



The United Church of Canada General Council

Reconciling & making new

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Introduction

Today is a time of spiritual dislocation for many Christians. A secular and consumerist spirit pervades public life. The shopping mall can be as much a Sunday morning destination as is church. Many people identify themselves as “spiritual” but not “religious”. They choose not to identify themselves with any of the traditional churches of Canada. Greater knowledge of the richness of the world’s religions, together with the arrival of immigrants and refugees from all corners of the earth, has brought Canada greater cultural and religious diversity than earlier generations might ever have imagined. This is true not only in Toronto and Vancouver, but in Lac la Biche, Alberta and Shediac, New Brunswick.

The proximity of people of other faiths has served to break down stereotypes about other faith communities. We may even feel challenged by the spiritual and moral integrity of some of our newer neighbours. These developments have raised the question of how to relate the historic teachings of the church about Jesus Christ to the present pluralistic moment. As Christian people we want to witness faithfully to the salvation, wholeness and challenge we have experienced through the gospel of Jesus Christ. At the same time, and precisely because we know Jesus as God’s Word

made flesh, we want to treat all our neighbours ethically. We want to acknowledge the value we see in them and in their own expressions of faith.

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