



# The United Church of Canada

## Saskatchewan Conference

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### MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### The United Church of Canada Gives One-Half of its Income from Natural Resources to its First Nations Brothers and Sisters

The Saskatchewan Conference of The United Church of Canada held its annual general meeting from Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup> when over 250 people from various parts of the province gathered in Lanigan.

Those present at the meeting decided that the Saskatchewan Conference, a Conference of The United Church of Canada, will give one-half of the net income that it has received from oil producing property to its first nations counter-part within the United Church, the All Native Circle Conference. The gift is a sharing of the revenue of the natural resources that it owns. It is hoped that this gift will be a positive example to the Saskatchewan Government to enter into meaningful negotiations to share revenue from natural resources with First Nations.

Treaties were covenants designed to allow both First Nations and settler communities to dwell together in peace and harmony and to live off of the fruits of the land. However, First Nations people have suffered and continue to suffer negative social and economic consequences because of colonial oppression and have consistently asked for a share of the bountiful wealth which is derived from the resources of the land. To date the Saskatchewan Government has refused to enter into meaningful negotiations respecting the sharing of the revenue from such resources with First Nations.

This gift is a reflection of the United Church as a Christian denomination in that we are called as Christians to respond to "loose the bonds of injustice" (Isaiah 58:6). The gift will result in an immediate payment of over \$150,000 to the All Native Circle Conference and additional payments of ½ of the net income which are anticipated to be approximately \$25,000 per year. The gift is being made in spite of the adverse effect on the financial reserves of Saskatchewan Conference and its annual budgeting.

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Mission and Service Fund

The United Church of Canada and Saskatchewan Conference have long advocated on behalf of the marginalized and for equality rights for those within the indigenous community. Whenever the Conference meets it acknowledges that it is meeting on land that is part of the traditional territory of the First Nations. The United Church has also acknowledged its involvement in the operation of Indian Residential Schools. It has publicly apologized in 1986 and in 1998 to First Nations Peoples, to former students of United Church Indian Residential Schools, and to their families and communities for the pain and suffering that the United Church's involvement in that system has caused.

The journey towards reconciliation between First Nations and settled peoples is a long one. May this be another step along the way and may God's love for all continue to be a part of God's vision for all of creation.

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**Mission and Service Fund**