CIRCLE OF ELDERS REPORT



Dear CLC Friends,
Below you will find the COE report to General Council, as well as an experience of the Truth and Reconciliation hearings in 2010, in Winnipeg, and its urgent calls to action.

REPORT TO GENERAL COUNCIL

September 30th is a national day of remembrance for the victims of residential schools. We hope General Council for could consider tasking Elders with developing recommendations for action to mark that date.

A simple but important action would be including a national land acknowledgement on our website. CLC Australia has done that. As Michelle says, listening, learning and relationship are fundamental to this healing journey. However, land acknowledgements are only the beginning. They must be catalysts for action.

The following is from a 2019 interview with Hayden King, with Rosanna Deerchild, host of the CBC program, “Unreserved”. Hayden King is Anishinaabe from Beausoleil First Nation on Gchi’mnissing in Huronia, Ontario. In addition to joining the department of Sociology at Ryerson, Dr. King is the Executive Director of Yellowhead Institute and Advisor to the Dean of Arts on Indigenous Education. He wrote the land acknowledgement for Ryerson, but now regrets it.

“For me, personally, I think I started to see how the territorial acknowledgement could become very superficial and also how it sort of fetishizes these actual tangible, concrete treaties. They're not metaphors — they're real institutions, and for us to write and recite a territorial acknowledgement that sort of obscures that fact, I think we do a disservice to that treaty and to those nations.

It's one thing to say, "Hey, we're on the territory of the Mississaugas or the Anishinaabek and the Haudenosaunee." It's another thing to say, "We're on the territory of the Anishinaabek and the Haudenosaunee and **here's what that compels me to do**."

CLC Elders are the keepers of our CLC Canada sacred story and our hope is that this story will continue to evolve and encompass appropriate actions for this land’s Indigenous nations.

AN EXPERIENCE OF THE 2010 TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION HEARINGS IN RELATION TO THE RECENT FINDINGS OF UNMARKED GRAVES AT FORMER CATHOLIC RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mariette Ternowski and Ruth Chipman attended the June 2010 National Truth and Reconciliation hearings in Winnipeg. Listening to survivor stories was excruciating. The TRC Calls to Action were published in 2015. The Calls to Action having been influencing government, organizations and cultural institutions across Canada. In Manitoba we have many former residential school sites along with its current iteration in in our Child and Family Services system. There are no words to describe this horror and the suffering of these children and their families.

Bishops in BC and NWT have apologized and recognized the Church's complicity in the death of 215 children at the Kamloops Residential School and have offered support in the process off returning these children to their families and communities. Bishops listening and giving voice to the spirit in the people of God is a sign of hope.

TRC Calls to Action
#55 - Church Apologies, clearly frames the importance of this step.
#71-Missing Children and Burial Information-outlines the responsibilities of government and churches to work with families and their communities.



Unmarked Grave, Manitoba Residential School. Winnipeg Free Press

Our hearts ache for each precious child whose remains were found in Catholic residential school. We send our sympathy to their families and communities in this time of deep sorrow.

For all of us who desire to walk the path of Truth and Reconciliation we are reminded that the first TRC call to action is to address the Legacy of Child Welfare. This legacy continues, woven through the structures of Child and Family Services and the Justice system. Currently in Manitoba there are more than 9,500 children in 'care' (primarily indigenous) and more than 90% of the prison population is indigenous and have been part of the Child and Family Service system. We are very grateful for all of those involved in the sacred work of searching for each and every child.

Finally, two of us (Ruth and Elaine) are participating in the on-line U.S.A. Group Guides training course, along with a number of CLC Canada participants. We are grateful for this opportunity and it is a sign of hope for us.

Submitted by Ruth Chipman. Elaine Regan-Nightingale, Mary Balfe and Lois Zachariah