

2015-08-33 Minute from Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) on Truth and Reconciliation:

Friends across the country have engaged in and have been moved by the years of work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC is part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, a negotiated settlement addressing abuse claims of survivors against the government and churches. The TRC is an independent body that provided space for survivors of residential schools to share their experiences and participate in a process of truth, healing and reconciliation.

May 31 – June 3 2015 marked the formal closing events of the TRC in Ottawa. Many Friends were present at these events. CYM was represented by the Presiding Clerk and the staff of the Quaker Indigenous Rights Committee (QIRC) of CFSC.¹

We heard from Chief Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair: “We have described for you a mountain, we have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing.” These passionate words accompanied the handing over of the Commissioners’ report.

Reconciliation, as Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild noted, asks all involved to “open your mind and be willing to learn, and to link arms with Indigenous Peoples as we work together to heal and secure a better future.”

Let us honour the painful truths embodied in the report by actively working for the reconciliation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. We acknowledge our previous minutes on the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery² - actions requested in the TRC’s Calls to Action. We appreciate reconciliation is an ongoing process and not a one-time event. As Friends, we are committed to walk this journey. The Calls to Action include Calls specifically to Faith bodies.

Friends discussed reconciliation during our sessions this week, August 16-19. We urge individual Friends to read the Report of the TRC and the Calls to Action and listen expectantly to the Spirit for guidance on what steps they may be personally led to take.

We encourage Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups to engage with the materials shared by the Quaker Indigenous Rights Committee and prayerfully consider what actions they may take in working for reconciliation in their communities. We welcome the QIRC/CFSC offer to assist us with our journey and look forward to a Minute on our progress when we meet next summer.

¹ Videos from the TRC closing events on the Doctrine of Discovery and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples organized by CFSC can be found at <http://quakerservice.ca/our-work/indigenous-peoples-rights/canada-based-work/>

² <http://quakerservice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Doctrine-of-Discovery-minute-and-background-August-2013.pdf>