

## Residential Schools Update 2005

**"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."

-- from The United Church of Canada Brief to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Nov. 1993

### Residential Schools Steering Committee Update (March 2005)

#### 2005: A Key Year

Several key decisions are anticipated in 2005 that may significantly affect the work done by the Residential Schools Steering Committee:

- the awaited government response to the recommendations of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) for substantial changes to Canada's Dispute Resolution process
- the decision of the Supreme Court, which will hear the Blackwater appeal on vicarious liability on May 16 and may render a judgment by the end of the year
- the agreement currently being negotiated between a number of Roman Catholic entities and the federal government with respect to liability and funding for healing

The United Church continues to promote a holistic approach to resolving the wide range of harms done by residential schools, an approach that goes beyond financial compensation to public education, commemoration, and healing.

#### Aboriginal Affairs Committee Examines Dispute Resolution Process

During February and March, the Aboriginal Affairs Committee of the House of Commons held three hearings examining the government's Alternative Dispute Resolution process for survivors of Indian Residential Schools.

Presentations were made by a number of former students who told moving stories of their own individual experiences in residential schools. Members of Parliament were deeply affected by the hurt and loss that these survivors had faced.

In addition, the committee heard from a number of lawyers supporting the Baxter Class Action, and from the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, who proposed a comprehensive lump sum settlement for all former students. The Deputy Prime Minister, Anne McLellan, who is responsible for Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC), also presented testimony.

Committee members themselves expressed serious concerns and anger about what they perceived as excessive administrative costs for the Dispute Resolution process in comparison to the actual money paid for compensation.

The sessions provoked a lively debate resulting in a filibuster by Pat Martin, New Democratic MP from Manitoba. In the end, the three Opposition parties united in their report to Parliament urging the government, among other things, to

- terminate the Alternative Dispute Resolution program

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- initiate court-supervised negotiations with former students to achieve a court-enforced settlement for compensation
- initiate a national Truth and Reconciliation process

The report will likely be tabled in Parliament by the end of April.

### **“Community” Inquiry Roundtable**

The public inquiry consultation process, initiated by the United Church, continues. The fourth Roundtable was held in Nanaimo on February 21. The agenda included a look at what has already been done in terms of “community” inquiries; the experience of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society of BC, which is holding focus groups across the province; and practical issues related to funding, staffing, etc., to get the inquiry up and running.

There was renewed support for a truth-telling process that is community-based, and which can accommodate not only cultural and regional diversity but also build on local processes already taking place.

The Roundtable established five sub-committees to work on issues related to implementing a community inquiry. They are Visioning, Partnerships/Fundraising, Staffing, Design, and Communications/Public Relations. The sub-committees will report to the next Roundtable on May 11 in Toronto.

### **National Day of Healing and Reconciliation**

May 26 has been established as the National Day for Healing and Reconciliation (NDHR). Churches, congregations, and communities from across the country will be urged to observe this day with local activities. The aim is to promote healing and reconciliation among all races, creeds, and peoples living in Canada.

For the last several years, people have taken this opportunity to become more aware of the history of racism in Canada and, in particular, to struggle with the painful legacy of Indian Residential Schools. The overall political purpose of the schools, namely to assimilate Native children by separating them from their own families, culture, and traditions while steeping them in European culture and religion, has nullified the “good” intentions of many who worked in or ran the schools.

This year, the United Church is encouraging people to spend time during the month between May 26 and June 22 (National Aboriginal Day) to reflect on why Indian Residential Schools were such a significant part of Canadian public policy for over a century. We want to use this month, beginning so close to May 24 (Victoria Day), to examine the roots of colonialism and its resulting policy of assimilation and cultural destruction, and to ask why this policy was so widely accepted by the non-Aboriginal population.

It is hoped that in an evolving understanding, there can be genuine progress towards repentance, healing, recovery, and right relations. In 2006, the General Council Office will make available a congregational resource for a three-week process of study and reflection, culminating in a liturgy to mark National Aboriginal Day.

More information can be obtained from NDHR at [www.ndhr.ca](http://www.ndhr.ca).

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### **BC Survivors' Awareness Walk**

Starting April 1, a group of former residential school students and their supporters who belong to the Gitksan Spirit and Survivors Society in Hazelton, BC, will begin a walk from Prince Rupert to Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. The goal of the walk is to raise awareness of the impact of residential schools on Aboriginal families and communities.

Port Alberni is the site of the most notorious residential school with which the United Church is associated. The walkers will connect with former students and their families in communities along the route and hope to bring healing as painful personal stories are shared.

Organizations and communities have been very supportive of the initiative but practical support and places to hold meetings in each town are still needed. On March 19, a fundraising feast was held in Hazelton. James Scott of the national staff was present to make a donation and speak on behalf of The United Church of Canada. The feast included traditional drumming and dancing, good food, give-a-ways, and many moving stories by former students and community leaders.

### **Steering Committee Visits Former Portage la Prairie School**

The Residential School Steering Committee held its February 2005 meeting at the offices of the All Native Circle Conference (ANCC) in Winnipeg. The committee welcomed Nelson Hart and Anne Callaghan, who have been appointed as representatives from ANCC, and expressed its gratitude to departing member Bernice Saulteaux with a quilt.

As part of its own continuing education, the committee travelled to Portage La Prairie to visit the former residential school. The building, which is still standing, is now a community college serving the Long Plains First Nation. The residential school was started in 1888 with the formation of the first Methodist Church-run school. In the 1890s, the government decided to build an industrial school. It was opened in 1914 and operated until 1971 as a farm school. The building then stood abandoned until the 1980s and is now a college operated by Aboriginal people. Some former students are now teaching at the college. The school was not originally on reserve land, but in 1981, it was transferred to the Long Plain First Nation.

We then learned about a project to create the Indian Residential School Museum of Canada on the site. The website for the museum is [www.longplainfirstnation.ca/museum](http://www.longplainfirstnation.ca/museum). The land and building space will come from the Long Plains First Nation. It is hoped that the museum will open on June 21, 2008. While having a base in the Portage La Prairie school, the museum will have travelling components that can go out to communities.

The Residential School Steering Committee also visited "Where Are the Children?"-a travelling exhibit created by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation that was on display at the Manitoba Museum. It is hoped that eventually this very powerful visual exhibit will be permanently housed in the new Indian Residential School Museum of Canada.

### **To Contact Us**

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## **Residential Schools Steering Committee Update (June 2005)**

### **Political Agreement**

On May 30, 2005, an historic agreement was signed in Ottawa between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Government of Canada. Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan and National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine pledged that by March 2006 there would be comprehensive recommendations to resolve the legacy of Indian Residential Schools.

The agreement anticipates a lump-sum payment to each former student. In addition, there will be long-term programs for healing, a revised ADR process for individual abuse, commemoration events, a national public apology, a memorial, and a countrywide process for Truth Sharing, Healing, and Reconciliation. The essence of this commitment flows from the AFN report of November 2004 calling for such a comprehensive approach.

Chief Fontaine declared that this agreement was “truly historic” and without precedent. Former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci has been appointed by the federal government to negotiate with lawyers representing former students in class actions about how their cases might be resolved so that all survivors can be compensated.

While there are 12,500 lawsuits still outstanding, there are approximately 87,000 survivors still living who attended Indian Residential Schools. A lump-sum approach by the government would be similar to recent actions to recognize communal harms to Japanese Canadians during World War II and victims infected by Hepatitis C.

### **Church Advocates Comprehensive Healing Approach**

In April, the Residential Schools Steering Committee of the United Church issued a statement on redressing the harms of the Indian Residential School system. Titled “Establishing a Firm Foundation for Healing and Right Relations,” the statement was a response to both the Assembly of First Nations’ Report on the review of the government’s Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process and the recommendation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to terminate the ADR process.

In part the statement said, “The United Church supports the analysis and restorative direction of the Assembly of First Nations’ (AFN) Report on the review of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), particularly the assertion that the ADR is too limited. We are of the view that the ADR requires significant changes in order to increase its effectiveness and efficiency. Nevertheless, the ADR offers an important alternate resolution process to litigation for former students of Indian residential schools.

“The United Church of Canada does not support the recent recommendation of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development to terminate Indian Residential Schools Resolutions Canada’s ADR process. Termination of this mechanism without implementing a clear alternative to costly, time-consuming, and adversarial litigation does not serve the interests of former students of Indian residential schools nor of Canadian society as a whole.”

The statement went on to outline what the church sees as a comprehensive approach to healing and reconciliation that is based on the following seven elements: apology, blanket compensation for all former students, a resolution mechanism for abuse claims, support for healing programs, a national truth telling process, support for language and culture recovery, and public education.

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The full text of the statement is available at [www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/statements/050401](http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/statements/050401).

### Community Inquiry Roundtable

The 5th Roundtable of the community inquiry consultation process was held in Toronto on May 11. Representatives from church, government, and Aboriginal groups attended. The discussions have evolved beyond the concept of a public inquiry in the formal sense (e.g., with commissioners who hold hearings in various communities) to a community-based model where communities could initiate events and processes that reflect local or regional cultural realities.

The national “secretariat” would set overall goals and parameters, conduct promotional activities, provide funding support, and supply “witnesses” who could record the events so that a national record is compiled. The goal of the process would be healing and education rather than assigning blame.

Currently, committees have been set up to begin implementation work in five areas: visioning, design, partnerships/funding, staffing, and communications. A steering committee has also been named to manage the development of this Truth Sharing, Healing, and Reconciliation process. Chief Bobby Joseph is the Chair.

While the United Church has co-ordinated the process to this point, leadership has devolved to a steering committee headed by Aboriginal participants. The churches and government will primarily play a support role, especially with respect to financial resources. A job description is in place for a project director for the initial set-up year and a hiring process is underway.

The federal government is fully participating in this initiative and has committed significant funds for the initial project director position. In its recent political agreement with the AFN, a truth and reconciliation process is part of the mandate for the Hon. Frank Iacobucci. We have been assured in discussions with Indian Residential Schools Resolutions Canada and the AFN that this is the process they support.

### Update on the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process

To the end of May, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) has screened in over 1,600 applications from former students seeking compensation through the ADR process. On average, 25 applications are received per week. Of these, about 14 percent are from former students of United Church-associated residential schools. This is somewhat higher than our actual proportion of students (about 10 percent). To date, IRSRC has screened in 223 applications related to the United Church.

Currently we have received notification and copies of about 145 of those applications. After research is completed on each application by IRSRC, it is forwarded to the Adjudication Secretariat in Regina for a hearing to be set.

As of May 2005, hearings have been held in 46 cases related to the United Church. United Church representatives have been present at 26 (16 in B.C., 4 in Alberta, 0 in Saskatchewan, 6 in Manitoba). In 17 cases, we were informed that the claimant had asked that a church representative *not* be present. In three other cases, the church was not informed of the hearing until after it had taken place. Eleven hearings are scheduled for June, July and August.

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Public criticism of the slowness of the ADR process has resulted in the government's commitment to hold 1,000 or more hearings in the coming 12 months. That may mean up to 120 hearings for the United Church over the next year. Because of this, we plan to train additional volunteers in some regions who can attend ADR hearings on behalf of the church.

In many cases, the presence and words of the church representative have been very meaningful to the claimant. In a recent written decision from one hearing, the Adjudicator wrote, "I thank all for their participation and input, especially [the United Church representative]. I think her contribution, including her sincere apology to the claimant greatly helped to demonstrate that a fundamental purpose of the ADR process is to enable healing by acknowledging a claimant's experiences and accepting responsibility for any harm done to them."

### **Committee Welcomes New Staff**

The Residential Schools Steering Committee welcomed new staff person Cecile Fausak at its May 2005 meeting at Church House in Toronto.

Cecile, who begins July 1, will work with the General Council Officer: Residential Schools and the Special Advisor to the Residential Schools Steering Committee to co-ordinate and implement all aspects of the work of the Residential Schools Steering Committee. In particular, Cecile will represent the United Church in various processes to resolve claims against the church, co-ordinate and train volunteers, and develop educational and communications strategies to assist the church to understand and respond to the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system.

The committee also welcomed Allan Sinclair as the General Council Executive's representative. Allan is the minister at Poplar River Pastoral Charge in northern Manitoba. Allan also serves as the Chair of Keewatin Presbytery and has been a member of the Healing Council.

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## Residential Schools Steering Committee Update (September 2005)

### “Listening to the Spirit-Preparing the Way”

#### 2005 National Aboriginal Consultation

In 1986, on behalf of The United Church of Canada, then-Moderator Robert Smith made an apology to First Peoples, and delivered it to those who had removed themselves from the 31st General Council in Sudbury to a tipi in a parking lot of Laurentian University. The apology was not accepted, but was “joyfully received” and acknowledged. A stone cairn was erected on that spot but was left incomplete on the advice of the Elders who felt that time must be given to see how the church would walk together with First Nations people. More stones could be added to recognize any endeavours the church made in living out its apology.

In anticipation of the 20th anniversary of the apology in 2006, the fifth national Aboriginal Consultation was held at Laurentian University this past July, and several stones were added to the cairn in a spirit-filled and moving concluding ceremony. The consultation featured three theme presentations-Right Relations (Brenda Simpson), Leadership (Stan McKay), and Youth at Risk (Martin Broken Leg)-with sharing circles after each presentation.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Jenny Te Paa, Dean of the Anglican College of St. Jean in New Zealand, and a Maori. She challenged the gathering to think about bicultural theological education and building structures of mutual mission and partnership with Indigenous peoples. It was not easy to provide a safe space for people to say what was in their heart, but there was much trust and respect evident as each one of the 100 or so participants stood in the large circle to speak on the final day.

For the first time, 16 staff people-”people of the boat” related to Aboriginal Ministries in some way-were invited to attend. They were warmly accepted, listened hard, and met in their own circles. Much remains with them from this profound immersion experience. The General Secretary, Jim Sinclair wrote

“For several of us, each morning began with the sacred fire. The moment the sun peeked over the forest and onto the site of the cairn, the smoke of wood and sage enveloped us. Wise teachings were shared. The sense of being part of God’s creation was profound. This practice was sustaining as the days unfolded.

“The Greek Orthodox Church understands tears of either anguish or joy as one of the means of grace. They are signs that ‘God is here.’ There never was any doubt in my mind. When the tears arose out of great pain, there were willing arms to hold us. Tears of joy always pointed to new life. And the gathered circles of that week last July were vivid reminders that ‘face-to-face’ times are the best way to foster ‘right relations.’

“It’s never easy when friends are still feeling the brokenness of residential schools, other forms of oppression and prejudice, or that the United Church is still failing them. Yet, in the midst of all that, a gracious patience, respectful listening, and a generous hospitality extended to non-Aboriginal guests like myself reinforced a deep sense of hope.

“Continuing to address the best ways to be with one another remains. The question of how best to share power in our denomination among all who seek ways of serving Christ faithfully still challenges. Meeting regularly in national consultations such as this one is a valuable habit to continue.”

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Wenh-In Ng, General Council Minister for Racial and Gender Justice shared this reflection:

“Graced by the sharing of multiple voices from many Aboriginal communities, many linguistic groups, voices spanning a wide age range, voices articulating (or singing) multi-faceted experiences, I ask: how can these voices be heard in all their strength and authenticity, wisdom and challenge, by the rest of this United Church as integral dimensions of our life together?”

“Experiencing the exceptional leadership of designated speakers/facilitators and the leadership that emerges spontaneously, I rejoice. How can we learn to receive and celebrate such gifts without immediately coveting them for our own tasks and structures?”

“Cleansed by smudging of sweetgrass and touch of cedar and nourished by water and straw-berries at sunrise ceremonies, I plead: show me how to greet You with my whole being each morning along with the rest of your creation.

“Faced with the painful reality of the uncompleted cairn, I pray: teach the non-Aboriginal part of our church, both dominant White settler folk and latecomer immigrants, to seek ways to live out the Apology individually and communally as it approaches its 20th anniversary.”

Watch for a Spirit Connection show on the consultation in November 2006.

### **Translation of Apologies**

The 1998 apology made to United Church Indian Residential School students has been translated into Cree syllabics, Oneida, Oji-Cree, Mohawk, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and French. If you wish a copy in any of these languages, please contact Alison Jordan at 416-231-5931 ext. 2014.

The 1986 apology made to First Nations Peoples is also available in Cree syllabics. The Residential Schools Steering Committee is arranging its translation into the other languages, too.

### **Activity Following Political Accord**

On May 30, a Political Accord was signed in Ottawa between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Government of Canada to resolve the legacy of Indian Residential Schools. At that time, Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan and National Chief Phil Fontaine of the Assembly of First Nations agreed that former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci would be appointed as federal representative to negotiate a comprehensive resolution package with the AFN, the churches, and plaintiff counsel by March 2006. Chief Fontaine declared this agreement “truly historic” and without precedent.

Mr. Iacobucci has a broad mandate including a lump-sum payment to each former student, a revised Alternative Dispute Resolution process, a Truth and Reconciliation process, a national public apology, community healing programs, and commemoration events.

In the ensuing four months, Mr. Iacobucci has convened two “tables” that meet almost weekly. The first table discusses compensation issues. Legal counsel for the four parties (Canada, the churches, the AFN, and the plaintiffs’ counsel) attend. The second table deals with a Truth and Reconciliation process, healing and commemoration. The United Church is represented by its Residential School staff.

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There are many difficult issues facing each table. Primary among them are the limited financial pot from which all compensation payments, healing programs, and legal fees will be funded; the absence of the Roman Catholic entities from the process; and the short timeline. Mr. Iacobucci will produce an initial draft report later this fall.

### **Progress on Truth-Sharing, Healing and Reconciliation Process**

The General Council Executive (November 2003) mandated the Residential Schools Steering Committee to initiate action in support of a national public inquiry, arising out of the challenge of Georges Erasmus to General Council 38 in Wolfville.

Since then, the United Church has organized and facilitated six Roundtable meetings with representatives of Aboriginal organizations, the churches, and the federal government. Based on a collective understanding of the needs of survivors of residential schools, the Roundtable developed a community-based Truth and Reconciliation approach with the twin objectives of healing and education. Communities would be encouraged to develop culturally and regionally appropriate opportunities for former students and others to tell their stories in a safe context and have those stories heard, validated, and recorded. This would create a national education and participation process that would enable all Canadian citizens to come to terms with the impact and actual history of Indian Residential Schools.

This Truth-Sharing, Healing and Reconciliation (THR) process is now led by a Steering Committee that is co-chaired by Chief Bobby Joseph and Sharon Thira, both of whom are based in Vancouver and work with the B.C. Residential Schools Survivors Society. United Church staff and volunteers remain actively involved.

In the past few months, it appeared that the THR process might be overtaken by the Political Accord and the clear intention of the AFN to have a formal, national Public Inquiry under the Inquiries Act similar to the original proposal of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Vigorous discussion has taken place since early August at the second “table” created by Mr. Iacobucci among representatives of the federal government, the AFN, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, the churches, plaintiffs’ counsel, and the Roundtable about which vision best addresses the needs of former students.

Presently there seems a general acceptance of a two-pronged approach, with both a flexible and diverse community-based healing process (Roundtable) and a national fact-finding one (AFN). As yet unresolved is the question of what powers and authority the national fact-finding inquiry should have, for example, around powers to open archival records.

### **Update on the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process**

In 2003, the federal government created the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process as an alternative to lawsuits to more quickly resolve claims of former residential students regarding physical and sexual abuse, or wrongful confinement. The ADR employs a less formal hearing before an adjudicator to determine a settlement. By September 2005, Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada (IRSRC) has screened in 2,300 applications to the ADR process. Of these, about one third are from claimants who had filed a lawsuit but are now choosing the ADR process. Fourteen percent of the applications are from former students of United Church-associated residential schools (311).

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**Number of ADR applications forwarded to the United Church to date:** 198

**Number of hearings completed:** 92

**Number of hearings attended by United Church representative:** 47

(United Church attends all hearings except where requested not to by claimant)

ADR claims are being processed at a much faster pace now. For the 12 months up to May 2005, only 46 hearings had been scheduled. That number has doubled during the past four months.

### **“A Moment for the Ages”**

#### **Assembly of First Nations National Residential Schools Conference, July 19-21, Vancouver, B.C. (from Cecile Fausak’s perspective)**

The banner overhead read “A Moment for the Ages.” This might have referred to the significant turning point represented by the Political Accord signed by the Assembly of First Nations and Canada on May 30, 2005, which gave rise to this national conference. The banner might have referred to the overwhelming response of nearly 1,400 survivors to the invitation to provide input to “a fair and just resolution of the Residential Schools legacy.” The slogan might have also anticipated the collective of individual moments of healing experienced and witnessed during the conference. One such moment stood out for me as 150-plus conference attendees gathered in a breakout session to deal specifically with suggestions for a truth-telling and reconciliation process.

In the morning, David MacDonald and Chief Bobby Joseph, co-chair of the Truth-Sharing, Healing and Reconciliation (THR) Steering Committee, described the progress of the Roundtable discussions to date (see above). Bobby said “our children will never walk together unless everyone knows about this history. Keep your eye on this ‘moment for the ages’ and this collective goal.”

In the afternoon breakout session, many survivors stood to voice their support, hope, and cautions regarding such a THR process. One of them was Louisa Smith of Kitimaat Village, a former student at the Alberni school and a retired family and trauma counsellor in Prince Rupert. She affirmed that everyone is in a different place on the healing journey, but as an earlier speaker in the morning had also said, the word “forgiveness” constantly churns up a lot of emotions and thoughts, and causes problems. Both survivors had said “forgiveness” begins with “me”-think selfishly if you have to, for your own health. Louisa said for her, “for-giving” is about releasing memories, and giving them back. She visualized all her memories in the shape of a pie -each piece represented the memories surrounding a particular person who had harmed her. In her healing journey, she has mentally and emotionally taken each piece, handed it over to the offender, and forgiven them. Then she asked David MacDonald to come forward-she wanted to acknowledge his courage as a church representative to be “up front” in this place where so many people are not ready to forgive, and she proceeded to offer him a handshake in forgiveness. A “moment for the ages.”

I wanted to personally meet such a strong woman. And I did-when we broke into even smaller working groups, she and I ended up together! After the session, we talked for over an hour about her feelings about church now, what triggers she experiences, her reaction to the apology, and her participation in putting on a play in Kitimaat about residential schools called Reclaiming Our Spirits. More truth-sharing.

As I sat through hours of stories, reflections, suggestions, anger, tears, prayer, and analysis about the painful legacy of residential schools and trying to bring closure to it, a quote from Sam Keen kept weaving throughout the long line-ups of speakers: Wonder is the spiritual stance that makes us both humble in the face of things, and thankful. The resilience and courage of those 1,400 survivors was a wonder. That they tell their stories is a wonder. That in such brokenness, each one still puts one foot in

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front of the other is a wonder. That some can forgive is a wonder. I am humbled in the face of it. I am thankful that I was there. May the whole church and our country begin to experience more of those moments of healing and reconciliation on the path toward new relationships with First Nations peoples.

### **Committee Welcomes New Chair**

As of June 2005, for the first time since its creation in 1998, the Residential Schools Steering Committee has a chair who is a survivor of the residential school experience. Alvin Dixon of the Heiltsuk Nation went to Alberni Indian Residential School for eight years. He attended the University of British Columbia, and has had a varied and busy career as a teacher and in fisheries management for First Nations associations. Alvin has served many directorships as well as being a member of the B.C. Board of Parole and the General Council Theology and Faith Committee. He currently serves on the boards of Healing Our Spirit, Residential School Survivors' Council, and Vancouver Child and Family Services Society. Alvin is also chair of the Advisory Board of the Indian Residential School Survivors Society in Vancouver and works many volunteer hours with them.

The other elected committee members are Allan Sinclair (GCE rep), Charlotte Sullivan, Murray Whetung, Anne Thomas Callahan, and Nelson Hart.

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