



A Path Toward Healing: a year of study on the
Doctrine of Christian Discovery



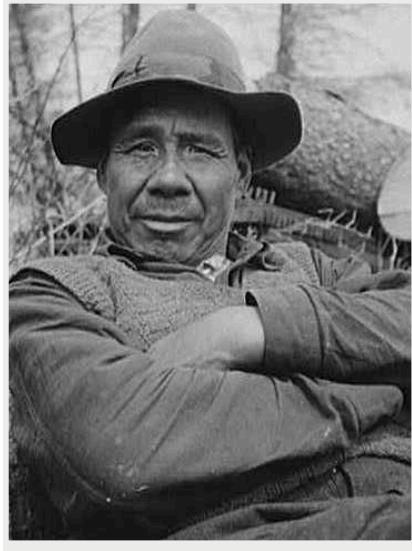
The Age of Discovery

Claims of Christian dominion over Indigenous Peoples and their lands served European monarchies as a means of fending off competing monarchies and de-legitimizing the long-established autonomous Indigenous Peoples' governments.



The Doctrine of Christian Discovery is the worldview that a certain group of people: primarily Western Christendom. Based on their religious identity, Christianity had moral sanction and the support of international law to invade and colonize the lands of non-Christian Peoples, to dominate them, take their possessions and resources, and enslave and kill them.

The Doctrine of Discovery is used in particular by former British colonies, specifically, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America.

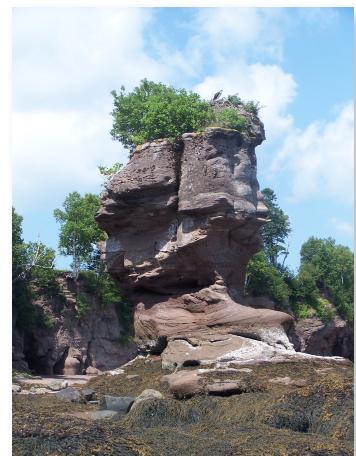


What is found in the Doctrine of Discovery?

- ◆ Criteria for claiming land.
- ◆ Transfer of the land.
- ◆ Government by agent or proxy.
- ◆ Coercion and subjugation of whole peoples.
- ◆ Incorporation of a diminished and impermanent status into secular laws.
- ◆ Double standards among international conventions.

Footprints of the Doctrine of Discovery

Elements of the Doctrine have rationalized heinous behaviors against Indigenous Peoples through the centuries. Forced removals such as the Trail of Tears, the seizure of natural resources, the destruction of traditional languages and cultures, the sterilization of Indian women, and the disruption of Indigenous communities are examples of implementation of the concepts of "discovery" and "dominance." The Vatican papal bulls of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries actively encouraged the subjugation of Indigenous Nations and the enslavement of African people. The secularization of the Doctrine in the United States and elsewhere perpetuated subjugation and its consequences. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Cannon of US Federal Indian Law.



Effects of the DOCD Today

The development of policies without the full knowledge and prior informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

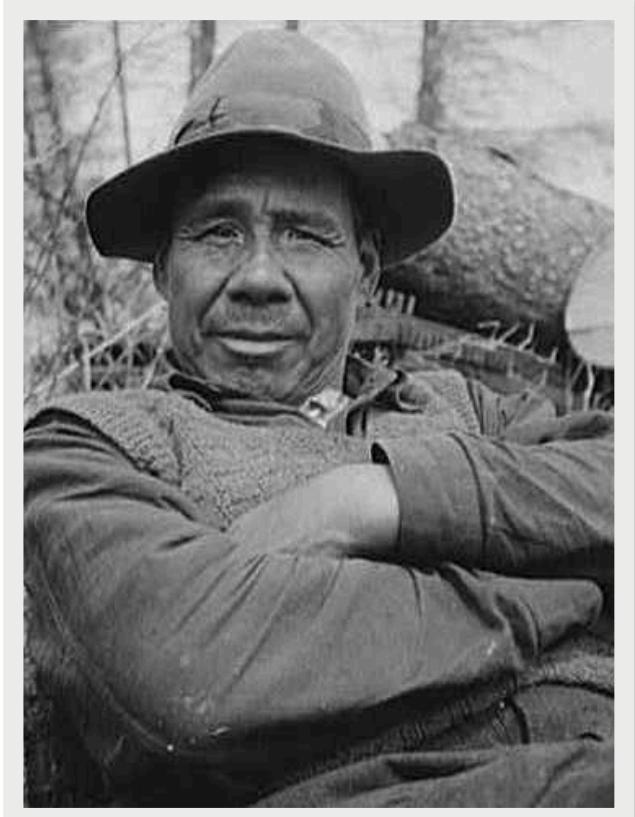
Diminished protection of human rights.

The “New Jim Crow” and mass incarceration of people of color as modern slavery. (Thirteenth Amendment)

The diminished and impermanent status of Indigenous Peoples under the Doctrine of Discovery, is contrary to their right to sustain themselves in perpetuity as distinct peoples.

A concept of occupancy (“Indian title”) is inconsistent with the constitutional status of treaties. (Treaties are the highest law of the land, equal to the constitution.)

Conflicts arising when Indigenous Peoples exercise self-determination bring them in conflict with governments and corporations that rely on the legal lineage of the Doctrine to assert claims on natural resources, such as coal, oil, uranium, natural gas and water.



Bibliography

In the Courts of the Conqueror: The Ten Worst Indian Law Cases Ever Decided by Walter Echo-Hawk, Fulcrum Publishing, 2010

The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in an Age of Colorblindness, Michelle Alexander, New Press, 2010

Helpful Websites

<http://tonatierra.org>

<http://doctrineofdiscoveryforum.blogspot.com>

<http://www.doctrineofdiscovery.org/index.htm>

Contact Information



The Workshops on the Doctrine of Discovery are a project of the **Racial Social and Economic Justice Committee** of the New England Yearly Meeting with technical assistance provided by the American Friends Service Committee Healing Justice Program. To schedule a workshop, contact:

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