

Address given by The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz,  
Primate of The Anglican Church of Canada  
at King's College, London, England  
7:30 p.m., Monday, December 5, 2016

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*God of our Ancestors,  
who holds the spirits of our grandmothers and grandfathers  
and the spirits of our grandchildren:  
Remembering the Children,  
we now pledge ourselves to speak the Truth,  
and with our hearts and our souls  
to act upon the Truth we have heard  
of the injustices lived,  
of the sufferings inflicted,  
of the tears cried,  
of the misguided intentions imposed,  
and of the power of prejudice and racism  
which were allowed to smother the sounds and laughter of  
the forgotten children.  
Hear our cries of lament  
for what was allowed to happen, and for what will never be.  
In speaking and hearing and acting upon the Truth  
may we as individuals and as a nation meet the hope of a new beginning.  
Great Creator God,  
who desires that all creation live in harmony and peace:  
Remembering the Children  
we dare to dream of a Path of Reconciliation  
where apology from the heart leads to healing of the heart  
and the chance of restoring the circle,  
where justice walks with all,  
where respect leads to true partnership,  
where the power to change comes from each heart.  
Hear our prayer of hope,  
and guide this country of Canada  
on a new and different path. Amen*

Friends, that was the prayer that church leaders of the Anglican, Roman-Catholic, United, and Presbyterian churches prayed across Canada in March 2008, when we were trying to raise the profile for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission whose mandate would be to investigate and

record the story of what were known as the Indian Residential Schools. The appointment of such a commission was enshrined in a 2002 Settlement Agreement between the Government of Canada which established the schools and the Churches and Religious Orders who operated them.

These schools were established through a federal government policy of assimilation, and over the course of more than 100 years (mid-1800's to mid-1900's), some 150,000 Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their families and communities, and housed in these schools. In total there were ??? schools across the country the majority being in central, western and northern Canada. The last of them closed in 1969. Removed from their communities, the children were stripped of their identity; their clothing was taken away from them (they were uniformed), and the young girls had their braids cut. They were forbidden to speak their language (indeed, they were punished if they did). Their culture was taken from them. They were, more often than not, known not by their name, but by a number. Birthdays were not celebrated. Tragically, many children were abused: physically, mentally, and sexually. There are documented cases of malnutrition. Many children ran away and went missing forever. Many others died in the schools and were buried in unmarked graves. As someone has said: it's a dark blot on the soul of this nation. The nation needs to be healed; the church needs to be part of that healing.

It's estimated that there are somewhere around, perhaps ten to twelve thousand survivors of the Residential Schools, and when the commissioners had completed their work through regional community and national gatherings, they had listened to some 3000 survivors. Most of them shared their stories in what we call 'public hearings'. Many others were unable to do that because it was simply too difficult, so they had the opportunity to share their stories in private.

Each one of the national gatherings for hearing testimonies was focused around one of the seven sacred teachings of Aboriginal Peoples: love, respect, humility, truth, honesty, courage, and wisdom. At all of these national events, there were moments for what were called 'gestures of reconciliation'. Some were in the form of statements by churches, community groups, agencies committed to healing and reconciliation. Others were public commitments by provincial ministers of education to rewrite courses in Canada's history taught in public schools in such a way as to include the story of Indian Residential Schools. There were gifts from the arts community and books about the schools. All were graciously received in a very dignified way and placed in the 'Bentwood Box' and are now housed at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.

One of the most moving presentations was by a former student surrounded by a number of people to support him. It was the suitcase he had taken to residential school. It had been packed by his mum with his clothes including traditional dress and moccasins, some books, some candy and some pictures. When he arrived at the school it was grabbed from his hand and its contents dumped on the floor and kicked aside. In the years he was in that school he said he filled his suitcase with his emotions, loneliness, hurt, anger, resentment and in his mind's eye it was filled to overflowing. When he eventually returned home from school he said it remained unpacked for years. Eventually he sought

help and through professional counselling and the support of his family and friends including some in the church, he said he gradually emptied that suitcase of its misery and was now ready to part with it. And when he heard of the Bentwood Box and the things placed in it would permanently housed in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, he decided that's where it should go. That presentation was for me and many others one of the most moving of the hundreds we witnessed over the course of the TRC's work.

I have thought a lot about these gestures made at the TRC gatherings; and, I have come to believe that they would have been more fittingly described as gestures toward reconciliation – that is gestures offered in the interests of reconciliation in the desire for it and in the commitment to it, however long it may take to achieve. Reconciliation takes a long time and it cannot be rushed, it has to emerge. It has to emerge out of conversation: where truth is told, and heard, and received, and pain is borne...by everyone. It grows out of a listening of hearts, and I think it grows out of a conversion of hearts."

I've learned over the years in my marriage, in my work in the Church, and now, in connection with the TRC, that once I've said "I'm sorry", I have to then be quiet and humble enough to allow the other party to actually hear that – to give them some space and time to hear it, to test it, to sieve it, to pray it – and in the meantime, for them hopefully to be able to see something in terms of what I'm doing, that gives some integrity to my words, "I am sorry." That I am in fact living by the words we heard in church on Sunday, John the Baptist bellowing out to the crowds gathered at the Jordan River, "Bear fruit worthy of your repentance".

So I believe there are actually three kinds of gestures at play in the work of reconciliation - gestures *toward* reconciliation, gestures *of* reconciliation, and gestures *in* reconciliation. There's evidence – it seems to me – in the Anglican Church of Canada, of all three. Sometimes the lines between them – gestures toward, of, and in – get kind of blurred. They're kind of like that beautiful hue between the colours in a rainbow: one is giving way to another.

As I think about gestures *toward* reconciliation, the first and most powerful are of course apologies. In Canada the United Church made an apology for its engagement in the Indian Residential Schools in 1986. The Anglican Church made an apology in 1993 and other Churches and Religious Orders have also. It would be many years later before the Government of Canada would make a formal apology, but finally did in the House of Commons ??? 2011.

I want to give you some the depth of the apology made by Archbishop Michael Peers on behalf of our Church. The National Executive Council of the day requested him to make an apology and left it to him to discern the right time to do it. At the National Native Convocation in Minaki, Ontario in August 1993, Michael Peers, having wept as he listened with many others gathered to story after story told by survivors of the Indian Residential Schools he decided that the time had come to say what needed to be said. It was August the 6<sup>th</sup>: the Feast of the Transfiguration. Here's how the moment was recalled by an Indigenous person at that event:

*“The great hall in this pine-beamed lodge is so quiet that you can hear your own heart hammering in your chest. More than a hundred Indigenous Anglicans from across the country, men and women, ranging in age from 18 to 80, are seated in a semi-circle around a white-haired man in purple robes (actually, he just had his purple shirt on). His eyes are fixed firmly on the floor, his attitude is prayerful, the weight of history is visibly pressing him down, and in slowly and carefully measured phrases, the Primate begins to speak: words he has laboured over, and painstakingly committed to memory. It is his apology, on behalf of himself and of the Church he represents, for the devastation wrought by the Anglican Church of Canada on the First Peoples through the residential schools.”*

This is what he said:

*“My Brothers and Sisters:*

*Together here with you I have listened as you have told your stories of the residential schools.*

*I have heard the voices that have spoken of pain and hurt experienced in the schools, and of the scars which endure to this day.*

*I have felt shame and humiliation as I have heard of suffering inflicted by my people, and as I think of the part our church played in that suffering.*

*I am deeply conscious of the sacredness of the stories that you have told and I hold in the highest honour those who have told them.*

*I have heard with admiration the stories of people and communities who have worked at healing, and I am aware of how much healing is needed.*

*I also know that I am in need of healing, and my own people are in need of healing, and our church is in need of healing. Without that healing, we will continue the same attitudes that have done such damage in the past.*

*I also know that healing takes a long time, both for people and for communities.*

*I also know that it is God who heals, and that God can begin to heal when we open ourselves, our wounds, our failures and our shame to God. I want to take one step along that path here and now.*

*I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God.*

*I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family.*

*I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image, taking from you your language and the signs of your identity.*

*I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.*

*On behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, I present our apology.*

*I know how often you have heard words which have been empty because they have not been accompanied by actions. I pledge to you my best efforts, and the efforts of our church at the national level, to walk with you along the path of God's healing.*

*This is Friday, the day of Jesus' suffering and death. It is the anniversary of the first atomic bomb at Hiroshima, one of the most terrible injuries ever inflicted by one people on another. But even atomic bombs and Good Friday are not the last word. God raised Jesus from the dead as a sign that life and wholeness are the everlasting and unquenchable purpose of God."*

So Michael spoke those words. Here's how the gathering received them:

*"When he is finished, he is greeted by a profound silence from the assembly, broken here and there by muffled sobs; some are staring at the floor with the same intensity as the Primate did; others can't take their eyes off of him. All of the people there, almost without exception, have been hurt and torn by those schools: they've had their families and communities devastated by them. They know in their hearts and understand in their souls that this is an historic moment in the journey of healing for themselves and for their Church."*

The next morning, Vi Smith, one of the elders (now passed from this life), stood up and offered a word of acceptance:

*"On behalf of this gathering, we acknowledge and accept the apology that the Primate has offered on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada.*

*It was offered from his heart with sincerity, sensitivity, compassion and humility. We receive it in the same manner. We offer praise and thanks to our Creator for his courage.*

*We know it wasn't easy. Let us keep him in our hearts and prayers: that God will continue to give him the strength and courage to continue with his tasks."*

In those few moments, Michael Peers set our Church on a path from which we have never and will never turn back. That journey is indeed a priority for our church: healing, reconciliation, and new life. One of the powerful things about Michael's apology – compared to a lot of other, and may I say, 'church apologies', and the Prime Minister's apology – the power of Michael's apology was in the 'I' statements. *I heard you, I am ashamed, I confess, I acknowledge, I pledge.* It came from the depths of his soul to make the apology in the manner and the tone in which he made it, and that's what had such profound impact on those who heard it for the first time, and those who hear it to

this day. It's so deeply relational. It's not some bureaucratic statement that 'we've done that; now let's get on with things'. It's a deeply personal, relational apology.

Now, it would be many years later before the Apology's full impact on the life of the Church and our relationship with Indigenous Peoples would be fully known and, in fact, many more years before it would get translated into a number of Indigenous languages. It's now translated in about 12 or 15 Indigenous languages. We have continuing work to do in this regard. Until people can hear and read it in their own language it means little – it's still a foreign text. It's still something that is in the language of those who imposed so much damage upon them.

As I reflect on the Apology, it is so 'Michael Peers', because it actually has a liturgical shape to it. There's a sense in which he's Gathered the Community, and he's found his own place in the midst of that community and its pain; then there's Reflection on Word and Story that he's heard; there is Confession of Sin and Contrition; there are Words of Apology and Commitments to Healing; and then, that beautiful Theological Reflection at the very end of it. It's a liturgy in and of itself. Here are all of the necessary pieces for a Corporate Rite toward Reconciliation.

Reflecting on the Apology at the 1995 General Synod (two years after he issued it), Michael said:

*“As a church we were captive to a system that did much damage and in which specific instances of abuse have been well-documented. The Apology was and is meant to acknowledge our past and to help prepare for the new things which God is doing among us.”*

That was one, “one step along the way of God's healing,” as Michael put it.

Another significant gesture toward reconciliation was what is commonly known as the Indigenous Covenant written in April 1994 by a gathering of Indigenous Leaders at St. Benedict's Retreat Centre on the banks of the Red River in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Entitled *A Journey of Spiritual Renewal*, the Covenant documents the story, the history, the pain of Aboriginals in Canada, and their experiences, even in our own Church. It speaks of the pain and plight of Aboriginal Peoples, their struggles within the country and within the Church. It also speaks of their resilience in their deep desire to build a truly Indigenous Church in Canada, and then it moves, beyond lament and despair, to invitation and hope. It concludes with an extending of the hand of partnership to any and all who would help them build a truly Indigenous Church. In its own way the Covenant itself was also a gesture toward reconciliation.

For the General Synod in 2001, the theme was “Toward Healing, Reconciliation and New Life”. In his presidential address, Michael, reflecting on developments since the '93 Apology and the '94 Covenant, said, “The work of healing has hardly begun, but it has begun. It will be the work of generations to come. It's our privilege to lay foundations, so let us pray that we lay them well. Some of the stones are in place—the Sacred Circles, The Covenant, the New Agape Educational

Resource, the Healing Fund, and commitments we have made to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in their struggle for new life.”

Michael set his presidential address in that synod around the Johannine image of friendship: being partners with Christ in his mission of reconciling love for the world. Referring to a Service of Healing that would take place within the Synod, he said “our purpose is to come before God seeking healing for ourselves and for our Church, for all relationships that have been broken by sin. This service is not an end in itself.” “It is a moment when we move toward one another knowing that Our Lord is in our midst. It is a step toward life.”

And so this service of healing took place. And it was such a powerful event—an experience people who were there will never forget. It would prove to be a watershed moment in the emerging relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Anglican Church of Canada. It's simply styled *A Service of Healing*.

It began with the Litany of the Dispossessed. That was followed by the Liturgy of the Word. The scripture readings were followed by stories offered by the survivors of the residential schools, each one in an amazing way taking us deeper into our reflection on the biblical text. That is followed by an Act of Contrition; which included excerpts from the Primate's apology. Many of us had read that apology, many of us had heard it, but few had ever spoken the words ourselves. In that moment, the Apology really became the Church's apology

This Act of Contrition concluded with a humble turning to God: “We turn to you, O God. We renounce evil, we claim your love, we choose to be made whole.” That was a powerful way to end the Act of Contrition, because it reflected what Michael said in the Apology: “We are all in need of healing.” We all need to look for reconciliation and new life...

That Act of Contrition then followed a time for Personal Prayer, laying on of hands, and anointing. That took a long time as I remember, but it was a deeply holy time. The liturgy concluded with moments of Renewing Our Life Together. All were sprinkled with water to remind us of our common baptism and the new life to which we are called in the reconciling love of Christ.

And then, an unexpected moment—no one knew it was coming; the Spirit came sailing in upon us. Gordon Beardy, who was then Indigenous Bishop of Keewatin, stood up and said.

*“Before I say the dismissal, I would like to say to the Primate, not as a bishop of the Anglican Church, but as an Anishnawbe who went to a residential school: from my heart, I would like to say that I forgive you and I want to forgive your church which has become my church. I forgive your people who have become my people.”*

In a way of wonder and grace that can only be of the Spirit's doing a gesture *toward* reconciliation evolved into a gesture *of* reconciliation. The hue in the rainbow of colours: *toward, of, and in...*

*"I accept your apology because you have worked so hard to break down the barriers. Where things that were condemned before, today you receive them with joy. Where once we were outsiders, today we are with you, as a friend, as a leader, as a brother. So, I extend my hand.*

*My children will hear what I said. My grandchildren will hear. For it is in forgiving that we can find peace and it is in rebuilding that we will become strong again as nations.*

*The Lord be with you."*

And Michael and Gordon fell into one another's arms. There was about their embrace utter exhaustion, and utter exuberance. It was a gesture of reconciliation that was years in the praying of our Church: a gesture of reconciliation that has inspired all our endeavours, by the grace of God, to live The Apology and to honour The Covenant.

And there have been some wonderful moments in what I would describe as *Gestures in Reconciliation*, and there are a couple:

I think one of the most far reaching was the Church's response to the call from the 2005 Sacred Circle of Indigenous Peoples for the appointment of a National Indigenous Bishop, who would have a pastoral relationship with all of the Churches in Aboriginal communities. Mark MacDonald was installed as the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop at the General Synod in 2007. His pastoral and prophetic ministry continues to give Indigenous People in our Church much courage, confidence and hope.

The second one was the emerging of a new diocese in our Church known as The Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. It was inaugurated with the seating of Bishop Lydia Mamakwa on June 4, 2014.

It was the birth date of The Rev. Dr. William Winters who, along with so many elders across Northern Ontario, had held in his heart the dream of a truly Indigenous Church with leadership from among his own people. He'd established The William Winter School for Ministry for training Indigenous men and women as catechists and candidates for ordained ministry.

Lydia's election was an amazing event. Our Church was humble enough to set aside all the canonical ways in which we've always elected bishops—into the cathedral we go, laity on one side, clergy on another side, Eucharist, prayers, ballots, singing, reflection. That was all set aside in the interest of honouring the way in which Indigenous Peoples raise up leaders in their communities. The people nominated to be bishop were told to go and face the wall. And then, community by community—the elders, the youth, and the delegates to the assembly were called to a time of prayer to discern the one over whom the Holy Spirit was already hovering and then stand behind that person. Thus Lydia was elected to be their bishop.

Gestures like these create what Bishop Mark MacDonald calls "the living, breathing space" for a self-determining Indigenous Church within the Anglican Church of Canada.



This distinction that I make between gestures *toward, of, and in* reconciliation is mine, and I'm humbled enough to say that I know it needs to be tested, probably first among Indigenous Peoples. I need to give them a chance to think about that, and to critique it: does it seem right to them? Is it appropriate? Does it give them some sense that the Church has actually heard and listened? There are movements *toward* reconciliation, and sometimes they evolve into gestures *of* reconciliation, and sometimes they evolve into gestures *in* reconciliation and we are so reconnected and related to one another, so re-membered as the body of Christ that now we can do some new things together, and we can be the Church in a different way

The commissioners of our TRC included in the final Report they issued last year 94 Calls to Action, using as a reference point the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples.

These Calls to Action are to the People of Canada, the Government of Canada and the Churches of Canada. They speak to everything from reparation to the opportunity to courageously embrace the question which the Chair of the Commission, Senator Murray Sinclair posed, "What is reconciliation?". How do we go about it? What are the signs that it's beginning to emerge? How will we know when it has happened? How will we have all been changed? How will we walk together differently?"

These Calls speak to the long sad legacy of Residential Schools, not only to the immediate experiences of those who survived their experience in the schools, but also to the intergenerational trauma manifested in struggles with addictions, domestic violence and suicides at rates higher than in any other sector of the population in Canada. They speak to the long-term impacts of lost opportunities to be parented and to learn how to parent. They speak to deficiencies in the welfare of Indigenous children and to the rising statistics of children apprehended and placed in the system of foster care in Canada. They speak to the dysfunction that is prevalent in family life. They speak to the physical and mental health issues faced by Indigenous Peoples including the disproportionate number of cases of heart disease, diabetes and depression. They speak to the grossly over-representation of Aboriginal people in Canada's prisons. They speak to the tragedy of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls, the stats showing no signs of reversal. They speak to the challenges faced by Indigenous youth and the place of music and sport in helping them maintain a healthy lifestyle. They speak to the gap in funding for public schooling between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians and the gap in funding for Aboriginal children educated on and off Reserve Lands. They speak to the loss of language and culture, spirituality and healing practices, to the loss of identity as Indigenous Peoples.

The commissioners called for the establishing of a National Council for Reconciliation "to monitor, evaluate and report to Parliament and the people of Canada on the government's post-apology progress". They also called on the Prime Minister to issue "an Annual State of Aboriginal Peoples Report" outlining the government's plans for advances the cause of reconciliation.

The commissioners called for "a Royal Proclamation to be issued by Crown". It would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764 and "reaffirm the nation to nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown".

Full attention to these Calls to Action will take a lot of political will on the part of government and a lot of good will on the part of all Canadians. One of the biggest challenges Canadians face is their own ignorance of the story of these Residential Schools and in most instances through no fault of their own. It simply was not included in the history of Canada taught in public schools for many years. Our Prime Minister himself has spoken publically of how in his own schooling there was in fact a reference to naming Residential Schools, but his teacher said, "That wasn't very important or very interesting, so we'll just pass by it". The Prime Minister has vowed that will never happen again in Canada. In provincial jurisdictions, ministers of education are ensuring that Canadian history is written in such a way as to include the story of how the First Peoples of this land were treated and the lasting impact it has had upon them and their children.

Of the 94 Calls to Action, only one had a particularly tight time frame – the one to the Churches that operated the Residential Schools. It called on the Churches and other faith groups "to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius". It also called on the Churches "to formally and adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to issue a statement no later than March 31, 2016 as to how they will implement the declaration. (Call to Action #48)

At our General Synod in 2010 our Church did in fact repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and endorsed the UN Declaration, so we embraced that particular Call to Action as direction from the TRC to act on our decisions, to quote a text from scripture, "to let our 'yes' be 'yes'". (James 5:12) That's how I titled a statement on behalf of our Church on March 19, 2016 in Her Majesty's Royal Chapel of the Mohawks at Six Nations of the Grand River. Here are excerpts from that statement.

In renouncing the Doctrine of Discovery that drove colonial expansion - regarding "discovered lands" as empty lands; and treating the First Peoples of the land as savages to be conquered, civilized, and Christianized, our church described that doctrine "as fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Christ and our understanding of the inherent rights that individuals and peoples have received from God"<sup>1</sup>.

While much has been written about this doctrine, it is clear there is much more education required if we are to understand the political and spiritual arrogance inherent in it. The lack of respect for these peoples was evidenced in a federal strategy of what some have described as an attempt at "cultural genocide" orchestrated through a policy of assimilation. That policy was designed to address the so called Indian problem and it actually had these words in it, "kill the Indian in the child and make of him a civilized adult". History has revealed how flawed this policy was, how horrific the experience of some 150,000 aboriginal children and how lasting the impact of so much loss in their lives – loss of identity, language, and culture; loss of community and learning the ways of their ancestors, loss of "their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies"; loss of their dignity through assault of every kind – emotional, physical, and sexual; and perhaps most profoundly of all the many years of lost love "for the child taken and for the parent left behind".

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<sup>1</sup> General Synod, 2010

Accordingly I called on every diocese and territory of our church to ensure opportunity for learning about the history and lingering legacy of this doctrine. I commend the growing practise of beginning meetings synods and assemblies with an acknowledgement of the traditional territories and lands on which we gather and an expression of thanks. The lands we thought we “discovered” were indeed “not empty”, but in fact inhabited for thousands of years by these First Peoples.

It would be an oversight not to remember also that in the General Synod Resolution of 2010, there was a clause requesting her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II “to disavow and repudiate publicly, the claimed validity of the Christian Doctrine of Discovery”. That request was formally acknowledged and the matter referred for consideration by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. My hope is that there be a response in time for the commemorations marking the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation next year.

With respect to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the commissioners’ challenge to declare a plan for how we will implement it, I referenced the counsel given me by a Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice which I appointed in 2013. The counsel read as follows:

*UNDRIP must be approached and applied with a set of expectations that will inform strategy, process, and practice... There must be time for teaching and reflection that demonstrates those connections – guided by direct input from Indigenous People. ... We will need to have a gradual acceptance and acknowledgement that Church institutions and members were involved in serious violations of UNDRIP and core Christian teaching over a number of centuries. The process of compliance to Call to Action #48 should be strategically planned to be progressive, on-going and reflective.*

I am requesting that on National Aboriginal Day, June 21 or the Sunday closest there be a public reading of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in every parish across Canada. This should be accompanied by appropriate prayers and ceremonies in keeping with Indigenous spiritual customs.

I am calling for the full text of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be included in the Handbook of the General Synod and regarded as a guiding document in our relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

I am calling for reference to this Declaration, among others issued by the United Nations, to be included in programs of preparation of candidates for baptism and confirmation in our church, in keeping with our vows “to strive for justice and peace among all people”. I am recommending that the UN Declaration be the subject of learning for education days in parish settings, deanery gatherings, diocesan synods and national councils of our church.

I call on our Church in every circle of its life and work to an unwavering commitment to anti-racism training, in the spirit of equipping all of us to honour our baptismal vow “to respect the dignity of every human being”.

I am commending as a key resource for setting the United Nations Declaration in both an historic and a present-day context is the timeline entitled “Indigenous Peoples and the Anglican Church in Canada: Timeline of an Evolving Relationship”. It is the inspired work of Esther Wesley, an Indigenous Cree woman who is the Coordinator of the Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation, in cooperation with the General Synod Archives, Indigenous Ministries, Public Witness for Social Ecological Justice and Communications.

I intend to hold the United Nations Declaration before the bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada. By virtue of their office they are a unique position to help us honour one of the clauses in the General Synod Resolution to endorse the UN Declaration, that is “to encourage dioceses and parishes to urge their municipalities, provinces and territories to endorse the Declaration”.

I call our Church to the forefront of addressing with Indigenous Peoples the injustices they continue to bear in this country concerning lack of access to fresh food, clean water, gaps in funding for healthcare and education, the overlooking of treaty rights, and the frequent instances in which the principle of free prior and informed consent concerning resource extraction is treated lightly.

I drew my statement to a close with an announcement, that in consultation with the National Indigenous Bishop and the General Secretary, I would establish a Council of Elders and Youth to monitor our church’s honouring in word and action our church’s commitment “to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. I am happy to say that council has been appointed and formally commissioned with prayer at our General Synod this past summer.

Of the UN Declaration our National Indigenous Anglican Bishop says, “May it be our prayer, dedication and discipline in the coming years”. I heartily concur. His word speaks to the patience and perseverance we will need in making the Anglican Church of Canada’s “yes” to the UN Declaration a resounding and continuing “yes” for all time.

Much about reconciliation has been published by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation of Canada. One volume entitled “*Response, Responsibility and Renewal*” features a series of articles written primarily from an Aboriginal perspective, but not exclusively. Here are some images of reconciliation: restoring harmony, rebuilding trust, acknowledging the pain of the past so we can embrace a new future based on mutual respect. Reconciliation requires proactive listening, and a public reckoning with horrific truth: that whole cultures were broken, children brutalized, poverty and racism institutionalized. We need to acknowledge that all of this was sanctioned by the values of the day. Reconciliation is (and I really like this one) “a dangerous opportunity; it’s a dangerous opportunity to unsettle ourselves and examine our values and beliefs, and re-root ourselves in the Gospel.” Reconciliation: a kindling of hope that adjusts an honourable relationship with the First Nations Peoples of this land will be achieved within this generation of all who now call Canada ‘home’.