

HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a common standard for all people and nations. Free Methodists claim these rights for all but when called upon by our Lord, we freely forego these rights for ourselves for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Free Methodists, currently and historically, affirm the deep worth of all persons in the sight of God. Human rights were established at creation as imparted through His image, maintained in the Law of Moses, defended by the prophets, elevated in the teachings of Christ, and practiced in the daily life of His church. Because of this we are to love our neighbours and live in healthy interdependent relationships with them. Promoting human rights reflects God's desire that people live justly in their relationships with one another.

If you have questions or need help in further understanding human rights issues and the role of the Christian in relationship to them, the following resources are a good place to start. Although Free Methodist doctrine and practice may not fully agree with some information contained; this information can be useful for people at risk (e.g. new Canadians unfamiliar with our laws, refugees and victims of torture, seniors, youth, and many others).

WEBSITES:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Document: www.hrweb.org

This document reads much like the Old Testament prophets. It is a good read for any Christian especially those interested in the work of human rights.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, The Persecuted Church:

www.evangelicalfellowship.ca

This is most likely the first site to visit. It is a good beginning speaking to a growing concern among evangelicals - the violation of human rights.

World Evangelical Alliance: www.worldevangelical.org

Another good starting-point to tap into a number of organizations dealing with persecution and human rights.

Citizens for Public Justice: www.cpj.ca

This is an organization that does excellent work on human rights in Canada. CPJ is rooted largely in the Christian Reform Church. It articulates the faith-based, biblical arguments concerning the stance they take on a number of issues.

Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives: www.kairoscanada.org

Kairos unites a number of churches and organizations to respond to Micah 6:8 "...do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God". It speaks out on justice issues and work in areas not generally covered by the Media. They often take a liberal stand on social conflicts but this could be useful in working through less known issues.

Center of Concern: Religious Social Values: Catholic: www.coc.org

This site offers a number of statements and resources in the Roman Catholic social tradition drawing from scripture and the values of Judeo-Christian experience and tradition. This could be a good source for background study and for challenging conventional conservative complacency.

Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org

Amnesty International strongly supports a vision through which every person will come to enjoy human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their work is well known although sometimes controversial. This is an excellent site for information on current human rights issues.

Government of Canada: www.canada.gc.ca

The Canadian government provides an almost endless list of sources for information on issues from seniors to refugees. Very practical information is available here.

UNHCR: UN Refugee Agency: www.unhcr.ch

With more than 22 million refugees worldwide, the Church has a great opportunity for ministry nationally and internationally. Much material is available here.

WRITTEN WORKS:

Rights and Responsibilities in Canada: Young Offenders. This is a basic guide to laws and procedures involving Canada's new Youth Criminal Justice Act. It covers procedures, being questioned by police, search and seizure, rights of arrested persons, bail, first appearances in court, trials and finding a lawyer. 45+ pages. 2003 ISBN #1-896225-32-2

Seniors and the Law: A Resource Guide by Anne Pellatt, LL.M. In a question and answer format, it provides an overview of issues facing seniors, including abuse, mental health, personal directives, powers of attorney and consumer protection. Includes a glossary. This pertains to the Province of Alberta but is pertinent to all Canadians.

Privacy Handbook for Canadians: Your Rights and Remedies by Brian Edy. This is made up of two volumes full of user-friendly information about government and private sector privacy laws that affect all Canadians. 2002. #ISBN1-896225-34-9.