



FGC 2013 Gathering: Covering the World of Quakerism

bill.esler, Friday 05 July 2013 - 22:53:50

Quakers at FGC 2013 Gathering explored the wide spectrum of interests that shape the culture and concerns of the Religious Society of Friends. Ted Ehnle, pictured here, completed his workshop in "Chanting from the Silence," along with fellow Northside Friend Bruce Kanorak.

Lead by Tony Martin, "Chanting" participants entered into a "river of sound and silence." Ehnle said the music moved spontaneously into many modalities and directions, and had a powerful impact on participants.

"It was a transformative experience," he said.

Northside Friend Beth Burbank completed a knitting workshop, "Wool Gathering," adapting the skills of knitting to facilitating better listening, and improved mindfulness.

At the plenary session, "Reconciliation," last night (July 1), theologians Tink Tinker and Dr. Vincent Hastings called upon Quakers to become activists in setting right the relations Native Americans have with the United States.

Tinker and Dr. Hastings are both associated with the Illiff School of Theology of Religion and Social Transformation in Denver, where Tinker, a member of the Osage Nation, has been a professor of American Indian cultures and religious traditions since 1985. Dr. Hastings is Professor Emeritus at Illiff.

Tinker noted that one step in reconciliation requires better understanding of the world of Native Americans: how they govern themselves and their view of creation. "Native American society is not hierarchical," Tinker said. European governments needed a chief to speak authoritatively for Native Americans societies, to enter binding treaties.

But governance of Native Americans has elements in common with Quakerism, Tinker said. "The chief speaks for the sense of the people," Tinker said. If the chief misrepresents this sense in negotiations with other parties, "He is out of a job."

Among Tinker's works described in Wikipedia are: *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Theology* (a critique of how the Christian church and its missionaries, regardless of its best intentions was complicit with the cultural, political, and social genocide of Native Americans); *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation* is concerned with eliciting the difference between Native American and White cultures and providing a critique of White categories of thought. "A Native American Theology" explains how Native American cultural symbols can be used to re-interpret Christianity.

Dr. Hastings told the group that the idea for this presentation sprang from a joint visit to meet Palestinians in the Middle East by a team of African-Americans and U.S. Jews. He said instead of discovering parallels with the civil rights struggle of African-American, his group was struck by similarities between Native Americans and Palestinians in the West Bank.

Co-presenter Dr. Hastings is also widely known for having written Dr. Martin Luther King's groundbreaking "Beyond Vietnam" speech, and for his many books, including *Martin Luther King: The Inconvenient Hero*.



Tinker and Dr. Hastings charged Quakers as well with framing truthfully how the history of European colonization of the Americas is taught our children.

"Remember the children; always remember the children," Hastings said.