

S04E03: Reclaiming Sacred Ground:
Indigenous Sovereignty, Environmental Wisdom, and the Path to Restorative Justice
With Patrick Gonzalez-Rogers

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([00:07](#)):

Hello and welcome to the Mapping The Doctrine Of Discovery Podcast. The producers of this podcast would like to acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation, Firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee, the Indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands Syracuse University now stands. And now, introducing your hosts, Phil Arnold and Sandy Bigtree.

Philip P. Arnold ([00:31](#)):

Welcome back to Mapping The Doctrine Of Discovery. My name's Phil Arnold. I'm faculty in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University and core faculty in Native American Indigenous Studies and the founding director of the Skä•noñh Great Law Peace Center.

Sandy Bigtree ([00:53](#)):

And I'm Sandy Bigtree, a citizen of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne, and I'm on the Collaborative for the Skä•noñh Center and the Board of the Indigenous Values Initiative.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:01](#)):

And we're coming to you today sponsored by the Henry Luce Foundation, and we really appreciate their continued support for this important conversation we're having.

([01:13](#)):

Today, we're super happy to have Patrick Gonzalez-Rogers join us. And Patrick was kind enough to invite Sandy and myself out to Yale to give a presentation to his class last year, and I think we really got to know a lot of good people there.

Sandy Bigtree ([01:38](#)):

The students were so engaged and well-informed. It was really one of our better experiences, with such interaction from the students. Good job.

Philip P. Arnold ([01:48](#)):

Yeah. Patrick, I'll just let you introduce yourself. You can talk about what you're doing there at Harvard ... Or sorry, Yale. Oh my gosh, I'm sorry to make that mistake.

Sandy Bigtree ([02:00](#)):

Cut. Yeah.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([02:00](#)):

Bite your tongue.

Sandy Bigtree ([02:01](#)):

Yeah.

Philip P. Arnold ([02:04](#)):

What you're doing out there at Yale.

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Sandy Bigtree ([02:06](#)):

Yeah, just begin. Yeah.

Philip P. Arnold ([02:10](#)):

And let us know what your work is currently.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([02:13](#)):

Yeah. Pat Gonzalez-Rogers, I'm a faculty at the Yale School of Environment. I teach a class, this semester, around tribal natural resources and sovereignty. And I think it's worthwhile to just explain a bit about my background, so people have a context to how I come about a lot of this.

([02:36](#)):

Previous to Yale, I was the inaugural Executive Director of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, and have previously held more than a few jobs within the federal apparatus, mainly along the lines of being the Senior Native Advisor for several federal agencies, but I've also served as the assistant General Counsel to the US Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the director of Federal Relations for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

([03:10](#)):

That said, while I do most of my work within Indian country, I always am clear I'm not Native American. I am Indigenous on my mom's side, both Tagalog, which is the largest indigenous group to the Philippines as well as being Samoan. A lot of my work is really within the intersect and construct of conservation and environmental issues, hence the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition.

([03:45](#)):

But one of the foundational pieces, as I present the history of Indian law and policy, and again, this is within the context of the School of Environment, is to really set a foundation towards those things that really set up the underpinnings and cornerstones to contemporary policy. And I think it comes as a surprise to many that the doctrine of discovery is not just this historical affectation. It is living with us today and is quite prominent towards how we view, operate, and implement many of the aspects of the Federal Trust relationship, which are at the primacy to the government to government relationship, how every tribe conducts its business. I say that as a bit of framing for the rest of our conversation today.

Philip P. Arnold ([04:52](#)):

That's very helpful. Thank you.

Sandy Bigtree ([04:54](#)):

Well, it's really difficult when, under the doctrines of discovery, colonists came into our territories and targeted sacred places. In Mexico, many of the sacred pyramids were leveled, and the rubble was actually used to construct churches, so they could shift the spiritual control of the narrative there in those places. We see that with Mountain Rushmore, those mountains were sacred to the Lakota. And then, Bears Ears as well, and many other sites all over the country.

Philip P. Arnold ([05:30](#)):

Yeah. Maybe you could talk about Bears Ears and help fill in our audience what's going on there historically, and then, recently.

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Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([05:39](#)):

Yeah. Let me just take a step backwards here. And this is a foundational piece for, maybe, some of the listeners that may not have the background to see how problematic this is. We have the doctrine of discovery, and Phil, you're a much, much more erudite and nuanced expert, but in many ways, the doctrine of discovery is the template of modern genocide. It is, one, the conquering of lands. Then, two, saying that your particular theology, your God, is flaccid, it is insufficient, let me replace it. And then, telling the people to assimilate. And then, followed by violence. The violence about snatching children away from their immediate family, the sexual assault of the women, and then, doing this under the guise that we have something better to offer. And I think we've seen this play out in a contemporary global aspect.

([06:46](#)):

The other example that I would like to interject into the conversation is, there was a period called the Allotment Period where the federal government basically did a 180 pivot and said, "We're now going to offer up Indian lands to private concerns, and you can buy them." But what many people do not know is, they had these intermediaries, and these intermediaries were not objective or balanced, and in many times, they were just crooked.

([07:23](#)):

But the biggest contingency of those intermediaries were churches. They were Christian denominations that then stepped in the role because they wanted to create land bases and still go about the business of proselytizing Native people. In this period, which you don't have to be a liberal or a conservative or anything in between, was a very unproductive period, in which millions of acres were lost by tribal communities, but the biggest benefactors were the Christian denominations, because they stepped in, and then, assumed the role of both negotiations as well as acquiring lands for their own vested interests.

([08:13](#)):

Now, you again have this continual methodical process of taking away the real spiritual and theological values from these Native communities. Let's fast forward. When we think about the Bears Ears, in many ways, what we're trying to say is, not only are tribes really valuable, productive, and efficient land stewards; by advancing and elevating tribes, as a co-manager to a national monument, you are really exercising this really profound force multiplier. And the other elements of that force multiplier is having traditional and Native ways instruct the land management plan, which invariably allow for a greater birth of cultural and Native practice on the landscape.

([09:13](#)):

The problem, as both Sandy and Phil know, is, we view all of this within the Western construct of law. The thing that has plagued us all these years is this really nebulous term called substantial burden. But that substantial burden, i.e. substantial burden for that community to worship, is defined by Western standards, and largely by a Judeo-Christian instruction to all that. And I would say to all of my brethren in Judaism, it's largely Christian and very little Judaism on that. It is a Christian construct to what creates a substantial burden.

([10:08](#)):

And why that's so important to the conversation is, from a Native perspective, we are not trying to make specific identification of a nave, of a stained window, of a confessional, of a pew. The entrance to a landscape like the Bears Ears, which is incredibly vast, is the gully that you walk in through a creek, the

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mesa that you climb, the enclosure that you get to has an equanimity to it, and that equanimity creates the sacredness.

[\(10:48\)](#):

Now, that same sensibility is incredibly valuable from a conservation because now, we are not trying to protect a 20 by 20 space. We are trying to protect a 15 mile radius relative to it. But what it says is, all elements are sacred. They are just as meaningful to where the actual ceremony or practice might be. From a Western perspective, what they really want to do is create consistency and durability, but they also want to be really specific. They want to say, "Oh, the overhang is important, so let's just protect that." And the reality is, the totality of landscape is the thing that creates this element to Native people in which they want to protect.

[\(11:45\)](#):

I think the better way to think about it is, if you had an entryway to a synagogue, you wouldn't defecate on it. You wouldn't have graffiti on it. And the entryway is just as important as the inner sanctum. We need to look at the totality, but also, the sensibility of the people that actually worship. In many ways, the Bears Ears is a great manifestation of that, because it allows the five tribes involved to not only have their particular idiosyncratic sensibility, because not all tribes are ... This is not monolithic. But it also then allows us to protect the landscape in a much more comprehensive way, so in many ways, you're getting a twofer off of that. You're protecting the total landscape, and you're protecting everything inside of that.

Sandy Bigtree [\(12:43\)](#):

The dog is in our garage.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(12:48\)](#):

I just discovered that was the Utah delegation.

Philip P. Arnold [\(12:53\)](#):

Oh, yeah. Yeah. All right. Well, that was so valuable, Pat. I really appreciate that whole exposition of, really, the problem of religion, I'd say, or problem of defining religion into a narrow Western framework. This is one of the problems that we have in the academic study of religion. How do Indigenous people really participate in that worldview? It doesn't fit.

[\(13:27\)](#):

And this is why so many of our Supreme Court cases over the last 40 years really don't have any teeth when it comes to defending these sacred places. If you look at federal Indian law, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act really has not helped in protecting these sacred places. And I'm wondering if that's what we're dealing with when it comes to the fallout around sacred places like the Bears Ears. The integrity of a landscape has to be present. It's not just a single spot where they might perform ceremonies at certain times of the year.

Sandy Bigtree [\(14:18\)](#):

It's a reciprocal relationship with the natural world. The natural world is a reciprocal engagement.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(14:25\)](#):

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Yeah. Sandy, I think you make the perfect segue. To me, another great example is Mauna Kea, right? Mauna Kea is sacred in many different ways for Native Hawaiians, including, it is the place where they do burials, but it also is representative of this dynamic of ...

Philip P. Arnold ([14:54](#)):

Stop for a sec.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([14:56](#)):

Oh.

Philip P. Arnold ([14:58](#)):

We can edit that out.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([14:59](#)):

Okay. One second.

Philip P. Arnold ([14:59](#)):

Just let them come in.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([15:09](#)):

Hey. No. I'm on an interview right now. [inaudible 00:15:14]. Yeah.

([15:23](#)):

Speaking of religion and Jehovah witness, they must have heard something. Where I was going to go with this is, Mauna Kea also represents this triangulation that is really reflective in many Native theologies, but for Native Hawaiians, it is Kea Akua, God, right? Ke Kanaka, the people, and Aina, the land.

([16:03](#)):

This representation on how it has equilibrium and balance to each other is really the engine towards everything. And if you don't have an insight to that portion, you will then default to this western, "Oh, it's a simplistic ... Well, if you can worship on this side of the mountain. Why don't you just go to the other side of the mountain? Or why don't you just find some alternative?" So that substantial burden, again, is defined by what they think is a burden and not viewing it again in the totality of what that means to the people, and all these relationships really define their spirituality.

Philip P. Arnold ([17:01](#)):

Well, that's great.

Sandy Bigtree ([17:03](#)):

Western religions are more ideological. They're not in this relationship with a natural world. And in contact, it was crucial to penetrate this way of life. And you talk about tribal governments today, many of those tribal chiefs came through the Bureau of Indian Affairs system, but they were selected predominantly because those were children who'd gone through the boarding school experience and

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had a lot of their culture stripped from them. It's a very complicated series of problems in Indian country today, because of the wrath of colonialism and what it did, culturally.

Philip P. Arnold ([17:49](#)):

I think, too, what you're describing also is blatantly apparent, the doctrine of discovery is blatantly apparent in our environmental laws and policies. The way that we tend to regard the natural world is as resource rather than as relation. I think what you're describing here is also a worldview that impacts these sacred places like Bears Ears and other spots, Onondaga Lake for example. And I wonder if you see that there's a relationship between the doctrine of discovery and environmental law and policy.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([18:41](#)):

Yeah, most certainly. The doctrine of discovery is the extension of a Western European sensibility, but the introduction of the legal fiction of private land ownership. From a Native perspective, we are all, in most instances, merely stewards, right? We are custodians of the land.

([19:07](#)):

And one of the first things I talked to the students about, and I said, you do not have to be Native, but if you ask me one thing on how you can be a better steward is to revisit your relationship with both land, water, and to a certain extent, sentient objects. And when you view them as an extension of yourself, it becomes much more intimate. And by taking care of these things, we are essentially taking care of ourselves.

([19:44](#)):

But I also think, in a political correctness, we have now said that man is the problem. But I think, from an Indigenous perspective, when you have this concept that land and water are an extension of yourself, you then can also say, "Man can also be part of the solution."

([20:10](#)):

And you do not bifurcate this, because we are a part of this, so we can then add to it and not just be looking from it from just an academic window or a non-interested, pedestrian perspective. It compels us in a way that we can be much more engaged. And I think our relationships with land of water then become, both figuratively as well as literally, much healthier.

Philip P. Arnold ([20:50](#)):

Yeah, I wondered about that as you were speaking. What would it look like to have environmental law and policy, you've worked in Washington, DC, you've been an advocate for Indigenous peoples there, what would it look like to have an Indigenously oriented environmental policy?

([21:16](#)):

Because I think we're at a moment now, at an urgent moment when students and others are really trying to think of a different way that we can exist in this world, that human beings need be in a better relationship with one another, but also with the Earth, as Tadodaho Sid Hill says, "Here, in Haudenosaunee territory, peace is only established when human beings are in proper relationship to the natural world."

([21:57](#)):

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This isn't a puritanical notion or something that follows John Muir or somebody where the natural world has to remain untouched by humans. Rather, it's a different way of thinking about economics of sane use of the Earth, so I wonder-

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([22:26](#)):
Engagement.

Philip P. Arnold ([22:27](#)):

Yeah, engagement with the Earth. So how do you see, as somebody who's training students in this area, how do you see us moving forward with a new set of values?

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([22:39](#)):

Well, I think the biggest thing that comes to mind when I think about conservation, from an Indigenous perspective, and really driven by that precept, is durability and sustainability. We use those as buzzwords right now, but in reality, Native people knew that all natural resources have a limitation.

([23:08](#)):

And that's not to say Native people were perfect in every instance, but because of traditional knowledge in at least one corner is steeped in the observational knowledge of what occurs over generations and decades, they were able to acquire information that they could then pass down to say, "If you did this, you may have the utilization of a waterway for 20 or 30 years, but if you did it this other way, it might be indefinite into future." It really hallmarks that, while people hear these terms like "seven and eight generations out," it was at the foundation of how they thought about conservation and the environment, because they knew they had to pass that down. It, in many ways dilutes the, "Oh," what I call shooting for Q4, and that is, "Can we make a profitability out of this? And then, we will regroup and think about the future of everyone else."

([24:29](#)):

Instead, what you're saying is, our primary goal is to preserve and pass it down better. And when you have that as your initial goal, you then are really in this mode of real conservation and being stewards of the land. The first thing I think about in that is that that is a very durable way to manage lands and waters. And I'm rather certain the paradigms and models that we use now relative to most extraction, people cannot say with a straight face, there is a durability and sustainability to it.

Philip P. Arnold ([25:18](#)):
Right.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([25:19](#)):

They're looking at such small elements of time on how they want to utilize it, and it usually has some profit margin or a dividend or a share incentive to it, which really, then, confuse the objectives of conservation and environment.

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([25:44](#)):

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Sandy Bigtree ([26:05](#)):

When you interject that the Earth is regenerative, its ever-changing species die, species are born, it's a whole different connection to the Earth. You can foretell what kind of fish will appear in the stream when they breed by a certain wildflower that may be blooming. The Haudenosaunee for example, had this language, as all Native people do. The world speaks to them and how things are changing in the rhythms and times which are not according to a calendar, but they're according to these cycles of life. It's so interactive, and it's really hard to say you can manage anything, but you need to tap into that regenerative machine of creation that we're part of.

Philip P. Arnold ([26:55](#)):

Right.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([27:00](#)):

Yeah. One of the things, and I haven't got to both of you and I was going to tell you about is, one of the things that I'm working with at Yale now is doing something, probably in the fall, where we would bring folks like yourself, but also with other people that may be more based from the historical, but also attorneys, to see if there is not a legal remedy, at least for tribes in the US as well as Alaska Natives, relative to the doctrine of discovery.

([27:41](#)):

I think we have had really robust discussions that really provide a summation on the implications and what we are now living with. The thing that we have not done is figure out, is there a way to confront the involved denominations on restoring tribal nations? And the reason why I say that is, this is really, I think about it in a fairly simplistic way, as I do most things. I'm not the most nuanced thinker, but it is like an apology, right? It is, "I am sorry. Two, this will not happen again. But three," and this is analogous to restorative justice, which is a Christian precept to all of these denominations, "how can I make you whole?"

([28:42](#)):

While Mennonites, Quakers and even the Catholic church have apologized, they have not satisfied that third element, which is probably the most important. "How have I made these other parties whole for actions that I am culpable for?" The convening would be to really put in the thinkers of this world and maybe to get audience with these denominations to say, "Is there a pathway?"

([29:12](#)):

Now, the reason I mentioned this, one, this is your guys' life work, so I would like your engagement. But the other portion is, I think, if we can get the denominations, especially the Mennonites and Quakers, to move, it might create leverage to the Catholic church.

([29:38](#)):

All of that is important, but I also think there's an organic, natural segue to land back. All of these denominations have large land holdings. If they're talking about are we ever going to make Indian country totally whole? No, that's not possible. It's a too vast amount. But can they, in some way, start

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returning lands because we now have the apparatus to do so? I think this is, at least, a preliminary, but sturdy vehicle to start the conversation and looking at this dynamic as part of the restorative justice.

[\(30:22\)](#):

This is something I've talked to some foundations as well as other interested parties, to put all of these thought thinkers in the room to say, "Can we start this conversation?" Because really, at the end of the day, relative to your own doctrinaire, you have not satisfied what is required. What do you think about that, to reverse the role of the interviewing, Phil and Sandy?

Sandy Bigtree [\(30:51\)](#):

Absolutely. Returning land to Indigenous people who understand this proper relationship is only going to free up the land and help everybody to begin recovering from this disconnection that's been dumped on everybody through colonialism and the church.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(31:11\)](#):

Exactly.

Philip P. Arnold [\(31:12\)](#):

And unfortunately, you were not part of our Doctrine of Discovery Conference last December, and you should have been, but we had lawyers there, and their whole orientation now is, how do you put before the Supreme Court the doctrine of discovery? Maybe not this Supreme Court, but how do you test the doctrine of discovery? Which, as we know, is part of property law.

[\(31:47\)](#):

The other part of what we did at the conference was, we had a bishops' panel where Lutheran, Episcopalian and Catholic bishops were on the stage in front of all these Indigenous peoples, and then, they were responded to by Haudenosaunee leaders, a clan mother, and someone who sat on the Chief's Council for 25 years. And essentially, what came up was exactly what you're talking about, Pat, was that, essentially, okay, apologies are great. We've had over 350 repudiations of the doctrine of discovery. Now, what? Now, what are we going to do? It's a little like our universities giving land acknowledgements. And then, now, what do we do? "Now, what are you going to do about it?," sort of thing.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(32:46\)](#):

Yeah. You make, as always, Phil, a very nuanced point. The more I think about this, but I would like the convening to really instruct it as opposed to some guttural instinct, but my sense is, it is less legal and more political, right?

Philip P. Arnold [\(33:07\)](#):

Yeah.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(33:08\)](#):

There is a political thing that must occur. I agree with everything you say, but I think, like everything, we need to then really approach this from an iterative process, and then, set the stage for a dialogue that continues on the dialogue that you have in saying, "All right, it might be a hard toll to, if you're thinking

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about, at the highest level, piercing the veil of the Vatican. On the other hand, we could have contemporary conversations in which they unilaterally agree, this is the right thing to do."

Philip P. Arnold ([33:52](#)):

Yeah. Actually, that's what they did. The bishops, in the Q&A, in that panel, basically admitted, "Yes, that's what we're doing. Those are the next steps. We are going to return land to the Onondaga Nation." We got those, what? Verbal assents to what the next steps are going to be.

([34:20](#)):

I think that's what you're describing as a political shift, but that's also a value shift within these Christian denominations, and it's across the board. And these are big denominations, these are mainline churches. And as you say, they have major land holdings across the country, and it goes right back to the Early Colonial Period where they are, as you said, the intermediaries between the evangelical or the missionization of Native people and the state takeover. I think we have a basis for the convening that you're suggesting there, Pat. I think there's really some real possibilities.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([35:14](#)):

Yeah. And I think there's an inflection point, and this is how I'll bring in back the Bears Ears. The inflection point of the Bears Ears is one of competency. And it's not that we needed the validation of the federal government or this Western construct, but the federal trust relationship is one really saying, "Tribes are not competent." It is as if the federal government is viewing tribes as if they're Britney Spears. "You cannot make decisions. If it's a big thing, you got to run back to Papa, and we got to decide for you."

Philip P. Arnold ([35:53](#)):

Yeah, [inaudible 00:35:54].

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([35:54](#)):

Now, there there's a little wrinkle to this, and both you and Sandy know this. While they're doing this and preaching assimilation, the single biggest feature of assimilation they did not give to tribes is fee simple ownership over the lands. The single biggest component to acquiring legacy wealth was then not given to tribes while they're still talking all this BS that you should assimilate. They basically say, "You all need to drive a car, but I'm not giving you any carburetor nor will I give you any cylinders in the car." They just don't want to give you the thing.

([36:32](#)):

But I'll go back to this belabored point. When they said the tribes should be co-managers, they're really saying, "We trust the competency of tribes." So it elevates it in a way, now, that we can go on these other attendant issues that are related to the doctrine of discovery and what happened through these many denominations to say, "You should give back these lands because we've always known this, but we're incredible stewards and custodians of lands, and they will be well taken care of, maybe even better taken care of than under your particular leadership." This historical recognition of tribes being the first co-managers of a national monument, I think, gives momentum to these other movements that have land back as part of their narrative.

Philip P. Arnold ([37:42](#)):

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Wow, that's fabulous.

Sandy Bigtree ([37:43](#)):

Wow. I do have to interject in this conversation that an Indian country, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs system, the US Native Nations are under the guardianship of the United States. That's the language. But that is not the case where we are from. I'm from the Shawnee Prairie, so I have to just clarify, the Onondaga, they never fell under that control. The FBI will not step foot on their territory unless they get permission, or any police. There's no police state, there are no taxes, there's no prisons.

Philip P. Arnold ([38:22](#)):

No BIA.

Sandy Bigtree ([38:22](#)):

And no BIA.

Philip P. Arnold ([38:23](#)):

Right. We have a model here, I think, and even though, recently, there was the return of a thousand acres of land just south of the Onondaga nation, it's still being worked out because, as you say, and I don't know this as well as you do, Pat, but the trust relationship is something that the Onondaga will not enter into with the federal government.

([38:55](#)):

They say, "Essentially, either you're returning land or you're not. And it becomes part of our nation or it doesn't." There are steps that each individual case will have to be considered, but I think getting Christian denominations in this post-doctrine of discovery moment is a really good idea, in these conversations about the return of land. I'm very excited about this.

Sandy Bigtree ([39:31](#)):

Post-era, maybe.

Philip P. Arnold ([39:31](#)):

Post-era, yeah.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([39:32](#)):

Yeah, and it's something that, I think, like so many things that have a political context is, sometimes, you're just in the right place at the right time. And while it may have nothing to do with the topic of the doctrine of discovery, I think about, during the Obama administration, where there became an opening that was very apparent and vivid in which he then could put into law about the legal rights for gay people in their communities.

([40:14](#)):

Some of this is to constantly be on the vigil that we're creating a momentum, because when that opening appears, it's not something that we've planned, but we've been prepared for. In reality, what I'm taking is the conference that you did, and then, continuing the conversation, in a way, to put a little bit more framework, because then, there will be a subsequent conversation.

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[\(40:43\)](#):

Because even through this conversation, it strikes me that the meeting may not just point out all of the answers at once, but it may instruct that we need to create an organization that is doing this 24/7 and having these kinds of conversations with all of these denominations, because I do think,, in some ways we're much closer than we have ever been. This is all compounding through everyone's both education as well as advocating through many conversations and doing our own advocacy.

Philip P. Arnold [\(41:34\)](#):

Yeah. And I think it's such an important lesson, really, for students. We're training the next generation of Indigenous advocates for the environment, for the natural world. And I think, as you say, religion needs to step up, or these Christian denominations need to step up and really make a difference, because what we're facing, what's coming is really going to be catastrophic if we don't start changing our practices quickly. Yeah, I think there is also the urgency of the moment, as well as the opportunity that has been handed us by previous people working on these issues.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(42:33\)](#):

And I think about this, and I think that many people don't realize how Native communities have pride, not equally, but they have pride in being an American. They have pride in the community they're from, but the greater landscape in which they're involved, and I can't help but think about the turmoil of the challenge of those feelings.

[\(43:06\)](#):

You're here, but you're also under the foot of something. And this foot, in some ways, you still have love and pride for. And I think about the words, he was not Native, but there's still prescient words of Frederick Douglass. He was in these series of conversations back in the day with someone, actually, if I'm not mistaken, in Belfast, and he writes, "In thinking of America, I sometimes find myself admiring her bright blue sky, her grand old woods, her fertile fields, her beautiful rivers, her mighty lakes, and star-crowned mountains. But my rapture is soon checked, my joy is soon turned to mourning when I remember that all is cursed with the infernal actions of slave-holding robbery and wrong, when I remember, with the waters of her noblest rivers, the tears of my brethren are borne to the ocean, disregarded, and forgotten, and that her most fertile fields drink daily of the warm blood of my outraged sisters. I am filled with unutterable loathing."

Sandy Bigtree [\(44:24\)](#):

Hm.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers [\(44:24\)](#):

That conflict is the thing that, on a personal level, is what we're trying to do. We try to reconciled these relationships, so we have to prompt the other party to do the right thing.

Philip P. Arnold [\(44:41\)](#):

Right.

Sandy Bigtree [\(44:42\)](#):

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And to really know equity and freedom.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([44:45](#)):

Exactly. Exactly, Sandy.

Sandy Bigtree ([44:47](#)):

And that was integrated into this whole forming of this nation when they met with Haudenosaunee, [foreign language 00:44:56], the Men of the Good Mind, we don't have a hierarchy of chiefs. It's all about integration and coming together in thought and purpose and living in proper relationships. Everybody has that hope, but we've not experienced freedom and equity yet.

Philip P. Arnold ([45:15](#)):

Right. What a great way to end our conversation. Pat, really, really appreciate you and all you're doing there, and we hope we can continue this conversation into the future.

Patrick Gonzales-Rogers ([45:27](#)):

We will. I appreciate you guys, and we'll be talking soon.

Sandy Bigtree ([45:31](#)):

Thank you so much.

Jordan Loewen-Colón ([45:36](#)):

The producers of this podcast were Adam DJ Brett, and Jordan Loewen-Colon. Our intro and outro is social dancing music by Orris Edwards and Regis Cook. This podcast is funded in collaboration with the Henry Luce Foundation, Syracuse University, and Hendricks Chapel, and the Indigenous Values Initiative. If you like this episode, please check out our website and make sure to subscribe.