



# Residential Schools Update

The United Church of Canada



L'Église Unie du Canada

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

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

January 2011

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## Residential Schools Steering Committee Re-Mandated, Re-Named

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

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

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

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

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

The membership of the Committee has remained the same.

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

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## Right Relations National Consultation

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

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

## “Walk Together” Toward Right Relations

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

## “Living into Right Relations” Home Group Contacts

All Native Circle	<i>Cheryl Jourdain</i> <i>Rick Hebert</i>	204-582-5518	<a href="mailto:cheryl.jourdain@anconline.ca">cheryl.jourdain@anconline.ca</a> <a href="mailto:reception@anconline.ca">reception@anconline.ca</a>
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Manitou	<i>Jen Dresser</i>	705-335-3566	<a href="mailto:apunitedchurch@ntl.sympatico.ca">apunitedchurch@ntl.sympatico.ca</a>
Maritimes	<i>Laura Hunter</i>	506-536-0695	<a href="mailto:lhunter@marconf.ca">lhunter@marconf.ca</a>
Montreal & Ottawa	<i>David Lee</i>	613-235-7819	<a href="mailto:peter_david_lee@msn.com">peter_david_lee@msn.com</a>
Nfld & Labrador	<i>Bryce Hodder</i>	709-364-1158	<a href="mailto:brycehodder@nl.rogers.com">brycehodder@nl.rogers.com</a>
Saskatchewan	<i>Sue Bland</i>	306-721-3311	<a href="mailto:bland.stueck@sasktel.net">bland.stueck@sasktel.net</a>
Toronto	<i>Linda Parsons</i> <i>Kathleen Monague</i>	905-895-7194 705-247-2287	<a href="mailto:linda.parsons@rogers.com">linda.parsons@rogers.com</a> <a href="mailto:special-k21@hotmail.com">special-k21@hotmail.com</a>

## Independent Assessment Process Outreach Sessions

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

## Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

### • Commemoration Fund Guidelines

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

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

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

### • Regional Liaisons Appointed

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

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

### • Northern Tour

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

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

- **Document Collection**

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

- **National Research Centre Forum**

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

### **KAIROS Launches “The Land, Our Life” Campaign**

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

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

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

### **Roll with the Declaration: Cross-Canada Action June 2011**

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

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

Further information on all KAIROS-led Indigenous rights initiatives can be found at [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org).

### **"Sisters in Spirit" Lose Funding**

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

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

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

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

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

### **“Equipping Ambassadors” Workshop for the Maritimes**

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

### **Returning to Spirit – Upcoming Workshops**

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

#### **Part 1: Aboriginal workshop**

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

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

March 7-11, 2011 Vancouver Island

#### **Part 3: Reconciliation**

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

#### **Part 2 and Part 1 weekend pilot**

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

**Aboriginal Clergy** May 9-13, 2011  
Beausejour

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

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**Contact us at: [irs@united-church.ca](mailto:irs@united-church.ca)**

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

*James Scott*

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Program Coordinator:  
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*This update is available on the United Church website:*

[www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools](http://www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools)

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## TRC Asks "What Do You Hope to Achieve in Reconciliation?"

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Murray Sinclair has asked all the parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to provide responses to the question "*What does your constituency want to achieve in "reconciliation?"*" The Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools will be seeking ways to animate discussion about this question throughout the church in the coming months.

## TRC Northern Tour

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is holding northern truth sharing and private statement-taking gatherings in 19 communities in Nunavik, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon from March 15 to May 27, 2011. See [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca) for details. On April 14 the TRC was in Yellowknife and will be in Whitehorse on May 23, the locations of the only United Church congregations in the North. The Rev. Peter Chynoweth, minister in Yellowknife and currently President of Alberta and Northwest Conference, reports that a local ecumenical group met to determine how to support and participate in the TRC gathering locally, and later in the Inuvik event. Chynoweth, Anglican priest Ron McLean, and Roman Catholic Bishop Murray offered prayers during the day of public sharing on residential school experiences and impacts. Bill Erasmus chaired the Yellowknife event. In her closing remarks, Commissioner Marie Wilson noted the significant number of non-Aboriginal people present to witness. Her spouse, Stephen Kakfwi, former Premier of the NWT, made the final survivor statement of the day. The recently appointed Northern regional liaison is Frank Hope ([Frank.Hope@trc.ca](mailto:Frank.Hope@trc.ca)) with responsibilities for coordinating statement gathering and community events.

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

## TRC Invites Former Residential Staff to Share Memories

Justice Murray Sinclair has written to the United Church about his desire to encourage former Residential School staff to share their memories and unique insights with the TRC. Inclusion of the former staff perspective will help the TRC to prepare a more comprehensive history of the Residential School system and legacy.

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For those who wish to share their memories, the TRC will arrange for a personal interview on film or tape with an experienced statement gatherer. The pace and content of the interview is determined by the participant. Personal information will be protected. The interviews will be given to the National Research Centre where they will be made available to the public, subject to the applicable privacy laws. This is the same process used to gather statements of former students. Please contact Helen Harrison by e-mail [Helen.harrison@trc.ca](mailto:Helen.harrison@trc.ca) or by phone at 613-947-1093 for further information and to make arrangements for an interview.



*Florence Kaefer (white hair) shown here in a sharing circle at the national TRC event in Winnipeg June 2011. She was one of the first of former staff members to provide her statement concerning her experience at Norway House and Alberni Residential Schools to the TRC.*

Photo: Cecile Fausak

### **TRC National Event in Inuvik**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will hold its second national event in Inuvik, June 29-July 1, 2011. Alvin Dixon, who chairs our church's Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools, and James Scott, General Council Officer: Residential Schools, will attend on behalf of the United Church. The United Church will again be providing funds (\$75,000) to assist with survivors' travel and accommodation.

An All-Party National Event Working Group has been formed and met for the first time on April 6, 2011. The third National TRC Event will be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 25-28, 2011. National events will be held in B.C. and Quebec in 2012.

### **TRC National Research Centre Forum**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will create a National Research Centre as a permanent resource for all Canadians on the history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools. To learn from the experience of others, the Commission held a visioning forum in Vancouver March 1-3, 2011, with international speakers from holocaust and human rights museums and memorials around the world including, New Zealand, U.S.A., Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Germany, Serbia, Spain, Guatemala, Chile, Peru, Australia, Bangladesh, East Timor, and Canada.

On the final day, representatives of the Parties were asked to reflect on what they had heard. James Scott, General Council Officer, expressed the hope that the Centre would be "much more than an archives or museum, and would be a catalyst for education and transformation." He said that since "the Residential School system was [much more than a dark] chapter in Canadian history—it is an ugly theme running through the whole book"—the Centre needs to enable our children to write new chapters of Canadian history based on just and right relationships, free of the shadow of the ugly theme of oppression." Nancy Hurn, national Anglican archivist, spoke to some of the specific ideas that were heard that reflect what the survivors and their children, and the country need, and that they wished to hold up for the Commissioners.

A critical issue facing the Commission is securing the financial resources to both create the Centre and to sustain it over the long term. Such resources are not provided for within the Commission's mandate or in the Settlement Agreement.

See [www.trc-nrc.ca/websites/NRC/index.php?p=181](http://www.trc-nrc.ca/websites/NRC/index.php?p=181) for webcasts of proceedings.

### **TRC Commemoration Fund Proposals**

The TRC accepted over 200 applications for 2011 Commemoration funds by the deadline of March 18, 2011. Funds available this year are \$10 million and requests totalled over \$30 million. Review of the proposals will begin April 15, 2011.

"The commemoration is intended to be about honouring, educating, remembering, memorializing, and paying tribute to Residential School former students, families, and their communities, and acknowledging the experience and broad systemic impacts of Residential Schools," says TRC Chair Justice Sinclair.

Commemoration initiatives can take a variety of forms, including the creation of or improvements to existing memorials, commemorative structures, or ceremonies. Proposals can be submitted by communities, Aboriginal organizations representing a group, groups of Residential School survivors, churches or charitable organizations dealing with Residential School issues. The second call for proposals to distribute the remaining \$10 million will be issued in fall 2011. For the complete set of guidelines see [www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/TRC\\_Commem\\_Guide\\_en\\_final.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/TRC_Commem_Guide_en_final.pdf).

### **"Walk Together" Toward Right Relations**

"What spiritual discipline might undergird the difficult work of reconciliation and finding new ways to seek peace with justice in this land?" This question arose at the consultation between the national Right Relations Task Group and representatives from the Conferences in November 2010.

As the Sunday morning worship included the reading of the story of the disciples walking on the road to Emmaus, some "hearts began to burn within," and the idea of "walking together" took hold. "Walking together" is also invited in the 1986 Apology. The consultation felt that there was no better way to share our understanding of what has happened in the past 100 years than to walk and talk in the presence of the Spirit of Christ, and stay with one another for a feast.

You are encouraged to plan a walk, run, paddle, bike, or horseback ride between June 11 and June 21—the timeframe that runs from the anniversary of the federal apology to National Aboriginal Day—or choose your own dates that work best locally. This event could involve, for example, a walk or journey by other means to a local Pow-Wow, to a partnering First Nation community, to a specific Right Relations event, to the site of a former Indian Residential School or other relevant historical site, or to a simple meal gathering. You could plan stops and learning stations along the way.

Conference Home Groups can seek national funding support for a "walk," and local groups can apply to the Justice and Reconciliation Fund. You could also join other Walks under way in the spring and summer. For example:

- **Walk4Justice** concerning missing and murdered Aboriginal women. The walk calls for the reinstatement of funding to the Native Women's Association of Canada and a national symposium to address this crisis. Co-founder, Gladys Radek, can be reached at [frillyfrog08@yahoo.ca](mailto:frillyfrog08@yahoo.ca). On the website is found the route, the mission statement, and the list of needs: [www.walk4justice.com](http://www.walk4justice.com).

- **Mother Earth Water Walk** ([www.motherearthwaterwalk.com](http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com)). On this 7th walk to seek protection for the waters, the grandmothers are walking from the four directions to Bad River, Wisconsin, meeting on June 12. The northern and eastern routes are primarily through Canada, and several Canadians are joining the western walk.

### “Living into Right Relations” – Alberta and Northwest Conference Consults

The Alberta and Northwest Conference “Living into Right Relations” home group met with 10 additional reconcilers from St. Paul, Calgary, Red Deer, and Edmonton regions at a Sylvan Lake camp March 28–31. They heard updates on the TRC, KAIROS, and United Church and viewed the DVD *Front Runners*. A modified world cafe process was used to engage participants in discussions based on media items regarding Native education, a controversial historical mural, and Native children in care. The home group wants to focus in the future on youth and young adults and their teachers in the school system, in the church, and with partners such as University chaplains, Native Student Associations, and Friendship Centre Youth Programs.

Participants designed a banner for the KAIROS campaign (at right) to be picked up at the Edmonton train stop on June 16. Pictured left to right: back row: Lee Spice, Paul Mullen, and Cecile Fausak; and front row: Charles Wood, Marie Barr, Pat Robertson, and Wendy Molnar.



Cecile Fausak presented Cree Elder **Charles Wood** with an “Eagle Meets Dove” print to thank him for being a “special friend to the United Church.” Mr. Wood is a former student of the Oblate-run Blue Quills Residential School. He and Cecile completed the Wisdom’s Well Speaker Series sponsored by St. Stephen’s College March 29–31. Their topic: Miyo wicehtotan: Let us Live in Peace.

### KAIROS Roll with the Declaration: Cross–Canada Action June 2011

KAIROS is inviting churches and communities to **make banners** indicating support for the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights. Visit [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org) for instructions on how to make a banner. Involve your community in the process. The banners may be shipped to Ottawa or put on a “banner train.” On June 20, the banners will be joined together and unfurled on the lawns of Parliament Hill while KAIROS members and staff visit government representatives to urge our government to get to work on implementing this historic international agreement.

You are encouraged to hold events either in conjunction with making a banner or a train stop, and to circulate a petition. The Western Banner VIA Rail Route begins in Courtney, B.C. on June 13 and continues from Vancouver on June 14 arriving in Toronto on June 18. Several trains leaving from North Bay, Windsor, Sarnia, and Niagara Falls will also converge in Toronto, and the banners will then go by train from Toronto to Ottawa on June 19. The Eastern Train Route departs from Halifax on June 18 and arrives in Ottawa on June 19. Further information on the train schedule and event outlines and all KAIROS-led Indigenous rights initiatives can be found at [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org).

[www.thechildrenremembered.ca](http://www.thechildrenremembered.ca)

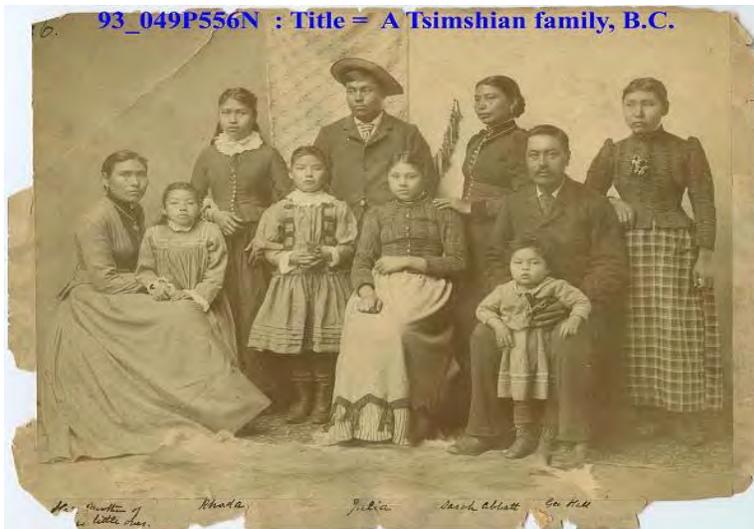


86.158P/25N  
This snap was taken a year ago, so all our big girls are not here now / Jerret's (1950).  
United Church of Canada Board of Missions Fonds  
United Church of Canada Archives

Do you know anyone in this picture? Or what the occasion was? If so, please go to the website [www.thechildrenremembered.ca](http://www.thechildrenremembered.ca), click on Brandon, and share the information with the United Church Archives. You can also view many more photos of 13 schools.

### Missions to First Nations in B.C. Photos Going Online

A project of digitizing the images in the United Church Archives in Toronto titled "Up and Down the Coast: Records of Missions to First Nations in British Columbia" was completed in April with funds obtained from the University of British Columbia.



93\_049P556N : Title = A Tsimshian family, B.C.

UCCA 93.049P/556  
A Tsimshian family, B.C.  
[18--?]  
  
Available online in May  
2011 at:  
[upanddownthecoast.ca](http://upanddownthecoast.ca)

The Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools gave the green light to a proposal for funding up to a maximum of \$25,000 to continue similar digitization for missions to First Nations operated by the United Church and its predecessors across Canada. DVDs of images will be sent to the communities that were the subject of missions and eventually all photos will be available online. This is an effort to give communities back their history.

### "Can You Hear the Drum? Conference May 16–18

A conference focusing on Aboriginal spiritualities and theological education will be held May 16-18 at the University of Winnipeg. Sponsored by the ecumenical Churches Council on Theological Education in Canada, the keynote speakers will be Aboriginal theologians **Carmen Landsdowne** and **Richard Twiss**. For further information or to register, visit: <http://ccteconference.ca>.

## Re-Mandated Committee and Aboriginal Ministries Council Meet

At its November 2010 meeting, the Executive of the General Council (GCE) renamed and re-mandated the Residential Schools Steering Committee to include two new components: “to assist the church to live out its Apologies through theological reflection and through education and advocacy for Indigenous justice issues, including but not limited to land, rights, treaties, the impacts of colonialism and racism” and “to work in partnership with the Aboriginal Ministries Council and collaborate with KAIROS, ecumenical partners, and Indigenous organizations.”

As a first step in fulfilling the second of these new components, the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools (CIJRS) held a joint meeting for two days in Winnipeg with the Aboriginal Ministries Council in March to get to know one another, build a relationship, and consider the opportunities for partnership in guiding the United Church in its work on Indigenous justice.

## Returning to Spirit – Upcoming Workshops

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

### Part 1: Aboriginal workshop

May 9-13, 2011 Beausejour, MN  
May 30-June 3, 2011 Thunderchild, SK  
Aug. 2 -6, 2011 Burns Lake, BC  
Sept.19-23, 2011 Paris, ON  
Sept. 26-30, 2011 St. Albert, AB

### Part 2: Church and Non-Aboriginal

May 16-20, 2011 Saskatoon, SK  
Aug. 15-19, 2011 Smithers, BC  
Sept.19-23, 2011 Paris, ON  
Sept.26-30, 2011 Edmonton, AB  
Nov. 7-11, 2011 Interlake Area, MB

### Part 3: Reconciliation

June 9-15, 2011 Nanaimo, BC  
July 7-13, 2011 Winnipeg, MB  
Oct.13-19, 2011 Saskatoon, SK

To read evaluations from past participants, and for more information: [www.returningtospirit.org](http://www.returningtospirit.org).

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

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## Contact Us [irs@united-church.ca](mailto:irs@united-church.ca)

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

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*This update is available on the United Church website:*

[www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools](http://www.united-church.ca/communications/newsletters/residentialschools)

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# 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)*

July 2011

## TRC Second National Event Held in Inuvik, NWT

The community of Inuvik, NWT, opened its arms to welcome the second National Event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), June 29–July 1. Over 500 survivors from communities across the north exemplified the theme "It's About Courage—a journey of survival, strength, and resilience" through storytelling, cultural displays, and solidarity. The former students were joined by government and church leaders, community residents, and international witnesses. Alvin Dixon, Chair of the Committee on Indigenous Justice and Residential Schools, and James Scott, General Council Officer for Residential Schools, represented the United Church.

Scott, speaking to survivors at the opening ceremonies on behalf of Moderator Mardi Tindal, said, "You demonstrate the courage that it takes to live in the gap between the way things are and the way we hope they could be. And before we can clearly see how things could be, we are learning from you about the way things are." **Highlights** of the event can be found at [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca).

Six individuals from four continents were named as **Honorary Witnesses** to the TRC process, including: Chief Ed John (Grand Chief, First Nations Summit of B.C. and North American Representative for the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues); Shelagh Rogers (CBC Radio); Robbie Waisman (Jewish Holocaust Survivor); Francisco Cali Tzay (Vice Chairperson, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, UN); John Dommert (Chief Executive Officer, Connecting Home Ltd, Australia); and Refik Hodzic (Communications Director, International Center for Transitional Justice).

Individual survivors, Aboriginal organizations, churches, and other groups offered **Expressions of Reconciliation** to the "Bentwood Box" (pictured right) symbolizing gestures, programs, or initiatives that support healing. Anglican and Roman Catholic churches exchanged gifts as a symbol of their process of reconciliation in the community. Other gestures included a video made by youth learning about residential schools



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in a program sponsored by the International Center for Transitional Justice, a picture presented by Australians working with families affected by the Stolen Generations, a flag created for the Innu area of northern Quebec known as Nunavik, and a statement by the Primate of the Anglican Church. The United Church offered copies of its 1986 and 1998 Apologies as well as a description of its mobile counsellor program in B.C.

The **Commissioners' Sharing Panel** provided an opportunity for former students and the churches to tell their stories in a public forum. While many survivors told of very painful residential school experiences, they focused as much on expressing appreciation to those who had supported them and given them hope. Archivists Nancy Hurn and Tammy Wesley of the Anglican Church and Bishops Murray Chatlain and Gary Gordon of the Catholic Church made statements of accountability and regret. **Community Sharing Circles** and **Private Statement Gathering** also afforded opportunities for personal storytelling.

Displays and albums of photographs of residential schools were available at the **Learning Place**. Many former students were fascinated by pictures they had never seen of their schools and classmates provided by the Anglican and Roman Catholic archives. Copies were made for them to take home. Information displays were presented by the TRC research program and by Library and Archives Canada.

A highlight of the event was a **Birthday Celebration** for former students complete with cupcakes, candles, special napkins, and the singing of "Happy Birthday" in eight languages.

Organized by the Anglican Church, this was a moving moment for many survivors whose birthdays were never celebrated in residential school.



### **TRC Third National Event Coming to Halifax, NS**

Planning for the third National Event of the TRC began on June 15 in Halifax with a meeting of local representatives and officials from the Commission. The TRC Atlantic Regional Working Group was established. This group is composed of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit members, including survivors of residential schools, as well as Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, and United Church representatives and federal government officials from Aboriginal Affairs and Health Canada. This group will advise and assist the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners in planning and preparing for the TRC National Event in Halifax, October 26–29, 2011. Much of this work will be carried out by two sub-committees, a Cultural and Programming Forum and a Planning and Logistic Forum. Members of these forums will be drawn from across the four Atlantic Provinces including Labrador.

It is anticipated that this TRC Atlantic Regional Working Group will be meeting at least twice a month beginning in July until opening ceremonies. In addition, in the latter part of September and early October the TRC Commissioners will be attending **Community Hearings** first in Labrador and then in mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

It is anticipated that as many as 600 survivors from the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School could attend the National Event at the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax. It is hoped that many others will also attend the four-day event, which will include ceremonies, cultural celebrations, and artistic presentations. Storytelling, archival displays, and truth sharing will be important components of the overall experience. It will be yet another significant national event for everyone to be a part of, sharing in the exciting work of historic transformation in Canada.

### Remembering the Children in Red Deer, AB

Children who attended Red Deer Industrial School (1893–1919) and are buried in the associated cemetery were remembered during the second of four traditional feasts on June 30, 2011. (See *Update July 2010* for coverage of the first ceremony.) In addition to the pipe ceremony, the Remembering the Children Working Group had arranged for four remaining wooden grave headboards to be transferred from a private garage on site to the **Red Deer City Museum**.

The Elders brought the headboards into the city and placed them in the hands of four youth who processed them through Heritage Park to the outdoor gathering at the museum. Brothers Rick (white cap) and Richard Lightning (black hat with brim) led the drumming and singing in remembrance of their uncle David Lightning, who died during the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918.



Photo: Sam Den Haan

The Working Group, composed of representatives from the Saddle Lake, Goodfish Lake, Samson and Ermineskin, Paul, and Stoney Nakoda First Nations, Métis Nation of Alberta, as well as from the United Church joined over 100 others to mark this event. Co-chair of the group Charles Wood introduced Montana Chief Carolyn Buffalo, Ermineskin Chief Brian Lee (pictured above in headdress), Mayor Morris Flewwelling, MLA Cal Dallas, and MP Earl Dreeshen to offer their comments. Dallas noted that, "It's fitting that we gather here in a city that sits on the borders of Traditional Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 lands because today's ceremony marks the shared concerns for history and healing that crosses borders and cultures." He also noted that, "Aboriginal issues are part of the Alberta school curriculum and events like today are so important to help fill in that history with education."

Many wise people have noted that for reconciliation to begin, someone needs to identify with a corporate entity to confess the sins of the past. Then friendships can develop and old hatreds begin to give way. In keeping with that need, three United Church representatives, the Rev. Cecile Fausak, Liaison Minister: Residential Schools, the Rev. Lynn Maki, Alberta and Northwest Conference Executive Secretary, and the Rev. Mary Ellen Moore, retired minister from Sunnybrook United Church in Red Deer, took responsibility for national, regional, and local levels of a church institution whose policies and actions have resulted in a legacy of pain. A commitment to "continue to seek equitable treatment for Aboriginal children and justice for missing and murdered Aboriginal women, [and to] work side by side in caring for the earth, air, and water" drew the crowd's applause and cheers. The three then continued with the reading of the names of those believed to be buried in the Red Deer Industrial School cemetery, which included community members as well as school children, and three students (Ellen Hart, Florence Hart, and John Sinclair) from Nelson House, Manitoba.

Lorna Johnson, Executive Director of the Red Deer City Museum and Art Gallery (at the mike, pictured below) was honoured to accept, on loan, the headboards from (pictured left to right) Talon Lightning and Rhett McLeod (grandchildren of former Red Deer IRS students), Mari Marcellus, and Andrina Duval. The boards were placed for



Photo: Sam Den Haan

safekeeping in plexiglass cases alongside traditional Aboriginal children's wear. A rendition of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" in Veronica Cardinal's pure, soft voice gave new meaning to the words, and left everyone holding their breath for a very sacred moment. Refreshments supplied by Sunnybrook United Church bakers and the museum were enjoyed by all.

### **"Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation" at Tatamagouche**

Reaching out to communities and congregations across the Atlantic provinces was the aim of the recent "Equipping Ambassadors of Reconciliation" at the Tatamagouche Centre in Nova Scotia. Following a similar event at Geneva Park in Ontario in 2009, this conference in May 2011 engaged both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in preparing for participation in upcoming TRC events.

The two-and-half-day workshop provided training and resources to church leaders and others to learn to work together to prepare for and build on the work of truth and reconciliation. It was particularly important that people have an appreciation of the history and impact of the Indian Residential School experience.

Several gatherings in a sacred circle, held in a large tent constructed for this purpose, allowed the participants to hear the grandmothers and the Elders share their wisdom. Participation in pipe ceremonies and a sweat lodge, and visits to the sacred fire deepened the understanding of those present. Over 60 people attended from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Several generations were from Mi'kmaq First Nations communities as well as congregational representatives from Anglican, Presbyterian, United, and Roman Catholic churches.

Attendees are expected to encourage and assist people in their home communities to break down the barriers between Native and non-Native communities and to meet, talk, and walk together in new and better ways. One participant relayed the comment of a survivor of the Indian Residential School in Shubenacadie: "We don't want you to walk behind us or ahead of us. Just walk beside us, and we'll learn to grow together."

### **New Aboriginal Justice and Right Relations Coordinator**

John Bird will be serving in a term position as the United Church's program coordinator for Aboriginal Justice and Right Relations until June 30, 2012, replacing Chad Beharriell. He is the UCC staff member relating to the KAIROS Aboriginal Rights Circle. John has worked in similar positions with the Anglican Church of Canada and Citizens for Public Justice, and brings a wealth of experience as a writer and social justice advocate. He is known for his work on the UCC resource *A Healing Journey for Us All*.

## Walking – and Paddling – for Right Relations

The Conference Right Relations Home Groups are taking their commitment to walk together in right relations seriously—and literally. They are organizing walks to raise the profile of their goals. Among the initiatives:

- United Church congregations have been supporting the **Walk4Justice** as it passes through their areas from Vancouver to Ottawa to raise awareness and demand justice for missing and murdered Aboriginal women across Canada. Supporting the walkers can include financial donations, food and shelter, publicizing, providing phone cards so participants can call home, and of course, walking part of the way with co-founders Gladys Radek and Bernie Williams, as they lead a walk for the fourth time. The walk began June 21 and will end in Ottawa, September 19. See [www.walk4justice.com](http://www.walk4justice.com).
- Others have supported the **Mother Earth Water Walk**. Anishnabe women and men gathered water in copper pails from the Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Ocean, and Hudson Bay, and carried it by hand to the shores of Lake Superior to emphasize the precious nature of this sacred element and the need to protect it. Manitou Conference Home Group members reported it was a privilege to help carry the water, and to spend time with the walkers, especially Elder Josephine Mandamin. The walks from the four directions converged in Bad River, Wisconsin, on June 12, 2011. See [www.motherearthwaterwalk.com](http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com) for a documentary and reflections.
- Maritime Conference Home Group members joined the Maliseet First Nation in July water ceremonies on the banks of the Wulustuk River, also known as the St. John.
- Continuing the water theme, the **Bay of Quinte** Conference Home Group is planning an August **canoe trip** for both First Nations and non-Aboriginal young people into a wilderness area in the Kawartha Highlands near Peterborough, Ontario.
- **Hamilton and London** Conference Home Groups are together planning a walk from the former Mohawk Institute Residential School in Brantford (operated by the Anglican Church) to the former Mount Elgin Residential School on the Munsee Delaware First Nation (operated by the United Church from 1848 to 1946). **Toward Right Relations: A Journey of the Heart** will run from June 21 to July 1, 2012, and will link with a commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812.

## Rolling into Ottawa – Supporting the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights

United Church congregations, Right Relations Home Groups, and others from every Conference and many First Nations communities were among those who joined together to make banners for the **KAIROS Roll With The Declaration** event at Parliament Hill in Ottawa on June 20, 2011.

The banners rolled in by train from whistle stops (such as Winnipeg train station pictured at right) and post offices across the country. And people rolled in by train, bus, car, plane, and even bicycle to participate in the action.



In banner after banner, Stephen Harper and the federal government were asked to honour the commitments he made on November 12, 2010, when he signed the 2007

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.** Canada was the second last country to sign, just barely ahead of the United States. Find the declaration online: [www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html).

Most impressive was the way KAIROS staff and volunteers strung 300 banners together end-to-end so they could roll out as one long, eye-catching petition. It took more than nine minutes for that wonderful, celebratory procession to weave by.

The speakers were powerful too. **Ellen Gabriel**, a clan mother of the Mohawk Turtle Clan, Kanasatake Longhouse, called "for Canadian society to learn what colonialism is—that it continues today. And to teach your children, so we don't have to keep fighting each other. Indigenous peoples should not have to enter into litigation to protect their collective rights."

**Cindy Blackstock** of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society pointed out that education funding for First Nations students is \$2,000–\$3,000 less per year than for the rest of Canada (often in communities where isolation and climate already increase education costs). Little wonder, she said, that less than half of First Nations children graduate from high school.

And Jamie Scott spoke of the United Church's ongoing actions to live out its own apologies to Indigenous peoples, before calling on the Canadian government to follow suit. "We will not be satisfied," he said, "until there's flesh on those bones, until the words of the (UN) Declaration are fully lived out." See the website [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org) for a slideshow, complete speeches, and train stop blogs.

**Common Experience Payment Deadline Approaches**

The deadline for applying for the CEP is **September 19, 2011**. If you know someone who attended an Indian Residential School, but has not yet applied for the CEP, please let them know of the deadline. Application forms and information can be obtained by contacting 1-866-699-1742 (TTY: 1-800-926-9105) or by visiting a [Service Canada Centre](http://ServiceCanadaCentre). Or download from <https://catalogue.servicecanada.gc.ca/iforms-iformulaires/> The Common Experience Payment (CEP) is a component of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The CEP recognizes the experience of residing at an Indian Residential School and its impacts. About 95 percent of the estimated 80,000 eligible former students have received CEP payments.

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**Contact us: [irs@united-church.ca](mailto:irs@united-church.ca)**

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