

The Healing and Reconciliation Ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

*Of all the non-governmental institutions in Canadian society, religious institutions have perhaps the greatest potential to foster awareness and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.
The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996*

Who is my neighbour?

In response to the great commandment, Love Thy Neighbour, The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (The PCC), 2006, approved plans for a Healing and Reconciliation ministry.

At the heart of the Healing and Reconciliation ministry is the belief that society will be transformed for the better when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people develop a new understanding of each other and build a new relationship founded on mutual respect and love of neighbour. Healing is required to overcome the legacy of misunderstanding.

The approach is simple: local church members and groups are encouraged to reach out and get to know their Aboriginal neighbours.

The 2006 General Assembly approved the following specific recommendations from the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team:

- i. Provide support and/or seed funding for local initiatives
- ii. Encourage and support Healing and Reconciliation activities for youth
- iii. Invite other denominations to engage in a Leaders Tour, with reference to the model of Ten Days for Global Justice, to inform and inspire Healing and Reconciliation action
- iv. Develop and distribute resource materials
- v. Establish, direct, and support a resource team to further the work of Healing and Reconciliation at a local level in the years to come

To help church members begin the process of reaching out to Aboriginal people, The PCC has hired a Healing and Reconciliation Animator, Ms. Lori Ransom. She will work for one year to provide information and advice to church members. She welcomes invitations to speak and/or lead workshops. Seed funding is available to support local initiatives that build bridges between peoples. (See www.presbyterian.ca/healing/projects.)

While the Animator will work for one year, the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team emphasized that The PCC's healing and reconciliation ministry will not be a time limited initiative. We believe the Church is called to engage in an ongoing process of community building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

For more information, contact Lori at lransom@presbyterian.ca; 1-800-619-7301 or 1-416-441-1111, ext.283

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