



OFFICE of the PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT

August 11, 2020

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON MÉTIS IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP

To my fellow Métis across the province of Saskatchewan:

I am writing today as I feel compelled to share some thoughts on Métis identity and calls to action for responsible leadership. This has been a topic of community conversation over the last several days following some ugly and unacceptable statements that have been made online and in public. Several citizens and community members have called, written or otherwise contacted me to express their shock and disappointment. I share their concerns.

We must be clear on who we are as a people, who we are as a nation and stand firm in defending the sanctity of our communities, identity and peoplehood. It is also important that as a people we walk the right path in these discussions and comport ourselves with principle, compassion, understanding and resist the base urges of bigotry, prejudice and lateral violence. We have been the target of hateful and harmful attitudes as Métis people, and we should resist the temptation to subject others to similar abuses. We should not attempt to correct the sins of the past by redirecting them onto others.

Our Métis identity is rooted in our culture, our values and our language and plays a critical role in the unity of our Métis Nation. At the national level in 2002, as Governing Members, we agreed to a definition of who is a Métis person based on historical knowledge, traditional laws of kinship and principles of solidarity. This definition states that a Métis is a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis ancestry and is accepted by the Métis Nation. The Métis Nation Government of Saskatchewan has been built with this simple but powerful fact at its core: we know who we are as Métis. This principle informs everything our government does. It is reflected in our Constitution. We manage and maintain a strong registry of our citizens. We provide programs and services to registered Métis citizens. We require those hoping to lead us to hold citizenship to run for office and that citizens be registered to vote in elections to determine this leadership.

We all know that there are others across Canada who seek to call themselves "Métis". We are also collectively clear and unified that these people are not us. We know who we are. It is important that we resist attempts to usurp our history, our culture and our identity. It is also unacceptable to use terms that are racist, derogatory, or



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dehumanizing. No matter the topic, circumstance or issue at stake, this kind of behaviour is unacceptable and has no place in our private and public forums.

As leaders of the Métis Nation, we are duty-bound to put the needs and interest of our citizens ahead of our own. The needs of one do not outweigh the needs of many. The vision of our historical leadership underlines the Métis spirit of pride, independence, and self-determination. To get to where we are today required overcoming incredible tests of intellect, persistence and courage, and this has contributed to our collective consciousness as a people and as the Métis Nation. We have a shared history, common culture, a distinct way of life, traditional territories that underpin our strong, distinct collective identity. This is what distinguishes us as Métis people. You know this. We know this.

I call on all leaders within the Métis Nation to provide the kind of leadership that our citizens and our communities can be proud of. I call on all of us to be leaders that our youth can look to as examples and role models. Let us be leaders that think and speak ethically, respectfully, and truthfully. As leaders, we are asked by the citizens who elect us to carry with us always the legacy of our people, our wise historical leaders and the collective hopes and dreams of our great Métis Nation. Honouring this history demands that we not only defend its border, but that we protect and nurture its heart and its soul.

This government is and always has been a Métis nationalist government. As long as I am your President, it will remain one. But we will also be a government that builds instead of destroys. We will be a government that leads with a hand raised to help our citizens rise to greater heights instead of a clenched fist to beat down those weaker than us. For too long, we have allowed ourselves to be distracted and mired in ugly battles. My government will continue to fight. But we will fight for our nation, for a hopeful tomorrow, and for our children and our communities to flourish and prosper as is our rightful destiny as Métis people.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Glen McCallum". The signature is fluid and cursive.

President Glen McCallum