

DRAFT – QUERIES for Canadian Friends on Reconciliation

May 4, 2020

Preamble

As Friends engage in the work of upholding Indigenous rights, we actively pursue the decolonization of Canadian society by building partnerships and practices of reconciliation under the guidance of and through respectful relationship with Indigenous people(s) in our local communities and across this land.

The foundation of our actions is our Spiritual practices. We gratefully acknowledge that our principles, philosophies and actions are grounded in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and Principles of Reconciliation, and Quaker testimonies of 'peace', and 'unity and diversity' among others. We honour the good work that Canadian Yearly Meeting¹ and the Canadian Friends Service Committee² are undertaking on the path of Indigenous Rights, Decolonization and Reconciliation on national and international levels and the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Friends in guiding us to truth and love as we continue on this journey. In light of the legacies (and continuity) of colonization, we hope this journey of listening, critical but loving self- and communal-reflection, relationship-building, learning and healing will continue for generations to come. In this spirit, and building on the work CFSC has begun in this direction, we offer a few queries for Friends in their discernment and discussions. Overall, they ask:

How can we follow leadings of the Spirit, both individually and in our Meetings, to actively work towards the decolonization of Canada, recognition, promotion, and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?

These queries and reflections are an invitation to challenge and inspire Friends individually and corporately as a faith body. In the queries, "we" may refer to your local Meeting or Canadian Yearly Meeting as a whole.

Queries

1. How am I learning about and building respectful relationships with Indigenous people in the communities in which I live, work and/or worship? How am I building relationships of truth and understanding with non-Indigenous people in the communities in which I live, work and/or worship?
2. How can we increase our awareness of the local history of colonization and reconciliation efforts in our Faith community?

3. What protocols or practices do we honour in our Monthly Meeting and collective gatherings to recognize Indigenous lands, waters, lifeways, and rights? How do we ensure these do not become tokenistic or rote over time?
4. In what ways can I stand in solidarity with the current concerns and rights of Indigenous Peoples? What protocols and/or permissions may I need to seek in this process?
5. How do I relate to concepts of 'home' and 'belonging' in the context of settler colonialism?
6. Do my actions support Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty?
7. Am I doing my own work in educating myself about reconciliation and decolonization? Am I aware of my own areas of ignorance, bias and discomfort? Reconciliation is work that Settlers must do, being careful not to put the burden of this work onto Indigenous peoples.
8. How are we doing our own work to decolonize and honour the rights of Indigenous Peoples as a Faith community? How are we actively challenging the direct personal, structural and cultural violence of settler colonialism where we encounter it? What does reconciliation require of us as Friends?