

Prayer for Healing and Reconciliation (May 26, 2018)

(This prayer is written from my perspective as a Settler, it is the perspective that is authentic for me to use.)

God of mercy, in 1994, we confessed the wrong we, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, did to the Indigenous people of this land. We confessed how we misused your name to justify the suppression of Indigenous language and culture, the operating of the Indian Residential Schools, and the abuse of children and young people. We said we were sorry and in repentance declared that we wanted to live a different way.

We confess, O God, that we have been slow to understand how rooted our patterns of life and ways of being as settlers are within us, and we have found it difficult to live into patterns of healing. We have not fully embraced the truth that reconciliation comes only by way of the cross and our surrender to Jesus' way of being.

God of human flourishing, we have often pointed at the structures of government, saying they are responsible for ensuring there is clean drinking water, adequate housing, quality education, and needed medical care; without asking what we might be willing to do to bring these things about.

God who forms communities, we have attended blanket exercises and public lectures, we have read books and listened to indigenous elders tell their stories, we have become knowledgeable; but we have not been hesitant to take the first awkward steps of walking together with the Indigenous people living in our neighbourhoods or nearby communities.

O God, move us beyond saying someone else is being called to walk together the Indigenous people we meet and see on a regular basis, so that we understand it is our calling to begin a journey towards reconciliation. Teach us to move beyond words to relationships, beyond knowledge to connection.

O God, teach us the practices that lead reconciliation. Teach us humility. Give us the ability to be of few words and much listening. Challenge our preconceived assumptions with which label people before we have learned who they are. Move our hearts and our wills, so that action flows from our words of commitment.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Peter Bush, Moderator
143rd (2017) General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada