

Reflections on TRC “Call to Action” points 58-61

Jack Teeter 8/01/17

I was moved once again by reading, watching and listening to the tragic history of First Nations cultural genocide by the Government in conjunction with the dominant churches in Canada. I have heard the stories and felt the anger and distrust many times in the past from survivors of the residential school system. I have seen the residual effects in families and communities, and I have witnessed the revulsion toward western Christianity, and my heart is broken. In my 50 years of First Nations ministry, I have labored to rebuild the trust and to break the stereotypical picture of Christianity. Tragically, while I have felt that trust and love grow, and have become welcomed into the communities and hearts of the people I have come to serve, I have seen that their love for us has not translated into a love for our Jesus. Only God knows how significant the impact of the Residential Schools has played into that picture. Satan for sure has, and continues to use that tragic history to keep people from trusting the Jesus represented by the churches involved in that history.

So, what can we as an organization and staff of NAIM do as representatives of the Gospel in light of the tragic history, and the calls to action by the TRC in points 58-61?

While we are not directly responsible for tragic Residential School disaster, we are implicated by the fact that the Gospel and Christianity were used to promote the cultural genocide. I think NAIM, and NAIM staff should make this tragic history known in the churches, among our constituency, and fully support the TRC movement among the people we work with. I think we should apologize where appropriate for the block to hearing and responding to the Gospel that has taken place as at least a partial result of Residential School system. I think we should make the knowledge of this history a key part of training of our staff and short term workers. I think we should train our staff in how to treat with respect the people involved in traditional aboriginal religions and never belittle or downplay the power and impact of that worldview, while never apologizing for our Ambassador role in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ as the only way to peace with Creator God. I think we should renew our commitment to prayer as we see Satan using this tragic history in his warfare against the Gospel. I think we should listen much, affirm where possible, grieve with our brothers and sisters, and love with an action love.

I would like to see NAIM staff actively involved in the reconciliation process, and while I feel there needs to be monetary recompense from those directly responsible, I think we at NAIM need to be creative in finding ways to be involved without direct monetary contribution.

May God enable us to have a significant part in the long term process of healing and hope.