliation project).

Documentary about cultural survival and stolen children: As recently as the 1970's, one in four Native children nationwide were living in non-Native

foster care, adoptive home or boarding school....In Maine, a historic investigation—the first government-sanctioned truth and Reconciliation as they work toward truth and reconciliation....as they work toward truth, reconciliation, and the survival of all Indigenous peoples inside the first truth and reconciliation commission for Native Americans.

- **Indigenous Peoples Day Celebration**, Boulder, Colorado (October 7, 2018 (An inspiring action of reconciliation, narrated by Jerilyn DeCoteau (Turtle Mountain Chippewa). 6.19 minutes. Right Relationship Boulder presents "Welcome the Hinono'ei (Arapaho) Home", Sunday October 7, 2018. Join the City of Boulder in welcoming the Arapaho to their Boulder Valley homeland as they share their culture, history and current lives through presentations and performances. (Building a relationship and going forward).

An afternoon of traditional dancing games, storytelling, language exchange with Boulder and a Q and A with Arapaho history and current lives. This event was designed to build a foundation for a relationship going forward. Currently the group is buying land to give to the Arapaho as a permanent place to come back to when they visit their traditional lands. (Events Included: Intergenerational Service, eating lunch together, Grand Entry, Speeches (the Mayor, school district, Arapaho guest speakers, hand games, language lessons, gift giving, Q & A)

## BOOKS

- **Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery** (2008), by Steven T. Newcomb. It provides a unique, well-researched challenge to U.S. federal Indian law and policy. It attacks the presumption that American Indian nations are legitimately subject to the plenary power of the United States.
- **The Rediscovery of North America**, Barry Lopez (1990). Five hundred years ago an Italian whose name, translated into English, meant Christopher Dove, came to America and began a process not of discovery, but incursion — "a ruthless, angry search for wealth" that continues to the present day. This provocative and superbly written book gives a true assessment of Columbus's legacy while taking the first steps toward its redemption. Even as he draws a direct line between the atrocities of Spanish conquistadors and the ongoing pillage of our lands and waters, Barry Lopez challenges us to adopt an ethic that will make further depredations impossible. The Rediscovery of North America is a... persuasive call for us, at long last, to make this country our home.
- **Conquest of New Spain**, Bernal Diaz (1963) Almost 500 years after it was written, The Conquest of New Spain is a compelling read, providing a first-person account of Cortes's invasion of Mexico. The characters on both sides of the conflict are vividly portrayed. Ranks up there among the great historical accounts of the New World that captures the clash of cultures that resulted in the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Of especial interest was the development of alliances between the Spanish and various indigenous groups who were opposed to the Aztecs.
- **Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War**, Nathaniel Philbrick (2006), Philbrick masterfully recounts the desperate circumstances of both the settlers and their would-be hosts, and how the Wampanoags saved the colony from certain destruction. Indeed, there was a first Thanksgiving, the author notes, and for over 50 years the Wampanoags and the Pilgrims lived in peace, becoming increasingly interdependent. But in 1675, 56 years after the colonists' landing, Massasoit's heir, Philip, launched a confusing war on the English that, over 14 horrifying months, claimed 5,000 lives, a huge percentage of the colonies' population.
- **1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus**, Charles C. Mann (2005). Charles C. Mann take us into a complex, fascinating, and unknown world, that of the Indians who lived in this hemisphere before Columbus. He gently demolishes entrenched myths with impressive scholarship and with an elegance of style that make his book a pleasure to read as well as a marvelous education. Howard Zinn

- **The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present**, David Treuer (2019) In clear and vivid prose, Treuer positions unforgettable portraits of contemporary Indian people within a compelling narrative of the experiences of indigenous peoples in the big sweep of time. His book offers a powerful challenge to the persistent and pernicious idea of the 'vanishing Indian, replacing it with a far more accurate story of Indian peoples' repossession and restoration of sovereignty and dignity. Patricia Nelson Limerick author of *The Legacy of Conquest* and cofounder, Center of the American West.
- **An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States**, Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz  
Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz offers a history of the United States told from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and reveals how Native Americans, for centuries, actively resisted expansion of the US empire. In *Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*, Dunbar-Ortiz adroitly challenges the founding myth of the United States and shows how policy against the Indigenous peoples was colonialist and designed to seize the territories of the original inhabitants, displacing or eliminating them.
- **American Apartheid: The Native American Struggle for Self-Determination and Inclusion**. Stephanie Woodard (2018)  
Stephanie Woodard details the ways in which the government—using voter suppression and other means—keeps tribal members from participating in the policy-making decisions surrounding education, employment, infrastructure projects, and other critical issues affecting their communities. This system of apartheid has staggering consequences, as Natives are, per capita, the population group most likely to be shot by police, suffer violent victimization by outsiders, be incarcerated and have their children taken away. On top of this, indigenous peoples must also fight constantly to protect their sacred sites and landscapes. Despite these obstacles, *American Apartheid* paints vivid pictures of diverse Native American communities that embody resilience, integrity, and the survival of ancient cultures.
- **Horizon**, Barry Lopez. (2019) Barry Lopez is a straight-up magnificent writer. To read *Horizon* is to be transported to wondrous landscapes far beyond the pale, and thereby obtain an astounding perspective on our increasingly uncertain future. Lopez expresses faith that our species can avert annihilation by investing 'more deeply in the philosopher's cardinal virtues: courage, justice, reverence, and compassion—virtues this book possesses in abundance. John Krakauer. **Note:** Barry talks about the indigenous peoples in all but one of the landscapes and explores their centuries of place-based knowledge and world views.

## OTHER RESOURCES:

- [\*\*Tribal Nations Maps\*\*](#). Here you will find the most comprehensive maps of pre-contact and at-contact Native North America to date. These maps use Tribal Nation's original indigenous names for themselves and show where Tribes were just before contact with outsiders, as well as the last homelands they defended . The intent of these maps is to instill pride in Native peoples and to be used as teaching tools from a Native perspective. These maps are part of my **Tribal Nations Map series**-which cover the Nations indigenous to the "United States," "Canada", "Mexico" , "Central America", "South America" and "Alaska."
  
- [\*\*A Memorandum of Understanding: A Foundation for Partnerships with Lummi Nation and Whiteswan Environmental\*\*](#) (Becky Curtis of Bellingham WA. Unitarian Fellowship was asked by Lummi, Shirley Williams to create a Memorandum of Understanding that would allay Native fears of cultural appropriation and exploitation when working together. Her class paper describes her process and what she learned. Contact Becky by [email](#) if you'd like to read the actual MOU she created. (This is applicable to other indigenous nations working with non-Native individuals and groups)
  - The acknowledgement of living on traditional native lands, and the traumatic theft of land, culture, and children, from which non-Natives have benefitted, is a step toward reparation.
  
  - When non-Natives pledge to learn about the Indigenous perspective of local history, and to engage with Lummi in ways that respect their history, culture, and knowledge, confidence in partnering with them is promoted.
  
  - It defines "cultural property" and asks non-Native partners to avoid cultural misappropriation or theft that would contribute to or continue trauma.

## ARTICLES

- [\*\*“On resilient parasitisms, or why I’m skeptical of Indigenous/settler reconciliation”\*\*](#) by Kyle Powys White. (A very thought provoking article) Political reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and settler nations is among the major ethical issues of the twenty-first century for millions of Indigenous peoples globally. Political reconciliation refers to the aspiration to transform violent and harmful relationships into respectful relationships....Settler colonialism often includes the illusion that historic and contemporary settler populations have moral grounds for their mistreatment of Indigenous peoples. This illusion masks historical and ongoing practices of settler colonialism that thwart effective practices of reconciliation.
- [\*\*Statement of Vision Toward the Next 500 Years\*\*](#). An historic gathering of 100 Native wisdomkeepers, artists, and writers at Taos Pueblo. It was sponsored by the Morning Star Institute and The 1992 Alliance.
- [\*\*This Ally Bill of Responsibilities\*\*](#) blog is reproduced with permission of its creator, Dr. Lynn Gehl, Ph.D., Gii-Zhigaate-Mnidoo-Kwe, Algonquin Anishinaabe, Mekina Ndoodem. Lynn’s [email](#). Much food for thought in these blogs
  - [The Ally Bill of Responsibilities](#).
  - [A Colonized Ally Meets a Decolonized Ally: This is what they learn.](#) THIS IS BEST PRACTICE ADVICE!
  - [Black Face Blog Index](#).

## MOVEMENTS

- [Indigenous Peoples' Day](#) is a holiday that celebrates and honors the **Native Americans** and commemorates their shared history and culture. It is celebrated across the United States on the second Monday in October, and is an official city and **state holiday** in various localities. It began as a counter-celebration held on the same day as the U.S. federal holiday of Columbus Day, which honors Italian explorer Christopher Columbus. Some people now reject celebrating him, saying that he represents "the violent history of the colonization in the Western Hemisphere". A list of locations observing Indigenous People’s Day since 1992 to 2019 (Wikipedia).
- [Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women](#): MMIW: Coalition to Stop Violence Against Indigenous Women.

*(Note: some of the resources in this "ReconciliACTION "document came from the Boulder Colorado, Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples)*