



February 9, 2021,

Dear Adrian Dix and Dr. Bonnie Henry,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, the one who said, “The Spirit of the Lord is Upon me....to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” We write as the senior leaders of the Pacific Mountain Region of the United Church of Canada in response to what we have seen in Bella Coola. We stand with the people of the Nuxalk Nation in their experience of systemic racism portrayed in the actions of Dr. John Hardy removing vaccines destined for the community. We also join with you as you likely watched with disappointment one example of your own work undermined by the inappropriate and unhelpful actions of others.

With a commitment to living out the Calls to the Churches in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and in our denomination’s own Call to Action, written by the Indigenous Elders Circle of the region, we call for two immediate actions.

Recognizing that you have offered faithful and unwavering leadership in this pandemic, this is an opportunity to deepen that resolve and to move the work of reconciliation. We know that the Nuxalk Nation has received informal words of apology in various ways. We know in our work, that a formal letter of apology from both your offices, will be an important step in resolving this particular situation.

According to the gospel we espouse, we are called to love not just with words or speech but also with actions and in truth. Apologies only go so far. And so, we encourage you to develop an immediate vaccination program for the most vulnerable of our Indigenous Communities and that you communicate that plan as quickly as you are able.

For our part, we are in regular contact with elders in the communities to build trust and hope in the relationships we are privilege to participate. In our recent justice work, have identified reconciliation as one of the major priorities of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, calling on our communities of faith in the region to pray for, and work toward the ending of systemic racism in our communities.

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on the ancestral and unceded territories of the hən̓d̓əmíḵəḵ and Skwxwú7mesh speaking peoples
Office: 1600 Cliff Avenue, Burnaby BC, V5A 2K2 Tel: 604-431-0434 or 1-800-934-0434 (BC)



This pandemic has stretched all our capacities. On behalf of the Pacific Mountain Regional Council, we thank you for the mammoth task you have undertaken on behalf of all people. We celebrate that we are blessed with such gifted and dedicated leaders.

In peace and kindness,

Rev. S. Blair Odney
President

Treena Duncan
Executive Minister

Cc – Tammy Lindhal
John Snow, Pacific Mountain Region Indigenous Minister
Jay Jones, Indigenous Ministry Co-Chair
Beverly Brown, Indigenous Ministry Co-Chair
Lucy Hansen, Admin. Coordinator for the Hon. Adrian Dix

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