

June 21, 2016

Participants Proposal for WCC Central Committee from the Conference
“Reconciliation Processes and Indigenous Peoples: Truth, Healing and Transformation”
Trondheim, Norway

We, the Indigenous Peoples from around the world, have journeyed across the Mother Earth through sacred mountains, lands and waters, to meet in Trondheim, at the base of the river that flows from the ancestral homelands of the Sami. We gathered each with our own unique and specific identities, contexts and dynamics to share our stories, to listen, and to learn from each other so that we could discern together recommendations that inspire and influence the World Council of Churches (WCC) “Pilgrimage of justice and peace” from an Indigenous perspective.

As Indigenous Peoples we seek guidance from our resilient ancestors, drawing on the strength of the past for a just future, to understand our beginning, our history, and our current realities to stand strong in our own identities. We also look to the guidance of the future through the voice of our youth who gathered before this conference and co-created a statement. Our youth expressed their desire “to see a movement towards a decolonised way of thinking with regards to how we communicate across borders and between generations” that “creates a movement for justice and reconciliation.” Their wisdom provided a profound example of strength, solidarity, truth telling, humility, courage, and revitalized our hope as we take our rightful place in the Body of Jesus Christ.

Historical and current experiences of colonization is the over-arching commonality that burden both non-indigenous and Indigenous Peoples gathering here. Even more than the physical elements of colonization the emotional and spiritual abuses are the worst things to endure. The Church must acknowledge its part in this harm. To journey toward reconciliation in order to alleviate these aspects of deep trauma, healing must take place. Like the beating of the drum, this must come from the heart. The path to reconciliation is to heal both the oppressed and the oppressor.

Truth telling, repentance and restitution are integral to true reconciliation. Reconciliation too often comes to us as “cheap grace”. It happens when perpetrators move to apology before first hearing the stories of pain and hurt. These stories as uncomfortable as they are for the Christian Church must be embraced as “Truth”. The colonial impacts that profoundly shape our indigenous communities’ current realities including health and wellbeing cannot be moved through too quickly. We must be heard and we must be sources of awareness, understanding and repentance. This will ensure reconciliation processes that heal and transform relationships and produce visible and meaningful outcomes that change the horrendous and dreadful realities that face our Indigenous communities.

An indigenous perspective in reconciliation is imperative. Any attempt at such processes must be led and directed by Indigenous people. This is to ensure a holistic, non-linear approach is incorporated that creates space that is appropriate and encourages authentic truth telling. This truth becomes a source of awareness building and inspires taking responsibility. Reconciliation from an Indigenous perspective also means that this cannot be only an intellectual exercise. Reconciliation is an issue of the heart, the Spirit and is profoundly emotional. It challenges and breaks the systemic colonial practices that have divided us and severely damaged our relationships and have broken our hearts. Therefore we will need

to incorporate Truth and Reconciliation Processes that empower all of us to heal broken relationships that inspire us to truly love ourselves.

Therefore we recommend the following to the WCC Central Committee:

1. That the ongoing realities of injustice through colonisation, militarization, political oppression, economic exploitation, violence against women and children, and landlessness of Indigenous Peoples, inform and direct the pilgrimage of justice and peace.
2. That the Central Committee encourage member churches to support and resource reconciliation processes, both on-going and emerging that provide safe truth telling spaces.
3. That the Central Committee urges member churches to actively stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples to combat racism and to achieve justice incorporating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a minimum standard.
4. That the Central Committee urges member churches to be intentional and proactive about protecting God's creation and the earth by acting to counter climate injustice.

As representatives of the Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples' Network meeting in Trondheim we celebrate this opportunity to engage with the WCC Central Committee and by extension with the wider ecumenical movement to critically analyse and to reflect theologically on the issue and the meaning of a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. Our hope is that our message is received in the spirit of Christ who countered systemic evil with costly grace and exemplified how to live and witness to systemic good.

The following Indigenous Peoples were represented among the conference participants: *Bontok* (Philippines), *Kankanaey Igorot* (Philippines), *Manobo* (Philippines), *Bunun* (Taiwan), *Paiwan* (Taiwan), *Karbi* (India), *Khrunkh* (India), *Dewan Adat Papua* (Indonesia), *Biak* (Indonesia), *Yali* (Indonesia), *Bidjara* (Australia), *Adnyamathanha/Kyuani/Guburn/Noongar* (Australia), *Māori* (New Zealand), *Batwa* (Burundi), *Khoisan* (South-Africa), *Aymara* (Bolivia), *Quechua* (Peru), *Ch'orti'* (Guatemala), *Maya K'iche* (Guatemala), *Maya Tzutujil* (Guatemala), (Guatemala), *Guna Yala* (Panamá), *Ibanag* (USA), *Northern Cheyenne* (USA), *Cherokee, Dakota* (Canada), *Ojibwe* (Canada), *Wyandotte* (Canada), *Inuit* (Greenland), *Sami* (Norway, Sweden and Finland)

Trondheim, 21 June 2016