

**Wilhelmina Nolan**

**Thursday, Sept 21, 2000**

**To: the Aboriginal Rights Committee, United Church of Canada**

## **Letter re: Burch Church**

Dear Friends,

I received the [news](#), which outlines the Canadian government's increasing use of militaristic force against the people of Burnt Church. The writer chose not to mention the increasing threat of extreme violence from non-native fishers (a number of Esgenoopetitj residents and CPT observers have already suffered violence from non-native fishers and DFO staff!); please understand that this possibility is imminent. My understanding of the situation is that by law, the Canadian government MUST negotiate in good faith with and work to protect First Nations people, and that enforcement activity is contrary to Canadian law and constitution in this situation. Legal experts have already published statements that DFO and RCMP attacks on Burnt Church are criminal and unconscionable.

Please respond to my request for your intervention without delay, and request that all Faith groups come together to demand that the government officials not hold themselves above the law, avoid potential injuries and deaths, and stop embarrassing the people of Canada by acknowledging First Nations Treaty and Human Rights to the use of our vast national resources.

As the world watches and reports on this situation, it has become more than apparent that the DFO position is covering up a \$500 million Atlantic lobster fishing industry dominated by multinational corporations. It is also apparent that both non-native and First Nations fishers are being used as pawns with their lives and livelihoods offered up to protect large national and foreign business interests.

I would ask that, further to the proposal to organize and host Prayer Gatherings in support of peace and cooperation among the fishers on both sides, brought before you by Wade Reppert and myself, that you fully support this important work.

I commend the United Church of Canada and its public announcements in support of our Mi'maq people. As an example of the UCC's truly Christian response to this conflict, I beg that you offer all available resources (communications, Public Relations, legal, financial, etc.) to support demands for the government to stop violent and illegal enforcement activities and for United Church members to attend and host the Prayer Gatherings. We at the front lines need tangible forms support in order to speed our effectiveness. Is the Committee willing to consider the immediate

establishment of a fund for grassroots workers?

Thank you for your expeditious response to my requests. I ask also that you provide me with copies of any correspondence that you undertake with regard to this situation. I send my prayers for the power of Love and Prayer to bring order to this crisis with this message.

Sincerely yours,  
All My Relations,

<signed>  
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