

Truth and Reconciliation Response

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February 19, 2018

What was learned:

Much of the material viewed and read in this online workshop concerning residential schools, abuses and consequences was not new information. However, it was good to be confronted with this history again, to remember. And it was encouraging to learn about the truth and reconciliation movement. Prior to the exercise I knew little of this movement. I was concerned that the 94 calls to action were perhaps too far reaching to be immediately answered. I hope the movement does not die from being spread too thin. But then, that is not my place to say.

How can NAIM as an organization and staff members can address “Call to Action” points 58-61:

I think that we as an organization and staff first need to give honest and careful thought to identify our responsibility for the residential school and broader injustices experienced by First Nations, including the Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada and the US. We do not bear the same responsibility as the organizations who ran the schools. But it would be inappropriate to throw out a quick apology without honoring these peoples by carefully examining ourselves and accurately identifying our potential contributions.

Such an examination could help us not only craft an appropriate apology, but also more meaningfully identify our way forward. We have, as an organization, devoted a great deal of time to educating our new staff, and continuing to educate our existing staff, concerning this history of injustice and its ramifications for First Nations. We need to commit to continuing this education and perhaps submitting our education increasingly to First Nations.

In addition, we need to consider, as we are doing here, how to bring the gospel to First Nations in this contemporary climate. In some ways, this is a new cross-cultural challenge. We speak not only into the First Nations culture that we have been working with for decades, but into one that is politically active in and gaining the support of a larger more spiritually inclusive climate, one that is wary of Christianity and our great commission. Perhaps now more than ever we need be guided by our First Nations brothers and sisters.