**An American Woman: Two Spirited and Two Nations**

--Sunday, 31 January 2021—

Good morning.

--Let me start with an Indigenous land acknowledgment: **The caretakers of the land upon which we now stand are the people of Yavapai (**people of the sun**), of Pima-Maricopa (**who taught us most of what we know about diabetes**), of Hohokam (**whotaught us aboutirrigation canals)**, of O'odham (**the desert agricultural people**),** and of **Apache-Navajo (**a proud people**)—A ho.**

Inaugural Poet Amanda Gorman, 20 days ago articulated a new way of being…

“So, while once we asked,

how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?

Now we assert

How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?

We will not march back to what was

but move to what shall be.

A country that is bruised but whole,

benevolent but bold,

fierce and free.

We will not be turned around

or interrupted by intimidation

because we know our inaction and inertia

will be the inheritance of the next generation

Our blunders become their burdens.

But one thing is certain:

If we merge mercy with might,

and might with right,

then love becomes our legacy

and change our children’s birthright.

So, let us leave behind a country

better than the one we were left with.

Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,

we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one

We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,

we will rise from the windswept northeast

where our forefathers first realized revolution

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,

we will rise from the sunbaked south

We will rebuild, reconcile and recover

and every known nook of our nation and

every corner called our country,

our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,

battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade,

aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it

For there is always light,

if only we’re brave enough to see it

If only we’re brave enough to be it”

                                ---

Yes, this young black woman with her spoken-word poetry, emphasizing the rhythms and rhymes of a new WE in America. Indeed, she pronounced a new day with the Biden-Harris administration; however, **we**, you and me, have much hard work to do.

Just last Wed (27 Jan21), The Acting Secretary of Homeland Security issued a National Terrorism Bulletin announcing a heightened threat across the United States. Homeland Security believes ideologically motivated violent white supremacists will continue to mobilize and incite violence. Long-standing racial and ethnic tension—including opposition to immigration—has driven Homegrown Violent Extremist attacks, including a 2019 shooting in El Paso, Texas that killed 23 people. Law Enforcement is concerned these drivers to violence may be emboldened by the January 6, 2021 breach of the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. to target elected officials and government facilities. Threats of violence against critical infrastructure, including the electric, telecommunications and healthcare sectors, increased in 2020 with violent extremists citing misinformation and conspiracy theories about COVID-19 for their actions.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (a R-Calif.) has said that all Americans bear “some responsibility” for the deadly pro-Trump Capitol riot on Jan. 6. Indeed, we all undoubtedly have blood on our hands. Who among us has not participated in White Supremacy Patriarchy either overtly or inadvertently?

Where in America is there a human *purebred*? As a Christmas present, we send a sample of our DNA to **23andMe**. Soon to be informed 60% of me is from X-lands, 20% from Y, and 15% from Z, and a smattering of this and that, over and yonder. Science tells us the idea of a pure white race has no basis in genetics.

The forces of White Supremacy are in **our backyard**.

The FBI issued a recent report: Phoenix ranked third among **all** cities in the country in the rate of anti-LGBT incidents per 100,000 residents, which represents 23% of all hate crimes committed in the **state**.

Jake Chansley – the guy with the horns during the Capitol insurrection… remember him?—he attended Moon Valley High School, Ken over by where you live on Cactus Rd.

ABC on channel 15 reports Phoenix has the third most reported hate crimes in the country. FBI is currently investigating 22 known violent hate groups in Phoenix.

Sharon and Greg Slater live down the street in Scottsdale. They started **Family Watch International** which works within the United Nations and countries around the world fostering anti-LGBT+ hate propaganda.

In the Mall at 7th and Bell, last year a woman found a handout that read “Save your Race, Join the Base”

**The Base** is a [neo-Nazi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neo-Nazism), [white supremacist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_supremacy) [hate group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hate_group), formed in 2018 and active in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. The group advocates the formation of [white **ethnostates**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_ethnostate), a goal they see as achievable via [terrorism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorism) and the violent overthrow of existing governments. It emerged in mid-2018 and is white supremacy on steroids. The Base is known for telling its members to arm themselves and be ready for violence. They espouse a deep hatred and are preparing themselves for a racial holy war.

Most of my life there are two subjects I avoid most: sexuality and racism. Why? Because even today there are those who live in our community who would do me harm 1st because I am Two Spirited: a lesbian, and 2nd because I am Native. Amongst White Supremacist I am a target of violent rage.

--start video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=CJdT6QcSbQ0)…

There was a **time before racism**. In the way way back time.

H. sapiens developed in the Horn of **Africa** roughly 200,000 years ago from Eve, the mitochondrial DNA we all inherited, which is *only* handed downfrom our mothers. The material that gives every cell in our body the energy to survive.

The plain truth of it is… all of humanity is Black African, descendants of Africa.

Socrates – 450 BCE taught “The just man, has a well-regulated soul and knows his obligation to the community and thus obeys its law. The just man is a happy man.”

Plato – 400 BCE emphasized the WE of people. Similarly, in Native Country, there is no word for I only WE. Our leaders are charged with making choices for all our people, including 7 generations before us, and 7 generations after us.

And then…a thousand years later…

On 18 June 1452 - Pope Nicholas V, the leader of the Christian Church, issued a decree calledThe **Doctrine of Discovery** which established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians was available to be "discovered," claimed, and exploited by Christian colonizers. That was only Roman Catholic Christians, remember The Church of England wasn’t established until 1534, and the Protestant Reformation didn’t start until 1546.

By 1600 CE, the philosopher Thomas Hobbs concluded “Humans are exclusively **self-interested**.”

Jean-Jacque Rousseau in 1740 CE, during the Enlightenment period, purposed, the invention of **property** constitutes humanity’s ‘fall from grace’.

Slaves are property…

Research scholars provide population estimates of Native Americans to be as high as **112 million** in **1492,**….. the current census is **2.7 million** Native Americans. That is genocide, pure and simple!

Slavery in America certainly did not start with Africans, Native American slavery is a piece of the history of slavery that has been glossed over. Between 1492 and 1880, between 2 and 5.5 million Native Americans were enslaved in the Americas in addition to 12.5 million African slaves.

The concept of slavery was hardly a new one to the English colonists who first came to America. It had been practiced in Europe for more than 100 years. On August 20, 1619, first enslaved Africans arrive in Jamestown, setting the stage for black slavery in North America. This slave trade between Africa and North America was based on the social norms of Europe.  
  
Black Slavery grew quickly in the South because of the region's large plantations. However, slavery in New England was different. New England did not have large plantations for growing crops. Here, it was more common to have one or two slaves working for a household, business, or small farm. Enslaved people often learned special skills and crafts.Part of the reason slavery developed differently in New England was the culture of indentured servitude. This practice also came from England. Indentured servants were often white Europeans working off debts. Usually, they had signed a contract to work for four to seven years. More than half of the original population of the North American colonies was brought over as indentured servants.  
  
New England colonies were also slower to start accepting African slavery in general. One reason for this was that there were local alternatives to African slaves. Early in New England's history, a different kind of slave trade began. Colonists enslaved and shipped local Native Americans to the West Indies, in the Caribbean.

Enslaved Africans quickly replaced indentured servants on plantations in Virginia, Maryland, and other Southern colonies. However, that was not the case in New England. At first, enslaved people here had the same rights as indentured servants. That changed in 1641. That year, the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed new slave laws. As a result, enslaved people in the colony lost the few rights they had.

In recent years, a new wave of historians of American slavery uncover stories that throw African slavery—still the narrative that dominates our national memory—into a different light, revealing that the seeds of that system were sown in earlier attempts to exploit Native labor. The historian Alan Gallay, in his book **The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South**, documents between 1670 and 1715, more Indians were exported into slavery through Charles Town (now Charleston, South Carolina) than Africans were imported.The use of slavery throughout the colonies continued to grow throughout the 1700s. As time passed, the colonies moved closer to revolution against England. There was a growing trend of questioning slavery in New England. Enslaved individuals who fought in the Revolutionary War (on both sides) were offered their freedom. As a result, the number of freed enslaved people in the region grew.

Of the **55** delegates to the **Constitutional Convention** in 1787, about 25 owned slaves. Many of the framers harbored moral qualms about slavery. Some, including Benjamin Franklin (a former slaveholder) and Alexander Hamilton (who was born in a slave colony in the British West Indies) became members of anti-slavery societies. John Adams, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Paine never **owned slaves**. Of those presidents who were slaveholders, Thomas Jefferson owned the most, with 600+ slaves, followed closely by George Washington.

Instead of constitutional **rights**, **slaves** were governed by "**slave** codes" that controlled every aspect of their lives. They had no access to the rule of law: they could not go to court, make contracts, or own any property. They could be whipped, branded, imprisoned without trial, and hanged.

At the most fundamental level, our founding fathers, in theory, created the first modern nation-state based on the democratic principle that political [sovereignty](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sovereignty) in any government resides in the citizenry (the WE rather than ME) and not in a divinely sanctioned monarchy; and the judicial principle that all citizens are equal before the law. **However**, make no mistake about it, this sense of citizenship, including within the Bill of Rights (1791), was only for white heterosexual men who were landowners and registered Church members. Everyone else were **property**, as were cattle.   
  
New England governments began to step in as well. Connecticut and Rhode Island outlawed active slave trades. **However**, few colonial leaders wanted to fully get rid of slavery at the time. It was not until late into the Revolutionary War period that the former New England colonies began outlawing slavery fully. Vermont was first, followed by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. By 1840, all New England states were "free" states.

Lacking large-scale plantations, New England did not have the same level of demand for slave labor as the South. But slavery still existed there until well into the 19th century. Ships in Boston Seaport sailed enslaved Africans along the Atlantic and throughout the Caribbean. White Supremacy was far from over.

After the Civil War which presumedly made slaves “free,” the north and the south could not agree on the presidential election after the death of President Lincoln. The white male landowners’, known as the US Congress, developed what is called **The Compromise of 1877**. It resulted in Hayes as President, but the price was the United States federal government had to pull the last troops out of the South and ending the Reconstruction Era. Thus, allowing the South the right to deal with black people without northern interference which ushered in the Jim Crow laws.

The citizenry? Although Native People are known to have lived in America 20-30,000 years before our invasion by the Spaniards, my father, a full-blooded Eastern Band Cherokee, of the wolf clan, was a non-citizen when he was born in 1923. It was not until June 2, 1924, Congress enacted the **Indian Citizenship** Act, which granted **citizenship** to all **Native Americans** born in the **U.S.**  The right to **vote**, however, was governed by state law; until 1962, some states barred **Native Americans** from voting. Not until 1948, did the Arizona Supreme Court struck down a provision of its state constitution that kept Indians from voting. The last state to fully guarantee voting rights for Native people was Utah in 1962, nine years after I was born!

John Rawl’s 1972 book, “**A Theory of Justice”** concludes the only way out of this mess, is to form **mutually** agreeable contracts. But there is nothing mutual about institutionalized racism. Actually, the devil in it, is that we have become blind to it.

John Dorhauer, our UCC denominational present, sent all clergy a letter stating, and I quote “Contemporary white Christians must first learn these unsettling truths because this is the only way to salvage the integrity of our faith and identities. And then we must confront them, decentralizing Whiteness. More broadly, it is no exaggeration to say that not just the future of white Christianity, but the outcome of the American experiment is at stake.”

It is no coincidence, that Shadow Rock is smack in the middle of a county, that has the highest case rate and death rate per capita of COVID and a plethora of White Supremacy. The consequences of Institutional Racism in America would take a year of Sundays to scratch the surface of its impact on you and me.

I am so done with watching black men shot in the back by police, gay and lesbian hate and disapproval, bullies name calling and threatening violence, and all the lies, the alternative facts! Aren’t you?

*I haven’t even gotten to the chart* showing Native Americans with COVID cases and deaths at a rate 3 times that of whites, a daily struggle for me these past 12 months! The evil of White Supremacy must stop. Now. It is time for people of privilege to change, so others can have the privilege of just living. We at Shadow Rock need to do the hard work of seeing our complacency and change the narrative. It is time each of us find the WE, in all its beautiful diversity, rather than be all about me. AMEN.