

Universalist Unitarian Church of Halifax

Themed Church Magazine - February 2016

Reconciliation



Definition

reconciliation n.

1) “coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people going forward.” From the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

2) the action of making one view or belief compatible with another.

E.g. “he aims to bring about a reconciliation between art and technology”

This is the sixth in a series of monthly “magazines” on the topic of the theme for the month. Each magazine will contain inspiring words, questions to ponder, articles to read and further resources to explore.

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What Does Reconciliation Mean in your Life?

Our Theme for February, a theme we share this month with UU congregations across Canada, is Reconciliation. We are devoting the entire month of February to this theme in the narrowly defined context of reconciliation between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples of Canada.

On March 29, 2014, the president of the Canadian Unitarian Council and the President of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada delivered a solemn commitment at the ceremonies marking the end of the formal sessions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that had gathered information on the history and legacy of the Canadian Residential School System. That commitment read in part:

“We, the Canadian Unitarian Council and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada, commit to the journey of healing and reconciliation between Canadian Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people. Today, as we acknowledge and accept our responsibility for truth-telling, healing and reconciliation, we commit to these specific steps to advance that journey:

- **To assemble and promote educational materials for our congregations regarding the history and impact of the Indian Residential School system.**
- **To create and promote a new program for congregations about racial equity and intercultural competency.**
- **To continue to encourage our congregations and their members to learn more about the richness of Aboriginal spirituality and cultures, working together to advance the struggle for justice for Aboriginal people.**

We must learn from these travesties, as well as from the strength, courage, honesty, resilience and success of those who survived the Indian Residential School system. We have asked our congregations across Canada to read this statement. We want you to know we walk with you.”

What does that commitment, made by our leadership, mean in your life? For me it means that I am called to action. Action on that commitment must begin with study and reflection combined with making personal contacts and hopefully friendships with Mi'kmaq and others in the aboriginal community here in Halifax and in Nova Scotia. If done sincerely, this will be a difficult challenge for us, but it will be one way that we can bring meaning into our own lives and into what it means to be a proud Canadian. I hope you will be a part of this journey of healing and reconciliation and that the materials presented in this magazine will help you to do so. Rev. Norm Horofker

How can you love those who have stolen from you, assaulted or abused you, or tried to blow you up and completely destroy you? How can you forgive those who have kidnapped, tortured and killed someone you love? Yet this is where reconciliation has to begin.

Andrew White, Father, Forgive: Reflections on Peacemaking

Our Spiritual Exercise



Option A: Spend Time with the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation report at this site. The various reports are indexed and provide summaries. Read the words of the survivors of the Residential School system and try to imagine what experience would have been like.

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=890>



Option B: Watch for news about the Women's Memorial

March on Sunday February 14 in Halifax. The march is intended to honour the lives of missing and murdered aboriginal women while holding our federal government accountable for full and open hearings into the roots of this national disgrace.

Option C: Host a Reconciliation Dialogue in your home with other church members and friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues!

Reconciliation Canada provides a Community Action Toolkit to help you do it. The 6-page Kitchen Table Dialogue Guide is found at

http://reconciliationcanada.ca/staging/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/CommunityActionToolkit_KitchenTable.pdf



Option D: Express yUUrself! Join the Canada-wide community art project!

In addition to Sharing Our Faith this month, the Truth Healing and Reconciliation Reflection Guide Task Force has joined the Canadian Unitarian Council and the Vancouver Conference Host Team in a nation-wide community art project for the CUC's National Conference during May 20-22, 2016 in Vancouver, BC. UU congregations and individuals are asked to name their actions towards truth, healing and reconciliation. The theme of the 2016 National Conference is ***Bolder Ways of Being***, and we invite you to help us create this bold expression. Ask Norm Horofker for more details if interested.



We owe the Aboriginal peoples a debt that is four centuries old. It is their turn to become full partners in developing an even greater Canada. And the reconciliation required may be less a matter of legal texts than of attitudes of the heart.

Romeo LeBlanc

Your Question



No need to treat these questions like “homework.” You do not need to engage every single one. Instead, simply find the one that “hooks” you most and let it lead you where you need to go.

- Reconciliation can be a solitary act. For example, it is possible to be reconciled to unpleasant fact, meaning that you fully acknowledge what happened and are ready to move on. **But if the “unpleasantness” meant that another person continues to suffer the consequence of something that you benefit from, can you move on? Does true reconciliation require a personal connection between those involved, those who benefited and those who suffered the consequences?** In one case you may be reconciled to your own feelings. In the other, you are reconciled with another person. **How important is each of these in your spiritual growth?**
- “Twelve Step Programs” have been a source of spiritual healing and growth for millions of people. The steps are meant to be worked in sequential order. Step Eight is “Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.” And Step Nine is “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.” **Why, do you think there might be seven steps suggested before you even consider focussing on those you might have harmed?**
- **What is the reason you are willing/motivated to walk the path of reconciliation?**
- **Will it be sufficient for the entirety of the journey, particularly when there are complications and challenges?”**

Books for Children

When I was Eight By Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton and illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard. This true story is based the life, courage, and resilience of Margaret Pokiak-Fenton (the author’s mother-in-law) who lived in Canada’s far north and experienced the residential school system.

Shi-shi-etko by Nicola I. Campbell – available through your local library or you can watch the Youtube video. It’s a story of how a young girl prepares to go to her first day of school. Shi-shi-etko came from a First Nations community, she was being sent away to school to live. As she gets ready, she

gets some important lessons from some important people in her family.

Now Everybody Really Hates Me by Ross Chast

Now I Will Never Leave the Dinner Table by Ross Chast

Once there was a Boy by David Leffler

Shin-chi’s Canoe by Nicola I. Campbell

The Forgiveness Garden by Lauren Thompson and Christy Hale

The Grand Mosque of Paris by Karen Gray Ruelle

The Year the Swallows Came Early by Kathryn Fitzmaurice

The overall purpose of human communication is - or should be - reconciliation. It should ultimately serve to lower or remove the walls of misunderstanding which unduly separate us human beings, one from another.

M. Scott Peck, The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace

Recommended Resources

As always, this is not required reading. These pieces are simply meant to get your thinking started, and maybe to open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to “be a people of resilience”.

Wise Words

Let us not be lulled into an impression that when the sun rises tomorrow morning, the pain and scars will miraculously be gone. They will not. But a new day has dawned, a new day heralded by a commitment to reconciliation and building a new relationship with Inuit, Métis and First Nations.

Mary Simon

The human spirit has enormous resilience. But it is pushed to the limit by grief. We pray for strength, for a few more morsels of faith a few more nuggets of time and little spaces in our days and nights when we can touch another soul, and be held in someone else's embrace.

Help us to find the hope that lies beneath what our eyes can see and our ears can hear. Help us to hold fast to the belief that there is still goodness in this world.

Help us to respond out of love rather than out of fear.

Help us to trust again, knowing that ‘the arc of the moral universe is long’ and that it does indeed ‘bend toward justice.’

Mend once again our brokenness, and guide us toward the path of peace.

Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley

Reconciliation means working together to correct the legacy of past injustice.

Nelson Mandela

We are all one - or at least we should be - and it is our job, our duty, and our great challenge to fight the voices of division and seek the salve of reconciliation.

Roy Barnes

The practice of peace and reconciliation is one of the most vital and artistic of human actions.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Reconciliation is a part of the healing process, but how can there be healing when the wounds are still being inflicted? N. K. Jemisin

To reconcile is to weave a stronger and more vibrant social fabric, based on the unique and diverse strengths of Canadians and their communities.

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph

The work of community, love, reconciliation, restoration is the work we cannot leave up to politicians. This is the work we are all called to do.

Shane Claiborne

With all the differences and misunderstandings, meeting halfway is the only way to show that both of you are willing to sacrifice a portion of yourself for the benefit of both.

NerD_Seyer

What is or should constitute reconciliation, is not at all clear. However, what I am convinced of is that the suffering of the survivors; the legacy of the Indian Residential School system must give rise to an equal and positive return; a legacy of hope – from the ashes of their disaster must grow the roses of success. Canada owes this to them. It owes it to us and indeed we owe it to each other and to ourselves.

Justice Harry S. Laforme

Let us find a way to belong in this time and place together. The future, and the well-being of all our children, rests with the kind of relationships we build today.

Chief Dr. Robert Joseph

Many people today agree that we need to reduce violence in our society. If we are truly serious about this, we must deal with the roots of violence, particularly those that exist within each of us. We need to embrace ‘inner disarmament,’ reducing our own emotions of suspicion, hatred and hostility toward our brothers and sisters.

Dalai Lama XIV

Articles

As long as we share our stories, as long as our stories reveal our strengths and vulnerabilities to each other, we reinvigorate our understanding and tolerance for the little quirks of personality that in other circumstances would drive us apart. When we live in a family, a community, a country where we know each other's true stories, we remember our capacity to lean in and love each other into wholeness.

I have read the story of a tribe in southern Africa called the Babemba in which a person doing something wrong, something that destroys this delicate social net, brings all work in the village to a halt. The people gather around the offender, and one by one they begin to recite in his life: every good deed, social responsibility. These the person, and spoken honored consequence of that person back into the person is given the chance to why he is important to the

I want to live under such a When I forget my place, private wounding in a public remembered back into my purpose. I want to live reconciliation. When

thoughtless or cruel, I want to be given the chance to respond with a ritual that creates the possibility of reconnection. I want to live in a neighborhood where people don't shoot first, don't sue first, where people are Storycatchers willing to discover in strangers the mirror of themselves. *Christina Baldwin, Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story*



everything he has done right thoughtful behavior, act of things have to be true about honestly, but the time-misbehavior is to appreciate better part of himself. The remember who he is and life of the village. practice of compassion. when I lash out with some way, I want to be alignment with my self and with the opportunity for someone around me is

Whenever I express my views, thoughts or anything I deeply believe, I will welcome any opposing view or thought. I will listen with caring attention to what the other says, accepting it no matter how different or antagonistic it seems to be. I will also deeply and sincerely thank them. I will abstain from feeling accused or judged. I will acknowledge the other as my shadow, an integral part of me who has accepted to relate with me. I believe that a vision in order to manifest requires its opposite, the other polarity. If my vision is truly holistic, I am not in a condition to oppose any alternative vision. I intend to learn to accept what appears to be opposite, no matter how unpleasant or contrary it is. I believe that only in the paradox of this acceptance, in releasing the urge to be right, unity can be experienced and manifested. I have tried all other options, and they have not worked, and this is the only I have left. And for this purpose I am open to be patient, promoting the gestation of this healing process, for I know that all is one."

Franco Santoro



Kintsugi is a pottery technique. When something breaks, like a vase, they glue it back together with melted gold. Instead of making the cracks invisible, they make them beautiful. To celebrate the history of the object. What it's been through. And I was just thinking of us like that. My heart full of gold veins, instead of cracks.

Leah Raeder, Cam Girl

Videos & On-line

I Am Not the Indian You Had in Mind” Video by Thomas King: Thomas King is a novelist and also more recently wrote the non-fiction work *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*. He wrote and directed this short video, “I’m Not the Indian You Had in Mind,” which challenges the stereotypical portrayal First Nations peoples in the media. This spoken word short offers an insight of how First Nations people today are changing old ideas and empowering themselves in the greater community.”

<http://www.nsi-canada.ca/2012/03/im-not-the-indian-you-had-in-mind/>

“What is Reconciliation?” Video from Murray Sinclair, the chair of the TRC:

<https://vimeo.com/25389165>

“Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools” Developed in 2001, the goals of *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools* are to: acknowledge the experiences of, and the impacts and consequences of Canada’s Residential School System on Aboriginal peoples; to create a public and historical record of this period in Canadian history that could be easily accessed by Canadians; and to promote public awareness, understanding and education of the history and legacy of residential schools.

<http://wherearethechildren.ca/exhibition/>

Reconciliation Canada engages Canadians in dialogue and transformative experiences that revitalize the relationships among Indigenous peoples and all Canadians.

<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>

Website of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission:**

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=312>

Justice Sinclair speaks with the CBC about the final report of the TRC:

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/reconciliation/index.php?p=312>

A groundbreaking **arts partnership** looks to the past & future for new dialogues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada

<http://canadacouncil.ca/aboriginal-arts-office/reconciliation>

The Failure of Reconciliation, Taiaiake Alfred (University of Victoria, BC)

<http://taiaiake.net/2014/05/14/the-failure-of-reconciliation/>

Rwanda: From Hatred to Reconciliation <http://tinyurl.com/zgcfg8x>

Music

Power in the Blood, Buffy Sainte Marie <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzZtZVTiRFQ>

Amen, Leonard Cohen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsYd08wQGII>

Blank Page, Christina Aguilera <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xD8Ga0Nsu0>

Song of Reconciliation, Susan Ashton <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kkk-JaTcF7M>

Sweet Forgiveness, Bonnie Raitt <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq2RbR-eXVE>

Rita Joe Song Project: Gentle Warrior <http://nac-cna.ca/en/ritajoesong/gentle-warrior>

Reconciliation should be accompanied by justice, otherwise it will not last. While we all hope for peace it shouldn't be peace at any cost but peace based on principle, on justice.
Corazon Aquino

Books	Movies
<p>Michael Asch, <i>On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada</i></p> <p>Marie Battiste, <i>Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit</i></p> <p>Glen Sean Coulthard, <i>Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition</i></p> <p>Jill Doerfler, <i>Those who Belong: Identity, Family, Blood, and Citizenship Among the White Earth Anishinaabeg</i></p> <p>Tom Flanagan, <i>Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights</i></p> <p>Thomas King, <i>The Truth About Stories and An Inconvenient Indian</i></p> <p>Arthur Manuel, <i>Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call</i></p> <p>Pamela D. Palmater, <i>Beyond Blood: Rethinking Indigenous Identity</i></p> <p>Pamela D. Palmater, <i>Indigenous Nationhood</i></p> <p>Paulette Regan, <i>Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada</i></p> <p>John Ralston Saul, <i>The Comeback</i></p> <p>Leanne Simpson, <i>Dancing On Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation</i></p> <p>Annis May Timpson, <i>First Nations, First Thoughts: The Impact of Indigenous Thought in Canada</i></p> <p>Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, <i>Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume One: Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future</i></p> <p>Daniel N. Paul, <i>We Were Not the Savages</i></p> <p>Desmond Tutu, <i>No Future Without Forgiveness</i></p> <p>Rupert Ross, <i>Returning to the Teachings: Exploring The Aboriginal Justice</i></p> <p>Simon Wiesenthal, <i>The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness</i></p>	<p>Changing Lanes (2002) The story of what happens one day in New York when a young lawyer and a businessman share a small automobile accident on F.D.R. Drive and their mutual road rage escalates into a feud.</p> <p>Dead Man Walking (1995) A nun, while comforting a convicted killer on death row, empathizes with both the killer and his victim's families.</p> <p>Invictus (2009) Nelson Mandela, in his first term as the South African President, initiates a unique venture to unite the apartheid-torn land: enlist the national rugby team on a mission to win the 1995 Rugby World Cup.</p> <p>Reconciliation (2009) The provocative story about an estranged father and son struggling to overcome the heartbreaking consequences of their past.</p> <p>Reconciliation (2012) Three people with vastly separate lives and vantage points share an interconnecting narrative of grief, loss, and hope following 9/11. https://vimeo.com/34647517</p> <p>The Mission (1986) 18th century Spanish Jesuits try to protect a remote South American Indian tribe in danger of falling under the rule of pro-slavery Portugal. Priest Rodrigo emerges from his climb up the falls to be forgiven and accepted by the very people he had sinned against.</p> <p>The Straight Story (1999) Alvin Straight's slow, arduous journey on his lawn tractor to bring reconciliation with his brother is a powerful witness to the patience and tenacity that is required if we are to make things right; if we are to tear down walls that separate.</p>

Get Ready for March's Theme – Renewal

Come to the "Reconciliation Salon" at the church at 7 pm on Tues, Feb 23 for wine and cheese and a discussion on reconciliation. Contact Rev. Norm Horofker if you need a ride or if you would like to join the conversation by computer link.