

*Animated by the Spirit for
God's New Community of Hope*

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice
Initiatives

Strategic Plan 2016-2020



October 2015

Table of Contents

The Development of the Plan	3
Overarching Commitment: Rooted Deep in Integrity, Reaching out in Hope	4
Affirmations	4
Core Identity	4
Prophetic Voice	5
Resetting the Relationship	5
Global Partnership	5
Continuum	5
Connections	6
Engagement of Young Adults.....	6
Directions for 2010-2015	7
Program Theme: RECONCILIATION.....	7
Program Priorities	7
Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples	7
Reconciliation in the watershed	8
Reconciliation with migrant and diaspora communities	9
Cross-Cutting Program	9
Women of Courage Initiative	9
Work on Israel-Palestine	10
Review of Structures	10
KAIROS Companions, Communities, Local Groups and Regions—Deepening Connections and Broadening Welcome.....	10
Resources to support the Plan	10

“We believe that God is present
in the darkness before dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty
where fear and courage join hands,
conflict and caring link arms,
and the sun rises over barbed wire.
We believe in a with-us God
who sits down in our midst
to share our humanity.
We affirm a faith
that takes us beyond the safe place:
into action, into vulnerability
and into the streets.
We commit ourselves to work for change
and put ourselves on the line;
to bear responsibility, take risks,
live powerfully and face humiliation;
to stand with those on the edge;
to choose life
and be used by the spirit
for God’s new community of hope.
Amen.” --*Iona Community*

“...take root downward, and bear fruit upward” –*Isaiah 37:31*

The Development of the Plan

In February 2014, the Board of KAIROS appointed a working group to guide the development of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. This group included four Board members (Stephen Allen, Jim Hodgson, Henriette Thompson, Pam Peters-Pries), the Executive Director, Jennifer Henry, and Program Manager, Ed Bianchi, and two people drawn from the KAIROS Ecumenical Circles grounded in Indigenous and young adult communities (Joanne Jefferson, Kaitlyn Duthie-Kannikkatt). Some initial feedback and input was gathered from the KAIROS community at the Circle Fest event of May 2014. The working group proposed the use of the SOAR process (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) to further develop the plan. In the fall of 2014, the Board and Ecumenical Circles engaged in conversations, stimulated by “Inquire, Imagine and Innovate” questions from SOAR. Using a survey tool, KAIROS also gathered input from members, staff, regional ecumenical groups, global partners, and some KAIROS communities and individuals. This material was synthesized and grouped into themes and questions that were considered by the KAIROS Board at its February 2015 meeting.

Following the February meeting, a draft strategic plan that reflected the Board’s discussion was prepared. Initial feedback on this draft plan was offered by the strategic planning working group, and

the document was revised for presentation to the Board at its May 2015 meeting. At that meeting, Board members provided further feedback that was synthesized into a memo and attached to the draft plan for circulation to members, partners, and Circles for a final round of input. That input, with the advice of the strategic planning working group, was incorporated into the final proposed plan prepared for adoption at the October 2015 Board meeting.

The Board approved the Plan by consensus at its October 2015 meeting.

Overarching Commitment: Rooted Deep in Integrity, Reaching out in Hope

While there were many nuances and textures to the feedback KAIROS received, the overwhelming direction leans towards a deepening and strengthening of core identity, areas of work, and ways of working. In 2016-2020, KAIROS will root itself deep in its integrity, forged from a memorable history, strong relationships, common purpose, deep faith, and bold collective action. The focus is to deepen that which brings us together—faithful action for ecological integrity and human rights. Recognizing that KAIROS itself is a movement among movements, our intention is also to reach out even further in hope, collaborating even more intensely within our churches, with communities of faith and conscience across the country, with Indigenous peoples, young adults, migrants and diaspora communities, and others who seek to come together in common action for justice.

Affirmations

“KAIROS unites eleven Christian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social justice and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation” –KAIROS Identity Statement (in brief)

Core Identity

We affirm KAIROS’ core Christian identity, with humility and with a deep commitment to work with others. While we work together as Christian churches and religious organizations, we do not work in isolation.

KAIROS affirms its core Christian identity, as a faithful ecumenical response to the biblical call “to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). We root ourselves deeply in our faith—consolation, challenge and hope—to help us together live out our commitments to seek abundant life for all. We root ourselves in our rich justice traditions, inspired by prophetic witness lived out by faithful people from biblical times to our own. We claim the different gifts of our denominations, even as we seek the strength of a common voice in public witness and a common movement of faithful advocates for social change.

Aware of the ways in which Christianity has become entangled in dehumanizing processes, such as colonization, and has been co-opted to support violence, we claim our identity with humility. We work together as churches and religious organizations conscious that we do not only want, but need, people

of different faiths or of conscience to enable effective and credible reflection and action. We are a movement within movements, seeking to make a contribution but also to learn from and collaborate with others.

Prophetic Voice

We affirm KAIROS' role in helping to hear prophetic voices, to sustain a prophetic voice within churches, and to magnify the prophetic message that churches, together, might voice in the public square.

We affirm a particular, but not unique, responsibility for KAIROS in listening for prophetic voices within the movements in which we work, within our churches, and within creation. It is our hope that working together, drawing from our Christian traditions, we can sustain theological courage to respond to those voices, and magnify our own prophetic voice, including into the public sphere.

Resetting the Relationship

Within KAIROS, we affirm a continued commitment to “resetting the relationship” with Indigenous peoples.

The KAIROS Indigenous Rights Circle and the KAIROS Board have engaged in a dialogue over a number of years on how KAIROS might better work *with* and not *for* First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. This dialogue, and related opportunities to engage the whole of KAIROS in changed attitudes and behaviour, has been referred to as “resetting the relationship.” We will continue this process within KAIROS of “resetting the relationship” with Indigenous peoples, where we strive to fully implement the principles, norms and standards of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. This includes seeking to have ongoing accountability to Indigenous peoples for KAIROS' Indigenous rights work.

Global Partnership

KAIROS continues its commitment to work with and through global partnerships on shared advocacy and to strengthen relationships between partners from different global regions; between global, migrant and Indigenous partners; and global partners and all Canadians.

KAIROS' advocacy commitments in key countries are, in many ways, shaped by the analysis and solidarity calls of our global partners. Even when working on policy issues in Canada, KAIROS brings a global analysis informed by partner insight. With integrated cross-cutting projects like *Women of Courage*, engaging women human rights defenders from all over the globe, KAIROS seeks to build common cause towards shared action for social change. In 2015, KAIROS engaged with global partners both regionally and in our priority countries of Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Philippines, The Pacific, and Israel and Palestine.

Continuum

We affirm KAIROS as a place to express and engage in a continuum of social change efforts from research and policy development to grassroots action.

KAIROS is not simply a think tank, nor only an activist organization. We affirm that KAIROS works on its established priorities through research and policy development, theological reflection, education, advocacy, partnership, lobbying, and grassroots action. Our goal is to delve deep and engage in a sustained way in the priorities to which we commit.

Connections

We affirm the way in which KAIROS can help to connect churches, issues, regions and communities.

We affirm a role for KAIROS in deepening ecumenism by continuing to connect churches in Canada and beyond—one to another—in common commitments to ecological justice and human rights. KAIROS, in its identity, continues to express the spirit of the *Lund Principle*, the commitment by churches to strive to “act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.”

We affirm that KAIROS has an important role in building bridges or making connections between local and global analysis, between ecological justice and human rights issues, between communities across the country and around the globe, between different constituencies, and between churches and social movements.

Engagement of Young Adults

We affirm a continued commitment to increasing engagement in all aspects of KAIROS by 18-35 year olds.

KAIROS has placed significant intention on connecting with 18-35 year old people through both outreach and promotion of KAIROS activities and clear and principled presence at and with young adults in their justice commitments, whether denominational or in young adult movements. We will continue to build on these relationships and commitments that have clearly begun to take root, energizing the KAIROS community.

Directions for 2016-2020

Program Theme: RECONCILIATION

Our faith in Christ Jesus holds both a promise of reconciliation and issues a call and challenge towards deeper commitment in the work of right relations. Between 2016 and 2020, KAIROS will express its commitment to reconciliation, through an intersecting program that focuses on reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, reconciliation in the watershed, and reconciliation with migrant and diaspora communities. In so doing, KAIROS will contribute to building a Canadian constituency that:

- is committed to reconciliation as requiring change in behaviour, attitudes, relationships and policies;
- is working actively with Indigenous peoples, communities and organizations on reconciliation-related initiatives and similarly with migrant or diaspora people, communities and organizations;
- links the work of reconciliation to the work of ecological justice and human rights;
- values accompanying global partners, welcoming their insights and collaborating with them in shared advocacy;
- recognizes and affirms the integrity of creation;
- integrates a commitment to gender and racial justice;
- is visible, regionally, nationally, and globally in movements of reconciliation, ecological justice and human rights.

Program Priorities

Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

Colonization has bred violence, racism, mistrust, and led to massive inequities in the social, health, and economic realities of Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples means a new relationship built on truth, a relationship of mutual respect that fully affirms the dignity and contributions and rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada and around the globe and strives to bridge existing gaps through renewed justice

KAIROS' commitment to **reconciliation with Indigenous peoples** may include:

- increasing the number and diversity of Canadians knowledgeable about the history and impacts of colonization and engaged in acts of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada and abroad;
- increasing pressure towards implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- contributing to policy change that will close the gap between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians in areas such as child welfare, education, safety for Indigenous women and girls,* health, cultural and language supports, and food security;
- increasing pressure on corporations and governments to implement free, prior and informed consent, ensuring the genuine involvement of Indigenous peoples at every stage of resource development in Canada and abroad;

- improving understanding and accommodation of the particular needs, roles and responsibilities of women in resource extraction projects in Canada and abroad, and advocating for women's clear representation at every stage;*
- contributing to an improvement in Canadian corporate accountability for mining operations on Indigenous land, including by advocating for access to justice by communities affected by Canadian mining abroad;
- increasing support, capacity and strategic opportunities by linking Indigenous women with women human rights defenders from around the world, and connecting them to Canadian women for shared advocacy on gender and racial justice, and the promotion of human rights.*

Reconciliation in the watershed

Wherever we live in creation we are part of a watershed, an interdependent eco-system nested in a larger system, also a watershed. Watersheds are God's map, integral to the design of creation.

Reconciliation in the watershed means inhabiting the corner of creation in which we reside in a respectful and related manner, while reaching out to build and renew relations of ecological integrity and justice across our global common home.

KAIROS' commitment to **reconciliation in the watershed** may include:

- increasing the number and diversity of Canadians who are knowledgeable about their immediate watershed, able to identify issues related to its protection, and engaged in nurturing ecological justice;
- contributing to Christian perspectives on ecological integrity, and supporting churches and people of faith who are taking faithful actions to reduce their ecological footprint;
- contributing to building an inclusive global movement for climate justice that proposes and enacts sustainability from the ground up and succeeds in achieving effective international agreements to ensure global temperatures do not rise to a level that will cause catastrophic climate change;
- contributing to Canadian policy change in areas such as strong, effective greenhouse gas emission targets, ending all subsidies to oil, gas and coal, placing a price on carbon emissions, and increasing environmental protection;
- responding with ethical reflection, education and action to solidarity calls from global partners and from communities in Canada experiencing acute climate justice challenges or resisting oil and gas exploitation, including by addressing the specific experiences of women;*
- developing and implementing a range of economic advocacy measures to increase influence on corporations to keep the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves underground;
- contributing to improved Canadian corporate accountability for the ecological impact of resource extraction operations;
- contributing towards a vision, plan and just transition strategy for a sustainable energy economy in Canada;

Reconciliation with migrant and diaspora communities

The root causes of migration include violations of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights. Reconciliation with migrant and diaspora communities includes addressing Canadian involvement in global rights' violations leading to forced migration, and increasing welcome, justice and participation for those who come to Canada.

KAIROS' commitment to **reconciliation with migrant and diaspora communities** may include:

- enhancing understanding of the human rights situation in countries where KAIROS works with global partners and increasing participation in solidarity actions and long term advocacy in defense of human rights, including working with related diaspora communities;*
- increasing the number and diversity of Canadians who are knowledgeable about the challenges facing migrant and diaspora communities in Canada and abroad and are engaged in acts of right relations and racial justice;
- increasing pressure towards ratification and implementation of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*;
- contributing to policy change for increased justice for migrant workers such as a fairer temporary foreign workers program, with a comprehensive monitoring system;
- contributing, on a responsive basis, to advocacy and education campaigns for refugee rights;
- linking , for increased support, capacity-building and strategizing, migrant and diaspora women with women human rights defenders from different parts of the world, and connecting them to other Canadian women for shared advocacy on gender and racial justice and the promotion of human rights.*

Cross-Cutting Program

The KAIROS program is integrative—each of the three priorities is inter-related. It also includes a number of cross-cutting elements. KAIROS' global partnerships include shared advocacy in all three areas, and our movement building strategies engage education and action opportunities from all three spheres. Integrated theological reflection can draw its source and context from all areas, and racial justice can be similarly seen as a transverse commitment.

Women of Courage Initiative

One key cross-cutting initiative is the commitment to gender justice expressed through working with women human rights defenders and activists across the scope of KAIROS program priorities (see starred* priorities above), on reducing the related incidence of gender-based violence and human rights violations. This initiative unites program activities by global partners in South Sudan, Israel-Palestine, Colombia, Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with activities of Indigenous and migrant women in Canada.

Work on Israel-Palestine

Given the rapidly changing political context in the Middle East, the political landscape in Canada on Israel-Palestine, and the shifting nature and focus of organizations, including denominations, working on just peace in Israel-Palestine, KAIROS will clarify the very specific area of contribution we might make with a view to focusing the work for greater impact.

Review of Structures

To ensure that our structures, processes and protocols continue to serve KAIROS' mandate and current priorities, KAIROS will conduct a review of the ecumenical Circles of Collaboration, and the structures that serve the regional networks. We continue to affirm meaningful roles for our constituencies in animating program directions and in offering grassroots leadership, but wish to ensure that current structures are best serving that purpose. We will also conduct a review of our processes for public statements, given a changed information and media environment. In the longer term, KAIROS will carry out a review of the structure of the Board of Directors.

KAIROS Companions, Communities, Local Groups and Regions—Deepening Connections and Broadening Welcome

Committed to strengthening ecumenical movements for ecological justice and human rights, KAIROS will seek to deepen its connections with existing networks, communities, churches, and individuals across Canada, while at the same time striving to broaden connections beyond these existing relationships. Our first priority will be to map the existing connections. Recognizing that multiple strategies are likely, we will identify and prioritize the most promising possibilities, within existing or accessible resources, to deepen capacity and broaden outreach. A plan will be developed that honours existing KAIROS communities and anticipates new opportunities in relationship, including with diverse communities (i.e., diaspora, young adult, Indigenous, francophone) and communities outside the member churches. This shared plan will be held collaboratively with members, anticipating member engagement, gifts, and support.

Resources to support the Plan

KAIROS continues to receive the generous support of its founding members. In addition, significant contributions are made to KAIROS by individuals and through grants made by foundations or labour unions. An endowment fund continues to provide investment income. Recognizing that member resources are stretched, KAIROS will continue to diversify its funding sources, while remaining mindful of the possible impact of such diversification on its core mandate.

KAIROS Identity Statement (2003)

In a time such as ours....

KAIROS **unites** Canadian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8).

Informed by biblical teaching, KAIROS **deliberates** on issues of common concern, striving to be a prophetic voice in the public sphere.

Inspired by a vision of God’s compassionate justice, KAIROS **advocates** for social change, amplifying and strengthening the public witness of its members.

Responding to Christ by engaging in social transformation, KAIROS **empowers** the people of God and **is empowered** by them to live out our faith in action for justice and peace, joining with those of goodwill in Canada and around the world.

KAIROS Members

[The Anglican Church of Canada](#)
[Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace](#)
[Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
[Canadian Religious Conference](#)
[Christian Reformed Church in North America](#) (Canada Corporation)
[Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada](#)
[Mennonite Central Committee of Canada](#)
[The Presbyterian Church in Canada](#)
[The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund](#) (PWRDF)
[Religious Society of Friends](#) (Quakers)
[The United Church of Canada](#)

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