



# 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 2009

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## Archival Research Project Begins

At its June 2008 meeting, the Residential Schools Steering Committee approved a research project to "understand and record the history of each of the 13 residential schools with which The United Church of Canada was associated as named in the Settlement Agreement." The project will also include the Red Deer Industrial Residential School run by the Methodists, which closed in 1919. This comprehensive review is necessary as we prepare to participate in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and as part of our contribution to the Working Group on Missing Children.

A contract researcher has been engaged to undertake this 40-week project. Ted Wickson, who has extensive experience in archival research on residential schools for the Anglican Church, will gather as full a picture as possible of each school, including information about its history, students, deaths and burials, staff, relationship to the community, and interaction with the church. The project will involve direct research in archival and other records, on-site visits, anecdotal information acquired from former students, staff, and community and local church members. Ted began work on January 5, 2009.

## Selection Process to Replace TRC Commissioners

In a joint statement released on October 23, 2008, all of the church parties to the Settlement Agreement expressed regret over the resignation of Justice Harry LaForme as Truth and Reconciliation Chair while affirming their confidence in Commissioners Claudette Dumont-Smith and Jane Brewin Morley. However, as a result of the controversy created by resignation of the Chair, the TRC remained in a state of uncertainty for several months. At the end of January, Commissioners Morley and Dumont-Smith voluntarily offered their resignations in order to facilitate a fresh start for the Truth and Reconciliation process. We recognize their integrity and goodwill in acting in what they perceived to be the best interests of the commission.

A seven-person selection panel, chaired by former Supreme Court Justice Frank Iacobucci, has been identified and is undertaking the process of identifying candidates for the Chair and Commissioners. James Scott is a member of the selection panel representing the Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches.

Go to [www.trc-cvr.ca](http://www.trc-cvr.ca) for up-to-date information.

## Aboriginal Ministries Circle Inaugurated



Left to right: Peggy Monague, Healing Fund Coordinator; Russell Burns, member of Aboriginal Ministries Steering Group; Laverne Jacobs, General Council Office Aboriginal Ministries Coordinator; Stan McKay, former Moderator; Maggie McLeod, co-chair of national Living into Right Relations planning team.

At its November 2008 meeting, the Executive of the General Council (GCE) received and adopted the report and recommendations of the Aboriginal Ministries Steering Committee. The steering committee was established in 2006 to undertake a process of consultation and discernment with Aboriginal members and others within the church about a National Aboriginal Council and an Aboriginal Ministries Unit. Titled "Giving Voice to a Vision," the report recommended the creation of a National Spiritual Gathering to meet every three years to discern directions for Aboriginal ministries work, an Aboriginal Ministries Council to oversee and guide the work, and an Aboriginal Ministries

Circle as the staff team. The GCE recognized and expressed gratitude for the historic nature of this decision. On January 6, 2009, members of the Aboriginal Ministries Steering Committee, General Council staff, and guests gathered to give ceremonial recognition to the work of the committee and to mark the beginning of new commitments to Aboriginal ministry within the United Church. Through ritual, teaching, and feasting in the reconfigured workspace on the fourth floor, the vision of Aboriginal peoples within The United Church of Canada was celebrated and embraced.

## Recognition of Prophetic Leadership

This past fall was the 10th anniversary of the United Church's apology to former students of residential schools and their families and communities. At its November 2008 meeting, the Executive of General Council also unanimously adopted a proposal from the Residential Schools Steering Committee to send a letter of appreciation and acknowledgement to the Rev. Kathy Hogman and leaders of the congregational group who played an important role in the genesis of that apology.

The letter from Moderator David Giuliano said, in part, "We recognize that a number of people in B.C. Conference called upon the church to listen to the voices and experiences of former residential school students and to accept responsibility for the church's role in the Indian residential school system.

"However, we want to acknowledge the singular contribution made by you and members of St. Andrew's United Church in offering an apology feast and public apology to the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people at the site of the Alberni residential school in March 1997. You and those who studied, talked and listened, prayed, prepared and hosted the feast gave outstanding, persistent and prophetic leadership in the face of resistance and fear as the wider church struggled to understand and accept its complicity in the residential school system.

"I wish to express our deep appreciation to you for your personal ministry and leadership, and to those in St. Andrew's who walked with you."

## **“Remembering the Children” and Conference in Edmonton**

It was an amazing two days. About 450 students from King’s University College in Edmonton, 20 students from Blue Quills First Nations College in St. Paul, and over 100 members of the public attended the Christian-based school’s winter interdisciplinary conference “Truth and Reconciliation: Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools,” January 21–22, 2009. This was no ordinary academic conference.

Opening worship included smudging, prayers in Cree, drumming, and singing. From the opening keynote speech by Dr. Maggie Hodgson to concluding remarks by Chief Robert Joseph, the point was made that all Canadians are in need of healing as we move toward reconciliation. Eleven break-out sessions were led by former students, those living with the intergenerational impact, or those offering support to survivors and Aboriginal communities. They spoke their truth and shared their experiences and vision of right relationships. Ted Quewezance of the National Residential Schools Survivors Society asked each person to educate a friend about the darkest secret in the country. It appears that many did. Calls and e-mails continue to pour in attesting to the impact of the experience on the hearts of participants, and inquiring about how something like this can happen in other venues.



On the evening of January 21, over 300 people gathered in a circle at the Canadian Native Friendship Centre in a fifth “Remembering the Children” event, following the pattern set during the national Aboriginal and Church Leaders’ Tour in March 2008, intended to promote the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Elders conducted a Grand Smudge and church leaders lit candles in the four directions. Archbishop Terry Finlay, the Anglican Primate’s special envoy for residential schools, assured the crowd, “We’re in this for the long haul, regardless of what happens with the TRC.” Bob Smith, former Moderator of the United Church, recalled the words of the 1986 apology he delivered to First Nations peoples. Presbyterian Moderator Cheol Soon Park and Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, President of the Roman Catholic Entities Corporation, also spoke words of regret and hope. Drummers from the Amiskwachiy Academy (pictured), a thriving First Nations school in Edmonton, were among a number of dance and musical presentations.

Roy Berkenbosch, King’s College Vice-President for Student Life and Campus Ministries, was inspired to adopt the truth and reconciliation theme after watching the government’s apology on June 11, 2008. He wanted to help the students find their “place in the work that needs to be done in order to bring healing to our communities.”

## **In Calgary, Gaining an Urban Perspective on the TRC**

The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary and the Aspen Family and Community Networks Society are preparing to host the second of five forums to provide information on, and prepare for, the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in an urban setting. About 55 former students of residential schools in western Canada, staff from Calgary social agencies, and representatives from United, Presbyterian, and Anglican churches gathered at Kamp Kiwanis in Bragg Creek last November. Survivors shared their thoughts and feelings about the Prime Minister’s apology and the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Steven Francis of the TRC Secretariat outlined the work that has been done so far. The attendees were most grateful as many were not aware of the TRC’s mandate.

A second forum will be held at the Calgary Friendship Centre, February 10–11, 2009, to explore how Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal urban citizens can fully participate in the TRC. Third and fourth forums will look at how the traditional roles of Elders and youth and spiritual and healing practices may be honoured in the TRC process. This project is funded in part by the United Church Justice and Reconciliation Fund.

### **Right Relations Experiences: “It Takes a Village”**

On May 10–12, 2008, the United Church held a conference in Pinawa, Manitoba, as the first step in its five-year national right relations vision. Each Conference sent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants to explore what is needed to understand each other and live together in harmony. Besides plenary sessions, participants met in “home” groups to get to know one another, reflect on traditional teachings, and discuss what could be done to further this initiative locally. They covenanted to walk together for five years. It was a powerful event, manifesting respect and goodwill.

One of the highlights of the Pinawa gathering was the experiential learning process called “It Takes a Village” facilitated by Kathi Camilleri. She illustrates how prior to European contact, First Peoples had well-established cultural and spiritual identities. Their children were the centre of their lives. The whole village was involved in caring for children and teaching them in the ways of their people. Participants then learn about the wide-ranging destructive impact of taking the children away to residential schools.

Most regional/Conference home groups have held follow-up meetings to plan and implement local events and strategies. The “Living into Right Relations” group of B.C. Conference hosted “It Takes a Village” in four venues during the fall of 2008. Facilitation was provided by both an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leader. Other home groups are planning regional “mini-Pinawa” events for 2009, initiating communication tools on Facebook, engaging people in the Blanket exercise developed by KAIROS, and negotiating Conference support.

A national planning team, co-chaired by Maggie McLeod and Russell Daye, has been reconstituted under the Residential Schools Steering Committee to facilitate this overall initiative for the next five years and offer ongoing support, resources, and information to the local groups. The right relations initiative is intended to parallel and complement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

### **A Step on the Journey of Reconciliation in Kenora**

Colin Wasacase attended residential school in Manitoba as a boy. As an adult, he taught in residential schools and became principal of Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School near Kenora, Ontario. He went on to work on Aboriginal education issues at the national level. Dan Essery was also a teacher and principal in the Kenora public school system. Both are now involved in lay worship leadership in their respective churches, St. Andrew’s United in Keewatin and Knox United in Kenora.

On October 26, 2008, with the background of a residential school display at the local museum, and on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the United Church apology to residential school survivors, Dan and Colin led a worship service at Knox. They chose to do a dramatic dialogue of the history of the church’s involvement with residential schools. Dan took the role of the non-Aboriginal Christian school authority, and Colin represented the Aboriginal community affected by the intrusion on traditional ways. An opportunity was included for Colin to relate some of his personal story, as well as to explain traditional Aboriginal religious symbols and practices. The dialogue

concluded with the entire non-Aboriginal congregation being invited to join Dan in reading the 1998 apology to Colin in his representative role.

An unrehearsed personal gift exchange followed. Colin presented Dan with a stone Aboriginal warhead found by his family on his grandfather's land in Saskatchewan. It symbolized the pact that their respective people would never be at war again. Dan presented Colin with a diamond willow walking stick that had belonged to his father, symbolizing the journey they've committed to take toward truth and reconciliation.

In a community in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people continue to work toward better relations, it is hoped that the minds and hearts of the congregation members were moved by this service of worship.

(Thanks to Dan Essery for submitting this story.)

### **Alberni Dorms to Be Demolished**

Gone is the physical structure of the Alberni Indian Residential School and soon, too, will be Peake Hall, the dormitory for senior boys. On February 10, 2009, former students are being invited to a Call to Witness at noon. Those interested in attending may contact Anne Robinson of the Tseshaht First Nation at 250-720-8907 or [FirstNationsWildcrafters@shaw.ca](mailto:FirstNationsWildcrafters@shaw.ca).

### **Update on the *FrontRunners* Film**

Is the Olympic torch coming to your community? Capture the energy and view a film about the 1967 Pan Am Games torchrunners, to enter into a discussion about manifestations of racism and residential schools. How are First Nations involved in the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver? How are Aboriginal athletes supported? Consider getting together with other churches in your community to sponsor a learning event and strengthen relationships.

At Grace United in Thornbury, Ontario, the EcuFems group hosted a fundraising dinner and film screening to support the kids that playwright Laura Robinson coaches in cycling and cross-country skiing at Chippewa of Nawash.

Watch for *Niigaanibatowaad: FrontRunners*, and a discussion guide to go with the DVD, available from AVEL by March 2009. See the promotional trailer on YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/FrontRunnersMovie](http://www.youtube.com/user/FrontRunnersMovie). The DVD may be purchased from the National Film Board at 1-800-267-7710 or [www.nfb.ca](http://www.nfb.ca).



### **Consultation Regarding Spending “In-Kind” Funds**

A recent consultation in Winnipeg focused on the imaginative use of resources for recovery of language, culture, and spirituality, addressing intergenerational impacts, and family reunification. It was held to provide advice and direction to the United Church Healing and Reconciliation Service Evaluation Committee. This “in-kind committee” has been established to allocate \$1 million over the next five years to healing and reconciliation programs according to criteria set out in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. Members spent a day brainstorming exciting new possibilities with Native experts on language, culture, and spiritual recovery from the four western provinces and representatives of the Indian Residential School Survivor Society and the Assembly of First Nations.

The recovery of Aboriginal languages was seen as an urgent priority that could assist in addressing intergenerational impacts and bringing families together if it was done in a culture camp setting. Other concrete suggestions were a national foundation for the reclamation of Aboriginal languages in Canada or a research centre focused on children and family with a special emphasis on recovery of language, culture, and spirituality. Participants agreed that the original federal budget of \$172 million for language and culture must be reinstated.

There were encouraging examples of where important work was happening in First Nations educational institutions on language recovery with immersion and early childhood education. The need to recognize the importance of women in the community and the family as well as drawing on the traditional strengths of Indigenous knowledge were seen as central to these initiatives.

### **Moderator Delivers Apologies**

When Moderator David Giuliano visited Newfoundland and Labrador Conference last October, he attended the opening of Bay St. George's Mi'kmaq Culture Circle in the former United Church building in St. George's. There he delivered the apologies to Director Ann Hart (pictured at left). Thanks to Bernie Francis for the Mi'kmaw translation.



On November 7, 2008, the Moderator visited Moraviantown and the Delaware First Nation, where Terrence Whiteye, Executive of the General Council member for ANCC, lives. He and others from Muncie and Six Nations were invited for the presentation of the apology plaque. Copies of the apologies in Delaware were provided to all members of the Delaware Nation. We thank Velma Noah and Lunaapeew kihkeesak, Delaware Nation, for the translation services.

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### **Contact Us**

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

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## Month of Healing and Reconciliation

The Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches are promoting a national Month for Reflection on Healing and Reconciliation to encourage congregations and other Canadians to engage in awareness, reflection, healing, and relationship-building activities. Three significant days form a framework for the month:

- May 26, National Day of Healing and Reconciliation
- June 11, First Anniversary of the Prime Minister's Apology to Survivors
- June 21, National Aboriginal Day

### Key Reflection and Discussion Resources

#### ***Niiganibatowaad: FrontRunners* New in AVEL: Study guide and DVD (48 min)**

The Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Churches have created a cross-cultural study resource to explore issues of racism, residential schools, and healing. View a trailer at [www.youtube.ca/unitedchurchofcanada](http://www.youtube.ca/unitedchurchofcanada) under Subscriptions. Why not celebrate other renowned Aboriginal, Inuit, and Metis runners in conjunction with viewing this award-winning film of the memory play produced at General Council 2006.

***A Healing Journey for Us All: Uncovering the Wounds of Empire* New stock available in UCRD (\$2.50 each)** A three-session study to promote healing and reconciliation in light of the legacy of the British Empire and a colonial history characterized by racism.

#### ***Pinawa East, South, West, North* New on YouTube: 4-part DVD (13 min)**

For coverage of the Living into Right Relations gathering held at Pinawa, Manitoba, May 2008, go to [www.youtube.ca/unitedchurchofcanada](http://www.youtube.ca/unitedchurchofcanada) and select "see all" under Playlists to view the Living Into Right Relations playlist with all four parts.

***Muffins for Granny* Available in AVEL: DVD (88 min)** Hear the stories of former residential school students, and follow Anishinabe filmmaker Nadia McLaren in her journey to understanding as she honours the memory of her grandmother.

**Worship Service Suggestions** See [www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/firstnations](http://www.united-church.ca/planning/seasons/firstnations) and [www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/resources/trservice](http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools/resources/trservice)

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission

**Selection of New TRC Commissioners:** The process for appointing new commissioners for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is well underway. A Selection Committee of seven, chaired by Justice Frank Iacobucci, posted job descriptions on the TRC website ([www.trc-cvr.ca](http://www.trc-cvr.ca)) on February 20 with a closing date of March 20. Applications, nominations, and names generated by the committee have produced a pool of outstanding candidates.

Currently, the committee is reviewing the applications and conducting interviews. While no timeline for the appointments has been set, the committee is working diligently, ever mindful that the appointments need to be made as soon as possible.

**Ongoing Work of the Commissioners:** The two current commissioners believe that an important contribution toward truth and reconciliation will be their efforts in preparing their successors to assist with a full resumption of commission activity. Jane Brewin Morley and Claudette Dumont-Smith have indicated that they will be stepping down as commissioners on June 1, 2009. They are preparing a report to the new commissioners and conducting interviews with those who will be contributing to the work of the commission.

## Right Relations Experiences: At Camp Kasota, Sylvan Lake, Alberta

The Alberta and Northwest Conference Living into Right Relations Ad Hoc Committee held its first workshop March 20–22 on the beautiful shores of Sylvan Lake. We invited people interested in being leaders, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, from three regions of the province. Twenty-two individuals formed three regional teams from areas related to All Tribes Presbytery: Saddle Lake Cree Nation paired with St. Paul Presbytery, Hobbema/Samson paired with Red Deer Presbytery, and Morley paired with Foothills Presbytery. As March 21 was the International Day to Eliminate Racism and the first day of spring, it was a fitting time to create new beginnings.

The goal was to create teams that would return to their regions to hold their own events, modelled on the workshop. The event used the KAIROS Canada experiential Blanket Exercise from the resource *In Peace & Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples* to explore the historic relationship between the European settlers and the First Peoples, including a review of relevant Canadian legislation, Indian Residential Schools, and Alberta's five Treaties.



Charles Wood (*pictured back row, far right*) of Saddle Lake Cree Nation reflects, "For my part I will continue to try to be a bridge for all, as I sincerely believe that we must make every effort to understand each other, including our historical past."

The second event is tentatively planned for September 25–27, gathering people from the regions of Northern Lights, Yellowhead, and Edmonton Presbyteries. The Living into Right Relations group is set up on

Facebook (more pictures!) as London Conference also is, thanks to Alice Laine (*pictured middle row, far right*).

Thanks to Pat Robinson (*pictured bottom row, far right*), chair of the ad hoc committee, for this article.

## **The Roundtable on Truth and Reconciliation Continues Work**

Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, it has been observed, “are like spring ice. It takes a lot of hands to pick it up. If one person tries to pick it up, the ice will break and crumble in our hands.” It was in that spirit that the Truth and Reconciliation Roundtable met in March at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation office in Ottawa. The roundtable included representatives from survivor, First Nations, and Inuit organizations along with participants from churches, government, and the TRC Secretariat.

The roundtable discussed progress and plans for the resumption of the commission later this year with the anticipated appointment of three new commissioners as well as strategies to encourage survivors, their families and communities and non-Aboriginal Canadians to actively participate during the five-year life of the commission.

There was agreement that the first anniversary of the apology to survivors by the Prime Minister, the departure of the present commissioners, and the relaunch of the commission should be marked by significant publicity and ceremony. Several survivor organizations offered to work on this. A strong desire was also expressed to use the period from May 26 (the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation) through June 11, to June 21 (National Aboriginal Day) as a Month for Reflection on Healing and Reconciliation. A request for official designation has been sent to the Prime Minister.

## **Community Impacts Working Group**

The Community Impacts Working Group (CIWG), set up three years ago in anticipation of the implementation of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, has been reinvigorated. Initiated by the former IRSRC (Indian Residential Schools Resolutions Canada), the working group includes government agencies, survivor and Aboriginal groups, churches, police and correctional representatives, and health support workers who coordinated efforts to prepare and support communities in dealing with the potential positive and negative impacts of the agreement.

At an April meeting, the working group adopted a revised mandate, established a communications subcommittee to gather information on the recent experiences of survivors around the country, heard an update on the implementation of various components of the agreement, and identified a number of outstanding concerns and issues. The CIWG will meet again within a month.

## **Beginning to Recover the Red Deer Industrial School Cemetery**

In 2005, members of Sunnybrook United Church in Red Deer City became aware that a cemetery existed, unrecognized and overgrown, at the site of the former Red Deer Indian Industrial School. The school was operated 1893–1919 by the Methodist Church under an agreement with the federal government. The sites of the school and cemetery are currently the properties of two different private owners. A group from the church decided to collect what information they could, and pursue getting the cemetery registered and marked. A congregational member, Don Hepburn, has been most diligent in searching for records and pictures, and compiling the findings.

Research shows that students from the First Nations of Saddle Lake, Whitefish Lake, Paul band at Duffield, Samson and Louis Bull at Hobbema, Morley (all in Alberta), and Nelson House, Manitoba, and Métis students attended the school. A list of 325 students who attended up to 1914, with their year of registration, has been located. Uta Fox's 1993 thesis *Failure of the Red Deer Industrial School* by identifies that some



Terry Gibson, kneeling, with archaeological students. Far left: Don Hepburn; far right: Lyle Keewatin-Richards

45 students died, most of tuberculosis. It is not clear how many of these children would have been buried in the school cemetery rather than the city cemetery.

A request to rezone the land for residential development was made to the county in 2008. Fortunately, the province required that a Historic Resources Impact Assessment be done first. The study, done by Terry Gibson of Alberta Western Heritage Inc., included “handstripping” (removal of 5–6 inches of accumulated debris and soil) and found the outlines of 20 graves. Before this was done, a smudge was conducted by Lyle Keewatin-Richards under the guidance of Elder Rock

Abraham, and prayers were offered by Linda Ervin, minister at Sunnybrook United.

In recent weeks, project committee members have visited the various First Nations communities from which students attended the school to inform them of what is known, gather further information, and seek their advice as to next steps. It is hoped that a ceremony at the site may be held soon. Further meetings to discuss how to remember the children and protect and care for the site are planned.

### Archival Research Project

The Archival Research Project suffered a setback recently with the resignation of the researcher, Ted Wickson. The project involves research into the United Church central and regional archives as well as visits to the sites of the former residential schools with which the United Church was associated, and a number of interviews.

Ted began the 40-week project on January 5 and had completed some portions of work. Nevertheless, for personal reasons, he decided not to continue. We are pleased to welcome a replacement contract researcher in the person of Susan Roy.

### Claims and Hearings Update—Independent Assessment Process

The Adjudication Secretariat is gearing up to process 2,500 abuse claims per year as committed to under the Settlement Agreement. This requires recruiting and training many new staff. The United Church received 425 claims in 2008, about 2/3 of the number received in the past three years. We expect a major increase in hearings in 2009.

From January through March this year, claimants in only 6 of 49 hearings welcomed a church representative. This is a significant drop. We are hoping that changes in procedures, and discussions with claimants’ counsel and hearing coordinators will increase opportunities for the church to be present.

**Meetings with Secretariat:** Anglican and United Church staff met with managers and some 100 members of the Secretariat staff in Regina in February to review the communication process for IAP hearings. This was welcomed by all concerned, as the Secretariat staff had little knowledge of the role of the church at hearings, and the usually positive response of claimants to the church’s presence. There are plans for church staff to meet with Secretariat staff in Ottawa and Vancouver as well.

**Statistics:** As of March 15, 2009, the Secretariat had received a total of 10,259 claims (continuing ADR, ADR transfers, and new IAP). About 50% have been settled, have completed a hearing or have been withdrawn ([www.iap-pei.ca](http://www.iap-pei.ca)).

As of March 31, 2009, the ADR/IAP statistics pertaining to the United Church were:

Number of ADR/IAP applications forwarded to the United Church:	1,132
Number of hearings completed or scheduled into June 2009:	645
Number of hearings attended by United Church representative*:	231

\*United Church sends representatives to all hearings except when requested not to by the claimant

**New Manitoba representatives:** RSSC staff and some veterans spent January 9 training a new group of volunteers to represent the church at ADR/IAP hearings. In addition to current representatives John Badertscher, Sandra-Hayes Gardiner, Bill Gillis, Wayne Larstone, Leslie Elizabeth King, Jan Van Aertselaer and Bruce Faurschou, nine new members agreed to take up this important ministry: Paul Campbell, Adele Compton, Elsie and Peter Douglas, Don and Susan Maxson, Ann Naylor, Nancy Sanders, and Richard Sawchuck.

### **Assistance to Attend “Returning to Spirit” Programs**

The Residential Schools Steering Committee has agreed to support up to 10 Aboriginal and 10 non-Aboriginal participants over the next year to attend any of the three “Returning to Spirit” workshops. Lay people are particularly encouraged to apply.

The committee will cover the workshop fee, accommodation, and meals at the hosting centre. The participant is responsible to cover all travel costs. See past issues for more information about this highly acclaimed healing and reconciliation program.

Apply by sending a copy of your registration form to [irs@united-church.ca](mailto:irs@united-church.ca). Payment will be made directly to the hosting centre.

Upcoming workshops:

- Part 1: First Nations—May 18–22, Prince George; June 8–12, Thunderchild School, SK; June 26–July 3, Teslin, YK; July 20–24, Tla-o-qui-aht (Vancouver Island), BC; August 10–14, Winnipeg, MB; August 31–September 4, Saskatoon, SK; September 21–25, Ahousaht, BC; November 16–20, Beausejour, MB; December 7–11, Hollow Water, MB  
Contact: Lisa Raven ([lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org](mailto:lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org))
- Part 2: Church—May 25–29, Winnipeg, MB; June 1–5, Dauphin, MB; July 6–10, Prince George, BC; October 3–7, Lorette, MB; November 1–5, Dauphin, MB; November 16–20, Beausejour, MB; December 7–11, Prince George, BC  
Contact: Olive Halpin ([olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org](mailto:olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org))
- Part 3: Reconciliation—April 23–29, Winnipeg, MB; October 22–28, Saskatoon, SK

*Note:* Parts 1 and 2 will be hosted by the United Church Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre November 16–20.

## Displays at Chilliwack and Port Alberni Museums

Pictures are worth a thousand words, they say. For former students of Alberni and Coqualeetza looking for photos and stories of themselves and family members, a visit to the museums in Chilliwack and Port Alberni, B.C., may be well worthwhile.

A major exhibit in Chilliwack, *The Coqualeetza Story*, portraying the history of this residential school and Sardis landmark is on until September 2009. The first panel of the exhibit carries a Sto:lo Coast Salish story of reconciliation. The mission was begun by Methodist missionaries Charles and Caroline Tate in 1886. The Industrial Institute was formally opened in 1894. A new building rose in 1924, and was converted to a tuberculosis hospital in 1941, at which time the students were transferred to Port Alberni Residential School. The hospital closed in 1969. Many Sto:lo organizations are housed in the Coqualeetza buildings today, including the Coqualeetza Cultural Education Centre.

A collection of photos that were in the possession of former residential school principal Caldwell are now available at the Port Alberni Museum. Visitors can search the museum database of historic photographs in the main gallery at a standalone computer.

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### Contact Us

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

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## New Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners

The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair has been made Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild have been appointed as new Commissioners. The appointments were announced on June 10.

Justice Sinclair is a member of the Three Fires Society and a Third Degree Member of the Midewiwin (Grand Medicine) Society of the Ojibway. Manitoba's first Aboriginal judge, Justice Sinclair brings to the TRC his years of commitment to advocating for Aboriginal rights, plus expert knowledge of Aboriginal culture and the administration of justice. Commissioner Marie Wilson has lived and worked in cross-cultural environments within Canada and internationally as an educator, award-winning journalist, broadcast trainer, and program director in the public broadcast and public service sectors. She has experience with Aboriginal, church, and political organizations, and is bilingual. Marie is an active member of The United Church of Canada. Commissioner Wilton Littlechild is from Maskawacis Cree Territory of Treaty No. 6. He is a strong advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and a former residential school student. He organized a coalition of Indigenous Nations that gained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. He was the North American representative to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

## Recognition of Outgoing Commissioners

Honouring Jane Morley and Claudette Dumont-Smith with a presentation of eagle feathers, the Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society (BC) and the Truth and Reconciliation Roundtable recognized the significant contribution made by the work of these former Commissioners. The ceremony took place on Victoria Island in Ottawa on June 11. The two women had stepped down as Commissioners on June 1. The work of Bob Watts, Interim Director of the TRC, and Seetal Sunga was also recognized.



(Pictured left to right: Bob Watts, Claudette Dumont-Smith, Seetal Sunga, Jane Morley, Wayne Courchene (AFN), and Alvin Dixon)

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## **National Day of Reconciliation in Ottawa, June 11**

Beginning with a sunrise sacred ceremony, June 11 saw a full day of activities in Ottawa and across the country in recognition of the first anniversary of the national apology offered by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons to former students of residential schools and their families.

A symbolic meeting between Aboriginal leaders and government and church officials on a bridge in Ottawa included the exchange of gifts followed by a mass march to Parliament Hill where speeches and ceremony organized by the Assembly of First Nations followed. Aboriginal leaders then met with the Senate.

The Legacy of Hope Foundation sponsored a morning public forum, which included John Ralston Saul, National Chief Phil Fontaine, and Chief Bobby Joseph discussing what is necessary for reconciliation to occur in Canada. The Ottawa Presbytery of the United Church held an event in the evening to explore the theme of "right relations."

Events were also held in Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver, and Prince Rupert among other locations.

## **General Council 40 and the TRC**

On the afternoon of August 10, General Council 40 will hear from former students of residential schools as well as from TRC Commissioner Marie Wilson. The Commissioners will have an opportunity to hear what survivors would like to tell the church and then to engage the question of how United Church members can participate in this important opportunity for national healing and reconciliation.

In the evening, there will be a workshop or "learning option" to further explore ways to prepare and be involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and another workshop to explore the church's "Living into Right Relations" initiative facilitated by co-Chairs Maggie McLeod and Russell Daye.

## **"Voicing the Past" in Kamloops, August 7 – 9**

Tk'emlups Indian Band, First Nations Health Council, and the BC Indian Residential School Survivors Society have invited interior BC communities to give voice to their residential school stories and prepare for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission at a Survivor event coinciding with GC40. Thousands are expected to gather August 7–9 on the PowWow grounds in Kamloops, near the former residential school operated by the Missionary Oblates and Sisters of St. Ann from 1893–1977.

Moderator David Giuliano and General Secretary Nora Sanders will participate in opening ceremonies on the first evening when the themes will be educating about the history of residential schools and the Settlement Agreement. Saturday will be devoted to truth-telling through dialogue circles and plenary speakers. Residential school staff will make a presentation about the five schools the United Church operated in British Columbia as well as the Edmonton school. There will also be statement-taking.

The final day will focus on reconciliation, the steps that have already been taken, and the steps that are envisioned. The concluding ceremony will present the statements to the TRC and hand the process on to local communities. Workshops concerning "History and Impacts," "Planning TRC events," and "Healing" will be held simultaneously. Non-Aboriginal folks are encouraged to attend all the activities to listen to the stories. [See [www.irsss.ca/Voicing\\_the\\_Past.pdf](http://www.irsss.ca/Voicing_the_Past.pdf) for further information.]

## Committee Visits File Hills Residential School Site on Okanese Reserve

All that visibly remains on the site of the File Hills Industrial Residential School on the Okanese Reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley is a metal swing set, a stone pillar for an arch, and a cairn erected by the Women's Missionary Society on the school's 50th anniversary in 1939. It is said that documents are stored in the cairn behind the engraved plate. About 60 students were attending the school when it closed in 1949.

Together with a few former File Hills students and community members, the Residential Schools Steering Committee visited the site on June 18. Songs and prayers were offered. At noon, the Okanese Learning Centre gym was the setting for a traditional feast to remember the students of the former school. Gratitude for the preparations was extended to the Okanese Health Centre staff and the Rev. Betty Lou Skogen of the File Hills Pastoral Charge, which includes the reserves of Okanese, Peepeekisis (the location of Wanakapew United Church), Big Bear, and Starblanket.



*(Pictured standing left to right: Ann Yuzicappi, Geraldine Robertson (RSSC member), and the Rev. Betty Lou Skogen; and seated, Irene Creely, former File Hills student.)*

At the Okanese Hall, former students/elders Myrtle Moneybird and Aubrey Goforth, and daughter of the late Alice Swanson, Ann Yuzicappi shared some of their experiences of the residential school legacy, and thoughts about the Settlement Agreement, as did former students from the schools at LaBret and Gordon. Aubrey was able to identify many students in photos from 1948 brought on CD by archivist Nichole Vonk. Myrtle's granddaughter was delighted to see her kokum as a teenager! Chief Mike Starr of Starblanket reserve spoke of the good work of the Whapiimoostisis Healing Lodge, funded by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and his own healing journey. It is a 28-day program for survivors and relatives incorporating the grieving process, genealogy, and addictions recovery. General Council Officer James Scott presented the Chief with an apology plaque for the Lodge. Chief Starr said he would mention the apology in the opening and closing ceremonies of the program.

After a ham supper prepared by members of the Wanakapew United Church, the Committee met with a dozen members of Good Spirit, Wascana, Plains, and Saskatoon Presbyteries. Members listened to responses to the question "What do you think the church needs to do?" Guidelines for initiating and designing Truth and Reconciliation gatherings are keenly awaited. Special note was taken regarding the difficulty of building relations and effecting reconciliation in remote First Nations communities, and in non-Aboriginal communities where there are few Aboriginal residents or neighbours. Can technology and the concept of "twinning" help overcome the isolation?

The Committee members held the rest of their meeting at the Calling Lakes Centre where they spent time with the Saskatchewan Justice and Reconciliation Committee. The Saskatchewan Conference office brought a display of pictures from the Round Lake IRS. Four committee members also took time after the meeting to visit the cemetery site of the Regina Industrial School, which was closed in 1912.

## **Assistance to Attend Returning to Spirit Programs**

The Residential Schools Steering Committee will support up to 10 Aboriginal and 10 non-Aboriginal participants per year to attend any of the three "Returning to Spirit" workshops. Lay people in particular are encouraged to apply. The Committee will cover the workshop fee, accommodation, and meals. Participants are responsible for their travel costs. Information about this highly acclaimed healing and reconciliation program has been included in past issues of Update.

To apply, see contact info on page 6 of this Update.

### **Upcoming Workshops**

#### Part 1: First Nations workshop

Aug 31–Sept 4, 2009- Saskatoon, SK; hosted by Thunderchild School FN  
Sept 21–25, 2009 - Ahousat, BC  
Nov 16–20, 2009 - Beausejour, MB  
Dec 7–11, 2009 - Hollow Water, MB  
Mar 9–13, 2010 - Calgary, AB

For info, contact: Lisa Raven [lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org](mailto:lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org)

#### Part 2: Church and Non-Aboriginal workers

Sept 1–5, 2009 - Queen's House Retreat Centre, Saskatoon, SK  
Sept 21–25, 2009 - Nanaimo, BC  
Nov 16–20, 2009 - Beausejour, MB  
Dec 7–11, 2009 - Prince George, BC  
Jan 25–29, 2010 - Regina, SK  
Feb 12–16, 2010 - Yellowknife, NWT  
Mar 10–14, 2010 - Calgary, AB

For info, contact: Olive Halpin [olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org](mailto:olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org)

#### Part 3: Reconciliation - Oct.22-28 Saskatoon

For info, contact: either Lisa or Olive

Of particular note, Parts 1 and 2 will be hosted by the United Church Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre (November 16–20).

## **Healing Fund at work in Hobbema, Alberta**

The Indian Residential School Unit of the Maskwacis Health Centre hosted a fourth and final commemoration ceremony for the Ermineskin Indian Residential School in the Harvey Buffalo Memorial Centre on the Samson Cree reserve, across the street from the Samson United Church in Hobbema, Alberta. About 70 people took part in a traditional feast, tea dance, and giveaway.

Cecile Fausak, Liaison Minister: Residential Schools, attended on behalf of the United Church as the Healing Fund had provided the funds for the event. Although Ermineskin IRS was operated by the Missionary Oblates 1916–1973, the United Church Healing Fund is open to all Aboriginal organizations planning programs of healing for survivors and their communities.

### **“Kanata, Canada: A Return to Good Relations,” Edmonton, April 23–24**

Robertson-Wesley United Church was beautifully set for a dialogue amongst spiritual and community leaders and agency and health care providers about healing within the urban Edmonton First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. The Edmonton Presbytery Inter-church Interfaith Committee along with the Edmonton Diocesan Aboriginal Coordinator helped to sponsor the event as some 50 people ate, talked, listened to sacred stories, prayed, sang, and considered the steps in building good relations.

With each course of the meal on Thursday evening, guests were asked to move to another table and thus meet new people and engage the question: “Gospel was brought, the empire stayed. Can this statement be true?” As we listened to two versions of the flood story (one from the Bible, and another from Cree teachings), two artists drew their interpretations of the stories (*pictured at right*).



After the morning smudge, a counsel of elders from Kanata, Canada, moderated by Lewis Cardinal, responded to three questions:

- What do I bring that would contribute to a return to good relations between Canada and Aboriginal people?
- As you envision a return, what would good relations look like to you?
- What are needed steps to construct a healthy process, one with integrity, for a return to good relations?

This counsel circle was comprised of Maggie Hodgson, Aboriginal Advisor on Residential Schools to Indian Affairs, Will Campbell, Edmonton Circle of Elders, Bob McKeon, Social Justice Desk of the RC Edmonton Diocese, the Rev. Travis Enright, Anglican Diocesan Aboriginal Co-ordinator, and Cecile Fausak, Liaison Minister: Residential Schools, The United Church of Canada. Each small table group deliberated on the three questions and shared their insights in plenary after lunch. For many, there was uncertainty as to whether “good relations” had ever existed and whether a “return” was feasible; perhaps it was more helpful to envision good relations in the context of today’s society? This was the second such gathering.

### **A New Display Board and Brochure**

An updated stand-alone display board “Along the Healing Path” has been shipped to each Conference office. It depicts several steps on the healing journey of the United Church with former residential school students, their families, and communities.

The four display boards are available from the Conference office for lending to any congregation, presbytery, “Living into Right Relations” group, or committee wishing to educate about the United Church’s role in, and response to, the legacy of residential schools.

A new complementary resource, a colourful brochure titled *The United Church of Canada and Indian Residential Schools* will be available at General Council 40, mailed in the October Infopac, and available to order in bulk from UCRD 1-800-288-7365.

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## Contact Us

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

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*Photos for this issue of Residential Schools Update were taken by Cecile Fausak and reproduced with her permission.*

*This Update is available on the United Church website:  
[www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools](http://www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools)  
Published quarterly by the Residential Schools Steering Committee.*



# 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)*

October 2009

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## Truth and Reconciliation Commission Re-Launched

Governor General Michaëlle Jean welcomed survivors of Indian residential schools and others to a "Witnessing the Future" ceremony at Rideau Hall on October 15. The event marked the first public event in the reconstituted Commission which will lead the nation in a process of truth-telling and healing on the legacy of the residential school system. The Governor General committed herself to be a "witness" of this national reconciliation.

Justice Murray Sinclair, chairperson of the Commission, and Commissioners Marie Wilson and Chief Willie Littlechild joined survivors, their families, and Aboriginal, church, and government representatives for the event which remembered the children of the past by including the hopes and dreams of the children of today, many of whom were grandchildren of survivors. Moderator Mardi Tindal, Residential Schools Steering Committee chairperson Alvin Dixon, and General Council Residential Schools staff James Scott and David MacDonald attended.

The Chairperson announced that the first national event will be held in Winnipeg before the end of May 2010. The seven national events will be held over the five-year period, rather than in the first two years of the TRC as originally planned. In addition, the Commission has announced the appointment of Tom McMahon as the new Executive Director of the Secretariat and that the office of the Commission will be located in Winnipeg early in the New Year.

## "Voicing the Past" in Kamloops

Tk'emlups Indian Band, First Nations Health Council, and the B.C. Indian Residential School Survivors Society invited interior B.C. communities to give voice to their residential school stories and prepare together for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission August 7–9. About 200 participants gathered at the Pow Wow Grounds in Kamloops, situated below the Kamloops Indian Residential School building, which was operated by the missionary oblates and sisters of St. Ann during the period 1893–1977. Bill White, Evelyn Camille, and Wayne Christian acted as the commissioners for this event.

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*Participants in the listening circle hear James Scott (in black shirt) tell the truth about the United Church involvement in five Indian Residential Schools in B.C. Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson is on Scott's right.*



*In the same listening circle as pictured above, local commissioner Evelyn Camille is seated fourth from left. The Pow Wow pavilion is in the background.*

Bishop Monroe of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Kamloops and Moderator David Giuliano spoke at the opening ceremonies on Friday evening. Giuliano likened the offering of apology to giving birth with much pain, and then nurturing the child of reconciliation: the church can only heal if we are willing to be changed by what we hear.

Saturday was devoted to truth telling in dialogue circles, and with plenary speakers addressing the issues from all perspectives. James Scott made a presentation on the United Church's role in the operation of five schools in British Columbia, as well as the Edmonton IRS, as many students from northern B.C. attended the Edmonton school. Acknowledging that we do not

yet know the whole truth of the impact of the schools, and that there has been an enormous conspiracy of silence, Scott shared several startling quotes from former missionaries, teachers, and principals that indicate the complicity of the United Church and its forbears, Methodist and Presbyterian, in this national policy of assimilation aimed at getting rid of the Indian peoples.

**For the full text of James Scott's presentation see "Truth Telling – A Presentation" at [www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools](http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools) and click on "Voicing the Past."**

Commissioner Camille noted that "Grandmother Wind is around us so people will hear what is being said today." Walter Leach, who had earlier shared his experiences in school, was surprised that the church kept records of "bad things." He also said "There were some teachers who were kind and imparted good knowledge." There followed personal statement-taking with the help of the Legacy of Hope Foundation staff.

Florence Kaefer (*pictured at right*), a former teacher at the Norway House and Alberni Indian Residential Schools, listened to former students and was moved to offer her own personal statement. She may be the first former staff person to do so.



The final day focused on reconciliation using dialogue circles and plenary presentations. Bishop Monroe and General Council Residential School Special Advisor David MacDonald offered closing reflections on their experience of the two days. "We were gathered close to "the meeting of the rivers" (translation of "Kamloops"), and "we have truly met" said David, expressing the hope that "what we have shared this weekend will be a beacon of light" on the difficult walk ahead. The afternoon concluded with a ceremony of presenting the personal statements, books, art, and the IRSSS button blanket (telling the story of its beginnings) to the Commission, represented by Marie Wilson.

After a feast, participants mended a symbolic "values blanket," which had been damaged by the residential school system, and washed away their tears.



### **General Council 40 Hears from Survivors and Commissioner Wilson**

Three survivors who had attended the Kamloops event—Ben David, Jeff Seymour, and Andrew Yellowback — visited and spoke to GC 40 in Kelowna, B.C. Although none of the three former Residential School students had attended a United Church-run school, they spoke movingly about their childhood experiences and the efforts they have made as adults to heal from the trauma occasioned by their days at residential school. All three former students pointed to forgiveness as a key part of their healing journey.

*Former Residential School students Ben David (speaking) and Jeff Seymour (seated) at GC 40.*

Following the survivors, Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson urged the Council and the church to participate fully in this significant national healing opportunity. Marie attends the United Church in Yellowknife.

### **“Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation” Kick-off Workshop**

As a follow-up to the very positive “Remembering the Children” gatherings in 2008, Anglican, Presbyterian, and United Church leaders are initiating four or five regional train-the-trainer sessions across Canada beginning this fall. The first “Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation” event will be November 19–21, 2009 at the YMCA Geneva Park Conference Centre near Orillia, Ontario.

This project to equip leaders has three specific goals:

- First, to ensure that every church member knows the history of Indian Residential Schools; and that resources and training are available for them to participate fully in Truth and Reconciliation opportunities.
- Second, to ensure that all former students of Residential Schools, whether church members or not, are able to share their experiences in safe and respectful community based Truth and Reconciliation events.
- Third, to encourage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal church members to work together in their communities to build right relationships through training, resources, and the exploration of local opportunities.

It is hoped that those who attend already have a strong desire to participate in this work and are willing to train others in their home communities over the next several years. While this first session is primarily for Ontario and Eastern Quebec, later training events will be held in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and possibly the north. Dates and locations are being determined.

### **Native Ministries Enhancing Response to the RS Legacy**



A second set of workshops, “Responding to the Residential School Legacy as a Community” has begun. The first was held for leaders in Saskatchewan Native ministry in September at Calling Lakes Centre, Fort Qu’Appelle. The “Journey Toward Healing Together” planning team involved three Saskatchewan folk from the Anglican Church, as well as people from the United Church.

Each morning began with a smudge, prayer, and a song led by Jason Keewatin and his father Ron Keewatin (*pictured at left*) around the outdoor fire pit. Much appreciated were presentations on the impacts of trauma that many residential schools students suffer, and on vicarious trauma and the

burnout experienced by care-givers, triggers, self-care, and support groups.

About 40 people took part in the workshop (*pictured at right*) about two-thirds of whom were funded by the United Church. Three groups (Gordon's, Regina/Saskatoon, File Hills) began planning future work, including the possibility of hosting a TRC national event.

Planning for workshops in B.C., Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario is underway.



## **Recovering the Red Deer Industrial School Cemetery**

Significant steps have been taken in a project initiated by Sunnybrook United Church four years ago to reclaim a forgotten cemetery associated with the Red Deer Industrial School (1893–1919). Representatives of the First Nations of Saddle Lake Cree, Whitefish, Samson, Stoney, and Paul, and the Metis Nation gathered on September 14 with the United Church working group at Sunnybrook to share information and visit the cemetery site for the first time.

Doug Moore, owner of the access property, greeted everyone and showed the four remaining wooden grave headboards. The owner of the cemetery site, Chris Pohl, was unable to come. A smudge and prayer were offered, and a group picture was taken. The Mayor of the City of Red Deer and member of Gaetz Memorial United Church, Morris Flewelling, spoke at the luncheon about the initiatives city council has taken to establish relationships with local band councils. The group expressed profound appreciation to Mr. Moore for caring for the site all these years and for allowing them access that day, and to the mayor and to the United Church for taking and supporting these efforts so far.

A working group was established to plan a pipe ceremony and a feast for June 30, 2010 for an estimated 600 plus people. The men held a sweat in Hobbema on October 18 to seek guidance as to how to proceed. The Rev. Nelson Hart will be consulted as he has established that one of the known burials, Ellen Hart, and that of another student, Matilda Hart, were his mother's aunts.

## **Archival Research Project**

Since May 2009, researcher Susan Roy has been reviewing archival files, photographs, and United Church publications to recover documentary records in preparation for the United Church's participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She is collecting materials related to the specific histories of each school, information about students, parents, and staff, and tracing debates within the United Church about the nature of its involvement.

The Steering Committee is also interested in what the archives can tell us about children who became ill or died while attending the schools. This archival research will be supplemented with oral history interviews with survivors and staff. Susan is developing a database of photographs and key historical documents, which we hope will be made available to residential school survivors, local communities, and congregations online.

## Assistance to Attend Returning to Spirit Programs

The Residential Schools Steering Committee (RSSC) has agreed to support up to 10 Aboriginal and 10 non-Aboriginal participants per year to attend any of the three "Returning to Spirit" workshops. Lay people in particular are encouraged to apply. The RSSC will cover the workshop fee, accommodation, and meals at the hosting centre. The participant is responsible for all travel costs. See past issues for information about this highly acclaimed healing program.

Send a copy of your registration form to J.V. Scott, General Council Officer for RSSC, and the payment will be made directly to the hosting centre.

### Upcoming workshops:

Part 1: First Nations workshop

Nov 16–20, 2009 - Beausejour, MB for First Nations church workers

Dec 7–11, 2009 - Hollow Water, MB

Mar 9–13, 2010 – Calgary, AB

Contact: Lisa Raven [lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org](mailto:lisa.raven@returningtospirit.org)

Part 2: Church and Non-Aboriginal workers

Dec 7–11, 2009 - Prince George, BC

Jan 25–29, 2010 – Regina, SK

Feb 12–16, 2010 - Yellowknife, NWT

Mar 10–14, 2010 – Calgary, AB

Contact: Olive Halpin [olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org](mailto:olive.halpin@returningtospirit.org)

Of particular note, a workshop designed especially for church workers who are First Nations people will be hosted by the United Church Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre, November 16–20.

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## Contact Us

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

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