

Truth and Reconciliation assignment response

Appalled, shocked, speechless, and astounded are just a few words that would describe me in the course of reading, and watching the materials that were included in this assignment.

I learned about a level of deliberate and conscious intent that I have previously been oblivious to. Although few, there were rational voices that spoke against some of the atrocities of the residential schools and yet they were ignored, dismissed and rejected.

Some of my closest friends are First Nations. I've heard firsthand the stories of abuse in and by the residential school system and the laws of Canada. I consider myself well above the average Canadian in regards to being informed and sympathetic to First Nations issues and causes. And yet, as I learned more of our history and of cultural genocide in our past, I can't but wonder what it is going to take to get the average Canadian to learn and acknowledge the realities that continue to contribute to the unhealthy state that many Aboriginal people find themselves in today.

Reconciliation demands **both sides** of the conflict to acknowledge the truth – not just the Aboriginal peoples. Far too many of my non-Aboriginal friends and acquaintances remain in denial and ignorance of the historical facts.

I fear that all the courageous work that has been devoted to the Truth and Reconciliation movement will have been done in vain, if the majority of our nation continues to turn a blind eye and deaf ear to the truths revealed in the disclosures and stories of the First Nations people.

It is no wonder to me that First Nations people question the hope of reconciliation. In order for there to be reconciliation, there needs to be conciliation, which means "relationship."

I continue to pray for God's healing to be experienced in the hearts, minds and souls of Aboriginal peoples; and healing in the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Calls to Action

I like the idea of NAIM formulating a statement that is called for in Call to Action number 48.

Ron Hartwig

Number 59: NAIM staff can be agents of reconciliation helping to educate churches and congregations of the historical facts. NAIM needs to use the influence we have to validate the need for Christian people to own the wrongs of the past.

Number 60: ...“to respect” Indigenous spirituality... Respect and Tolerance are two different things. I think we currently show respect for the spiritual leaders and their practices, but it doesn't mean we agree with them. We need to continue to live and speak the truths of the gospel as we have been called to do. If some feel that our commission and mandate goes against this call to action, so be it. I think there is a path of respect and agreeing to disagree that fits within the spirit of this call to action.

Number 61: NAIM puts a lot of funding into programs that are designed to bring healing and reconciliation. I believe that participating and giving of our own time and energy is equally important than just providing funding.