



## **Endorsement for Resource Box: Reaching Up to God our Creator**

In June 2008 the Prime Minister of Canada officially apologized and asked the forgiveness of Aboriginal Peoples on behalf of the Canadian government for “*failing them so profoundly*” in its role in the Residential school system. In particular, he highlighted the assimilation policy which has proven to be devastating to the very fiber to who we are as Indigenous peoples in most cases. Canada has modeled many of its policies after the governmental practices of our American neighbours. Tens of thousands of children experienced these residential schools. Thousands of families and hundreds of communities suffered the effects of losing their children for months and years over several generations. The effects impact us to this day.

The Canadian government’s apology kicked off a Truth and Reconciliation process that will be traveling across Canada over the next five years, to officially document the Residential School experience. We are entering a period of time that will raise the consciousness of this issue with tremendous intensity and will undoubtedly lead to other issues as the stories are told and additional questions are raised. Over the last decade, many mainstream churches, including the Mennonites, have also apologized and committed to building new relationships and to work at a healing process. A call for a similar apology is being pursued in the United States.

Within this context, it is most timely that the “*Reaching up to God our Creator*” resource box comes to you and your congregation. It is our hope that you will accept this resource as a starting point for entering into a process of reconciliation and of building respectful relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, within Aboriginal communities, churches and families. From time to time the designers of this box will provide new resources but we ask that you also take responsibility and initiative for finding resources to increase the relevance of the box for your community and setting. This box provides tools to assist us in developing a new lens with which to re-examine our history, our relationships and our responsibility to one another.

We recognize that this undertaking can be daunting, and even controversial ground, for some of us. Our hope is that you will embrace the uncomfortable, realizing that the journey to reconciliation often leads us through difficult territory. It is better to go through than around these difficulties. We trust Creator, who loves us all, will walk with us and provide the strength, courage, and discernment we need to embrace the uncomfortable and discern Creator’s will as we journey together.

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