

Expression of Reconciliation

Notes for remarks, Rev. Bruce Adema
Director of Canadian Ministries
Christian Reformed Church
Saskatchewan TRC National Event June 21-24, 2012

Commissioners, Elders and all present,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I represent the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada and consider it a profound responsibility and honour to express our commitment to the Journey of Reconciliation – to walking with all of you here and so many other Indigenous People and Communities in Canada. Our church does not have a direct history of running Residential Schools in Canada. However, as members of the body of Christ in Canada we confess that the sins of assimilation and paternalism in Indian Residential Schools, and in wider government policy, are ours as the Christian Reformed Church. We are deeply sorry and pledge to walk the journey of reconciliation and healing with you.

In this, our first Expression of Reconciliation we offer a small gift; a book that describes the paintings in the series *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – the Creator’s Sacrifice*. This series of paintings by Missinippi-Ethiniwak Cree Artist Ovide Bighetty was commissioned by The Indian Metis Christian Fellowship in Regina – a long term ministry of our churches. We were honoured that the first stop of the “reForming Relationships Tour”, a national tour of this artwork, was here at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park. It is our prayer that Ovide’s beautiful depiction of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus – using Indigenous symbols and imagery – will help bring people together on the road to reconciliation.

This art also testifies to the presence of the Creator’s truth and beauty in Indigenous Culture. It reminds us that the journey of faith, healing and reconciliation is one of sharing and mutual respect. The church and the nation of Canada are poorer because we refused to acknowledge the Creator’s truth and way as revealed to Indigenous people. We are grateful that the Creator has sustained your will to protect your culture, language and ceremonies. As we –together- heal and reconcile we eagerly look forward to the ever deepening contribution of you the Indigenous people to our shared lives on this land. We pray expectantly that *Kisê-manitow* will guide our mutual journey to healing, justice and reconciliation.

May our children and grandchildren and the generations yet to come celebrate the steps we take together today, tomorrow and in the years to come, as children of the Creator. All my relations.

Hay-Hay, Mîkwêc, Merci, Thank you.