



OFFICE OF THE PRIMATE

## Anglican Church of Canada

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### A letter to the church from the Primate

November 23, 2005

My brothers and sisters in Christ

Today, I bring to members of the church, especially to our indigenous brothers and sisters who attended residential schools, some very good news.

The federal government working with the Assembly of First Nations, ourselves and other Christian denominations has reached an agreement to all outstanding residential schools issues. I hope that this will bring a just and lasting solution to this painful part of our history for those who suffered either from abuse while they were there, or from the policy of assimilation that the schools were meant to foster

Under the terms of the agreement announced today, each and every person who was a student at residential schools is entitled to just financial compensation. The announcement specifies that former students who are elderly will have their payments expedited. In addition, the agreement allows for compensation for sexual abuse and serious physical abuse. These are essential steps along the road to healing and reconciliation.

The agreement announced today includes a settlement agreement with the Roman Catholic Church under which that church undertakes to provide extensive programs in healing and reconciliation. The Roman Catholics, however, are not required to pay compensation to former students of the schools they helped operate whose claims of physical or sexual abuse are validated.

Those terms in the Roman Catholic agreement are more favourable to that church than the terms of our own agreement, which was signed in 2003. However, our agreement with the federal government contained a clause – the so-called ‘most favoured nation’ clause – which stipulates that if another entity reaches more favourable terms with Ottawa, and then we have a right to renegotiate.

I am therefore announcing that we have invoked this clause and that the federal government has agreed to renegotiate our agreement.

Under that agreement, the General Synod and each of the church’s 30 dioceses committed themselves to raising a total of \$25 million for a compensation fund over three years. We are now more than half way though that time period. It has been far from easy, but through dedicated effort, the Church has raised more than \$16 million of that total.

The legal details of today’s agreement are complicated and their full implementation is some months away. But today’s news means more light at the end of this very dark tunnel than we have been able to see in a long time.

Now I want to say this, most emphatically, to our indigenous brothers and sisters. Our first priority throughout these lengthy negotiations has been justice, healing and reconciliation with our native brothers and sisters. This priority remains and our work in achieving these goals will continue.

Less than a week ago, the Council of General Synod unanimously passed a motion calling the church to prayer for the success of the negotiations then underway under Justice Frank Iacobucci, with all parties involved in residential schools issues. I want to thank him for the swift dedicated and just manner that he has brought to this remarkable achievement. We realize that we have some way to go before the full terms of this agreement are implemented and we have a very long way to go in achieving full healing and reconciliation with our indigenous brothers and sisters.

But today is a historic day for this Church and for the people of Canada. We as Anglicans and Canadians have taken a giant step along that road.

The Most Rev. Andrew S. Hutchison  
Archbishop and Primate