

**Journey Towards Healing Together...Residential Schools Event**  
Pinawa Manitoba - April 11 to 13, 2010  
Small Group Feedback/Recommendations - Facilitated by Gloria Cook

Group 1 - April 12, 2010

- 1) Need to ask our political leadership where we fit in community:
  - As a 'church'...as 'aboriginal church' leaders.
  - In 'healing' work in community.
  - Ministers are used primarily for ceremonial church services. (eg) baptisms, weddings, funerals, special services like Christmas, Easter, Veterans Day, Mothers/Fathers Day.
  - Yet, ministers/helpers are expected to be there for the people in times of crisis and when there is trauma. (eg) suicides, death, family crisis, community crisis.
  - 'Outreach' ministry needs to be reviewed in community.
  
- 2) 'Healing of the Spirit' seems to be missing in health & wellness programs & services in the community. Traditional teachings are sometimes included, but no direct focus on healing the spirit. Yet, that's what the people ask for when there is a crisis...'prayers and spiritual support'.
  - Spirit is the 'foundation' of who we are. If we don't heal our spirit we are not whole.
  - We need to put the Bible *and* the Seven Sacred Teachings at the centre of healing.
  - Make a Declaration as a Group to practice the Seven Sacred Teachings...make them visible...be role models & practice them ourselves.
  
- 3) Do more training/conferences together as United Church and Anglican Church aboriginal people:
  - Need 4 - 5 days of training *together*...two days is not enough.
  - Do training that will help us do our work in community...this was good training on 'trauma'.
  - Training/retreats for the helpers because we are burning out.
  
- 4) Help the Anglican Church ministry personnel with funding and resources:
  - Currently volunteer work...no \$ resources to do/support the work. Communities receive funding and workers were paid, but the church workers are forgotten.
  - If spiritual healing of community is important, include us with other community resources...we are also part of community.
  - Ministry personnel are trusted by the people...they come to us. We are bound and practice their oath of confidentiality because it is part of our spiritual practice. This is an opportunity and gift.

5) Loss of our language is a big part of loss of our culture and identity as aboriginal people:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation can understand, but don't speak it.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> generation has lost the language.
- Next generation are taught in school (elementary) but come home to parents who don't speak the language.
- Important to our pride of who we are...get the children to teach us.

Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (Regional Groups Feedback)

Community participants in this group included:

- Cote Saskatchewan
- Carry The Kettle Saskatchewan
- Berens River Manitoba
- Fisher River Manitoba
- Sagkeeng Manitoba

Question asked as to what the commemoration fund is for and whether communities can apply for remembering our RSS or does it just have to be for a plaque?

Ideas for Commemoration Fund or 'Commemorating' Residential School Survivors (RSS):

- 1) Develop a *special symbol* in commemoration of all Residential School Survivors (RSS)...like the 'pink' ribbon or other symbols used universally.
- 2) Mark the RSS' graves in all our community cemeteries with this symbol to honor our ancestors and survivors.
- 3) As soon as the fund becomes available, advertise to our congregations.
- 4) Honor our RSS at community events (like Pow-Wows, Family Reunions, Community Feasts, etc)...have a give away.
- 5) Have themes like Sagkeeng has...'Remembering Our Past & Reshaping Our Future'. They have fixed up their old historic church and are inviting people to come share their stories and making their church a *healing* place.
- 6) Make our churches a *community* place of healing...welcome the survivors so they can start to heal. Some have said they would never step foot into the church again because of their abuse. We need to make our churches a community place of healing.
- 7) Do our own history book and stories by community or areas.

TRC Event...and things for them to consider and/or questions:

- 1) Recommendation that any copy right, royalties or profits made from the publishing of Residential School Survivors must go back to the RSS and their families and not to government, commission or any corporation.
- 2) Will the TRC process honor our language and recognize the loss of our languages formally? This was not a major concern with the church or government and the loss of our languages was not recognized *formally on its own*...it was blended in with all the other abuses. Regaining our languages is most important to our culture.
- 3) Can RSS tell their story in their own language at the TRC Event in June?
- 4) TRC must research family members lost who were in residential schools:
  - Family members were buried on RS lands & the graves were not marked. Some survivors know of kids buried *outside* burial sites.
  - Families need help accessing personal family information.
  - Some don't even know their family (ancestors) names or location of burial sites.
- 5) Clergy/church workers need more training on counseling RSS. The session on 'trauma' only touches the surface. Network and train United Church and Anglican Church workers/volunteers.
- 6) The churches put us in boxes...our workers work with the whole community. The 'Church' tell us *we need to work together*, yet when it starts to become a reality, the churches protect their territory and put us back into our boxes. If they are serious about healing, the bureaucracy needs to address perhaps working towards networking and stop the fear about losing their identity.
- 7) The role of Ministry Personnel and Church workers needs to be revisited with regards to helping the community heal. Many of our churches are only used for ceremonial services and are pretty empty for regular Sunday services. The healing work is in the community. Is our work becoming more *outreach community* work? If so, how can we make our churches a place for healing community? All levels of the community and church need to discern this and make some serious decisions.
- 8) What is being done for day schools on-reserve? They suffered abuses too and are survivors.