

Call to Action Study Group - Statement on Reconciliation

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The Fellowship's *Call to Action* Study Group has discussed the meaning of reconciliation several times. It considered readings, personal experiences, and Unitarian beliefs and principles. However, its primary source was the Chapter on reconciliation in: What We Have Learned:

Principles of Truth and Reconciliation by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Principles%20of%20Truth%20and%20Reconciliation.pdf>

The Study Group recommended to the Board that the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina adopt this STATEMENT ON RECONCILIATION, including the definition of reconciliation.

Statement on Reconciliation

"...reconciliation" is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country." (page 113)

For the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina, reconciliation requires respecting Indigenous spirituality. It means resolving to continuously educate ourselves about First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and engaging with them on a journey toward justice and equity for all Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

"In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. We are not there yet. The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples is not a mutually respectful one. But, we believe we can get there, and we believe we can maintain it." (page 113)

Awareness of the past means learning the historical truth. "...by truth, we mean not only the truth revealed in government and church residential school documents, but also the truth of lived experiences as told to us by Survivors

and others in their statements to this Commission. Together, these public testimonies constitute a new oral history record, one based on Indigenous legal traditions and the practice of witnessing." ... As Elder Jim Dumont explained in 2014, "in Ojibwe thinking, to speak the truth is to actually speak from the heart." (page 117)

"A critical part of this [reconciliation] process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change.

Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process." (page 121)

"Together, Canadians must do more than just *talk* about reconciliation; we must learn how to *practise* reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships." (page 126)

"For Canadians from all walks of life, reconciliation offers a new way of living together." (page 126)

