

TRADITIONAL CIRCLE OF INDIAN ELDERS AND YOUTH

Anishinaabe, Saginaw-Chippewa, Michigan
August, 2000

COMMUNIQUE NO. 20

Statement reflecting the position of the Traditional Circle of Indian Elders and Youth and delivered on their behalf by Oren R. Lyons, Faith Keeper, Turtle Clan, Onondaga Nation, to the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, United Nations, New York, August 28-31, 2000.

Leaders of the World:

Neyaweha-scano (Thank you for being well).

Today I bring you greetings from the Indigenous Peoples of North, Central, and South America. Indeed, I bring you greetings from the Indigenous Peoples of the world.

We are the keepers of the traditions, ceremonies, histories, and future of our nations. We are the ones who escaped from your proselytizing. We survived with the wisdom of the Old Ones.

And we are pleased to add our voices to yours in this great effort for common sense and peace among nations.

Leaders of the World:

I bring you a most urgent message that was brought to our 23rd annual gathering of the Traditional Circle of Elders and Youth. This message was brought by a runner from the north, from Greenland, and he said:

The ice is melting in the north!

He informed us that some 15 years ago they noticed trickles of water coming down the sheer face of Glacier Mountain. That trickle has grown to a roaring river of ice water pouring out of this mountain into the Atlantic Ocean.

He informed us that Glacier Mountain has lost 4,000 feet of ice in these past few years. And the melt continues to accelerate.

This is an alarming message that requires your absolute attention.

Leaders of the World:

We are a collective voice of Indigenous Peoples. We have joined this great mission for peace. We add our presence in support of this great effort for reconciliation between peoples and nations.

We agree that there must be parity and equity between rich and poor nations, between white people and people of color, and rich people and poor people, with special attention to women, children, and indigenous peoples.

We, in our collective voices, add to this: that there must be a reconciliation between peoples and the natural world, between nation states and the forests that sustain us, between corporations and the resources they mine, the fish that they catch, and the water that they use.

Leaders of the World:

Indigenous nations and peoples believe in the spiritual powers of the universe. We believe in the ultimate power and authority of a limitless energy beyond our comprehension. We believe in the order of the universe. We believe in the laws of creation and that all life is bound by these same natural laws.

We call this essence the spirit of life. This is what gives the world the energy to create and procreate, and becomes the ponderous and powerful law of regeneration - the law of the seed.

We, in our collective voices, speak to this to remind you that spirit and spiritual laws transcend generations. We know, because this has sustained us.

Religion and spirituality is vital to survival and moral law. It is a faith that has sustained our human spirit through our darkest hours. It has sustained our human spirit in times of crisis during the times we suffered through the grinding measures of inexorable persecutions that have spanned generations and continue today. Yet here we are, today, adding our voices to this plea for sanity in leadership and responsibility to the future generations whose faces are looking up from the Earth, each awaiting their time of life here.

Leaders of the World:

The collective voices of indigenous people add that we are saddened by the absence of our elder brother, the Dalai Lama, in this forum. We believe that reconciliation should begin here because peace is an inclusive term, and peace and reconciliation is the purpose of this summit.

Peace is dynamic and requires great effort of spirit and mind to attain unity. Leaders of peace must step forward and take responsibility for a paradigm change in the direction of current lifestyles and materialistic societies. The human species has become the most voracious and abusive consumer of Earth's resources. We have tipped the balance of life against our children, and we imperil our future as a species.

Leaders of the World:

Despite all of our declarations and all of proclamations, no matter how profound they may be:

The ice is melting in the north.

We see the acceleration of the winds.

We see the fires that are raging in North America.

And we see that the sun's rays that provide us with light, energy, and the very essence of life now are causing cancer in people, blinding animals, and killing the plankton and krill of the sea.

This is only the beginning and already we are helpless. We will now see the real spiritual powers that govern the Earth.

Leaders of the World:

There can be no peace as long as we wage war upon Our Mother, The Earth. Responsible and courageous actions must be taken to realign ourselves with the great laws of nature. We must meet this crisis now, while we still have time. We offer these words as common peoples in support of peace, equity, justice, and reconciliation.

As we speak, the ice continues to melt in the north.

Dahnato (now I am finished), Neyawenha (thank you).

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