

An Indigenous Vision to Heal America

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9/17/08

There is only one path that I see for America to truly become a land of life, liberty, and justice for all. That path is to heal itself through an uncompromisingly honest acknowledgement and thorough addressing of its atrocities and lies. Without this our country will continue to act out of ignorance, fear, greed, and an obsessive need to forcefully control human lives both domestically and internationally. Humanity has experienced time and again how a history rooted in dysfunction and unsustainability feeds the fire of self-destruction. As sure as the Roman Empire collapsed and a drug addict smiles as his last dose ushers him to death, the United States will continue to blindly and in some cases consciously inflict suffering at home and abroad if it does not acknowledge and address the truth of its past and current actions.

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) have said that those who aspire towards “a clean heart and a clean mind” will be able to live a balanced life and lead wisely. Without understanding and applying this knowledge we will continue placing band-aids on a cancer that has been eating this country from within since its inception. Then in the aftermath of each new atrocity we will wonder how our country continues to send its children to face death in distant wars and why our prison cells fill to capacity. We will wonder why we are murdering each other in our own city streets and why both domestic and international terrorists choose to attack us, feeding the cycle of ignorant violence.

There is a path that can free us from this cycle and help to transform the world. It is not an easy path, but it is necessary if we hope to prevent the loss to millions of human lives. We have the resources, knowledge, technology, and time to make a transition, but the question is: Do we have the courage and the will to face truth and act from a place of humility, patience, compassion, and conscience? How successful do you think Jesus, Mohamed, or Buddha would have been in sharing their teachings with a tainted heart and a distraught fearful mind?

We must begin by acknowledging and addressing the foundation upon which America was built - stolen land and the genocide of American Indians. The United States has never apologized to American Indian people for these violations. This country has demonized Hitler and erected Jewish holocaust museums, yet refuses to acknowledge its own acts of genocide. An apology or museum alone would not heal the wounded hearts and disempowered governments of Indigenous peoples or the tainted heart of America. There is one great critical lie that the United States government has effectively taught to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Americans alike: That there is no way for the United States to honor its treaties with American Indians and pursue new treaties with those not yet afforded that opportunity, including Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Indigenous nations.

This great lie is only as true as we Americans accept it to be. There were similar lies told in our country's history to women deprived of a voice and to African slaves. In the case

of abolishing slavery it took a radical shift in human consciousness, a courage and will to overcome, and a changing national economy, as well as a forced acceptance upon many Americans who were not ready for the positive evolution of our country. As painful and challenging as it may be for many Americans, we must begin our healing by dispelling this great lie and moving through a process of reconciliation with American Indian nations.

Our inability to adequately address the many critical issues facing American people today are symptoms of a United States that harbors a tainted heart. Reconciling our relationship with American Indian nations is the first step to building a foundation upon which life, liberty, and justice can be attained for all.