

Reflection on Christian Unity
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Ephesians 4:15-16

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The plain meaning of this passage is surely that when we speak the truth in love, the body (of Christ, the church) is built up in love.

In the Canadian Council of Churches we know we have our differences but I believe we work very hard at speaking the truth in love. The fact that we operate as a forum where each voice is equal helps with this commitment. When we are working on statements together it may feel like we are speaking the truth in frustration, but whether we come to consensus or not on the wide variety of issues we consider, we do our best to speak the truth in love.

The measure of how successful we have spoken the truth in love is, according to Paul in this passage, is: has the church been built up in love.

Over the past year we have had a tangible example of trying to do this within the Council.

A year ago the CCC took on the challenge of crafting an Expression of Reconciliation that we could all offer at the final event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Edmonton.

We spoke the truth in love in the team that worked on it. It was not always easy. Some spoke the truth from the perspective of adult survivors of residential schools; some spoke the truth from the perspective of the history of the schools; some spoke the truth from the perspective of little children taken from their homes and communities; some spoke the truth from the perspective of staff who served with selfless devotion; some spoke the truth from the perspective of church institutions who have been hurting; some spoke the truth from the perspective of personal journeys seeking reconciliation.

What we say is always incarnate. So we can never fully detach our perception of the truth from ourselves. They are my words, your words, my truth, your truth. So they are imperfect. But as we spoke these very different truths it was always done together and in love. And I think we came to an expression that is even closer to the truth than we might have had we not worked together. In fact I'm sure of that.

As one of the four churches that ran Residential Schools, I must tell you how meaningful it was to me and to our church to know that all the other churches in the

Council were able to stand with us in Edmonton and speak truth together about this legacy.

Of course, what Paul speaks of is not my truth or even the truth of our shared work. Truth is ultimately the gospel. That is what is most important. The truth is the good news of Jesus Christ for all people.

That is the truth that builds up the body in love. I think we saw that in the work we did together on this statement and I pray that as a result our churches will be better able to share Christ's love. And that is a wonderful expression of Christian unity.