

COMMISSION ROYALE SUR
LES PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES

ROYAL COMMISSION ON
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

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1 **Ottawa, Ontario**

2 --- Upon commencing on Monday, November 8, 1993

3 at 8:45 a.m.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Good morning,
5 everyone. Good morning, members of the Royal Commission
6 on Aboriginal peoples, distinguished representatives of
7 the Anglican, Catholic, United and Presbyterian Churches
8 in Canada that, for the purpose of this Hearing, will be
9 referred to as the historic churches.

10 My name is Whit Fraser. I am the
11 Chairman of the Canadian Polar Commission and I have been
12 asked by the Royal Commission for the purposes of this
13 special consultation if I would act as moderator for these
14 Hearings, and I am delighted to do so.

15 In a few minutes I will invite the two
16 Co-Chairs of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples
17 to make some brief opening remarks. But before that, may
18 I ask Elder William Commanda of the Algonquin Nation to
19 offer prayer in the spirit of co-operation and in the search
20 for truth, guidance and wisdom as we explore the difficult
21 issues facing all of those who are involved in this Hearing.

22 To do that, I would ask you to all rise,
23 please turn this way and face the Elder for the morning

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1 prayer.

2 **(Opening Prayer)**

3 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Perhaps at this
4 time it would be appropriate if I were to introduce to
5 you members of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples.

6 On my left is Georges Erasmus, Co-Chair
7 of the Commission and the former National Chief of the
8 Assembly of First Nations. Next to Mr. Erasmus is René
9 Dussault, Co-Chair and Justice of the Quebec Court of
10 Appeal; Peter Meekison, Commissioner, university
11 professor of political science and constitutional affairs
12 at the University of Alberta; Mary Sillett, Commissioner,
13 former president of the National Inuit Women's
14 Association, Pauktuutit; Justice Bertha Wilson, first
15 woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada. On my
16 right is Viola Robinson, Commissioner, past president of
17 the Native Council of Canada.

18 At this special consultation, as it
19 begins, it is very clear to all members of the Commission,
20 to Aboriginal peoples, to the churches, their
21 congregations and all Canadians that for more than two
22 centuries Christianity has had a profound impact on the
23 lives of Aboriginal peoples of this land. Indeed, no one

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1 has been even able to measure the extent of that impact
2 for neither the benefit nor to the detriment of the
3 Aboriginal peoples. It is not the intent of the Royal
4 Commission at these Hearings to make those judgements.
5 But it is the intent to begin addressing some of the most
6 difficult questions facing Aboriginal peoples across
7 Canada today, and that is the long-standing relationship
8 with the four historic mission churches.

9 It would be difficult, if not
10 impossible, to examine the relationship between the
11 Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadian society without
12 looking at the role that the missionaries and the four
13 long-established Canadian churches represented here today
14 played in the development of Canada as it exists today
15 and the relationship that presently exists between Canada
16 and its first nations.

17 In order to examine that relationship,
18 the church and the Royal Commission jointly set out four
19 primary goals for this special consultation. They are:
20 to review the relationship between the churches and the
21 Aboriginal people in regard to the past and the present
22 understanding of spirituality and culture; to examine the
23 origins of the residential schools and their impact on

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1 the present relationship between Aboriginal people and
2 the churches; to explore the churches' responsibility for
3 and contribution to the healing process and increasing
4 awareness of the issues in the non-Aboriginal church
5 communities; and finally, to consider the churches' role
6 in supporting the Aboriginal peoples' struggle for
7 political, social and economic justice by reviewing the
8 past involvement of the churches in the struggle and
9 clarifying the capacity for working together in the future
10 with the aim of achieving a just and lasting reconciliation
11 between Aboriginal people and the rest of Canadian society.

12 May I then, with that background and
13 comment, turn to the Co-Chairs of the Commission, Georges
14 Erasmus and Mr. Justice René Dussault.

15 Mr. Erasmus, please.

16 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank you,
17 Whit. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to
18 the Royal Commission Special Consultation with the
19 representatives of the four historic mission churches.
20 You are here because your churches operated the residential
21 schools on behalf of the federal government.

22 As you probably know, in the course of
23 our travels across this country we have heard more than

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1 2,000 representations and gathered over 60,000 pages of
2 testimony. We have also sponsored round-table seminars
3 on urban affairs, justice, health, economic development
4 and education.

5 We have held other special consultations
6 on suicide amongst young Aboriginals, on the relocation
7 of the Inuit to the High Arctic, and on the impact of the
8 residential schools.

9 Through all of these hearings we have
10 heard repeatedly from former residential school alumni,
11 their children and social workers about the long-term
12 impacts -- mostly negative effects and long-term impacts
13 on the education policies imposed by the Canadian
14 governments and implemented by churches through the
15 residential school system.

16 Some of the effects were to create a
17 sense of alienation and anomia from both Aboriginal and
18 non-Aboriginal society, an inability to develop parenting
19 skills or to form familial bonding relationships, a loss
20 of language, culture, spirituality and pride. These
21 effects have carried over to several generations and may
22 well be the basis for the dysfunction we see in individuals,
23 families and entire Native communities.

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1 The purpose of this special consultation
2 for the next two days is to offer the churches an
3 opportunity to speak about these past policies, their role
4 in the establishment of the residential schools and the
5 efforts being taken to alleviate some of the wounds of
6 the past.

7 We invite the churches, who have had a
8 collective experience, to share with each other and to
9 talk about the remedies which will contribute to the
10 reconciliation that must soon take place with Aboriginal
11 people.

12 The churches have in recent years made
13 great efforts towards reconciliation with Aboriginal
14 people. Statements of apology for the psychological,
15 emotional, physical or cultural abuse have been issued.

16 The churches have supported Aboriginal people in their
17 constitutional claims and are seeking ways to work together
18 with Aboriginal people in addressing the issue of healing
19 in first nation communities.

20 We look forward to hearing your
21 presentations and to discuss with those of you representing
22 the churches means to rectify past wrongs and to move
23 towards reconciliation with Aboriginal people so that

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1 churches can be instrumental in helping to foster changing
2 attitudes in Canadian society as a whole. It is for this
3 reason that we have agreed to hear from the churches alone
4 without inviting the many Aboriginal leaders who would
5 have liked to participate.

6 I will now ask Mr. Dussault to say a few
7 words to you before we proceed with the day's business.

8 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you;
9 merci.

10 Je voudrais d'abord souhaiter la
11 bienvenue à vous tous qui êtes venus participer à cette
12 consultation spéciale. Espérons que ce sera là une
13 rencontre positive et fructueuse.

14 Les Commissaires se rendent bien compte
15 que les quatre églises ici représentées n'ont pas
16 délibérément cherché par leur action et les politiques
17 mises de l'avant au siècle dernier à causer un préjudice
18 aux enfants qui leur étaient confiés. Les autorités de
19 l'époque étaient convaincues d'agir dans l'intérêt des
20 Autochtones. Il faut se rappeler que la société
21 blanche d'alors considérait que la culture, les langues
22 et la spiritualité des Autochtones étaient inférieures.
23 Les sociétés d'autrefois ont toujours fait preuve

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1 d'intolérance à l'égard de ceux qui sont différents. Et
2 c'est encore le cas trop souvent aujourd'hui.

3 Nous espérons que le monde, ou du moins
4 le Canada, s'est raffiné et qu'il a appris à apprécier
5 la valeur des autres cultures. Nous savons que des églises
6 pour leur part apprennent graduellement à apprécier et
7 à valoriser les cultures autochtones.

8 Nous sommes disposé à écouter le débat
9 et à y prendre une part active. En fin de compte, la
10 Commission aimerait favoriser un rapprochement qui
11 aboutisse à une véritable réconciliation entre les églises
12 et les peuples autochtones.

13 Nous espérons que cette consultation
14 tracera la voie à une telle réconciliation, car ce serait
15 là un pas important dans la guérison tant attendue au sein
16 des communautés autochtones et des églises.

17 Il faudra peut-être que les églises
18 reconnaissent leurs erreurs, que les Autochtones accordent
19 leur pardon, et que tous deux s'entendent pour travailler
20 ensemble à redonner aux familles leur fierté, leur langue
21 et leur culture.

22 La Commission royale a entrepris un
23 important projet de recherche sur les pensionnats et sur

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1 les politiques sous-jacentes. Le ministère des Affaires
2 indiennes et des églises nous ont récemment donné accès
3 à de la correspondance et à des documents d'archives qui,
4 jusqu'à tout récemment, étaient encore inaccessibles.

5 À en juger par le compte-rendu
6 préliminaire de notre principal chercheur nous pouvons
7 nous attendre à un document final percutant. Nous
8 espérons que cette recherche mettra en lumière ce qui a
9 motivé les gouvernements et les églises à agir ainsi par
10 le passé de sorte que puisse enfin s'amorcer la guérison.

11 Il ne saurait bien sûr y avoir
12 réconciliation sans justice. Il n'y aura de justice
13 véritable que lorsque nous aurons effacé toutes les traces
14 de ce racisme profond et insidieux qui imprègnent encore
15 trop souvent nos institutions. Ces institutions doivent
16 changer et la mentalité des Canadiens doit changer elle
17 aussi.

18 Les églises, bénéficiant encore d'une
19 grande influence dans la société canadienne, peuvent
20 contribuer fortement à façonner la conscience sociale et
21 morale du Canada. Elles doivent aider à dissiper la fausse
22 notion selon laquelle le Canada a toujours été juste et
23 équitable envers ces peuples autochtones.

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1 Les églises sont dans une excellente
2 position pour lever le voile sur l'énorme différence qui
3 existe entre l'idéal et la réalité, parce qu'elles sont
4 passées par là elles mêmes. Les pensionnats devaient
5 permettre d'instruire les jeunes Autochtones et c'était
6 là un idéal. Mais la triste réalité fut que ces enfants
7 ont été séparés de leur famille, ils ont été coupés de
8 leur langue et de leur culture, et qu'ils ont souvent été
9 maltraités.

10 Cette réalité avait pour toile de fond
11 des préjugés culturels que les églises ont dû réévaluer.
12 Celles-ci ont la responsabilité de dénoncer l'ignorance
13 et l'indifférence de la majorité des Canadiens en ce qui
14 concerne ces préjugés culturels.

15 La réconciliation de tous les Canadiens
16 doit se concrétiser dans une atmosphère d'acceptation et
17 d'appréciation des différentes cultures, des différentes
18 langues, des différences philosophiques et spirituelles
19 car, après tout, c'est le Créateur qui a voulu ces
20 différences.

21 Merci.

22 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Mr.
23 Dussault and Mr. Erasmus.

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1 Let me have a word, if I may, on the
2 format and the process for the morning before we begin.

3 Each of the four churches have been given
4 and will be given 40 minutes this morning to present a
5 brief. All churches have already made their detailed
6 submissions in advance, and the Commissioners have had
7 these briefs for some days. So let me suggest to the
8 presenters that they would keep this in mind while making
9 their submissions.

10 It is the express wish of the
11 Commissioners that the presentation be divided, perhaps
12 even equally, 20 or so minutes for the comments that you
13 want to make in addition to the brief that you have
14 presented and they would really like to keep about another
15 20 minutes free for questions and answers because it may
16 be in the questions and answers that they can round off
17 and get to the heart of some of these very important issues
18 that are before all of us.

19 With that, I will then turn to the first
20 presenters this morning, the Anglican Church of Canada,
21 and introduce briefly the delegation. Archbishop Jim
22 Boyles, the Reverend James Isbister, the Right Reverend
23 Caleb Lawrence, Reverend Peter Hamel, Vi Samaha, and

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1 Shirley Harding.

2 May I turn to you, then, Archdeacon
3 Boyles for the presentation.

4 **THE REVEREND JAMES ISBISTER, CHAIR OF**
5 **THE COUNCIL FOR NATIVE MINISTRIES, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF**
6 **CANADA:** Good morning. I am the Reverend James Isbister,
7 Chair of the Council for Native Ministries, Deputy
8 Prolocutor of General Synod. I am from the diocese of
9 Saskatchewan, Anglican Priest.

10 I have been appointed to present first
11 and then to end with closing remarks.

12 Elder, members of the Royal Commission,
13 historic mission churches, ladies and gentlemen, before
14 contact, the first peoples of North America lived in
15 sovereign communities within the circle of creation. They
16 were grounded in a spiritual and sustainable relationship
17 with the land and their Creator, and they expressed their
18 relationship through diverse cultural forms and political
19 structures. Their world views were based on the concept
20 of the circle and could be generally described as
21 non-hierarchical, communal, holistic and inclusive.

22 At the time of the first contact, the
23 British recognized the nationhood of the Aboriginal

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1 peoples and approached them as political allies and trading
2 partners. Those British with a strong religious bent also
3 saw the Aboriginal people as potential sisters and brothers
4 in the Christian faith.

5 As the British Empire grew, its success
6 coloured the attitude of British people toward their
7 neighbours throughout the rest of the world. Anglicans
8 of British origin, like many Christian groups within other
9 European imperial powers, were convinced their own culture
10 and faith represented the truest reflection of
11 Christianity and, therefore, of God's will. They believed
12 they had both the right and the moral duty to tell others
13 how to live.

14 In their view, the expansion and
15 hegemony of the British Empire was good for everyone.
16 Aboriginal cultures worldwide were doomed to extinction,
17 said the common wisdom of social Darwinism, and the only
18 hope for the people of those cultures was to adapt to the
19 dominant culture. The Anglican Church, along with the
20 political, economic and social structure of the British
21 Empire, formed a complete cultural package.

22 Christian missionaries did at least
23 consider Aboriginal people to be fully human and capable

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1 of joining civilized society. Some social Darwinists did
2 not even believe that.

3 Today there are 210 active Anglican
4 congregations in Aboriginal communities across the country
5 from Quebec west. Two of the church's suffragan assistant
6 bishops in the dioceses of Keewatin and Saskatchewan and
7 approximately 70 clergy are Aboriginal persons. There
8 are no Aboriginal diocesan bishops.

9 Aboriginal people constitute
10 approximately 4 per cent of the total Canadian Anglican
11 membership. In the Diocese of the Arctic approximately
12 90 per cent of Anglicans are Native people, mostly Inuit.

13 In four dioceses, Keewatin, Saskatchewan Moosonee and
14 Caledonia, Aboriginal Anglicans account for more than a
15 third of the church's membership.

16 But these demographics tell only a
17 fraction of the story. Aboriginal people today, both in
18 church and in society, speak repeatedly of their desire
19 to recover the values and freedoms that have been lost
20 to them through the impact of the Europeans. They focus
21 on the struggles to become self-determining once again;
22 to regain their own land bases and their relationship with
23 the land; to recover their spiritual values and practices;

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1 to rediscover and revive their culture; and to recover
2 their sense of identity and self-esteem as the first
3 peoples of this land.

4 These struggles intertwine in the
5 process of recovery and healing, and the work to make the
6 circle whole again is carried on in many ways at once.
7 Each is equally important, for a broken circle is a broken
8 circle no matter where the break is found.

9 The Anglican Church acknowledges its
10 role in breaking this circle. It seeks now to play a role
11 in mending it.

12 **THE RIGHT REVEREND CALEB LAWRENCE,**
13 **BISHOP OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE, ANGLICAN CHURCH**
14 **OF CANADA:** Mr. Chairman, Commission members, fellow
15 presenters, Khanagansit (PH) William, ladies and
16 gentlemen, I am wearing a number of hats in this
17 presentation this morning.

18 First of all, I have been asked to
19 represent the Anglican Bishop of the Arctic and to explain
20 briefly why the Inuit people have not been included
21 specifically in this brief presentation. The explanation
22 is because the thrust of this presentation is the
23 consideration of questions around residential schools

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1 which involve very few Inuit mainly in the western Arctic.
2 No Inuit have been consulted and no Inuit are represented
3 in the group presenting this submission. Similarly, the
4 appendices attached refer mainly to the church's ministry
5 to Indian people.

6 Secondly, I represent the Primate of the
7 Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Michael Peers, who
8 is unable to be present at this hearing today because of
9 a long-standing commitment to take part in teaching at
10 the Arthur Turner Training School in Pangnirtung which
11 is a training school for Inuit clergy in our church. I
12 represent also the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee. Roughly
13 half of our constituency is of the Aboriginal nations,
14 and three of the Anglican residential schools have been
15 located within our diocesan area. The details of the
16 experiences of people within those school situations in
17 our brief correspond very closely to those who were part
18 of the schools in the Diocese of Moosonee.

19 I also, inevitably, represent myself.

20 I am a clergyman in the Anglican Church of Canada. I
21 was brought up in eastern Canada; trained for the ordained
22 ministry at a southern theological school in Halifax in
23 a part of our Anglican church which is sometimes described

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1 as rather conservative and sometimes ingrown.

2 That experience for ministry in the
3 southern church was brought in somewhat by a number of
4 months spent in the wider Anglican church in Great Britain
5 and in continental Europe and in the Middle East. I came
6 to a growing appreciation of the broadness of our own church
7 as well as some ecumenical dimensions.

8 But then I came from all of that to spend
9 all of my employed years as a minister in the church in
10 northern ministry among Native people. For 15 years I
11 was priest in a parish made up of Cree Indian and Inuit
12 people who had been traditionally enemies of one another
13 and, in that setting, had to learn not one but two Native
14 languages, and found slowly, painfully over the years that
15 I was transformed by that experience.

16 In fact, I have said to many people
17 subsequently that I have learned more of what it means
18 to be a Christian and I have learned more about what
19 Christian ministry means by my experience living among
20 and being taught by Aboriginal people in the life of the
21 church.

22 Although many bad things have happened
23 -- and these are detailed in the various presentations

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1 and in other things which the Commission has heard across
2 the country -- at best, it has been my experience that
3 Native people have become members of our church. They
4 have become Christian through a recognition that Jesus
5 Christ was not an alien and a stranger, but he was received
6 with hospitality as a friend.

7 As people progressed in their experience
8 of life as Christians, then they came not by being taught
9 doctrinally or not perhaps by a deep understanding of the
10 scriptures -- because they were only translated into Native
11 languages partially and over many decades -- but they came
12 to understand the truth of what is outlined, for example,
13 in the prologue to St. John's gospel, that when the word
14 became flesh, became a human being, that Christ in fact
15 became human in every sense of the term, he became every
16 bit as much part of Aboriginal peoples in their various
17 nations as of any other people on earth.

18 Out of that experience, the Anglican
19 Church of Canada has, over many years but particularly
20 over the past two or three decades, come to a deeper
21 understanding of the tremendous contribution which
22 Aboriginal people bring to the life of our church and
23 through it to the nation. It has been a transforming

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1 experience for me. It has been a transforming experience
2 for the parts of the church in which I have been privileged
3 to serve. It has been a transforming influence in our
4 Anglican Church of Canada. And I believe that it has in
5 many ways transformed what we are as Canadians.

6 All of this is reflected in the
7 submission which is before you from our church, from our
8 denomination. It is carried to you very personally by
9 the presenters assembled here, some of whom carry it from
10 within themselves as Native people and others among the
11 presenters who have stood beside and have been greatly
12 influenced by Aboriginal insights, cultures, perceptions
13 of Christ from within the church either in parish
14 situations or by being part of the church at the national
15 level.

16 Two comments which will close my remarks
17 at this point. They come from Aboriginal people in the
18 life of the church. The first is: Never ask a question
19 unless one is prepared to deal with the answer. The second
20 comment is: Be very careful how the questions are framed
21 because without due care they may be weighted by too much
22 presupposition and come in from a superior attitude which
23 will make hearing, comprehending and understanding the

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1 answers very difficult to receive.

2 Thank you.

3 **ARCHDEACON JIM BOYLES, GENERAL**

4 **SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL SYNOD, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA:**

5 My name is Jim Boyles. Mr. Fraser, I would like to correct
6 the introduction. I am not yet an archbishop, only an
7 archdeacon.

8 I am the General Secretary of the General
9 Synod of the Anglican Church and I have been in that
10 position for the past eight months. Previous to that time,
11 I was in Calgary as the Diocesan Executive Officer and
12 had the joy and privilege to work with people of the Sekani,
13 Blood, Peigan, and Sarcee or Tsuut'ina nations.

14 One of the haunting memories of that time
15 for me was wandering through the abandoned and dilapidated
16 residential school near Cardston on the Blood Reserve,
17 St. Paul's, standing alone in a field with bushes grown
18 up around it; no glass in the windows; wandering in through
19 a door that was supposed to have been nailed shut; the
20 halls littered with garbage and the walls covered with
21 graffiti; long corridors.

22 In the main room of the building, on the
23 high ceiling above an arch was a painted cross on the wall,

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1 a haunting reminder of a failed policy of the churches.

2 During the 1960s church leaders came to
3 realize that the old ways of relating to the Aboriginal
4 peoples were outdated and that a new direction was needed,
5 so Dr. Charles Hendry, a sociologist, was hired to do major
6 research. His report was received by the General Synod
7 in 1969. That date stands at a point when the church's
8 understanding changed somewhat dramatically, although the
9 roots of the change were found much earlier.

10 The future lay in a new partnership with
11 Aboriginal people based on solidarity, equality and mutual
12 respect. This foundational principle has guided the
13 church through the last two decades. We have grown in
14 the realization that such a partnership is new, demanding,
15 slow, difficult and very hard to actualize.

16 We are still learning, both Aboriginal
17 Anglicans and non-Native Anglicans. We are still learning
18 of the importance of listening to one another. We are
19 still learning of the depths of the past injustices and
20 of the need for corrective action. In attempting to stand
21 in solidarity with the Aboriginal peoples, we have
22 co-operated with the other churches through Project North
23 and, more recently, the Aboriginal Rights Coalition. We

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1 have attempted to provide staff and financial resources
2 in the continuing effort to support Aboriginal peoples'
3 rights.

4 The General Synod of our church and its
5 National Executive Council have passed up to 80 motions
6 in the last 20 years in support of self-determination,
7 urging governments to respect treaty rights, land rights
8 and the right to self-government. We have urged that
9 Aboriginal rights be entrenched in the Constitution of
10 the country. We have been supportive of the Aboriginal
11 people and nations as they attempt to claim these rights,
12 and we will continue to do so.

13 The church has been challenged to look
14 at its own life too. A consultant on Native affairs was
15 appointed to the national staff in 1969. A committee later
16 formed as a council on Native affairs was formed in 1973.
17 Aboriginal people have served and are serving on most
18 of the national committees of our church.

19 During this past summer, the second
20 National Native Convocation was held in Northern Ontario.
21 Anglican clergy and lay from most parts of the country
22 -- Native clergy and lay, were present for a week together
23 to explore the issues of current concern: the relation

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1 of Native spirituality to Christianity; the pain of the
2 residential schools and the need for healing; and the
3 future of the church among the Aboriginal people.

4 It was at this gathering that the Primate
5 of our church, Archbishop Peers, apologized. He said:
6 "I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures
7 in the residential schools. We
8 failed you. We failed ourselves.
9 We failed God."

10 The hard work of the new partnership goes
11 on. We will continue our solidarity work. We will
12 continue to examine our own church situation so that
13 Aboriginal peoples will be included and honoured. We will
14 support with prayer and with resources the development
15 of Aboriginal Christian communities and congregations.
16 We will continue to urge the federal government to work
17 with the Native people to achieve justice.

18 The Hendry Report in 1969 symbolized a
19 shift in policy in the national church. But that policy,
20 to become real and embedded in the lives of Anglicans across
21 the country, takes indeed much more work. Many Anglicans,
22 indeed, many people in this country, have very limited
23 encounter with Native people. It is through the

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1 experiences of encounter that we come to an appreciation
2 of one another and a respect for the traditions of each
3 group.

4 Thank you.

5 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you very
6 much.

7 **MS VI SAMAHA, NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**
8 **COUNCIL, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA:** My name is Vi Samaha
9 from the Nlaka'pamux Nation and Caribou Diocese in British
10 Columbia. I bring you greetings.

11 I carry with me a picture of my sister
12 and I in residential school to remind me of where I was
13 as a child and the trauma and loss for that time spent
14 there and the principal of that school. I am here also
15 for my six sisters and two brothers who also attended.

16 I am here to tell you my story of healing
17 and the beginning of that. My story is very scary because
18 I am still afraid, but I know that through Christ this
19 is possible.

20 I come from both cultures, so I feel very
21 gifted. I also come from two spiritualities, which is
22 also a gift.

23 It has been a struggle in the Anglican

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1 Church. That is okay, because that is where we are. So
2 part of my healing is to try to help my people and myself
3 through this healing.

4 For the past 13 years I have lived in
5 Spence's Bridge and have worked with my nation in the
6 healing process and lived in that community of dysfunction,
7 both Native and non-Native, because the honour of one is
8 the honour of all and the dysfunction of one is also the
9 dysfunction of all.

10 It hasn't been easy, but there has been
11 growth and change and healing. Now being part of the
12 National Executive, that healing has begun there as well.

13 I feel that I have permission to share with you what it
14 feels like to be on that executive and the struggle that
15 we have.

16 I feel that we are still always asking
17 for permission. I feel I can speak honestly here because
18 they have given me that.

19 This brief is the non-Native brief. I
20 will share with you my story as part of the Anglican Church.

21 The first six years of my life I was
22 raised in a loving family and protected and cared for with
23 all my elders. It was a very special place. Then walking

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1 through the doors of this institution changed my life.

2 I have memories of loss and confusion and trauma.

3 I saw abuse. I felt abuse. I tasted
4 abuse with the food. I often wondered why I was there,
5 but now I know. I can't be here unless I have experienced.

6 I had to experience that.

7 This isn't history. This is happening
8 this week in my community, the loss, suicides. Now Native
9 women are committing suicide. For the longest time it
10 was men, the last 13 years that I have lived in Spence's
11 Bridge. It is so sad. It is catastrophic.

12 After our family moved, we attended
13 public schools. The non-Native people said we didn't
14 belong there. The Native people said we belonged in the
15 residential school. I didn't understand any of that.
16 But because of this dysfunctional beginning, I struggled
17 through school. It wasn't until high school that I
18 realized that I could learn and be who I really am.

19 Since then, I have tried to regain my
20 culture, and found out that our culture is in museums across
21 Canada and throughout the world hidden away in boxes or
22 wherever. So my goal is to bring all of that back home
23 so it can be part of our lives, so that we can learn from

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1 it. One of the losses is our language.

2 Listening to René this morning speaking
3 French -- which I took six years of and I still don't
4 understand it -- it reminded me of being in our church
5 and the elders speaking our language, saying the prayers
6 in our language, and I don't understand the prayers. That
7 is so sad.

8 I hope one day to learn the language,
9 and I hope the Anglican Church is part of making that
10 possible. That is a need. Without the language, there
11 is still a loss.

12 I thank you for the opportunity to let
13 me share. I thank you for listening. And I thank you
14 for helping me heal.

15 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

16 Are there other presenters from the
17 Anglican Church?

18 **JAMES ISBISTER:** The final comment is
19 where do we go from here.

20 Over the last quarter century, the
21 Anglican Church has repeatedly affirmed respect for the
22 inherent dignity and intrinsic value of the cultural and
23 spiritual traditions of Aboriginal peoples; the rights

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1 of Aboriginal peoples to self-determination in political,
2 cultural, economic, social -- for example, education,
3 justice, health care -- and spiritual spheres; the rights
4 of Aboriginal peoples to control their own land base.

5 The church has also called repeatedly
6 on federal and provincial governments to take action in
7 accordance with these affirmations.

8 Through the Aboriginal Rights
9 Coalition, the Anglican Church participated in developing
10 the 57 recommendations contained in ARC's submission to
11 the Royal Commission, which are headed: Quest for
12 Resources on Aboriginal Lands, Aboriginal Land Rights,
13 Self-Determination, Healing, Public Education, and
14 Non-Violent Struggle.

15 In August 1993, with the support of the
16 NEC, the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada publicly
17 apologized to Aboriginal people for the violence they had
18 suffered in Anglican-run residential schools, pledged
19 continuing support for healing and reconciliation related
20 to this issue, and encouraged diocesan bishops to take
21 similar actions within their own jurisdictions.

22 In October 1993, the Residential Schools
23 Working Group passed a series of resolutions encouraging

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1 the church to commit continued financial and personnel
2 resources to healing work related to residential schools,
3 and to support cultural and spiritual recovery for
4 Aboriginal people within the church. Other resolutions
5 also ask the National Executive Council to urge the federal
6 government to apologize for its role in the residential
7 schools and commit financial resources to support
8 grassroots Aboriginal healing programs for people harmed
9 by the schools.

10 Thank you.

11 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
12 Reverend Isbister.

13 I will turn now to Commissioners to see
14 if they have any questions. Mr. Erasmus, please.

15 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I have a lot.
16 Perhaps we will get into them in more detail a bit later.

17

18 One of the things that I think is
19 important for the Royal Commission to get to the bottom
20 of is how did the relationship start between the churches
21 and the government. Was it the government that came to
22 the churches first and said that somebody should bring
23 some kind of formal education to Aboriginal people? Or

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1 was it the other way around? Did the churches come to
2 the government and say that somebody needs to bring some
3 kind of formal education system to Aboriginal people and
4 we are prepared to do it; fund us, or whatever?

5 How did it begin? And what is the
6 Anglican Church's understanding of it?

7 **JIM BOYLES:** I don't feel that it's a
8 very clear answer to that question. I think the early
9 missionaries came to this land with a concern for the people
10 and for their education, their well-being.

11 As government developed, that
12 partnership between church and government evolved in a
13 haphazard way at first and developed as the questions,
14 particularly of funding and personnel support, arose.

15 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What is your
16 understanding of what the church was actually trying to
17 do? Understandably, 100 years ago or more there was a
18 general attitude toward Aboriginal people as not being
19 quite the same civilized state as the Europeans. What
20 in fact was the goal? Was the goal to remake Aboriginal
21 people completely in the eyes of Europeans? Or was it
22 to make them productive citizens of society, that whether
23 or not they had their culture was unimportant and the focus

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1 was on assimilation so that they would be productive parts
2 of society?

3 What was the goal?

4 **JIM BOYLES:** In our archives, in the
5 public records, there are some very damning documents and
6 speeches of people in the church who bought into the
7 assimilationist position. That was their goal. That was
8 shared by many government people as well. Others came
9 with a sensitivity to the people and their cultures.

10 Again, we can't generalize totally. I
11 think the policy of the church as it evolved in the late
12 years of the last century, the early years of this century,
13 was to provide Aboriginal children with an education and
14 Christian faith so that they would be assimilated into
15 the wider society. That policy was part of the partnership
16 between church and government.

17 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** What did
18 that policy mean in relation to Aboriginal languages?
19 Did it mean that Aboriginal people had to turn their back
20 on their language to the point where they couldn't speak
21 it, or that they should become bilingual and have another
22 language?

23 **THE REVEREND PETER HAMEL, CONSULTANT ON**

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1 **NATIONAL AFFAIRS, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA:** Georges,
2 I will take a stab at that. I am Peter Hamel. My national
3 affairs concern has been bird-watching, but I am here today
4 with the Royal Commission.

5 To me the language question has
6 different parts. In many places the Bible and parts of
7 the Prayer Book were translated into Aboriginal languages
8 and was used to a great extent. But there was also a fair
9 amount of cultural imperialism, colonialism,
10 paternalistic attitudes. They dominated whether there
11 was concern for Aboriginal people or not.

12 Hendry makes a point that what the
13 missionaries failed to recognize on many occasions was
14 the fact that there were different forms of being human.
15 I think that says it in a very effective way. In many
16 communities Aboriginal people were not considered ever
17 to be as good as Europeans. So that, I think, had a great
18 influence.

19 Also, in terms of the destruction of the
20 culture, especially on the west coast with the potlatches
21 and the cultural implements and artifacts that the
22 Aboriginal people used in their own government, et cetera,
23 they were condemned. In some cases it was the clergy,

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1 including Anglican, who then collected those artifacts
2 that are now parts of collections in, say, the museum at
3 the University of British Columbia and so on. So all of
4 that is a part of it. It is the whole question of
5 paternalism and its impact and the fuzzy relationship.

6 Hendry points out that many of the
7 missionaries did not really relate to Aboriginal people
8 and their leadership in terms of the powers that ran
9 society, the powers that were in place with government
10 and the industries. Of course, that has been a major
11 struggle of the last 20 years.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** In relation
13 to the church's understanding of Aboriginal people as human
14 beings, did the church always have a belief that Aboriginal
15 people were human beings in the fullest sense of the word,
16 that it was their culture that was inferior and that what
17 they were instilling was a superior way of life so that
18 once this took hold, they would be equal to other human
19 beings? Or was there ever an impression that in fact these
20 were inferior people, that even if you did provide them
21 -- in fact, was there a feeling that it might even be
22 difficult to provide them with a new culture, that they
23 were actually inferior human beings? What was the

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1 impression? Was it one or the other? Did they recognize
2 Aboriginal people as equal?

3 **JIM BOYLES:** Clearly, the church
4 through the residential school system took seriously the
5 place of children and saw the children in one way as the
6 mission field for the faith. But I think also that
7 expressed a hope for the future; granted, that it was to
8 assimilate the children into a western culture. But I
9 think that part of that was to say that there was hope
10 here and not to write off the cultures completely.

11 It's a very mixed and confused and not
12 very pleasant history and story, but I think that for many
13 of the people involved, the individual church people, the
14 provision of education, of a place to live, food, and so
15 forth, was an important consideration because of God's
16 love for these people.

17 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Thank you.

18 I know these are difficult questions. I appreciate the
19 attempts at the answers.

20 I have other questions, but I know that
21 we will have another opportunity to get into them, so I
22 will pass the mike to any other Commissioners who have
23 questions.

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1 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.
2 Mary Sillett, please.

3 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
4 very much.

5 There is an issue I am trying to clarify
6 in my own mind. I am going to ask the same kind of questions
7 that Georges did, but in a different way.

8 For example, in some of our public
9 hearings we have heard very much about the residential
10 schools and, for the most part, the kinds of things that
11 we have heard have been very, very emotional and very
12 unpleasant. I think too there is a recognition that you
13 just can't close a chapter on that and pretend it never
14 happened. In order for the future to be brighter, those
15 kinds of issues have to be addressed.

16 In our public hearings in the Northwest
17 Territories, we heard something about the residential
18 schools. I guess I was somewhat surprised because, as
19 an Inuk, I always used to believe that the residential
20 school policy applied only to Indians. But as we work
21 with the Commission, I have learned that the residential
22 school applied to many, many people, particularly the Inuit
23 in the Northwest Territories. Even though there weren't

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1 many residential schools, the impact basically has been
2 the same.

3 In reading the Nunusiq News, I have
4 heard about what is happening. There are efforts being
5 made to work on the healing.

6 One of the questions that I have always
7 had is that in the Inuit communities many missionaries
8 came in. Many of the missionaries spoke Inuktitut. The
9 reason that they had to speak Inuktitut was that there
10 weren't any people speaking English. So in order to teach
11 the gospel, Inuktitut had to be spoken. So there were
12 missionaries in those communities who could speak
13 Inuktitut.

14 When we were in Montreal, we heard about
15 the contribution of missionaries with respect to
16 developing the first books for the Inuit in syllabics in
17 Labrador in Roman lithography. So there was a great
18 contribution made, it was said, to the retention of the
19 language. For example, we heard as well in places like
20 Chesterfield Inlet there was a church. The missionary
21 would probably be preaching the service in Inuktitut,
22 community with adult Inuit in Inuktitut. Yet on the other
23 hand, they would be treating the children very, very

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1 differently with respect to the language. The way that
2 many of these children were treated with respect to the
3 language resulted in either the loss of their language
4 or the shame of their language, or both.

5 I was wondering what was it that the
6 missionaries were thinking. Was there a policy that they
7 were implementing with respect to -- why teach to the adults
8 and work at developing books day in and day out and in
9 the schools beat the children for speaking Inuktitut?
10 Why?

11 **LAWRENCE CALEB:** I mentioned a few
12 moments ago that this particular submission from the
13 Anglican Church is concentrated on the residential school
14 situation. Our submission did not include input from the
15 Inuit people because the Anglican Church did not have
16 residential schools in that part of Canada. Certainly
17 the church was ministering across the eastern Arctic,
18 central Arctic, into the western Arctic. We did not have
19 residential schools.

20 I think that in what I understand of the
21 history of our church that ministry was to the whole family,
22 to the adults and to the children. The policy with regard
23 to education was much later. Only when Inuit people were

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1 gathered from the land and into larger communities were
2 schools set up, largely government schools, federal
3 government schools. That was the situation in the part
4 of the Arctic in which I worked.

5 I think, though, to be honest, we have
6 to realize that the missionaries, even those who learned
7 Inuktitut very fluently, who were engaged in translation,
8 who were training leadership from among the Inuit, also
9 came very much with a bias. The bias was of the
10 imperialistic assumptions of being non-Aboriginal people,
11 as part of a dominant culture, as part of a church whose
12 missionaries across the Arctic from the Anglican side were
13 invariably Church of England rather than southern
14 Canadian. That bias was very much shown in the attitudes,
15 teaching and the way the missions were run.

16 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Who should
17 I direct my question to to get a more full answer? Was
18 it the Catholics who ran the schools in that area?

19 **CALEB LAWRENCE:** The particular
20 instance you gave of Chesterfield Inlet, I believe, is
21 more from the next presentation. It was a Roman Catholic
22 school.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Madam Wilson,

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1 please.

2 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Mine is a
3 very general question. It is this: What would you say
4 is the lesson of the residential school experience for
5 the missionary endeavours of the Christian church?

6 **CALEB LAWRENCE:** I think that one of the
7 profound lessons with regard to setting up institutions
8 such as educational ones, the residential schools, is that
9 these only be set up with the full co-operation and input
10 of the people whose children would be part of that
11 institution. It would involve the parents of the
12 children, and it would involve the community leaders
13 working in close collaboration so that what the schools
14 seek to achieve affirms the values of a people as held
15 by the leadership of those people or retained within the
16 families.

17 **JIM BOYLES:** I might add to that in a
18 more general response to your general question: A respect
19 in all aspects of our living and working together across
20 cultural lines. That is a difficult lesson for many to
21 learn and to take into their own lives. It seems to me
22 that we need to live in a partnership together with respect
23 across lines of culture, lines of language, lines of

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1 religious or faith traditions.

2 **PETER HAMEL:** I think it also means that
3 in whatever situation it would be that the culture and
4 the history of the Aboriginal people of that area would
5 be taught and encouraged in the school, and the Aboriginal
6 language would also be taught so that there would be much
7 more integration with the distinctness of the Aboriginal
8 history and the place of Aboriginal people, say, in
9 Canadian society. It would be an educational system that
10 would relate to the Aboriginal yearly cycle in terms of
11 the traditional patterns of harvesting, fishing, hunting,
12 and so on. All of that would become a part of the value
13 process of the education. So there would be the
14 encouragement of language study, and that would be carried
15 through in the family as well.

16 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Madam Wilson,
17 do you have other questions?

18 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I was just
19 going to say as a follow-up that one of the things that
20 concerns me is that most of the talk of healing that we
21 have heard as we travelled across the country has been
22 the need for the healing of the Aboriginal people. The
23 reason why I ask the question I asked is that as a Christian

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1 I am conscious of the importance of the missionary aspect
2 of the Christian faith and the responsibility to go out,
3 as it were, and convert those who don't belong to the faith.

4 I personally have found this a very
5 sobering experience in that area. I suppose it's the fact
6 that built into this concept of a responsibility to convert
7 and to shed the light is this tremendous conviction that
8 we have the answers. I must say, for me personally, this
9 experience of being on the Commission has had quite an
10 impact and, I confess, rather shaken my confidence in this
11 aspect of my own faith and my own church.

12 I mention that because the emphasis is
13 always on the healing required for the Aboriginal people
14 who, I suppose, speaking generally, one could say were
15 the victims of this residential school experience. But
16 my own upbringing has always been that those who commit
17 the unjust act have the greater responsibility with respect
18 to the consequences. So this is what prompted me to ask,
19 just as a very general question, what we have learned from
20 this about our church's missionary zeal.

21 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
22 Madam Wilson.

23 Unless any member of the Anglican

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1 delegation wishes to respond, I would propose that we move
2 on, but I don't want to cut anyone off either. I would
3 ask all of you not to respond at this point because I think
4 this is a question that we are going to get into in much
5 greater detail this afternoon.

6 **CALEB LAWRENCE:** Just a very quick
7 response to say that as our church has become more and
8 more involved in the issue of the residential schools,
9 there is a deep recognition that this is not a Native
10 problem. This is a situation which involves our whole
11 church. We have had some strong concerns raised by people
12 who were staff personnel in those schools: What about
13 them as well as the students? But the deeper question
14 is: How have we as a church been involved?

15 There needs to be healing at all levels,
16 not only those who were students, but of those who were
17 staff. The whole church and the attitudes which we
18 espoused and which we held up -- mission personnel as
19 heroes, for example, of our church -- is a problem of the
20 whole church.

21 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
22 Reverend Lawrence. Unless other members of the Commission
23 have pressing questions at this time, I would propose that

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1 we move on.

2 I thank the delegation from the Anglican
3 Church. As we move into the afternoon session, there will
4 be two hour-and-a-half long sessions of questions and
5 answers. I think we can get into all of these questions
6 in much more detail.

7 May I now turn to the Canadian Conference
8 of Catholic Bishops, and introduce Monseigneur James
9 Weisgerber, Monseigneur Henri Goudreault, Monseigneur
10 Jean-Guy Hamelin, the Most Reverend Remi de Roo, and the
11 Most Reverend Adam Exner.

12 I will leave it to the head of your
13 delegation to begin the comments. Thank you.

14 **MONSEIGNEUR JEAN-GUY HAMELIN,**
15 **PRÉSIDENT, CONFÉRENCE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DU CANADA:**

16 Je suis Monseigneur Jean-Guy Hamelin, Président de la
17 Conférence des Évêques catholiques du Canada, évêque de
18 Rouyn-Noranda au Québec.

19 En ouvrant cette présentation je
20 voudrais, messieurs les co-présidents, mesdames et
21 messieurs les Commissaires, vous remercier de cette
22 ouverture que vous faites à vos audiences pour que nous
23 puissions nous y présenter. Nous savons très bien

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1 l'importance du travail que vous faites.

2 Nous sommes conscients aussi que depuis
3 un certain nombre d'années, ces dernières années en
4 particulier, cette question de la présence des Amérindiens
5 dans notre pays a pris beaucoup d'importance et il y a
6 eu des pas en avant de faits, et nous sommes convaincus
7 que le travail de cette Commission permettra d'aller encore
8 plus loin et comme vous l'avez si bien exprimé, messieurs
9 les co-présidents, que dans notre Canada il y aura ainsi
10 une possibilité d'avoir un Canada qui soit plus juste,
11 où il sera encore bien intéressant de vivre tous ensemble.

12 Au tout départ de cette présentation je
13 voudrais tout simplement faire remarquer que la Conférence
14 des Évêques catholiques du Canada n'est pas une fédération
15 d'églises catholiques. C'est une association d'évêques,
16 une sorte de lieu de concertation, un lieu de coordination
17 du travail que nous faisons ensemble, et que par votre
18 conséquence aussi les différents diocèses restent
19 indépendants, libres dans les démarches qu'ils font et
20 les responsabilités qu'ils prennent.

21 Je voudrais tout simplement vous
22 signaler qu'ici nous partagerons comme on l'a fait, comme
23 nos frères anglicans l'ont fait il y a un moment, la

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1 présentation dont vous avez eu le texte, messieurs et
2 mesdames les commissaires. Par conséquent nous
3 essayerons d'aller le plus rapidement possible pour
4 permettre qu'il y ait des questions subséquentes qui
5 viennent.

6 Commençons donc par moi-même, à la page
7 1 de notre texte. Je lis tout simplement et je laisserai
8 ensuite la parole à mes confrères qui sont ici, qui ont
9 été présentés tout à l'heure.

10 Dans le présent mémoire à la Commission
11 royale d'enquête sur les aborigènes nous ferons état, à
12 titre d'évêques catholiques du Canada, de l'espoir et de
13 la confiance que nous entretenons à l'égard des amérindiens
14 et des amérindiennes de notre pays. Nous désirons parler
15 du passé que nous avons partagé avec eux, un passé où,
16 vous savez bien, nous avons pataugé dans des eaux troubles
17 certes, mais où nous avons aussi navigué dans des eaux
18 limpides. Nous voulons également faire resplendir pour
19 tous les citoyens et toutes les citoyennes de notre pays
20 le gage d'un avenir qui pourrait être plus prometteur,
21 dont la réalisation dépend en grande partie des engagements
22 et des recommandations que fera cette Commission royale
23 d'enquête.

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1 Je laisse la parole à Monseigneur Adam
2 Exner.

3 **THE MOST REVEREND ADAM EXNER, ARCHBISHOP**
4 **OF VANCOUVER, CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS:**

5 The first Christian missionaries arrived with the armies
6 of the empires and the merchants of the fur trade. In
7 New France, some were prepared to accommodate themselves
8 to various aspects of Native cultures. Their
9 disillusionment with colonial society and their
10 willingness to participate in Native village life allowed
11 them to develop a vision of mission that was supportive
12 of Native culture and less predisposed to the practices
13 that favour assimilation.

14 By the middle of the 19th century,
15 however, a model of Christian mission was developing which,
16 though differing in many ways from the program of the
17 dominant culture, was growing in a symbiotic relationship
18 with the forces of nation-building and the projects of
19 expansion and assimilation.

20 There was always those missionaries who
21 established relationships with Native people that were
22 marked by profound respect and mutuality as well as
23 dedicated service. While some of their actions may be

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1 criticized today in light of new understandings, they were
2 first and foremost men and women of the gospel who, within
3 their human limitations, tried to act with love and
4 compassion. Their memory has never been abandoned by the
5 people they have served.

6 However, it must be acknowledged that
7 the missionary endeavour was deeply marked by the
8 prevailing attitudes of the superiority of European
9 culture. When this conviction was translated into social
10 action in the 19th century, it manifested itself in a
11 paternalistic model of charity which at times expressed
12 itself as protection of the Native rights and freedoms
13 and at other times took the form of coercion and control.

14 The church's objectives were
15 incorporated into the social, cultural and political
16 objectives of the government and the wider society.
17 Although not the sole instigators of social and cultural
18 disruption, missionary and educational activities
19 contributed at times to the cumulative result, the
20 weakening of the spirit of the Aboriginal peoples.

21 Most of the men and women who engaged
22 in missionary activity did so because of a sincere desire
23 to share what was most precious to them, a profound belief

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1 that those who are born of water and the spirit will live
2 forever. They were generous, courageous and even holy
3 men and women. Nevertheless, their perspective was
4 necessarily limited by their own experience. They did
5 not then, as few of us do today, have a sense of the vastness
6 and diverse manifestations of the spirit of God. Their
7 commitment to the European expression of Christian
8 tradition made it more difficult to recognize the
9 Aboriginal peoples as people of the water and the spirit.
10 As a result, these missionaries sometimes legitimated
11 forms of cultural and spiritual domination.

12 There are indeed long shadows over the
13 waters of the history that the church has shared with Native
14 people. There are ripples of light that even reach us
15 now today. The church has walked with Aboriginal peoples,
16 shared their joys, their sufferings and their aspirations,
17 and supported their struggles for recognition of their
18 rights for personal and collective growth. Then and now,
19 the churches provide a place where Native and non-Native
20 peoples may find common ground. Non-Native church members
21 have accompanied Native peoples on their journey,
22 sometimes leading, sometimes following, and sometimes side
23 by side.

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1 Now to come to the question of
2 residential schools. There are many tales of solidarity
3 and of genuine love and friendship which took place between
4 missionaries and Native peoples. Yet there are other
5 stories which continue to emerge of oppression and even
6 abuse of Native peoples within the institutions
7 administered by the church.

8 The shocking revelations about the
9 various types of abuse experienced at some residential
10 schools have moved us to a profound examination of
11 conscience as a church. We who share in the blessings
12 of the church must also bear the burden of its past.
13 Several church groups and religious congregations have
14 made public statements arising from this examination of
15 their consciences.

16 In the past two years, healing
17 conferences and school reunions have provided occasions
18 for former students of residential schools to express the
19 sense of loss, vulnerability, shame, and diminishment that
20 has haunted them into their adult life. In the past few
21 years, these have been settings where the memories are
22 expressed and, to some extent, the burden shared. Out
23 of these sessions has emerged a renewed sense of urgency

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1 to heal the brokenness in Native communities and Native
2 families.

3 As lived experience has shown,
4 approaches to healing and reconciliation are most
5 effective on the local and personal level. Nonetheless,
6 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the men
7 and women religious communities are working together
8 through the National Catholic Working Group on Native
9 Residential Schools to support these local efforts and
10 to share information and resources and to understand the
11 meaning and effect of residential school experiences.

12 We cannot and do not want to deny our
13 collective past. To do so would be to lose sight of our
14 common future. However, justice and healing concern not
15 only the churches but also the whole of Canadian society.

16 The Indian residential schools were initiated for the
17 most part by the federal government, sustained by
18 government funds and Native peoples' funds that the
19 government administered, and supervised by government
20 officials. Far from being clandestine, the government's
21 policy concerning the schools was expressed repeatedly,
22 openly and publicly. It reflected the political and
23 social thinking of the time and enjoyed general public

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1 support.

2 Historian John Webster Grant rightly
3 asserts that the residential approach to schooling was
4 designed to have a total impact on the habits and
5 personality patterns of the children. As such, the system
6 was dangerously flawed by the policy underlying it which
7 was fundamentally racist. In addition, many of the
8 difficulties encountered in the residential school system
9 were compounded by insufficient government funding,
10 inadequate housing, classrooms, and even food were
11 frequently cited in government reports.

12 One of the consequences of this
13 parsimonious approach by government to Native education
14 was that student labour which began as part of their
15 education became a financial necessity. From the
16 beginning, government agents contemplated a
17 self-sustaining system no longer depending on the public
18 purse.

19 Although they may have become a symbol
20 of the disintegration of Native culture and the lightning
21 rod for anger about this historical period, the residential
22 schools were only a part of an overall government strategy
23 to assimilate or integrate the Native peoples. Neither

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1 and to heal. Many missionaries made significant
2 contributions to the retention and revitalization of these
3 same cultures and languages. There is much in the
4 historical relationship between the Catholic Church and
5 Aboriginal peoples to celebrate and build on. However,
6 we are currently very aware of what was lost and this is
7 of great concern to us.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Excuse me,
9 Monseigneur, may I ask you to introduce yourself for the
10 benefit of our translators and for the official record,
11 please.

12 **MONSEIGNEUR HENRI GOUDREAULT, ÉVÊQUE DE**
13 **LABRADOR CITY-SCHEFFERVILLE, CONFÉRENCE DES ÉVÊQUES**
14 **CATHOLIQUES DU CANADA:** Henri Goudreault, Évêque de
15 Labrador City-Schefferville.

16 Ce qui a été perdu, ou presque, c'est
17 la liberté pour les Premières Nations du Canada d'exprimer
18 et de célébrer leur spiritualité. Cet affaiblissement
19 de l'esprit des peuples aborigènes a été la plus importante
20 parmi les pertes les plus facilement identifiables en
21 matière de culture et de territoire indigènes. Une perte
22 certes pour les autochtones, mais aussi pour notre pays
23 et notre église qui se sont ainsi privés d'une chance de

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1 s'enrichir car à mesure que le matérialisme s'infiltré
2 toujours davantage dans la culture nord-américaine, nous
3 avons grand besoin de connaître les valeurs issues de la
4 sagesse de la spiritualité des Premières Nations du Canada.

5 Il est donc important pour nous tous que
6 les peuples aborigènes du Canada retrouvent intégralement
7 cette force spirituelle qui a survécu malgré les nombreux
8 facteurs qui jouaient contre son épanouissement et son
9 existence même.

10 Un examen approfondi de l'histoire du
11 Canada peut atténuer la tendance à accentuer les
12 caractéristiques de "victimes" que l'on attribue aux
13 peuples aborigènes.

14 Bien que le processus de guérison
15 comprenne à coup sûr l'admission de la victimisation,
16 l'ensemble du processus de libération comporte la
17 reconnaissance du fait qu'un être humain est toujours plus
18 qu'une victime.

19 La guérison du passé exige certes qu'il
20 faille admettre les faiblesses de l'église, du
21 gouvernement et de la société, et reconnaître les blessures
22 de peuples indigènes. Le défi à relever toutefois
23 consiste à agir avec suffisamment de courage ou de

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1 motivation pour que l'on puisse cheminer ensemble vers
2 l'avenir.

3 À cette fin, nous devons avoir confiance
4 dans la force, les compétences et l'énergie des aborigènes.

5 Nous devons avoir confiance dans la puissance de l'eau
6 et de l'Esprit que nous partageons. Nous devons croire
7 que l'Esprit peut changer non seulement nos coeurs et nos
8 esprits, mais aussi ceux de nos concitoyens et
9 concitoyennes.

10 Nous croyons que la première tâche de
11 cette Commission royale d'enquête est de prendre au sérieux
12 les points forts des aborigènes, de les confirmer et de
13 compter sur eux. L'histoire nous jugerait tragiquement
14 si cette Commission basait ses recommandations uniquement
15 sur la victimisation des indigènes. Nous assisterions
16 alors à une autre destruction spirituelle, plus profonde
17 que la première.

18 Il serait également dramatique que cette
19 Commission fasse des recommandations qui laissent supposer
20 que les allochtones ne sont que des victimes. Nous
21 devons faire appel aux forces vives de nos concitoyens
22 et concitoyennes en étant assurés qu'ils sont foncièrement
23 honnêtes. Nous devons présumer que les Canadiens et

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1 Canadiennes, autochtones et allochtones, sont capables
2 de changements personnels et politiques.

3 Les vertus de justice et de bonté sont
4 latentes dans notre pays et il ne tient qu'à nous d'en
5 susciter des manifestations pour que la justice coule comme
6 un fleuve puissant. En tant que chefs spirituels, nous
7 tenons à sensibiliser les autorités gouvernementales à
8 la vitalité et à la dignité de tous les peuples.

9 Le renforcement de la spiritualité
10 indigène à l'intérieur du christianisme constitue pour
11 nous tous une source de grande espérance. Depuis le
12 Concile Vatican II, l'église s'est sérieusement efforcée
13 de reconnaître les diverses expressions culturelles du
14 christianisme. Celles-ci ont enrichi le trésor de la foi
15 dans sa catholicité ou son caractère universel.

16 L'Évangile, en pénétrant les cultures, assume ce qu'elles
17 ont de meilleur et les transforme dans ce qui n'est pas
18 conforme au plan de Dieu sur les personnes et les peuples.

19 Les indigènes qui sont membres de notre
20 église vivent leurs valeurs culturelles, religieuses et
21 sociales, à l'intérieur de la tradition de la foi
22 catholique. L'église apprécie ce développement d'une
23 spiritualité indigène catholique et d'une expression

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1 indigène du catholicisme. Cette spiritualité est
2 caractérisée par son lien intrinsèque harmonieux avec la
3 création tout entière et avec les peuples, par l'importance
4 qu'elle attache à la guérison individuelle et collective,
5 par sa conviction de la nécessité d'un plus grande justice.

6 Tous ces traits de la spiritualité
7 indigène se trouvent présents d'une façon particulière
8 dans l'église grâce à la contribution qu'apportent les
9 autochtones par leur présence et leur spiritualité. La
10 voix de cette spiritualité est maintenant entendue non
11 seulement dans l'Église catholique mais aussi dans les
12 autres milieu chrétiens et sociaux du monde entier. Il
13 se développe donc une théologie qui intègre la prière,
14 la culture et l'expérience des autochtones. Les
15 allochtones, membres de notre église, doivent d'une façon
16 permanente soutenir et encourager cette spiritualité qui
17 vit une période de renaissance et de renouveau.

18 Comme évêques, nous avons encouragé les
19 dirigeants catholiques autochtones à assumer une plus
20 grande responsabilité à l'égard de la vie de foi de leurs
21 communautés.

22 Je dois passer la parole à mon confrères.

23 **MOST REVEREND REMI DE ROO, BISHOP OF**

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1 **VICTORIA, CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS:**

2 Merci, Monseigneur.

3 I am Bishop Remi de Roo from Victoria,
4 British Columbia. For 31 years, I have been working among
5 the Native people who honoured me by adopting me into their
6 race. I have sat and listened at many gatherings to the
7 very painful experiences that we heard. I listened to
8 Vi Samaha just moments ago and was deeply moved by this
9 testimony.

10 But I am also conscious that if we just
11 live in the past, we are prisoners of the past. So I wish
12 to also bring to our attention the work that has been done
13 over a number of years to work with the Native community.

14 On page 16 of our brief, you have the
15 information there. I will not read it all to you.

16 Starting back in 1969 with the famous
17 debate over the White Paper on Native Peoples and where
18 the federal government stood in terms of assimilation or
19 partnership, I was one of several people who had the honour
20 to stand publicly with the Native people to claim their
21 right to self-determination and expression.

22 This was based on a further document
23 known as the Synod of Bishops on Justice in the World that

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1 took place in 1971 in Rome where we made it very clear
2 that action for justice and participation in the
3 transformation of the world was a constitutive dimension
4 of the preaching of the gospel.

5 That was really a major shift in thinking
6 among Christian leaders. Ecumenically with other
7 historic churches, we then committed ourselves to projects
8 like Project North which, through the 1970s and 1980s,
9 assisted in building support and solidarity with Native
10 organizations around a variety of justice issues.

11 Then in the 1980s the Aboriginal Rights
12 Coalition replaced Project North and took on a broader
13 mandate where there was even more participation and
14 self-determination by the Native participants.

15 The Canadian Conference of Catholic
16 Bishops has also expressed itself something in the
17 neighbourhood of 35 or 40 times, if my memory serves me
18 right. Some of that documentation is found on page 17,
19 particularly our key statement in 1975 "Northern
20 Development: At What Cost", where we insisted that the
21 Native peoples must be part of determining the future.

22 In 1981, we initiated a week of
23 solidarity events and activities under the title "A Cry

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1 for Justice From the North", which took place in 30 cities
2 around Canada. The details are there further on on page
3 18.

4 I want to call your attention to the
5 bottom of page 18 that, in September of 1992, we also issued
6 a major document entitled "Towards a New Evangelization"
7 in which we reflected on the 500 years of evangelization
8 in the Americas and the continuing concerns for justice
9 for the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas and realize
10 that this was really a global problem, as was mentioned
11 earlier, affecting everyone, not only the churches, and
12 that we really need what might be called a "see change",
13 a total shift in our attitudes.

14 We are convinced as a result of all this,
15 that the Aboriginal people of Canada can and must regain
16 their strength through the process of self-determination,
17 a process that was strongly affirmed by Pope John Paul
18 II in his visits to Canada in 1984 and 1987.

19 The ecumenical interventions as such
20 will be dealt with later, so I will not concern myself
21 with them here to save time, and I move on to page 21 where
22 the question of self-government is addressed briefly.

23 We will recall the collapse of the

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1 Charlottetown Accord in 1992 for a variety of reasons.
2 We don't believe that the failure of one political accord
3 can or should mean the end of the Aboriginal dream of
4 self-government. The Canadian bishops are committed to
5 support the Aboriginal desire for self-government in
6 concrete and public ways.

7 However, we go on to say on page 22, that
8 self-government must also be accompanied by strategies
9 for social and economic renewal both within the Aboriginal
10 communities and the rest of society. Others have already
11 spoken about the need for partnership, so I won't dwell
12 on that.

13 Simply, as we say on page 23, we do
14 believe that we are moving into the future, confident in
15 our mutual desire to work together to chart a new course.

16 This is not the time to simply drift with the current
17 or let ourselves be swayed by the changing winds of passing
18 ideologies and public opinion. At every level of
19 government, in each Native community, in each church and
20 religious group, we must summon the political will to
21 change our present course to alter what might be called
22 the drift to despair.

23 We have indicated that many and strong

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1 public statements have been issued in solidarity with the
2 Aboriginal peoples. However, it is not enough, as we say
3 on page 23, to just talk about justice. There must be
4 people who love justice and strive for it with all their
5 hearts. It is not enough to talk about equality. There
6 must be people who value the dignity of others as a matter
7 of course. It is not enough to talk about respect. There
8 must be people who are willing to guarantee the rights
9 of others through daily acts of decency.

10 In this context, I really want to commend
11 all of the members of this Commission for the tremendous
12 work that you are doing.

13 I turn to our President, Bishop Hamelin.

14 **JEAN-GUY HAMELIN:** Jean-Guy Hamelin,
15 Président de la Conférence.

16 Dans notre mémoire nous avons pris onze
17 engagements touchant l'éducation, la justice sociale et
18 économique, les pensionnats, la spiritualité,
19 l'autodétermination, et les revendications territoriales.

20 Nous avons aussi formulé sept
21 recommandations concernant l'information du public, le
22 racisme, d'égalité en matière d'emploi, des pensionnats,
23 des revendications territoriales, et des études

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1 postsecondaires. Voilà ce qui est marqué d'ailleurs dans
2 le Mémoire.

3 Je passe à la conclusion rapidement,
4 pour donner plus de temps pour des questions.

5 Je vais en résumé donner cette
6 conclusion. D'abord, pour redire encore une fois à nos
7 frères et soeurs autochtones que nous voulons continuer
8 de cheminer sincèrement et loyalement avec eux en vue de
9 renforcer nos liens et de chercher de nouvelles façons
10 de vivre ensemble en esprit de partenariat.

11 Dans nos communautés catholiques nous
12 disons que notre engagement envers nos frères et soeurs
13 autochtones me vise pas seulement leur bien-être mais aussi
14 notre meilleur avenir à tous.

15 Nous voulons aussi dire un mot à nos
16 missionnaires d'hier et d'aujourd'hui pour leur souligner
17 que nous voulons entreprendre un nouveau cheminement
18 spirituel.

19 Évidemment à tous les niveaux de
20 gouvernement nous faisons un appel pour qu'ils adoptent
21 des politiques et des lois qui permettront à ces
22 communautés de réaliser leur désir de justice.

23 Enfin, le désir de justice coule en nous

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1 dans la ligne de ce qui est notre mémoire, coule en nous
2 et parmi nous comme un fleuve puissant. Son courant peut
3 être détourné et peut être à la marée haute ou à la marée
4 basse. Il peut même sembler asséché parfois.

5 Il n'en demeure pas moins que pour les
6 gens nés de l'Esprit ce fleuve de justice charrie toujours
7 le véhicule de nos souvenirs et de nos espoirs.

8 Merci beaucoup, messieurs les
9 Commissaires.

10 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
11 Monseigneur Hamelin and your delegation.

12 I will now go back to Commissioners for
13 questions and perhaps pick up with Mr. Justice Dussault.

14 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you;
15 merci.

16 J'aurais une première question à poser
17 qui a trait à ceci.

18 Vous dites à la page 12 de votre mémoire
19 que le pire que la Commission pourrait faire serait de
20 construire sa recommandation dans un esprit où les
21 Autochtones seraient vus comme des victimes seulement,
22 et également où les blancs, les non-autochtones, seraient
23 vus comme des agresseurs et que, effectivement, il faut

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1 construire l'avenir en tablant non seulement en
2 reconnaissant le passé mais en tablant sur les forces des
3 autochtones pour la construction de l'avenir.

4 J'aimerais cependant vous demander ce
5 que l'Église catholique compte faire premièrement pour
6 rendre le public canadien conscient de la réalité des
7 pensionnats. En d'autres termes, on a été beaucoup
8 frappés lors de nos audiences par le fait que le grand
9 public, et c'est davantage vrai dans certaines parties
10 du pays, ignore l'existence des pensionnats en regard des
11 Autochtones et toute cette question, au fond, lorsqu'on
12 en parle ils la découvrent pour la première fois dans
13 plusieurs régions du pays, en particulier au Québec, par
14 rapport à l'ouest du Canada.

15 Donc il y a une incompréhension parce
16 que la notion de ce qu'on été les pensionnats n'est pas
17 connue. On connaît bien sûr des événements comme Mont
18 Cashel, comme Alfred en Ontario, mais la réalité massive
19 des pensionnats n'est pas connue. Donc il y a une
20 nécessité pour le public canadien de connaître cette
21 réalité.

22 La deuxième question est lorsque le
23 public connaît la réalité et la question qui vient

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1 immédiatement et de dire, bon, on ne peut pas juger avec
2 les standards d'aujourd'hui ce qui s'est fait dans le
3 passé. C'est vrai, c'est toujours extrêmement difficile
4 comme opération que de regarder aujourd'hui des événements
5 d'il y a 100 ans ou 50 ans.

6 À cet égard-là j'aimerais vous demander,
7 et c'est ma deuxième question, qui est reliée. Vous avez
8 vécu le système. Vous pouvez passer un jugement avec les
9 standards d'aujourd'hui, mais connaissant les standards
10 de l'époque sur ce qui s'y est passé. En d'autres termes
11 il y a l'éducation du public. Le public a tendance
12 possiblement à dire, écoutez, on ne peut pas juger le
13 présent avec les événements passés. Il pense que vous
14 avez une contribution à jouer sur ce plan-là pour --
15 essentiellement si on parle de réconciliation, il y a un
16 certain mur du son à franchir pour, dans le fond, passer
17 de la notion de victimisation à la notion des forces vives
18 des peuples autochtones.

19 Je pense que vous êtes certainement bien
20 placés pour éclairer le public sur cette question de
21 standard. Est-ce que véritablement, même avec les
22 standards de l'époque, il y a eu des problèmes majeurs,
23 et si oui lesquels. Je pense que c'est une démarche qu'on

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1 ne peut pas escamoter.

2 Donc, connaissance des écoles
3 résidentielles et jugement par rapport aux normes de
4 l'époque, qu'est-ce que l'Église catholique entend faire.

5 **HENRI GOUDREAU**: Merci beaucoup,
6 monsieur Dussault.

7 Au sujet de la première question, la
8 réalité qui n'est pas connue, je pense que c'est un fait,
9 et peut-être qu'au Québec les écoles résidentielles ayant
10 été mises sur pied beaucoup plus tard et ayant eu une vie
11 beaucoup plus courte, peut-être que ceci explique un peu
12 pourquoi c'est moins connu.

13 Nous sommes désireux de faire faire des
14 études sur les écoles résidentielles et de faire connaître
15 l'histoire des écoles résidentielles. Monseigneur
16 Croteau, du Mackenzie, a fait étudier une des écoles par
17 un historien, et l'étude doit sortir ces semaines-ci.

18 Il y a dans cette étude l'interview de
19 nombreuses personnes, l'étude de nombreux documents, et
20 je pense que ceci sera mis dans un large public. Nous
21 espérons qu'au moins vis-à-vis de cette école-là les choses
22 seront plus claires.

23 Je pense qu'il faudrait le faire aussi.

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1 Vous connaissez peut-être qu'a fait Thomas Lacelle, un
2 Oblat, sur les écoles résidentielles de la
3 Colombie-Britannique. Personnellement il y a quelques
4 années j'ai envoyé à une douzaine de journalistes cette
5 étude pour qu'ils puissent s'en servir à l'occasion.

6 M. Lacelle a aussi fait une étude plus
7 globale sur les écoles résidentielles mais il faut je pense
8 étudier davantage les situations des écoles individuelles
9 puisque les choses ne se sont pas passées de la même façon
10 partout.

11 Bien sûr qu'il faut que cette histoire
12 soit mieux connue. Je pense que nous mettons en place
13 des mécanismes qui feront connaître davantage cette
14 histoire. Nous voulons entrer en communication avec
15 Western Publications, qui est une maison d'édition oblate,
16 qui fait l'histoire des Oblats au Canada et nécessairement
17 cette question des écoles résidentielles aura une place
18 importante.

19 Au sujet de la deuxième question, bien
20 sûr même si on dit que nous ne pouvons pas juger avec les
21 normes d'aujourd'hui ce qui s'est autrefois, il reste
22 qu'autrefois il y a eu des choses tout à fait inexcusables.

23 Il n'y avait pas un seul principe ou une seule référence

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1 qui pouvait permettre certains abus. Nous devons je pense
2 admettre cela et s'il y a preuve faite de ces abus, eh
3 bien agir en conséquence.

4 Donc, même si nous ne pouvons pas,
5 disons, juger avec les normes d'aujourd'hui ce qui s'est
6 passé autrefois il reste que nous devons réparer les torts
7 qui ont été faits autrefois.

8 Je pense que là-dessus les églises
9 s'engagent dans le processus de guérison. Peut-être que
10 nous pourrions en parler cet après-midi puisque nous avons
11 davantage de temps et c'est quand même assez impressionnant
12 de voir l'argent actuellement qui se dépense pour organiser
13 des sessions de guérison, et le reste, à travers le pays.

14 Je peux vous donner un seul exemple.
15 Je suis un évêque quêteux. J'ai besoin de 300 000 \$ par
16 année pour boucler, et malgré cela je dépense de 30 000 \$
17 à 40 000 \$ par année pour des sessions de guérison. J'ai
18 une personne à plein temps qui travaille dans ce
19 domaine-là. Je pense que pour réparer les torts passés
20 il faut aller dans cette ligne, et y aller le plus
21 généreusement possible.

22 **ADAM EXNER:** Could I add to that?

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** We are trying

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1 to keep from having all members of the delegation respond
2 to all questions, obviously, but on the other hand I don't
3 want to cut anyone off. So if you could be as brief as
4 possible.

5 **ADAM EXNER:** I just wanted to add what
6 Bishop Goudreault said about informing the public. I
7 think this is happening in just about every diocese. In
8 my experience, I can tell you in my own I have circulated
9 studies to the parishes. We have a diocesan newspaper
10 we publish. Then we have held a number of healing
11 conferences which the public press was invited and got
12 into the local newspapers.

13 I think the people are becoming very much
14 aware of the existence of these schools and the problems
15 that came from them.

16 Thank you.

17 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Mr. Dussault?

18 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you.

19 I understand from the answer that was
20 given that it is the view of the Catholic Church that even
21 in accordance with the norms of the time there has been
22 problems within the schools. I am emphasizing this
23 because I really think for the public to understand that

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1 is key in terms of addressing the issue positively in the
2 future. Unless there is a real understanding that this
3 is the case, it is difficult to move toward a greater
4 openness and less racism.

5 I feel, for one, that churches are
6 certainly one of the best situated organizations across
7 the country to promote public education on this. Again,
8 we just can't say that they were victims. We have to move
9 in a positive way and look at the future. We have to do
10 the two things together: revisit the past, assess what
11 has happened, and then move forward and build on the
12 strength of not only Aboriginal people but the larger
13 public in this country.

14 Thank you.

15 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Are there
16 questions from other Commissioners? Mr. Meekison?

17 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** My
18 question relates to the number of children who went through
19 the residential school system.

20 In your brief, you mention that
21 researchers estimate that a minority of Native children
22 attended residential schools. The number that is referred
23 to in the footnote is approximately 100,000. In the

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1 Anglican brief, they estimate that between 50,000 and
2 100,000 children went through their school system.

3 What I am trying to come to grips with
4 is how many students actually went through the system,
5 and is there any way of ascertaining this through either
6 the church records or government records? Clearly, there
7 appears to be a difference of opinion as to what the facts
8 are and, therefore, the extent and pervasiveness of the
9 problem which we see today.

10 **ADAM EXNER:** Allow me to reply. From
11 the historical studies that I have seen thus far, they
12 range in saying anywhere from one in six to one in ten.

13 I think it will take more to start a study to see exactly
14 what the number was. But those are, in general, the
15 numbers that you will find suggested by historians today.

16 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** Was the
17 number higher in different parts of the country?

18 **ADAM EXNER:** Yes. There was a variety.

19 In some parts of the country they were higher. In other
20 parts of the country they were lower. There are parts
21 of our country where there were no residential schools.

22 What is very interesting in that regard
23 -- and Bishop Goudreault can speak to that. In his

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1 territory, which is a territory of one million square
2 kilometres, there were no residential schools in that area,
3 none whatsoever. Yet, the social problems that the people
4 are experiencing there are very much the same as in the
5 rest of the country, which leads to a very interesting
6 question.

7 In other words, what it really points
8 out is that undeniably the residential schools have
9 contributed to the problems of Native people, the social
10 problems. But I think that maybe there is just a
11 possibility that we might be exaggerating the influence
12 of residential schools. Even in areas where there were
13 no residential schools, the Native people have the same
14 problems as in the rest of the country. I think we have
15 to look at the problems of the Native people in a much
16 broader perspective. They come from the relationship with
17 the government in the past and in the present. The
18 problems come from a relationship to the rest of society
19 in the past and in the present. And they come certainly
20 also from a relationship to the church in the past and
21 the present.

22 But to simply narrow down the problems
23 of the Native people as coming from the residential schools

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1 seems to be denied by the facts.

2 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** I don't
3 think that it is being narrowed down to that at all. The
4 issue keeps recurring in terms of presentations the
5 Commission has heard. From what I have seen and have been
6 able to read, it has had a profound influence and impact.

7 **ADAM EXNER:** Undeniably.

8 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** I am
9 going back to the numbers. You say one in six or one in
10 ten, which is even lower. Were there no records kept?

11 **ADAM EXNER:** Yes. But the records are
12 over almost 200 years. Nobody has really gone through
13 all the records. Work is being done now by historians.
14 But those historical studies have not yet been made.
15 They are in the process of being made right now.

16 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** In terms
17 of recruiting students or encouraging students, or
18 whatever, to come to the schools, what were the policies
19 of the churches? Was it to increase the numbers? Was
20 it to assure that as many students in a particular area
21 where there were schools would come?

22 **ADAM EXNER:** Again, there were about 45
23 Catholic residential schools. I am not sure it is fair

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1 even to suggest that the policy was the same in each and
2 every instance.

3 What was certainly common was the desire
4 on the part of the church to provide an education that
5 would enable these young people to cope with the world
6 that was growing around them.

7 One of the reasons why -- I read one story
8 about why. They simply couldn't use any other language
9 than English in the schools because they had children with
10 five or six different languages all in the same school.
11 They had to use a common language of instruction which
12 eventually became mandatory when the government dictated
13 policies.

14 But initially, when they started
15 schools, they did encourage, in some instances, the
16 maintenance of their local languages. But the language
17 of instruction necessarily had to be English because the
18 children couldn't communicate amongst themselves in their
19 own languages. There were children of five or six
20 languages in one school. Those situations existed.

21 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** Thank
22 you.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Viola Robinson,

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1 and then Mary Sillett.

2 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
3 you.

4 First of all, I just want to preface my
5 remarks by saying that I am Micmac from Nova Scotia. The
6 Micmacs certainly contributed enormously to the
7 introduction of catholicism to Atlantic Canada. At that
8 time it was all Nova Scotia. Certainly we had a couple
9 of missionaries, Mayard (PH) and Pacific, who actually
10 spoke the language quite fluently and designed a writing
11 system.

12 Having said that, I just want to make
13 reference now of things that happened later on with respect
14 to the residential schools and the subsequent problems
15 that arose from that.

16 You say on page 9 that neither justice
17 nor healing can take place without significant
18 participation of the federal government and the rest of
19 Canadian society. Can someone expand a little more on
20 this? Exactly what is it that you mean? How can the
21 federal government contribute to this?

22 **ADAM EXNER:** I would like simply to
23 relate to you here the messages that I got from my First

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1 Nations Committee, which is a kind of pastoral council
2 in my diocese. When they heard that I was coming here,
3 they said: "Please, don't only talk about residential
4 schools; talk also about the fact that we have been as
5 Native people in Canada kept in a state of dependency,
6 wards of the governments. We are welfare people. Help
7 us to get out of that state of dependency. Talk about
8 the need for self-determination. Talk about the need for
9 self-government. Talk about the need for a land base and
10 economic resources."

11 Those are the messages that my people
12 gave me before I left to come here. I think those are
13 very, very important issues. Healing has to go beyond
14 merely the healing of painful experiences. There is also
15 healing in a much broader sense of restoring the dignity
16 to people to have the ability to self-determine their own
17 lives, to run their own lives, to govern their own lives.

18 Right now the Native people are deprived of that and are
19 marginalized. This is part of the problem.

20 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** That is
21 very helpful. We have heard that as well. I just thought
22 maybe you had something specific that you could possibly
23 give us some information on with respect to how the federal

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1 government can actually -- what is their responsibility
2 and who is ---

3 **ADAM EXNER:** We already in British
4 Columbia have one community that has self-government,
5 Sechelt. The other communities are saying to the federal
6 government: Allow us to go in the same direction. This
7 is something concrete and specific that they are asking.

8 **COMMISSIONER VIOLA ROBINSON:** Thank
9 you.

10 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.
11 Mary Sillett, do you have a question?

12 **COMMISSIONER MARY SILLETT:** Thank you
13 very much.

14 I asked a question earlier I would like
15 to follow up on. I was told that I was asking the wrong
16 church.

17 I was interested in the response that
18 you gave to Mr. Meekison. You were saying, for example,
19 there were some situations in Canada where there were
20 different languages spoken in any one class. It made more
21 sense to teach those students in English.

22 But there were communities, for example,
23 in the north where we had a situation where the students

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1 that came to those classes only spoke Inuktitut. The Roman
2 Catholics in those communities could speak Inuktitut.
3 The community spoke Inuktitut. But yet, in those schools
4 it was very, very clear -- the message was very, very clear
5 that these children were not to speak Inuktitut.

6 **ADAM EXNER:** I would request somebody
7 else to answer that question. I have worked 20 years with
8 Indian people, but I have no experience with the north.
9 I think Bishop Goudreault is more equipped to answer that
10 question.

11 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Bishop
12 Goudreault.

13 **HENRI GOUDREULT:** I was not part of
14 those schools, but I know that there was a government policy
15 asking that the only language spoken would be English.

16 I was told by teachers from other schools
17 like Fort Albany and Fort George in Ontario and Quebec
18 that the teachers often failed to those rules because they
19 wanted the children not to lose their language.

20 Bishop Laganière from Moosonee was
21 telling me that when the inspectors were going, then they
22 would have to say to the school teachers, "Remove
23 everything that is of the Native language." But then after

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1 the inspector had gone, they would come back with the
2 material that could help the people to keep their language.

3 So I think that the main reason was the
4 policy of the government, and the teachers, trying to make
5 the system more humane and knowing the importance of that
6 language for the people, allowed the students to speak
7 their language. Some of the matters were taught in their
8 language.

9 This is what I have from people, from
10 teachers having taught in Fort Albany and Fort George.

11 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
12 Bishop Goudreault.

13 At this point, unless Commissioners have
14 any urgent questions that they want to ask, I would propose
15 that we stop at this point. All of these questions, what
16 was government policy, what was church policy, were there
17 conflicts between the two, what were the conflicts, what
18 was the churches' responsibility, perhaps, to try to
19 influence government policy if it didn't agree with it
20 on language instruction -- I think there are a number of
21 questions that we can move into this afternoon and should.

22 At this point, may I propose that we take
23 a 15-minute break. We are running behind time already,

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1 so I caution the Presbyterian and the United churches to
2 that point. We will try to pick up a little bit of time
3 in your presentations but make up again in questions this
4 afternoon.

5 With that, we will take a short break.

6 --- Short recess at 10:50 a.m.

7 --- Upon resuming at 11:10 a.m.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** If I may, I will
9 call this special session back to order. I think we have
10 all of our people back at the table. We are going to move
11 on now and hear from both the United Church of Canada and
12 the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

13 Just to review where we were this
14 morning, of course, we have set aside a very long, it seems,
15 40-minute presentation time for each presentation. We
16 do hope that people will be able to, in their presentations,
17 leave at least half of the allotted time for questions.

18 I think you will have seen in the first half of the morning
19 the interest among members of the Royal Commission in terms
20 of answering questions and how the questions themselves
21 begin to put us right to the core of the issue.

22 With that, let me introduce to you the
23 next presenters which is the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

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1 The presenters will be the Reverend Ray Hodgson, Ms
2 Lorraine Major, Mr. Stewart Folster, the Reverend Ian
3 Morrison, and Mrs. Tamiko Corbett.

4 May I call on the delegation to start.

5 I am sorry, with the light I cannot see the name signs.

6 I obviously do not know all of the members of the various
7 delegations. For some weakness in my life, I have not
8 been able to get to all of your churches on Sunday morning.

9 So if you will help me from time to time by introducing
10 yourselves as you speak, it would be a great help not only
11 to myself but to the translators and the official record.

12 **REVEREND DR. RAY HODGSON, ASSOCIATE**
13 **SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE MINISTRIES, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN**
14 **CANADA:** I am Dr. Raymond Hodgson. I am the Associate
15 Secretary for Justice Ministries for the Presbyterian
16 Church in Canada. As such, my mandate includes helping
17 our constituency come to grips with issues of Aboriginal
18 justice and also to work with Aboriginal peoples in terms
19 of listening and being in solidarity with those peoples
20 and their struggles.

21 I have been asked to make the
22 presentation of the brief so that there will be enough
23 time for reflection and dialogue.

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1 The Presbyterian Church in Canada is the
2 smallest denomination around this table. Historically,
3 we have worked with Aboriginal peoples in northwestern
4 Ontario, Manitoba and parts of northern Saskatchewan.

5 We are part of a world-wide family of
6 Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. In 1925, a major
7 event in Canadian church history was the union of
8 Methodist, Congregational, and some congregations of the
9 Presbyterian Church to form the United Church of Canada.

10 The Presbyterian Church as we now know it consists of
11 those congregations which did not enter union, along with
12 others formed since then.

13 We have slightly over 1,000
14 congregations with about 150,000 members. When I looked
15 at the 1991 census, I discovered that people who designated
16 themselves as Presbyterian and who spoke Aboriginal
17 languages numbered 505 across the country. We are also
18 aware that there are other Aboriginal people within our
19 community of faith who have lost their traditions and their
20 language.

21 We welcome this opportunity to make this
22 presentation and to begin dialogue with other communities
23 of faith around questions of our ministry with, and our

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1 standing in solidarity with, Aboriginal peoples. We
2 consider this question extends far beyond residential
3 schools and their history. We understand the impact of
4 residential schools in terms of Aboriginal cultures,
5 Aboriginal peoples. We understand its intergenerational
6 impacts as well.

7 But as a community of faith, we also
8 recognize the impacts on ourselves, that we too are broken,
9 that we too are hurt, that we too are in need of some
10 healing, that we too need to recapture the vision of what
11 it is to be together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

12 Maya Angelou, (PH) a black woman from
13 the United States, a poet, a woman who suffered abuse in
14 her youth wrote this. She said that history, despite its
15 wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with
16 courage, need not be lived again.

17 In terms of the recommendations that we
18 bring before this Royal Commission, we wish to recommend
19 in the strongest possible terms that many ways and means
20 be sought to recover history: the history of the churches'
21 relationships with Aboriginal peoples, the histories of
22 the Aboriginal peoples themselves, the history of the
23 relationships between government and first nations, the

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1 relationships at local levels between congregations and
2 Aboriginal peoples.

3 We believe that this needs to be
4 implemented in Canadian educational curricula. We also
5 believe that our own church training institutions need
6 to be more intentional about looking at questions of gospel
7 and culture in terms of training professional church
8 workers. We also believe that in terms of public education
9 there is much work yet to be done.

10 In terms of our own constituency, we have
11 over the last two or three years intentionally begun a
12 program of public awareness. For example, this is our
13 Mission Update, which is included in our Church
14 Denominational magazine. In September, an insert dealing
15 with our work with Aboriginal peoples went to every person
16 who is a subscriber. Within the last week an article from
17 our Committee on History entitled "The Presbyterian Church
18 in Canada in Native Residential Schools 1925 to 1969" was
19 sent to every congregation.

20 We also have a video which we hope will
21 help some of our congregations begin to explore some of
22 the implications of their own spirituality and dialogue
23 with some of the questions raised by Native spirituality.

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1 The Presbyterian Church in Canada,
2 because of its size, tends to work ecumenically. In terms
3 of our own vision statement and mission statement about
4 ourselves, we have made a commitment to work ecumenically
5 at local, regional and national levels. We believe that
6 this is one of the most effective ways for churches to
7 work in terms of healing and reconciliation in terms of
8 Aboriginal peoples.

9 As a smaller denomination, we do not have
10 the financial or human resources to fully participate alone
11 in what is needed. So we urge the Commission and our
12 brothers and sisters in Christ around this table to
13 consider ways in which we can approach questions of healing
14 and reconciliation as Christians, not as various
15 denominations.

16 We also have worked ecumenically in
17 terms of being in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples and
18 their struggles. We have worked through Project North
19 and the Aboriginal Rights Coalition. Myself, I am on the
20 executive of the Aboriginal Rights Coalition. We have
21 also worked with the Task Force on Churches and Corporate
22 Responsibility, and I was one of the co-presenters of that
23 brief.

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1 It is our hope that in terms of justice
2 for Aboriginal peoples that what occurred in terms of the
3 Charlottetown Accord does not mean that questions of
4 self-government get pushed to the side. Now is the time
5 for these questions to be where they need to be, central
6 in terms of the political, social, cultural discussions
7 that are occurring within the borders of Canada.

8 If healing and reconciliation is to take
9 place, it must come from many levels and there must be
10 many different kinds of initiatives. The Presbyterian
11 Church in Canada will want to call on the federal government
12 to acknowledge its responsibility. We are not at this
13 point aware of what the federal government has said
14 officially to this Commission, or whether it has said
15 anything to this Commission, concerning past policies,
16 concerning its implications in the running of residential
17 schools.

18 Our own history shows that at various
19 times and in various places those who administered the
20 residential schools had different approaches, different
21 ideas, different notions, ranging from cultural
22 imperialism to being, as we would say now, in solidarity
23 with the peoples. We see some of those latter continually

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1 thwarted as they attempted to help those students either
2 regain or keep culture, language, and tradition.

3 We would call upon the Commission to call
4 upon the federal government to fully acknowledge, and not
5 only to fully acknowledge its role in terms of the
6 residential schools, but also in terms of the
7 assimilationist policies, its own responsibilities in
8 terms of the radical mind-set that led to the institutional
9 abuses that occurred.

10 For us one of the foundational questions
11 which must be confronted is the question of the systemic
12 and endemic racism within this country. This disease of
13 long-standing has affected us all whether we are within
14 communities of faith or not in communities of faith. We
15 believe that it is time for programs of public education,
16 awareness and calling to account and responsibility around
17 questions of racism in Canada.

18 In order for Aboriginal peoples to begin
19 to recover dignity and self-worth, we believe that the
20 questions of land rights need to be settled expeditiously,
21 fairly, and with due consideration of historical
22 relationships. There is a need to ensure an adequate land
23 and economic base arising from Aboriginal title rights

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1 and treaty rights.

2 We also believe that resource
3 development should not take place on land under dispute
4 -- often known as unsurrendered land -- and told there
5 is either a claims agreement in place or there are terms
6 governing the development which have been agreed to by
7 all parties.

8 In terms of moving on to healing, we
9 believe as the Presbyterian Church in Canada that churches
10 and governments need to listen and respond as Aboriginal
11 peoples name how the issue of healing is to be described
12 and defined. Sometimes our hearing of that will be
13 difficult. Sometimes it may even be difficult for us to
14 maintain a silence. But we need to hear. It is the
15 too-quick application of answers that institutions feel
16 appropriate that will lead to a further fragmentation.

17 We also believe that the churches need
18 to work together in terms of raising questions in our own
19 constituencies around hope, healing and reconciliation.

20 The question for us is: Any new
21 beginning starts with us as communities of faith where
22 the confession of God's power and our own inability apart
23 from God's spirit working in and through us as individuals

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1 and communities.

2 At this time, can we dare hope again?

3 Can we as Christians work towards healing and
4 reconciliation in our own faith communities in our nation
5 and amongst and with Aboriginal peoples? Can we break
6 down the barriers that separate us?

7 We have been called in Christ to work
8 towards this no matter what the personal cost, no matter
9 what the pain. Only then can healing and reconciliation
10 take place within ourselves as well.

11 The question for us as Christians: Can
12 we dare hope again? For the Presbyterian Church in Canada,
13 the answer is yes.

14 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
15 Reverend Hodgson. I will give other members of the
16 Presbyterian Church a moment if they wish to make any brief
17 comment and add any of their own thoughts before turning
18 to the members of the Royal Commission for questions.

19 Would you please introduce yourself.

20 **MR. STEWART FOLSTER, PRESBYTERIAN**
21 **CHURCH IN CANADA:** (Native language -- not translated)

22 Ladies and gentlemen, our honoured
23 Elder, and Commissioners, Chair and Co-Chairs, my Indian

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1 name is Laughing Bear. I guess my Christian name is
2 Stewart Folster.

3 Last night I sat in my room and was
4 wondering what I should say today. So I decided to write
5 down my own version of the history of the people as I know
6 it, or as I believe I know it.

7 Our missionaries and churches, along
8 with the Canadian government, have worked together in
9 history and have betrayed the Indian peoples of Canada.
10 The government's mandate was to assimilate the Native
11 people into the mainstream dominant white society. They
12 planned to do that by using a system of oppression. They
13 said they could civilize the Indians, but they needed the
14 help of the church and the schools to carry out their evil
15 scheme. It was an ugly triangle.

16 Together with the church they could
17 assimilate the Indians. They could assimilate the Indians
18 by civilizing them, and they could civilize them by
19 Christianizing them.

20 It did not begin at this stage, but was
21 part of a whole process that began before treaties were
22 signed. Indian land and the rights to freedom and the
23 rights to land were denied to the Indian people. They

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1 were herded and placed on small reserves like cattle led
2 to slaughter. Hunting rights and trapping rights were
3 taken away. Fishing rights were taken away. They did
4 not receive compensation for losing their resources and
5 their way of life like the fishermen in Newfoundland.
6 They received instead a system of welfare, oppression and
7 genocide.

8 Native cultural practices were
9 outlawed. Drums and sacred pipes and sweat lodges were
10 burned. People were threatened with imprisonment if they
11 continued to practice their sacred ceremonies openly.

12 The picture that was painted by the
13 oppressive system of our Canadian Indian was devastating.
14 Indians were considered less than human. Some said they
15 were a blank slate with no souls and no intellect, therefore
16 you could do whatever you wanted with your Indian.

17 Church workers could sexually and
18 physically abuse the Indian children because they were
19 considered to be pagans, savages and not worthy. They
20 were considered to be a burden on society, nothing but
21 drunken Indians.

22 Before Europeans came here there were
23 no prisons, no welfare, no child welfare, no standing

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1 armies, no need for healing from sexual and physical abuse.

2 There were no old folks' homes or elder abuse. There
3 were no alcoholics and there was no oppression. There
4 was no greed, lust or a system of materialism that says
5 you must step on the next person in order to get ahead.

6 So what did this mean for my family?

7 I did not go to residential school. My dad and mom did
8 not go to residential school, although the nuns came for
9 my mother, but my grandmother chased them away. However,
10 my grandfather on my dad's side did go to residential
11 school.

12 My dad was a very violent person when
13 he drank. He put my mom in the hospital several times.

14 He threatened my mom with a gun when we were children.

15 We were oppressed by the system.

16 The pollution of the water by mercury
17 poisoning had ended my dad's livelihood of fishing. As
18 a result, he became more violent and drank more until it
19 killed him at age 47.

20 None of us had a normal childhood because
21 of the alcohol and the mental and physical abuse. At age
22 18 I became an alcoholic and left the church for 12 years.

23 I went through the same cycle of violence and abuse and

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1 divorce that my dad went through. I lost my three oldest
2 children by separation. I felt that I had put them through
3 what my dad did to me, only worse.

4 They were placed in foster care and
5 sexually abused by their foster dad and by their own mother.

6 My ex-wife overdosed by drugs three years ago. She
7 committed suicide. Since then I have visited all three
8 of my oldest children in the hospital due to a suicide
9 attempt.

10 Today I work with families who are
11 alcoholic, depressed from lack of education, employment
12 and self-esteem.

13 Residential schools were supposed to
14 educate the Indian people, yet most of the students never
15 went beyond grade 6 or 7. Until the early 1950s,
16 residential schools were only open for classroom education
17 for half a day.

18 I will read part of an article here.
19 "Educationally, the schools had two focuses. On the one
20 hand, their purpose was to teach
21 young Native people to read and
22 write and to develop an
23 appreciation for learning, at the

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1 same time, give the students the
2 living skills that the dominant
3 white society believed that they
4 needed in order to fulfil their
5 lives. This split vision led to
6 a confused leadership of the
7 schools. Children were not
8 allowed to go home for Christmas
9 until the early '50s. Most Native
10 parents did not send their children
11 to school until they were eight or
12 nine years old. The students at
13 the residential schools were only
14 in class half days, spending the
15 other half of the day working on
16 the farms attached to schools, or
17 helping prepare meals, washing
18 clothes, and doing other household
19 chores. Therefore, when students
20 left the residential school system
21 at the age of 16 or 17, they had
22 completed no more than grade 5 or
23 6 education.

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1 R. Webb, Principal of Birtle School from 1942 to 1945
2 challenged the prevailing view.
3 He said the Indian parents see the
4 white children going to school all
5 day, then their children tell them
6 how they spent their half day out
7 of school. This half day is spent
8 working in the laundry or in
9 mending clothes. They are not
10 learning anything. After a short
11 while, the Indians wanted their
12 children to have every educational
13 opportunity. The plain facts of
14 the situation are that they are
15 not."

16 It also says:
17 "As the WMS, the Women's Missionary Society, became simply
18 the managers of the schools, they
19 lost the spiritual core that had
20 brought them into educational
21 ministry in the first place."

22 T.C. Ross, the Principal of Cecilia
23 Geoffrey, wrote:

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1 "Here is an institution in which the government professes
2 to be attempting to educate and the
3 church professes to be attempting
4 to evangelize. The government
5 grant is too small for an adequate
6 staff of teachers. As a result,
7 education suffers. None but a few
8 of the present staff attach due
9 importance to the task of
10 presenting the gospel of Jesus
11 Christ to these children. The
12 government was unwilling to
13 provide the schools with the
14 financial resources necessary to
15 do their job well. The Women's
16 Missionary Society was unable or
17 unwilling to support the schools
18 financially, choosing instead to
19 manage the schools on behalf of the
20 government. In the process of
21 managing the schools, the WMS and
22 the staffs of the schools lost the
23 spiritual centre that had created

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1 the schools in the first place.
2 As the leaders in the schools lost
3 their spiritual focus, it became
4 easier for racist, abusive and
5 dehumanizing forms of leadership
6 to enter the school."

7 I am on a committee that works with young
8 Native children who are into prostitution. It seems like
9 for every Native person that has been converted to
10 Christianity, there are 10,000 or more in prison because
11 they have grown up believing that no one really cares.
12 Our people die young because they have been taught that
13 they are no good. Most of them have never even heard about
14 their own Indian culture because people are ashamed to
15 teach it or they are afraid of the consequences.

16 Yes, they need Christ in their lives,
17 but they also need to feel good about who they are. They
18 will never learn about the good things in life until the
19 people who say they are servants of the Creator begin to
20 practice what they preach.

21 Yes, I lost my identity. My mother did
22 not teach us our language because we were strapped for
23 speaking our language anywhere on the school grounds on

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1 my reserve. I feel that I have wasted a lot of my life
2 when I could have been living and growing up with my own
3 spiritual values like faith, honesty, kindness and caring
4 and sharing.

5 Like Stan McKay says, "You have told my
6 mom I would be better off to be white and you have taught
7 me well, but now it is time to learn to be Indian again."

8 I lost the ability to feel, to show emotions, to care
9 and to love people, to be intimate. When I lost my
10 children, I went numb. I couldn't love anybody and I hurt
11 everyone who got in my way. My children lost their
12 identity and don't know who they are. They are lost.

13 We traded in our beautiful and gentle
14 way of faith, honesty, kindness and caring and sharing.

15 We traded our Indian culture for an alcoholic culture
16 that brought with it three ugly laws: Don't talk about
17 your problems; don't talk about your feelings; and don't
18 trust anyone.

19 Give us something to take home to our
20 people. Give us hope and peace and love. But show us
21 you care. Show us we can work together to bring healing
22 and harmony back to creation. Don't give us more empty
23 words and stop putting the Indian people through this over

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1 and over again. I mean those who went to residential
2 school and those who lived through the effects of the cycle.

3 It feels like you are just rubbing their noses into it
4 again. Let's not let this go on for nothing.

5 I wonder if you really care. If you do,
6 then show me.

7 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Mr.
8 Folster.

9 If the Commissioners would agree, I
10 would propose that we move to the United Church, hear their
11 presentation in the next 40 minutes or so, and then take
12 the remaining time of the morning to put questions to both
13 the United Church and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

14 If that is agreeable to Commissioners, unless anyone has
15 an urgent or pressing question they want to ask at this
16 time.

17 Mr. Erasmus?

18 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I would
19 agree with that, except that don't suggest to the United
20 Church they take 40 minutes to make their presentation.

21 That's the only part I would disagree with.

22 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** With that
23 understanding we will hear your presentation and, as we

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1 suggested, use the rest of the morning.

2 Let me turn, then, to the Right Reverend
3 Stanley McKay. Reverend McKay, maybe you would like to
4 introduce the members of your delegation.

5 **THE RIGHT REVEREND STANLEY MCKAY,**
6 **MODERATOR, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA:** Thank you very much.

7 I would like to introduce our
8 representatives at this table beginning with Anne Shirley
9 Sutherland, who is Chairperson of the Division of Mission
10 Canada. If the Commission wants to have dialogue this
11 afternoon about programs and implementation, she will be
12 the person who will be listening to recommendations and
13 suggestions.

14 Grafton Antone is the Speaker of the All
15 Native Circle Conference. We have been, since 1988,
16 developing self-government within our Aboriginal church
17 community, first nations church community. Grafton is
18 working directly in that area, so he will certainly want
19 to speak about that with you.

20 Dianne Cooper beside me is the Executive
21 Secretary of Manitoba Northwest. She will be speaking
22 briefly this morning about our involvement in some attempts
23 to deal with the residential schools question and also

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1 other questions of justice.

2 Former moderator Bob Smith beside me is
3 going to speak about the apology and experience of that
4 as a part of our presentation.

5 As we begin, as part of this time we are
6 going to be offering to the Elder of this gathering some
7 tobacco. (Native language -- no translation)

8 We want to acknowledge the importance
9 in our community of the presence of elders, not only in
10 symbolic ways but in the ongoing work of this Commission
11 and in the healing of our community.

12 We also have as a symbol of our
13 involvement and commitment from the tradition of one of
14 the first nations a friendship belt that we want to put
15 in front of our delegation which symbolizes for us the
16 ongoing dialogue. This will be referred to as well in
17 the afternoon discussions. We place it before you as a
18 Commission to indicate our intention to work with
19 friendship and redevelopment of relationships across this
20 land.

21 There are a number of issues around the
22 table that might just highlight our involvement. But
23 first of all, the fact is that we want some language to

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1 change within the process. The image of two founding
2 nations in Canada for us is hampering our process at the
3 very roots of our dialogue. So it maintains us in some
4 sort of historic captivity of the realities of the history
5 of Canada.

6 As we consider that, I want to thank this
7 Commission for bringing the four historic churches
8 together. You will be interested to know there are no
9 opportunities within this country for this kind of dialogue
10 to take place. None of us have a strong commitment to
11 this process, but I give thanks this day that we set up
12 this table together. Our people are broken by
13 denominationalism. Our people are broken by an incomplete
14 theology which results in genocidal practice on human
15 beings in Canada, but also on the environment.

16 This is not the liberating image of Jesus
17 Christ. It is a historic theology that I believe is caught
18 in what we describe as systematic theology. I refer to
19 it as systemic theology, and I would like us to talk more
20 about that in our conversations this afternoon.

21 I spent five years of incarceration in
22 a residential school. It was Presbyterian. The reason
23 I spent time as a United Church person in a Presbyterian

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1 school was the two United Church schools in the area were
2 thought by my family to be less humane. The food was rotten
3 and the treatment by the administrators of those schools
4 were problematic. So I am not sure whether I should thank
5 the Presbyterians at this point, or just carry on with
6 the dialogue.

7 A fundamental question for me in this
8 process is the question of spiritual oppression. I
9 believe in the final analysis that, if we as churches want
10 to be part of the healing, we must deal with our own
11 spiritual understanding. In fact, as first nations
12 people, we have a gift for the whole of society, and much
13 of our gift is in the area of spiritual understanding.

14 Native spiritual renewal is now under
15 oppression in this land. There is a second wave of
16 spiritual oppression carried on by churches which believe
17 we must be transformed again, that our theology is still
18 inadequate, that our spirituality is lacking. While we
19 sit around this table today, in my village there are
20 movements that call themselves evangelical that are still
21 attempting to suppress what remnants there are of
22 traditional spiritual ways and values.

23 I would like the Commission to

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1 understand that this is not a dialogue that can happen
 2 in isolation. There are new forms of oppression. The
 3 adoption system in society of having our children being
 4 given away to other parts of society and other parts of
 5 the world continues. Our communities are being abandoned
 6 by the historic churches. There is less commitment by
 7 the four churches around this table to having personnel
 8 present in villages now than there was. So there is a
 9 sense of abandonment as we carry on this dialogue, and
 10 that certainly includes my own denomination.

11 I also would hold in context the reality
 12 of Kanesatake and our lack of response to the ongoing
 13 injustices. I hope that our discussions today will help
 14 us to move on to some of the real questions of injustice,
 15 the absence of power from the first nations communities
 16 in the name of good theology. And so we are going to talk
 17 a bit about our history.

18 **THE VERY REVEREND DR. ROBERT F. SMITH,**
 19 **FORMER MODERATOR, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA:** The process
 20 of moving towards self-government for the Native peoples
 21 within the United Church of Canada began in earnest around
 22 1977. It took many forms, but I want to speak of one
 23 element in that process.

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1 In the fall of 1985, the elders who had
2 gathered indicated to us that if we were really serious
3 about the kind of reconciliation of which Mr. Justice
4 Dussault spoke earlier this morning, if we really meant
5 a new relationship between the dominant community and the
6 Aboriginal community in our midst, then we needed as a
7 church to make a formal apology to the people of the first
8 nations.

9 Let me tell you, that really put the cat
10 among the pigeons. Were we supposed to apologize for the
11 gospel? Were we supposed to apologize for the at times
12 noble sacrifice of missionaries?

13 We spent a great deal of time trying to
14 understand what was being asked of us and what was to be
15 our response. It became apparent that, increasingly,
16 whatever the motives, whatever the instances of sacrifice,
17 the church's willing complicity in the government's policy
18 of assimilation reflected a misunderstanding of, if not
19 a blind contempt for, the Native culture and Native
20 spirituality and led inevitably to the kind of devastating
21 results that the Royal Commission has been documenting.

22 So, in August of 1986, the General
23 Council of the United Church prepared and, on their behalf

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1 I presented, the apology which appears as Appendix 2 in
2 our brief.

3 The apology of the Primate of the
4 Anglican Church, I note, was accepted the next day. By
5 contrast, the apology which I offered on behalf of the
6 United Church was left without response for two years.
7 And then it was not accepted; it was acknowledged. So
8 I don't know what the Primate's magic was, but certainly
9 our experience was very different.

10 The reason it was acknowledged rather
11 than accepted was, they said, because if the apology means
12 anything it has to be lived out. There has to be some
13 sign that the church in making the apology takes it
14 seriously.

15 I want to give one instance -- and I will
16 be able only to make reference to it now because of the
17 time constraints. I hope there will be time later to talk
18 about it more fully. The British Columbia Conference of
19 the United Church in 1989, as a part of working out its
20 apology, instituted what is called the Land Claims Campaign
21 and committed itself to raise \$1 million to be given to
22 first nations in British Columbia to support them in their
23 claims for land settlements.

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1 That program has two aspects. There is
2 obviously the fund-raising aspect and equally, and perhaps
3 more importantly, an educational aspect.

4 I think I can report that with regard
5 to the fund-raising goal, that is in sight and before
6 another year is out, the entire sum of \$1 million will
7 have been provided by United Church people in British
8 Columbia.

9 The educational component has been far
10 less successful. While there has been significant
11 progress, it is far less than we expected and, indeed,
12 it is disappointing.

13 My time is exceeded, and I apologize for
14 that.

15 **MS DIANNE COOPER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,**
16 **CONFERENCE OF MANITOBA AND NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO, UNITED**
17 **CHURCH OF CANADA:** I am Dianne Cooper. I work for the
18 United Church in the Winnipeg office.

19 I grew up in a community not far from
20 the Brandon school where Stan's parents didn't want him
21 to go and I didn't know anything about it. So in that
22 sense I represent, to my great pain, the non-Native people
23 of the United Church of Canada who do not know this story

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1 and who still don't want to know it.

2 I, in my life and work in the church,
3 have the opportunity to be part of two times of living
4 out the apology. One would be the self-government matters
5 which have been described in our brief. I would just like
6 to say to you that as part of that living out, we have
7 experienced, as Native and non-Native people working
8 together in that, a number of thorny issues.

9 The first would be acceptance of
10 differences. In what things must the whole United Church
11 of Canada act identically and in what things can we support
12 the Native churches developing their own standards and
13 their own ways of doing things.

14 Second, we have numbers of questions
15 around the appropriate role and the place of non-Natives
16 in Native congregations and in regional bodies.

17 Third, we have thought about money.

18 The fourth issue has been tensions among
19 us about the role and place of women.

20 Last, we have struggled around how we
21 will respect and honour Native spirituality.

22 I would say to you that in none of these
23 issues have we ever been lined up with Natives on one side

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1 and non-Natives on the other. So your task is complex.

2 I mention these issues because they are
3 the same ones we see in the Province of Manitoba as we
4 talk about child and family service agencies and Aboriginal
5 justice. So perhaps we in the church have a few learnings
6 to share.

7 In both residential school issues and
8 self-government issues, the transitions have been
9 difficult. They have been marked by name calling, by hurt
10 feelings, misunderstanding, anger, and finally, by new
11 learnings and mutual respect.

12 When we have worked together as Natives
13 and non-Natives and we have taken time and risk, we have
14 been able to accomplish some tiny things. In our Regional
15 Residential Schools Committee, we have tried to follow
16 the wisdom of Native elders who have cautioned us to move
17 very slowly and very carefully. We have found no simple
18 or easy things to do. Everything has led to more questions
19 and more dilemmas.

20 You will know that in Manitoba the
21 churches have had a very difficult time co-operating with
22 each other and with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. About
23 that I express my grief.

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1 You will know that some Native people
2 want the churches to be actively involved, and some Native
3 people don't. You will know, as I said earlier, that many
4 non-Native people do not know this history, and I confess
5 to you that many do not want to, so we have a common role
6 to play in sharing that.

7 This meeting is one step on the journey
8 and I am grateful to be here.

9 **STANLEY MCKAY:** In conclusion, then,
10 for this part -- I realize we are under pressure and other
11 members of our delegation would like to speak -- I want
12 to say that we are not totally without political
13 possibilities.

14 I was elected in 1992. My election
15 platform was: After 500 years, shouldn't we do something
16 different?

17 There is a lot of guilt in the church
18 on which our momentum might be built; not that guilt is
19 always a positive thing, but I recognize that there is
20 some limited recognition within our community about the
21 need for change.

22 There is confusion within Aboriginal
23 territory about what is acceptable within the church

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1 framework. We are still living under judgement of church
2 policy, historic, around the acceptability of our
3 ceremonies and our prayers and even our language. The
4 biblical statement is about the year of jubilee. I am
5 waiting for that year. I haven't seen any sign of it,
6 but maybe we can bring something of that about.

7 A large part of our mission within the
8 established churches certainly is to our own members, as
9 Dianne just referred to. It is about transformation.

10 I approached your Commission at my
11 initiative some six months ago to initiate conversation
12 about education in the Canadian school system. I notice
13 a tremendous challenge, but I don't believe that any
14 graduate from any high school in Canada should graduate
15 without at least one year of intensive study in Native
16 history and Native culture.

17 Thank you for this opportunity.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
19 Reverend McKay. Thank you to you and your delegation for
20 helping us get back on our time track. We deeply
21 appreciate it. I think a lot of the questions that will
22 come out we will get into this afternoon. I don't have
23 any concerns that there will be any issues that will be

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1 left untouched or questions left unanswered by the time
2 we come through this this afternoon.

3 With those comments, let me again come
4 back to members of the Commission for their questions to
5 both the Presbyterian and United Churches. I will start
6 with Mr. Erasmus.

7 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I would like
8 to start by acknowledging the powerful presentation that
9 was made by one of the members of the Presbyterian Church.
10 I think it was Mr. Folster. I thought that was an amazing
11 personal testimony.

12 You certainly showed more courage than
13 I would have. You walked us through your own personal
14 pain; how far back it started, which was before you were
15 born; and how it is still continuing through your children;
16 and inevitably your grandchildren and others will feel
17 it. To me it was a perfect example of what we heard in
18 our hearings, but many didn't have the courage to do it
19 as openly and clearly as you did.

20 I have a lot of questions. I think I
21 am going to wait for this afternoon. I don't want us to
22 get too far behind schedule. I think it would be better
23 for us to break soon and go for lunch. We have some

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1 fundamental questions that we are going to deal with this
2 afternoon, and that will give us the time to get into the
3 kinds of things I want to talk about.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Are there
5 questions from other Commissioners at this time?

6 If that is the case, I will take a half
7 a minute to try to set out where we will be going this
8 afternoon.

9 You heard me this morning outlining the
10 four principle questions and goals that the Royal
11 Commission and the churches discussed that will be put
12 to this special consultation. We will be going to those
13 questions this afternoon.

14 I think the way has been clearly set for
15 everyone this morning. There is the struggle within the
16 church itself to recognize the injustices of the past in
17 terms of the residential schools. There is the hurt from
18 within the community. There is the need for the church
19 and Aboriginal peoples to find a point of reconciliation.

20 And there is, of course, in all of it the questions of
21 the federal government and, as some have mentioned, the
22 federal government's own responsibilities and policies
23 of assimilation, and then the churches' responsibility

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1 in that.

2 With that setting from this morning, may
3 I then call our lunch break. We will resume this afternoon
4 back on schedule at 1:15.

5 Thank you.

6 --- Luncheon recess at 12:00 p.m.

7 --- Upon resuming at 1:18 p.m.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I would like to
9 call everyone back to order to resume the discussion.
10 I will take just a moment to reflect on where we have been
11 this morning.

12 As we will all recall, in their written
13 submissions and in their verbal submissions, the historic
14 churches have told us that they have brought more than
15 the Christian message to the Aboriginal peoples. They
16 brought a new and different culture, education, technology
17 and even health care.

18 They have, I think, all of them this
19 morning spoken candidly about their failures. But when
20 one culture was introduced, another began to disappear.

21 When one religion, Christianity, was introduced, the
22 religion and the spirituality, the culture and the values
23 of the first peoples also began to disappear.

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1 We have reviewed the policies and
2 practices not only of the churches but of the Government
3 of Canada that were plainly designed to assimilate first
4 peoples into the European or, more specifically, the white
5 culture. And we have heard a considerable amount about
6 that this morning.

7 We have heard that it was the residential
8 schools that became the fundamental and principal
9 instrument of these policies of assimilation.

10 In the course of its work, the Royal
11 Commission on Aboriginal Peoples has heard extensive
12 testimony from many of those who attended these schools.
13 That brought us to where we are today. It brought to
14 the formation of the goals and the major questions that
15 were agreed to to be put to the four historic churches
16 for discussion.

17 The first question, then, is: What is
18 the relationship between the churches and Aboriginal
19 people with regard to the past and the present
20 understanding of spirituality and culture?

21 In part, because of the direction we took
22 this morning -- we heard considerable questions for both
23 the Anglican Church and the Conference of Catholic Bishops

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1 -- I would propose to put the initial question this
2 afternoon to the other side to get our discussion going.

3 While this is a very broad question, I
4 think it is one that we want to try to keep as tightly
5 focused as we possibly can. In that regard, I will repeat
6 it: What is the relationship between the churches and
7 Aboriginal peoples with regard to the past and the present
8 understanding of spirituality and culture?

9 May I ask you, Reverend McKay, if you
10 would initially like to respond.

11 **STANLEY MCKAY:** I think my comments
12 before noon touched in part on this question. I would
13 just say that clearly there is no doubt in the minds of
14 certainly those of us who are first nations people that
15 the tone was very much that in the past the people who
16 had only Aboriginal culture and spirituality -- that it
17 was evil and worthless.

18 While the present awareness would seem
19 to have moved us beyond that, I still do not feel personally
20 -- and I think within some segments of our denomination
21 there is some work beginning around what it means to be
22 Christian Aboriginal. I don't think that in the North
23 American context we have dealt with the questions of

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1 spirituality and culture.

2 The other element of that that
3 complicates it in some ways is that in the Aboriginal
4 communities, as I have come to understand it, it is not
5 possible to separate spirituality from life. There would
6 seem to be in the history of the church in North America
7 almost a need to separate spiritual practice from ongoing
8 life practice. I think the question is very complex.
9 In the lodges of our people in Aboriginal communities,
10 which the United Church is learning from in a very slow
11 manner, I think we are beginning to understand that culture
12 and spirituality cannot be separate.

13 The question of religion in the schools,
14 for instance, is problematic for first nations people.
15 How can you educate anyone without touching on
16 spirituality? I think the attempts to deal with this
17 question cannot be in a fragmented way. We must deal with
18 a holistic understanding of the oppression.

19 I believe the oppression continues in
20 this area of spirituality and culture because we have not
21 dealt in the established historic churches with our
22 theology, and we have not assumed the correct posture as
23 well -- certainly in the United Church of Canada that I

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1 will speak for at this point -- of understanding how our
2 culture is brought to our spirituality in the
3 non-Aboriginal community, I would say, at this point.
4 So we have been dealing with a fragmented approach in our
5 denomination.

6 I would say that the final influence for
7 me in our denomination that we struggle with ongoing is
8 the question of our ongoing mission in Canada. Our mission
9 would still seem to have some elements of paternalism,
10 some elements of where the truth is and who possesses it.

11 So I think that our attitude is still problematic within
12 our denomination.

13 I would suggest that there may be others
14 on the panel representing the United Church who would wish
15 to speak to that. My understanding is we are still
16 teaching basically European theological approaches in our
17 schools. Our approach to understanding culture are not
18 very much in depth. Our theological graduates from our
19 schools in the United Church of Canada, generally speaking,
20 are not being taught to do social analysis in any depth
21 of our own culture, so I think the attitude has not been
22 dealt with in a straightforward manner within our society.

23 I would hope in our discussions today

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1 we would look at the -- I think this is a fundamental need,
2 in my assessment, within our denomination that until we
3 come to a place of some sense of giftedness coming from
4 first nations people to the majority of society in Canada
5 that we do have something to offer, until that attitude
6 is brought forward and upheld by everyone, racism and
7 cultural oppression will continue.

8 When we heard Commissioner Wilson speak
9 earlier, I think she was referring to that in her question,
10 about where the healing has to happen. I as an Aboriginal
11 person would say that it is on both sides.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I would ask if
13 the next speaker could pick up on this. Are the churches
14 themselves ready and able to accommodate Native
15 spirituality and Native customs and culture to the extent
16 that Aboriginal people may want them to?

17 **STANLEY MCKAY:** The complexity of that
18 question is framed in the fact that on the prairies in
19 1956 the census indicated that 97 per cent of Aboriginal
20 peoples on the prairies at that time were Christian, were
21 baptised. What we have now within my own village is a
22 great confusion about what is truth. Aboriginal
23 spirituality in many of the villages has been eradicated.

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1 The ceremonies have gone underground and many of them
2 have not emerged. The lodges are only now being
3 established. So the question isn't being put forward very
4 strongly by first nations people with any real momentum
5 because within our own sense of community we are being
6 divided by our own confusion about what is truth.

7 I don't think our church, even with the
8 apology of 1986, has not made it known as to what that
9 means for the future of our relationship and where truth
10 is and whether the church will continue to practice --
11 even though it may say something else, it still practices
12 judgement.

13 I find it very difficult at this point
14 to speak on behalf of the United Church of Canada because
15 obviously I find myself in a compromised position. I
16 personally lead a group of people in the church who say
17 it is possible to be Christian and Aboriginal. There is
18 only a small group within our church, two of us who sit
19 here today, who say that might be possible. A good number
20 of our United Church members who are Aboriginal would say
21 we are Christian and we have given the rest away. That
22 is a tragedy of genocidal process.

23 I think residential schools had a part

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1 in that, but the whole theology of the Christian church
2 up to this day continues to put us in that position.

3 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I could
4 entertain other members of the United Church. Go ahead,
5 Reverend Antone.

6 **THE REVEREND ANTONE, SPEAKER, ALL NATIVE**
7 **CIRCLE CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA:** I would like
8 to begin by honouring the Elders and the Commissioners
9 for giving us this opportunity to come before you to address
10 something that needs to be redressed now, not years ahead.

11 In my understanding of coming, we had
12 to bring a wampum belt because without a wampum, there
13 is really no basis for discussion amongst Native peoples.
14 So the first step was to have the friendship belt
15 presented. It is at the table here.

16 When we have peace and friendship
17 amongst each other, then we are able to talk about things
18 that need to be done at this table with everyone sitting
19 around here. Everyone has the opportunity to hear what
20 we Native people have been asking for for a long time,
21 understanding of who we are and understanding of our ways.

22 I just came into the Speaker's job this
23 June. They gave me the sweetgrass and they said "Will

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1 you walk in the sweetgrass way holding both Native
2 traditions and Christian traditions together so that we
3 can have a new way of seeing things". I responded to their
4 Elder's questions that I would.

5 This is my first opportunity to come out
6 from the Native Circle and speak in a public forum.

7 Self-government in the United Church of
8 Canada is what the All Native Circle is all about: How
9 do we function within the United Church.

10 You heard this morning how Bob Smith
11 talked about the apology given in 1986. In 1988, we became
12 a conference. The United Church gathered half of their
13 congregations together in four different presbyteries --
14 half of their Native United Church congregations in four
15 different presbyteries to make our conference.

16 We are walking in to discover how we can
17 combine Native spirituality and Christianity together.
18 In order for Native people to rediscover their actual place
19 in society today, it is that we have to recapture our
20 histories and know who we are. In our languages that we
21 speak, we have to know what our tongues are and what our
22 names are. We have to know our creation stories. These
23 things to me are very vital, and it is vital to all Native

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1 peoples. In order for us to walk, we have to have
2 agreements.

3 I know that the United Church of Canada
4 had a basis of union in 1925 which was agreed to by the
5 three churches who came together. It was an Act of
6 Parliament that brought them together. So the United
7 Church and the Government of Canada are together in one.
8 They are one. How they deal with Native people -- they
9 deal with them one way with spiritual things and one way
10 with government things.

11 In order for us to get on top of that,
12 we have to come together as one and the non-Native peoples,
13 the Canadians, have to sort of own up to what spirituality
14 is and what government is. This is what the residential
15 school thing is all about, to bring those two together.

16 In my Christian walk and in my
17 traditional walk, as I am a Native person, I have to hold
18 those two together.

19 Last summer at our 34th General Council
20 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, we presented a theme. It
21 was based on "There is a river". The river of life is
22 what everybody is involved in.

23 In that theme presentation, we used the

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1 theme of the two-row wampum belt. I don't have that here
2 today. It is not ready yet to be brought out because the
3 churches have to get in line with an understanding of Native
4 peoples. There is the church way or the non-Native way,
5 and then there is the Native way. Between it all we have
6 to go down this river of life together. The two-row wampum
7 tells us that in the Native way we will direct our own
8 paths, and in the European type of way, Canadian way, there
9 is their own way. Between us we are both in that same
10 thing.

11 I bring that as one of my understandings
12 of where we are in this process. Even though the
13 residential schools brought a lot of pain and a lot of
14 those things, I still feel that we as Native peoples have
15 benefitted from learning knowledge in residential schools.

16 Earlier I went to talk to Elder Bill
17 Commanda who opened up this meeting. He talked to me in
18 his language, Ojibway. Then I responded to him in my
19 language, Onondaga. We couldn't understand each other,
20 but when we shook hands we talked the language of English.

21 So we were able to communicate. There is a wide gamut
22 here. I speak on behalf of the Native peoples who are
23 glad of the benefits that education has brought. Yet,

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1 there are others who feel very much pain and have
2 experienced the worst. I also have to remember and speak
3 for them.

4 I believe we here in this circle now,
5 at this conference table, have an opportunity to begin
6 a new path. The United Church that I am part of is walking
7 that path with Native people.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
9 Reverend Antone.

10 I would ask the Presbyterian Church to
11 respond to the question, the relationship between the
12 church and Aboriginal people with regard to the past and
13 present understanding of spirituality and culture.
14 Reverend Hodgson, please.

15 **RAY HODGSON:** I will begin, but I will
16 not speak for Aboriginal peoples. They are able to speak
17 on their own behalf, and I encourage them to do so.

18 What I have been able to discover in my
19 own research is that I have found it very interesting that
20 most often mission with Aboriginal peoples in Canada has
21 been housed administratively within the churches with
22 foreign missions. I think that says a few things that
23 need some reflection.

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1 What I also find interesting is that in
2 the 1950s and 1960s when there was a radical rethinking
3 of what it meant to be in mission with other peoples outside
4 the borders of Canada, those learnings -- and some of those
5 learnings came with quite a lot of difficulty as countries
6 struggled for nationhood, for indigenous theology, for
7 looking at mutuality in mission -- that a lot of those
8 learnings which are well known in terms of dealing in what
9 we might call international missions were never carried
10 over into how we do mission with, amongst, Aboriginal
11 peoples.

12 I think that is one of the tasks of the
13 church. I will say the Presbyterian Church. I won't
14 speak on behalf of other churches. Our church needs to
15 go back to some fundamental principles of what we believe
16 in terms of theology of mission. I believe that our
17 partners overseas have much to teach us that we need to
18 appropriate and learn before we can walk together with
19 Aboriginal peoples.

20 The other thing that I would like to say
21 in terms of spirituality and culture -- that is for me
22 almost such a western question. It almost presupposes
23 that one can disentangle spirituality and culture. Again,

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1 this is a challenge for the anglo church or the white church
2 to begin to look at some of those presuppositions that
3 came out of the European enlightenment in terms of allowing
4 us to even think that we could disentangle those kinds
5 of questions.

6 While were talking about it
7 theologically and philosophically, in practice we did not
8 disentangle them. As a matter of fact, we considered that
9 western culture was spirituality and that was what needed
10 to be transmitted to Aboriginal peoples. So, that is
11 another whole reflection that churches need to undertake.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

13 Mr. Folster, please.

14 **STEWART FOLSTER:** My experience is much
15 to do with what Reverend McKay has told us. Our Native
16 people are confused. They are not sure about their Native
17 spirituality.

18 When our young people come back and go
19 to the ceremonies, quite often they find out that what
20 the church has been saying all along is not true, that
21 their Native spirituality is not dead. Then they become
22 angry and they don't go back to the church. In a sense,
23 they have lost Christ. They have lost the teachings of

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1 Christ.

2 On the other hand, there are people in
3 Native spirituality who say that you cannot mix the church
4 and Indian culture together, that they just don't go
5 together.

6 My brother is a traditional pipe
7 carrier. I go to Native church elders for advice. I go
8 to pipe carriers who are in the church and who work for
9 the church. I go to them for advice. But if I want to
10 go for healing, if I want to know what is wrong and if
11 I want to know what to do about it, I go to my brother.
12 That is the reality that I see right now.

13 There is an orthodox Native traditional
14 culture which is very powerful. There is a lot of good
15 that can be said for it. Yet they do not speak about
16 Christ.

17 It is possible to have the two together.
18 But it is very difficult as ministers to introduce Native
19 culture into our church practices, into our worship service
20 and that kind of thing. As soon as we do that, there are
21 always some people who will start screaming that we are
22 evil and that we are pagan. This is where the effect of
23 the evangelism comes in. They are being taught that these

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1 ways are evil and they should stay away from them.

2 Yet at the same time the young people
3 don't know who they are. They are not proud of being
4 Indian. They think that it is evil to speak their language.
5 That is what they are being taught. This is not in the
6 past. This is happening today.

7 I find that I can go and speak about
8 Indian culture and about Indian laws to a lot of white
9 people and they will say it sounds really good, "I really
10 like what you have to say." But I can't do that with my
11 own people because they will start screaming at me "You're
12 evil. What are you doing? You're supposed to be
13 worshipping Christ."

14 Our biggest struggle is to convince our
15 own people that their ways are good.

16 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** If I may, I will
17 move to hear from the representative from the Anglican
18 Church. Could you please introduce yourself, because I
19 can't read the sign that far down.

20 **REVEREND LAVERNE JACOBS, CO-ORDINATOR,**
21 **NATIVE MINISTRIES, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA:** I am
22 Laverne Jacobs. I am a priest of the Anglican Church
23 working as a co-ordinator for Native Ministries.

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1 The story for the Anglicans is very
2 similar to the stories of the United Church and the
3 Presbyterian Church. I sit before you as an Aboriginal
4 person who cannot speak his language, who does not know
5 the stories or the songs of his people. It was just last
6 summer that I experienced my first sweat.

7 As I was sitting this morning and
8 watching the United Church people present the tobacco to
9 the Elder, I felt uncomfortable because this is a part
10 of our tradition that we are not familiar with. That is
11 where we are. We don't know all the rights things to do.
12 I think that is where we are.

13 I say to our Elder, I am sorry, but we
14 are still learning.

15 I relate to a group called the Council
16 for Native Ministries. This is a group of Aboriginal
17 people from all across Canada who give direction to the
18 Anglican Church in its relationship in the ministry to
19 Native peoples.

20 In 1988, there was a discussion in that
21 gathering about the whole question of Native spirituality.

22 Peoples' experiences in that gathering were very varied.
23 There were people from the west who had a living memory

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1 of some of the traditions and some who still practice some
2 of the traditions and knew the stories and the songs and
3 the dances. There are others with longer contact with
4 European culture, such as my community, where those
5 traditions had been lost. There is a real fear of
6 compromising their Christian faith, of being told that
7 the ways of our people were wrong, that they were pagan,
8 and we were to put those aside.

9 I can remember discussions in my own
10 community where the elders have said "We have put those
11 aside. We don't talk about them any more."

12 During that gathering, one of the
13 council members -- it was a very difficult question. One
14 of the members from the northern communities said "What
15 am I going to tell my people". In his area, they are
16 thoroughly Anglican. They can sing the chant in Cree.
17 You would go into their services and you would think in
18 some ways, except for the language -- it is just a very
19 Victorian service. Those people are adamant that the
20 traditional ways are wrong.

21 After that discussion, the committee
22 said "We need a statement from the church about Native
23 spirituality." The feeling was that the church placed

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1 these shackles on us. The church stopped us from talking
2 about our traditions and have made us put them aside.
3 Until the church removes those shackles, our elders will
4 not have the freedom to talk about what they have been
5 told to put aside.

6 In some sense -- and I don't like to
7 describe it this way, but it is almost as if the elders
8 feel that because the church said no that now they need
9 permission from the church to begin to explore their
10 traditional roots.

11 From that conversation, there was a
12 resolution from our National Executive Council, and
13 subsequently from the General Synod of the Anglican Church
14 at its 33rd General Synod, affirming the value of Native
15 spirituality and encouraging dialogue. The dialogue has
16 to begin within our own Native communities because there
17 is a great deal of conflict and a great deal of confusion.

18 Just 10 years ago I firmly believed that
19 those traditions were wrong. I was really afraid. I can
20 remember the fear that I had when I experienced my first
21 sweetgrass ceremony. I dreaded the possibility of ever
22 going to a sweat. It was so ingrained in me that these
23 things were wrong and I didn't want to compromise my

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1 spirituality which is Christian, the spirituality in which
2 I was raised, because that would be -- I don't know who
3 I am. I think that is a very common story.

4 What does it mean for me to be a Native
5 person but who also has been raised in the Christian faith?

6 One way that we are trying to grapple
7 with this issue is to encourage dialogue. In 1991, we
8 brought together some representatives from the Anglican
9 Church, the United Church and from the Roman Catholic
10 Church and some traditional people. They spent two days
11 talking together about what does it mean to be a Christian.

12 We had a Roman Catholic deacon there to help facilitate
13 the gathering and to lead in the ceremonies. We talked
14 about the loss that we felt and the fear that we felt and
15 how the circle in many ways was very fragile and broken,
16 and how do we begin to heal that.

17 My feeling is that dialogue has to
18 continue. In many ways it has to continue on two fronts,
19 or maybe three:

20 There is the dialogue between Native
21 communities and Native people themselves because that is
22 where a lot of the division and a lot of the confusion
23 and a lot of the conflict is.

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1 There is also the dialogue between
2 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Christians, so that the
3 non-Aboriginal church can realize that the beliefs, the
4 traditions, the practices of Aboriginal people complement
5 the gospel, and that in many ways the values are the same.

6 Then there is the dialogue that has to
7 take place between the non-Aboriginal church and the
8 community itself, helping them to look at their own
9 cultural roots and what does it mean to be a person of
10 faith. How do you respect the traditions of another
11 culture and see truth in that.

12 We are on a journey and we have a long
13 way to go. Thank you.

14 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
15 Reverend.

16 Are there representatives from the
17 Conference of Catholic Bishops that would like to pick
18 up on the question and perhaps pick up on where we were
19 with the previous speaker.

20 Sister Eva Solomon, please.

21 **SISTER EVA SOLOMON, CANADIAN CONFERENCE**
22 **OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS:** (Native language -- no translation)

23 My name is Eagle Woman. I would like

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1 to honour and thank our Elder William Commanda and to thank
2 the Commission for the opportunity to be here.

3 I believe that the issue of spirituality
4 is one of the most important issues for Native peoples
5 because spirituality touches every aspect of who we are
6 as individuals and as communities. It is because of the
7 condemnation of our churches and the criminalization by
8 our government of our sacred ceremonies that much of the
9 disintegration and demise of our people has happened.

10 Those ceremonies, all of them, speak to
11 life. In criminalizing them and condemning them, it was
12 as if that became the base for the exploitation of those
13 peoples. It was like saying that our way of governing
14 ourselves is not good enough, that our way of speaking
15 is not good enough, that our way of educating our children
16 is not good enough. All those things are part of our
17 spirituality. And that destroys the people. It destroys
18 the spirit.

19 I think that many of our Native peoples
20 can only come to wholeness when they are able to integrate
21 both those ways in themselves, or to be free to accept
22 only the traditional way or to accept only the Christian
23 way, but they have to have that freedom and that has not

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1 I think there is some aspect of Native
2 spirituality that can be common across various individual
3 Native nations. But there are also very distinct
4 differences. The Ojibway sacred ceremonies are not the
5 same as the Haida sacred ceremonies, and both are valid,
6 and any of the others. So we also have to recognize that
7 we are not talking just one spirituality or one way. There
8 are as many different ways as there are different Native
9 groups and nations in our land.

10 One of our primary virtues is respect.
11 If we can begin to respect as churches that God is bigger
12 than any one church and God is bigger than any one Native
13 spirituality, then we can begin to be open, to listen to
14 the way God speaks to various peoples in their spiritual
15 traditions.

16 I also think that there is a time for
17 us as Native people when we have to stop simply blaming
18 and begin to take ownership of the healing, and the same
19 thing in our non-Native society. They too cannot simply
20 blame the Native people. They have to own their part in
21 the dysfunction and work together for healing.

22 Megwetch.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,

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1 Sister Solomon.

2 In a moment I want to go to the
3 Commissioners to see if they have questions that follow
4 from the first question. It seems that we have heard two
5 interesting and -- even three interesting and opposing
6 views of the situation.

7 We have heard that the move to bring
8 Aboriginal spirituality and culture into the churches has
9 to come from the Aboriginal peoples themselves. Then we
10 have heard the difficulty that Aboriginal people have doing
11 that. They have been told, as you have said, Reverend,
12 that it is an enormously difficult move. It was for you
13 and for others because you had been told for so long that
14 it is wrong, or that the practices of the Native
15 spirituality was wrong and against the teaching of the
16 church.

17 "What has to happen" is the question that
18 maybe I could have other members of the church pick up.
19 What does the church have to do to open the door? Do
20 you want the door open? To what degree and how far can
21 you go to accommodate the concerns that you hear?

22 Bishop de Roo, please.

23 **REMI DE ROO:** I would like to pick up

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1 on that from the perspective of my own experience having
2 spent over 30 years relating to my Native sisters and
3 brothers.

4 These problems I live myself in my own
5 Roman Catholic tradition. For instance, it is not
6 generally known that within the communion of the Roman
7 Catholic Church there are 22 different rights or valid
8 ways of worshipping that are very, very different. For
9 instance, in Victoria we have a Ukrainian Church which
10 worships in the eastern Slavonic ways as compared with
11 the Latin.

12 But we are back to a problem that has
13 been raised much earlier about the European form of racism
14 which affects the whole world. Somehow the European race
15 got the impression they were a superior race and,
16 consequently, we Europeans -- because my grandparents came
17 from Europe -- came into this land thinking somehow that
18 the Native peoples were inferior. That is part of an
19 unconscious superiority complex.

20 Europe has spread this complex right
21 around the world, particularly through the Latin right
22 missionary effort of the Roman Catholic Church. That was
23 done unconsciously with the best intentions in the world.

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1 We are only awakening to the fact that we have this deep
2 racism within us. Consequently, when we try within our
3 own Roman Catholic right to reach out in new ways and to
4 recognize other ways of seeing our own people -- some of
5 our own people turn against us. Some we call the
6 evangelists who have a very narrow concept of truth. That
7 was raised earlier today.

8 Our understanding of truth -- as if truth
9 were something that can be packaged and controlled. That
10 is the heritage of the enlightenment. We are back again
11 to that European complex. We are only beginning to awaken
12 to the depth of that. Consequently, all our institutions,
13 government, educational, political, economic, all of them
14 were shaped by that vision. We are only beginning to
15 critique that vision.

16 For instance, let me mention one book.
17 I am in the process of reading John Ralston Saul's book
18 called "Voltaire's Bastards", a delightful title, which
19 is a fundamental critique of that Eurocentred,
20 enlightened, inspired understanding that somehow the
21 European civilization was superior to the others, and
22 because Europe had fire power and all the others we imposed,
23 we are only beginning to see the consequences of that.

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1 I think it is in that broader context
2 that I for one have to recognize that I have been shaped
3 that way and that I have to try to reach a new perspective
4 and help my sisters and brothers likewise. So I am
5 delighted to hear that we are not just looking at it in
6 a narrow context.

7 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Could you
8 identify yourself, please.

9 **REVEREND ACHIEL PEELMAN, PROFESSOR, ST.**
10 **PAUL UNIVERSITY, CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS:**

11 My name is Achiel Peelman. I am a professor of theology
12 here in Ottawa at St. Paul University.

13 Over the last 10, 15 years I have had
14 the opportunity to visit many Native communities and to
15 establish a relationship with elders, prophets, spiritual
16 leaders, and medicine people. This has been a tremendous
17 theological education for me.

18 You raised an important question about
19 the conflicting situation. I met lots of people who said
20 "Is it really possible to be totally Native and totally
21 Christian?" I really have no answer to that question.
22 But I came to the conclusion as a theologian that it is
23 practically impossible to construct a synthesis between

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1 the theology that guided the missionary experience in the
2 past and the new theology that we hope with guide us now.

3 What we can do is really analyse the
4 context and try to find out why at all it was possible
5 for the churches to have that kind of attitude toward Native
6 cultures and spirituality in the past and what kind of
7 analysis we need to change that so that we really move
8 into a different and new direction with Native people.

9 I would also agree with Ray when he
10 mentioned that obviously in other parts of the world
11 mission theology has moved more rapidly and to a different
12 direction. I am inclined to believe that one of the
13 reasons is that in other parts of the world missionaries
14 were really challenged by new political and social
15 situations and they had no choice but to change direction.

16 Take, for example, the entire continent of Africa that
17 became independent from the fifties to the eighties. Here
18 in Canada the political situation is still very much the
19 same. Many Native communities can still be described as
20 internal colonies. We have not really been challenged
21 by the new political and social direction.

22 But we have the opportunity today to
23 change when we take the Native renaissance much more

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1 seriously and when we let Native people speak in our
2 churches and let them decide with us what kind of direction
3 we can move in.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.
5 Reverend Smith, please.

6 **ROBERT SMITH:** I don't want to respond
7 to your question, but to add another layer of complexity
8 to it.

9 The moderator indicated that he was
10 wearing two hats as he spoke, as an Aboriginal person and
11 as the official spokesperson for the United Church of
12 Canada. He has some discomfort, understandably, with
13 those two hats when they seem to fit in different ways.

14 I only wear one hat. I think it is
15 possible to say that the United Church of Canada in its
16 official speaking and acting has moved 180 degrees from
17 its former policy of contempt for and denigration of Native
18 spirituality and Native culture to the point where we say
19 in our teaching and in our action that we must sit at the
20 feet of Native people and learn from them and walk with
21 them.

22 The problem is that there is a very great
23 distance between the United Church in its official speaking

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1 and acting and in its dispersed reality. There is an
2 enormous gap between the, I would say, enlightened or being
3 enlightened policies that are expressed at the level of
4 the General Council and what is lived out at the local
5 level.

6 That leads to the importance of an
7 educational process and some kind of hook to involve people
8 in that educational process. We are not going to move
9 towards a redress of the historic inequities and injustices
10 until we find that way to involve the constituency at large
11 in the things that now the church teaches officially.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Reverend Peter
13 Hamel, please.

14 **PETER HAMEL:** Whit, one of the things
15 that the church, I think, has been plagued with for at
16 least 2,000 years is that very few of the theologians have
17 been bird-watchers. There is a deep sense with which I
18 say that in terms of our understanding of scripture.

19 One of the things that I have learned
20 over the last 20 years in my relationship with Aboriginal
21 peoples is that in fact the basis of their faith and
22 survival has been their understanding of their
23 relationship to the land and the identity within which

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1 they understand their whole lives being related to the
2 land and to the environment.

3 When you look at especially the Old
4 Testament, it is loaded with natural history which gets
5 little attention in terms of our understanding of creation.

6 We also need to remember that it was the environmental
7 movement of the sixties and early seventies which began
8 to blow the church out of the water in terms of its
9 understanding of creation.

10 So, in terms of what we are talking about
11 this afternoon, Aboriginal spirituality, I have heard Stan
12 McKay and others refer to Aboriginal people as Old
13 Testament people. So when we get down to the nitty-gritty,
14 there are many, many similarities in the Old Testament
15 between Aboriginal people and the early Israelites. I
16 think we, the non-Aboriginal community, too has a role
17 to play in terms of working at that understanding and making
18 those relationships.

19 If we begin to understand Aboriginal
20 people in that light, then it takes on much more meaning
21 for Christians. It also means that we have to let go.
22 Control is the name of the game of the churches in terms
23 of our understanding of spirituality. We have heard a

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1 lot of discussion this afternoon by Aboriginal people
2 telling us that we have to let go to allow Aboriginal people
3 to be free to respond to the spirit of the Creator, and
4 in so doing that enhances the churches' life.

5 What we have learned in terms of the
6 ecumenical work around economic, social and environmental
7 justice are these deep connections that Aboriginal people
8 have.

9 Earlier Sister Eva was talking about all
10 Aboriginal peoples are distinct. That is based upon their
11 relationship to the land wherever they live. It is that
12 organic understanding that we have lost and that alienation
13 that we possess. I think we need to be freed up to look
14 at that in a new light.

15 The church in Canada and its destiny is
16 dependent upon the leadership and the response of
17 Aboriginal people. If we lose that, then I think we have
18 lost a deeper understanding of what it is to be Christian.

19 So we need to support all of that and make those
20 connections.

21 It is very interesting, this past year
22 our son was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident.

23 What brought me through that was the reading of Job.

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1 What dumbfounded me was not only Job's intensity in having
2 his day in court with God, which was unheard of for the
3 Hebrews, and he pursued it and all the elders told him
4 he was nuts and off the wall, but he pursued it. The
5 response that God gave to him in terms of his personal
6 suffering was to talk in terms of the universe, God as
7 Creator, and to look at "Where were you when I created
8 the Heavens", et cetera, and then to look at animal
9 behaviour. There is a great natural history of ostriches
10 in there if you want to look at that.

11 But all of that understanding can be so
12 easily related to Aboriginal people. Many around this
13 table have participated in events around issues. We can
14 talk about the rivers of life, but many of the rivers where
15 Aboriginal people live today are being destroyed. We have
16 not made a very effective response in terms of the
17 spiritual, the ethical, the moral dimension of that and
18 in terms of being in solidarity with Aboriginal people.

19 That's enough of the sermon; sorry.

20 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

21 **ADAM EXNER:** I don't want to elaborate
22 on any of the points that have already been made, but I
23 agree with Sister Eva that this is an issue that is basic

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1 for the future of the church and its relationship with
2 the Native people. I think it is important for the future
3 of the church in Canada and for the future of our society
4 in Canada.

5 I say that because I come from a diocese
6 in which we provide services in 20 languages. The latest
7 we added was Hindi and Malay.

8 What we really need to do with regard
9 to all this cultural variety that we have in Canada is
10 learn to implement a principle which the second Vatican
11 council enunciated when it said that we must learn to
12 recognize, accept and welcome the true, the good and the
13 beautiful, no matter where it comes from and from what
14 culture it comes from. I think this is really important
15 as far as church is concerned. This is important as far
16 as our society and the development of our Canadian culture
17 is concerned.

18 If we don't learn that, we are in
19 trouble.

20 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** May I ask you,
21 in a one-word answer, before I give the floor to Mr.
22 Erasmus, of the 20 languages how many would be Aboriginal?

23 **ADAM EXNER:** About five or six.

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1 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

2 Mr. Erasmus, please.

3 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We held
4 hearings all across the country and I got into an
5 interesting situation in Saskatchewan. I brought up part
6 of what we were discussing here earlier. I was asking
7 somebody from the Catholic Church, peace and development
8 -- after he had presented to us a litany of good things
9 the church had done in partnership with Aboriginal people
10 -- when the church was going to do something about the
11 mess it had created amongst Aboriginal peoples. We now
12 had divided communities. We had communities where people
13 were struggling in understanding who they traditionally
14 were. The people in the pews were, in a lot of ways, the
15 most reactionary people you could find because they had
16 been so indoctrinated. The fear for their soul had so
17 been put into them that they would be the first ones to
18 reject their own people. Was it not possible for the
19 church to start to do something about that, since the Pope
20 had made numerous statements and so forth about culture
21 and recognizing Aboriginal peoples' contributions and so
22 forth?

23 The point I was trying to make was that

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1 the message had not reached the pew. The message had not
2 reached the Aboriginal people that were still there, and
3 the churches, and not looking at anything else.

4 I received quite a bit of fan mail from
5 different parts of the church when this was covered in
6 the media, quite angry mail, actually, for asking this.

7 It was a very defensive communication from people.

8 The other point I was bringing forth was
9 the information I had been receiving by reading what was
10 happening in other places in the world with Aboriginal
11 people. For instance, in Central and South America
12 missionaries are still going into the deep jungle and still
13 trying to bring the western European industrial lifestyle
14 to people living in jungles where they don't have any
15 electricity. If there is anything there that would work
16 for them, it would be their herbal medicines, their
17 traditional understanding of foods. But in fact, they
18 are still being taught that to go to traditionalists that
19 could cure them using the herbs and all of the gifts of
20 creation that grow around them is in fact pagan and that
21 is not the way to go. That is the message today.

22 I was trying to get to the bottom of what
23 in fact we are discussing here. It seems to me that if

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1 in fact Aboriginal people are going to contribute the way
2 that the churches have said -- I found some irony in the
3 presentations saying that if there ever was a time for
4 the message from Aboriginal people and the traditional
5 way, it is today. Here we have the society that came here
6 and tried to teach Aboriginal people the good life, the
7 civilized life, the way of the future. It is polluting
8 the world. There is selfishness that we are seeing every
9 day, destruction that we see, rampant violence and abuse
10 that is going on in all the first world countries. It
11 is very ironic that the churches now turn around and say
12 that the original message from Aboriginal people is very,
13 very important and it should occur now.

14 I would like to return to what the church
15 should do in relation to the people that are still in the
16 pews and are the most colonized. It seems to me it is
17 a classic situation of people being colonized and there
18 are two ways of breaking the ties with the colonizer.
19 It is either the people that are at the other end of the
20 chain saying "I have had enough of this", getting up on
21 their hind ends; or else the master saying "It's okay.
22 We will give you the key and you can undo it."

23 The reality is, it seems to me, very,

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1 very clear that if we are going to speed this up, if you
2 really do want to assist in creating healthy Aboriginal
3 communities, then the message needs to get out to quite
4 a few people that it really is all right to be involved
5 in a ceremony like we had this morning.

6 The ironic situation is that while I
7 watched all the way around the corner -- I didn't look
8 closely, but I didn't notice anybody pushing away the
9 sweetgrass when it went around this morning. As we were
10 told from the corner there, there are many Aboriginal
11 communities that would feel we were tempting the devil,
12 that in fact we are using the black arts and that this
13 is something we should never do.

14 The churches believe their message is
15 clear to those in pews, but I don't believe it is. I really
16 do not believe it is. I think that something substantial
17 needs to be done to let people know that they have a choice,
18 not that they need to go through another new
19 indoctrination, but simply that they can relax and allow
20 the young people and those who want to find out in fact
21 all of what it meant to be and what it could mean to be
22 Aboriginal. They should be allowed to do that.

23 Even these apologies. Reading through

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1 this, I hear about the churches, sometimes repeatedly,
2 having made these apologies. The message has not gotten
3 out. It is not clearly understood. It is really
4 important to hear from the churches what they think they
5 can do in relation to assisting Aboriginal peoples so that
6 they can work together. Unless we start there, it is going
7 to be a long, long road.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Are there any
9 comments?

10 Sister Solomon, please.

11 **EVA SOLOMON:** I would like to speak to
12 something that we have been doing for 10 years in our own
13 area where we as Native Catholic people have gatherings
14 where we actually teach our traditional ceremonies, where
15 we have our elders come in and teach those ceremonies,
16 where we have our people experience them, and say it is
17 up to you to choose. We are not going to say you must
18 do this. We are saying this is what the teaching is and
19 this is how we are open to receive it, and the choice is
20 yours.

21 So I believe that there are places where
22 that actually is happening.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Bishop Exner,

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1 please.

2 **ADAM EXNER:** In my own case, it is two
3 years now that I am in Vancouver and I am doing there what
4 I also did previously in Winnipeg and before that in
5 Kamloops.

6 As the Bishop, I have not only said it,
7 but I have done it. Native people all through my diocese
8 have seen me wear buckskin vestments. They have seen me
9 wear a buckskin miter. They have seen me carry a talking
10 stick instead of a crozier. They have seen me welcoming
11 the smudging at the beginning of mass. They have seen
12 me smoke the peace pipe at the sign of peace.

13 I think they are getting the message that
14 it's okay, because they see me doing it, not only saying
15 it.

16 We do have what I might term as a native
17 pastoral council. I meet with them about six times a year.
18 We talk about these things and we encourage them to
19 proceed. This enculteration, namely, dressing
20 Christianity in Native garb, it is not something that I
21 can do or any other white man can do. I think Sister Eva
22 is quite correct in saying that it is only the Native people
23 that can do that, and I am certainly encouraging them.

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1 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Laverne Jacobs,
2 please.

3 **LAVERNE JACOBS:** The issue that you
4 raised is a very critical issue. At the national level
5 in the Anglican Church there is certainly an awareness
6 of how important this issue is. But you are right; it
7 doesn't get down to the grassroots that it's okay to do
8 that. In some way the Native people in our constituency
9 who are involved in levels of the church at the national
10 level and even perhaps on some special diocesan committees
11 are aware of that, but it doesn't get down to the
12 grassroots.

13 In some ways, our bishops need to take
14 some leadership in that by working with Native people
15 around a process of education and meeting with people in
16 their dioceses to say it is okay to do this and enabling
17 them do that, not by giving direction, but by their presence
18 -- I don't even like to use the word "permission", but
19 supporting that kind of action.

20 I would like to hear Bishop Lawrence's
21 response to that.

22 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Bishop
23 Lawrence, please.

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1 **CALEB LAWRENCE:** I have a comment, and
2 this refers to the residential schools situation. In the
3 area in which I work in the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee,
4 things were being said about abuses in the residential
5 schools in the past. There were Aboriginal people in our
6 diocese who had said it may have happened a way out there,
7 but it didn't happen in the schools we attended.

8 Then some time after that they started
9 to say maybe there were some things that happened in the
10 schools we attended, but it wasn't significant; isolated
11 incidents. Then more and more lately I am hearing stories
12 told by people who were students in those schools of things
13 that had happened to them and they match the kind of stories
14 that are detailed in the submissions and that have been
15 shared here today.

16 For many Aboriginal people, it is not
17 something that is going to happen overnight. Having been
18 told for decades, in some cases centuries, that any
19 expression of faith, of spirituality other than that which
20 is closely defined by a particular church denomination
21 is not only inferior but it is pagan and wrong, will not
22 be reversed overnight.

23 But things are changing. It is

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1 happening slowly. It is happening after a great deal of
2 discussion and reflection by people, Aboriginal people.

3 It is greatly aided by the kind of forums which the various
4 churches are providing, allowing that to happen in our
5 own constituency. The two national Native convocations
6 have been watershed experiences. The fact that there has
7 been an Aboriginal Council for Native Ministries for a
8 number of years has made a significant difference in
9 allowing Native people in their own space within the church
10 to reflect on these things, to challenge these things,
11 and to seek to recover some things which are important
12 to them.

13 Another thing I have seen is, as this
14 recovery takes place at the local level, it breaks down
15 the barriers of denominationalism. When Aboriginal
16 people are able to express their faith in a free and natural
17 way as Christians, they find that the differences between
18 them, whether they are Anglican, or United Church, or Roman
19 Catholic are almost insignificant. From that side, from
20 the grassroots level, the barriers are tumbling down.
21 But it is happening as people discover and authenticate
22 their own spirituality and find Christ in that kind of
23 milieu.

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1 A closing comment I would make -- and
2 this is my understanding out of the Cree language. The
3 Cree word for salvation is a very interesting one. In
4 its root, it is the same word as life. The word for life,
5 pematchewewan (PH), is an inanimate word. Life, in a
6 sense, is an object. It is something you pick up when
7 you are born and lay down when you draw your last breath.

8 But you take the same word and express it in an animate
9 form. That is the way the Cree people in the area where
10 I worked talk about salvation. That is their word for
11 salvation, pematchewewan (PH). In that sense, out of that
12 spirituality, to be saved means to be really alive.

13 When people have that sense of being
14 Christian from their own roots, from their spirituality
15 expressed through their culture when they are really alive,
16 the barriers come down and they are able to relate to other
17 people.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Reverend
19 Lawrence, let me read some of the background material that
20 was provided to me by the Royal Commission when I agreed
21 to moderate this special consultation to get to some of
22 the fundamental questions that are underlined and
23 contained in this basic question we have before us today.

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1 Let me pick up on something, if I may, that you said
2 earlier. Perhaps the Commissioners would want to pick
3 up on this as well.

4 In response to Mr. Erasmus's question,
5 you said that it is going to take a very long time and
6 it is going to be a difficult process, perhaps, for many
7 Native people to come into the church because they had
8 been told for 200 years and perhaps longer that their
9 customs, their religion, their spirituality, was wrong.
10 But let's move it to the messenger, if I may.

11 Is the church now in a position itself,
12 after having delivered that message so thoroughly, so
13 strongly, and believing all along that it was delivering
14 the right message -- I think you understand what I am
15 saying. It wasn't ill-intentioned. It believed what it
16 was doing was right and it was right for everyone. But
17 that was the very strong message. Is the church now ready
18 to say to the Aboriginal people across Canada "We were
19 wrong"?

20 **CALEB LAWRENCE:** I think that is the
21 force of the apology offered by our Primate in the Second
22 National Native Convocation. He did not do it alone.
23 He did it at the request of the National Executive Council

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1 of our Church. Aboriginal people are represented there,
2 but it is overwhelmingly non-Native. He did it at the
3 request of Native people at that convocation. It's
4 building upon a whole series of decisions which our church
5 has made over the past two or three decades from the time,
6 particularly, of the Hendry Report and its
7 recommendations.

8 Our church is solidly committed to that.
9 It is not happening everywhere. But I can tell you, as
10 a Bishop in the Anglican Church, that if I was not committed
11 to that, I could not remain a minister in my denomination.
12 We are committed to that and we are moving towards it.

13 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
14 Bishop.

15 Are there questions from Commissioners?
16 Madam Wilson, please.

17 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** This
18 really follows on something that has just been said about
19 Native spirituality. The thing that has impressed me most
20 about Native spirituality is that it is God-centred. The
21 emphasis is on the Creator and we are all part of His created
22 creatures. I think that is a significant difference of
23 emphasis from my understanding of our Christian position

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1 which has a very heavy emphasis on self, hence, the
2 differentiation among denominations, each of whom claims
3 to have the truth.

4 I think this is a fundamental
5 difference. I am not quite sure what the churches need
6 to do in order to bring them closer to Native spirituality
7 with its emphasis on the Creator and therefore the
8 levelling effect that the emphasis on the Creator has on
9 all other aspects of creation, including ourselves. I
10 wonder whether at some point it is going to be necessary
11 for the churches to acknowledge that there is something
12 fundamentally wrong with schism, that it is probably
13 blasphemous and it may be necessary for us as churches
14 to reorient our thinking so that we are more in tune with
15 Native spirituality which puts the emphasis on the Creator
16 and really has to make us think about where we as the
17 churches got off the rails.

18 This is what has been coming through to
19 me as I have listened to Native people and participated
20 in their spiritual ceremonies. Somewhere or other I think
21 we must have got off the rails. The fact that we are
22 divided has introduced an unfortunate almost competitive
23 element, and an element of pride in our possession of the

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1 truth.

2 I am just wondering whether, if we are
3 serious about a new covenant or a new relationship between
4 the churches and Aboriginal people and their spirituality,
5 we don't have to face up to that at some point.

6 Thank you.

7 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
8 Justice Wilson.

9 Does anyone want to pick up and comment
10 on that? Reverend McKay, please.

11 **STANLEY MCKAY:** The depth of the racism
12 within this land, the level of fear of first nations
13 communities by the powerful and established, including
14 in the academic fields, to my mind is a great foe. I think
15 the churches, certainly, as you say, are in disarray.

16 The ecumenical movement in Canada is
17 basically not a presence. We have some coalitions where
18 we do some good work ecumenically, but basically, around
19 major issues of change in the country, the churches are
20 not present.

21 I think that we have brought our
22 disputes. I made reference early on to the two founding
23 nations concept in this land. We hold on to these European

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1 struggles that we bring to this land and whoever is a pawn
2 in the process matters not.

3 Let me put an even bleaker picture on
4 that. In the Hebrew community among the people of Israel
5 they speak of the holocaust. No one in North America,
6 even after 500 years, has talked about the great dying
7 of our people and the vulnerability of our people at the
8 time of settlement on the land when we were suffering
9 massive death. And the great dying of our people hasn't
10 ended.

11 I am afraid we have moved in some way
12 -- I don't want to be totally without hope, because I think
13 there is healing happening in our community at our
14 initiative. Most of it is happening in the lodges these
15 days, not in the churches. That is because we as churches
16 have continued to be divided, confusing in our message,
17 and certainly not learning what we have learned in global
18 centres.

19 We have known in our denomination for
20 more than 50 years that the peoples of Africa and India
21 had rights as peoples of those nations in the face of the
22 Christian gospel. But that wasn't even reflected in the
23 relationship in Canada.

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1 The despicable reality is that we in the
2 first nations communities pose a great fear to the reality
3 of Canadian consciousness, and we have not yet come to
4 grips with that. It is greatest within the lives of church
5 people because our faith has been built on sand in the
6 sense that we haven't acknowledged the reality.

7 For me, I pray one day that with the
8 teachings of the elders we will stop referring to the holy
9 land as over in Israel. We will finally, finally recognize
10 this sacred place as a holy land. In that context, these
11 churches will be liberated, our churches will be liberated.

12 The place at which we are becoming relevant is a place
13 of greatest suffering.

14 I learned this past week that the women's
15 prison in Kingston is going to be closed, apparently,
16 unless the present government changes the initial plans
17 to shut that place of horror down. I have also had a chance
18 this past week to visit the sacred healing place that women
19 are initiating in the Iganeath(PH) Reserve in
20 Saskatchewan.

21 I think there is some transition
22 happening, but much of it is at the initiative of our feeble
23 strength and our marginalization. We don't have the

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1 resources within the Aboriginal community, and the
2 churches continue to stand by and we talk theology and
3 separation. So I think your point is very well taken.

4 I work in a small theological school for
5 first nations women and men. It is a school where we look
6 at biblical teaching and we look at our own stories, our
7 own traditions and teachings. We try to work
8 ecumenically, and we cannot. We cannot work ecumenically
9 because the historic barriers that came from somewhere
10 else are here and denominationally we cannot support each
11 other in theological education.

12 So I am afraid that much of the healing
13 will happen outside the church context because the church
14 will take too long to identify the reality of the history
15 and the pain and the great dying of our people.

16 The other reality for me is that I spent
17 some years in the city of Winnipeg. I know that more than
18 half of the Aboriginal first nations people of Manitoba
19 live in that city now. There is almost basically no church
20 presence among my people. Really there is no presence.

21 Among the thousands of people suffering, unemployed,
22 marginalized, living in despair and despising their own
23 roots, the church is not present.

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1 I think that much of the healing
2 happening in the inner city of Winnipeg is happening by
3 the women who go to the medicine of our people and follow
4 the sacred way. For many of us the sanctity of life is
5 found only in our own lodges. That is not a bad thing,
6 but I hope the church will not stand by and talk about
7 suffering and dying in foreign lands without some
8 contextualization of the struggle here and the genocide
9 that is caught in that mix.

10 I think there is potential. I have
11 never given up on ecumenical possibility, but it would
12 seem that our energy has always been to be diversified.
13 What I said this morning was that as we sit here today
14 there are other groups of churches now moving into my
15 village or re-establishing the front lines of the conflict
16 with the traditional teaching. That is what worries me
17 most about the conversation. In the interim, what is
18 filling the gap are juvenile detention centres, social
19 services agencies, jails and prisons. That is where my
20 relatives are now, in those institutions. That is where
21 they are taking them up. The residential school is closed,
22 yes, but the society had other ways.

23 So, as we talk about the historic

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1 process, we as a church have not been prophetic about that
2 process. We are very pastoral with our membership and
3 with the process of where our churches are. I think the
4 challenges are quite real. I am hoping we can move within
5 the society.

6 I believe education is foundational.
7 I still believe in education of the young people. I talk
8 to 13 and 14-year-olds who are willing to look at
9 cross-cultural dialogue. But I don't hear many people
10 in the coffee shops where I stop in, who carry on their
11 racist conversations over a cup of coffee day after day -- I
12 don't hear many of them having any openness to first nations
13 people. So the challenge for us very real. It is hidden
14 in fear and, I think, a disguising of truth in terms of
15 the fact that we live in some sort of democracy that really
16 doesn't work for many people in this land.

17 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
18 Reverend McKay.

19 Before I move along, I want to see if
20 there are other members of the Commission who have
21 questions or a question on this particular round. If not,
22 we will look towards our break and then pick it up on
23 question 2 this afternoon.

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1 If there are no further questions, we
2 will take 15-minute break and then come back with the second
3 question which will deal with the origins of the
4 residential schools.

5 --- Short recess at 2:47 p.m.

6 --- Upon resuming at 3:10 p.m.

7 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I would kindly
8 ask everyone to come back to order. We will begin in just
9 a moment to take a look at the second question for
10 discussion.

11 Before I do that, there is one
12 housekeeping item that I should have raised earlier.
13 Forgive me that I did not, but I had forgotten earlier.
14 You will notice that the agenda inadvertently set aside
15 only a half hour for discussion on question 4. We will
16 take a look at question 4 from 4:30 until 5:30. We intend
17 to sit until 5:30 so that we will have a full hour to discuss
18 the third question this afternoon listed as question 4
19 in the agenda.

20 We will move to question 2. We have had
21 a pretty good preliminary discussion on the whole question
22 of residential schools this morning. In the briefs and
23 in the discussion we covered the first part of the question

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1 quite thoroughly, unless certain members of the Commission
2 have specific questions about the origin of the residential
3 schools. I think that part of the question, though, is
4 rather well covered in the presentations either written
5 or verbal.

6 But the impact on the relationship today
7 between the Aboriginal people and the churches of the
8 residential schools is a question that surely must be
9 discussed. We touched on some of it this morning. It
10 is an area that will lead to a great number of questions
11 from members of the Commission.

12 If I may, I propose to do more or less
13 what I did in the last hour. But since we have had a fairly
14 good discussion on this earlier this morning, I again will
15 start with the United and Presbyterian churches and let
16 them pick up because I think the Conference of Bishops
17 and the Anglican Church had a crack at this this morning
18 with some questions.

19 Maybe I could start with your group,
20 Reverend Hodgson, and get a preliminary statement on what
21 you see as the impact on the relationship today between
22 the Aboriginal people and the churches.

23 **RAY HODGSON:** In terms of the impacts

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1 on relationships today of the experiences that both church
2 staff and Aboriginal peoples had in the residential school
3 situation, one of the real problems within denominations
4 is the high level of denial concerning what took place.

5 What this really means is that a lot of those relationships
6 are clouded. It means that there is a lot of resistance
7 to uncovering the history. It means that we as a
8 denomination really need to look very carefully and do
9 some documentation.

10 One of the problems that I have noticed
11 in terms of the constituency and Aboriginal peoples is
12 that there is a real dissonance in terms of how one
13 communicates experience. A lot of people have said to
14 me that they want to hear the stories, but they want to
15 hear the stories in terms of affidavits and partly getting
16 into legal process. Aboriginal people have told me that
17 they want to tell their stories the way that they need
18 to tell their stories and then to have the church
19 acknowledge that the church has heard their stories.

20 It is not clear to me how we overcome
21 that dissonance. We have to do that in order to reach
22 into some of the denial that is going on within the
23 denominations.

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1 In terms of the residential school
2 impact, I think in many ways it is easy for people to say
3 "There and there and there there was abuse. There was
4 impact. There was destruction of society and culture and,
5 yes, it was intergenerational. But while it was there
6 and there and there, was it here?"

7 For us that is a prime educational task.
8 In terms of what we have to do, I hope that the Royal
9 Commission is going to help us in that task. I do know
10 that you have had folks researching the residential school
11 situation. I hope that that documentation is available
12 to those of us who work for justice within the individual
13 denominations so that we can begin to look at this
14 deniability which is a barrier that must be overcome, has
15 to be overcome.

16 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
17 Reverend Hodgson.

18 Would you introduce yourself, please.

19 **MS LORRAINE MAJOR, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
20 **IN CANADA:** My name is Lorraine Major. (Native language
21 -- no translation) I am giving you my Indian name.

22 When I knew I would be attending this
23 meeting, I had very mixed feelings. I went to a

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1 residential school. I had a very negative experience,
2 very unpleasant. It seems that I am always afraid to talk
3 and speak because I get very emotional. I get up-tight
4 and I cry. I hope this doesn't happen. I am going to
5 be brief.

6 I hated the residential school. Today
7 I work for the church. I have heard some stories. Each
8 time I hear a story, I share all your experiences. It
9 is just like I am back at school. It is like awakening
10 and that pain lives through me again. But the more I talk
11 about it, the less the pain gets.

12 My goal one of these days is to help my
13 people go through the healing process. Most of my people
14 I have talked to, there is so much anger and bitterness.
15 When I hear them, I myself get like that. I question
16 why I am working here. Then when people ask me "Why do
17 you work here", deep down I want to carry the message about
18 Jesus Christ. I want to be strong. I have to think
19 positive. I have to forgive the past that has happened
20 to me or what I saw. I will never forget 100 per cent,
21 because there was so much destruction and pain.

22 For me I think prayer helps, morning and
23 bedtime. The main thing for me is to forgive. I can't

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1 be angry forever. I respect my people when they practice
2 their own spirituality. I have to accept them. I can't
3 be critical of them. That is their way that was given
4 to them.

5 Thank you. Megwetch.

6 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Ms
7 Major.

8 I think the Commission in some of its
9 past hearings has left a message this morning that it has
10 heard from a great number of people, former residents of
11 residential schools across the country who spoke about
12 their individual pain, about their experiences, and about
13 a whole host of negative things in their lives and in the
14 lives of their families and even generations after that
15 that have flowed out of that.

16 I think we heard quite a bit of that this
17 morning from Mr. Folster and again from the previous
18 speaker. It may be useful for the discussion if we could
19 get the churches themselves to talk a bit about the impact
20 on the churches of the experience of the residential
21 schools and the impact of what we are now beginning to
22 hear and have only heard, perhaps, for the last three or
23 four years about the experiences in the residential

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1 schools.

2 I am wondering and, I am sure, are
3 others: Have we so far heard and seen only the tip of
4 the iceberg? Can you begin all of the healing that people
5 have said have to take place until it is all out there
6 and laid bare? If so, how do you go about doing that?

7 Who wants to start with all of that?
8 Dianne Cooper?

9 **DIANNE COOPER:** I don't know if I want
10 to answer that question or not.

11 I am a little bit uncomfortable with your
12 question, seeming to separate some of the people who have
13 spoken from the churches, because we are not separate in
14 this.

15 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** No, it was
16 certainly not intended to.

17 **DIANNE COOPER:** I realize the
18 differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
19 within the churches, but all who have spoken to you today
20 are people of the church and are struggling with it in
21 different ways, some with grief because of their experience
22 as students in the schools and some of us with guilt as
23 part of the culture that ran the schools.

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1 In one sense we are together, and in
2 another sense we are coming at it from different
3 directions.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I appreciate
5 your point. There was certainly no intention to separate
6 people. But we have heard the individual impact and we
7 haven't heard the institutional impact. That is where
8 I am coming from.

9 **DIANNE COOPER:** I think the
10 institutional impact for us, as was commented earlier,
11 is to live up in some ways to the apology and to try to
12 figure out what that means. For many of us non-Native
13 people in the United Church, that means an extended period
14 of listening and of being willing to bear some of the pain
15 without coming too quickly to solutions. Some of the
16 Native groups that our committee has met with have said
17 "Don't try to fix it too quickly because you won't know
18 what you're doing. You have to be willing to bear the
19 pain for a while."

20 That is one of the difficult things for
21 us. Seeing some of this, we just want to fix it right
22 now, and the message is we can't that quickly. That would
23 be one thing that I would comment from a United Church

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1 perspective.

2 The other small thing is that we need
3 to work very seriously at the education task particularly
4 among the non-Native part of the United Church of Canada
5 in terms of helping people hear what they do not want to
6 hear because it creates feelings of guilt.

7 Those are two things for us.

8 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Mrs.
9 Cooper.

10 Sister Solomon, please.

11 **EVA SOLOMON:** I would like to make two
12 comments, one in relation to anger, and one in terms of
13 the impact of what is happening to significant numbers
14 of members of the church.

15 From my own experience living as a
16 religious, I have sat through gatherings where I have
17 experienced my own father in tremendous anger and rage
18 saying "You missionaries" and going on with the things
19 that he was angry about. I would sit there and ask "What
20 did I do as a missionary? What did I do to make him so
21 angry?" This is my father, the one who has given me what
22 I am.

23 Then I came to realize that it was not

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1 me as an individual he was angry at. It was the whole
2 system and it was not just the system of the church. It
3 was the whole system that destroys our people, the
4 genocide. I realized also that that anger has to come
5 out. Anger in itself is a gift from the Creator that helps
6 us to sustain life. When we can allow that anger to be
7 spoken, to be heard, then and only then can we begin to
8 heal.

9 One of the impacts of what is happening
10 now is that there are many people in the institutional
11 churches who live their lives in dedication and they
12 themselves believed that what they were doing was the very
13 best they could do. They themselves may not have been
14 abusers in any way. They fought the government policies.
15 They did everything they could to change things. And
16 yet they feel like they are being painted with the same
17 brush. They are asking "What was my life for? I gave
18 my whole life believing that I was helping someone and
19 I did everything I could, and now I am condemned."

20 When I speak of the schools, we also have
21 to hear that side of the story. There must be balance.
22 It can't only be on one side. Living in balance is another
23 of our sacred values.

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1 Thank you.

2 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
3 Sister Solomon.

4 Bishop Goudreault, please.

5 **HENRI GOUDREULT:** Is it possible to ask
6 the Commission how many former principals or former
7 directors of those residential schools or former teachers
8 appeared before the Commission? Just a global figure.

9 Did you hear only from former students,
10 or did others come to say what they lived when they were
11 there?

12 Am I out of order by asking this
13 question?

14 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** No, Bishop, I
15 don't think you would be out of order at all in asking
16 the question. I don't have the answer for you. Perhaps
17 Mr. Erasmus could. I am sure if he doesn't have it, he
18 will find.

19 Mr. Erasmus?

20 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** We travelled
21 in three teams most of the time. So we didn't necessarily
22 all hear exactly the same thing.

23 In the hearings that I headed up we never

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1 had an opportunity to hear from somebody that ran a
2 residential school or was a staff person. The hearings
3 could be open. Anyone who wanted to make presentations
4 to us would come forth. No one came.

5 I was just consulting with René Dussault
6 to see whether or not, of the hearings he conducted, he
7 knew of anyone.

8 We may have. It's an interesting point.
9 It would be worth knowing. I don't know if any of the
10 other Commissioners heard it. I don't believe so.

11 **HENRI GOUDREAU:** Thank you.

12 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Since I have
13 the microphone, perhaps I could ask a question.

14 I was brought up in a Catholic school.
15 I was baptized the very day I was born. They didn't want
16 me to get away.

17 One of the things I never could
18 understand about Christianity was what it meant to be a
19 missionary. I am a reasonably aggressive person and I
20 have a big enough ego to think that I know enough things
21 that I could go out and tell other people some things,
22 but I have never, ever been able to understand being a
23 missionary because, I guess, I am looking at it from the

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1 traditions of the Dene. For us to go out and to conquer
2 another people and to turn them into Dene just doesn't
3 make any sense.

4 That kind of approach to the
5 world -- particularly if you are going to put yourself
6 between that human being and the Creator and say "I know
7 the right way for you to be talking to the Creator". I
8 just can't fathom that kind of thinking and approach to
9 the world, particularly because Aboriginal people didn't
10 really put human beings between someone and their Creator
11 as a messenger or communicator. We were all taught that
12 the first responsibility you have is to assume control
13 of your essence, your soul. So to me I just do not
14 comprehend being a missionary. I can't understand it.
15 I have never been able to understand it.

16 What I can't understand is how it is
17 still going on today. We can talk about what it was like
18 100 years ago, 50 years ago, and even up until the late
19 sixties when the residential schools were going on and
20 all the rest of it. But I can go back to Denedeh today
21 and, as was mentioned by Stan McKay, there is a second
22 wave of missionaries coming amongst us to divide us even
23 further now. It wasn't good enough that we were all

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1 Anglicans or -- we might have had two major Christian
2 churches, 90 per cent were Catholic, 10 per cent were
3 Anglicans. Now we have the Baptists or somebody else
4 coming in amongst us to divide us even further. They all
5 say they have this major message. There is one Creator
6 and there are so many ways to tell the story.

7 I just don't understand this concept of
8 being a missionary. If somebody could shed some light
9 on that for me, you would be doing me a great service because
10 I have gone through a long time in my life that I have
11 never been able to comprehend it.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** We have a couple
13 of people who are ready. Could you identify yourself,
14 please.

15 **MS TAMIKO CORBETT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,**
16 **WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY, PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA:**

17 My name is Tamiko Corbett. I can't say that I have
18 experienced the Aboriginal peoples' oppression. However,
19 I come at the whole question of missionaries from an
20 entirely different point of view.

21 I grew up with a real inferiority
22 complex. As I was growing up, I used to wonder why I was
23 born Japanese in Canada, as you know what happened during

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1 the war and afterwards. However, it was through hearing
2 the gospel that I learned that I was worth just as much
3 as anybody else. Therefore, the gospel came to me as good
4 news. So I have been a missionary. I guess I still am,
5 in a sense, not in an imperialistic way, but to share the
6 good news that all of us are brothers and sisters in Christ
7 and therefore to God our Creator.

8 Throughout the ages and, in particular,
9 in the ethnocentric European theology, people have
10 forgotten that the good news of Christ, the treasure, has
11 been in earthen vessels. I think no matter how good we
12 have been as missionaries or ministers or whatever you
13 might say, we are always tainted by our humanity which
14 is limited. Therefore, unfortunately, in the history of
15 the churches with the Aboriginal peoples, you have seen
16 the brokenness of the vessels.

17 I don't know whether that helps at all,
18 but I am just sharing my experience of the good news.

19 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Ms
20 Corbett.

21 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** That is very
22 useful. Maybe I could ask a supplementary question. I
23 have tried understanding it before. I understood it to

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1 the point where there was good news to share and you were
2 told to share the good news. But were you told to colonize
3 and pour this down people's throats whether they want it
4 or not?

5 If you are an enlightened person who is
6 happy and you have a good message, does it mean that you
7 have to destroy what's there and replace it with something?

8 I am not sure that you would necessarily have to read
9 the scriptures and the gospel to be so aggressive and to
10 be destructive of communities as the Christian churches
11 were in the first round and as they are going to be in
12 the second round, and perhaps the third round and a fourth.

13 How many times do you have bring the good word around?

14 I don't understand, if it is supposed
15 to be a good message, why it also has aggression with it?

16 That is the part I don't understand. I can understand
17 people saying "We have a wonderful story to tell and any
18 time anybody wants us to tell it to them, come and ask
19 for it and we will be more than willing. We want everyone
20 to know we have something wonderful and tell", and then
21 to sit and wait.

22 The part I don't understand is to knock
23 on the door of not one home but every home and to feel

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1 that until you have converted everybody that your job
2 wasn't done. That's the part I don't understand.

3 **TAMIKO CORBETT:** I don't understand
4 that either.

5 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Let me go, if
6 I may, to Sister Eva Solomon.

7 **EVA SOLOMON:** I think you have touched
8 on something very important when you ask about it in that
9 way because there is a very big distinction between a
10 missionary and a colonizer. I think that Bishop de Roo
11 spoke earlier today on the whole aspect of the superiority
12 of the European peoples in coming to this land as
13 colonizers. Those missionaries were part of that same
14 cultural background and they believed that.

15 When I look at my life as a person and
16 see myself as a missionary, I was called and see myself
17 as being called through an experience of violence in my
18 own people and saying "I am called to help my people to
19 recognize the beauty, the goodness and the dignity that
20 is within them", to tell them that they will show the face
21 of the Creator in a way that no one else can, and that
22 because of that they are sacred peoples. That is what
23 missionary means to me. That isn't imposing something

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1 more. That is helping them to find what is already there
2 within them, from the God who dwells within them.

3 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Ms
4 Solomon.

5 There was considerable discussion this
6 morning. Perhaps I will offer this. I think it perhaps
7 follows directly from where Mr. Erasmus was going, and
8 in your response.

9 There was considerable discussion this
10 morning and the churches have said in their written
11 submissions that they were merely carrying out the policies
12 of the federal government.

13 Does someone want to elaborate on that?
14 There is, from what we have just heard, perhaps some
15 contradiction in all of that. What is God's work and what
16 is the government's work? Should the church be doing
17 the government's work, or should it be doing God's work?

18 Mr. Kelly, please.

19 **GERRY KELLY, CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF**
20 **CATHOLIC BISHOPS:** My name is Gerry Kelly. I am with the
21 National Catholic Working Group on Native Residential
22 Schools.

23 I think it is important to say very

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1 clearly that we were not merely in some disinterested or
2 some instrumentalist way carrying out a policy that we
3 were not implicated in. I think we have to recognize that.

4 Residential schools were integrated
5 into the social policy of Canada and were integrated in
6 the 19th century. None of the Christian churches can claim
7 that they had an analysis or a social analysis that was
8 any better than the three components that underlay the
9 social policy in Canada in the 19th century: The
10 fundamental presupposition that the Native people in
11 Canada were disappearing as a race; the fundamental
12 presupposition that Canada as a nation had a right to go
13 from sea to sea; and the evolutionary understanding that
14 people move from a hunter and gathering society into an
15 agricultural society, a kind of social Darwinism. Those
16 three pieces of social analysis, if you will, were within
17 the churches as well as within the government.

18 With that same understanding, churches
19 began schools. Churches began schools for various
20 reasons. But certain policies, for example, the language
21 policy, would never have been the policy of a primarily
22 French Catholic clergy. Certain policies -- in our case,
23 I am referring to certain policies that became the

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1 foundation of the residential school system -- were
2 established by commissions such as the Bagot Commission
3 in 1842, that established the residential schools and what
4 their purpose was.

5 The Christian churches need to not only
6 be accountable for the fact that we were uncritical and
7 shared those same assumptions. We have to be accountable
8 for the fact that it was not until well into the 20th century
9 that we began to push back against those fundamental
10 understandings. It wasn't until we stood in solidarity
11 with Native people after the announcement of the white
12 paper that we realized that it was no longer going to be
13 part of our implicit policy that the Native people were
14 disappearing in this land as a people.

15 I don't believe that people are saying
16 that in any way we were an innocent kind of instrument
17 of the government. But we were saying that in terms of
18 the policies that got directed, the administration of the
19 schools, the supervision of the policy, that has to be
20 clearly stated that that did come from the federal
21 government with the support of the people of Canada. That
22 doesn't make us innocent at all.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** What was it

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1 about 1969 that brought about the change in attitude?
2 Was it the white paper itself?

3 **GERRY KELLY:** I think the white paper
4 became a very critical moment where we recognized and could
5 understand clearly, but began to understand something
6 about collective and individual rights. We began to
7 recognize.

8 But 1969 was, I think, a coalescing
9 moment of a number of things that were happening in the
10 latter part of the 20th century. When you asked the
11 question "what is the impact", I think the impact of
12 residential schools for churches is such that one would
13 hope that we will never move with such uncritical
14 assumptions of national policy. One would hope that we
15 would never accept implicitly or explicitly that a group
16 of people are destined to live in the margins of the
17 dominant society.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** That is what I
19 was going to ask you. I don't want to forget or leave
20 out the enormous contribution that many very well
21 intentioned and good people made along the line, all the
22 way along to the residential school. Not all schools were
23 bad. Certainly not all of the structures or all of the

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1 people who were in them caused hardship. There were a
2 lot of positive things that were laid. Sometimes one
3 worries that that is going to be overshadowed by the
4 negative impacts that we talked about in such a gathering
5 as this.

6 But setting that aside for the moment,
7 you said you hoped never again would a church be swept
8 up in the national policies to allow happen what happened.

9 But do you have any idea why it took so long? Was it
10 because the Aboriginal people in 1969 reacted first to
11 the white paper and they had such a negative reaction to
12 it?

13 **GERRY KELLY:** Oh, yes. I don't believe
14 there was any inspiration. The lead was definitely from
15 the Aboriginal people in Canada. I think that trying to
16 be true to that inspiration over the last number of years
17 has allowed us to more clearly understand what was in the
18 beginning an impulse in the direction, I believe, of
19 justice.

20 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** It is clear in
21 all of the testimony from all of the churches that the
22 signs were there for a very long time, the signs of
23 suffering, so many children that ran away from the schools,

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1 the difficulty the parents had that all of you have
2 submitted.

3 That is why I ask the question why it
4 took so long. What was the turning point?

5 Bishop Goudreault, please.

6 **HENRI GOUDREULT:** If we wanted to give
7 some sort of formal education to the Natives, what were
8 the alternatives? To do my high school I had to live in
9 a residential school too. So, what were the alternatives
10 if we wanted to give education to the people?

11 I want to add that we had in the Catholic
12 Church a body called the Indian Escom(PH). It was a body
13 having relationship with the government and with the
14 principals of schools. Every year they had gatherings
15 and were studying the negative and positive effects of
16 the system and were making recommendations to the
17 government.

18 I think that the decision that was taken
19 in 1969 to close the schools also comes from the analysis
20 of that body. All those archives are here in Ottawa.

21 I find the question raised by Mr. Erasmus
22 very interesting. I don't want to be malicious, but I
23 think that whenever you had very great deep convictions,

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1 you became a missionary too, as I did. In other words,
2 when we have values and we think that those values are
3 to be shared by other people, we want to share them. You
4 are right in saying that it must not be imposed. I agree
5 that in many instances the style and the power of the
6 churches were not in compliance with the gospel in that
7 sense, in the term of style.

8 I wish to add that in Canada I think that
9 something happened that did not happen in Africa. The
10 Nigerians who became Christians did not lose their culture.
11 The Basotos in Lesoto did not lose their culture because
12 they were the majority.

13 There is another thing here. Have we
14 distinguished between the effects of the Native accepting
15 modernization and the effect of the residential schools
16 and the religion? When people accept modernization,
17 people accept lots of changes in their culture and in their
18 ways of looking at things. So these have to be studied
19 too.

20 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** We have a point
21 over here and then I am going to turn to Mr. Dussault for
22 some questions.

23 Could you identify yourself, please.

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1 **JOHN SIEBERT, PROGRAM OFFICER, HUMAN**
2 **RIGHTS AND ABORIGINAL JUSTICE, UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA:**

3 My name is John Siebert. I am a staff person with the
4 United Church working on some of these questions.

5 I think we have to recognize a period
6 in history where we had a particular convergence of
7 especially churches working in conjunction with the
8 government and with society at large. I don't think in
9 English Canada, in which the United Church is primarily
10 placed, has ever officially had a state church. But there
11 has been a de facto period in time where people were part
12 of communities of faith virtually by being born into them.

13 I think that kind of sway in society corresponds with
14 the period of residential schools.

15 In the United Church in its Methodist
16 and other forebears, there was a strategy in schooling
17 for those who were marginalized in society before public
18 schooling existed to allow people to move into a different
19 strata to participate in society. It was a positive
20 intention that, over time, went very badly awry and great
21 evils came from it. There were questions -- and these
22 go back at least as far as I have seen in the archives
23 of '47 -- about why residential schools, why note day

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1 schools on reserves, et cetera. As far as I know, the
2 final kick at the can for the churches to get out in '69
3 was that the teachers in residential schools were
4 unionizing under CUPE. In fact, they were government
5 employees and the churches were not satisfied -- I must
6 blush a little bit -- to have a union running their
7 employees. So they are a convergence of historical
8 factors.

9 I think one of the tragedies that we have
10 to face very squarely today is that now we are being asked
11 to respond as churches historically involved with
12 Aboriginal peoples to the pain and the legacy of
13 residential schools who we no longer have even what was
14 some sort of de facto pre-eminence in the moral and ethical
15 shaping of our society. Influence, yes. I think we are
16 committed all around this table to using it to respond
17 to a legacy. But I am afraid the government doesn't quite
18 move to the tune that we want to set.

19 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

20 Mr. Dussault, please.

21 **CO-CHAIR RENÉ DUSSAULT:** Thank you. I
22 would like to go back to what was said at the outset of
23 this session. I think it was the representative of the

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1 Presbyterian Church who said that there was still denial
2 of what happened for many reasons, some of them being that
3 people want to hear things in the sense of affidavits.

4 On the other hand, we have heard from
5 the other side that many people have given genuinely their
6 life, a contribution to their people who feel that they
7 lost their life and they are condemned.

8 We heard a lot about the anger that is
9 still there. We heard that all over the country during
10 our hearings, not only today.

11 At the end of the day we are left with
12 a very crucial question: What should be done to cross
13 over that fence of anger to move toward positive building
14 together, also of this denial? We are kind of frozen
15 between denial and anger. Obviously it is a major concern
16 for the Commission to find a way to move forward and forge
17 ahead.

18 I don't want to jump over the schedule
19 of our consultation, but it is pretty much in the back
20 of our mind. I don't think we can just move to say that
21 now governments have to be in charge of the solutions.

22 I understand what was said a minute ago
23 by Mr. Siebert. But there has to be a link between the

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1 past and the future. We can't just, as was said many times,
2 not hear what we don't want to hear -- for the
3 non-Aboriginal side; there has to be things heard. But
4 on the other hand, it has to be channelled in a positive
5 way. That is certainly the challenge to all of us, to
6 find the mechanism to do it and the weight to do it.

7 From what I heard within the churches,
8 I understand that there is still quite a bit of difference
9 in points of view on the trade-off between integrating
10 the Native cultures and being a Christian and what it means,
11 and it creates insecurity from both sides.

12 I just would like to finish by saying
13 that we would really like to focus on what should be done
14 to prevent a denial and also to enable this anger to
15 transfer into a dynamic that will be positive and building
16 together.

17 I suspect the fact that it struck us --
18 I was struck by the fact that we never heard from any
19 administration of the schools. We heard a lot from the
20 students or people who were within the schools and from
21 the churches. Many, many presentations were made by the
22 various churches. But those who were really in charge
23 of specific school didn't come to the Commission's hearing.

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1 It might be because they felt that they were situated
2 in a delicate situation to come up in public and they could
3 be challenged. But there is a hole here in some ways.

4 I can't help thinking that there might
5 be a lot of discussion on a higher level, but it has to
6 go a few levels down to really achieve what has to be
7 achieved in terms of putting the anger -- what is needed
8 from both sides; from one side to go over the anger, and
9 from the other side to come to terms with what has happened
10 and try to build some future together. That is a major
11 challenge.

12 I know everybody knows that and it is
13 easier to speak about it than to come up with solutions,
14 but I think it would be very important for the Commission
15 to hear about the solutions for the future in order to
16 achieve that.

17 Thank you.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
19 Justice Dussault.

20 We have several takers right off the bat
21 to that. I will begin with Bishop Exner.

22 **ADAM EXNER:** My own conviction is -- and
23 this is based on experience -- I think that there is a

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1 lot to be said for bringing together people who were
2 students in residential schools, people who were teachers
3 in residential schools, bringing them together.

4 I have had that experience a number of
5 times in the area of Vancouver. It is a very painful
6 experience for everyone concerned. A tremendous amount
7 of anger and pain comes out. But in the end there is also
8 an experience of peace, an experience of reconciliation,
9 and an experience of better understanding and mutual
10 acceptance that comes out of this experience.

11 I think that these kind of local efforts
12 can be and should be supported by higher levels. This
13 is what our national working group is trying to do within
14 our own church. But I think that the action really has
15 to take place at a grassroots level by bringing together
16 both the students and the teachers and the administrators
17 and staff of residential schools. It is a very, very
18 effective process.

19 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

20 **MS SHIRLEY HARDING, SPECIAL ASSISTANT**
21 **TO THE PRIMATE ON RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS, ANGLICAN CHURCH**
22 **OF CANADA:** My name is Shirley Harding. I am one of the
23 staff to the working group on residential schools for the

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1 Anglican Church.

2 For the past year and a half, we have
3 been engaged in an intentional process of listening. That
4 process has been very painful. I speak as a non-Native
5 person who went representing a church who did all those
6 things you heard about, and as a person who is still
7 mystified to this day about how -- you asked earlier about
8 that. I don't know how we could ever, ever have done what
9 we did.

10 So we are living in a time of chaos and
11 broken relationships, and I think we have to realize that
12 and not try and fix it up. It is going to take a long
13 time for the process of healing. I know that I woke up
14 the day after the Primate made his apology on behalf of
15 the Anglican Church of Canada feeling far more responsible
16 than I ever felt before. If we do not carry through with
17 what we said we would do, we have once yet again violated
18 and betrayed the people we say we want to have a
19 relationship with, a new relationship with.

20 So the way ahead is not clear. The way
21 ahead is not yet identified. It is to be lived out. Stan
22 talked about living out the apology. That is where we
23 are. That will mean different things for different

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1 people. Yes, it will mean bringing people together. Yes,
2 it will mean the church being in a listening posture
3 empowering Native people to be our teachers and for us
4 to give up that power.

5 Those are all words that may sound easy,
6 but aren't easy, in a structure that is used to having
7 power and power over people. So we have a long way to
8 go.

9 I have hope. What I have learned in the
10 last year and a half from the Native people is their
11 incredible love, forgiveness, and their wanting to be in
12 relationship. If we can walk gently, if we can be honest,
13 if we can be with in the spirit of healing, I think that
14 there will be a new day. I look for us to work together
15 as churches on that. And I look for the Commission's
16 report as to some ways that that may be helpful to us too.

17 I thank you for listening.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Ms
19 Harding.

20 Reverend Smith, please.

21 **ROBERT SMITH:** I want to pick up on what
22 I understood to be the import of Mr. Justice Dussault's
23 query and relate it to something that was said to me at

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1 the break.

2 It seemed to me, sir, that you were
3 beginning to grope for some kind of answer or solution
4 or some result from this gathering other than simply the
5 sharing of our papers. An Aboriginal person during the
6 break -- not a member of any of delegations -- said that
7 he would begin to be convinced about the seriousness of
8 our approach to this question if he heard, in addition
9 to our words of apology, that we were prepared to commit
10 significant resources to the healing.

11 We are in a bit of a tricky position here.
12 I am wondering, would there be value in -- certainly I
13 will ask the question: Is there some statement that the
14 representatives of the four historic mission churches
15 might make having come here today -- it is probably not
16 possible for us to speak for our churches in an official
17 way. But is there some statement that we could make that
18 would pick up the apologies that have been made formally
19 by the Primate of the Anglican Church or by the General
20 Council of the United Church or by the oblates, or by
21 whoever, as a way of increasing public knowledge of the
22 churches' repentance, recognizing that that statement
23 means very little unless we can find some way to contribute

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1 in more tangible ways to the healing.

2 If there is some value in that, I think
3 there would be some of us who would be prepared to work
4 on such a statement.

5 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Mr. Erasmus?

6 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I would
7 encourage you to share that with the rest of the churches.
8 It seems to me it would be extremely useful for that to
9 occur. If it could occur here in the next day and a half,
10 it would be very useful. I understand what you are saying.

11 It might not be official statements, but from the
12 representatives here I think it would assist.

13 I don't know if the churches have done
14 it together before. I have read that you each
15 individually, it seemed, did that at different times.
16 It would be very interesting for the churches collectively
17 to make a statement. It might reach a broader audience.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Are there other
19 questions from Commissioners?

20 Commissioner Wilson?

21 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** It is not
22 really a question. It is just a response to what has just
23 been said.

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1 I think it would be tremendous if the
2 churches could make some kind of ecumenical statement in
3 this Year of Indigenous Peoples.

4 **JOHN SIEBERT:** I think there is at least
5 an implicit notion running through at least some of the
6 churches here that we do want to find a mechanism and a
7 way of dialoguing more broadly at a national level.

8 We have been at various points in each
9 of our church processes, diocesan conferences, what have
10 you, speaking with certain groups of Aboriginal peoples.

11 It is not clear to me -- and I would certainly be blessed
12 if it was clear to somebody else and they could speak --
13 who we speak to and how. Not that we decide this in the
14 next day and a half, but how do we begin a process where
15 healing in a genuine conversation begins happening over
16 a five, ten, fifteen, twenty-year period?

17 We didn't walk into residential schools
18 in a year and a half. We are not going to come out with
19 solutions in a day and a half. But where do we get on
20 that path?

21 Also, if we are going to begin speaking
22 about resources, how is it that we as churches can
23 genuinely, without walking away from our own

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1 responsibility, bring the federal government into this
2 conversation in a good way? I need light on that too.
3 I think we all do.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Mr. Erasmus,
5 please.

6 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** In the
7 seventies there used to be a process called the Indian
8 Ecumenical Conference where a lot of churches participated
9 in Morley, Alberta. What was really interesting about
10 those events was that it was community people that were
11 interested first in re-finding out what it meant to be
12 a Dene or Nishnabe or Nishka or whatever. We would have
13 the opportunity to sit and talk with elders from their
14 own people. What was also interesting was that there was
15 a great sharing from all the Christian churches that had
16 been participating with Aboriginal people in their
17 communities for quite some time.

18 There was quite a growth amongst the
19 participants, it seemed to me. There are probably people
20 around the table here who were involved in that. It was
21 not a forum of formal leadership coming together. It was
22 a forum where interested people came. There was all kinds
23 of different types of ceremonies and services. People

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1 would be able to participate in traditional Aboriginal
2 ceremonies and sacred events. Then they would also be
3 involved in a joint ecumenical/Aboriginal service,
4 ecumenical services between different Christian
5 denominations. Then they would go back to learning and
6 sharing. There would be different kinds of events. There
7 would be plenary sessions, sessions between elders and
8 young people.

9 When that ended, we lost a forum where
10 people could come together like that. The organizers of
11 that movement thought that the essential process had more
12 or less ended its usefulness in that it was now time to
13 have regional events like it. But when the central
14 leadership went its way -- in some places it picked it
15 up, obviously, as we heard different things going on.

16 It seems to me that we may need another
17 event. It doesn't have to be Morley, but certainly that
18 was a beautiful site. I think we need another event like
19 that and similar type of events where churches and
20 Aboriginal people come together, and elders, traditional
21 people. It seems to me the kind of healing that needs
22 to occur -- and we were just talking about it here.

23 Somebody asked about whether or not there ever was a time

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1 when people that ran residential schools were in the same
2 place with their students. That kind of discussion, it
3 would seem to me, would also be very useful.

4 I would suggest that that be considered.
5 One of the reasons why it didn't restart is that -- a
6 year or so ago there was an effort to get it going again,
7 but the kind of resources and commitment was just not there
8 to get the message out to people. But there is interest
9 in the Aboriginal community that I am aware of in doing
10 something similar to that.

11 If in fact you could bring an interest
12 in the Christian churches with the Aboriginal people, you
13 could have a forum. You might sit down and talk about
14 a proper forum. Maybe what was there before was good for
15 the sixties, seventies and early eighties. Maybe we're
16 talking about something else now. But certainly a lot
17 of what occurred would be very useful now.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Bishop
19 Goudreault, please.

20 I would start asking people now to keep
21 their comments as brief as they can. I think we have
22 allowed everyone to express their views. I will get a
23 quick comments from Bishop Goudreault and then from Ms

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1 Cooper, and then a question from Mr. Meekison.

2 **HENRI GOUDREULT:** I will speak French,
3 if possible. Vous avez certainement entendu parler du forum
4 paritaire autochtone québécois. Je pense que c'est un
5 organisme qui a présenté ses documents ici.

6 Le forum paritaire autochtone
7 québécois, qui consiste en un groupe de réflexion composé
8 de porte-parole et de personnes responsables
9 d'organisations autochtones et non-autochtones.

10 Le forum était ouvert à une vingtaine
11 de personnes à la fois. Il a tenu jusqu'ici 12 rencontres
12 et la semaine prochaine le forum est élargi à une centaine
13 de personnes. Je crois que vous avez là un organisme dans
14 la ligne de ce que M. Georges Erasmus vient de souhaiter.

15 Merci.

16 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
17 Bishop Goudreault.

18 Ms Cooper, please.

19 **DIANNE COOPER:** I have two quick
20 comments.

21 I would just like to record that in our
22 schools committee the concept of a joint meeting of
23 teachers and students is a very mixed one. I would just

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1 like to make sure that that isn't seen as the solution.
2 I think it is one on the list. But there are numbers
3 of students who have no desire to do that. I would be
4 very reluctant to do anything that suggested that that
5 is the answer. I just want to record that from our
6 committee experience.

7 The other thing that strikes me that we
8 probably need to think about -- and this would be in
9 response to the questions about the aggressive
10 missionaries and the messages of which Laverne Jacobs was
11 speaking. Some of us need to think seriously about our
12 responsibility to speak loudly and clearly to Christian
13 brothers and sisters whose behaviours we believe are
14 harmful. We have been reluctant to do that, and I think
15 there is a challenge today in front of us to do that.

16 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Ms
17 Cooper.

18 Commissioner Meekison, please.

19 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** Thank
20 you, Whit.

21 What I want to make is more of a comment
22 and a cautionary note. When I read the briefs, something
23 struck me both in terms of a number of the comments and

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1 in terms of the number of different recommendations that
2 have been made. I was struck by the number of references
3 to "the north". As we know, the north can have a number
4 of meanings, north of 60, the northern part of the
5 provinces. Or another concept is something that is away.
6 It's away from where I am, but it is there. It is also
7 part of the mystique of Canada. We are a northern people,
8 and this is something that has grabbed the consciousness
9 of the citizenry.

10 In listening to some of the comments
11 throughout the day, I was recalling as a child growing
12 up in Vancouver, going to church and taking collection
13 to the church to support the northern missions. I was
14 struck by the idea that these northern missions were also
15 lumped together administratively with the foreign missions
16 which, as said earlier, does give a very clear message.

17 But something else that struck me today
18 -- and I am going back to some hearings we had last week.

19 This goes to the essence of the second question, and that
20 is the impact. While the impact and many of the activities
21 may have been in the north or away, the reality is that
22 the impact is something that is being felt throughout the
23 entirety of Canadian society and, in particular -- and

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1 this goes back to what Mr. McKay said earlier -- the
2 migration to the cities. This is something, in looking
3 at the briefs, that while it may be there in terms of the
4 number of polices and recommendations, it is not something
5 that is specifically stated. While the problem may have
6 taken place in residential schools somewhere else or away,
7 the consequences are being felt in other parts of Canadian
8 society.

9 If we look at the demographic trends
10 which we were shown last week, then while in terms of
11 healing it might have to take place clearly throughout
12 Canada, I don't think we can overlook the cities and their
13 importance and the Aboriginal population that is swelling
14 in the cities. We can't forget them.

15 I am not suggesting that anybody has said
16 that. Please don't take that as a criticism. It's more
17 a comment in looking at the recommendations and the kinds
18 of activities -- I know we will get into this in the fourth
19 question -- that the churches have supported. But many
20 of these are outside of the cities. My plea is, in looking
21 at solutions and healing, let's not forget what is
22 happening as we speak.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, Mr.

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1 Meekison.

2 Are there other members of the
3 Commission who would like to make either a statement, a
4 comment or a brief question before we move on to the next
5 question before us?

6 There seems to be a view that we have
7 generally had a look at the impacts. We have heard that
8 in the testimony.

9 Perhaps this is an appropriate time to
10 move on to question 4, which is the churches' role in
11 supporting Aboriginal peoples' struggle for political,
12 social and economic justice, and what has been the past
13 involvement of the churches in that struggle. In that
14 area, all of the churches present here, as you know, have
15 tried to work closely and together on the social and
16 political questions facing Aboriginal people. The
17 comment coming earlier that perhaps there could be a
18 statement or a way to address the residential schools
19 system and the impacts shows that there is a history and
20 a background of the churches working more closely together.

21 If I may, I would move on to that fourth
22 question: What is the churches' role in supporting
23 Aboriginal peoples' struggle for political, social and

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1 economic justice? What has been the past involvement of
2 the churches in this struggle?

3 I believe, Peter Hamel, that you are
4 going to begin with an opening comment on behalf of the
5 churches that you are going to keep quite brief so we can
6 get into some questions on all of this.

7 **PETER HAMEL:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I
8 will keep it as brief as I can.

9 As I look around the table, there are
10 many people who could give an introductory reflection on
11 the ecumenical work of the churches, including your own
12 Co-Chair Georges Erasmus who has been a thorn in the side
13 of Project North and the Aboriginal Rights Coalition for
14 a number of years and has made a significant contribution
15 himself to the work. Also Bishop de Roo mentioned that
16 he had been heavily involved in the seventies with Project
17 North. Stan McKay can't get out of the fact that he was
18 also a member of Project North. John Siebert and Ray
19 Hodgson are current members of the executive of the
20 Aboriginal Rights Coalition.

21 I have been asked as one of the old
22 crocks, I guess. I for 16 years was on Project North and
23 the Aboriginal Rights Coalition as a representative from

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1 the Anglican Church. I have the distinction of chairing
2 the destruction of Project North and then the restructuring
3 that led to the Aboriginal Rights Coalition in 1989.

4 The churches have made reference in all
5 of their briefs to the ecumenical work and that of Project
6 North and ARC. Two of the briefs, the United and Anglican,
7 have also included in the appendices the recommendations
8 from ARC, which this Commission made a significant
9 financial contribution in bringing together people from
10 across Canada to put their experience together into that
11 brief.

12 One of the realities that I think has
13 influenced us in this work around economic and social
14 justice and environmental issues relating to Aboriginal
15 lands has been the awakening of the Aboriginal people
16 themselves in the sixties. If you look at some of the
17 church meetings in the mid-sixties, they were already
18 recognizing a number of provincial and other Aboriginal
19 organizations that were formed. There was also some
20 church involvement in the Indian-Eskimo Association which
21 began in about 1965.

22 So there was considerable discussion
23 going on at that time within the churches with certain

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1 members in the national offices who, I think, to a great
2 extent were radicalized by Aboriginal leadership. That
3 has influenced many of us in this work, that in fact we
4 have been radicalized by the Aboriginal leadership in the
5 same way that a few of the clergy have been radicalized
6 working in Aboriginal communities. Out of that has come
7 the new thrust.

8 Also Aboriginal leaders in the late
9 sixties were saying to the churches "It's time you got
10 off the pot. We are getting lots of good statements,
11 resolutions, et cetera, but it is time to translate that
12 into action. So that began to take place in the late
13 sixties and early seventies. The churches have commented
14 where they were at that time.

15 The other reality -- and it gets back
16 to the north again. After the white paper and the reaction
17 there in which there was some support in solidarity with
18 Aboriginal leadership at that time with the white paper,
19 there was in the early seventies the concerted effort to
20 invade the Aboriginal lands in the north for major energy
21 development projects, mining, and so on. In fact, between
22 1971 and 1974 \$30.5 billion was earmarked for megaprojects
23 with James Bay in northern Quebec, the Churchill diversion

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1 in northern Manitoba, major development in northern
2 British Columbia and, of course, the Mackenzie Valley
3 Pipeline. So there was concern developing that the
4 Aboriginal people were once again being left out of the
5 equation, that the Aboriginal people had no say in the
6 decisions that were being made, and the awakening in
7 Aboriginal communities, especially in the north, and
8 concern around their way of life and the conflict that
9 developed especially in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline
10 discussion between the continuing colonial economic form
11 of development and the more community-based understanding
12 that the Dene Nation brought to that. Of course, as you
13 know, Georges Erasmus was then the President of the Native
14 Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories and the Dene
15 Nation that it came to be called.

16 So, it was in those early days that
17 connections were being made. The churches were involved
18 in some of the early stages around the James Bay project
19 in northern Quebec, what was happening there with Mr.
20 Bourassa's announcement of James Bay I and the fact that
21 it would lead to such devastation of Aboriginal peoples,
22 their communities, culture, their way of life, and so on.

23

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1 Out of this response to trans-national
2 corporations, crown corporations and government coming
3 together for these major new megaprojects, the churches
4 began to more earnestly work with Aboriginal people on
5 the economic and political and so on. Reports came out
6 talking about -- in the churches -- that there needed to
7 be political action and action with corporations. In the
8 past, actions with corporations had taken place in private
9 clubs and decisions made there as to what might or might
10 not happen.

11 But the Coalition Project North then
12 came together in 1975. At that time there was major
13 discussion as to what the purpose would be in terms of
14 that new project. There were some ideas that were firmly
15 put in place, that one of the roles of that project would
16 be to challenge the church constituency in the south to
17 respond to the ethical and moral issues being raised by
18 northern development being raised by Aboriginal people.

19 This included justice in the settlement of Aboriginal
20 land rights, responsible stewardship in the development
21 of northern resources and the cultural and spiritual values
22 of Aboriginal people. These were main tenets of that.

23 In the early days -- I think it's

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1 important in terms of looking at the future and how we
2 can work together to look at the structure. It was very
3 loose. It is very difficult to have a tight structure
4 if you have somebody like Hugh McCullum as one of the staff
5 people. As you know, Hugh is now the senior editor on
6 the Royal Commission and made a considerable contribution
7 along with Carmel Taylor in terms of working with
8 Aboriginal peoples. In those early days it was with the
9 Inuit and Cree of northern Quebec, Cree of northern
10 Manitoba, the Nishka in British Columbia, the Dene in the
11 NWT, the Council for Yukon Indians, a number of Native
12 organizations.

13 In that first year the staff spent 50
14 per cent of its time on the road, on planes, meeting with
15 Aboriginal organizations. I think that points out how
16 important it is that in our work we have to be in close
17 contact with the Aboriginal leadership. When we lose
18 that, as we do from time to time, it really brings problems.

19 We just lose any sense of where Aboriginal people are
20 and their aspirations.

21 Another aspect of that early work was
22 that the Aboriginal organizations contributed to the
23 travel costs of the staff of Project North. In fact, in

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1 that first year Hugh and Carmel travelled 335,000
2 kilometres. In those days, the travel costs were \$30,000.
3 That was picked up by the Aboriginal organizations. When
4 you consider that the churches put in \$25,000 together,
5 in fact the Aboriginal people were contributing more than
6 the churches in those early days.

7 That had a significant, I think, impact
8 on the development of the project. There were many ways
9 in which the project had an impact on the churches. One
10 of them was through commenting on the gospel and the impact
11 of the gospel on the development that was proposed,
12 especially in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. In the
13 submission from Project North at that time, they talked
14 at great length about the proclamation of the gospel as
15 God's sovereignty including all realms of life.

16 "The gospel is more than mere proposition. It brings with
17 it a radically new vision of man
18 ..."

19 You wouldn't say that today.

20 "... in view of this new vision, Christians are called
21 to take a critical stance regarding
22 the social reality of each time and
23 space. The gospel sheds critical

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1 light on the structures of
2 procedures of our institutions,
3 governments and corporations and
4 calls into question many of the
5 images and norms which prevail in
6 the mainstream of our economic,
7 political and social life."

8 Well, when Project North started talking
9 like that and the church leaders that participated in the
10 hearings, there was a significant backlash. Out of that
11 came the confederation of church and business people.
12 These were church people, bishops and others, who wanted
13 to correct the vision of Project North and to bring it
14 back in line with what the gospel really said.

15 There was pressure brought in 1977 to
16 have Project North withdrawn, to end Project North. There
17 was pressure put on the church leaders to that end, but
18 in fact it never happened and the churches endorsed the
19 work of the project.

20 There have been many ways that I think
21 the project has been effective. One of them has been in
22 terms of facilitating meetings in the south, especially
23 in the early days, for Aboriginal leaders to take their

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1 message to Canadians and to the churches in the south.

2 There was one such meeting in 1977 in
3 northern Ontario around Treaty 9 and the Royal Commission
4 on Northern Development that was taking place at that time
5 in which 130 clergy and laypeople came together to talk
6 about issues that were concerning Aboriginal people and
7 development in the north.

8 The highlight in terms of our connecting
9 with people in the south was the northern Native rights
10 campaign of 1979. At that time there were five teams of
11 Aboriginal leaders that went across the country talking
12 about Aboriginal self-government, self-determination and
13 aspirations of Aboriginal people. They went to 65
14 communities. By the end of that year there were 50 network
15 groups across Canada that had some church base.

16 It is also interesting to note that in
17 terms of the southern Berger hearings in 1976-77, 20 per
18 cent of the 450 submissions that were made in the south
19 were made by church-based groups. We no longer have that
20 kind of networking. Stan alluded to that earlier this
21 afternoon. But in those days there was that. The
22 spontaneous response of the churches that was possible
23 in Project North has also changed. There is much more

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1 bureaucracy in place in the churches today. I think, to
2 a certain extent, that has stifled what the Aboriginal
3 Rights Coalition can be in Canadian society and also in
4 solidarity with Aboriginal people.

5 I guess I should preface all of this by
6 saying that I am speaking for myself. These are my
7 reflections. Others will have comments to make as well.

8 There was also a significant change
9 around 1979-1980 between looking at the land rights issues
10 of particular tribal groups to looking at constitutional
11 issues. So there was a transition there in terms of
12 working with not just simply the tribal organizations,
13 but the national Aboriginal organizations.

14 Around the constitutional debates of the
15 eighties, there was a close working relationship with the
16 national Aboriginal organizations, including the Inuit
17 Council on National Issues. But I think one of the big
18 gaps we have had in the ecumenical work is that we have
19 really done very little with the Inuit. It came up in
20 the Constitution. It came up in terms of James Bay in
21 the early seventies. It has come up again in terms of
22 the Great Whale project in the nineties. But we have spent
23 very little time with the Inuit. I think that has been

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1 a significant gap in our work.

2 In terms of the repatriation of the
3 Constitution, we participated in a national campaign by
4 the Aboriginal organizations around the federal government
5 in 1981 taking out section 35 around Aboriginal and treaty
6 rights. So we were a part of that campaign which led to
7 its reinsertion with that dreadful word "existing"
8 prefacing that section.

9 We also participated in the cross-Canada
10 campaign around the Coolican Report and federal government
11 policy on comprehensive land claims. We didn't have much
12 success, but it was a very significant campaign that we
13 participated in.

14 The churches in terms of the
15 Constitution also developed a separate task force which
16 was staffed by Project North people called CARF, a very
17 interesting word, Churches Aboriginal Rights Forum. One
18 of the things that CARF did was to distribute over one
19 million copies of a pamphlet which was known as "You Can
20 Help With the Next Chapter of Canadian History".

21 We have written a number of these
22 documents about the new relationship over a number of years
23 and it hasn't happened as yet.

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1 One of the other components in terms of
2 political and economic justice that Project North has
3 worked on is also the environmental aspect, the protection
4 of Aboriginal lands. That has been a real learning
5 experience for the churches. In fact, the churches have
6 probably participated in more environmental assessment
7 review hearings than almost any environmental organization
8 in Canada. And birds have played a major part in those
9 discussions.

10 But it has been helpful. We have a new
11 term for brown-bagging it. That is when we get information
12 from government sources in parking lots after dark in terms
13 of the public hearing processes. We talked about this
14 in the task force brief in June in terms of third-party
15 interest and how important it is for the churches to address
16 that, and they have done so in terms of bringing about
17 justice on the Aboriginal front. So we have participated
18 in a number of hearings around mining, offshore oil and
19 gas pipelines, forestry, fisheries issues, uranium mining,
20 a variety of concerns across the country. Project North
21 and ARC have actually worked in all the provinces and all
22 the territories.

23 I added it up a few months ago. We have

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1 probably worked with over 150 band councils and some 30
2 or more tribal organizations. So there has been a broad
3 thrust.

4 But Project North and the Aboriginal
5 Rights Coalition are only as strong as its church
6 membership and the ownership of that. One of the
7 challenges that we face is that we continue to work on
8 the ground with Aboriginal organizations and simply not
9 make decisions around the table without that input. So
10 with the Aboriginal Rights Coalition development in 1989,
11 at that time there was a change. Aboriginal organizations
12 had a place at the table with the network groups across
13 the country on an equal basis with the participating
14 churches in an alliance and partnership, being the two
15 key words.

16 Lorna Schwartzentruber is here. She is
17 the current staff person who has also a difficult time
18 working with the churches as well as others that we have
19 heard in these hearings.

20 But the churches have endeavoured to
21 work on a number of fronts around this in a variety of
22 ways of doing it. One of the things in working with the
23 task force and the churches and corporate responsibility

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1 around the megaproject development was to initiate
2 shareholder actions. We participated early on, for
3 instance, with the AMAX issue and went to New York, and
4 the Nishka chiefs spoke at the annual meeting of AMAX.

5 We didn't exactly lead with strength
6 because we bought three shares in order to go to the
7 meeting. Then the Securities Exchange Commission changed
8 the rules. But we did get one million and a half votes
9 in support of the Nishka and their concern around the AMAX
10 mine dumping 100 million tons of toxic tailings from their
11 mine into the ocean over a 26-year period. There were
12 also calls for public inquiries around the health impacts
13 on the Nishka people and the harvesting of resources in
14 that area.

15 A number of items like that we
16 participated in with oil and gas companies, forestry
17 companies. In order to bring it to the boardrooms, the
18 issues that are involved, and I think that the churches
19 have at least made some contribution to that. We have
20 also been involved in petition campaigns and working with
21 other sectors of society. There has been a big change.

22 In the early days, the communication
23 skills of people like Hugh McCullum were important in

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1 working with Aboriginal organizations in developing
2 educational materials to be distributed widely in the
3 general public, to be involved in media events.
4 Aboriginal organizations now do all of those things.
5 There were fewer groups in the earlier days that were
6 involved in the Aboriginal justice struggle. Now today
7 there are many and the churches, I think, are struggling
8 to find their place in terms of how we work together in
9 solidarity. We have done that on occasion and with
10 significant results. But these are some of the challenges
11 that face us in terms of working on this front.

12 One of the things that we were also led
13 to in the late eighties was the fact that it was not only
14 important for the churches to be working in society, around
15 the societal implications of oppression of Aboriginal
16 peoples, but that we also had to deal with our own
17 institutional problems and our own institutional injustice
18 which has been talked about at great length today.

19 I came into this work in 1977. I have
20 never been to an Aboriginal meeting since then where the
21 issue of residential schools has not come up. So it has
22 been there, but it took us a long time in order to respond
23 to it.

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1 Another issue that has concerned us is
2 the racial prejudice of the judicial system. That came
3 out in spades in terms of Chief Justice MacEachern's
4 decision around the Gwich'in land rights issue, ownership
5 and jurisdiction of a couple of years ago. If you look
6 in the judgement -- many of the things that one uses in
7 this kind of work you never learned in theological college.

8 So you sort of have to learn on the job, and Aboriginal
9 people have been incredible teachers in terms of that.

10 On many fronts there are many more things
11 that we need to be doing. I have probably gone over my
12 12 minutes, Mr. Chairperson, so I think it is time to quit.

13 If you would like a little more, we could
14 continue.

15 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** I have no doubt.

16 I think you went only slightly over by about 12 minutes.

17 I am kidding a bit here. I think it is a worthwhile
18 discussion because it gives us all a sense of where you
19 have been in terms of churches working together with
20 Aboriginal communities.

21 Also, I think, there is a part of it that
22 comes back to the earlier question that was raised in the
23 previous session: What could the churches do together

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1 to go back onto the residential schools? Part of that
2 question is quite obviously in your statement. You have
3 worked together and you undoubtedly will be continuing
4 to do so.

5 Perhaps at this time I will see where
6 Commissioners want to go in terms of questions to you or
7 other members of either of the churches. At the same time,
8 I will give Commissioners a chance to think about that.

9 Are there further comments that people
10 want to add briefly to Peter's comments?

11 Bishop de Roo, please.

12 **REMI DE ROO:** I will try to be brief,
13 although I realize I am opening quite a chapter here.
14 I will just put it on the table as quickly as I can.

15 I want to put it back in terms of my own
16 living experience since the sixties with the Berger
17 Commission, the Dene, and all that background that Peter
18 has expressed to eloquently.

19 He made a comment about the Native
20 peoples radicalizing the churches in Canada. I just want
21 to add a dimension to that. It wasn't just Canada. My
22 experience, if I may call it, of radicalization came from
23 Latin America when I had the privilege of sitting down

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1 with the Native peoples in Latin America and realizing
2 that what was happening to my Native sisters and brothers
3 in Canada was part of a global pattern. I just want to
4 put that on the table.

5 The statements made through our Social
6 Affairs Commission like "Northern Development at What
7 Cost" in 1975, which we then developed further in our
8 ethical reflection on the economy in 1983 which we recalled
9 again earlier this year; there is another message behind
10 that telling us that we have to be aware that we are dealing
11 with a global agenda.

12 Bishop Goudreault raised a question
13 earlier that made me perk up my ears. Are Native sisters
14 and brothers fully aware of what is happening to them right
15 now through what we sometimes call modernization? What
16 is the model that lies behind that in terms of understanding
17 of the nature of the human being? Is the human being
18 primarily a manipulator working at this machine that we
19 consider creation, to control it by whatever technological
20 fixes, or are we people who should be standing in awe before
21 the mystery of creation and our role in that in solidarity?

22 That came into very sharp focus this
23 summer when I had the privilege of working with a group

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1 of scientists and scholars representing the major world
2 religions for an eight-day seminar on the question of
3 population and resource distribution and the tensions
4 between north and south. It became very clear here that
5 there is a profound religious issue behind this whole
6 question about the nature of the human being and our role
7 in relation to the environment.

8 We need to listen very, very carefully
9 to the arguments that are now presently coming forward
10 in that whole field of protection of the environment
11 because there are two models there. There is one model
12 that sometimes goes under the guise of "sustainable
13 development", which is basically a mechanistic model that
14 wants to put the trans-nationals and certain powerful
15 elites in charge of all the resources that all the Native
16 peoples have right around the world -- you could start
17 naming Brazil and others, but it goes right around the
18 world -- as distinct from another model that says: No,
19 we cannot continue this wild western development model
20 with the wasting of our resources. We have to learn to
21 become possibly less "efficient" in a mechanistic sense
22 and learn to live with modest sufficiency in mutual sharing
23 and solidarity.

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1 There is a fundamental question there
2 about the redistribution of the world's resources and our
3 stewardship together. I think possibly one of the key
4 roles for the churches will be to work with our Native
5 sisters and brothers in what I would call a critical social
6 analysis about the kind of patterns behind the economic
7 model and where our Canadian government wants to take us
8 in consortium with the trans-nationals.

9 I just put it on the table. It's too
10 long an issue to really go into in detail. But I suggest
11 it is extremely important because this is going to
12 condition the future of the Aboriginal peoples far more
13 than the other issues we have been discussing.

14 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
15 Bishop.

16 Reverend McKay?

17 **STANLEY MCKAY:** The area of economic
18 justice, of course, is rooted in a development of a people
19 dependent on the rest of society.

20 I have become in recent months a friend
21 of the Lubicon Cree. I happen to know in that part of
22 the country it is easy for the government of that province
23 and the federal government to extract minerals and

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1 resources and to pay welfare out of the funds that they
2 accumulate than to settle with any justice the existing
3 situation of injustice in the territory. I think that
4 model of non-negotiable use of power by governments and
5 by multi-nationals is being played across the country,
6 in Clayoquot Sound, and you go right across step by step.
7 Wherever there are resources, they are in control and
8 the economic future of first nations people is never a
9 part of the discussion.

10 I think we as churches, much more than
11 ever before, face a massive problem.

12 We are coming very near to a point in
13 our economic situation in the country, of course, where
14 we as churches don't have a sound theology about sharing
15 of resources at our local level. We attempt to play in
16 the G-7 as a nation with other nations' economic futures,
17 but we haven't even dealt with our own. So as a church
18 we have a primary responsibility.

19 What first nations people are saying,
20 and what I learned from Arthur Solomon, is that the greed
21 and the destruction of the earth, our mother, is not simply
22 about this generation but our faithful vision as churches
23 about the future. The care of the earth is critical.

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1 Going back to our earlier discussion
2 about our theology, about spirituality and culture, which
3 we began the afternoon with, I would say that the point
4 of liberation for many of the young people of our villages
5 is at the point when they understand that we are keepers
6 of the earth. That is when our liberation begins. That
7 is, as I say, what I learned from the elders, that the
8 kind of gatherings in Morley, Alberta and other places
9 that have happened where the lodges and the elders and
10 the youth get together, that our liberation for political,
11 social and economic justice comes with an identification
12 of ourselves as having a role in the whole of creation.

13 Theologically, again, to say we are out
14 of step, I think we have always had it backwards. We have
15 always believed, in the churches, that we had a mission
16 to the poor. My biblical understanding of the christology
17 of our church is that the poor always had a mission to
18 the powerful and the established. What calls for a radical
19 change in our political and theological approach is in
20 this area.

21 I don't know why I am doing the work of
22 the Commission, but I think that we as churches are not
23 moving in a way that is radical. I don't think we are

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1 moving within the context because our membership will not
2 approve a radical change. I think the lobby that Peter
3 referred to that attempted to dismantle Project North in
4 1977 is ever with us. Certainly within the United Church
5 of Canada it is going to be difficult to have conversations
6 in our membership about the lifestyle that is destroying
7 the earth, and it is destroying the future of our children
8 and those unborn.

9 So, as I say, I think that the struggle
10 calls for radical change. I heard Bob ask about a meeting
11 to talk about future educational plans that we might do
12 ecumenically across the country. I think we need some
13 direction from the Chair at this point as to whether that
14 can happen in terms of this meeting, because it will come
15 to an end very quickly.

16 I also think that in the area of economic
17 justice, political and social, there is the question of
18 power. I understand in a society that the power is held
19 in the hands of a few, and we are now talking about the
20 poorest of the poor. Aboriginal persons in every part
21 of this land are among the poorest people in the land.

22 I still get my \$5 a year and I am happy.
23 I haven't collected it yet and there will be no interest

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1 on it when I go to the Indian Affairs office to collect
2 it. But we don't even talk about the injustice of historic
3 relationships. I think it is a real sham that we as
4 churches haven't done our theology in the area of what
5 it is we are doing in democracy.

6 We are captive people in democracy. The
7 powerful always will make the decisions. If they can't
8 make them by the democratic process, they will undermine
9 it through the system of free enterprise. I think, then,
10 that we are very much caught in a time of definite prophetic
11 need on the part of the churches, and I wish we could pick
12 up some process ecumenically to move on.

13 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
14 Reverend McKay.

15 Bishop Hamelin, please.

16 **JEAN-GUY HAMELIN:** Dans la ligne un peu
17 de ce que vient de dire M. McKay, je pense que lorsqu'on
18 parle du rôle des églises pour le support à donner à la
19 lutte des Aborigènes pour une justice politique, je pense
20 qu'il y a un point très important qu'il y a à ne pas oublier.

21 On peut faire beaucoup de belles
22 déclarations. On peut donner notre support comme évêque
23 ou comme église, mais s'il n'y a pas à la base, on a parlé

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1 d'éducation et c'est très important, mais en même temps
2 un éveil à l'appui politique que la base de nos églises
3 peut donner. C'est très important, vous le savez très bien.
4 Nous venons de passer une élection. C'est clair.

5 Souvent nos déclarations restent un peu
6 au niveau des dirigeants, mais ils ne sont pas tellement
7 sûrs qu'ils soient supportés par la base, par ceux qui
8 sont les membres de nos églises.

9 S'il y avait un éveil politique plus
10 agressif fait par nous pour nos communautés, s'il y avait
11 évidemment dans la ligne de l'éducation dont on vient de
12 parler qui est absolument indispensable, s'il y avait
13 vraiment une sorte d'engagement de leur foi que les
14 Chrétiens doivent appuyer les luttes pour plus de justice
15 de la part de ces groupements, je pense que c'est important
16 de ne pas l'oublier et que ce devrait être un engagement
17 que nous devrions prendre nous mêmes pour aller dans ce
18 sens-là.

19 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you,
20 Bishop Hamelin.

21 May I come to the point that you had
22 raised, Reverend McKay. I as moderator for this session
23 cannot, of course, commit the Royal Commission on

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1 Aboriginal Peoples to anything, but I think it was clear
2 from what Mr. Erasmus has said and what Mr. Dussault has
3 said that if the churches were to make either here or
4 together on behalf of the churches such a statement, this
5 would be a very good time and a very good forum, perhaps
6 at the conclusion tomorrow, to make it.

7 I would offer you the opportunity to do
8 that, if that is what you so wish to do.

9 Let me open this to questions and
10 comments from Commissioners. Mr. Erasmus?

11 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** I wasn't
12 sure what Stan was asking, whether he was asking for a
13 response from the other churches. On our part, we would
14 love it to occur, but I didn't hear it picked up by anybody
15 else. I just assumed there was consensus, but maybe it
16 was inappropriate.

17 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Bishop Hamelin?

18 **JEAN-GUY HAMELIN:** Je pense qu'il n'y
19 a pas d'objection de principe de faire une déclaration
20 qui soit commune, cependant on a eu deux aspects. Le
21 premier aspect a été celui de faire une déclaration
22 immédiate alors qu'en fait il va y avoir beaucoup de
23 couverture par les médias, par la Conférence aussi, de

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1 ce que nous avons dans nos propres mémoires.

2 Il y a aussi la possibilité de s'asseoir
3 à la table et à cause de l'Année internationale de faire
4 quelque chose qui serait peut-être plus substantiel et
5 plus fort.

6 Je pense qu'il faut voir ces deux
7 aspects-là. Personnellement je n'ai pas consulté les
8 autres à ce moment-ci mais j'aimerais qu'on puisse en
9 discuter pour voir l'impact qu'aurait une déclaration qui
10 soit formelle et mieux encore préparée peut-être à
11 l'occasion de l'Année internationale, quitte à ce que déjà
12 dans nos mémoires on sache très bien nos positions.

13 Dans chacun des mémoires il y a des
14 positions de certaines des églises sur ce plan-là.

15 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

16 Sister Solomon?

17 **EVA SOLOMON:** I would just like to say
18 that if that happens from our churches, then there
19 absolutely must be involvement of the Native people in
20 the preparation of that statement.

21 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

22 I am going to leave it there, that
23 question. I think we have had a brief go-round on it.

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1 I leave it to all of you in the hours of this evening or
2 tomorrow morning to chart your own course on that one.

3 **CO-CHAIR GEORGES ERASMUS:** Could I
4 encourage you to do both, try to come up with some kind
5 of short ecumenical statement today from what could be
6 gleaned from all of the proposals you have and the things
7 you have done in the past, and do what Sister Solomon was
8 just saying. If you are going to make a major statement
9 for the year that we are in, one that could be done in
10 partnership, it might be different than what you could
11 do now, which would be a shorter statement, I would think.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Reverend Smith?

13 **ROBERT SMITH:** Just to speak about a
14 process. It is not clear in my mind that each of the four
15 churches is able to participate in such a provisional
16 statement. But if it were helpful, I would be glad to
17 receive any comments from each of the three. If you are
18 interested in working on such a statement, I would be glad
19 to work with representatives that you designate and have
20 something for tomorrow morning. We may not be able to
21 do it, but we need to have some kind of a mechanism in
22 case there is a possibility.

23 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** If I understand

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1 the offer, we should leave it to the four churches
2 themselves and through their own delegations to put that
3 together, unless Mr. Erasmus or Mr. Dussault have other
4 views.

5 I don't think we see ourselves as
6 co-ordinating that. I think it should come from
7 yourselves.

8 **ROBERT SMITH:** No, no. I am offering
9 to be the person that people talk to.

10 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** All right. I
11 think that is clear for everyone.

12 If I may, I will move on and get comments
13 and/or questions from members of the Commission.

14 Madam Wilson?

15 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I just
16 wanted to ask a question of the Presbyterian Church arising
17 out of its paper. I had noted that in relation to the
18 issue of Native self-government when you refer to the
19 church as being supportive of that principle, it is always
20 qualified by the word "once clearly defined". I note in
21 several places you indicate that negotiations should
22 recommence to entrench in the Canadian constitution
23 enforceable right of Aboriginal peoples to self-government

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1 once clearly defined.

2 That hit me as I was reading this
3 because, of course, it was one of the things that was raised
4 in relation to the Charlottetown Accord. I am wondering
5 whether this indicates that the view of your church is
6 that there can be one model of self-government that can
7 be spelled out and that would be the model for all
8 Aboriginal nations or communities. I am just wondering
9 what you have in mind by qualifying your support for the
10 self-government principle in that way.

11 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Reverend
12 Hodgson?

13 **RAY HODGSON:** When we first brought the
14 recommendation, it did not have that qualification in it.
15 This is something that our constituency wished to have
16 in it in order to pass the recommendation. I was asked
17 that question directly on the floor of our General
18 Assembly, which is our highest decision-making body.

19 What I said at that point was that to
20 say that something is once clearly defined does not mean
21 that there is one monolithic definition that is applicable
22 in all situations but that there needed to be negotiations
23 between first nations and the federal government in order

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1 to more clearly define what the terms of reference would
2 be for self-government.

3 Our folks had a lot of comfort with the
4 knowledge that there would not be one monolithic
5 definition, but that there really did need to be some
6 further discussion and that they themselves wanted in some
7 ways to be kept informed of how those discussions were
8 going because they saw how it would have implications for
9 themselves and how they saw themselves as citizens of
10 Canada. So it was not just one definition, no.

11 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** I am still
12 not quite sure what exactly the qualification means.
13 Could you explain that to me?

14 **RAY HODGSON:** When that particular
15 recommendation was being discussed, there were not a lot
16 of clarity for the people who were doing the voting on
17 what self-government was about in any kind of detail.
18 We had some information from the Assembly of First Nations.
19 We had a lot of individual discussions. But they were
20 not prepared at that point to just give a blanket
21 affirmation of self-government without knowing what some
22 of the implications would be for them. I think that is
23 fair.

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1 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** In terms,
2 you mean, of the relationship of the Native government
3 to the provincial and federal governments, the other
4 governments.

5 **RAY HODGSON:** Yes, and what the
6 implications would be for the people themselves in terms
7 of being citizens of Canada.

8 **COMMISSIONER BERTHA WILSON:** Thank you.

9 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Professor
10 Meekison?

11 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** In the
12 submission from the Anglican Church there is an Appendix
13 6 which is the 52 recommendations submitted by the
14 Aboriginal Rights Coalition to the Royal Commission on
15 Aboriginal Peoples. It goes into land and resources, land
16 rights, self-determination, public education. Given the
17 time, we don't have an opportunity to go into all 52
18 recommendations.

19 But I have a couple of questions. Have
20 these recommendations been discussed by the individual
21 churches themselves? Clearly, much of what is in here
22 relates to the mandate of the Commission. I am wondering
23 what happens to this after the Commission is over. Do

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1 you see these being debated within the churches themselves?
2 Do you envisage sending these to governments in addition
3 to the Commission?

4 I would really like some guidance from
5 you on this. Some of them, such as replacing the
6 Department of Indian Affairs, an amendment to the
7 Constitution on section 92 and so forth -- there is a lot
8 in here and I really think it would be helpful to me if
9 you could amplify a bit on their status and what you see
10 happening with them afterwards.

11 **PETER HAMEL:** I would hope that these
12 would get wide discussion within the Anglican Church and
13 that they would be endorsed and they would be sent to the
14 respective bodies.

15 My problem is that as of the end of August
16 I am not there any more, so it will be new people that
17 will be working on that. But that would certainly be my
18 feeling. I think the Council for Native Ministries would
19 want to take a look at those as well in terms of passing
20 them on to the various bodies. But this is the experience
21 of the Coalition, the ecumenical work, so I would hope
22 that they would receive endorsement by the church and the
23 churches, the others that are also part of the Aboriginal

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1 Rights Coalition, some of which aren't at the table.

2 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Do you have a
3 response, Mr. Siebert?

4 **JOHN SIEBERT:** It is my understanding
5 that the recommendations grew out of the experience of
6 Project North and the Aboriginal Rights Coalition and
7 represent the basic policy thrusts that underlie all our
8 work. There is a greater degree of specificity here, but
9 at least in our official positions I am grateful that we
10 are challenged on that question. Those are the churches'
11 positions.

12 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Are there other
13 comments? Reverend Boyles.

14 **JIM BOYLES:** The 57 recommendations are
15 from the Coalition and they come to the Royal Commission
16 here and they also come to the churches.

17 But it raises for me a question of the
18 power in the future of the prophetic voice in the churches.

19 A number of us in the Anglican delegation were last week
20 at the meeting of our National Executive Council where,
21 after spending two and a half hours on residential schools,
22 we spent the next time on the dramatic shortfall in revenue
23 that the national church faces for 1994 and the need to

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1 cut budgets.

2 It seems, in our analysis, that although
3 church income is being maintained at the parish level,
4 it is not being passed on to diocesan or national levels
5 at the same rate. I think that is a reflection of the
6 society as much as of the church which is a distrust of
7 leadership and of national institutions.

8 Peter talked about the increasing
9 bureaucracy and the diminishment -- I think he was hinting
10 at -- of the work of the Coalition and the prophetic voice
11 of the national church. I think that that distrust is
12 a factor that we need to take seriously in this issue and
13 other issues in the life of the church.

14 In one way increasing emphasis on the
15 local life of the church has the potential for some of
16 the healing that we have talked about. But I am rather
17 sceptical about that. I think that it is more likely to
18 be read as a sign of the church turning in in terms of
19 a maintenance mentality, looking after itself, fearful
20 of reaching out, fearful of some of the implications that
21 they don't understand about the prophetic voice that has
22 spoken nationally.

23 I think that is a major issue for us

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1 churches and, in terms of our own education, work, our
2 own ways of communicating and interpreting, what we are
3 saying back to ourselves. I just wanted to mention that.

4 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you, sir.
5 Peter Meekison?

6 **COMMISSIONER PETER MEEKISON:** Just as
7 an additional question, the last six recommendations deal
8 with public education. Again, the whole question of
9 cross-cultural training which you refer to here and
10 cross-cultural education are things that we certainly
11 discussed, for example, last week during our hearings.

12 The recommendations in part, as I read
13 them, are directed to governments. Do you see or envisage
14 a particular role for the churches in this educational
15 process?

16 I know, for example, the commitments by
17 the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the first
18 is "a commitment to educating our people at the most
19 foundational level". Education is another theme that runs
20 throughout the brief. It would be helpful to me if you
21 could identify or elaborate in greater detail the role
22 you see of the churches in this educational activity.
23 Much of what I read here can also be conducted by the

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1 churches independent of what the state does.

2 **PETER HAMEL:** There are a number of
3 different responses in terms of those resolutions that
4 you point to. No. 49, the cross-cultural training is
5 really much more than that. That resolution grew out of
6 the concern of the churches and Aboriginal people about
7 the use of policing in oppressing Aboriginal people around
8 land rights issues and other justice concerns.

9 When we are talking about cross-cultural
10 training, we are really talking about getting from
11 Aboriginal people in relationship with them an
12 understanding of their aspirations. There has been a
13 significant change, as I have seen it, in terms of the
14 role of the RCMP around Aboriginal justice issues over
15 the last eight or nine years.

16 For instance, as an illustration I would
17 use the Haida on Lyell Island in 1985 where the RCMP were
18 quite enlightened and there was no intimidation on their
19 part in that blockade. That changed dramatically in more
20 recent concerns, not simply at Kahnawake and Kanesatake.

21 Your chairperson today can attest to that in terms of
22 the Lubicon issue and also with the Old Man River issue
23 in southern Alberta.

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1 So there have been a number of areas
2 where this has arisen where the policing has changed and
3 attitudes have changed. We feel a real need around that
4 resolution for the police forces, attorney generals, et
5 cetera, to have a much deeper understanding of Aboriginal
6 people, their aspirations and the fact that they are not
7 violent people but are forced into it.

8 Georges Erasmus, as the AFN National
9 Chief a few years ago, warned about increases in violence
10 that Aboriginal people were being forced into. That then
11 brought about the resolution in 1989 of General Synod of
12 the Anglican Church supporting Aboriginal people and
13 others who are involved in non-violent direct action around
14 the Aboriginal justice struggle. Georges spoke to that
15 at General Synod.

16 So that is one area where we have great
17 concern.

18 **MODERATOR WHIT FRASER:** Thank you.

19 Are there any other questions or
20 comments?

21 If not, let me thank everyone today for
22 their time and their insights and the great deal of
23 preparation that has clearly gone into all of the briefs.

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1 I would also thank you for being so open and candid in
2 all of your remarks, especially those that touch on such
3 very painful and difficult questions that do surround the
4 residential schools and that have such tremendous impact
5 not only on the churches and on Aboriginal peoples, but
6 on your congregations and on all Canadians.

7 I have just a couple of announcements
8 to make before we call on the Elder for the closing prayer.

9 I want to remind everyone that the workshops tomorrow
10 will be held on the convention level, but we will be
11 convening at 8:30 in the morning and then breaking up into
12 workshops.

13 It says here on the conventional level
14 on the second floor except the J suite, 1803 and 1805,
15 Ballroom C. That is a little confusing, but I think we
16 will sort that out in the morning for everyone.

17 The churches may have more than five
18 official delegates in the workshops. However, try to keep
19 your numbers evenly distributed so that one is not top
20 heavy or out of balance. But certainly there is room for
21 more than your five official delegates in the workshops.

22 The Commissioners only will be free to
23 move around and visit all of the workshops. They are not

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1 required to stay in the room assigned. They have much
2 more freedom than all of the rest of you on this, so you
3 will remember that tomorrow.

4 We would also like the facilitator and
5 the note takers or the rapporteurs to please stay just
6 for a few minutes after the closing of tonight's session
7 to get your instructions and answer any questions that
8 you may have, or whatever, for tomorrow morning.

9 There has been also a new sheet issued
10 this afternoon. The line-ups have changed a little bit
11 somewhat through the day, so please check the line-up
12 before tomorrow morning and we will look after you.

13 That concludes the questions before the
14 Royal Commission for this afternoon. We will reconvene
15 tomorrow morning, as I say, at 8:30 and break into the
16 discussion groups to look at the details of question 3.

17

18 If I may, I would ask Elder William
19 Commanda to offer us the closing prayer.

20 **(Closing Prayer)**

21 --- Whereupon the special consultation adjourned
22 at 5:25 p.m. to resume on Tuesday, November 9,
23 1993 at 8:30 a.m.