

In this reaction/response paper, I will summarize what I learned through the reading material and videos, and include suggestions of how NAIM as an organization and staff members can address “Call to Action” points 58-61.

I learned about the TRC, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and some of the work they are doing to bring about reconciliation. This commission was a result of a class action lawsuit against the government and churches concerning the cultural genocide. One of the first steps of reconciliation is to educate people about the actions of the government and church against the Indigenous people. Usually when people are educated they feel horrible about it and are often very upset (many in the US, not so much). Next we need to realize that reconciliation does not happen simply because we feel bad and say we are sorry, there needs to be constructive action behind those feelings as we work together towards reconciliation.

I also learned that, in response to the lawsuit, a “Call to Action” was drafted, and points 58-61 in that Call to Action, calls upon church parties in collaboration with Survivors and representatives of Aboriginal organizations, to establish permanent funding to Aboriginal people for community-controlled healing and reconciliation projects, culture and language-revitalization projects, education and relationship-building projects, and regional dialogues for Indigenous spiritual leaders and youth to discuss Indigenous spirituality, self-determination, and reconciliation.

Based on this Call to Action, it seems to me that NAIM needs to educate its support base on these issues, and then encourage them to consider allocate more funds for First Nations staff within our organization. We also need to do more to be a support to Indigenous leaders in our communities rather than, as outsiders, working so hard to run all of the programs and being in charge of everything. We need to recognize that the church has played a major role in forcibly stripping the culture from these people groups, and we need to make sure we are not repeating the mistakes of the past. There are some strong, faithful, First Nations leaders on staff. We need to ask ourselves, “How can we support them, listen to them, and trust them to lead in the future?”