



Canadian  
Race Relations  
Foundation

Fondation  
canadienne des  
relations raciales

## Event Report

1. **Name of the Event:** *Spirit of Reconciliation* Book Launch
2. **Event Date:** February 24, 2020
3. **Brief Description of the Event:** A festive book launch event, featuring welcome to the land from a local elder; greetings from the CEOs of the two partner organizations (CRRF and Vancouver School of Theology), and the project co-coordinators; and comments by some of the project contributors. Between the brief talks, musicians sang and led chants. In the spirit of the event – launch of a multifaith resource for Reconciliation -- speakers and musicians represented Musqueam, Cree, Squamish, and Nisga'a nations, and Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Bahá'í, Sikh, Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic and Evangelical traditions.
4. **Main Speakers:** Melany Gleeson-Lyall, Musqueam artist; Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, Principal of VST; Dr. Lilian Ma, Executive Director of CRRF; Rev. Dr. Raymond C. Aldred (Cree), Director of Indigenous Studies at VST and project co-director; Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan, Director of Inter-religious Studies at VST and project co-director.

**Other Speakers:** Book contributors Deacon Rennie Nahanee, (Squamish Nation; Catholic); Melanie Delva, (Anglican); Sukhvinder Kaur Vinning (Sikh); Ciprian Jauca (Bahá'í); Eva Ziduliak (Buddhist; Acharya S.P. Dwivedi (Hindu), Dr. Syed Nasir Zaidi (Islam).

**Musicians:** Melanie Gleeson-Lyall (Musqueam), Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls (Presbyterian), Dr. Charles Kaplan (Jewish), Hubert Barton (Nisga'a), Rev. Dr. Raymond C. Aldred (Cree), Catalina Parra, Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan.

5. **Audience:**
  - a. **Number of the attendees:** 85
  - b. **Who were the main audience?** Vancouver area spiritual leaders; leaders of local interfaith organizations; VST faculty, staff, and students
6. **Strategic Impact**

### CRRF Strategic Objectives 2017-2020

The CRRF will ...

- 1) Identify key issues of racism and racial discrimination
- 2) Be recognized as the leading national comprehensive resource on racism, race relations, best practices and recommended solutions
- 3) Engage Canadian Youth and other groups in addressing racism and race relations using a variety of means
- 4) Develop and promote education on the content of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism Act, their inherent values as a source for building a common understanding of our individual responsibilities, and as a tool for exploring the nature of rights and their limits in Canada with respect to speech, religious beliefs and discrimination

**a. Which of the above strategic objectives were met?**

- (1) The book focused on Reconciliation, and included discussion of land destruction, displacement of families through residential schools, colonialism, poverty, and hate. At the launch itself, speakers mentioned several of these.
- (2) This launch brought CRRF to the attention of religious leaders in British Columbia.
- (3) This book and its launch involved religious and spiritual leaders in learning about challenges facing Indigenous communities and suggesting ways that religious communities can participate in raising awareness and pointing towards solutions.
- (4) The book and its launch express values inherent in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Multiculturalism act, encouraging religious groups to educate their communities about them.

**b. Please assess the strategic impact. Describe why (or why not) the event was a success? How did you measure the success? What metrics were used to measure success?**

The book launch was a success by both quantitative and qualitative standards. By quantitative standards, the audience of 85 was the maximum the room as it was set up could hold; on the first two days following the launch, the online e-book was viewed over 300 times. By qualitative standards, attendees reported being moved by the combination of words and music; the diverse affiliations of the speakers; and the amount of information about Reconciliation and multiculturalism presented. Many signed up to be notified of a second print run for the hardcopy.

Success was due to careful planning; inclusive nature of the program; attentive hospitality provided by VST staff and student volunteers; strong collaboration and clear communication between CRRF and VST; detailed attention to preparing the book by CRRF manager Suvaka Prithayarsan, co-editors Ray Aldred and Laura Duhan-Kaplan, and book designer Don Monkman; and strong publicity by VST.

**c. How can this event be improved in the future?**

The event was excellent, and we at VST did not identify anything significant we would like to have done differently. We underestimated the demand for print copies, but will address that by reprinting according to the terms of the MOU with CRRF.

Around the book itself, we at VST underestimated how badly needed the resource is. For some of the religious communities involved, it was challenging for the co-editors to identify authors who felt qualified to speak about Reconciliation on behalf of their traditions. A multi-author book takes about a year to produce; knowing that in advance will reduce some stress for project managers.