



Residential Schools Update

The United Church of Canada



L'Église Unie du Canada

"The United Church of Canada is committed to working to create a new relationship with Aboriginal peoples that starts in confession for past wrongs and, it is the church's hope, ends in the shared joy of walking together in a healed and renewed creation."

*The United Church of Canada Brief to the Royal Commission
on Aboriginal Peoples (November 1993)*

January 2011

Residential Schools Steering Committee Re-Mandated, Re-Named

The original mandate of the Residential Schools Steering Committee, established in 1998, was to "coordinate all aspects of the issues related to residential schools, including the legal, pastoral, communications, alternate resolution possibilities and healing initiatives, and financial planning" (GCE 1998).

Over the past 12 years, the understanding and analysis of the United Church has broadened and deepened with respect to the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. Beyond the abuse that was suffered by individual students in the schools, we are now aware of the destructive impact of this system on families, communities, and cultures. We also know that Residential Schools did not take place in a vacuum, but were part of a larger process of colonization resulting in dispossession and injustice.

In recognizing that the time is right for the church to take a more integrated approach to the task of decolonization, seeking justice, and building right relations, the General Council Executive meeting in November 2010 adopted a new mandate and name (as below) for the committee with the role of guiding and assisting the United Church to live out its Apologies. The GCE was also aware of the increased opportunities for partnership in this work with the creation of the Aboriginal Ministries Council.

The mandate of the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools is:

- a) to coordinate all aspects of the issues related to Indian Residential Schools, including the legal, pastoral, communications, alternate resolution possibilities, healing and reconciliation initiatives, and financial planning
- b) to assist the church to live out its Apologies through theological reflection and through education and advocacy for Indigenous justice issues including, but not limited to, land, rights, treaties, the impacts of colonialism, and racism
- c) to work in partnership with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and collaborate with KAIROS, ecumenical partners, and Indigenous organizations
- d) to make full reports, and recommendations as required, to the General Secretary and to each meeting of the Executive of the General Council

The membership of the Committee has remained the same.

Program coordinator Chad Beharriell has chosen to end his two years of work with the Committee on April 30, 2011 to return to teaching at the University of Windsor. We thank him for the insight and energy he brought to this portfolio.

© 2011

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd) Licence. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/ca>. Any copy must include this notice.

Right Relations National Consultation

A national Living into Right Relations gathering was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba (November 19–21, 2010). Two representatives (one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal) from each of the 13 Conference-based Right Relations Home Groups were invited to join the United Church national Right Relations Task Group for a consultation. Following a 2008 United Church Right Relations event in Pinawa, Manitoba, the 13 Home Groups were formed to support dialogue between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in their respective areas. The participants made a five-year commitment to support this work. From over 40 attendees, including representatives from the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, feedback was sought to help direct the support provided by the Task Group to the network of Home Groups.

A welcoming ceremony led by Elders Barb and Clarence Nepinak opened the gathering and provided an acknowledgement of territory. The opening circle question allowed attendees to share their current vision of Right Relations. TRC Commissioner Marie Wilson joined the first day of the gathering to share information on the Commission, including national and community events. Home Groups were asked to share what they felt were successes and barriers for their Right Relations work. Participants were then asked what would assist their Home Groups to realize their vision of Right Relations. Many said that meeting and sharing experiences had given them “a boost.”

“Walk Together” Toward Right Relations

The national Right Relations Task Group, after reflecting upon the feedback of Home Group representatives and the expressed need to enhance awareness of ongoing Living into Right Relations work, decided to launch a “walk” toward right relations. This event could involve a walk, or journey by other means, to a local pow-wow, to a partnering First Nation community, to a specific Right Relations event, to the site of a former Indian Residential School, or to a simple meal gathering. Planning the walk, run, paddle, bike, or horseback ride between June 11 and June 21 is encouraged as a link to the timeframe that runs from the anniversary of the federal apology to National Aboriginal Day, but Home Groups will choose dates that work best for their locality. You might also join other walks underway in the spring and summer. For example: for Walk4Justice concerning missing and murdered Aboriginal women contact the cofounder, Gladys Radek, at: frillyfrog08@yahoo.ca; and for Mother Earth Water Walk check: www.motherearthwaterwalk.com. Watch for more details coming, nationally and in your province. Home Groups can seek national funding support for a “walk.”

“Living into Right Relations” Home Group Contacts

All Native Circle	<i>Cheryl Jourdain</i> <i>Rick Hebert</i>	204-582-5518	cheryl.jourdain@anconline.ca reception@anconline.ca
Alberta & NW	<i>Pat Robertson</i>	403-719-0044	pkrobertson22@gmail.com
Bay of Quinte	<i>Bronwen Harman</i>	613-256-0889	bharman@xplornet.ca
British Columbia	<i>Marion Best</i>	250-496-5729	bestm@shaw.ca
Hamilton	<i>Christina Paradela</i>	905-945-2249	cparadela@trinityunitedgrimsby.ca
London	<i>Matthew Stevens</i>	519-672-1930	matthew@londonconference.ca
Man & NWOntario	<i>Sandra Hayes-Gardiner</i>	204-282-6864	sandrahg@shaw.ca
Manitou	<i>Jen Dresser</i>	705-335-3566	apunitedchurch@ntl.sympatico.ca
Maritimes	<i>Laura Hunter</i>	506-536-0695	lhunter@marconf.ca
Montreal & Ottawa	<i>David Lee</i>	613-235-7819	peter_david_lee@msn.com
Nfld & Labrador	<i>Bryce Hodder</i>	709-364-1158	brycehodder@nl.rogers.com
Saskatchewan	<i>Sue Bland</i>	306-721-3311	bland.stueck@sasktel.net
Toronto	<i>Linda Parsons</i> <i>Kathleen Monague</i>	905-895-7194 705-247-2287	linda.parsons@rogers.com special-k21@hotmail.com

Independent Assessment Process Outreach Sessions

Under the direction of Peter Rinaldi, the Client Services–Outreach unit of the Independent Assessment Process Adjudication Secretariat is making information presentations. See www.iap-pei.ca/out-cal-eng.asp for a calendar of events.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

• Commemoration Fund Guidelines

“The commemoration initiative is part of the TRC’s mandate,” said TRC Chair Justice Murray Sinclair. “The commemoration is intended to be about honouring, educating, remembering, memorializing, and paying tribute to Residential School former students, families, and their communities, and acknowledging the experience and broad systemic impacts of residential schools.”

In total, \$20 million will be available for this initiative. This call for proposals provides for \$10 million in 2011–2012. All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by the TRC, who will then make its recommendations to the Government of Canada, which will administer the funds. Applications for 2011 Commemoration proposals will be accepted until 2:00 p.m. CT, March 18, 2011.

Commemoration initiatives can take on a variety of forms, including creation of or improvements to existing memorials, commemorative structures, or ceremonies. Proposals can be submitted by communities, Aboriginal organizations representing a group, groups of Residential School survivors, churches, or charitable organizations dealing with Residential School issues. For the complete set of guidelines, see www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/TRC_Commем_Guide_en_final.pdf.

• Regional Liaisons Appointed

The TRC now has seven Regional Liaisons in place across the country. The role of the Regional Liaison is to facilitate the flow of information between organizations, communities, and individuals by increasing community outreach and dialogue on behalf of the TRC. They will work collaboratively with the TRC head offices, communities, and other organizations in planning national and community events. Regional Liaisons will also help coordinate statement gathering activities in their region.

British Columbia	Samaya.Jardey@trc.ca	(604) 983-2675
Alberta	Darlene.auger@trc.ca	(780) 231-7183
Saskatchewan	Kimberley.quinney@trc.ca	(306) 371-3403
Manitoba	Ida.Moore@trc.ca	(204) 984-7667
Ontario	Alvin.Fiddler@trc.ca	(204) 984-7667
Quebec & Atlantic	Richard.Kistabish@trc.ca	(819) 874-2043
Northern	<i>Currently vacant – announcement pending</i>	

• Northern Tour

The TRC announced it will hold northern gatherings of truth sharing and private statement taking in 19 communities throughout the regions of Nunavik, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. The northern hearings begin on March 15 in Inukjuak, Quebec, and end in Watson Lake, Yukon, on May 27, 2011. On April 14, the TRC will be in Yellowknife and on May 23 in Whitehorse, the locations of the only United Church ministries in the north. The second national TRC event will be in Inuvik, June 29–July 1, 2011. For details, dates, and locations, see www.trc.ca.

“The northern hearings are an opportunity for Residential School survivors, who might not otherwise be able to come to us, to speak up, be heard, and inform the Commission and Canadians of the unique experiences of children who attended Residential Schools in Canada’s North,” said TRC Chair Justice Murray Sinclair.

- **Document Collection**

Terry Reilly has been appointed the Manager of Document Acquisition and Collection Management at the TRC on an Interchange Canada arrangement between Canada and the University of Calgary. Reviewing of the proposals from the bidders for the TRC digitization and database project is happening as we go to press. That work is likely to begin in April at the Presbyterian Church Archives, then the United Church Archives, and thirdly, the Anglican Church Archives. The archivists of the signatory parties are invited to a meeting in Winnipeg (March 21–22) as an opportunity for networking and information sharing. United Church archivist Nichole Vonk will be attending.

- **National Research Centre Forum**

As part of its mandate, the TRC will establish a National Research Centre that will be a permanent resource for all Canadians to learn about Residential Schools. As the TRC enters the planning stages for the Centre, they are holding a visioning forum “Sharing Truth—Creating a National Research Centre on Residential Schools” at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Hotel (March 1-3, 2011). The Forum’s goal is to learn from a broad spectrum of experts with experiences in other countries in relation to their respective Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and/or similar processes, and to provide a base of knowledge from which to move forward. Information and registration: www.trc.ca

KAIROS Launches “The Land, Our Life” Campaign

At Regional annual meetings across the country in fall 2010, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives launched “The Land, Our Life: Indigenous Rights and our Common Future” 2010–2011 campaign. There are materials available to help you, your church, and your community to learn more about Indigenous rights and the impacts of resource extraction on Indigenous lands. Download or order them through the KAIROS website, and use them to hold an event in your church or community. Order print materials by phone at 1-877-403-8933, ext. 221, or by e-mail: orders@kairoscanada.org.

Ecumenical groups gathered with Indigenous peoples across Canada (December 4–5, 2010) to drum in support of Canada’s implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—the federal government endorsed the Declaration on November 12, 2010. United Church (UC) congregations involved with the KAIROS-initiated “Beat the Drum” events included such New Brunswick churches as Forest Hill UC, Fredericton; St. Andrew and St. David UC, St. John; and Sackville UC, Sackville.

Since 1977, First Nations citizens living on reserves have been denied access to filing complaints of discrimination through the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) due to the Indian Act. This was known as Section 67 of the CHRA. As of June 19, 2011, the CHRA will apply to First Nations living and working on reserve. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations hosted a forum on the Repeal of Section 67 in Saskatoon on January 31, 2011. “There are so many questions that need to be answered about this new human rights legislation,” says FSIN Vice Chief Morley Watson, “Questions like, How will our treaty rights be affected? How will our First Nations governments be affected?”

Roll with the Declaration: Cross-Canada Action June 2011

KAIROS is asking you to make banners indicating your church or community's support for the Declaration. See the website for instructions on how to make the banner, involving your whole community in the process. The banners will be carried to Ottawa by train as a way of urging our government to get to work on implementing this historic international agreement.

This action is patterned on the "Blanket Train" when on June 21, 2001, at the end of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, hundreds of Canadians converged on Ottawa by train from the four directions to join their voices with the will of another 50,000 who had signed the Jubilee Indigenous Rights petition calling on the Government of Canada to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), issued five years previously. Now on the 15th anniversary of the RCAP, few of those recommendations have been acted upon.

Further information on all KAIROS-led Indigenous rights initiatives can be found at www.kairoscanada.org.

"Sisters in Spirit" Lose Funding

The federal government announced on November 3, 2010, that the "Sisters in Spirit" program of Native Women's Association of Canada, which advocates for Canada's missing and murdered Aboriginal women, will no longer receive funding unless they comply with a series of conditions. Under any new agreement, the organization must promise to quit working on their internationally acclaimed database, stop using government funds for research and policy, and change their name to Evidence and Action. For now, ten million dollars has been redirected to the Department of Justice and the Ministry of Public Safety. On January 24, 2011, several organizations, including KAIROS and Amnesty International, publicly called upon the federal government to make a clear public commitment to supporting the ongoing work of the Sisters in Spirit Initiative, and providing sustained, long-term funding for research and advocacy led by Aboriginal women. Many United Church women who have participated in annual vigils to honour the lives of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls may wish to join the call.

TRC Community Event in Victoria, December 3-5, 2010

Ben Ziegler wrote in his blog: "I shed tears this weekend. They weren't for me. They were for others, and their stories, I heard as a participant, along with 200+ others, in the first ever Truth and Reconciliation Conference between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Victoria. The conference was titled 'Open Hearts, Clear Minds: A Road to Reconciliation' and took place at the First Peoples House at the University of Victoria ... At times the weekend felt surreal to me. Listening to stories of 'survivors' of Residential School abuse and intergenerational dislocation were difficult; especially when many of the stories came from the elderly, and are still very painful (to them) to share, even 60 years later. At times I felt as though I, a 'settler's' child, and my Aboriginal neighbour, living only kilometres away, are in parallel universes...Yet, with all the pain, there was still room for joy, humour, and optimism. In one circle that I participated in the question was posed 'Where do we go from here (along the reconciliation path)?" Zeigler went on to list 15 ways, largely based on that circle's conversation. Another participant commented that it was very lonely and scary, but he got through the weekend with the help of the Lord.

Read more and see pictures at: www.collaborativejourneys.com/2010/12/06/15-ways-to-bridge-the-gap-between-cultures-and-communities-in-conflict/.

Thanks to Aboriginal Neighbours, a group supported by the Anglican Diocese of Victoria, the United Church Victoria Presbytery, and the local Quakers, for their hard work as the main organizers of this event.

“Equipping Ambassadors” Workshop for the Maritimes

A second Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation event is scheduled for May 4–6, 2011, for Maritimes and Newfoundland and Labrador folk, to be held at Tatamagouche Centre, Nova Scotia. These ecumenically-supported events provide an opportunity through speakers, workshops, and sharing for individuals to learn more about the legacy of Residential Schools, the larger work of de-colonization and building right relations, as well as laying groundwork for participating in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. More details will come when the planning coordinators are in place. The second national Truth and Reconciliation Event will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, beginning October 29, 2011.

Returning to Spirit – Upcoming Workshops

For information about this transformative program, specific registration contacts, and locations, e-mail: rts@aboriginalcircleofeducators.ca or call toll free 1-877-772-1991.

Part 1: Aboriginal workshop

March 7-11, 2011 Vancouver Island
May 30-June 3, 2011 Thunderchild, SK

Part 2: Church and Non-Aboriginal

March 7-11, 2011 Vancouver Island

Part 3: Reconciliation

March 24-30, 2011 Prince George, BC
June 9-15, 2011 Vancouver Island
July 7-13, 2011 Winnipeg

Part 2 and Part 1 weekend pilot

Feb.25-27, and March 18-20, 2011
Winnipeg

Aboriginal Clergy May 9-13, 2011
Beausejour

Funding is available for the registration fee, accommodation, and meals for up to 10 Aboriginal and 10 non-Aboriginal people in 2011. You can apply by sending a copy of your registration form directly to jvscott@united-church.ca, prior to the workshop.

Contact us at: irs@united-church.ca

Questions, concerns, or comments? We'd like to hear from you!

James Scott

General Council Officer:
Residential Schools
1-800-268-3781 ext. 2032

Chad Beharriell

Program Coordinator:
Aboriginal Justice & Right Relations
1-800-268-3781 ext. 4045

Cecile Fausak

Liaison Minister: Residential Schools
647-688-1149 office cell (Alberta-based)

David MacDonald

Special Advisor
416-686-5449

This update is available on the United Church website:

www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools

Published quarterly by the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools.