PREAMBLE AND PRAYER

CANADIAN BAPTISTS of Ontario and Quebec

Pastors prayer time June 1 led by Marc Potvin, Interim Director of Church Life and Leadership

Numbers 14: 18-19

> "The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation." In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.'

From Dany Zachariah's Facebook post, 31 May 2021 (Associate professor of NT at Acadia Divinity College and First Nation heritage)

"I have mentally been a little numb since the end of last week when I learned about the mass grave at the Kamloops residential school, and went about my weekend as I usually do. But this morning I woke up and reality came smashing in. Here are some rambling thoughts, feeble and inadequate as they are. They were helpful for me to get out of my mind and on to paper, perhaps they'll be medicine for you as well.

"They were taught about Jesus feeding the 5,000, then they were fed rotting food and oatmeal mixed with sawdust

…

"They were taught about how Jesus healed and made people whole, and then beat the children

"They were taught about Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit enabled the church to speak in many languages, and then they were punished for speaking their native language

"They were taught Jesus' teaching to love God and love your neighbour.

"Why weren't these children treated as neighbours?

"Willfully blind to their own hypocrisy, the church wed themselves to the state as agents of assimilation. As they preached "justification by faith," they lived out a justification for colonization.

…

"How could people who claim to follow and worship a brown-skinned Indigenous man at the same time try to kill the Indian in the child.

"Kill the Indian in the child.

"Kill the Indian child.

"Had Jesus been born in Canada, he would have been rounded up too. For these 215 children, representative of many more whose names we do not know, this school was a death camp. A place of pain. A place of abuse, sadness, hunger, and loneliness. A ministry of the church.

"Everyone I know, regardless of their ethnicity, is appalled by this story, and they should be. But I remind myself of this, and you should remind yourself too: this is another of many waves that have crashed upon Indigenous peoples of Canada, and there will be more to come. My heartbreak and your heartbreak is something that has been felt and continues to be felt for multiple generations of First Nations people. This is not ancient history, but living reality."

…

Prayer created with CRC and UCC prayers

- Litanies for Indigenous Ministry Sunday

Wise and loving God, you have created, and are still creating, a world rich with difference and diversity. You have created all people in your image, each expressing their being and living their life in valid, special relationship with you. **For all this, we give you praise.**

How difficult it has been, O God, for us to be humble and caring. The call to go out into all the nations and bring the good news has so often been compromised by our fear of what we do not understand.

We confess that we can lapse into stereotypes, fear, and suspicion of our Indigenous neighbours. There is brokenness between us as your children.

We too easily say, "get over it", and don't try to understand that Canada – our society, our churches - tried for generations to 'kill the Indian in the child' by removing children from the influence of their parents, their communities, and their cultures. The scars that resulted are real still today.

We confess this generational and corporate sin today.

We also confess historical acts of injustice and oppression perpetuated not only against Aboriginal communities, but also against Black, and various Asian communities

For the times we have failed to recognize racism in ourselves, in our church, in our society, and the times we have failed to take action, **Forgive us.**

For our complicity in systems of privilege and power over those whose skin colour, culture, language or faith differ from those of the majority, even today: **Forgive us.**

Grant us courage not to let a racist joke pass in our hearing, commitment to insist on equal treatment of all persons and groups— including ourselves if oppressed—
even at the risk of being unpopular or misunderstood:

Grant us patience in enduring periods of non-action, persistence in resisting the evil of radical oppression, and faithfulness in working toward racial justice among your people, in the church, and in the world:
And grant us humility and wisdom to discern when it is that your Spirit must come to accomplish that which human beings and groups cannot.

We pray in the name of Jesus, himself the one who is truth, light, and freedom. **Amen.**