



Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

December, 2015

Quakers & Synthetic Biology

We seek nonviolent ways of meeting the needs of our species without compromising the viability of other species with whom we share this Earth.
- Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (2011 minute on sustainability)

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is known for its active work on nonviolence and what is called "positive" peace - i.e. peace grounded in just conditions, not merely the absence of war. In presenting The Religious Society of Friends with the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, Norwegian leader Gunnar Jahn said,

"The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to translate into action what lies deep in the hearts of many: compassion for others and the desire to help them - that rich experience of the sympathy between all men, regardless of nationality or race, which is the ground and the basis, must form the basis for lasting peace."

But what does this have to do with synthetic biology?

In 2013, ten Quaker Meetings from across Canada formed study groups and spent months learning about and discussing synthetic biology. Here are some of the key ideas they raised:

- "Science and mind are expressions of spirit. They could be used to create a more equitable world."
- "We must 'harness the integrity of creation, and the interdependence of humans and other beings'."
- "If as a culture, you had a back notice of the sacredness of humanity - not just the human community - you would automatically put safeguards in place."
- "The issue is of very great importance, its implications are almost overwhelmingly vast and, inadequate as we may feel, we must grapple with it and respond."

Spiderweb jackets and living shoes?

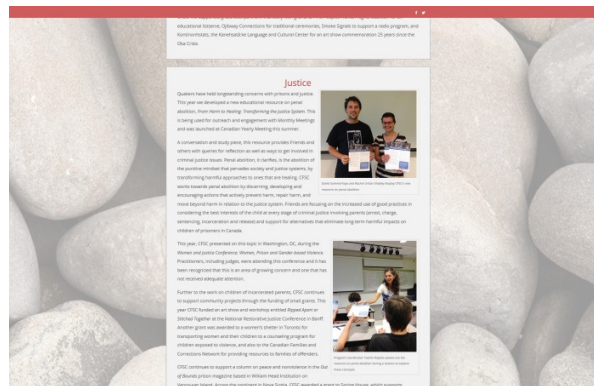
CFSC has released an update full of synthetic biology headlines including "spiderweb" jackets, living shoes, and edits to nonviable human embryos. What is all this? By combining biology, computer science, and engineering, synthetic biology techniques are increasingly used to create novel life forms.

Grounded in our values of peace, integrity, equality, simplicity, and respect for all creation, Quakers are one of the few faith communities actively following developments in this field.

We very much welcome your comments and suggestions. Please read and share the update:

<http://quakerservice.ca/SBUpdate2015-2>

Also see the handout *Quakers and synthetic biology* which explains briefly why these issues are of concern to Friends: <http://quakerservice.ca/QuakersSB>



CFSC launches new Annual Accountability Report

If you are on our physical mail list you may be used to receiving a four page *Annual Report and Appeal* from us around this time of year. This year we're trying something new. Those on our mailing list will have received a shorter letter from us which goes into more depth about just one of our projects. We've also

made an *Annual Accountability Report*, but this year it is online (feel free to contact us to ask for a paper copy if you'd prefer one!)

The Report is full of brief snapshots of what happened this year - program work, individual grants, work representing Friends in coalitions - all done thanks to the generosity of individual donors. We invite you to have a look and please share this *2014-2015 Annual Accountability Report*: <http://report.quakerservice.ca>

We only ask once a year and now is the time. Please make a donation today to support justice and peace. <http://www.quakerservice.ca/support>

CFSC joins in calling on Canada to implement FPIC

Over the last decade, the federal government has repeatedly approved large-scale resource development projects - like the Northern Gateway Pipeline and the Site C dam in British Columbia - over the objections of Indigenous Peoples. Such actions run counter to the directions set by the Supreme Court of Canada and violate Canada's human rights obligations.

CFSC has joined 16 other Indigenous Peoples' human rights, faith, and environmental organizations in writing to Canada's new Prime Minister calling for Canada to recognize and implement free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) standards. The letter provides some detail about how FPIC is being used internationally and how Canada is lagging behind. FPIC derives from the right of self-determination, a right of all peoples, including Indigenous Peoples, under international law. <http://quakerservice.ca/FPICLetter>



Get updates from our *Youth Justice Knowledge Hub*

Innovative, quality research and good practices on issues related to criminal justice and youth is out there. However most people working in the field or concerned about the issues are unaware of it.

So we have created an electronic clearing house of information, the publicly accessible *Youth Justice Knowledge Hub*. To keep people in the loop when new information is added, we've also created an email list through which we'll send messages once every month or two. To sign up to receive these emails visit <http://quakerservice.ca/YouthJustice>. To see the first email that went out to the *Youth Justice Knowledge Hub* list visit <http://bit.ly/1XUQtay>

CFSC is hiring!

CFSC is hiring a 2 days per week Office Assistant to be based in our office in Toronto. This is an entry level position with a competitive salary commensurate with education, skills, and experience. Deadline to apply is December 7th. Please help to spread the word! <http://quakerservice.ca/OfficeAssistant>



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

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Practical assistance, policy dialogue, research, and education - CFSC works for a world where peace and justice prevail.

Read past issues & encourage others to subscribe at <http://www.quakerservice.ca/enews>