

# An Expression of Reconciliation from a Community of Mennonites

We give thanks to the Coast Salish peoples for allowing us to meet in their traditional territory. We recognize that the lands on which we live, work and worship are lands originally given by the Creator to the First Nations people. As Mennonite settlers we have benefitted greatly by your dispossession and marginalization.

Jesus said we are to love God and to love our neighbour:

- We confess that we have failed in our love and care toward our Indigenous neighbours.
- We commit to working towards reconciliation as we follow the example of Jesus whose life and mission modeled reconciliation, peacemaking and bringing justice.
- We commit to growing in our understanding of your history and culture, your attachment to and care for the land, and to educating those with misconceptions in our communities.
- We commit to growing in mutual relationships of trust and respect.

My name is Yenmo Ceetza. I am a survivor of eight years in the Kamloops Indian Residential School. My family, my faith, Alcoholics Anonymous and my art have all been part of my healing journey. Now we have made a video of my story to help others to be reconciled and to heal.

My name is Don Klaassen. Yenmo Ceetza's friendship with me has helped me understand what it means to be on a healing path. I hope our video will help Indigenous and non-Indigenous people across Canada to join us on this journey.

An Amish/Mennonite quilter in the 18th century is said to have expressed her reason for quilting this way: I make my quilts warm to keep my family from freezing. I make them beautiful to keep my heart from breaking.

Quilting is a slow, meticulous, intentional work. Women gather around a quilting frame and as we tell our stories, we are stitching the fabric of our lives together. Every quilt carries a message of care and compassion, an expression of community and of belonging. This "Log Cabin" quilt was hand stitched by the Mennonite quilters group which meets twice a week in Abbotsford, and we present it as a gift of warmth and friendship.

I would like to ask those in the gathering today who are part of the Community of Mennonites to stand with us in affirmation of this expression and action.

Thank you.