



The Anglican Church of Canada / L'Eglise anglicane du Canada

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November 8, 2017

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing in support of Bill C-262, an act asking "...the Government of Canada to take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (UNDRIP). As parties to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, I believe we have a common obligation to ensure that genuine reconciliation in Canada becomes a reality. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has stated that the UNDRIP is the key to this reconciliation.

In 2010 the Anglican Church of Canada was the first signatory to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement to reject the Doctrine of Discovery, and at the same time we endorsed the UNDRIP. Much progress has been made since then. In 2013, I established a Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice, which made its interim report to our General Synod in 2016. Recognizing the depth and breadth of their work, their mandate has been extended.

In response to Call to Action #48, in March 2016 I released a statement called "Let Our Yes, Be Yes". I called on every diocese and territory of our church to ensure opportunity for learning about the history and lingering legacy of this doctrine, asked that the UNDRIP be read in parishes annually on the Sunday closest to National Aboriginal Day, and that the Declaration be part of preparation for baptism and confirmation in our churches.

Of note in the statement was the announcement of an Indigenous Elders and Youth Council – who now call themselves the Vision Keepers – whose mandate it is to monitor our on-going words and actions regarding the UNDRIP's endorsement by our church. Finally, this spring our church hired a full-time Reconciliation Animator to foster and encourage a network of reconciliation activities in the church nationwide, and to assess and encourage progress in our responses to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Our work is far from finished, but we are on the road.

I note your government's progress, particularly in the May 2016 announcement to make Canada a "full supporter, without qualification" of the Declaration. Minister Bennett's speech at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in April 2017 stating your intent to have a "working group to review all federal laws and policies related to Indigenous peoples, to reverse the colonial and paternalistic approaches" was particularly promising. It seems to me that passage of Bill C-262 would be the way to make this promise a reality.

Yours sincerely,

The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz
Archbishop and Primate