

Hamilton Friends January 2019 Newsletter



Advices and Queries

29. Approach old age with courage and hope. As far as possible, make arrangements for your care in good time, so that an undue burden does not fall on others. Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love

Coffee List

- 13 Jan. Beverly Shepard
- 20 Jan. Darlene James, but potluck
lunch as well
- 27 Jan. Christina Edwards
- 3 Feb. Woodsides



Future Wonderful and Exciting Potlucks!

Your Ministry and Counsel meeting, consisting of HMM Clerks Beverly Shepard and Shirla Schellenberg, Dick Preston, Darlene James, and Carol Leigh Wehking, has planned gatherings for February and March, as well as the presentation and discussion on Truth and Reconciliation on January 20th, with Dick Preston. In February -- perhaps appropriately for the month that includes Valentine's Day? -- we'll have a very special event on the second Sunday, February 10th, following a potluck lunch: **Poetry Patchwork!** Not quite a poetry slam, it will still be a spoken-word sharing of poems we'd especially like others to hear. If you want to, bring a poem you're fond of, and read or recite it to the gathering. It can be serious or funny; you can read it with dramatic flair or just simply; it can be your own work or someone else's; you can even get another Friend to read it for you if you prefer. It's not a competition, just a fun way to get to know one another a little better. And you don't have to bring a poem! Just adding to the audience is fine. Kids are very welcome!

In late March (after March break is over) we'll have a sharing time on Being Mortal. Details on this will be in the next newsletter, but meanwhile, please let a member of M&C (listed above) know whether you would be interested in coming on a Saturday afternoon. Potluck and program following worship make for a long day, but on the other hand, having these events on Sundays means we're not trekking to the Meeting House on another day. M&C thought we ought to see whether there's interest in a different time for potlucks and discussions or presentations, or possibly just the program without a potluck. Because so many of us live at some distance we thought we wouldn't do an evening, which means this would be a Saturday. So, again, please give us some feedback as to whether you'd like a Saturday event, and if you would, whether you'd like a potluck lunch included. The March event will be scheduled for Saturday the 23rd or Sunday the 24th, depending on the feedback.

Calendar



January 2019						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

february 2019						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

13 January: following worship, a meeting of the Refugee Support Committee and anyone else interested in helping

20 January: Truth and Reconciliation and Friends -- a presentation by Dick Preston after a potluck lunch starting at 12:30 p.m. What are we doing to forward reconciliation with our Native neighbours? What can and should we do? Soup will be provided; bring other simple foods to share.

3 February: Meeting for Worship for Business

10 February: Poetry Patchwork -- potluck lunch and sharing of favourite poems

23 or 24 March: Being Mortal -- mortality, eternity, and sharing the journey, with or without a potluck

New Opportunities for the New Year!

We at HMM are an "unprogrammed" Quaker Meeting. This means, in part, that all the areas of service or jobs at HMM are done by us! The Nominating Committee is tasked with identifying and nominating Friends and Attenders for the various roles that make us together a welcoming and effective witness to the Light.

The Nominating Committee would like to thank those who have completed their term of service for their dedicated contribution to the life of HMM. Some may choose to commit to a further term or take on a fresh opportunity of service, or take a fallow year. If you are new to HMM being on a committee is a great way to get to know people and feel more a part of the HMM spiritual family.

Do speak to Christina Edwards, Katherine Smith or Roberta McGregor about general information regarding the various committees. If you would like to be considered for a specific role please contact Christina Edwards 519-740-8889
cneedwards64@gmail.com

The Cambridge Worship Group will reconvene on **Friday February 22 at 2 pm**. Our venue is 64 Wellington Street, Cambridge. All welcome!



Screenshot from Defense for Children International-Palestine's short documentary *Detaining Dreams*, which features interviews with Palestinian children about their experiences in military detention. <https://youtu.be/7rw69pLILqw>

No Way to Treat a Child

By Matthew Legge

I've learned a great deal from Friends about discussing difficult issues and searching together for unity in the Spirit. Without having to agree, we can find ways to hold a broader perspective and come to experience a deeper truth. Every area that CFSC works on is controversial, and many will passionately disagree with our views on Indigenous Peoples' human rights, criminal justice, or synthetic biology. CFSC's views are ever evolving, and we must continue to listen to those with whom we disagree.

There can be little doubt that no issue we work on is more polarizing and difficult to discuss than is our concern for a just peace in Israel/Palestine. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement has been controversial¹ and beliefs about the causes of conflict in Israel/Palestine diverge widely. But there's one point nearly any human being can agree on – torturing children is never acceptable. (If we are not in agreement on this, I would ask you to please get in touch with me. I would be very interested to sit with and try to understand your views.)

Psychologists have explored a process we've all heard of, rationalization, and what they've discovered is important for all of us. A key finding is that we engage in actions contrary to our values because of *ambiguity*. If asked, few of us will say it's fine to treat children in degrading ways. In fact we'll likely say just the opposite – such behaviour is repugnant and we oppose it unequivocally. However when the situation actually arises, we may use ambiguity to comfort ourselves. We say, "I'm opposed to mistreatment of children but..." Perhaps the "but" goes: "this isn't mistreatment," or: "this is justified for X reasons."

It's a deeply troubling fact that we do this, and all of us are prone to it, regardless of our political views. In order to avoid rationalization, we must be clear where a line is, and when it's crossed. In the occupied Palestinian territories, such a line is crossed regularly and with impunity.

Once, as I was walking on my way to Swarthmore, a Quaker study centre in England, I realized that two children were throwing stones at me. This was frightening. It was dark out and I could barely see the children, crouched in the shadows under a bridge. What if they took out one of my eyes? I sped up and, luckily, was not hit. That experience leads me to understand that having stones thrown at you can get your adrenaline pumping. I'm no supporter of stone throwing as a troubled expression of unmet needs.

Typically, stone throwing is the reason Israeli soldiers give when arresting Palestinian children. In the occupied territories, an arrest warrant does not have to be issued by a judge. This means that children are regularly arrested on vague suspicion. The military often waits until everyone is asleep and then goes to a family's home to arrest the child in the most frightening and unpleasant way possible. Children are frequently blindfolded and have their hands tied. At this point three out of every four children endures some form of

physical violence.² The US Department of State notes documentation that this treatment includes “beatings, long-term handcuffing, threats, intimidation, and solitary confinement.”³ Children are regularly asked, under duress, to confess to crimes and to implicate friends and family in crimes they may or may not have committed. They then sign confessions written in Hebrew, a language most do not understand.⁴ While there is a trial, almost all children tried are found guilty. Military law is written by the military, and Palestinians have no mechanism to challenge it, since no elected official approves it. This means such laws can be remarkably harsh, and it is incredibly challenging to prove one’s innocence in military court.

This is obvious cruelty. The line is being crossed, and there is no ambiguity about it. If Israel, with all of its military power, wished to treat Palestinian children in a more humane fashion, it would be easy enough to do.

The harms to Palestinian children are clear (these extend to families and communities as well, creating long-term negative impacts), but what about the effects on Israeli soldiers and police officers? I believe that this practice does not increase their safety, nor that of Israel. I don’t think it deters Palestinian children from throwing stones, and I think that, even if it did, there are better ways of addressing the pain at the roots of stone throwing. I’m also very concerned that learning to rationalize the ill-treatment of children has untold negative impacts. Perhaps soldiers will see it as less problematic to abuse their own children or partners. They may also struggle with a sense of shame or a traumatic moral injury.

At this point we might feel upset about this destructive situation but wonder why CFSC is singling out Israel. Surely many countries treat children this way. It turns out that no, they don’t. Human rights lawyer Jonathan Kuttab was asked this question when he spoke to the new Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group recently, and he confirmed that Israel is in fact the only country in the world that regularly uses military law to prosecute children. Jonathan pointed out that unfortunately, in this way, Israel is singling itself out.

Canada has an opportunity to press its ally Israel to make positive changes. We don’t have to agree about the future of the Middle East, or who’s to blame for what, to know that traumatizing children is not the way to build peace.

We encourage you to share this article to raise awareness, and to consider meeting with your Member of Parliament to express your support for the No Way to Treat a Child campaign, a non-partisan effort to end this deplorable situation.

Matthew Legge is CFSC's Peace Program Coordinator. CFSC is among the founding endorsers of the No Way to Treat a Child campaign in Canada. More information and resources about the campaign are available via: <http://quakerservice.ca/NoWayToTreatAChild>

1. For an analysis of this issue please see our paper Canadian Friends and BDS <http://quakerservice.ca/BDSPaper> ↵
2. Defense for Children International-Palestine. "No Way to Treat a Child: Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system." 2016, <http://www.dci-palestine.org/no-way-to-treat-a-child-palestinian-children-in-the-israeli-military-detention-system> ↵
3. US Department of State. "2013 Human Rights Reports: Israel and The Occupied Territories." February 26, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/nea/220358.htm> ↵
4. UNICEF. "Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations." 2013, p.15, https://www.unicef.org/oPt/UNICEF_oPt_Children_in_Israeli_Military_Detention_Observations_and_Recommendations_-_6_March_2013.pdf ↵

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– Winter 2018 / peace

-Submitted by Paul Dekar