

# Reconciliation - What's Next?

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By Jane Knox

Like many of you, I continue to work on “reconciliation.” What an odd word!! What does it really mean? There are many answers: forgiveness, respect, proactive diversity, building relationships and trust, a growing understanding of each other... In some ways, it is like a conversation where we turn towards each other with openness and interest. As in a conversation, all are responsible to listen, to keep the conversation going, and to learn the perspective of others.

In a recent meeting, I saw how easy it is to lose sight of “reconciliation.” Someone said: “We always invite First Nations elders to our *Reconciliation Regina* meetings but we do not invite seniors from other cultures to guide us. Why is that?” About 40 people heard that comment but none of us had a good immediate response.

Later, I reflected that in Canada, from the mid 1800s through the entire 1900s, our Government designed policies to strip our indigenous peoples of their languages and cultures. According to official Government records, this was intentional assimilation ... or to use more direct language, it was *cultural genocide*. The cultural practices and languages of Canada’s indigenous peoples were suppressed deliberately in residential schools, The Indian Act, and other policies.

The United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)*, article 8 states: “Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be assimilated – meaning, they have the right not to be forced to take up someone else’s culture and way of life, and for their culture not to be destroyed.”

We invite First Nations elders to work with us now because we need them to rebuild awareness of a rich cultural heritage that was nearly lost. Reconciliation means we value the many aspects of indigenous culture that can enrich our lives, our communities, and our society.

## What Can We Do As Unitarians?

What have we done as individuals? as a Fellowship? What will move us forward now?

Explore—the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action* are now two years old.

**TO DO:** Join a study group (3 sessions) to examine the TRC’s *Calls to Action* and assess where we could next focus our attention as a Fellowship. We need 5 people to have a good chat. Will you be one of them? Call Jane: 306-586-1066.

Act—do something, however small; set a date, get going, keep moving forward.

**TO DO:** Visit the Royal Saskatchewan Museum before December 2017 to see the temporary exhibit: *We Are All Treaty People*. It includes original written records of the meaning of Treaty Four from an indigenous perspective. **Build your understanding of Treaty Four!** And enjoy an outing to one of the best museums in the country.

Read a book. Have a conversation. Pick something you want to learn about and find a partner to journey with you. Lots of options!

*There are no passengers on spaceship earth .... We are all crew.*

— Marshal McLuhan

Let’s get cracking! We have work to do!