



Moravian Church in Canada

DISTRICT EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Wednesday June 14th, 2017

Good morning all,

On behalf of the Board of Elders of the Canadian District of the Moravian Church Northern Province, please accept these three documents for your use in the next weeks, as the calendar moves towards Canada Day.

The intent of the BECD letter is to orient our congregations towards the topic of reconciliation with indigenous groups. There may emerge, through the ongoing work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, issues to which the Moravian Church, and other religious institutions, may need to respond. The unifying principles of our Moravian faith share central tenets of other faith traditions; God creates, redeems, and sustains, and we respond in faith, hope, and love.

The BECD encourages all our Canadian congregations, clergy, and lay leaders, to participate together on Sunday June 25th, to include the letter and possibly the prayers as part of our shared worship - either orally or in print form. Enriching awareness of our cultural connections will strengthen our community.

Your elected members of the BECD wish you well as we celebrate our rich history and promising future!

Blessings,

President,
Board of Elders of the Canadian District

To: Congregations, letter to be presented at June 25 Service.

From: Board of Elders of the Canadian District

Today, as every Sunday, we gather as God's people, aware of our shared journey and common call to be people of God.

Next Saturday, July 1st, we celebrate Canada's 150th Anniversary as a nation. Canada - a beacon of hope to so many people in our world. Ours is a nation of liberty, hard work and fair play. As we celebrate this milestone in Canadian history, we acknowledge the contributions of the three founding peoples of our nation, Indigenous, French and British, as well as the past and current waves of immigration that have led to the development of a diverse and inclusive society.

Today, we want to lift up the Indigenous people of our country who celebrated National Aboriginal Day, this past Wednesday the 21st of June. We recognize the cultural diversity of Inuit, Métis and First Nations people and celebrate their significant contributions to Canadian society through unique accomplishments in fields as varied as the military, agriculture, the environment and the arts.

As Canada celebrates its nationhood, it is important for us to remember the journey of our Indigenous brothers and sisters as the first people to whom the Creator entrusted this land. We acknowledge that the land upon which we gather is (**Read the one for your city: Calgary:** Treaty 7 territory and the traditional land of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakota (Stoney) and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee). / **Edmonton:** Treaty 6 territory and the traditional land of many Indigenous Peoples, including Cree, Saulteaux (Ojibwa), and Nakota (Sioux).

The signing of treaties by First Nations leaders was done with the understanding that the establishment of peaceful relations with the government would ensure the physical, cultural and spiritual survival of Indigenous people. For the Government of Canada, it meant that the land could be opened up for peaceful settlement and immigration. Our Moravian forefathers benefitted from these treaties when they settled in the Edmonton area in 1894, only 18 years after the signing of Treaty 6 and the placement of Indigenous people on reservations. Prior to that, Moravians had established missions with the Inuit of Labrador during the mid 18th Century.

The journey of First Nations as partners in confederation has not always been an easy one. The process of colonization through our shared history of treaty enforcement and residential schools has left a legacy that has tarnished the celebration of Canada150. However, the pathways to reconciliation established in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation report have provided an optimistic outlook for future transformation.

As people of faith, Moravians have been called upon to develop and live out a framework for the difficult yet hopeful task of reconciliation. The ultimate goal is to revitalize relationships with Indigenous peoples through dialogue and action that promotes healing and social justice for our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Chief Dr. Robert Joseph, Ambassador for Reconciliation Canada, states, "Reconciliation, at the heart of it all, is this idea of loving yourself, loving others. And we can all be driven by that as we try to determine what reconciliation looks like and where and how and when we will start." Chief Joseph invites us upon a journey of reconciliation to a future of caring and compassion where justice and equality will prevail for all Canadians and everyone will live with dignity purpose and value.

We share a common humanity with First Nations people and a shared belief in our Creator. For we are co-inhabitants of this world, each of us a creation of God. God in us, and us in God. He holds all of Creation in the palm of his hand, and we give thanks. Let us pause for prayer.

Your leadership, O Christ, is the resurrection.

Your healing, O Christ, is redemption.

Your work, O Christ, is reconciliation.

Lead us, heal us, send us to work, Amen.