

Jim Miller Response to the Truth and Reconciliation videos and the 94 action points.

The videos were informative to someone unfamiliar with Canada / Aboriginal history. I wish there had been a bit more effort put into the way they presented. The first minutes of NAIM's movie 'Building the Trust' were much more evocative than watching a talking head.

It seems though that there is a genuine effort being put out on the federal level for some progress to be made in recognizing the depth of the current First Nations situation and problems. And also it seems the federal govt. is willing to take some concrete steps.

The 94 point call to action document is interesting. I did not read it through all the way because I found it out of touch with what needs to happen for true reconciliation. It appears in this document that all movement for reconciliation needs to be at the federal and provincial level, and by those respective governments. But for true reconciliation to take place there must be movement from both sides of the offence.

I believe that the T&R topic has morphed into a large animal that is too comprehensive. It appears that people are trying to make this movement encompass **all** that is happening in the aboriginal community. The end result of this approach is that people of limited knowledge quickly become over-whelmed with the current situations and struggles of the FN communities. This is counter productive because it causes many to disengage. It would be far more manageable to firstly address the history of the residential schools. These schools were obviously the root of many of the current attitudes and struggles of our communities. But there is so much more.

The Indian Act and the resulting history of that document has as much to do with current conditions as well. The reserve system of dealing with First Nations people has formed a way of life and world view that has failed the people it was intended to protect.

I believe that the current treaty process happening in BC is the healthiest way to engage reconciliation. In this process, there are goals set by all parties and specific roles and responsibilities laid out.

Some of you may remember that the theme of the World Christian Gathering in Rapid City in '98 was reconciliation. I remember there were specifically 2 Maori elders that addressed us all in the plenary sessions. One of them was Monte Ohia. He said that he was glad that some of the mainstream denominations were represented there, and also that Christian wanted to reconcile with Christian.

'But', he said'

'Make no mistake, the primary parties that need to be involved with reconciliation are the nations. The wrong was done by nation against nation. And until nation sits down with nation, there can be no full reconciliation.'

So, as representatives of Christ, we do well to be aware of the current feelings and history of the people God has called us to. But we will never be the principle parties involved in reconciling one nation to another. Our job, of course, is to be agents of reconciliation of the created to the Creator.