

announced at the Atlantic National Event in 2011. It is a specially commissioned stained-glass window entitled *Giniigaaniimenaaning* or *Looking Ahead*, designed by Métis artist Christi Belcourt. Its two-sided imagery depicts the history of the residential schools, the cultural resilience of Aboriginal peoples, and hope for the future. The window was permanently installed in the Centre Block of the federal parliament buildings, and unveiled in a dedication ceremony on November 26, 2012.<sup>221</sup> Putting this window in such a prominent public place helps to make the history and legacy of residential schools more visible to the Canadian public and the world at large, while also acknowledging the federal government's responsibility in establishing the residential school system.

At the dedication ceremony, artist Christi Belcourt said that her inspiration for the window's design came from Survivors themselves. She said,

The stories of residential school students were never told in this building, so I'm going to tell you one now.... I asked Lucille [Kelly-Davis] who is a residential school survivor what she wanted to see on the window. I had assisted her through the residential school settlement process, and like so many survivors, her story is horrific.... Despite her childhood, she married, had four children, and now has many grandchildren. She is a pipe carrier, attends traditional ceremonies, and helps younger people learn the traditions. She's a powerful Anishnabeg grandmother who is generous, loving and caring, and gives all she can to her community and her family. She is not a victim, but a survivor. When I asked her what to put on the window, she said, "Tell our side of the story..." She said, "Make it about hope..." It's about looking ahead, as the name of the window says, "giniigaaniimenaaning" looking to the future for those yet unborn....

Because she told me to make it about hope, what I've tried to show in the design is all the positive things I've seen in my life. Despite residential schools, children, adults, and Elders dance in full regalia in celebration of who they are as Indigenous people. We see Métis youth learning fiddling and jigging with pride across the country. We see arenas full of Inuk Elders drum dancing, with little kids running around, speaking Inuktitut. We see whole communities come together in times of joy and in times of great grief. The lodges are growing, the traditional songs are being sung, the ceremonies are being taught, and the ceremonies are still practiced.

I wish I could show the government that reconciliation has the potential to be so much more. I wish I could convince them that reconciliation is not an unattainable goal, if there's the will and the courage to discard old paternalistic ways of thinking and of behaviour. We need action, and where we need action, don't meet us with silence. Where we need support, don't accuse us of being a burden.... I wish I could speak to the hearts of MPs, whether Conservative, or NDP, or Liberal, and let them know that renewal and reconciliation can be found between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada through the sustained wellness of generations of Aboriginal people to come.<sup>222</sup>