

*Seeking Certainty in the Cloud of Unknowing*  
*Friends General Conference 2017*  
*(Workshop: This is not What Security Looks Like)*

Toronto Monthly Meeting,

By: Sylvia Grady

**First thoughts:** Orientation, a touchstone begins – Nurturing, exploring, gaining fresh perspectives, that’s why we are here. The Alternatives to Violence Project looks inviting. FGC was a new experience. Exciting. For Canadian Friends, it’s the year of fallowed CYM in a re-tribalizing world.

**New insights:** *An imposed peace makes it a Lifeless one. Security is not synonymous with military strength – we all know this.* Major threats, such as climate change, economic marginalization, energy security, and global pandemics - are security issues, but not necessarily military problems. So what is our role in the world as peace builders living within this empirical bubble? Existing and current narratives help us move people to take action to solve the many problems we are addressing.

**Second Day:** Still earthbound. A quick detour to the Buffalo Monthly Meeting explains the building of art, they have become an integral part of the Network of Religious Community Inc.

**The Kickoff:** G. Peter Jemison, walks us in, I hear a giant-size think, the drop of a pin.

**Pre-workshop:** In 1998, Canada committed to nuclear exchange, through NATO, should there be a breach of our borders. June 6th this year, Canada’s Minister of National Defense, Harjit Sajjan committed the nation to eighty-eight new fighter planes, fifteen warships and armed drones, over the next twenty years. This is a seventy percent increase in “hard power” spending, and we know economies driven by military profit motives are doomed to fail. The campus surrounds us with current and historical narrative.

**General Assembly:** Our minds pull together as One. An opening by Kenneth Deer, Elaine Bishop

**Waiting for Eternity.**

**Workshop:** We answer the call: “to create an alternative global, financial, and economic architecture, based on the principles of economic, social and climate justice.”



A security review would reveal the underlying causes; unequal distribution of wealth, inadequate or lack of free health care, a deficit of education, and the military industrial complex’s death hold on the #democraticbodypolitic.

We need to improve rapid response mechanisms, emphasize civil capacity over military capability, and a reallocation of arms export budgets to “Departments of Peace budgets” - we still do not have one? Moreover, the rest of us have been shut out of the conversation, watching political parties and the military establishment from the sidelines. Security? We fight for flags.

**Our workshop** –inside the workshop - **asked some questions.** We told our own stories, with some local history thrown in, things got very interesting. The group discovered a liberal serving of privileged voices in the room. At about midpoint through the week, a shift happened. We looked inward and changed our unusual ways. Sigh.

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What was discussed: Deportations, petitions and street protest, school and institutional youth recruitment (for private armies), drones, arms export economies - environmental disaster, refugees, coal and removal of bronze statues dedicated to “war heroes”. Must we disarm these weapons ourselves? We focused on experiences: Private.

Pamela Boyce Simms is there, seems we are, winding up, must get to Earthcare.

George Lakey – “we could declare ourselves to be free of empire!”

Contra, Friends – social distancing’s converse.

**Today’s Theme:** spiritual, social, political, demand for justice, climate inclusivity, diverse bioethicality. It’s fun connecting to such a depth, There is an abundance of information on the military industrial complex on the US and Israel - not so much for Canada, I noticed. We speak in full sentences: A sense of our power begins to open, express feelings and inward thought, only falling silent when birdsong and sister skunk catch the moment and launch the Day.

We feel Cheerful, a sense of Spiritual Expanding.

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