

ABORIGINAL CHURCH JUSTICE WORK IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Since the United Church of Canada offered its apology to First Nations Peoples in 1986, and later, in 1998, to former residential school students, there has been a concerted effort to find ways to live out those apologies and to “walk together”.

The following links on the United Church’s website point to various related actions, programs, policies, and ministries:

- www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools
Everything regarding the legacy of residential schools and our involvement and response: history, frequently asked questions, quarterly *Update*, what congregations can do, news releases
- www.united-church.ca/en/funding/healing
Information about, criteria and application form for the Healing Fund
- www.united-church.ca/en/aboriginal/rights
Work related to advocating for Aboriginal rights including connection to KAIROS, the Sisters in Spirit Project, and support of Aboriginal land rights at Douglas Creek, Caledonia, Ontario.
- www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/relationships
Work related to building right relationships including the apology texts, Justice and Reconciliation Fund, worship resources, and ending racial harassment.
- www.united-church.ca/files/sales/magazines/mandate/2005/may/pdf/0810.pdf
Mandate, the United Church’s quarterly mission magazine has carried various stories about people and churches making a difference in Aboriginal communities from time to time. In particular the whole May 2005 issue is devoted to reflections on the 1986 apology and includes a **timeline**.

For a detailed chronology of actions taken between 1980 and the present, see below.

The United Church has produced many **resources**, both print and video. Here is a listing of what has been produced, and is available from the United Church Resource Distribution Centre (www.united-church.ca/en/sales/ucrd), or from the AudioVisual Lending Library (AVEL) – www.united-church.ca/en/contact/avel.

Also a listing of General Council staff related to residential schools, building right relations, and Aboriginal ministries. To contact them: irs@united-church.ca

Steps in the Journey Towards Right Relationships (1947 – 2008)

1947	UCC Brief to the Parliamentary Comm. on Reform of the Indian Act: "That Residential Schools should be closed in favour of non-denominational schools on Indian Reserves"	1997 (May)	St. Andrew's United makes apology to former students of Alberni Indian Residential School
1969 (April)	End of United Church role in Residential Schools.	1997 (Aug)	36 th GC makes Statement of Repentance re: res schools
1975	The United Church of Canada becomes an active member of the ecumenically-organized Project North and its successor, the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (ARC).	1998 (Feb)	Blackwater trial begins: 8 plaintiffs remain. Settled with 20 plaintiffs prior to trial.
1977	General Council 27 decision to review the United Church work with native people.	1998 (June)	Justice Brenner's rules on vicarious liability in Blackwater trial. Both church and government are liable. Appealed by UC. Moderator sends pastoral letter over painful and difficult decision. See July 2001, Dec. 2003, Oct.2005
1978	Saskatchewan Conference approves "Call for a Year of Repentance", with the program throughout 1979	1998 (June)	GCE strikes Residential Schools Steering Committee, establishes staff position, and instructs DMC (now JGER) to prepare educational resources
1980	First National Aboriginal Consultations held (June & Oct) and others follow every 1-3 years; last one in July 2005	1998 (Oct)	GC Executive issues a formal apology to residential school students, their families and communities
1984	Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre established	2000	Justice and Reconciliation Fund established
1980's	BC Native Ministries Consortium established including community-based theological education in partnership with Anglican organizations	2000 (Mar)	Gathering of former staff of the 13 UC-associated schools
1986 (Aug)	UCC issues a formal apology to First Nations Peoples within the church; acknowledged but not accepted	2000 (Aug)	General Council creates portfolios for a stronger capacity for racial justice, and for enhanced, vital relationships between the regions of the church and General Council.
1987	Francis Sandy Theological Centre is established	2000 (Sept)	Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative and Aboriginal Rights Coalition within KAIROS launch a national campaign in support of Aboriginal land rights
1988	All Native Circle Conference established	2000 (Oct)	Reconciliation and Justice Leadership Support Gathering – 90 people from every Conference meet at Cedar Glen
1992 (Aug)	Stan McKay elected, first Aboriginal Moderator	2001 (July)	Judge Brenner rules that UCC is 25% liable in case of six remaining Blackwater plaintiffs
1993 (Nov)	UCC brief to Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples	2001 (July)	News release: UCC says cultural loss must be included in negotiations with Ottawa; says no to bilateral deal with Canada.
1994 (Aug)	Healing Fund established – goal of \$1 million	2001 (Fall)	Federal Government says it will pay only 70% in cases not under Brenner ruling
1996	27 former Alberni IRS students launch lawsuit against UCC and Government of Canada seeking compensation and damages for abuses committed by Arthur Plint, a dormitory supervisor. Known as Blackwater case.		

2001 (Nov)	<p>Future Directions Report names 4 mission directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following God in Mission: Fostering Faith in a Changing Culture • Participating in God's : Shalom and Justice-seeking • Repentance, Justice, and the Seeking of Right Relationships with Aboriginal Peoples • Ministry in the 21st Century: Supporting Leadership for Ministry and Mission 	2005 (Apr)	UCC supports Assembly of First Nations Review Report on ADR process. Calls for a holistic response to legacy of residential schools with 7 elements.
2002	Staff position for Aboriginal Ministries created	2005 (May)	Justice Iacobucci appointed federal representative to negotiate and make recommendations on lump sum payments, ADR, commemoration, community healing and Truth and Reconciliation process. Working groups formed which involve UCC representation.
2003	Church and others successfully urge abandonment of Bill C-7 regarding First Nations governance	2005 (Oct)	Supreme Court reinstates 75/25% liability decision
2003 (May)	UCC participates in pilot project of an alternative settlement process with Gitksan survivors	2005 (Nov)	Canada announces Agreement in Principle on resolution package negotiated by Justice Iacobucci
2003 (Aug)	<p>GC accepts challenge to push for a "public inquiry" into residential schools as recommended by RCAP. Initiates "Roundtable" process in 2004 with churches, AFN, and government. Pre-empted by appointment and mandate of Judge Iacobucci in May 2005.</p> <p>GC also commissions "Circle and Cross" dialogues</p> <p>GC commits to ongoing funding for Healing Fund</p>	2006 (Feb)	UCC leads workshop "Decolonizing Ourselves; Transforming Ourselves" at WCC Assembly in Brazil
2003 (Oct)	GCE adopts 6 Principles for guiding Right Relations work	2006 (Feb)	Special INFOPAC mailing to commemorate 20 th anniversary of apology to First Nations Peoples
2003 (Nov)	Canada launches Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process – UCC commits to attend every hearing unless claimant declines. UCC trains volunteers for this role.	2006 (Mar)	To date, some 800 claims from former IRS students have been filed naming UCC; 360 settled out of court, 6 court decisions. Received 280 ADR applications with 155 hearings completed or scheduled.
2003 (Dec)	BC Court of Appeal says Canada is 100% liable.	2006 (May)	Settlement Agreement is finalized. UCC approves Agreement on April 30 th and federal Cabinet on May 10 th .
2004 (Feb)	Government files appeal of BC ruling with Supreme Court. UCC continues to pay 30% except in Alberni cases where it pays 25%.	2007 (May)	Working Group on Missing Children established
2004	Launch of "Sisters in Spirit" campaign with Native Women's Association, the Anglican Church, and Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada.	2007	Settlement Agreement implemented on September 19 th
2004 (May)	1 st National Day of Healing and Reconciliation		
2004	Healing Fund remanded, new staff position created		

National Staff Relating to Healing, Justice, and Right Relationships with First Nations Peoples:

Kim Uyede-Kai, General Council Minister: Racial and Gender Justice
Laverne Jacobs, Co-ordinator, Aboriginal Ministries
Gail Allan, Interfaith – Interchurch program Officer

General Council Office: Residential Schools

James Scott, General Council Officer (jvscott@united-church.ca)
Cecile Fausak, Liaison Minister (cfausak@united-church.ca)
David MacDonald, Special Advisor (dmacdona@united-church.ca)

Print and Audio-Visual Resources Produced with UC Support

Oct 1991	Spirit Connection: "Native Issues special"	Oct 2001	Spirit Connection "Reconciliation"
Nov 1993	Spirit Connection: "Stan McKay: Memories & Search for Healing" <i>The Dancing Sun</i> worship resources (vol. I to VIII) & <i>Children of the Dancing Sun</i> curriculum (vol. IX to XII) Video "The Awakening of Elizabeth Shaw"	Lent 2002	Spirit Connection "Paths of Grace" – parts 3 and 4 look at the meeting of Native and Christian spiritual traditions
		2003	<i>Toward Justice and Right Relationship: A Beginning (green congregational study guide and DVD)</i>
1995	Booklet: <i>Why the Healing Fund?</i> Video: <i>Words are not Enough</i> – Intro to the Healing Fund	2003	Video or DVD " <i>Hear Our Voices</i> " – 4 part with study guide on social, political, economic, and cultural rights of First Nations
Feb 1996	Spirit Connection: "Healing from Abuse in IRS"	2003	<i>That All May Be One: A Resource for Educating Toward Racial Justice</i>
Dec 1996	Spirit Connection: "Recommendations of Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)"	May 2005	Mandate Special Mission theme edition "One More Step: Living in Right Relationship"
Apr 1998	Spirit Connection: "Native Issues and RCAP"	2005	Spirit Connection: "Listening to the Spirit- Preparing the Way" - National Aboriginal Consultation, Sudbury, July 05
Dec 1998	Spirit Connection: "File Hills Reserve – Healing and Apology"	2005	Spirit Connection: "Topahdewin: The Gladys Cook Story"
Feb. 1999	Spirit Connection: "Forum: The Apology"	Feb 2006	<i>A Healing Journey for Us All: Uncovering the Wounds of Empire.</i> A 3-session study process for National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (May 26)
1999	<i>From Our Mother's Arms: The Intergenerational Impact of Residential Schools in Saskatchewan</i> by Constance Dieter, UCPH	Feb 2006	Translation of the 1986 Apology to First Nations Peoples is completed into Oji-Cree, Swampy Cree, TH Cree, Oneida, Mohawk, Plains Cree Y and Ojibway. Also in French, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, and Spanish. Translations of 1998 Apology done by Jan/08.
2000	<i>Overview: Evaluation of Workers' Wonderings – A Gathering of Those Who Worked in the Indian Residential Schools held in Surrey, BC, March 2000</i>	May 2007	Mandate Special Mission theme edition "Challenging Empire: A Call to Community" p.10-11
Apr 2000	<i>Residential Schools Update</i> first newsletter published	Oct 2007	Spirit Connection: "Invitation to Encounter"
Apr 2001	Spirit Connection: "Native Justice"	Jan 2008	Circle and Cross – resource for dialogue
2001	KAIROS kit: "As Long as the Sun Rises and the River Flows"		
2001	<i>Justice and Reconciliation: The Legacy of Indian Residential Schools</i> (blue study resource)		

See the website: www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools
www.united-church.ca/en/funding/healing

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