

**Doctrine of Christian Discovery Conference: After Repudiation, What Next?**  
**Skä·noñh – Great Law of Peace Center**  
**24-25 May 2014**

**Summary of Conference – Breakout Sessions**

**1. What were key learnings from presentations and panels**

**Values that Inspire**

- Thanksgiving Address (by Tadadaho, Sid Hill)
- Respect
- Peace
- Empathy

**Onondaga Land Rights case filed April 2014 with Organization of American States (OAS)**

- Onondaga Nation is a sovereign nation with long history of international diplomacy and action
- Dismissal of land rights case and denial of remedies for treaty violations by U.S. courts has exhausted ways to work with United States
- Onondaga suing United States for human rights violations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- OAS more open to hearing land rights case than United States or United Nations

**Legal History of DoCD**

- Legal histories of land rights court cases – very helpful in showing intrinsic role of DoCD in United States policy – yesterday and today
  - DoCD brought into U.S law in Marshall vs. McIntosh, 1823
  - DoCD still cited in 2005 by U.S. Supreme Court in City of Sherril vs. Oneida Indian Nation
- “Federal Indian Law” -- rooted in DoCD – has created a separate, and not equal, legal system --
- DoCD used against Indigenous Peoples around the world.

**Report on United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) – May 2014**

- Focus on recommendations for Principles of Good Governance based on the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
  - Onondaga Faithkeeper, Oren Lyons, presented Intervention
- Conflicts with states over border crossings

**Christian Denominations – Different Paths for the Work of Repudiating the DoCD**

- Episcopal Diocese of the State of Maine – looking at the DoCD principles in the Cabot Charter – passed Repudiation Resolution in October 2006. Then the resolution was accepted at the General Convention for all U.S. Episcopalians in 2009.
- The Loretto Community, a social justice community, passed a resolution in July 2012. They co-signed with other Catholic groups a letter sent to the Pope, seeking repudiation. Loretto has NGO status at the U.N. and works with other NGOs on supporting the work of Indigenous Peoples at the U.N., part of Mining Working Group, developing rights-based litmus test.

- Several Yearly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends have developed Minutes repudiating the DoCD. These Minutes are researched and discussed and must be passed by all members. These include: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, Boulder Yearly Meeting and Canadian Yearly Meeting.
- Unitarian Universalist 2012 General Assembly (national) passed a resolution repudiating the DoCD. The members undertook the study about the DoCD at request of immigration social justice partners. The UU gave small seed grants to individual congregations to be engaged in related projects. Schenectady Unitarians developing curriculum and worked on Two Row Wampum. Conversation about DoCD is occurring among theological schools in Boston.
- The 2012 General Conference (national) of the United Methodists called for all member conferences to engage in acts of repentance and healing relationships with indigenous persons. Upper New York State Conference engaged in holding Learning Sessions. Every congregation sent a DVD.
- Disciples of Christ are engaged in a two year study of the DoCD to more thoroughly understand the impacts not only on Indigenous Peoples, but also on their own policies.

### **Concepts that Connect**

- Listen to Haudenosaunee wisdom
- Doctrine of Christian Discovery, NOT Christian Doctrine of Discovery
- “Occupy the Gospel” – Take back the original teaching of the Gospel
- DoCD interrelated with contemporary issues of racism, climate change, sense of place, mineral extraction
- Changing the narrative and paradigms that underpin U.S. history /western society
- Creating a different relationship to the earth
- Free, prior and Informed consent (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

### **Other Related Policy Issues**

- Hunting & Fishing Rights / recent arrests on Long Island
- Environmental Protection
- Mascot Issues
- Education Curriculum
- Mining / Mineral Extraction / Hydrofracking
- Human right to water

## **2. What are Obstacles to Our Work?**

### **Obstacles**

- Issues of racism, ugly comments on blogs, other media
- Resistance to the idea of the DoCD
- Public fear of loss of land
- White privilege –
- Public ignorance and apathy
- Depth of pain and historical trauma
- Mindset of mineral extractors-hydrofracking - same colonial mindset as conquerors
- Steep learning curve

### **3. What are Ideas for Action – Brainstorming**

#### **Actions – Faith based repudiation**

- Education of religious communities
- Focus on Roman Catholic repudiation
- Everyone work together to compose a letter to the Pope, cardinals, bishops, people in other denominations
- Loretto community taking movement to organization of American nuns to organize them and get them to join in action to repudiate DoCD
- When Pope comes to UN in Sept 2015
  - Invite him to repudiate DoCD at UN
  - Invite him to attend World Lacrosse games with Oren Lyons at Onondaga
  - Arrange for Oren Lyons and Steve Newcomb to meet with him
- U.N. World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (Sept 22, 23, 2014) – meeting of UN member state representatives
  - Invite Pope and other state leaders to repudiate DoCD at conference
  - Campaign to ensure that U.N. member states do not weaken the UNDRIP
- Write about DoCD in church newsletters
- Dialog with other faith – based group (Baptists, Presbyterians, Jewish,)
- Learn about faith-based actions in other countries (e.g. Australia)
- Outreach to evangelical churches

#### **Actions – Media / Education**

- Wikipedia – “editathon” -- edit pages to bring out DoCD, improve accuracy
- Ted Talks – Sponsors for Indigenous Peoples to speak at those talks
- Better use of social media -- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs
- Teach-ins in high schools / colleges about on DoCD
- Engaging youth in developing DoCD projects of their own – providing training on organizing,
- Work with State Education departments, schools, publishers to get pre-European contact and contemporary issues into common core education curriculum. Develop true history curriculum that acknowledges
- Use the letter written by 50 Congressmen to the National Football League about the mascots as entrée into deeper issues
- Have house parties with native foods – use gathering to educate about issues.
- Approach past Nobel Peace prize winners to have Haudenosaunee nominated for Peace Prize
- Create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the United States
- Land reparations fund
- Social media campaign on International Indigenous Peoples Day
- Change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day
- Ask NY State Fair to re-name streets that have Haudenosaunee names to the names in actual language (e.g. Mohawk vs. Kamienkeha-ka)
- Repaint St. Marie sign
- Genocide museum
- Inform John Stewart about DoCD

### **Projects – Currently Underway – that could be used in other locations**

- Cayuga Nation and people in Ithaca working to get a Haudenosaunee mural in each school in Ithaca – vision to have mural in every school in every community around Cayuga Lake
- NOON Historic marker project in Onondaga and Cortland counties – creating virtual reexamination of native perspective of local history as described in roadside historic markers
- Use stories of Boarding Schools to begin discussion (“Unseen Tears”), whitebison.org

### **Identify Conferences for Speakers and Panels on DoCD**

- The Association of Public Historians of New York -- Work with association members to have Onondaga representative speak to conference on DoCD and local history
- Annual White Privilege conference and other conferences exploring impact of white privileges
- Anti-racism trainings / Race Forward annual conference
- Left Forum at John Jay College

### **Questions to Examine**

- How do religious and legal thought and practice connect?
- What are the effects of the DoCD on the non-human inhabitants of the land?
- What is the role of hope in this process?
- How to address issues / fears around property ownership?
- Can we learn from Brown vs. Board of Education? What was the background work of allies in building momentum for that change in law?
- How to work with other minority groups

### **Actions – Other Models**

- Highlander School model – local people coming together to study what is important to them – and changing the local government
- Democracy schools

## **4. What are Resource Needs for Increasing Effectiveness of work**

### **Resource Needs for Increasing Effectiveness of our work**

- Listserve – connection through email and other media
- Specific ways we can help the Onondaga
- Concise summary of legal histories of land rights court cases – very helpful in showing role of DoCD in historical and contemporary policy
  - Summary of Joe Heath’s presentation
  - Legal precedents
  - Outcomes
  - Land rights vs. land claims – what is difference
- Summary of steps in Onondaga petition to OAS
- Sharing ideas about themes, topics, audiences
- Bring together legal, environmental, theological concepts
- Denomination coalitions
- Conferences on DoCD and broader issues
- Documentary on DoCD that Steve Newcomb is developing
- Energy/ intelligence/activism of young people