

NAIM Professional Development Truth and Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation articles on the TRC web site were very well done and painted a good picture of the reality of what took place in residential schools across Canada. We as a nation have been a part of history for the First Nations People that should never existed. As individuals working with NAIM we have listened often to the pain of people we know and count as friends who have walked a life driven by the wounds of residential school. Many are still wounded and some have found healing. Some look back on residential school as a healthy part of their growing up but for the most part it has scarred people for life.

The Canadian government and the churches have dug a very deep dark painful hole that will not go away any time soon. Being a mission agency with a focus on ministry amongst First Nation people puts us in a very unique place in this time in history. May our history as a mission play a part in the healing of wounded hearts and continue to be an agent for healing.

A key role for us as a mission is played out in our interaction with people we are relating with, both in the First Nation community and with those who we connect with such as supporters and churches and society as a whole. We are in a special place because of our relationships with both sides. It gives opportunity to speak to the issues of residential school in a way that can help build a healthier understanding of the heart beat of a people who are wounded and grieving. On the other side of the coin we have the opportunity to speak to issues that arise as people outside the native community wrestle with their feelings whether negative or positive. Finding ourselves in this place can often bring us into a prickly spot as we find our selves in the middle of relationships that can bring tension. As an organization made up of Christ followers who are both First Nation and caucasian we have an incredible opportunity to work together in bringing healing, a healing that ultimately only God can bring. A healing that is built on God's love. A healing that brings reconciliation, forgiveness and hope.

Another aspect is education. We have the opportunity to present the reality that is residential school and the impact it has had on the people. In ministry we often find our selves speaking and teaching as we represent the Mission. These are times we can use wisely to help with Truth and Reconciliation. Many people do not grasp the pain that is felt nor the consequence of what has taken place in the lives of Canada's First Nation people. Many, if not most, do not understand or feel the depth of the wound the people have been impacted by.

God has put us in a place and in relationships with people that can be used by Him to bring healing. I always say we are just a tool in God's tool box. May He take us and use us as only the Master can. Let's continue to look in to our own hearts and lives and the part we can play in bringing healing to wounded people.