



Eastern Synod Assembly 2012

MOTION 1.3

A response to the work of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and the ELCIC's commitment to diversity

ES 12-06 MSC that, in light of the ongoing work of *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC) and the ELCIC's commitment to diversity, the Synod Assembly calls on the Eastern Synod to form a volunteer, ad hoc committee that will invite and help shepherd the congregations of the Eastern Synod in:

- confession and repentance of both our current racist attitudes and actions and the part we played in support of the policy of assimilation that denied the integrity of Aboriginal cultures and thereby created and perpetuated the residential school tragedy;
- committing ourselves to working toward reconciliation and decolonizing the dominant culture;
- planning to engage in on-going learning, reflection, and discussion based in scripture, the work of the TRC and related resources in order to uncover attitudes that are still present in our selves, church and society that were at the root of the residential schools;
- after the process of confession, repentance, self-learning, and reflection to humbly respond to invitations from communities that experience the debilitating effects of racism and with communities that live with privilege, to find ways to journey together, confronting the reality of racism.

The tasks of this committee will include:

- to begin to discern the context of the Eastern Synod in relation to diversity, racism, culture, and right relationships with First Nations Peoples;
- to look in depth at the issues of diversity, racism, culture and right relationships;
- to devise and commend processes for this work;
- to engage others in the Synod and beyond in gathering resources (written, experiential, video, workshop, and training);
- to help the Eastern Synod to identify and celebrate the ways this process is life giving and helps us to live our faith.

RATIONALE: (Presented on the floor of the Assembly but not part of the Motion)

On Friday, February 24, 2012 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), released its interim report together with a new historical publication, *They Came for the Children: Canada, Aboriginal Peoples, and Residential Schools*. The report together with the excellent historical publication provide a wonderful opportunity for God's people to rediscover the truth about the treatment of First Nations Peoples in Canada and through this education, move toward reconciliation.

Out of the TRC has also come the recognition that most of the people who ran the residential schools were "faithful, well meaning people who thought they were doing the will of God".

God's people today need to ask, "What about the faithful well meaning people who think they are doing the will of God today"?

There were attitudes and cultural beliefs at the root of residential schools. One of the challenges of the TRC is to do the difficult work of uncovering which of those attitudes still exist and continue to shape us today.

The Eastern Synod of the ELCIC is committed to being "In Mission for Others." This calls us to be a diverse church. To truly engage such diversity means more than having a variety of skin colours in our congregations. We are called to do the work of understanding our own culture and intentionally living in right relationship across cultures.

Even though we, as Lutheran Christians, did not run residential schools, we must recognize that we had a part in the residential school reality and that we continue to be shaped by the attitudes that led to the residential schools.

Rationale has been abridged.

Additional Rationale and Resources:

See <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

Resources:

There are a growing number of resources (written, workshop, training, video, and other) that can be helpful in this process. As a beginning point, and to help introduce the need for an invitation into this process small number of Canadian resources are suggested as a starting point:

Unsettling the Settler Within:

Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada

by Paulette Regan: UBC Press

http://www.ubcpress.ca/search/title_book.asp?BookID=29917296

A powerful and compassionate call to action, *Unsettling the Settler Within* inspires with its thoughtful and personal account of Regan's own journey, and offers all Canadians -- Indigenous and non-Indigenous policymakers, politicians, teachers, and students -- a new way of approaching the critical task of healing the wounds left by the residential school system.

Mamow-Be-Mo-Tay-Tah (Let Us Walk Together)