



THE QUEBEC GATHERING

A Look Back into History and a Stepping-stone to the Future

Towards a Community of Communities: From Solitudes to Partnership

We look back at the Quebec City gathering with gratitude for all the people who helped make it happen: for the planning and thought that went into it, for the local initiatives in teams across the country, for the people who put so much time and energy into the logistics of travel, meals, and fundraising, and for the warm-hearted welcome from the Quebec City team.

The symbolic elements of water and stones as well as the Aboriginal Ceremonies on the Plains of Abraham took us back many centuries to honour those who were here before the Europeans. These helped to create an atmosphere which resulted in steps of reconciliation and renewed commitment and the experiencing of healing in ourselves and between delegates.

The thoughtful, respectful presentation of our national history through representations of the four Solitudes of our country on stage was superb! The special ceremony mingling the waters of different areas of Canada and beyond portrayed our oneness.

It was valuable to hear the teams from across the country present their diverse processes and what some were learning personally. We felt part of our history. We built bridges to the past, present and future with people from Quebec City and five of Canada's provinces, as well as with representatives from the USA, Europe and Africa. By living it we realized that diversity is such a richness.

We feel hopeful and encouraged about the future of Canada. We are confident that we can build on more solid foundations as the Canadian Project continues through to the end.

*Michael Prior, Laurent Gagnon,
Co-chairs of the Steering Committee*

A full report of the Quebec Gathering will be sent to Newsletter readers in mid-July and also posted on the web site. Extra copies can be requested from major lofC centres.

Thank-you for your kind invitation. I was very moved by the many people I met in Quebec. I agree that we must find ways to collaborate in the future. Please consider me a brother and a partner. I look forward to working together.

Bob Watts,

Interim Executive Director,

Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission

I was so touched by the young Muslim lady from Toronto that I felt, for the first time, that I could learn from them. I shared this with my children who said 'Mother you have changed a lot during that weekend.'

Marie-Lise Gingras, Quebec City

Coming from a continent and a society torn by wars and genocide, I was deeply moved to see people of many races and roots sincerely seeking harmony of the Four Solitudes by praying together to the Almighty to achieve this harmony. The sincerity of Canadians in accepting responsibility for past wrongs and looking forward in correcting them was indeed a powerful message.

Fesseha Weru, Ottawa

I felt I was baptized as a Canadian when we shared the water and was also filled with enthusiasm and humbleness when I heard the speakers. I hope God will help me to transform this feeling into action that transforms me and people around.

Iman Al Ghafari, Toronto



Waters mingled in the peace bowl to demonstrate oneness.



Hands dipped in the water symbolized cleansing from the past.



Taking a stone to represent moving forward together in partnership.



Canada's history portrayed through dynamic drama.



The young people planned a session on differences and common bonds.

The historic apology to the Aboriginal People of Canada from the Government on June 11, touched many hearts across the country. We must continue to learn about and experience the changes, including personal changes, needed to build the trust and firm foundation from which Canada can move forward into the future.

History Remembered

Sixteen people, young and old, from across Canada as well as from France and Switzerland, gathered at the Château Frontenac in Quebec City for tea on Monday, May 26 to commemorate 75 years since the first Canadian House Party of *The Oxford Group* opened there on May 25, 1933 and went on until June 5.

The invitation to the House Party stated, "Modern civilization vainly strives to build security on the quicksands of individual self-interest." That sounds like little has changed in seventy-five years. The Invitation goes on to say, "There is an Answer. An army of life-changers building a new world order on the bed-rock of God-directed personalities," an answer that is still available to all who are prepared to take the initiative.



Some of the people who met at the Château Frontenac.

Those who gathered to honour that event shared experiences from the just-concluded gathering in Quebec on the theme *Towards a Community of Communities: from Solitudes to Partnership*, and celebrated the beginning of new friendships spanning language, culture, a vast land and beyond.

Keith Newman

Canadians in Asia

One of the many interesting programmes taking place in Asia Plateau, in India, is the APIP (Asia Plateau Intern Programme). During my three months in India I was involved in this programme. My job was to help care for these young people, and to help them with English classes and the various projects and jobs they had to do. I took some of them to Mumbai where we interacted with the local IofC team and visited schools.

In January I left India to go to Cambodia where I lived and worked

with the young IofC team. The centre in Phnom Penh is a home for young people who are working and studying in the capital and is used by the two full-time workers, who are funded by a number of international NGOs based in Cambodia. These NGOs were impressed with the work the young IofC people are doing, especially in the area of reconciliation with Vietnam. On a regular basis the youth cook meals for the street people in the city and for the patients in one of the large hospitals, raise funds to provide educational material for poor students, and hold the regular dialogues with friends from Vietnam. They are a warm-hearted, hardworking bunch of young people who care for their country. I appreciate the way an older Western person is accepted by the young people and I enjoy being included in all their activities.

I'll be back in India in September for Action for Life 4, and in February I'll go with the group to Cambodia.

Peter Heyes

About Action for Life

Action for Life (AfL) is a nine-month training and outreach programme, bringing together an intergenerational, international, multi-faith team of 30-45 people. It starts in India with further fieldwork in Southeast and East Asia, equipping participants with the skills to bring vision and transformation in challenging regional and global contexts.

For more information go to www.iofc.org/en/programmes/afl

Nejla Azima, a university student in Toronto who was a Caux Intern in 2006, will be participating in AfL4 in September 2008.

AfL4 Participant

I have joined AfL4 trusting it will help shape my personal philosophy on life and I find that this process has already begun. The questions we were given to reflect on have triggered new discoveries about how I view things. I used to be so sure about what I wanted to do in my life and how I wanted to contribute to this world, but I've grown to realize that I cannot predict how things turn out in the future. All I can do is keep doing the things I'm good at and wait and see where I'll end up. At present, I am good at learning; I have great dreams for myself and those close

to me; I seek some form of stability and security not only in my personal life but also in the future of our world as a whole; and I am trying to discover what path will best lead me to those things. I thank everyone involved for dedicating their time and energy to this process.

Nejla Azima

Meeting of the Americas

Keith Newman, John Freebury and I, represented IofC-Canada at the Brazil Encuentro in Petropolis Brazil, held March 8-16. The aim of the conference was to bring together groups from North, Central and South America to learn about our respective projects, share experiences and ideas, and possibly seek ways to connect in the work that each is doing.

We heard of initiatives happening in each country, participated in a *Tools for Change* workshop (focusing on creating and maintaining a diverse team), and defined goals for the future of IofC in the Americas. More importantly, perhaps, was the time spent building relationships with others at the conference. Although a language barrier existed between myself and those that spoke only Portuguese, it didn't seem to matter. We all shared the common bond of wanting to make positive changes in the Americas, and this alone was enough to make instant connections.

I was more than pleasantly surprised by the organization Gente que Avanza who are producing charismatic, driven leaders for the future. The possibility of IofC-Canada working with them is going to be further explored.

Overall, the conference met my expectations and more. I am very thankful for the opportunity to participate, and especially to gain a better understanding of IofC and its global community.

Sonja Bergen

Events in Regina

Traveling Roundtable of Francophones and Métis of Western Canada (2007-2011)

An innovative three-year program to bring Francophones and Métis together to promote the healing of broken relationships through dialogue and exploring their common culture is being developed at the Institut Français at the University of Regina.

In April, IofC Regional Coordinator, Gwen McLean, and her sister Jean Parker invited Peter Dorrington, Assistant Director of the Institut Français, to address the MultiFaith Forum, of which they are both members.

He told them about the initial two-day meeting of *The Traveling Roundtable* that took place in August of 2007 at Batoche, a place of historical importance to the Métis. As facilitators, they were challenged to be open to listen to the hurts of the past. They felt that holding the first event at Batoche provided a freedom for dialogue and discussion. Participants suggested that this format might be used in other areas of misunderstanding. Dialogues will take place throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta over the next two years.

Also present at the meeting with the MultiFaith Forum was Dennis Desgagné, Director of the Assemblée Communautaire Fransaskoise, who had earlier met with Laurent Gagnon and heard about the Quebec City gathering. He was not able to attend but said that building bridges among the Francophone and other communities across Canada was needed.

Ideas began to form for events that could enable that to happen.

The Imam & the Pastor Screening

An animated conversation took place following the screening of *The Imam & the Pastor* shown on April 3 at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Regina.

One woman, who works within conflict resolution settings, felt this film is an invaluable tool.

A heated discussion between a Nigerian Christian and a Muslim from Egypt was a microcosm of the feelings found between Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye. Real feelings were expressed and resolution found by referring to the demonstration of the two religious leaders in the film. The men took down the address where they could send for the DVD.

Gwen McLean, Jean Parker

Global Development Village

On May 6-8 & 10 at Downsview Park, Toronto IofC were involved in this conference put on by the Canadian Youth of the World Campaign. The Global Development Village (GDV) is

an interactive event with hands-on workshops, presentations, performances and displays designed to help participants gain better understanding of global development issues.

2000 school kids (grade 7-12) attended The Global Development Village from May 6-8. In an interactive workshop, Stefan Zulauf, Jessie Henthorn and Iman Al Ghafari showed groups of 10-15 kids how they can make a difference for peace and as a result help move humanity closer to achieving the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2000 to address world issues of poverty, hunger and disease, environment and education. The target date for meeting the Millennium Goals is 2015.



Stefan Zulauf with some of the school children at the GDV.

We had about 120 children come through our workshop on peace building and many of them wanted to know more about Initiatives of Change. We invited them to call the Toronto IofC group and offered even to come to their school or work and meet with a few friends of theirs to discover how IofC could support them. It is our prayer that the seeds planted in these children's hearts will bear fruit in their own lives, in their families, schools and neighbourhood and eventually around the world.

Stefan Zulauf

Participating in the workshops was a useful chance for me to share ideas with the youth. We started by sharing some of our experiences in life and how we were involved with IofC. We encouraged the youth to share ideas about something they didn't like, or were annoyed at in the society or the environment. We shared a game that showed how it was easy to blame others instead of starting the change in us. We had a story and they were asked

to respond to it by writing about their feelings. At the end we talked about the four standards and other steps for making changes within ourselves.

I was so happy that IofC was there and hope we will be having more events where we can communicate and share ideas with the youth. I hope it will be a blessing on us all and that God will prevail and bring peace, respect and harmony among all His people.

Iman Al Ghafari

On the last day of the GDV, May 10, the public were invited to attend. A group of Boy Scouts and Scout Masters came and, with the help of Osman Shum, the DVD *The Imam & the Pastor* was shown. We had good conversations about IofC with people visiting our display, and they took brochures and handouts. The chance for IofC to participate in this event was very worthwhile. Arrangements for the displays were excellent, as managed by Trevor Buttrum, Project Coordinator of the GDV.

Imelda Walker, Jessie Henthorn

Canadians to Caux

Over the next several weeks, a number of Canadians will be leaving for Caux, Switzerland to give support to the Swiss and others who are carrying the overall running of this international conference centre for IofC. Among those going are a former Caux Scholar and an Intern from Montreal. Lorne Braun will be representing the Canadian Council at the International Association (IA) meeting in early August. Eve Wojciechowska, Toronto, is heading up the Conference Secretariat and training her replacement.

To read more about Caux Conferences go to www.caux.ch.

Anne Hartnell

A FINANCIAL NOTE: To enable the continued growth of IofC initiatives, your generous financial support is needed, especially at this time for those taking part in the Caux Conferences and AfL4. Donations are tax deductible and can be made online at www.ca.iofc.org or by mailing a cheque payable to Initiatives of Change to:

The Treasurer, Initiatives of Change – Canada
Box 61079, Kensington RPO
Calgary, AB T2N 4S6

The Imam & the Pastor ... finally in French

On April 14, **Montreal** had the privilege to host the world "avant-première" of the film *L'Imam et le Pasteur*. Thanks to their partnership with IofC, six organizations provided a broad network and enriched the diversity of participants. The Nigerian community was included as well as a significant number of Muslim individuals and groups.

Some of the insights and comments left by participants were:

- Much educational potential for peace and reconciliation (mentioned by many), here and in African countries.
- An example of the link between deep values and community action.
- An illustration that religions can live alongside each other.
- We can all make a first step towards unity.
- Forgiveness is a key towards lasting peace.

A woman said after the film: "For the first time, I feel better educated about the spirituality and the values of Islam. I am now able to respect them more."

In **Quebec City**, three showings took place between April 16 and 30: two at Laval University and one for the general public. The presentations were a springboard for the May Canadian Gathering in Quebec City.

These first presentations brought about many suggestions for further use. The film is a promising tool for the coming months in Quebec, as it is for the rest of Canada.

Lise Gagnon

AGM Highlights – May 25

On Sunday afternoon following the gathering in Quebec City delegates stayed on for a lively Annual General Meeting.

Nominations from the floor this year meant an electoral race for seats on the Council with more candidates than vacancies, which hasn't happened in several years.

The newly elected Council members are Lorne Braun (Chair), Lucie Pagé and Alvin Manitopyes (Vice-Chairs), Bill Parker (Treasurer), Joy Newman, Genevieve LeBaron and Serge Vallée. Leann Marsh, appointed by Council, will continue her responsibility as Secretary. Anne Hartnell will also continue as Canadian Coordinator while the role undergoes review over the next few months.

A Consultation will be held this fall near Toronto, September 26-28, and is being organized by a team led by Genevieve LeBaron and Alex Ramirez.

2008 will be a year of receiving significant bequests made in 2007 by people committed to the work of IofC for many years. These will enable continuance and renewal of IofC across Canada.

Dick Morton is stepping down as the IofC Accountant and his successor is Wayne Friesen from Calgary. We wish Dick good health and thank him for his work over the past two years.

The 2007 Annual Report is available upon request from the office in Calgary.

Bill Parker

More detailed reports of many of the items in this Newsletter can be viewed at www.ca.iofc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 3 to August 17 – International Conferences in Caux, Switzerland – *Addressing the Root Causes of Human Insecurity*

September 26-28 – Canadian Consultation, Toronto

September 2008-May 2009 – Action for Life 4, Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India

NDHR May 26

The National Day of Healing and Reconciliation 2008 was celebrated during the week of May 26 in many centres across Canada. Maggie Hodgson, the national chair of NDHR, participated in the IofC gathering in Quebec City on May 23-25, and was present on May 26 in Edmonton when the Mayor's representative proclaimed NDHR to be officially recognized by the City.

The national launch of NDHR began with a sacred sunrise ceremony on May 25 at the Forks Historic Site near Winnipeg and continued there throughout the day. On May 26 "A Day of Inspiration," designed to uplift the spirits and expand self-sufficiency among Aboriginal youth, was celebrated in Brandon, Manitoba. Speaking at the Edmonton gathering, Maggie Hodgson expressed the aim of NDHR when she said "Each person has opportunity to explore what healing and reconciliation means in our own lives. NDHR offers Canadians a chance to reflect on their personal history and the history of other nations and cultures in Canada."

Jack Freebury

Bridges to a Common Future – building a common future founded on trust and understanding.

On June 22, people from various Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities gathered at a Calgary Community Centre to find out more about the programme *Bridges to a Common Future*. IofC organized the event with the endorsement of the Muslim Council of Calgary and the Anglican Diocese of Calgary.

In discussion groups following the film *The Imam & the Pastor*, there was unanimous enthusiasm to educate ourselves and the younger generation to break down any stereotyping and to bridge the gaps of understanding.

Joy Newman, Alex Ramirez

Initiatives of Change

Building trust across the world's divides

A global network open to people of all nationalities, cultures, religions and beliefs who work toward change locally and globally, starting with change in their own lives.

The network has been active on every continent for over 60 years.

For more information visit
www.ca.iofc.org