

Pacific Yearly Meeting
Indigenous Concerns Subcommittee of Ministry Committee
Report to Annual Session 2021

SUMMARY

1. ACTION FOR MEETINGS, PacYM COMMITTEES, AND RELATED QUAKER ORGS IN OUR REGION: Those who haven't yet designated someone to fill out our [survey](#) are still welcome to do so. **We have moved the survey deadline to July 31st.** Thanks to those who have already submitted responses! Further information is on the [Indigenous Concerns page on the PacYM website](#).

2. ACTION FOR INDIVIDUALS, REPS, MEETINGS: Friends interested in being on the subcommittee, or who have recommendations for our **subcommittee membership, please contact us** and we will forward that information to Ministry Committee (or contact Ministry directly). We extend a special invitation to **Indigenous Friends** who are interested in serving on the subcommittee or as an advisor or accountability partner. Currently none of the subcommittee members is Indigenous.

3. ACTION FOR REPS: Please share with meetings how Friends can **join the Friends for Right Relationship listserv** that is under the care of [Decolonizing Quakers](#) (see details on [our web page on the PacYM website](#)).

4. ACTION FOR MEETINGS: Please consider minuting and sharing your support for the forthcoming bill in the U.S. Congress that will propose a Truth & Healing Commission on the abuses and legacy of forced boarding schooling/assimilation of Indigenous children between the 1860s and 1970s. Be on the lookout for an upcoming communication about this from Ruth Flower of [Decolonizing Quakers](#).

CONTACT: Our email is IndigenousConcernsClerk [at] PacificYearlyMeeting [dot] org

Interest Group at AS: Monday, July 26th, 7:00-8:30pm: We are hosting a panel, discussion, networking, and visioning on the topic of **“Toward Reparations and Justice for Indigenous Peoples and Communities: Some Steps PacYM Meetings are Taking.”** The panelists are slated to share about meetings' actions on Indigenous issues, including land acknowledgement, voluntary land tax / honor tax, environmental justice, and legislative advocacy.

About the subcommittee: Please see [our report to RepCom 2021](#) for details about the initial formation of this subcommittee earlier this year, including how it differs from and complements the Racial Justice Subcommittee. Since RepCom, the subcommittee name has changed from “Indigenous Peoples Concerns” to “Indigenous Concerns.” We intend to inspire “right relationships,” and we are paying attention to the ways that non-Indigenous Quakers are sometimes unconsciously unwelcoming to Indigenous Friends. We want to be clear that there are Indigenous Friends in PacYM and among Friends in general, and also that the makeup of the subcommittee does not currently include any Indigenous Friends. We have received some expressions of interest via our survey. Please see action item 2 (above) about how to nominate oneself or others for the subcommittee.

We reiterate these stated purposes from our draft job description:

- Inform and support the Pacific Yearly Meeting community as it seeks to uncover the history and ongoing impacts of colonization in and on both Indigenous and Quaker communities,
- Increase awareness of Indigenous Peoples' struggles and joys both within and outside Quaker communities,
- Seek equitable and just partnership among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples.

Activities, Collaborations, and Gratitude: We are in the midst of conducting a survey to learn what

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meetings, YM committees, and local Quaker organizations are doing on these topics. The next section has summary of what we've learned so far.

We are grateful that PacYM's Unity with Nature committee included our subcommittee as a co-sponsor in initiating the **Braiding Sweetgrass Worship Group**, an opportunity for Friends to engage with the book *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Indigenous Anishinaabekwe ecologist Robin Wall Kimmerer and queries about our relationships with one another and with the more-than-human world.

We give big thanks to Communications Committee, especially George Mills and the late Sharon Gates, for helping get our new subcommittee started with an official PacYM email address, a page and post on the website, drive space in PacYM's Google Suite, and help sending out our introduction and survey.

Our [web page](#) on the PacYM site provides some resources, links, and examples of actions that meetings and organizations can take. We will be updating it with examples from across the YM with the intention of fostering a sharing network and linking with other sources for wider information.

Survey of Meetings, YM Committees, and Organizations: A preliminary look: Thank you to the 14 Friends who have submitted responses to our [survey](#) thus far: 1 PacYM committee, and 13 responses from a total of 10 local meetings (3 from CPQM, 5 from SCQM, 1 from HI -- two meetings had more than one respondent). So far, all respondents have indicated they know the names of the Indigenous people(s) in their area(s): Kumeyaay, Tongva, Gabrielino, Kizh, Patwin People of the Wintun Nation, Amah Mutsun, Mechoopa, Hawaiian, Chochenyo, Muwekma, Ohlone, Northern Chumash, Ramaytush/Ohlone, Wiyot.

We are leaving the [survey](#) open through the end of July to allow for others to participate; you can access it via our page on PacificYearlyMeeting.org. We will be sharing about what we've learned so far during our Interest Group at AS (see below) and eventually on our [web page](#). ***Below are some preliminary observations based on the responses so far.***

The survey asks what **issues or actions** their meeting/committee/organization has addressed or participated in. While a few selected "We have never discussed these issues at all" and "We're just getting started", so far **most respondents have indicated yes to one or more of the following:**

- Addressing particular needs/concerns of Indigenous Friends in your meeting
- Building relationships with local Indigenous Peoples
- Participating in Indigenous-led social or environmental movements
- Participating in Indigenous-led cultural activities or celebrations
- Learning histories and/or contemporary cultures of Indigenous Peoples in your area
- Land acknowledgements
- Voluntary Land Tax / Honor Tax / Ancestral Reciprocity Fund
- History of forced boarding schools for Indigenous children (including any Quaker involvement)
- Truth & Healing today on legacy of forced boarding school era
- Doctrine of Discovery - history/legacy
- Interfaith Truth & Healing/Reconciliation with Indigenous communities
- Quaker Truth & Healing/Reconciliation (within and among QUAKERS and Indigenous

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communities)

- Advocacy on behalf of missing and murdered Indigenous women/womxn/girls/people/relatives
- Participated in:
 - Braiding Sweetgrass Online Worship Group
 - Workshops for your meeting on Indigenous issues
 - Spring Youth Service Learning Camp at Quaker Oaks Farm, in partnership with the Wukchumni Tribe and PacYM Youth Programs
 - Quaker-related organizations addressing Indigenous issues (such as DecolonizingQuakers.org, Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples, AFSC, FCNL....)

So far, **no response** has indicated that their meeting/committee/organization is addressing:

- Rematriation/repatriation of cultural objects in possession of the meeting
- Rematriation of land / LandBack
- Formal Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery
- Governmental Truth & Healing/Reconciliation with Indigenous communities

Excerpts of some **actions added** so far by respondents:

- “Formed Racial Justice Working Group to address issues including Indigenous communities.”
- “Several of our members were at the conference on Indigenous peoples held at ... Swarthmore a few years ago.”
- “Helped facilitate an Interracial Marriage Retreat”
- “Members of the Working Group have sought out Pendle Hill webinars and other resources to inform our Working Group and as a basis for future Meeting action.”
- “Befriended and discussed Indigenous issues with Paula Palmer in Boulder. She is a delightful and wise listener!”
- “Honor tax sent to Wiyot tribe which they are using for some social activities such as elder meals”
- “[Our meeting’s] Power, Privilege, and Race Subcommittee is leading a reading/study group on Braiding Sweetgrass; and the Meeting’s new Community Sharing Fund included a local intertribal Indigenous organization among fund recipients but without any formal connection with or outreach to the organization or to any local Indigenous Tribe/Nation. We are also seasoning a minute relating to the Indian [*sic*] Boarding Schools, particularly those established by Quakers.”
- “I forwarded the Subcommittee report to both our very active Adult Education Committee and the Peace and Social Action committees, asking them to consider holding workshops and other education about these issues.”
- “We worked very hard to get to land acknowledgment. There is interest but not much follow through.”

In addition to asking about actions, we asked for any questions, requests for support, resource suggestions, and general comments. We will compile and share once we close the survey. We look forward to hearing from more PacYM committees, meetings, worship groups, and related Quaker organizations in our region.

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The subcommittee consists of (as appointed by Ministry Committee):

- Sophie Wood Brinker (unaffiliated), Lisa Hubbell (Co-Convenor; unaffiliated), Alyssa Nelson (Co-Convenor; Davis)
- *Ex-officio Liaisons from Ministry:* Jim Summers (La Jolla) & Gail Eastwood (Humboldt)
- *Resigned since RepCom; acknowledged with thanks for her contributions:* Rebekah Sophia (La Jolla)
- *Coming on after Annual Session:* Barbara Babin (Redwood Forest), and other Friends TBD who have contacted us or been suggested and who are being considered by Ministry Committee, which makes the decisions on its subcommittees' memberships.