

WINNIPEG – Inter-cultural experience trip January 2017



Early in January a group of In-Ministry Year (final M.Div. year) students and accompanying staff travelled to Winnipeg for a one-week trip to learn about aboriginal religious life.

They stayed at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

The purpose of this trip was to provide M.Div. students with an opportunity to engage in contextual theological experience, particularly in relation to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. Through presentations and conversations, the students explored aboriginal Christian identity, traditional aboriginal culture and experiences, and the urban experience of indigenous peoples in Canada. They also explored the TRC Calls to Action and ways that the churches might continue to participate in the way of reconciliation with the First Peoples of Canada.

Here are some of their comments after their return:



"One of my main learnings from the trip was the importance of relationships. We speak often about our relationship with God and how important it is for us to continue to reconcile that relationship. In Winnipeg, we saw how many indigenous families, workers and aid organizations were there to serve the communities they were in. They stressed the importance of relating to people as they are while not

demanding they subscribe to a doctrine or creed. At the end of the day, our faith is founded on relationships; in our future missions we need to ensure we can build and nourish relationships in the communities we serve."

E.

"The first place we visited was the Human Rights Museum. We went on the Mikonak-Keya Spirit Tour. A general theme in the museum is light versus darkness. The museum, from the outside, is all windows, rising above four cement foundations, which represent the four directions (North, East, South and West). Inside on the main floor is an art piece in the shape of a circle, mounted in a frame. This lighted circle represents Turtle Island, which means North America. Another lighted area is the Turtle ramp which starts on the second floor and rises to the seventh floor of the museum. The sides of the ramp are made from Alabaster shell and are lit. The effect of this is a beautiful ramp which shines from floor to floor. A third example of light inside the museum is the Israel-Asper tower. The glass around this tower allows the visitors to get a panoramic view of Winnipeg."



J.



"My feelings were after hearing different people talk about their life & how uneasy it has been that hope for them is really a star. Hope for them is a star that guides their endeavor & prayer to arrive to safer shores. Without this guiding & inspiring star they will be truly lost & dispirit. Our hope seems somehow superficial if compared with theirs. Actually, their whole experience in terms of faith & worship seemed more tangible & down to earth. And even the term "down to earth" here has a truer meaning. I'm so happy that I was part of this trip."

R.