

*A Circle of All Nations  
A Culture of Peace*



**A CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS  
A CULTURE OF PEACE**

# *A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace*

*Vision And Plan For The Healing Of Mother Earth And The Strengthening  
Of The Circle Of All Nations And Races*



**Elder William Commanda's Vision - Level One**

# A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace

Vision And Plan For The Healing Of Mother Earth And The Strengthening  
Of The Circle Of All Nations And Races



Elder William Commanda's Vision - Level Two

## *A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace*

The Vision Of North American Algonquin Elder  
William Commanda  
Keeper Of The Seven Fires Prophecy Wampum Belt

These Difficult Times We Live In Were Foreseen By Spiritual Visionaries Across The World. My Ancestors Warned Us About This Time And The Choices We Would Have To Make, In The Seven Fires Prophecy, Which Was Inscribed In Sacred Wampum Shell In The Late 1400s

### **The Prophecy Holds A Vision For A Future Where We:**

- Honour Our Relationship And Responsibility To Mother Earth And All Creation
- Celebrate Our Individual Gifts And Diversity, And Still
- Recognize And Respect Our Place Within A *Circle Of All Nations*

### **The Steps To This Future Are Few:**

- First We Look Within, So We Know Ourselves First And Best. We Recognize, Acknowledge And Forgive Ourselves Our Shortcomings And Any Failure To Achieve Our Best Potential
- We Forgive Others For Any Hardship And Pain They May Have Caused Us And Our Communities. We Trust That This Energy Will Transform Them Spiritually
- We Recognize That Our Thoughts, Words And Actions Affect Ourselves, Mother Earth And All Creation, And We Embrace Peace Mindfully
- We Listen To Our Minds But We Trust Our Hearts Above All

### **It Is Of Crucial Importance That The People Of The World:**

- Respond Immediately To The Plight Of The Many Oppressed By Exploitation, Social Injustice, Racism And
- Animate The Human Capacity For Forgiveness, Compassion, Love And Reconciliation, And
- Create A Global Synergy To Ensure The Improvement Of The Lives Of All

This Path Will Lead Us To Love, Sharing, Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Healing, Reconciliation, Equality And Justice

We Shall Then Light The Eighth Fire Together And Become

*A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace*

## The Circle of all Nations

This was a gathering in Ottawa, Canada organised by the First Nation's People, focusing primarily on the issues of peace, racial harmony, social justice and indigenous wisdom, engaging youth in ongoing education, action and leadership development in these areas; and, profiling art and creative expression as catalyzing forces of social regeneration.

The purpose of the gathering was to promote the establishment of a Circle of All Nations, united by a vision of peace and indigenous wisdom, and committed to a just society for the rainbow people.

Sarifa Moola reports:



Dr Douglas Cardinal, architect, speaking at the Circle of all Nations gathering in Ottawa.

### A Calling

The trip to Ottawa, Canada was definitely a Calling, one that encapsulated, and crystallised what I was going through as a young African woman and a peace activist. This was a journey of self-discovery, growth and the search for inner peace. It gave me insight and a positive perspective about myself, the importance of the environment and the work that I was doing.

From Belfast to Ottawa, rushing, a bit tired, anxious, excited and concerned about the interesting Gathering we were going to, one of its kind. Concerned for I wasn't quite sure what to expect or what was expected of me. However, these feelings of anxiety, concern were transformed by the warm welcome we received. This was the beginning of an amazing and enriching experience.

Right at the outset, from the opening ceremony, I knew that this was no talk show. Here were people who were open about their culture and heritage, proud of being the First Nations People, were caring towards their own and the environment and readily shared their vast wisdom. We always talk about reviving the spirit of UMBUNTO, here were people who were living it. I have a deep admiration for the First Nations People of North America, who bring to mind images of simplicity, spirituality, humility, respect for mother Earth, and most important, forgiveness. These are people who have suffered brutality, dehumanisation, and cultural genocide at the

hands of the British like the Africans and Irish and yet they can still forgive their perpetrators.

We at Umtapo, always speak of the importance of the individual internalising what s/he believes in and through the courage of their conviction, and by example, make a positive impact on their families, and with their support go out into the community and make a difference. This was evident in the families that were present, the support they gave each other and their ability to communicate with one voice. The most amazing thing for me was the humility, calmness that each one of them radiated, especially Elder William. Just his presence commanded respect and unconditional love from the people around him.

Part of the programme focused on the talking circles, which I thought were extremely therapeutic for many who came forward and shared their life experiences. It was amazing to see men come forward and share their experiences and cry openly. This is something that we can learn where we come together in a circle and give people the opportunity to speak out, share their pain, anger, hatred, depression and whatever emotions they carry from their past, giving them a shoulder to cry on. Instead of restricting ourselves and only speaking if and when it is politically correct.

Each speaker had an important experience and message that they shared with the group. Elder William

Comanda's messages were so simple yet so accurate and with so much of passion. The most important points that were emphasised was the need to care for the environment that is quickly being destroyed because of greed and other human fallibilities. Elder William constantly emphasised the power and ability that each one of us has to forgive, understanding the power and responsibility that we have as agents of change to transform the negatives into positives and to maintain the equilibrium. Other messages that I will remember were about the importance of the individual and s/he recognising the power and energy that each one has. How we should have the ability to judge the action and not the person.

There was one message that I could identify with coming from Umtapo and to say that is what we are doing, is to be unreasonable about one's commitment, take your stance and follow it through. This is one of the things I had learnt at Umtapo, that if you strongly believe in something then you should

**if you strongly believe in something then you should be able to see it succeed.**



Sarifa Moola with Elder William Comanda.

be able to see it succeed.

The messages that came out of the panel discussions together with the ceremonies, rituals, dreams that I had, and the sweat lodge made a positive impact on my life. It reminded me of the importance of the Elders in our communities and homes. Their vast wisdom are our guide and education through life's journey. Also, that education can be rich through experience and the knowledge of the Elders.

I must also say that this experience was even better because of the wonderful people that I travelled with. Their caring, support and understanding made this trip more pleasurable. To Zeni, Renee, Franco and Lebo, I am very grateful for the experience as well as the challenge. Representing the different 'race' groups in South Africa we came together as one family. Here I was able to confront whatever prejudices that I still harboured, negative attitudes and transform these into positive attitudes and actions towards the development and growth of myself, our new friendship, and our country.

### Scholarship for Umtapo Staff Member

Sarifa Moola, assistant programmes officer at Umtapo Centre and youth coordinator, has left Umtapo that is, physically only after an association that started around 1994 when she was a 17 year old student completing her formal schooling. Having gone through various leadership programmes at Umtapo and assisting as a splinterer for a few years, Sarifa began as a part-time staff member in 1997. She was required to act as coordinator of Civitas Africa, the regional component of the world civil society alliance, which was temporarily based at Umtapo Centre. In this position, she gained vast experience with civil society organisations in Africa as well as globally. Sarifa represented Umtapo Centre at forums throughout the

world, from the indigenous peoples' gathering in Canada, the world conference of the United Nations of Youth Foundation in The Hague, the Global Meeting of Generations in Washington, to heading a youth delegation to Belfast, Northern Ireland.

In August this year, she was awarded a scholarship to do her Masters Degree in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, England.

Sarifa epitomized Umtapo's contribution to the growth and empowerment of young people in South Africa. She is a dedicated and committed peace and anti-racism activist who will be sorely missed but will surely be back to continue the struggle for peace and socio-economic justice in South Africa.



*A Circle of All Nations  
A Culture of Peace*

The Frog Principle

**F**oundation

**R**esults

**O**pportunities

**G**oals



# *A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace*

## **Foundation**

Conquest

War

Expropriation

Racism

Hatred

Near Genocide

Exploitation

Corruption

Religious Oppression

Loss Of Language, Culture  
And Traditions

**Colonization**  
**Globalization**



## Results

Clear Cutting

Poverty

Pollution

Suicide

Family Violence

Global Warming

Addictions

Sexual Abuse

Alienation And Isolation

Extinction Of Species

**Negative  
Aftermath**

## **Opportunities**

Decade Of Indigenous Peoples

Anti Racism

Peace Vigils And Summits

Focus On Rights And Equality

Truth And Reconciliation

Peace Building

Indigenous Justice

**Change**



# A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace

Foundation	Results	Opportunities	Goal
Compassion		Peace	War
Conquest	Justice		Expropriation
Decade Of Indigenous Peoples			Clear Cutting
	Poverty	Racism	Hatred Hope
	Forgiveness		Pollution
	Suicide		Near Genocid
Anti Racism		Exploitation	community
	Family Violence	Respect	
Diversity And Unity		Corruption	
Religious Oppression		Peace Vigils And Summits	
		Global Warming	
	Focus On Rights And Equality		Reconciliation
	Addictions		Truth And Reconciliatio
Loss Of Language, Culture And Traditions			Sexual Abuse
		Peace Building	Healing
	Alienation And Isolation		Love
Responsibility		Indigenous Justice	
	Extinction Of Species		
<b>Colonization Globalization</b>	<b>Negative Aftermath</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Vision</b>

# A Circle of All Nations ~ A Culture of Peace

Foundation	Results	Opportunities	Goals
Compassion		Peace	War
Conquest	Justice		Expropriation
Decade Of Indigenous Peoples			Clear Cutting
Poverty	Racism		Hatred Hope
Forgiveness		Pollution	
Suicide			Near Genoc
Anti Racism	Exploitation		community
Family Violence		Respect	
Diversity And Unity		Corruption	
Religious Oppression		Peace Vigils And Summits	
		Global Warming	
Focus On Rights And Equality		Reconciliation	
Addictions		Truth And Reconciliatio	
Loss Of Language, Culture And Traditions		Sexual Abuse	
		Peace Building	Healing
Alienation And Isolation		Love	
Responsibility		Indigenous Justice	
		Extinction Of Species	
Colonization Globalization	Negative Aftermath	Change	Vision

# AN EXPLORATION OF FORGIVENESS

FIRST THERE IS A TRANSGRESSION OR OFFENCE

TRANSGRESSION *leads to*

HURT, PAIN *to*

ANGER AND FEAR (first level of 'hot' emotions) *and to*

RUMINATION (Scab Image) *to*

UNFORGIVENESS (second level of 'cold' emotions)

RESENTMENT

BITTERNESS

RESIDUAL ANGER

RESIDUAL FEAR

HATRED

HOSTILITY

THE EMOTIONAL STATE is NEGATIVE and STRESSFUL

THEREFORE - WE WANT TO GET RID OF OR REDUCE  
STRESS

ONE WAY IS THROUGH ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

THIS DEADENS THE NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL STATE  
BUT THE STRESS RETURNS

WE NEED TO TRANSFORM EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO  
TRANSGRESSION IN A HEALTHY WAY

WE NEED TO MOVE FROM A NEGATIVE TO A POSITIVE  
EMOTIONAL STATE, AND

FROM NEGATIVE UNFORGIVENESS TO POSITIVE  
FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS INCLUDES POSITIVE EMOTIONS LIKE  
EMPATHY  
SYMPATHY  
COMPASSION  
LOVE

WE UNDERSTAND FORGIVENESS BY FIRST EXAMINING  
AREAS WHERE WE NEED FORGIVENESS

FIRST WE MUST UNDERSTAND WHETHER WE ARE  
DEALING WITH DENIAL OR GUILT

WHEN WE UNDERSTAND FULLY AND ACKNOWLEDGE OUR  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACTIONS THAT REQUIRE  
PARDON, THEN WE LEARN TO FORGIVE OURSELVES

WE DO NOT HAVE TO JUDGE OURSELVES - THAT IS  
PRESUMPTIOUS; ('THE POWER TO FORGIVE')

WHEN WE SHARE OUR STORIES OF HUMANESS, WE FIND  
HEALING

WHEN WE UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF FORGIVENESS,  
WE CAN LEARN TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRANSGRESS  
AGAINST US

AT THE FIRST LEVEL, WE FREE OURSELVES FROM THE  
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS OF 'UNFORGIVENESS'

WE ALSO DEVELOP A SENSE OF PERSONAL POWER OVER  
OUR DESTINIES

THUS WE MOVE OUT A STATE OF VICTIMHOOD OR  
FEELING VICTIMIZED TO A STATE OF SELF  
EMPOWERMENT

AT THE SECOND LEVEL, WE LEARN TO FORGIVE OTHERS

IN THIS PROCESS, WE TRANSFORM THE ENERGY IN OUR  
RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEM

WE TRUST THAT THIS ENERGY WILL TRANSFORM THEM  
SPIRITUALLY

THUS FORGIVENESS IS THE WAY TO TRANSMUTE  
POISON AND PAIN

IT CAN REPLACE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS WITH POSITIVE  
ONES

FORGIVENESS IS PERSONAL; THE BENEFITS ARE  
PERSONAL

FORGIVENESS - IS NOT TO 'FORGET', BUT  
'FOR GETTING "TO FEEL BETTER"

RECONCILIATION IS A SEPARATE PROCESS

IT IS ABOUT BUILDING A BRIDGE WHERE TRUST HAS  
BEEN BROKEN

FOR THE INDIGENOUS VISION OF CONNECTEDNESS,  
THE RESTORATION OF HARMONY IS RELATIONSHIPS IS  
ESSENTIAL

THIS LEADS TO PEACE - UNDERSTOOD IN THIS WAY, WE  
REALIZE THERE IS NO WAY TO PEACE - PEACE IS THE  
WAY (Gandhi)



# CIRCLE OF COURAGE

(Reclaiming Youth at Risk - Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern)

## SELF ESTEEM

### FOUR COMPONENTS OF SELF ESTEEM

**SIGNIFICANCE** acceptance, attention, affection vs  
*rejection, ignored, not belonging*

**COMPETENCE** mastering one's environment, capability vs  
*inaadequacy, stifled emotions*

**POWER** ability to control one's behaviour and gain respect of  
others vs  
*Being helpless and without influence*

**VIRTUE** worthiness, judged by values of one's culture and  
significant others vs  
*life not spiritually fulfilling or meaningful*

### INDIGENOUS IDEOLOGY

**SIGNIFICANCE** belonging (community)

**COMPETENCY** mastery (personal strengths)

**POWER** independence (uniqueness)

**VIRTUE** generosity (community)

**CIRCLE OF COURAGE** - the fearless warrior

**BELONGING, MASTERY, INDEPENDENCE, GENEROSITY**

**?**

**“An  
Inconvenient  
Truth”**

**“Corporations”**

**“Fahrenheit 9-11”**





**The Fourth  
Dimension  
Earth/Spirit  
Connect**

**Respect,  
Responsibility  
and Reverence  
for Mother Earth**

**Generosity  
and  
Sharing**

**Racial Harmony  
and  
Peace Building**

# CIRCLE OF ALL NATIONS



# Legacy Work of William Commanda

- [www.circleofallnations.ca](http://www.circleofallnations.ca)
- [www.asinabka.com](http://www.asinabka.com)
- [circleofallnations@sympatico.ca](mailto:circleofallnations@sympatico.ca)
  
- © Romola V. Thumbadoo