

March 1997

M E S S A G E

"The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." I never used to know what that meant. It didn't seem plausible that children, innocent children, should be made to suffer for the wrong choices made by parents, and it certainly didn't seem loving that those malign effects should be perpetuated for generations.

Of late, those words have taken on the ring of truth. Especially when I think of the parental role which the so-called "historic missionary churches" assumed in their relations with Canada's First Peoples, which role was expressed in significant measure through the residential school system. We treated them like children, and now I see them "unto the third and fourth generation" with their teeth set on edge.

Let me explain. I work in Vancouver's inner city, the home of the largest concentration of Aboriginal peoples (with the single exception of the city of Toronto) in Canada. Of the 300-400 people who come through the doors of the mission each day, more than half are from First Nations, from Kahnésatake to Haida Gwaii.

They are, with rare exception, the irreparably broken ones. In the three years that I have been here I have conducted two funerals of people who were more than 50 years of age. The rest were of people in their 20s and 30s. Victims of homicide, overdose, AIDS, suicide. In one afternoon I had services for two aboriginal women in their 20s. The first was thrown out

of a third story hotel window by her pimp; the second threw herself in front of a passing train the day she learned that her HIV virus had developed into full-blown AIDS. I listen to their stories of being shunted from foster home to foster home—the third generation of dysfunction that began with the apprehension of six year olds who were taken away to residential schools.

In November 1996 the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, in its final report named those residential schools as a key factor in the social disintegration that has taken place.

A few years ago, at a meeting of Christians from different parts of the world, the following prayer was repeated at the beginning of each day:

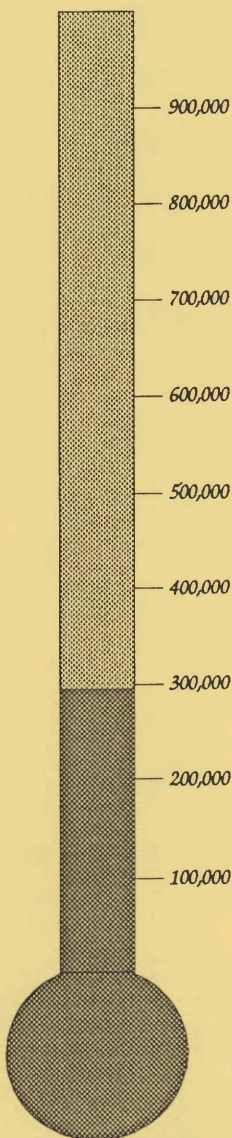
Tell us, Lord
what has happened to us?
Where did we go astray?

Our church has asked that same question, and has heard that we went astray by treating Canada's First Peoples as children. Now that we know that those children and their children's children have teeth that are set on edge we have an opportunity, through The Healing Fund, to begin to make things right. Already, in towns, cities and on reserves healing initiatives

have been started and, please God, will continue until, in the words of the 1986 Apology, "our people [are] blessed and God's creation healed."

*The Very Rev.
Robert F. Smith
Spokesperson
for The
Healing Fund*

One Million



THE

HEALING

FUND

RECEIVED APR 8 1997

THE HEALING FUND CONNECTION

*A Ministry of
The United Church of Canada
March 1997 Issue 2*

Newsletter for Conference and United Church Women Healing Fund Contacts

About this Newsletter—This is the second of three issues coming out each year to bring Conference and UCW contacts for The Healing Fund up to date. We want to share success stories of educational and fundraising events you are holding.

Let us know at:

The Healing Fund
The United Church of Canada
3250 Bloor St. W.
Etobicoke, ON
M8X 2Y4
Tel (416) 231-7680
Ext. 5047
Fax (416) 232-6005
email: jsiebert@uccan.org
Or you can catch updated info on The Healing Fund on the Internet
<http://www.uccan.org>

FEBRUARY 1997 TOTALS BY CONFERENCES

As part of their fund raising strategy a number of Conferences have set a fund raising goal for their contribution to The Healing Fund. Thanks and congratulations to Maritime Conference, which has almost reached its goal in donations and pledges. British Columbia Conference is leading the church in the total of donations and pledges to date. Just as exciting is the educational work being done by all the Conferences to enable United Church people across the country to understand the impact of the residential schools on First Nations' communities.

Conference	Conference Goals	Total Received	Pledges Due	Totals
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$0	\$2,496	\$710	\$3,206
Maritimes	\$25,000	\$18,289	\$4,446	\$22,735
Montreal & Ottawa	\$65,000	\$9,369	\$2,500	\$11,869
Bay of Quinte	\$35,000	\$16,604	\$0	\$16,604
Manitou	\$0	\$814	\$0	\$814
Toronto	\$85,000	\$36,494	\$5,602	\$42,096
Hamilton	\$0	\$14,953	\$250	\$15,203
London	\$100,000	\$4,877	\$1,000	\$5,877
Manitoba & NW Ontario	\$100,000	\$17,770	\$1,690	\$19,460
Saskatchewan	\$64,000	\$12,623	\$1,000	\$13,623
Alberta & NW	\$0	\$9,302	\$200	\$9,502
British Columbia	\$0	\$37,844	\$13,235	\$51,079
Extraordinary Gifts		\$80,433		\$80,433
Misc. & Foreign		\$419		\$406
Grand Totals	\$474,000	\$262,287	\$30,633	\$292,920

NEWS FLASHES

New Healing Fund Promotional Material

"Words Are Not Enough," a new 12-minute video produced on The Healing Fund is now available, as are the others mentioned below, from your closest AVEL outlet or by contacting your Conference committee. The video highlights the stories of former students with a message from The Very Rev. Robert F. Smith, Spokesperson for The Healing Fund.

The Healing Fund Poster entitled, "Hope From the Healing," is also now available. This 11"x17" poster is ideal for your church bulletin board. Call/write for copies.

Spirit Connection, November 15th, 1993 video includes a 23-minute documentary Search for Healing, which explores the painful memories of Native people who were former students in residential schools. Also on this programme is an interview with former Moderator Stan McKay who talks about how his years in residential school forced him to deny his Native culture and about the need today for reconciliation within the church.

The Awakening of Elizabeth Shaw is a 25-minute video that documents one missionary's response to the abuses she observed in a residence for Native children. Shaw worked briefly as a matron in a residential school for First Nations children in British Columbia.

Bay of Quinte Healing Fund Committee has given presentations to the following: five of seven Presbyteries, six UCW Presbyterials, eight Sunday morning and three Sunday evening services in congregations, two Workshops, and three Church Boards. The Chair, Norma Soble, has collected loonies and more in the "pink can" for a total of \$10,000. In February they jointly sponsored an all day workshop with the Francis Sandy Theological Centre on residential schools and The Healing Fund. Some Presbyteries are challenging others to specific fund raising goals.

Glenn Morison, who serves a two point pastoral charge in Hazelton and Gitsegukla, BC, has written a personal letter to 50 friends in places across the country where he has served the church asking for support of The Healing Fund. Glenn shared his experiences as a United Church minister in a Native congregation where, walking down the street, people stop him and ask if he really understands the impact of residential schools.

Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario Conference has had a Taskgroup on Residential Schools active for over six years. It has responsibility for providing educational and motivational assistance to Presbyteries and pastoral charges as they raise money for The Healing Fund. Five Presbytery workshops have been held or are planned as well as events in several pastoral charges. Videos and testimony by former students set the context for small group interaction and for questions to emerge. Roger Coll at the Conference office can be contacted to hold an event in Manitoba.

Jayne Little at the Wesley United Church in Cambridge followed up a suggestion in the 1996 *Mandate* article on The Healing Fund and organized an Elders Feast for everyone in the congregation over the age of 80. A story from the residential schools was read to convey the impact on students. The potluck lunch ended with a hymn sing of old favourites.

Toronto Conference has been active in their "Journey of the Healing Loon" campaign for The Healing Fund. All of the Presbyteries have had presentations and mailings and a Worship Service Resource are being sent out to Pastoral Charges for 21 June 1997, First Nations Day of Prayer.

Tom and Bev Brown served Native congregations in Keewatin Presbytery in Manitoba in the 1970s. After her death, Tom found these thoughts written by her: "I haven't read very much about Indian-non-Indian relationships and dealings, but knowing a few people with names and relationships makes it real, where it wasn't before. And my feeling is that a lot of damage has been done to a whole race of people, by a more aggressive people who didn't realize what they were doing. None of them really intended to do harm, but because they were there they kept on doing things that were harmful. And now I wonder if all the white people who travel around the reserves, including us, aren't acting in the same way. We don't intend harm but we create harm just by being there. . . . Yet I still feel that the damage has been imposed on the people and they may be helpless to undo it themselves. Maybe by learning how we create the damage we can learn to undo it. I firmly believe that God can do what he wills. The only thing is—what is God's will? The church has a long violent and bloody history, and much evil has been done in His name. Maybe the great evil is always trying to do, and not giving the Holy Spirit a chance to show what He wants."

The Healing Fund Council

Fourteen members of United Church Native congregations have formed The Healing Fund Council. They have established the criteria and guidelines for disbursement of the money raised through The Healing Fund. At their first meeting in the fall of 1995 they wrote their Statement of Purpose as follows:

Jesus said, "...Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven." Mark 10:14

From the strength of our First Nations' traditions we are recovering on the healing path. Our goal in working with The Healing Fund is to reach out to all broken, hurting people in our communities. Children no longer, we bear the scars of the past, and we are finding healing emotionally, physically, and spiritually, and we are available to walk with others on their wholistic, healing path. The historical aspect of government controlled Residential Schools has to be told and heard. The church and all Canadian society need healing. Support for The Healing Fund is a step in living out the United Church Apology to Native Congregations (1986).

Applications to The Healing Fund for Project Support

Many First Nations communities are diligently working to bring about healing in their communities, both on and off the reserve. You may know of such groups that could use the financial support of The Healing Fund. For criteria and guidelines for applying to The Healing Fund, please call, write, or e-mail: The Healing Fund c/o The All Native Circle Conference, United Church of Canada, 18 - 399 Berry Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 1N6; Tel (204) 831-0740; Fax (204) 837-9703; e.mail: ancc@mb.sympatico.ca

In Memory of Harvey Anderson

We were saddened to hear that Harvey Anderson, an elder from Mnjikaning (Rama) First Nation in Ontario, died of a heart attack on 16 January 1997. Harvey travelled with Sue Anderson, his spouse, to the first two meetings of The Healing Fund Council. Sue and Harvey have shared their insights with a number of United Church congregations which have requested speakers to explain The Healing Fund, work that Sue is continuing. Harvey's life and inspiration will remain with us as the work of The Healing Fund continues.



You can obtain more information about The Healing Fund from your
Conference Contact at: