



**Truth and
Reconciliation**
Commission of Canada

January 27, 2011

Ms. Henriette Thompson
Director, Partnerships
Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street
Toronto, ON
M4Y 3G2

Dear Ms. Thompson:

I am writing in follow up to our discussion regarding former residential school staff at the All Party meeting of December 15th 2010.

As part of our commitment to the promotion of truth and reconciliation, I would like to encourage former residential school staff to share their memories with the TRC. Residential school staff can provide us with a unique insight into the operation of the schools, the relationship between students and staff, and the day to day challenges of working in difficult circumstances. A better understanding of the experiences of former staff will help us to prepare a more comprehensive history of the residential school system and legacy which in turn will contribute to our final report and recommendations.

In addition to the insights we will gain from listening to the experiences of former staff, the process of listening and the opportunity to speak can become an opportunity for healing and reconciliation. Of the school teachers and support workers we have met with already, all expressed compassion for the students in their care, concern for the legacy left behind and a willingness to share their truths in order to reconcile with this troubled past.

Sadly, the number of former staff is rapidly declining. To ensure their voices are heard, we must work quickly to reach out to those who are still with us. We must let them know that the TRC is interested in what they have to say and that their memories will be respected. For this I would like your assistance, both to identify former staff who may wish to speak with us, and to re-assure former staff that we are interested to hear from them.

For those who wish to share their memories, the TRC will arrange for a personal interview with an experienced statement gatherer. Interviews will take place in a safe supportive environment in a location that is convenient for the participant and in the language of their choice. Health supports will be provided if requested. Friends and family are welcome to provide personal support. The interview can be undertaken on film or audio tape. The pace of the interview is determined by the participant (not the interviewer). Personal information will be protected unless the participant expressly chooses to waive that right. At the end of the TRC mandate, the interviews will be given to the National Research Centre where they will be available to the public, subject to applicable privacy laws. Above all else, the TRC will ensure that all participants will be treated equally; their opinions and memories will be respected.

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The TRC has identified Helen Harrison, a senior research analyst in the TRC Research Unit, to coordinate the work with former residential school staff. I would encourage you to contact her with your ideas and comments. Helen can be contacted by email at Helen.harrison@trc.ca or by phone at (613) 947-1093.

Kind regards,

The Honourable Mr. Justice Murray Sinclair,
Chair
Truth and Reconciliation Commission