

# Hamilton Quaker Newsletter

June 2021



***When you are preoccupied and distracted in meeting let wayward and disturbing thoughts give way quietly to your awareness of God's presence among us and in the world. Receive the vocal ministry of others in a tender and creative spirit. Reach for the meaning deep within it, recognizing that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be so for others. Remember that we all share responsibility for the meeting for worship whether our ministry is in silence or through the spoken word.***

*Advices and Queries #12*

# Upcoming Events and Announcements

Meeting for Worship will enter silence at 10:30 a.m. The Clerks will try to open the Zoom space by 10:20 to allow people a time to chat and settle in before worship begins. Weather permitting, we are resuming outdoor, in-person worship at the Meeting House. You are urged to pre-register with Wilf Ruland ([deerspring1@gmail.com](mailto:deerspring1@gmail.com)) by 9:30 on Sunday morning.

June 23 there will be a meeting of the Peace and Social Action Committee on Zoom at 7 p.m. If you would like to attend, please contact Wilf Ruland ([deerspring1@gmail.com](mailto:deerspring1@gmail.com)).

The Cambridge Worship Group (CWG) will be meeting separately in our own homes at 2 pm on Friday, June 25th. At 3 pm we will join together via Zoom for After Word and fellowship. If you would like to participate please let Carol Leigh know ([clwehking@gmail.com](mailto:clwehking@gmail.com)) so that she can send you the Zoom link. We will also be meeting on Friday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> and on Friday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, also at 2 pm, with Zoom fellowship at 3 pm.

June 27 will see a Zoom-based meeting of the Reading Club. Please email Shirla ([shirla766@gmail.com](mailto:shirla766@gmail.com)) if you would like to join this group. This meeting will focus on pages 93 to the end of the chapter of Richard Wagamese's book, ***One Drum***. The meeting will convene at 3 p.m. A Zoom link will be provided to all those who have expressed interest. Meetings for the book club in July and August have not yet been finalized. If the club decides to meet over the summer, Shirla will notify participants.

September 12 will be our next Meeting for Worship for Business. The meeting will be held at 12:30 p.m. in our Zoom Meeting space, unless the Meeting House Re-opening Committee advises otherwise. Email will be sent inviting members and attenders to this meeting.



# Truth and Reconciliation – Importance of Examining Genocide

by Jennifer Preston and Paul Joffe

Reconciliation is an ongoing process – not a point in time. In order to achieve genuine reconciliation, the full truth must be determined. As part of CFSC’s commitment to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), we are exploring with partner organizations the significance of genocide in the Indigenous context. An increasing number of researchers and commentators have concluded that genocide was committed against Indigenous Peoples in Canada, including through the Indian Residential Schools.<sup>1</sup>

Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Chair, and Stuart Murray, outgoing president of the Canadian Human Rights Museum, have highlighted the need to include genocide in the discourse on colonization: “We need to take seriously the perspective that the entire process of colonization in Canada would fall within the definition of genocide as contained in the UN [Genocide] Convention. Confronting honestly and deeply such realities of colonialism in Canada is one of our most important human rights tasks.”<sup>2</sup>

The 1948 UN *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* [Genocide Convention] was the first United Nations treaty devoted to human rights. According to the *Genocide Convention*, acts of genocide and complicity in genocide are criminal offences. Article 2 of the *Genocide Convention* provides:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

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<sup>1</sup> For examples, see Andrew Woolford, Jeff Benvenuto and Alexander Laban Hinton (eds.), *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014); and Hayden King and Erica Violet Lee, “The truth is there. But Reconciliation is deeply complicated”, *Globe and Mail* (16 December 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Murray Sinclair and Stuart Murray, “Canada Must Confront the Truth”, *Winnipeg Free Press* (1 November 2014) A13.

- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

It is important to note that only one of the above five acts necessarily involves “killing”. When we examine the colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, we can see how genocide applies to the Indian residential school system and also the destruction of Indigenous economic, social, political, and spiritual institutions. Viewed in isolation, certain actions might not be called genocide. The combined and cumulative effect, however, creates a context for the critical concern of genocide.

In order to prove genocide, one must demonstrate that there was a specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, Indigenous peoples as such. Negligence or recklessness is not sufficient.

Specific intent to destroy Indigenous peoples as distinct peoples was expressed by Canada’s first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, who informed Parliament that a national goal was “to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion...”<sup>3</sup>

An Indian Affairs Department official described the purpose of residential schools: “Every effort should be directed against anything calculated to keep fresh in the memories of children habits and associations which it is one of the main objects ... to obliterate.”

Specific intent is also found in the 1920 speech by Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy minister of Indian Affairs: “I want to get rid of the Indian problem. ... Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic...”<sup>4</sup>

In its Summary Report of the Final Recommendations, the TRC concluded that Canada had committed “cultural genocide”: “For over a century, the central

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3 Quoted in John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System – 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Winnipeg Press, 1999) at 6.

4 James R. Miller, *Legal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) at 35.

goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as 'cultural genocide.'"<sup>5</sup>

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, also concluded:

The most glaring blemish on the Canadian historic record relates to our treatment of the First Nations that lived here at the time of colonization. ... Early laws forbade treaty Indians from leaving allocated reservations. Starvation and disease were rampant. Indians were denied the right to vote. Religious and social traditions, like the Potlach and the Sun Dance, were outlawed. Children were taken from their parents and sent away to residential schools, where they were forbidden to speak their native languages, forced to wear white-man's clothing, forced to observe Christian religious practices, and not infrequently subjected to sexual abuse.... Indianness" was not to be tolerated; rather it must be eliminated. In the buzz-word of the day, *assimilation*; in the language of the 21st century, *cultural genocide*.<sup>6</sup>

In the final report, the TRC raised further concerns relating to genocide: "It is difficult to understand why the forced assimilation of children through removal from their families and communities — to be placed with people of another race for the purpose of destroying the race and culture from which the children come — is not a civil wrong even though it can be deemed an act of genocide under Article 2(e) of the *United Nations Convention on Genocide*."<sup>7</sup>

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5 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, May 31, 2015 at 1.

6 Rt. Hon. Beverley McLachlin, P.C., Chief Justice of Canada. "Reconciling Unity and Diversity in the Modern Era: Tolerance and Intolerance". Lecture, Aga Khan Museum. Toronto, Ontario: May 28, 2015. At 6.

7 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: Reconciliation*, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, (Montreal / Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015). Volume 6 at 48.

In Canada, genocide must be assured an effective legal remedy. Such an effective remedy should include reparation.

Recognizing the role of genocide and cultural genocide in the historical and contemporary context is part of the ongoing process of seeking justice and reconciliation. Intergenerational trauma continues to be transmitted to successive generations with devastating consequences. Greater understandings of past and ongoing genocidal actions could help clarify what remedial measures are necessary.

Such understandings could crystallize the urgency of fundamental reforms. Non-Indigenous governments have a responsibility to engage with Indigenous peoples in any future decolonization process. A decolonization process would likely address key unresolved issues repeatedly raised by Indigenous Peoples. These include affirmation of Indigenous sovereignty, strengthening of Indigenous governments and other institutions, and revitalization of Indigenous cultures, languages and legal traditions.

The factual bases for demonstrating genocide still require significant research and reflection. As we continue our journey towards reconciliation, we must be willing to honestly engage with the hard truths in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples. This is both a responsibility and opportunity. It is up to all of us to open our hearts and minds to this crucial and compelling process.

*Jennifer Preston is CFSC's Indigenous Rights program coordinator. Paul Joffe is a lawyer who specializes in Indigenous Peoples' domestic and international human rights. This article is reprinted by permission.*



# Daisies

*by Beverly Shepard*

Daisies lift my heart.  
Strewn in profusion over the fields,  
Daylight mimicry of the starry heavens,  
They proclaim their strength,  
Their tolerance,  
Their love of many places.  
Daisies are tough  
And commonplace.  
No perfume adorns their purity.  
But look!  
Oh, look – choose one bloom  
Or make a single bouquet:  
No rose or lily could be more beautiful.  
They are like grace:  
Without my tending they arrive  
To bless my life  
And when they have faded  
Still I know  
That they will come again,  
And I am always blessed.



## PSAC Discussions

At our May meeting, after a land discussion and expression of gratitude to Metta Spencer, editor of *Peace Magazine* for having provided a PDF file and audio of a discussion by Douglas Roche and others, "After the INF Treaty?" *Peace Magazine* 35/2 (April-June 2019) 5-15, we discussed concern about the threat that nuclear weapons constitute. Nine nations have them, and continue to upgrade them: Britain, China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States. Some include Japan and Germany as virtual nuclear countries since they have both the technical knowledge and domestic stocks of separated plutonium that would enable either to fabricate a weapon fairly quickly. Others -- Argentina, Brazil, Iraq, Libya, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Iran -- have had fledging nuclear weapons programs that were abandoned due to pressure, a unilateral decision, rapprochement with a former adversary, or simply practical reasons not to proceed.

The phrase "balance of terror" best characterizes our post-Hiroshima era. It is NOT the case that nuclear weapons have NOT been used. That is, the nuclear-possessing states have threatened and even considered their use during the Korean War, at Dienbienphu (1954), the Berlin crisis (1961), Cuban Missile crisis (1962), during protracted Arab-Israel conflict, and almost certainly at other times. At least two American presidents have cautioned: Dwight Eisenhower at the end of his 2<sup>nd</sup> term against the military industrial complex; and John Kennedy on June 10, 1963, at American University. In his "Peace Speech," he observed, "History teaches us that enmities between nations, as between individuals, do not last forever. However fixed our likes and dislikes may seem, the tide of time and events will often bring surprising changes in the relations between nations and neighbors." He announced his intent to stop atmospheric testing, a decision some believe may have led to his death. While concerned about this issue, PSAC agreed that it will not become a priority focus for future discussion.

# The Road Ahead

*by Thomas Merton*

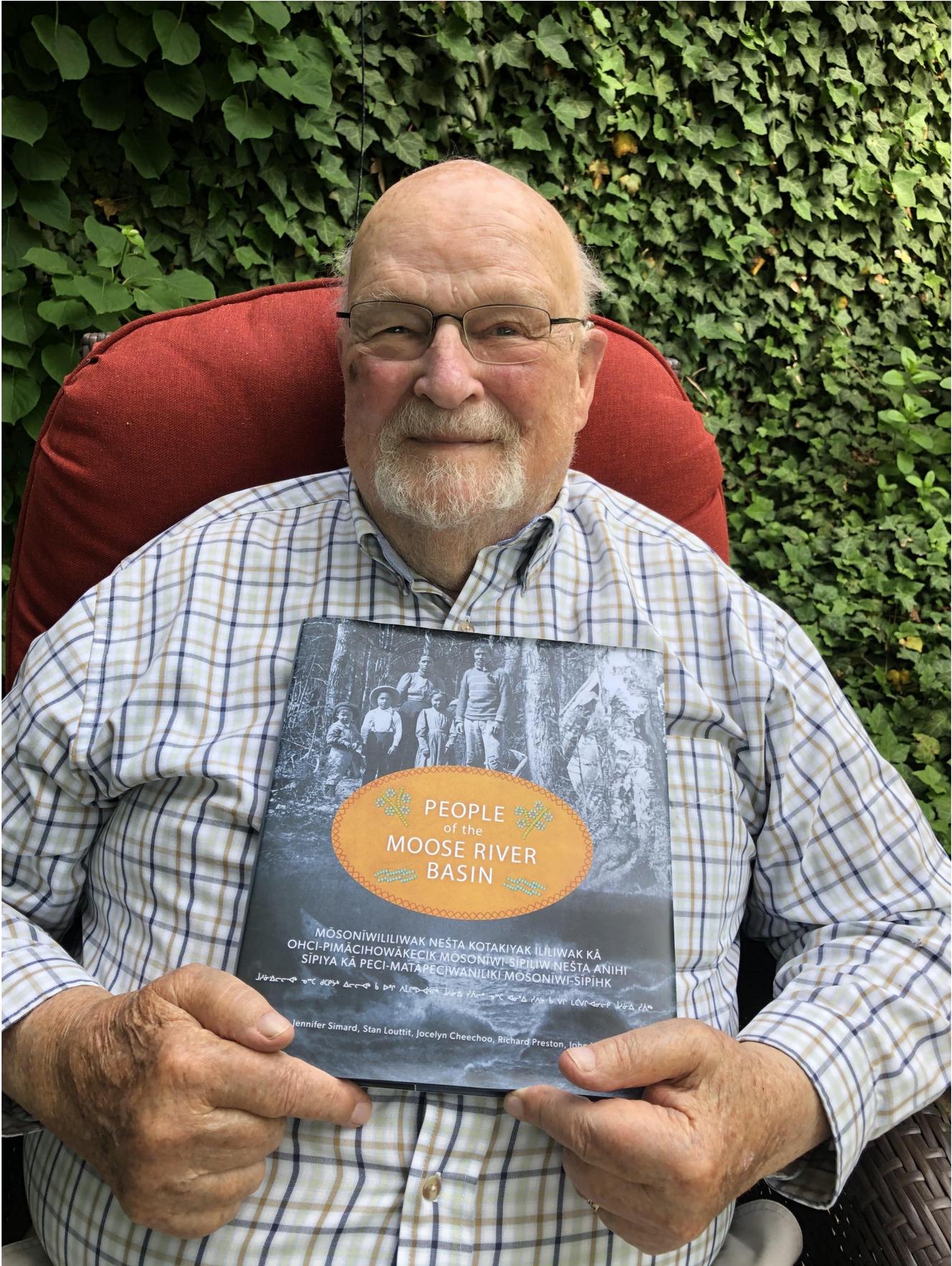
My Lord God,  
I have no idea where I am going,  
I do not see the road ahead of me.  
I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
nor do I really know myself,  
and the fact that I think I am following your will  
does not mean that I am actually doing so.  
But I believe that the desire to please you  
does in fact please you.  
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.  
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,  
  
though I may know nothing about it.  
Therefore will I trust you always though  
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

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PEOPLE  
of the  
MOOSE RIVER  
BASIN

MOSONIWILIWAK NEŠTA KOTAKIYAK ILILIWAK KĀ  
OHCI-PIMĀCIHOWAKECIK MOSONIWI-SIPIIWI NEŠTA ANIHI  
SIPIYA KĀ PEĆI-MATAPEGIWANILIKI-MOSONIWI-SIPIHK

Jennifer Simard, Stan Louttit, Jocelyn Cheechoo, Richard Preston, John

# About this Newsletter / Submission Guidelines

This Newsletter is a monthly publication of news and announcements relevant to Hamilton Quakers.

It is also a venue for members and attenders to share creative works or articles they have written on subjects that may be of interest to our Quaker community. As a general guideline we are looking for submissions that are inspirational and related to Quaker concerns, as well as announcements and news. Members and Attenders are encouraged to submit works for the newsletter.

Requests for newsletter items are announced after Meeting for Worship and/or via email during the week before Meeting for Worship for Business. Submission of materials implies permission to publish. Copyright for original material resides with the author.

If the person submitting the article is unknown to the editor or if there are questions as to whether the article will be appropriate for the Quaker newsletter, the editor will consult with the clerk(s) who will together discern what will be included. Written permission to publish must be obtained from the copyright holder if a submission is not the original work of the submitter, unless the works are in the public domain, or are covered under the creative commons license.

Hamilton Meeting reserves the right to edit submissions for length or content in consultation with the authors. When opinion pieces are included a line will be added indicating "Submissions reflect the opinions of their authors, and not necessarily of Hamilton Monthly Meeting".

Submissions should be directed to the current editor, Síân Reid, [daywitch@gmail.com](mailto:daywitch@gmail.com).