



NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

**Recommendations for Monthly Meetings
to Engage with the Letter of Apology**

As individual Friends and as meetings in the northeast, we are in different places with our knowledge and history of engagement with the peoples indigenous to this region. Some of us are new to examining settler colonialism and our ongoing participation in it as individuals, and as a religious body. Some of us are just now feeling the call to work toward right relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and some of us have been working on it for decades.

The Right Relationship Working Group urges you to approach this work with a tender heart and humility, aware that Indigenous People live in the aftermath of genocide, and with multi-generational trauma. We can neither expect them to bear the weight of teaching us or to accept our overtures. Through this work, Friends may open themselves to the pain which comes with awareness of the deeds of our spiritual forebears and sometimes, our current actions. But we cannot expect Indigenous Peoples to assuage the pain which our ancestors caused.

Friends are urged to be careful of expecting Indigenous people to help us do our work. A good place to work toward relationship is to follow their lead, standing alongside them in their struggles for sovereignty, in protection of the land and waters, in seeking justice and appropriate support systems for their people.

Some concrete suggestions for ways Friends can undertake this work are:

- Work within your Meeting to raise awareness of the history of settler colonialism, the harm done to Indigenous Peoples, the impact of intergenerational trauma and the need for healing. Also explore the cultural and spiritual debt owed them
- Learn about the tribes whose homeland you are living on and how the land was acquired. If you have a meetinghouse, do the same.
- Enter into discernment, following available direction from Native leaders, about how to respond faithfully to what you learn. How might your meeting acknowledge the land?
- Consider, for example, the name “New England” as a vestige of settler colonialism and imperialism, rooted in the doctrine of discovery.
- Follow the lead of the tribes and support their efforts toward social justice, such as elimination of racist school mascots or demeaning portrayals on flags or state seals, etc.
- Follow the lead of the tribes and support their efforts toward environmental justice, including preserving the integrity of their lands in the face of ongoing resource extraction, recognizing that theft of Indigenous land is not just a matter of history; it is happening today.

- Support state and federal recognition of the status of tribes as acknowledged sovereign nations entitled to self-government and reparations.
- Explore the implications for your meeting of restitution for lands unlawfully taken from the tribes in your area. Support efforts by the tribes to reclaim control of their sacred and culturally significant lands.

Resources are available at neym.org/Who We Are/Governance/Continuing Discernment
For support or to report engagement, email rightrelationship@neym.org