

**ACTION FOR RECONCILIATION**  
**PRESENTED BY REV. DARREN ROORDA, CANADIAN MINISTRIES DIRECTOR**  
**KATHY VANDERGRIFT, CHAIR BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**  
**JUNE 1 2015, ALGONQUIN TERRITORY OTTAWA ONTARIO**



Commissioners, Elders and Survivors – and all people in Canada.

We acknowledge with thanks, our presence on the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

We offer this commitment to action in the same spirit as an Expression of Reconciliation our churches offered at the Saskatoon National Event in 2012.

The Christian Reformed Churches in Canada have heard and seen the sacred Spirit of Reconciliation in the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In the stories, the tears, and the resilience of survivors we have learned that all people in Canada 'drink downstream' from the hurt of residential schools and the wider sins of colonialism. This history affects the health of the stream that all drink from today. We have been honoured to witness the expressions of truth in the TRC, and in them have seen a sacred momentum of reconciliation and hope. Because of this hope, and with the help of our Indigenous neighbours and Creator God, we are committed to turning from the systemic evils behind colonialism and living into a sacred call of unity and reconciliation.

We are thankful that the truths uncovered in the TRC have stimulated soul searching and action in our Church in Canada and the United States. The sacred momentum of the TRC has been a key catalyst in our denominational reflection on the [Doctrine of Discovery](#), a process that is causing our denomination to wrestle with our history of ministries among Indigenous peoples in Canada and the South West U.S. This is a difficult and urgent part of our reconciliation journey as a church on Turtle Island. We are learning our common story. In 2016, when our highest governing body – Synod – reflects on the Doctrine of Discovery all delegates will participate in the transformative heart learning of the Blanket Exercise. Its telling of history from Indigenous perspective stirs us in thought and heart to turn from our part in systemic evil and broken relationships. Our report on the Doctrine of Discovery, provisionally titled *Creating a New Family*, will include long term action plans on justice and reconciliation. We pray expectantly that these actions will be in continuity with the Spirit of Reconciliation that has been present in the TRC.

In addition to wrestling with the Doctrine of Discovery and its legacy, we are committed to acting for reconciliation in immediate and tangible ways. Since 2010 our justice office has focussed on bearing witness for [reconciliation in Indigenous education](#). We have heard Justice Sinclair say: "Education got us into this mess, and education will get us out." Learning that honours culture and spirituality, in the full embrace of community, transfers values and identity across generations. The arc of lasting trauma from residential schools will, in part, be healed by justice and equity in Indigenous education. Therefore, after review of the TRC final report, we will partner with Indigenous organizations and educators, in an effort to draw thousands of people in Canada to bear witness to the need for reconciliation in Indigenous education, and to call for Canada-wide curriculum that addresses the full reality of our common history. This will be an ambitious campaign inspired by the hope and joy of reconciliation.

To close, we offer two gifts as symbols of active hope. First, a copy of the painting "Creating a New Family" by Ovide Bighetty. This painting is from the series [Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – The Creator's Sacrifice](#) that has toured Canada since 2011, drawing many people into an awareness of Creator's truth and beauty in Indigenous cultures. The tour is on its final stop here in Ottawa at St. Joseph's Catholic Parish this week. We believe that creating a new family is a poignant metaphor for reconciliation. As this art tour and the TRC have crisscrossed Canada, people in our churches have been drawn into the journey of reconciliation. Our second gift, the [Reconciliation Milestones project](#) is our way of celebrating that journey and committing to its continuation in passionate action. May Kisemanito, Father, Son, and Spirit guide our journey as a new and reconciled family.

Meegwetch, Merci, Thank-you.