

*Adrian Dean Jacobs is Keeper of the Circle at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. He is also Ganosono, Turtle Clan of the Cayuga Nation of the Six Nations Haudenosaunee Confederacy. He lives and works as guest in Treaty One Territory. On April 23, 2017, he presented an address to those graduating from Canadian Mennonite University. The following text is an adaptation of that address for a United Church audience.*

Who are you in this Kairos moment, in this special moment in time in 2017, that may change the course of Indigenous - Canadian relationship?

1 Chronicles 12:32 speaks of some effective followers of King David and reads, “*The tribe of Issachar supplied 200 leaders, along with all of their relatives under their command. They kept up-to-date in their understanding of the times and knew what Israel should do.*” This is from the International Standard Version.

Acts 16:6 to 10, a second text concerning the Apostle Paul and his small team, reads, “<sup>6-8</sup>*They went to Phrygia, and then on through the region of Galatia. Their plan was to turn west into Asia province, but the Holy Spirit blocked that route. So they went to Mysia and tried to go north to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn’t let them go there either. Proceeding on through Mysia, they went down to the seaport Troas.*

<sup>9-10</sup> *That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans.*” This is from The Message Bible.

Keeping up-to-date in your understanding of the times in which we live and knowing for sure what God wants you to do is key to fulfilling Creator’s purpose for this country. This message is about knowing what to do when kairos moments, special moments like this where the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have been embraced by The United Church of Canada. General Council 43 in the summer of 2018 will be part of this kairos moment, when the Indigenous communities of faith (BC Native Ministries; All Native Circle Conference and their presbyteries, All Tribes Presbytery, Plains Presbytery, Keewatin Presbytery, Great Lakes Presbytery; Native Ministries of Ontario Quebec; Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre; Aboriginal Ministries Council) bring their proposal for a reimagining of Indigenous ministry in Canada. Who will you be in this kairos moment?

2017 marks the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The late noted author Phillis Tickle has observed that there is a kairos moment in Christian history every 500 years. This moment she has called the Great Emergence, a time of reexamining, reimagining and reforming what it means to be church.

2017 also marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian experience. Though it is a significant time of celebration for Canadians, Indigenous people in Canada see it differently and have spawned a hashtag Resistance150 on Twitter in response to the official hashtag Canada150 celebration.

2017 is also the 404<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1613 Two Row Wampum or Guswentah Treaty of my Haudenosaunee people. 2017 is also the 316<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1701 Nanfan or Dish with One Spoon

Treaty between my Haudenosaunee people, the Anishnaabe people and the English. This treaty covers all of Southern Ontario.

For the purposes of this message, 2017 is the 874<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Confederation of Five Haudenosaunee Nations and the coming of what we call The Great Peace. Our Hyonhwatha Wampum Belt is our record of this momentous time in our people's history. Benjamin Franklin appropriated our confederacy to frame his conception of separate states becoming one federation in his work on the U.S. constitution.

Come back with me origin of The Great Peace in 1143 A.D., 874 years ago. Our people were in a state of turmoil and violence. Brother fought brother, one clan member killed another from even the same clan, nation was at war with nation – it was a time of terror with people protecting their lives by closing up their hearts. They bottled up their grief.

But then the Peacemaker came. He was a man of slow speech from a cousin nation and had a message of peace for my people, “This violence, death and grief is not what the Creator had in mind for us.” He came first to the Mohawk or Kanien'kehá:ka people and found an eloquent ally and leader Hyonhwatha. Together they spread the message of peace and the idea of consensus decision making to the Oneida, the Cayuga (my people) and the Seneca. Each nation embraced this Great Peace as they were weary of death and grief.

The Peacemaker made a powerful ally in a woman from the Neutral nation, Gigohnsahsah. Her home was a home of peace for warriors, even those from different fighting nations. They had to lay down their weapons before entering her longhouse and they could not fight when they ate her food or enjoyed rest in her home. The Peacemaker called her to change her work from serving warriors to working for the Great Peace. She became the first Clan Mother, the one who would choose the male chief of her clan.

Each nation would have so many Clan Mothers and Clan Chiefs. Four nations had embraced The Great Peace but there was one nation that was resistant – the Onondaga nation in the middle of the other four nations. Atotaroh, The Great Cannibal was their main leader. He was a man of violence and did the greatest indignity to his enemies by eating them. He is pictured by our people as living in the swamps with a tangle of snakes in his hair that reflected his twisted thinking.

The Peacemaker then knew it was a kairos moment for the Haudenosaunee. It was a special moment in time and decisions had to be made right now to change the whole order of things. It was time to confront the Great Cannibal and advance the Creator's message of peace. He gathered all the 4 nations together with the Clan Mothers and Chiefs, men, women and children. Atotaroh braced for war and his warriors stood to defend their Onondaga nation.

Then the Peacemaker came forth and began to sing the Peace Hymn. I have heard this most beautiful Haudenosaunee song once in my life and it made me cry. As the Peacemaker continued to sing, the Clan Mothers (by this time about 30 of them) approached the Great Cannibal. It was a moment of tension but Atotaroh's warriors stood down and the Clan Mothers began to comb the snakes out of his hair.

In this kairos moment, Atotaroh was transformed, his face became normal, he had a good mind and he embraced the Great Peace. The Peacemaker told him that he would be the symbol of the Great Peace and that his Onondaga Nation would be the firekeepers, the hosts, of the Five Nations Confederacy. The Peacemaker gave him a fan made from an eagle's wing and said, “With this you will sweep away anything that will disturb the council fire of The Great Peace and without you or your nation nothing will be decided.”

In this Kairos moment of my people, the greatest obstacle to peace became the greatest example of peace and its enduring symbol now for 874 years. My question to you as delegates here in Portage la Prairie in 2017 and for those going to General Council 43 in Oshawa is, “In a kairos moment who are you?”

Are you a peacemaker with a message of peace from the Creator? Are you that old man who has worked all of his life to advocate for peace and now must lay it all on the line where death and disaster are real possibilities? Are you that young eloquent leader who hears in the Peacemaker a cause worthy to follow? Are you willing to stand down and let the elder move forward to do what only that elder can do? Are you the brave woman who was willing to change her life from serving warriors to serving the cause of peace? Are you that company of Clan Mothers who bravely face terror and the possibility of death to massage the head of insane violence until it is reduced to a puddle of humility? Are you Atotaroh’s warrior who witnesses the power of the Peacemaker’s hymn and stands down from your weapons and attack? Are you the great obstacle to peace in your own life, that of your family, that of your people, that of your community, who bravely lets the Peace Hymn come into your ears and into your heart? Are you that seemingly mighty man who lets women touch your head, your mind and gently wipe away your vile thoughts and imaginations? Are you that strong leader willing to let women and elders guide your life moving forward? Are you that terror leader now willing to lead by service and humility? Are you among the men, women, and children of that great crowd of witnesses who will mark this kairos moment in your memory and tell it over and over again so that your descendants will never forget?

“Who are you in this kairos moment of 2017?”