

TRC Principles and Actions to date

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By *Wayne Williamson*

Just as the faith of Unitarians and Universalists is based on seven principles, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada believes that in order for Canada to flourish in the 21st century, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canada must be based on principles. The following ten principles are from the TRC.

1. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.
2. First Nations, Inuit, & Metis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.
3. Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge land redress past harms.
4. Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.
5. Reconciliation must create a more equitable land inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
6. All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.
7. The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.
8. Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.
9. Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
10. Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.



At the recent Western Region Fall Gathering held at the Unitarian Church Calgary, a daylong workshop was held to help participants better understand some of the history of the Treaties and what "reconciliation" means to each of us. At the end of the day everyone attending the WRFG participated in a "Blanket Ceremony". This was most enlightening as it crystallized in our minds exactly what occurred to the First Nations peoples in Canada and just how unfair we the "settlers" treated our indigenous peoples.

So, what are we at the Unitarian Fellowship of Regina doing in regards to Truth and Reconciliation? Well let me tell you. In the past at Sunday services we have had presentations by First Nations Elders and other speakers about the residential schools, treaties, present society, etc. In addition a few years ago we hosted a one day workshop by the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) which was attended by members of the public as well as our members and friends. Currently we have been represented at Reconciliation Regina by Jane Knox. This is a group initiated by the OTC & the city of Regina last year, and participants include faith groups, chamber of commerce, service organizations and other interested parties. In house we have a study group of 7 members led by Jane reviewing the "Calls to Action", a list of 94 items the TRC has proposed for governments and other organizations to take. Our study group strongly supports this and is in process of zeroing in on a few specific actions that our Fellowship or the CUC can focus on. We are also in the process of setting up a collection of books related to the Treaties, residential schools, and indigenous peoples of Canada, novels by First Nations authors and others, for the Fellowship. A copy of the 94 Calls to Action will also be included. Additional information is available on the CUC website as well as a number of other websites. The study group reports to the Board of Trustees and will contribute articles to the newsletter.

Wayne Williamson