

Strength for Climbing:

Steps on the Journey of Reconciliation



"We have described for you a mountain. We have shown
you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing."
Justice Murray Sinclair

"God, give me hills to climb, and strength for climbing ..."
Arthur Guiterman, "Hills"

Strength for Climbing: *Steps on the Journey of Reconciliation*

The conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and release of its summary report calls Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada towards a new relationship built upon mutuality and respect. The truth will help us reflect more honestly on our shared history. The TRC's Calls to Action offer opportunities for deep solidarity. The future must include honouring Indigenous rights and building and renewing nation-to-nation relationships.

This booklet is designed to help non-Indigenous communities begin on a path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. By learning and unlearning. By building relationships. By actively practicing reconciliation. By living out our commitment in worship, in prayer and in just action.

KAIROS is with you on this journey, as together we strive to practice reconciliation. Please note that in addition to resource and action suggestions in the main text, there is also a substantial list of resources and links at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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Ecumenical Justice Initiatives to reflect and serve Canada's ecumenical community in the context of the release of the final recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. KAIROS is grateful for the ongoing work of Mennonite Church Canada (home.mennonitechurch.ca) and for its generosity in sharing *Paths for Peacemaking with Host Peoples*. Design by Cathy Vandergeest, www.gawck.ca

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Be patient -- with yourself and the process.
As Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation
Commission, has said: "If it took seven generations
to mess things up this bad, it'll take at least seven to mend it."



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

1. Learn and Unlearn

Listen to Indigenous voices first. Read the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Listen to Indigenous people reading a short version of it: <https://vimeo.com/51598291>. Take the opportunity to attend lectures and presentations by Indigenous speakers. In addition, these storytellers, poets and critical theorists offer a different lens on life past and present:

- Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks*
- Leanne Simpson, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*
- Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasase*
- Richard Wagamese, *One Native Life*
- Arthur Manuel, *Unsettling Canada*
- Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes*

Also read the works of critical settlers such as:

- John Ralston Saul, *The Comeback*
- Victoria Freeman, *Distant Relations*
- Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*
- Wayne Warry, *Ending Denial*
- Rudy Wiebe, *Stolen Life*

Recognize Indigenous contributions and resilience rather than focusing only on victimization.

Reread the Bible, seriously. Rediscover its powerful stories of liberation and be inspired by them. Be mindful of the stories of imperialism, conquest and oppression that underlie these stories of liberation. For guidance, seek out both Indigenous and settler ally commentaries on the biblical tradition.

Indigenous commentaries and theological reflections include:

- Randy Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation*
- James Treat, *Native and Christian*
- Tink Tinker, *American Indian Liberation*
- Stan McKay and Janet Silman, *First Nations: A Canadian Experience of the Gospel-Culture Encounter*
- Robert Allen Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians," in R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *Voices from the Margins, Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*
- Wati Longchar, *Theology, Christian Witness and Theological Education: An Indigenous Perspective*
- Lori Ransom and Mark MacDonald, "Systemic Evil and The Church: How Does a Church Repent?" in *Forum Mission*

Useful settler commentaries and theological reflections include:

- Chris Budden, *Following Jesus in Invaded Space*
- Wes Howard-Brook, *Come out My People!*
- Mark Brett, *Decolonizing God*
- Melanie Kampen, *Unsettling Theology: Decolonizing Western Interpretations of Original Sin*

Be attentive to the Indigenous voices in your midst.

- Watch Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) for news from an Indigenous perspective.
- Be open to Indigenous humour through films like *Smoke Signals*, *Pow Wow Highway*, and *Hank Williams First Nations*, and the writing of authors like Drew Hayden Taylor (*Only Drunks and Indians Tell the Truth*)
- Read the work of Indigenous poets and playwrights such as Rita Joe,

Dialogue is important, but so is listening.
Remember that Jesus privileged the words and wisdom of the marginalized. Listen carefully to diverse Indigenous voices.

Jeanette Armstrong, Thomson Highway,
and Gregory Scoffield

- Appreciate Indigenous music by performers such as Buffy Sainte-Marie, Indian City, Cheryl Bear, Jonathan Maracle, A Tribe Called Red, The Jerry Cans, Tanya Taqaq and Susan Aglukark
- Explore the visual arts through the works of artists such as Alex Janvier, Norval Morrisseau, Susan Point, Roy Henry Vickers, Christi Belcourt, Kenojuak Ashevak, Abraham Anghik Ruben, Annie Pootoogook and Oviloo Tunnillie.

Where common memory is lacking,
where people do not share in the
same past, there can be no real
community. Where community is
to be formed, common memory
must be created.

—George Erasmus, Dene Nation,
Co-Chair of the Royal Commission
on Aboriginal Peoples

Start exploring issues affecting Indigenous peoples in Canada both in the past and the present. These issues include:

- White privilege
- *Royal Proclamation, 1763* and the Treaty of Niagara, 1764
- Treaties, land claims, and self-government
- Residential Schools
- The *Indian Act*
- Sections 25 and 35 of Canada's *Constitution Act, 1982*
- Equity for Indigenous children in child welfare and education
- Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls
- *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Learn more about Indigenous responses to those challenges by exploring, in a respectful way:

- Indigenous spirituality/worldview
- Indigenous law
- Indigenous Christianity
- Decolonization and anti-colonial theology

Learn more about Indigenous movements for social change, such as Idle No More (www.idlenomore.ca).

Become an ally by joining with organizations like KAIROS (www.kairoscanada.org).

Don't let fear of mistakes prevent you from
participating, leading, or learning.

Unlearn history by doing the *KAIROS Blanket Exercise*, an experiential group learning tool that explores the history of colonization. This exercise is intended for both youth and adult groups and offers a transformative educational experience. **Consider becoming a *KAIROS Blanket Exercise* facilitator.** Check out the website for more information (www.kairosblanketexercise.org).

Learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery and what it means for us as Christians. A good place to start is the Mennonite Church Canada (Intotemak) resource *Yours, Mine, Ours: Unravelling the Doctrine of Discovery*. www.mennonitechurch.ca

Read the summary report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its entirety (www.trc.ca).

Study and learn more about the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. KAIROS can help.

Learn more about the treaty (or nation-to-nation) history of your region from both the Indigenous and settler experiences. Begin with the Treaty Commission office in your province or territory – it can provide written material and may also help you connect with teachers and elders who can help your church or community learn more.

Explore your own family history to understand how your people have engaged with Indigenous peoples currently and in the past. Take this moment of learning to both repent for what has happened in the past and commit to right relationships in the future. Check out the *KAIROS Reconciliation in the Watershed* program for workshop and other materials.

Invite local Indigenous elders, teachers and young people to share with your community. Create a safe, respectful space for discussion, and honour their time with you with a generous gift of appreciation.

Deconstruct Indigenous stereotypes in your community through education and awareness. Consult www.mythperceptions.ca to begin this process. Other good sources include:

Do not carry guilt,
but accept your responsibility to help build a better future.

The history of Indian Residential Schools in this country, and what needs to be done to address the legacy of them, is not just something for, and about, Aboriginal people. As a country, this chapter of our history belongs to all of us. As its citizens, we all own our past, just as we will all own its future. ... [W]e are all called to “Witness the Future”. Not just the survivors, not just the children, but all of us. Bearing Witness to something important is spiritual work. One of our spiritual advisors recently reminded me that the ancient Greek word for Witness is martyr. The martyr is someone who is willing to risk. . . though others may try to silence, weaken or distract. Witnessing such a future will also take kind hearts, willing to feel the experience of the other. Witnesses will also need wide vision, to see that Reconciliation is not about individuals. Restoring right relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is about the well-being of family, community and country.—*Commissioner Marie Wilson*

- Thomas King, *The Truth about Stories: A Native Narrative*, (www.cbc.ca/ideas/massey-archives/2003/11/07/massey-lectures-2003-the-truth-about-stories-a-native-narrative/)
- Linda Gray, *First Nations 101*
- *News Stereotypes of Aboriginal Peoples*, (www.riic.ca/the-guide/at-the-desk/news-stereotypes-of-aboriginal-peoples/)

Share stories of solidarity and reconciliation.

- Some settler communities and churches are learning to walk the path of solidarity. Good places to start include the DVDs *Two Rivers: A Native-American Reconciliation*, and *Reserve 107: Reconciliation on the Prairies*, and the magazine *Intotemak*.
- Move on to explore how this is being lived out locally by others in your community.
- Take inspiration from faith-based activists such as Sherry Smith (*Hippies, Indians and the Fight for Red Power*); Roger Hutchinson (*Prophets, Pastors, and Public Choices*); and Kathleen Kern (*In Harm's Way*).

Become a learning church or community. Begin small, and keep going.

- Post a map showing treaty areas, Métis settlements, or the ancestral territories of First Nations and Inuit peoples, rather than current political boundaries. Examples can be found at www.tribalnationsmaps.com

If we benefit from and celebrate our ancestors' successes, then we need to also reflect upon and repent for their failures. Be conscious of white and class privilege and find ways to deconstruct it.
(See Frances Kendall's *Understanding White Privilege*.)



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

- Visit an Indigenous place of learning, such as an elders' centre, a Friendship Centre (<http://nafc.ca/friendship-centres/>), or an Indigenous Governance program at the local university.
- Plan a guided delegation with Indigenous communities to learn their histories and discover their resilience. Christian Peacemaker Teams *Indigenous Peoples Solidarity* (<http://cpt-ips.tumblr.com/>) and Canadian Roots (www.canadianroots.ca) are two good sources for this kind of experience.

Change is difficult and not everyone in your church or community will come with you. Take hope from those who do.



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

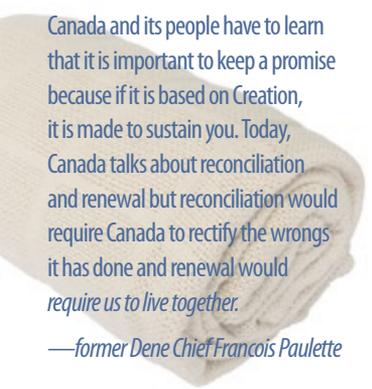
2. Build Relationships

... With Other Settlers

Share resources and experiences with others and begin a conversation about what you have learned, and about reconciliation. Form a book club or study group, or host a movie night. In addition to the resources named above, you could use:

- Films such as *8th Fire*, *We Were Children*, *Yummo Comes Home*, *Reel Injun*, *Skins*.
- www.wapikoni.ca: short films made by Indigenous youth, mostly in Quebec, in French and English.
- The National Film Board's Aboriginal Peoples Channel:
https://www.nfb.ca/channels/aboriginal_peoples_channel/

Settlers are also healing from a long history of colonization (though in a very different way from Indigenous peoples). As former United Church Moderator Stan McKay (Cree) said, settlers are also “wounded and marked by history.”



Canada and its people have to learn that it is important to keep a promise because if it is based on Creation, it is made to sustain you. Today, Canada talks about reconciliation and renewal but reconciliation would require Canada to rectify the wrongs it has done and renewal would require us to live together.

—former Dene Chief Francois Paulette

- Books such as Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian*; Michael Asch, *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties & Aboriginal Rights in Canada*; Steve Heinrichs, ed., *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*; and Shelagh Rogers, Mike DeGagné and Jonathan Dewar, eds., *Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School*.

Share this history with children. Help them to understand who was here before them, and what it would mean to live together in respectful ways. Some good books include:

- Nicola Campbell, *Shin-Chi's Canoe*
- Thomas King, *Coyote Columbus Story*
- Jordan-Fenton, *Fatty Legs*

Create a space for Indigenous knowledge and history in the classroom.

If you're a teacher, work it into your curriculum. If you're a student or parent, advocate for its inclusion. Good resources include:

- KAIROS *Blanket Exercise*, available for grades 4 and up, as well as college/university.
- Susan Dion, *Braiding Histories*
- Sheila Cote-Meek, *Colonized Classrooms*
- Rauna Kuokkanen, *Reshaping the University*

Visit your local history museum. Encourage the staff to develop exhibits about the Indigenous peoples of the area – past and present – with the participation of Indigenous scholars and community members.

... With Indigenous Peoples

Explore ways to be better neighbours with Indigenous people in your community or on a nearby reserve. Introduce yourself at the Band office, Friendship Centre, or Indigenous community service group. Seek to be in a mutual relationship. Find out what issues concern them most and ask how you can be a good ally.

Racist practices and colonial systems still operate today.

Attend powwows and other Indigenous gatherings.

Volunteer at an Indigenous-run organization.

Learn more about Indigenous ministries and Indigenous justice work in your denomination. Support and pray with them.

Honour the elders as you move into relationship. Listen to their stories and offer your help in any way you are able.

Advocate for strengthened health, education and social services for Indigenous children and families. Learn more about these issues from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (www.ahf.ca/publications/research-series) and films like Alanis Obomsawin's *Hi-Ho Mistahey!* Join with groups like the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (www.fncaringsociety.com) in this work.

Model reconciliation by volunteering with those in or just leaving prison. A disproportionate number of Indigenous women and men are in the prison system.

Model reconciliation and new relationships in your own living practice. If you are thinking of moving, consider relocating closer to the local Indigenous community. As a community, consider developing space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous can gather together.

... With the Land and Its Creatures

Spend time in nature and listen, as the prophet Job once said, to the creatures that surround you. Many Indigenous traditions hold that humanity is just one creature in an interconnected web of relationships.

Research the stories of the land and Indigenous peoples in your region.

Our leaders need to show the way, but no matter how many deals and agreements they make, it is in our daily conversations and interactions that our success as a nation in forging a better place, will ultimately be measured. It is what we say to and about each other in public and in private that we need to look at changing.

— Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Recognize that people may respond to you because of what you represent to them, rather than who you are on a personal level.
Try not to take that personally.



TRC Edmonton National Event, March 2014. Photo: Sara Stratton, KAIROS

Discover your watershed and understand its strengths, current struggles, biodiversity and the successes or endangerment of local species. Be a part of the KAIROS *Reconciliation in the Watershed* program (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/sustainability/reconciliation-watershed/>) and learn more about water issues at www.sacredrelationship.ca

“Decolonize” your diet by finding ways to eat and drink in rhythm with the land you live on.

Despite direct assimilation attempts
Despite the Residential School Systems
Despite the strong influences of the Church in Métis communities to ignore and deny our
Aboriginal heritage
Despite not having a land base
And despite our own diversity in heritage
We are still able to say we are proud to be Métis
We are resilient as a weed, and beautiful as a wildflower
We have much to celebrate and be proud of
—Métis artist Christi Belcourt

Recognize the importance of the past and the deep memories (both good and bad) that exist within Indigenous communities.



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

3. Practice Reconciliation

Identify yourself as a settler and remember and acknowledge the treaty region/traditional territory where you live. Go to: <http://native-land.ca/>

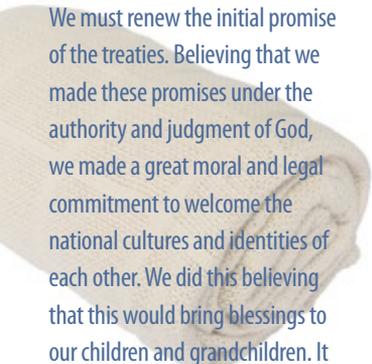
Identify the treaty and/or traditional territory that your church lies within, and name it on your church signage and address.

Invite Indigenous speakers to give talks in your church, school or community.

Stay attuned to Indigenous opinions and perspectives and share them.

Learn more about the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls at the KAIROS MMIWG Information Hub: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-girls>

Self-suspicion is ok. The history of residential schools compels us to be suspicious of our own "good intentions."



We must renew the initial promise of the treaties. Believing that we made these promises under the authority and judgment of God, we made a great moral and legal commitment to welcome the national cultures and identities of each other. We did this believing that this would bring blessings to our children and grandchildren. It is time for the church to rise up and reclaim this vision, so that all of Canada may live into the promise of a vibrant and positive future.

—*National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald*

Boldly confront stereotypes and racism wherever you witness them.

Share the history of land struggles in your area in ways that will animate discussion and action.

Donate to Indigenous charities or advocacy organizations seeking cultural renewal, land reparations and other forms of reconciliation.

Resist any sports teams/corporations that appropriate Indigenous imagery/language and work with Indigenous activists who are working to undo this appropriation.

Attend Indigenous-led rallies (such as Idle No More and Stolen Sisters) and distribute the information you learn there and offer to help out.

Join or create movements within your denomination, school, or community to challenge racism and be in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. We often find it hard to recognize the treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada as racism.

Rediscover Indigenous place names which have been replaced by settler names. Connect with local Indigenous leaders to join their efforts to re-mark areas with traditional names.

Join those reflecting on monuments, statues or plaques in churches and communities that reflect colonial history. These places of historical memory may not tell the history we have come to know, and may need to be updated or changed.

Acknowledge the complexity of the issues at hand and be willing to accept that everything is not “either/or.” There may be ambiguity.

Join with Indigenous-led environmental organizations, such as the Indigenous Environmental Network (www.ienearth.org).

Participate in Project of Heart, an award-winning initiative that commemorates the lives lost at Indian residential schools. The project focuses on the learning that takes place at the level of the spirit and heart and not just the mind (www.projectofheart.ca).

Advocate with your federal and provincial representatives for Canada to:

- honour nation-to-nation relationships and treaty obligations with Indigenous peoples
- implement the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

Advocate for responsible and sustainable resource extraction.

Most resource extraction occurs on Indigenous territory, almost always without the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous peoples. Find out how you can join and support Indigenous communities in their resistance. You can also learn more about FPIC here:

- <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/fpic/>
- <http://quakerservice.ca/news/free-prior-informed-consent/>

Advocate for Canada to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Participate in the KAIROS *Winds of Change* campaign (www.kairoscanada.org/windsofchange).

If your denomination has moved to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, learn what that might mean in practice.

The role of culture within the reconciliation process, I think, is that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures alike must respect one another in light of their historical experiences - they have to see eye to eye on healing, so to speak. By this, I mean that there needs to be maximized understanding and trust built between the cultures involved.

—David Joanasie from the Inuit community of Kinngait (Cape Dorset)

Remember that you have things to learn from Indigenous peoples and dismiss the idea that your knowledge, religion, way of thinking or way of life is somehow superior.



KAIROS Banner Train Event, June 2011. Photo: Susanne Ure, Amnesty International

4. Praying Justice

Integrate a traditional territorial acknowledgement into your worship flow. For more information, visit the KAIROS website: <http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/territorial-acknowledgment/>

Pray in church, inter-faith, and (if invited) in traditional Indigenous circles, for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Discuss within your community how to **create space in your church for Indigenous voices and their concerns**.

Incorporate into worship acts of repentance such as your denomination's apology, its repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, the Canadian government's apology to the former students of residential schools, or other litanies of confession at periodic, appropriate moments.

Encourage your community to create a **sermon or study series on understanding Indigenous and settler relationships**.

Be conscious of how hymns sometimes carry colonial understandings. To better reflect our new emerging understanding, consider writing new lyrics to traditional tunes.

Get angry! Jesus and the prophets got upset with injustice.
Anger is a tool of liberating potential.



KAIROS Banner Train Event, June 2011. Photo: Susanne Ure, Amnesty International

Read an Indigenous Christian prayer book to explore new ways of worship and prayer with your knowledge. Here are some examples:

- Joyce Carlson, *The Journey* (Anglican)
- Patrick Twohy, *Finding a Way Home* (Roman Catholic)

Bring **signs and symbols of the community's relationship with the Indigenous peoples** into the Church and encourage recognition of it as part of weekly liturgy.

Look to your own denomination's rituals to see what can connect your community to the land and Indigenous peoples.

Learn scripture and Indigenous teachings that can stir your spirit as you travel the path. Kent Nerburn's *Native American Wisdom* is a good source.

Consider displaying images of the Indigenous Christ or of Indigenous saints in your Church and home. See the work of Ovide Bighetty or the Trinity Religious Artwork website (www.trinitystores.com).

Integrate observance of days such as National Aboriginal Day (June 21) into your annual worship cycle.

Does your denomination have an Indigenous Ministry? Find out how to connect with it.

Learn from, but do not appropriate Indigenous traditions and spiritual practices. Be respectful and honour those to whom they belong.



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

Some Essential Historical Documents and Interpretation

General sources

- Indigenous Issue Primers:
<http://apihtawikosisan.com/aboriginal-issue-primers/>
- Olive Dickason, *A Concise History of Canada's First Nations*
- John Bird, Lorraine Land, and Murray MacAdam, *Nation to Nation, Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada*

Doctrine of Discovery

- Information on the Doctrine of Discovery:
<http://www.doctrineofdiscovery.org/index.htm>
- World Council of Churches' Statement: www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2012-02/statement-on-the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-its-enduring-impact-on-indigenous-peoples

Be willing to be creative and take risks.

Royal Proclamation, 1763

- Analysis and excerpt from the *Royal Proclamation*:
<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/royal-proclamation-1763.html>
- *Broken Covenant*, a film from Mennonite Church Canada:
www.commonword.ca/go/49

Treaties

- “Settler Treaty Rights”:
<http://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/settler-treaty-rights>
- “Treaties from 1760 - 1923: Two sides to the story”:
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/treaties-from-1760-1923-two-sides-to-the-story-1.1081839>

Indian Act

- “The *Indian Act*, 1876,” a fact sheet by N. Tidridge:
http://www.tidridge.com/uploads/3/8/4/1/3841927/the_indian_act.pdf

White Paper (1969) and Red Paper

- Text of the *White Paper*: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010189/1100100010191>
- Summary of the *White Paper*: <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-white-paper-1969.html>
- Red Paper: The Red Paper, also known as Citizens Plus, was an important response to the *White Paper*: <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/11690/8926>

Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

- Full text: <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1307458586498/1307458751962>
- Highlights: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/sgmm_e.html
- RCAP report card (note: while this document is not up to date, it still provides a sense of the application of the RCAP report):
<http://www.turtleisland.org/resources/afnrcap2006.pdf>

Be active in “unlearning” history, attitudes, behaviours and ways of being that may flow from colonization.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- Text of the *Declaration*: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- “Fact Sheet on the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*”: <http://bit.ly/QuakerServiceFPIC>
- Video presenting the *Declaration*: <http://vimeo.com/51598291>
- KAIROS, *Let Justice Roll: Implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. <http://www.kairoscanada.org/UNDRIP>
- Mennonite Church Canada (Intotemak), *Wrongs to Rights: How Churches can Engage the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. <http://bit.ly/CommonWord>

Residential Schools

- Tim Wolochatiuk, *We Were Children*
- J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision*
- Theodore Fontaine, *Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools*
- Residential School Resources, Aboriginal Health Foundation: <http://www.ahf.ca/publications/residential-school-resources>
- Settlement Agreement: <http://www.legacyofhope.ca/about-residential-schools/indian-residential-schools-settlement-agreement>

Apologies

- “Learning from the Past: Selected Documents of Reconciliation and Apology from Canadian Government and Churches”: http://speakingmytruth.ca/v2a/?page_id=955
- Government of Canada’s Apology to Survivors of Indian Residential Schools: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649 and www.youtube.com/watch?v=qo5cG-RjE8Y

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

- TRC website: www.trc.ca
- Executive Summary of Findings: www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf

Do not promise more than you are able to give to Indigenous communities. Be familiar with the limits of your community.

Terminology

Indigenous peoples: Cree lawyer Sharon Venne suggests that being Indigenous means being “descendants of the people occupying a territory when the colonizers arrived.” Indigenous is a word that has come into widespread use through the recognition that those people who are the original inhabitants of a place, and who have been marginalized by ethnic groups who arrived later, have much in common with other peoples worldwide with the same experience.

Not only does the word speak to global solidarity amongst these peoples, but it has important legal significance as well. Indigenous peoples’ rights have been recognized at the international level in various ways but most importantly in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 and endorsed by the Government of Canada in 2010.

When we speak of peoples, as opposed to people, it is a recognition of collective rights; that each Indigenous people is a distinct entity with its own cultural and political rights.

Aboriginal peoples refers to the original peoples of North America who belong to historic, cultural and political entities. *Canada’s Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples: First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

There are a number of synonyms for Aboriginal peoples, including Indigenous peoples, First Peoples, and original peoples. None of these terms should be used to describe only one or two of the groups. Because Aboriginal peoples is the term used in Canada’s constitution, it has specific importance within a Canadian legal context.

First Nations is not a legal term but replaces “Indian” in common usage. There are many First Nations in Canada: Innu, Cree, Salteaux, Ojibwe,

Don’t be afraid to try again.



Assembly of Seven Generations Mass Blanket Exercise, Ottawa, June 2015. Photo: James Park, InSpirit Foundation

Haida, Dene, Mohawk, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Blood, Secwepmec, etc., each with its own governance, history, culture, and traditions.

Inuit are the Indigenous circumpolar people of Canada and other northern countries. They were formerly called Eskimo, which the Inuit consider a derogatory term. Inuit live in all parts of Canada and have four traditional regions - Nunatsiavut (Labrador), Nunavik (Quebec), Nunavut, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories).

Métis are the mixed-blood descendants of Cree, Ojibwe, Saulteaux and Assiniboine women and French and Scottish fur traders and other early settlers. They have their own culture and history. As is the case with many Aboriginal languages, the Métis language, Michif, is endangered. Métis society and culture were established before European settlement was entrenched. This term is sometimes used more generally for someone of mixed Indigenous and non-Indigenous ancestry.

The invitation is to work with, not for, Indigenous peoples.

Sisters and brothers
of Chebuktug
support



KAIROS Halifax Cluster



KAIROS Banner Train Event, June 2011. Photo: Susanne Ure, Amnesty International

Dictionary definitions of **settler** include “one who settles in a new region, especially a region that has few occupants or that is occupied by people of a different ethnic or religious group,” and “a person who settles in a new country or area.” For some, settler is also a political term that describes the newcomer’s relationship to colonialism, and signifies that colonial settlement has never ceased. According to Corey Snelgrove and Klara Woldenga, in their article in *The Martlet*, “Colonial settlement is ongoing and it will remain so as long as we continue our implicit consent by remaining willfully oblivious to, or worse, actively and consciously defending, colonial power relations. ... We have inherited “settler” status because the structures of colonial domination remain to benefit us, whether you are first or eleventh generation on these lands (though these benefits flow unequally amongst us). Understanding this is the first step in creating new relationships based on peace and mutual respect — the first move towards producing the conditions for solidarity. But this is only the first step.” (www.martlet.ca/opinions/why-the-term-settler-needs-to-stick/)

Trust in the Spirit.

“Truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.” *Matthew 17:20-21*

Colonization, healing, and resilience reveal themselves to me. As Survivors, we ride waves of vulnerability for a lifetime and for generations. We were subjected to real risk factors including hunger, loneliness, ridicule, physical and sexual abuse, untimely and unseemly death. As we struggle to throw off the shackles of colonization we lean heavily toward healing, and resilience becomes our best friend. —Madeleine Dion Stout, Métis

At one time in my life, I was ashamed of my culture. To me, though, the residential school issue is not about making others feel bad or guilty. This issue is about truth and understanding. Truth and understanding are two key ingredients that will lead us to healing and reconciliation.

—Garnet Angeconebe, Anishinaabe from Lac Seul First Nation

KAIROS unites ten Christian churches and religious organizations in a faithful ecumenical response to the call to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). We deliberate on issues of common concern, advocate for social justice, and join with people of faith and goodwill in action for social transformation.

The members of KAIROS are: The Anglican Church of Canada, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Canadian Religious Conference, Christian Reformed Church in North America (Canada Corporation), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and The United Church of Canada.



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