



BRITISH COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA L'ÉGLISE UNIE DU CANADA

November 29, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

I never thought I would be writing the man who has done so much to inspire hope and possibility in the world, who has worked against seemingly overwhelming odds to do so much for so many. It is an honour and a privilege to write you and to take note that your presence and offering of greatness and good news to all brought out a resounding return on the day of your own election. I only wish the recent campaign had offered folk similar prospects. However, we have what we have, and we must do what we must do to address it. That is the second point of this letter.

I am writing you as President of the BC Conference of The United Church of Canada to request your support for the people of the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota. As you are aware, the Standing Rock Reservation has become a focal point in the struggle to protect creation from the harmful effects of fossil fuel contamination. Your ongoing efforts to safeguard our environment and stand with people whose human rights are under attack are well known in my country. Members of our church hope you will take some time, in these latter days of your presidency, to make another statement of support by ending the pipeline project.

It is so difficult to see ordinary men and women, representing the first peoples of this land, being pushed aside, herded by dogs, gassed, sprayed and beaten for attempting to defend their ancestral lands, the waters that nurture all life, and the sacred spirit that permeates the ground around them. It is also so difficult to see other ordinary men and women, representing the people who settled on this land, using dogs and weapons to beat men and women out of the way of bulldozers. All alike are dehumanized; all, participants and viewers, are made less. Please use the powers left to you on behalf of the people, the land, and the spirit that calls us into great hope and wonderful possibilities to bring an end to the Dakota Access Pipeline project.

Thank you for taking the time to be made aware of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Reverend Keith Simmonds
President