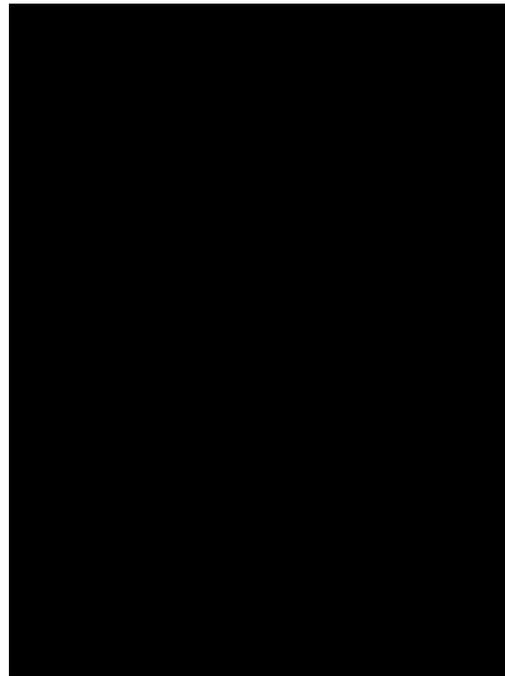


# Hamilton Friends March 2016 Newsletter



## Advices and Queries #22

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgements about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.

## A REMINDER AND A REQUEST

As you heard in February, there will be a **Memorial Meeting for George Sanders** at our Meeting House **on March 26 at 12:30**. George was a Quaker, formerly associated with Pelham Executive Meeting (Niagara Friends) but also connected to Kitchener Area Monthly Meeting. His daughter, Jennifer Sanders, asked if we could host his Memorial Meeting because we are located quite centrally for those who will be coming. George was a prolific artist. We are hoping that pieces of his work will be on display and available free for Friends who would like them. Jennifer thinks that 80 to 100 people may be coming.

Jennifer and her husband, Karl Amdur, will have a Meeting House key. They will be in and out helping prepare the Meeting House and setting up the art. They will return on Monday, March 28 to collect anything that has been left.

We need your help. Harriet is coordinating the preparation for the Memorial Meeting. Please let her know what you can do as soon as possible. <[woodsideh@gmail.com](mailto:woodsideh@gmail.com)>

CAN YOU:

**March 24: 2 to 4:** Help tidy up the lower floor of the Meeting House.

Bring sweets and other snacks on the **morning of March 26**. Jennifer will provide some refreshments (not a lunch) and will ask other guests to bring items too.

**March 26:** Guests are invited to come from 11 on to view George's art before the Memorial Meeting at 12:30.

10:00: Help set up Meeting Room and hallway for refreshments.

11:30-12:30: Greet people and help set up refreshments.

Thanks from Harriet and the rest of  
M&C!



# A GREAT OPPORTUNITY!

A time to learn a lot about each other...

Ministry and Counsel invites all Friends and attenders to a potluck supper at the Meeting House on Friday, March 11<sup>th</sup>.

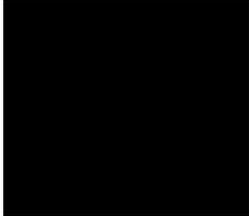
DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A CHRISTIAN?

After the meal, two F/friends will talk about their relationship to the central elements of the Christian faith. They will share their views on such ideas – or events – as the virgin birth, the crucifixion, the ethical teachings of Jesus, and any mystical connections to Christianity they may feel. Following the brief talks, we will have an open dialogue about how each of us regards these matters. M&C believe this occasion will be rich, deep, enlightening, and possibly full of surprises.

We come from many different religious traditions and often express – or simply experience – our spirituality in strikingly different ways. This will be an occasion to learn how it is that we can come together in a common form of worship. We have had quite a few discussions around specifically Quaker practices and beliefs, but we don't talk much about the ones that diverge -- from each other, and from traditional Quakerism. Here are some examples of the questions that might come up.

- \* Do you believe in God?
- \* Do you have connections to some other faith -- Buddhism, Wicca, etc.? How does this affect your spiritual life?
- \* Have you experienced radical changes in what you believe?
- \* Are you much like your childhood self, religiously, or very different, or something in between?

This is an opportunity for all – new attenders through "weighty Quakes" – to learn about each other's spiritual beliefs.



**Quaker Response on Call to Action #48**

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,**

*Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

**March 2016**

48. We call upon the church parties to the Settlement Agreement, and all other faith groups and interfaith social justice groups in Canada who have not already done so, to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation. This would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:

*i. Ensuring that their institutions, policies, programs and practices comply with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

*ii. Respecting Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practise, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies, consistent with Article 12:1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

*iii. Engaging in ongoing public dialogue and actions to support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

*iv. Issuing a statement no later than March 31, 2016, from all religious denominations and faith groups, as to how they will implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

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Reconciliation, as Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild stated, asks all involved to “open your mind and be willing to learn, and to link arms with Indigenous Peoples as we work together to heal and secure a better future.” Canadian Yearly Meeting (the national body) of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has endorsed, celebrated and committed to implement the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (see [Minutes here](#)).

The *Declaration* affirms Indigenous Peoples' human rights including the right to self-determination and rights to their traditional lands, territories and resources, as well as protection from discrimination and genocide. It also recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to have meaningful control over their own lives including culture, religion, language, education and health. The *Declaration* instructs governments to obtain free, prior and informed consent when making decisions affecting Indigenous peoples.

Canadian Quakers have issued a statement formally repudiating the **Doctrine of Discovery** (see [Minutes here](#)).

Canadian Quakers have formally responded to the work of the TRC, and have committed to a progress report in one year's time (see [Minutes here](#)).

Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC), the peace and justice body of Quakers in Canada, has ongoing work that responds to *Call to Action #48* in a multitude of ways, internationally, nationally, and locally, both within and beyond the Quaker community. For the past two decades, CFSC has participated in the development, adoption and implementation of the *UN Declaration*. Ongoing implementation of the *UN Declaration* takes many forms and ongoing commitments.

- The mandate of CFSC's Indigenous Rights work includes: focus on Indigenous Peoples' human rights including: **self-determination and land rights**; **spirituality**: acknowledging the right of Peoples to worship in the way of their own cultures and faith traditions; **implementation** of Indigenous rights as affirmed in the *UN Declaration*, and as protected under the Canadian Constitution.
- Quakers are encouraged to engage their local Meetings (Quaker term for congregation) in actions towards **reconciliation**, a major part of which is engaging with the *UN Declaration*. See this booklet for more information, [Truth and Reconciliation: A Guide for Canadian Quakers](#)
  - For example, local Quakers have organized discussion groups in partnership with local Indigenous peoples, are attending educational events such as workshops and film screenings, and are displaying the *UN Declaration* in poster or booklet form in their Meeting Houses (places of worship).
- CFSC, in collaboration with the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, prints, distributes, and advertises pocket-sized booklets of the *UN Declaration* as **educational tools**. To date over 140,000 copies have been distributed. We compile many educational resources on the *UN Declaration* on our website: <http://quakerservice.ca/our-work/indigenous-peoples-rights/un-declaration/>. For over 15 years CFSC has been a core member of this Coalition, a national group including Indigenous Peoples' and human rights organizations.
- CFSC volunteers and staff contribute to educational materials and policy briefs. These serve not only to inform Canadian Quakers, but also other faith and social action groups we work with. This year we are producing briefs on Indigenous Peoples' **right to free, prior and informed consent**, the legacy of **intergenerational trauma**, and the need to investigate **genocide** committed against Indigenous Peoples.
- As Quakers work individually towards reconciliation in their communities, CFSC acts as a resource centre and contact point. This includes: sharing information among worship groups across Canada, visiting Meetings for presentations, and pointing Friends to resources that might answer some of the challenging questions that the work of reconciliation poses.

- Staff work collaboratively in a variety of areas with Indigenous partners to support **implementation of the *UN Declaration***:
  - **Internationally:**  
CFSC carries the work on Indigenous Peoples' human rights for Quakers worldwide at the United Nations and other international bodies. Presently, this work includes attending meetings alongside Indigenous partners and others where we prepare joint statements, coordinate and facilitate dialogue, and raise awareness of Indigenous Peoples' human rights.
  - **Nationally:**  
CFSC is engaging with the federal government to assist in their plan to implement the *Declaration* nationally. Meetings with policy makers are taking place, and considerable educational efforts are being taken to ensure that implementation is full and meaningful.
- CFSC staff coordinated and participated in two events at the **closing ceremonies of the TRC** in June 2015, including an educational panel on the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which can be watched [here](#). A panel also presented on the Doctrine of Discovery, which can be watched [here](#). CFSC also helped to build linkages between the national and international implications of the TRC through work in coordination with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the UN Secretary-General (see final [statement](#) here).
- CFSC's Indigenous Rights staff partnered with representatives of Indigenous organizations to co-edit the book *Realizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Triumph, Hope, and Action* and have it published. CFSC intervened at the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark case *Tshilqot'in Nation* where we argued that international human rights law, including the *UN Declaration*, must be used when cases involving Indigenous Peoples rights are before the Court.
- CFSC continues to co-host and participate in public events advancing human rights education, with a particular focus on implementation of the *UN Declaration*. Such events are acts of implementation and take place in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities as well as academic settings.
- Representatives of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) are also engaging with other faith bodies in Canada in response to the TRC's *Calls to Action*. As Friends, we have a deep and longstanding commitment to working in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. As a historic peace church, we place a high priority on this work. To be faithful to our spiritual commitment to a world of peace, we must work for justice, equality, non-discrimination and human rights.

For more information please contact [jennifer@quakerservice.ca](mailto:jennifer@quakerservice.ca)

-Submitted by Jennifer Preston

Thank you very much for your message on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers) setting out how those religious societies have adopted and are committed to implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in their own work of reconciliation.

I extend to you my warmest congratulations and support for your endeavors and wish you every success in carrying out your commitment. I particularly like the annual review element to which each society has committed.

I will ask the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to ensure that your correspondence and attachments are placed in the Centre's archival collection as an indication of what can be done to further reconciliation in Canada and throughout the world.

Thank you.

Justice Murray Sinclair  
Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2009-2015  
Currently Jurist-in-Residence  
U of MB Faculty of Law

-Submitted by Dick Preston