



# Canadian Initiatives

## Initiatives of Change

Spring 2015

### Editor's message



Dear Readers,

It's been a long, cold winter for many in Canada. But for millions of people around the world, it's a long, dark tunnel of sorrow and suffering with no glimmer of spring sunshine to set daffodils and tulips blooming in all their glory. Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Ukraine and more. Stories of conflict and violence dominate.

Yet IofC sows seeds of hope in troubled lands, and builds bridges of trust even in peaceful nations like Canada where past injustices have been seared into the collective memory of some groups.

Trustbuilding workshops in Calgary, Multicultural Women's Friendship Circles in Ottawa, Circles of Trust in Quebec- these are small steps in peacebuilding but have far-reaching effects in creating relationships of trust and mutual respect.

At this year's AGM in Calgary, we will be discussing future directions for IofC. All members and friends are cordially invited to attend, or at least follow the proceedings from afar.

Please respond to the call for nominations, since we need committed leaders to guide IofC into the future. IofC needs your input and financial contributions. Cheques may be sent to the Treasurer at our new address: **101A-225 Metcalfe St.**

**Ottawa, ON K2P 1P9.**

May the values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love lead us to a new springtime of personal and social change!

**Susan Korah, Ottawa**



FCJ Centre, Calgary

### Calgary to host AGM 2015 June 5-7 weekend

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of Initiatives of Change Association (Canada), will take place at the FCJ Christian Life Centre, 219 - 19th Avenue SW, Calgary, in the afternoon of Saturday, June 6. All are also warmly invited to participate in the weekend's other activities including Friday's welcome dinner, discussions on Saturday and Sunday morning and lunch on Sunday.

Accommodation for out-of-town guests will be arranged in homes as far as possible over Friday and Saturday nights. Registration forms and further details will be sent out soon.

### Call for Board nominations 2015

The Nominations Committee is looking for nominees for the IofC Canada Board to serve three - year terms. IofC Board of Directors aims to represent the cultural, religious, linguistic and geographic diversity of our association's membership, as fully as possible. Candidates for the Board must be at least 18 years of age and must be members of IofC Canada in good standing. We are ideally looking for people with:

- an understanding of accounts and financial management
- fundraising experience
- administration skills
- strong interpersonal skills and/or leadership skills.

Board members are expected to take part in regular meetings through the year, as meetings by web conference in addition to face-to-face meetings before and after the AGM. Each Board member is also asked to take an active part in at least one committee.

If you would like information about this process or would like to nominate someone, please contact Anne Hartnell, Nominations Committee Chair by April 15.

Email: [annehartnell@ca.iofc.org](mailto:annehartnell@ca.iofc.org).

Mail: #107, 15325 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Surrey, BC V4A 1T8, Tel: 604-560-966

### Gordon Crowchild played key role in IofC Canada

**Editor's note:** Gordon Crowchild of the Tsuu T'ina Nation, Calgary, Alberta passed away in the early hours of Monday, January 12, 2015 at the age of 85. Gordon played a pivotal role in the MRA/IofC revue *Song of Asia's* visit to Canada in 1976 and in 1977, travelled with 40 other indigenous peoples to New Zealand to commemorate the signing of Treaty 7 (the 1877 agreement between the first nations of southern Alberta and the Queen that basically set the stage for the development of what has become modern Alberta). Gordon served on MRA/IofC's Council of Management from 1982 - 1991. He was a leader of his people and well respected by all. The funeral was held on Saturday, January 17, 2015 at the Grey Eagle Event Centre, Calgary. Here, Jack Freebury pays his own personal tribute to Gordon.



Gordon Crowchild (centre) circa 1995

### Jack Freebury remembers Gordon Crowchild

“Former Tsuu T’ina Chief Gordon Crowchild laid to rest in state funeral,” announced a headline in *The Calgary Herald* on January 18, 2015. Speaking at the funeral Chief Roy Whitney, the current Chief, said that “He (Gordon) instilled a mindset in our people to strive for opportunities allowing them the ability to enhance their lives for not only the betterment of themselves and their families but also for the community.” In a message, the Hon. Jim Prentice, Premier of Alberta, said Gordon is remembered as “an iconic leader, an inspiration to all who had the privilege to meet him.”

Gordon participated in many local, national and international MRA/I of C actions in Northern Ireland, Latin America and across North America including the *Song of Asia* campaign in Canada. Gordon also served on the IofC Council for a number of years.

Speaking at the 1975 MRA International Conference in Banff, Gordon said “The first time I went to a conference like this was in 1958...I had a lot of ideas but I didn’t have the right ideas. MRA is the idea of listening to your deepest thoughts -- that God really speaks to you. This is what I find in my job as Chief. It has helped me a lot. I know that it’s a challenging world every day, but if a person has the knowledge and the guidance of God in whatever he does in his decisions, it’ll make a lot of sense in your leadership or whatever position you hold. And I think that is what the world is waiting for.”

Jack Freebury, Calgary

### Canadian intern finds opportunity for self-transformation and service in India

Panchgani, India, March 14, 2015--Greetings from Panchgani! I’ve been quite privileged to have the opportunity to join the latest batch of interns here at Asia Plateau, IofC’s Centre, about 250 kms from Mumbai, India. I am nestled in rural India on a sacred land between some beautiful flat top mountains.

The interns come from many corners of the earth: India, Japan, Rwanda, South Korea, and Sweden. Noah, my roommate, is from Rwanda and we have been getting to know and understand one another better. I am also forming new bonds and building a sense of community with the people I’ve been living and exploring with.

I have been practicing yoga and silent time, both daily. My journal which I purchased for five months has been nearly filled in less than a month. We also had a day of silence. That was really incredible for me. I responded to many questions about my own character (or lack thereof) and introduced questions to identify my own life purpose.



Melanie Klein with new friends

The recent "Just Governance" dialogues were really quite profound. I learned so much about different countries. How they responded to their independences, how conflicts between nations have left deep wounds, how reconciliation processes have occurred throughout history. We had delegations from Cambodia, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, etc... It was a memorable learning opportunity and I am feeling deeply grateful for that.

We’ve also been involved in many workshops which are connected to IofC principles. We also had the opportunity to conduct research on various topics related to IofC. I did the history and evolution of Asia Plateau and its construction. I also may have the opportunity to do some work with expanding their organic agriculture and permaculture practice to nearby villages. The daughter of Kiran Gandhi--a member of IofC’s International Council-- is interested in this field and there may be opportunity for collaboration.

I look forward to continuing this journey. It is a great balance of inner governance and personal transformation, coupled with opportunity for outer service and development practice.

**Melanie Klein, Oakville, Ontario reporting from Panchgani, India**

For more information on the Asia Plateau internship program, visit <http://www.iofc.org/asia-plateau-internship-programme>

## Calgary team screens *Beyond Forgiving* for interfaith audience

Calgary, March 5, 2015--It was an evening of sharing ideas on making positive changes in the world-- changes such as those illustrated in IofC's documentary *Beyond Forgiving*.

"I had no idea how important this evening was to me," commented a young man after viewing the film. "This was an amazing story of healing."

The film screening was part of a program hosted by Initiatives of Change and the Intercultural Dialogue Institute (IDI). While the latter organization offered the venue and the dinner, Janyce Konkin, IofC's Regional Project Manager in Alberta showed the documentary and led a dialogue that enabled participants to reflect on the life-changing experiences of the two South African protagonists Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mphalale.



Door prize winners at interfaith event

One viewer was so impressed that he asked for the video to be shown to his university class. The evening ended with a young hip hop artist named Axiom from the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary performing a number of social justice rap songs, bringing more awareness of the importance of everyone being involved in changing the world around them. Door prizes were presented by IDI to two participants.

**Janyce Konkin, Calgary**

## Joseph Vumiliya appointed Quebec Project Manager

Montreal, March 18, 2015--It is with joy and satisfaction that we welcome Joseph Vumiliya, hired by IofC Canada to work full time from Montreal. He was appointed Regional Project Manager for the province of Quebec on January 19, 2015 after having been a volunteer for nine months and a part-time consultant for six months.

He had already met IofC in Rwanda, his country of origin, where he worked during 19 years with ACORD, an international NGO. His organizational skills as well as his human and spiritual values are excellent assets for IofC. He is a great help with administration, managing and implementing projects, and supporting regional teams.

**Lise and Laurent Gagnon, Montreal**



Joseph Vumiliya

## University of Ottawa IofC Club launches program of activities

Ottawa, March 5, 2015--The University of Ottawa's IofC Club has launched a program of activities to introduce students to some core values and practices of IofC.

A workshop on January 28 on the practice of silence was led by Rachel (Bala) Freeman, a teacher of meditation and modern spirituality.

The workshop-- organized by Karen Bamboyne and Viola Sebahana, IofC's office administrator-- was inspired by the fact that, beginning with the founder Frank Buchman, IofC/MRA has always used 'quiet times' or times of silent reflection as a way of listening to one's inner voice and finding spiritual guidance including ideas for focused action from this practice.

Ms. Freeman led participants through breathing exercises to relax the body and mind. Ms. Bamboyne introduced the workshop by explaining the importance of times of silence to IofC as a starting point for personal and social change.

Another University of Ottawa IofC Club activity was a workshop on discrimination presented in the context of Black History Month (February). The idea was to identify different kinds of discrimination, ask questions about the roots of discrimination and finally, to share the idea of forgiveness and apologies.

The feedback from both these events was encouraging, with some participants requesting more information on IofC. To find out more about the University of Ottawa IofC Club, please contact [admin@iofc.ca](mailto:admin@iofc.ca)



Viola Sebahana, Ottawa

U of Ottawa students learn about IofC

## Multicultural Women reunite to view *Beyond Forgiving* film

Ottawa, March 10, 2015--It was a joyful reunion as several women from IofC's Multicultural Women's Friendship Circle of Fall 2014 gathered at the new office for a multicultural potluck supper and a screening of the film *Beyond Forgiving*. "I can't wait to see everyone again," said Samrawit Mersha, a newcomer from Ethiopia, as she arrived at the door with a broad smile on her face and dishes of Ethiopian food in her hands. Another participant commented that this was an extremely successful 'Circle' as the bonds formed within the group are strong, and the women kept in touch with one another over the winter months.

The highlights of the evening were the screening of the film and the thoughtful conversation that ensued. "It's an amazing story of forgiveness and reconciliation," remarked one of the women. Another added: "When one thinks of South Africa, one usually imagines that Blacks were the victims (of apartheid) but this film showed that both Blacks and Whites were both victims of the system."

The Multicultural Women's Friendship Circle is an IofC program that seeks to build trust and friendship between newcomers and established Canadian women. It consists of a series of meetings where the women share honest stories of personal change and exchange cultural perspectives. Guest speakers present ideas for civic and community engagement to help the newcomers integrate into Canadian society.



Established Canadian women and newcomers discuss the film



Peter Heyes at the wedding of IofC Cambodia friends

## From Canada with love: Peter Heyes, mentor and friend to IofC in South-East Asia

Peter Heyes is from Sturgeon County, Alberta. He has been with IofC Canada since 1964. He has a special interest in South-East Asia where he spends six months of the year, helping young people who are members of IofC in Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. Each country's team has a different focus, so Peter's main role is to be a mentor and a supporter. In Vietnam it means meeting friends when they come together in a coffee shop, in Cambodia it's helping with various activities such as feeding the poor, providing a meal for patients in a hospital or giving out school material to poor children, in Indonesia it's participating in their annual youth camp. Peter has also participated as a mentor in IofC's *Action for Life* programs in India and South-East Asia.

## Calendar of Events

### Vancouver

**IofC –Farmers Dialogue to sponsor two events with A/Rocha, an environmental stewardship organization.**

**Holy Ground: Answering God's call to creation conference May 5-8; Earthkeeping: A climate for change May 7. For more info on the two events: <http://www.arocha.ca/>**

### Calgary

**AGM of IofC Association (Canada) June 5-7 weekend at FCJ Centre, 219-19<sup>th</sup> Ave. Calgary SW. All are welcome. More details and registration forms will be sent out soon. For other Calgary events contact Janyce at 403-270-0975.**

### Ottawa

**Open House at the new office. Wednesday April 22, 5:00-7:00 pm. All are welcome. For info [admin@ca.iofc.org](mailto:admin@ca.iofc.org)**

## Initiatives of Change

In Canada, IofC is officially registered as a charitable organization under the name Initiatives of Change Association Canada. Donations are tax deductible. For more information and to donate online visit [www.ca.iofc.org](http://www.ca.iofc.org)

By mail send a cheque payable to: Initiatives of Change, The Treasurer, Suite 101A-225 Metcalfe St., Ottawa ON K2P 1P9

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To submit articles and pictures, e-mail [susan.korah@sympatico.ca](mailto:susan.korah@sympatico.ca). **The deadline for the next edition is June 9, 2015.**

For more information contact the national office or visit [www.ca.iofc.org](http://www.ca.iofc.org)