



QUAKERS
Canadian Friends
Service Committee

2021 Synthetic Biology Update



COVID-19, novel drugs, and gene therapies: synthetic biology update 2021

Combining life sciences, computer science, and engineering, a field sometimes called “synthetic biology” is developing rapidly. It uses a suite of powerful techniques with names like “CRISPR.” As with other new technologies, there’s a lot of hype, many promises, and many perils. Governments have failed to keep pace. The public doesn’t provide input into the far-reaching decisions companies make.

Once a year we provide simple informational updates about some of the applications of synthetic biology that are making headlines. These updates are aimed at a general audience with no science background. This year's update covers:

- The many ways that synthetic biology is being used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Research on editing entire populations of animals and insects in the wild,
- Bioweapons,
- Gene editing humans, and human-animal chimeras, and much more.

Read the [2021 synthetic biology update](#) (PDF).



Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Bill C-15

The [Faith in the Declaration](#) coalition, of which CFSC is an active member, is excited to be hosting the three commissioners of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for a learning event on May 4th at 7pm Eastern. The three will discuss the TRC, the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and Bill C-15. [Find out more and register.](#)

CFSC also recently joined with our partners in the [Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) on a submission to the House of Commons committee studying Bill C-15. The submission considers the legal implications of C-15 and the importance of moving this legislation forward. You can find the full submission and links to nine other documents we've worked on to explain C-15 at: <https://quakerservice.ca/resources/open-letters-public-statements/#Indigenous>

Don't forget that, if so led, you can use this tool developed by the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue to write to your MP in support of C-15: <https://p2a.co/4oHgQa7>



Exciting opportunities to engage with Friends

Friends aged 18-35ish are invited to join a one-day **Young Adult Friends Retreat** being held on Saturday, May 8. It promises to be a relaxed event of attending to and nourishing senses, bodies, spirituality, and relationships. For the schedule and Zoom information, please contact Lilia at liliaofthevalley@protonmail.com by May 7 at the latest.

[Applications](#) are now open for three programme assistant positions at the **Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva** from September 2021 to August 2022 in: Human Rights & Refugees (HRR); Peace & Disarmament (PD); and Climate Change & Sustainability (CCS). These are perfect for young professionals with an interest in international affairs to learn about and

contribute to Quaker work at the United Nations. The closing date for applications is May 10. QUNO Geneva is also looking for a director. Applications are due by June 7.

Friends World Committee for Consultation, the global body of Friends, is accepting applications for their General Secretary. The applicant must be a member of the Religious Society of Friends who speaks English proficiently and is willing to live and work in London, England. Application deadline is June 4.



Virtual global conference on unravelling the war machine

CFSC is pleased to be one of many sponsors of the No War 2021 virtual conference happening from June 4-6. With a range of speakers from many parts of the world, this conference promises to offer many educational presentations, interactive discussion groups, and virtual networking opportunities. For tickets visit: <https://hopin.com/events/nowar2021-virtual-global-conference>