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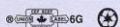
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December 21, 2012

Dear Chief Theresa Spence,

On behalf of KAIROS, I write to offer you support.

We offer prayers for your continued strength and health of body, mind and spirit as you pursue the non-violent resistance strategy of a hunger strike.

During our efforts to support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Saskatchewan earlier this year, we were taught that the Cree word for truth is “tâpwêwin” and that it can be interpreted as “speaking from the heart.” Through these words to you, we are striving to speak truth and to commit to reconciliation, equity and justice.

Last year, we were honoured to stand with the First Nation of Attawapiskat and join our voices to a worldwide call for funding, justice, and equity for your community and for the hundreds of communities facing similar crises of health, housing and education brought on by funding that is far too little and is deeply inequitable.

The roots of that crisis, we believe, lie in the larger crisis of Canada's continued failure to uphold the Treaties our non-Indigenous ancestors signed with yours. We strive to return to the teaching that these are sacred agreements, and to accept our responsibility to uphold them.

We see Treaties as nation to nation agreements that cannot be unilaterally altered and that are about sharing the land. As well, we understand Treaties to be an essential part of living out the churches' and Canada's apologies to the survivors of residential schools. Without respect for the Treaties, and without a commitment to live according to the original spirit and intent of those Treaties, reconciliation cannot be achieved.

We have urged Canada to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in full collaboration with Indigenous peoples. We commit to continuing to take action in support of Treaties as an integral part of that necessary implementation.

We fully support your call for a meeting that would bring together the Prime Minister, Governor General, Provincial leaders and First Nations and we will work to further that call in collaboration with Indigenous leadership.

This letter comes to you during Advent, a time of reflection and hopeful, expectant waiting for Christians. I am more than aware that as Christians, we have failed to live in respectful friendship with Indigenous peoples. As Christians, we have participated fully in colonization, and including, for some, in the terrible legacy of residential schools. We strive to live into a present and a future of right relations. In this sacred time, we join with you to attempt to heal the injustices and broken relationships that have for too long kept our peoples apart.

Be assured of our prayers for your continued strength. For your courage, we are so thankful.

Blessings ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Henry', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jennifer Henry
Executive Director