

WALKING TOGETHER — IN A — GOOD WAY

MOVING TOWARD WHOLENESS



Contents

- 3 **My Grandfather's Prayers:**
A Reflection
- 4 **A Call to Reconciliation in Our Land:**
Statement on the Importance of
Truth and Reconciliation and the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- 5 **A Good Way of Beginning:**
Learn Whose Territory You are On
- 6 **An Apology in the Making:**
Resetting the Relationship
- 8 **Home and Native Land:**
Canada's Racism Problem
- 10 **Red Brother Red Sister:**
A Reflection
- 11 **A Good Way of Understanding:**
Read the Truth & Reconciliation
Commission Report
- 12 **The Day I Stopped Driving By**
Checking Your Blind Spots
- 16 **Guilty Roots**
Owning Our Ever-Present Past
- 19 **A Good Way to Listening:**
Hearing from Indigenous Voices
- 20 **Undoing the Damage:**
The History of Christian Mission
among North American Indians
is not a Happy One
- 22 **Residential School Song:**
A Song by Cheryl Bear
- 22 **Journeying Backwards:**
Healing the Divides

CBM acknowledges that its head office is situated upon traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations (Mississauga Tract, Treaty 19).



WELCOME TO THE GOOD WAY

THE REASON FOR THIS TITLE, Walking Together in a Good Way, is to acknowledge that we are on a journey. Reconciliation is not a destination. It's a journey that will last our lifetime and generations to follow. There is always prep time for a trip, contingent on the length and difficulty. This is where we are right now within Canadian history. We still have a lot to learn about the Indigenous perspective of history and Christianity, and also about Indigenous worldview, culture, values, and spirituality. Misunderstanding in Canada about these things is rampant. Many non-Indigenous people say to me, "I have never heard of the Residential Schools." Those words come from educated, thoughtful, good-hearted Christians in churches across Canada and this is only one example among many misunderstandings.

Now, let's start off this journey with this acknowledgment, "You don't know what you don't know" ... and let's follow that acknowledgment with, "Now that you know, how then shall we live." Now let's take that first step.

~ Cheryl Bear

MY GRANDFATHER'S PRAYERS

AN OPENING REFLECTION



AS I WRITE THIS, I'm sitting in my room in my community, Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, at my late Grandpa Alec George's house. Growing up, I spent many summers here and weekends in the winter. Grandpa's house was our house and we were always welcome.

There are memories of him all over the place. Last year, we tore down the old shed that held the winter's wood for 70 years. My Grandpa built it well! I kept most of the shed panels to turn into a keepsake.

Grandpa also had a 4x8 that he fashioned into a bench beside the house. There he would sit, with a great view of Nadleh River, the bridge and the mountain. He would watch us as we played soccer and baseball well into the warm, summer nights with our cousins from all over the Rez. Up north it stays light out forever!

But one of my favourite memories is getting water from the river. Up until 1980, homes here had no running water. So Grandpa would take a barrel on his truck and dip it into the river. It sat in the kitchen – full of water for cooking, cleaning (dishes, the house and us) and drinking. There was a dipper hung from a nail in the wall to get water. It was good, clean water!

There is also a big dipper in the sky. It was the only constellation I could ever find. People would point out other clusters of stars and try to make some sense of them to me, but they never looked like anything. But that dipper, I knew that dipper!

When the water started running from taps in the house, the barrel and the dipper were gone. The only thing left is the memory of them and the nail hole.

My Grandpa worked hard all of his life. After Grandma died (when my mom was four years old) he raised his children as a single dad. He was well respected and a good example to many in the community. He was the first to buy a TV and a new car. When the weather dropped down into the -40's, he would take the battery out of the car and bring it into the house for the night, to make sure it started so he could get to work.

The closest "big" town is Vanderhoof, a half hour east. During the 1970's there was a sign in a local business that said, "No Indians Allowed." This is a shocking part of Canadian history. Shocking to me is that it was in my lifetime. We tend to believe segregation and racism only happened in the 1950's, deep in the American South, but it was alive and well here as well.

Another shocking part of Canadian history is the abuse of Indigenous students of the residential schools. They eventually won one of the world's largest class action suits, against the Canadian Government. As part of their settlement, they asked for an apology and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), based on the South African model after apartheid.

In 2008, residential school survivors received an apology from the Prime Minister of Canada. Unfortunately many, like my Grandpa, did not live long enough to hear this apology. I wonder what he would have thought about this.

I was a witness at many TRC events held across Canada where former students shared their stories. Horror stories, mostly. Some of the disciplinary actions taken against Indigenous children can only be called torture. (Hear their stories at www.trc.ca)

What gives me hope is to see change happening in my lifetime. Today no one would tolerate a sign saying, "No Indians Allowed" on a public building. But sometimes these signs still exist in the hearts of Canadians. We have work to do to raise awareness of Indigenous worldview, culture and values because reconciliation starts in learning of the people whose land we are on.

Thanks to the courage and tenacity of our Elders who never gave up the struggle to hold Canada accountable, we are living in a new day and the journey of reconciliation can begin.

I remember my Grandpa when I look at the Nadleh River, this beautiful land, and the big dipper in a starlit sky. My Grandpa had a strong faith. I know he prayed for me and our beautiful Nadleh Whuten'ne. I believe that we are living in the days of answered prayers of our ancestors and that gives me great hope.

~ CB

A CALL TO RECONCILIATION IN OUR LAND

AS PART OF THE Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Step #48 calls for the faith community's public response "to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples." The following is the collective response of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation of which CBM is one of 39 participating faith communities and faith-based organizations.



STATEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

March 28, 2016

The Canadian Interfaith Conversation gathers faith community representatives who believe that people of faith can contribute positively to the benefit of all people in Canadian society. We advocate for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life, believing that conversation is essential to doing so effectively.

The goal of bringing about a society where people of any or no faith can flourish together is a primary orienting concern of this interfaith conversation. Reconciliation with people of the First Nations has also been a core value of our Charter Vision since we first came together under that Vision in 2012.

Specifically, our vision states that "We want to promote harmony and spiritual insight among religions and religious communities in Canada, strengthen our society's moral foundations, and work for greater realization of the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion for the sake of the common good and an engaged citizenship.... We also recognize the particular moment we are in, one of working for greater truth and reconciliation between aboriginal peoples in Canada and later arrivals. This situation calls us to deeper understanding of past wrongs and shared future hopes for living in harmony together. Reconciliation is, fundamentally, a spiritual process that needs to be accomplished first in the hearts of Canadians."

Among non-Indigenous people in the land, some faith communities have been part of the Canadian fabric as it has unfolded since first contact with Europeans, while others are newly arrived. Faith communities also include Indigenous peoples from this land and from other parts of

the world. This sets peoples and groups at different places along the path to reconciliation, while also offering shared opportunities through education and relationship building.

Recognizing that the Government of Canada has endorsed the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People and that our Charter Vision refers to Article 12(1) of the Declaration as a key principle, the participant groups in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation are committed to developing understanding of the Declaration as a framework for reconciliation.

All persons in Canada, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, whether living on treaty or unceded land, have a mutual relationship to uphold and develop. We realize that healing is a process requiring listening and learning, and building relationships over time. As an interfaith group in pursuit of active and meaningful participation in the ongoing healing process of truth and reconciliation, we commit to studying the Calls to Action, beginning with Call 48, "a framework for reconciliation." We commit to devoting time at each of our meetings to speak with one another and with Indigenous brothers and sisters, to encourage our members to pursue the Calls to Action in their own communities, and to speak publicly as occasions arise.

We recognize that conversation, like reconciliation, requires good listening practice and a willingness to work for good through mutual dialogue. The members of the Canadian Interfaith Conversation publicly support the work of truth and reconciliation, and commit to an ongoing implementation of it in our individual and collective hearts, lives, and practice.

A GOOD WAY OF **BEGINNING**

LEARN Whose Territory You are On

Indigenous people value land foremost. Land is identity. We are not defined by our jobs, but by the land. Find out on whose traditional land your home, church or school resides and begin to confront the place of privilege you enjoy as a result of these lands. A land acknowledgement with the word, “unceded,” is the first step toward reconciliation.

My grade six teacher said, “We’re going to learn about Indians in Canada.” I was happy. Wow! Us! But then the teacher said, “We’re learning about the Hurons, and they might be extinct.” I was shocked. And felt invisible. Acknowledging the traditional territory where you live makes us visible. And it is honouring. A very important step in this journey.

~ CB

ANSWER:

AN APOLOGY IN THE MAKING

RESETTING THE RELATIONSHIP

by Terry Smith

Justice Murray Sinclair stated frequently during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) work that "Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem, it is a Canadian problem. It involves all of us."

I was asked to issue a formal apology on behalf of Canadian Baptist Ministries. This is in response to one of the clarion calls from the TRC – that churches and mission groups engage in recognition, understanding, peer learning and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

As Christians, we are well aware that apologizing (asking and receiving forgiveness for deeds done or not done) to God and each other is at the heart of the journey to reconciliation. It is something we need to do individually and collectively – and often!

I offered our apology at an Indigenous conference organized by Highland Baptist Church in Kitchener, Ontario, in October 2016. This was a challenging request because of our congregationalist ecclesiology

A FORMAL APOLOGY ON BEHALF OF CANADIAN BAPTIST MINISTRIES

October 21, 2016

Today, I come humbly to this place, on behalf of Canadian Baptist Ministries. Before we seek to Reset the Relationship, as this conference is named, allow me to apologize before God and to you, our Indigenous brothers and sisters, both personally and collectively. I am mindful that I cannot apologize for others' acts without admitting my own shortcomings. As a community of God's people, we admit that too often we have not been or done what we could or should have to live and act justly. To you, our neighbours, our sisters and brothers who have been hurt, directly or indirectly by our actions and inaction, we ask your forgiveness.

Canadian Baptists have heard the pain and hurt inflicted upon our country's Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge the deep wounds that persist as a consequence of our shared history. As a Church body, our early roots were in a white, Colonial past, from both Europe and America. Attitudes and acts of arrogance, entitlement and greed compelled many who settled here in Canada to assume ownership of lands that were not theirs to take, to occupy territories that were unceded and to formulate and sign treaties which were tilted in their own favour. The trust and goodwill of our Indigenous peoples were further abused when we failed to honour the treaties.

Many of our own church roots emerged from the Anabaptist tradition in Europe. Our forefathers suffered forms of persecution and exclusion in Europe, yet we acted in a similar manner here. We went from being excluded to being the excluders, from the oppressed to the oppressors. We failed to learn from our past and fully embrace the "other" when we arrived here, despite the hospitality that was extended to us.

Although Canadian Baptists were not directly involved in the Residential School system, we failed our Indigenous brothers and sisters by not speaking out against it, when your language, culture, religion and values were being assaulted and harm was being inflicted on your children. We sinned when we were not the voice of the oppressed. We looked the other way when wrong was being done. And when some Baptists, like Silas Rand who lived and worked among the Mi'kmaq from 1843 - 1889, challenged the colonial status quo, our churches silenced them.

We put up walls when we should have opened doors. These practices have created a context wherein Indigenous peoples in this land today experience disproportionate poverty and oppression, the result of which are negative stereotypes, high rates of mental and emotional illness, suicide, violence against women, substance abuse and intergenerational pain.

and because CBM is only one of many Baptist partners in our national landscape. I couldn't speak on behalf of everyone, but I could give a glimpse into the feelings of regret from the people with whom I shared this concern.

To do so, I solicited advice and guidance from the Executive Ministers of the four Canadian Baptist regional denominations. I also enlisted the wisdom of a small group of friends and colleagues who I consider to be leading-edge thinkers in Canada around our social engagement. This team was made up of author Mark Buchanan, Lois Mitchell and Gordon King.

During the summer of 2016, we surveyed over 250 Canadian Baptist pastors and leaders and received 79 responses. We learned that only 27% of the respondents' churches are involved in Indigenous peoples'

ministries and 94% of them have not discussed the resolutions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a church family.

Finally, in answer to the matter of a national Baptist apology, 91% of the respondents agreed it was necessary, 5% felt it wasn't necessary and 4% were uncertain. In other words, a resounding majority affirmed the need to proceed with this apology. Wording it required careful and prayerful work. The final version integrates the input I received from across our country and contains the wording, direction and intention of the church leaders interviewed, as opposed to one person's voice on behalf of a body of believers.

I hope this helps you work through the process if God is calling your church to craft its own apology.

When we should have challenged our churches, institutions and governments to respond to systemic injustices, such as the lack of access to clean water and educational opportunities, we were silent.

We have heard the pain and sadness of the children and grandchildren of those who were affected by the actions and attitudes of the past. In a spirit of humility and weakness, we acknowledge the hurt we have done - when we acted greedily out of self-interest and when we failed to act vocally on behalf of our neighbours, our hosts - our brothers and sisters. For this we are truly sorry.

We are grateful to those who served and led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and affirm the excellent Calls to Action. We renounce the Doctrine of Discovery and Terra Nullius by which European Christians took that which wasn't theirs, sadly in the name of God and the Church. It is untenable, unacceptable and wrong for them to have done so, and we acknowledge our ongoing complicity through our failure to call out and stand against these systemic acts of injustice. We acknowledge that we have benefitted from them and ask your forgiveness.

But, today we commit ourselves to journeying on a new path. We want to venture alongside you so that we can learn from you. For many Canadian Baptists, this journey with Indigenous peoples is new. Some are just starting out. For those who are new and weak to the journey, please help us. Others have been on the journey with you for a very long time. Thank you for allowing us to walk with you.

Along this pathway, we will call upon our churches to renounce all forms of injustice and discrimination. We shall embolden our churches, schools and institutions to embrace the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples. We will encourage our churches to participate in opportunities for education and the resetting of our relationship.

Practically speaking, Canadian Baptist Ministries commits itself to working with local bands to identify and assist Indigenous women and girls at-risk and cooperating with local churches to participate in the healing of broken communities. We recognize that the path ahead will not be easy. Unjust systems are always difficult to dismantle, but we commit ourselves to doing all we can.

We are a people of the Good News - the Gospel - which promises us new life in Jesus' name. In the spirit of mutuality and partnership, we will encourage our churches to acts of repentance, learning and service. By God's grace, together we will seek to do what God desires from us: to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Terry Smith

Executive Director, Canadian Baptist Ministries



“

The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change.





”

John A. MacDonald, 1887

HOME AND NATIVE LAND

It's time to face the harsh reality.
Canada has a racism problem as great
as our neighbour to the south.



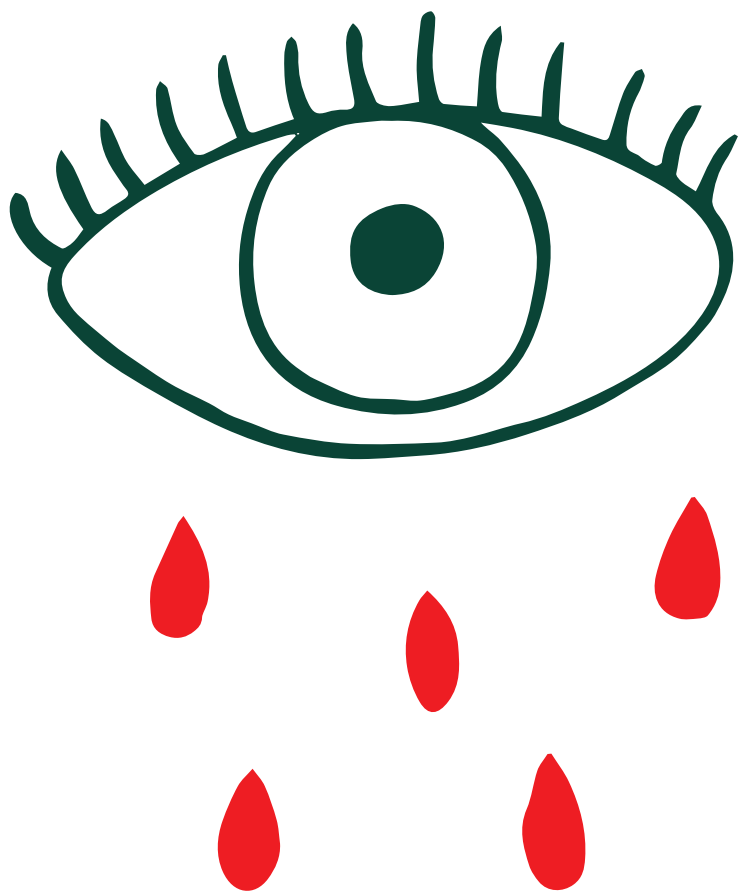
	Unemployment rate	14%	11%
	Unemployment rate vs. The national rate	2.1 times	1.9 times
	Median income	\$22,344	\$23,738
	Median income vs. The national rate	60%	74%
	Incarceration rate (per 100,000 population)	1,400	2,207
	Incarceration rate vs. The national rate	10 times	3 times
	Homicide rate (per 100,000 population)	8.8	17.3
	Homicide rate vs. The national rate	6.1 times	3.7 times
	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	11.7	12.4
	Infant mortality rate vs. The national rate	2.3 times	2 times
	Life expectancy (in years)	72.8	74.9
	Life expectancy vs. The national rate	91%	95%
	Dropout rate*	23%	8%
	Dropout rate vs. The national rate	2.7 times	1.1 times
<i>*20- to 24-year-olds without a high school diploma, and not in school</i>			

SOURCES: Statistics Canada; Office of the Correctional Investigator; The Lancet; Health Canada; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Justice; U.S. Department of Health; Centers of Disease Control; National Center of Education Statistics (Maclean's Magazine. Jan 22, 2015)

RED BROTHER RED SISTER

A REFLECTION

by Steve Bell



I WAS EIGHT OR NINE YEARS OLD the day I just came out and asked my dad if there was something wrong with Indians. He stopped what he was doing, looked at me for a few seconds and then said, “Now why on earth would you ask that question?”

My dad was a prison chaplain at Drumheller Federal Penitentiary at the time, and it was common for my sisters and I to go into the chapel with him and mom for weekly services and other social events. In fact, it was there that I learned to play the guitar as a group of inmates who used the chapel for jam sessions noticed I had some musical capacity, and invited me into their circle. I loved those guys. Most were First Nations.

I explained to Dad that I noticed there were a disproportionate amount of First Nations men on the inside of prison than on the outside and wondered why that would be. My dad just looked at me and eventually responded with, “You need to be asking questions like that for the rest of your life.”

Only a few months ago I had coffee with my foster daughter. She came to us when she was six and is now 32 and the mother of three. There is a whole lot of story in between those years. Jenny is First Nations. It wasn't long into our conversation before she suddenly began to weep saying she didn't know how she could continue to manage, to push down the trauma and pain of racism she constantly faces. She then listed a litany of recent situations, some cruel, some frightening, many that happened on the street and in front of her young daughters, that no one of white skin ever has to deal with. I honestly didn't know it was so bad. All I could do, really, was cry with her.

More recently, my young friend Christy and I were having coffee. The fresh, red cut marks – newly added to the ones that run up and down her arms like railway ties – indicated she had come off of a few bad days. The previous night she had been with friends who started cutting together; a fellowship of sorts. Yes... First Nations.

I'm not sure just how aware she is of the legacy of dehumanizing cruelty that exists between settler and First Nations people. But she sure knows its legacy in her body.

Honestly? I don't know what to say. “Woe is me... for I am a man of unclean lips, and come from a people of unclean lips,” (Is: 6:5) comes to mind. As does “Lord, have mercy.”

The lyrics of Bruce Cockburn's haunting song Red Brother Red Sister also come to mind; an aching lament from a man who knows in his bones what Andy Reimer (Biblical Studies Professor, NAIITS) has written so succinctly: “While the [European] invaders may have had crosses on their shields, the one who actually hung on that cross was the Creator experiencing the worst of what it means to be human, not a conquering war hero.”

*I honestly didn't
know it was so bad.
All I could do, really,
was cry with her.*

Hear Steve Bell sing
Red Brother Red Sister at
[www.soundcloud.com/
steve_bell/red-brother-
red-sister](http://www.soundcloud.com/steve_bell/red-brother-red-sister)



A GOOD WAY OF **UNDERSTANDING**

READ the TRC Report

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate was to inform all Canadians about what happened in the Indian residential school system (IRS).

Read the TRC's report to understand the devastating consequences of the IRS and the recommended Calls to Action.

The Residential Schools were a small part of the history of colonization in Canada, but their impact was massive. The mandate of these schools was never education but rather assimilation. They took the beautiful Gospel story and used it as a tool or weapon of assimilation. The Canadian government admitted this and apologized. No apology is complete without changed behaviour and reconciliation does not happen without restitution.

~ CB

TRCREADINGCHALLENGE.COM

THE DAY I STOPPED DRIVING BY CHECKING YOUR BLIND SPOTS

by Mark Buchanan



“

We are assured that the Majesties took particular pains to acknowledge the homage of their Indian subjects, and that in passing them the rate of speed was considerably lowered.

IN ALLAN TWIGG'S BOOK ABORIGINALITY, he tells of a meeting between three sovereigns – a king and two queens – that never happened. It was missed by inches.

The year was 1939. The place, Vancouver. The occasion, England's King George VI and Queen Elizabeth's visit to Canada. A year earlier, the Lion's Gate Bridge, joining Stanley Park to West Vancouver, had opened. The King and Queen and their entourage were to drive over the bridge to "honour it."

The lands needed to build the bridge had been transferred in 1936 from Indian Reserve lands to the First Narrows Bridge Company "without consultation and little compensation." But the Squamish people, at least, bore no ill-will. Instead, they officially requested a meeting between their Queen, Mary Agnes, and the English royals. The Squamish wished to exchange gifts and greetings. Queen Mary dressed for the occasion in full ceremonial regalia. Alongside her was her son, Chief Joe Mathais, who had actually sailed to England in 1911 to attend the coronation of King George. Here's what happened:

"The royals didn't stop. Nobody from the Squamish Band was invited to take part in the honouring ceremony. 'This was the only time we could present my grandmother to the Queen,' recalled Chief Simon Baker, 'but the car drove past us.... It was terrible for my grandmother.'"

Later, The Honorary Secretary of the Vancouver Committee for the Reception of Their Majesties sent a letter to the Squamish people. Besides assuring the Squamish people that their gifts had been received and sent to Buckingham Palace, it contained an explanation about the matter of the drive-by:

"We can assure you that every effort was made to fulfill the wishes of Their Majesties and had they desired to stop, it would have, of course, been done. We are assured that the Majesties took particular pains to acknowledge the homage of their Indian subjects, and that in passing them the rate of speed was considerably lowered."

ARCHIVE PHOTOS: *The Royal Visit 1939; Queen Mary Agnes; Stanley Park Bridge, Vancouver, B.C.*



In passing them the rate of speed was considerably lowered.

A line like that, so cavalier, so breezy, so condescending, reflects the ethos of an epoch. In 1939, attitudes of official racism were everywhere - fascism in many European nations, anti-Semitism in most, Jim Crow in the American south, apartheid in South Africa. 1942 would see the beginning of the roundup, property-confiscation, and internment of Japanese Canadians. These are only a few of the better-known examples of attitudes, assumptions and actions pervading the air everyone breathed.

And then there were Canada's First Nations people. We had begun to organize official prejudice toward Native peoples many decades earlier, in the late 1800s. It was embodied in the growing presence of Indian Residential Schools across the land. It was reflected and made into legal code in the ever-expanding reach of the federal Indian Act. It was expressed in government appropriation of Native lands and retraction of Native resource rights, and in the legal pettifoggery and stonewalling over treaty settlements. A history that began, largely, full of mutual honour and promise was swiftly becoming rife with betrayal and resentment.

White Canadians are heirs of all this. We're beneficiaries. I know most of us are not directly implicated in any of it. We are, after all, innocent of any personal wrongdoing. We didn't draft or enforce the oppressive measures of the Indian Act. We didn't remove Native children from their families and communities and abuse them, verbally, emotionally, physically, sexually, in Residential Schools.

We didn't start the fire.

But the majority of white Canadians grew up in a culture and an economy that, at least in part, has been built on the backs of the land's first inhabitants. We may not have committed any overt acts of injustice, but most of us have been beneficiaries of, and bystanders to, such acts. Our forebearers took much from the people, and didn't say thanks, and

didn't say sorry, and rarely looked back. And we, for the most part, have been happy to reap the windfall, or at least remain uninformed and uninvolved.

And many of us still carry, dormant perhaps but ready to awake with little stimulation, the very racism that marked out our forbearers. Why would I make such a bold and sweeping indictment?

Because most of us are still just driving by, and often not even at reduced speed.

MY JOURNEY

That was me for most my life. And then it got personal.

In 1995, I moved to Duncan, a small community on Vancouver Island, and stayed 18 years. Everywhere I had lived before made it easy to avoid First Nations people, and therefore easy to avoid my real attitude toward the people. In every other place I lived, the Native reserve was at a distance from the municipality. I rarely saw a real live Indian.

That changed when I moved to Duncan. The reserve, geographically and demographically, intersects the municipality at several points. The two are woven together tight as a wampum belt. Many of the area's place names - Mount Tzouhalem, Penelekut Island, Sansum Narrows, Cowichan River - reflect this. Duncan is 1/8 First Nation, and that percentage of population is visible everywhere. Native people are impossible to ignore or avoid.

I managed it anyhow for almost a decade.

The church I pastored met on Tzouhalem Road, named after a 19th Century hereditary chief. Across from our church building stood, until it burned down in 2010, the old offices for the Cowichan Band. If I turned left from the church parking lot, I skirted the edge of the reserve and then, about a kilometer down, crossed into reserve lands. I always knew where the boundary line fell, though no sign marked it: the houses told me. Most were dilapidated, with flaking paint, caked on moss, grimy and sometimes broken windows, collapsing stairs. Garbage and rusty cars littered the yards.

Later, I found out why many homes on reserves look this way. There are two main factors. One is the legal nature of reserve lands, which can never be sold on the open market. The effect of this is that reserve lands never increase in value (unless turned into leased land, but that's another story). This means that a house on the municipal side of Tzouhalem Road might, over five years, increase in value from \$300,000 to \$400,000. But a similar house on the reserve side of the road might only be worth \$30,000. Forever. Its value never increases, and usually decreases, as does all aging things. This kills all incentive for doing home improvements.

The second reason is that entire extended families live in many of these houses. A house designed to hold, say, five people comfortably might have 10, 15, 20 people living in it at various times. That's because Native people generally have a deep value for sharing: it's uncommon for a First Nation's person with a house to turn away even a distant relative in need of a place to stay. Yet a house built to hold five people can't handle 10+ people living in it any more than a car designed to seat five people can handle 10+ people regularly cramming into it. Things break down much faster.

But I knew none of this at the time. All I saw were disheveled yards and ill-kempt houses and rusting jalopies. And I made a judgment about the people who lived there. The judgment distilled to a single word: typical.

Because I had no real relationships with First Nations people – I knew a few to nod at in passing – there was nothing to disturb either my facile judgment or my illusion that I held no prejudices. I just kept driving by.

EAT WHATEVER THEY PUT BEFORE YOU

Then I met Tal. Tal James is Penelektu, a band from an island close to Duncan. Tal had, in his early 20s, become a Christian. Today he works with North American Indigenous Missions, a mission agency dedicated to sharing the gospel – in all its dimensions – with First peoples.

Tal has become a good friend. He has let me ask, and patiently answered, many stupid questions. He has taught me much about his culture, and helped me get past my uninformed reactions to indigenous practices, places, legends, artifacts – powwows, sweet grass ceremonies, totem poles, long houses, wampum, thunderbird stories – things I once knew nothing about, but held opinions and made judgments about anyhow.

And sometimes Tal, along with his German wife Christina, have gently but firmly rebuked me for my subtle but clear racism. An example will help.

Tal and I are at a restaurant in Nanaimo not long after I have announced to the church in Duncan my intention to “reach First Nations people for Christ.” We've just ordered lunch. I turn to Tal and ask what many of the people in the church are asking me: “What should we do about the dark side of Native spirituality? Many in the church feel that they cannot have fellowship with a First Nations people before they have figured this out.”

Tal falls silent. He looks around. He leans forward.



Because I had no real relationships with First Nations people...there was nothing to disturb either my facile judgment or my illusion that I held no prejudices.

“Mark,” he says, “why did you come into this restaurant, take a seat, order a meal, without once asking or worrying about the spiritual beliefs and practices of the people who own the restaurant, manage it, or work in it? You're about to eat food prepared by someone you don't know but who, more likely than not, does not share your beliefs or morals. You don't seem the least bothered by that. But you do seem bothered by the idea of sitting and eating with my people unless first you approve of our spirituality – which, by the way, you know little about.”

I was stung. But he was right. And that day began for me a fourfold journey: one, facing my prejudices without illusion or justification; two, forsaking them; three, learning First Nations culture from First Nations people; and four, committing to loving my neighbour as myself. It has been a slow walk, sometimes agonizing, but deeply liberating. I still have a ways to go. But I am thankful that I have made a beginning.

About a year after this conversation with Tal, I was at a meeting with several people who were helping a friend and I plan an event called “Understanding the Nations.” It was to be a 5-hour workshop educating churches about local First Nations history and culture, and challenging them to engage in practical acts of reconciliation. One of the people we'd invited was Dan Marshall. Dan is a university professor who had written a superb history of our local tribe, the Cowichan people. We hoped Dan would present at the workshop on Cowichan history. But he was wary of my motives. He deeply loved and respected the Cowichans and, as he said, didn't want to be part of a “new colonial, imperial, paternalistic effort to impose the Christian religion on First Nations people.” Then he asked me outright: “Is your intention with these workshops to try to convert the Cowichans to Christianity?”

God had now, for a year, been excavating me, exposing me, burning things out of me, pounding things into me. I said to Dan (who later became a good friend), “I admit, my dream is mass conversion. I would love to see everyone – all nations, all people of whatever ethnic identity in this community, and you also, Dan – I'd love to see all come to know Jesus Christ. But you are asking about my intention for these workshops. That's simple: I want to convert the church.”

For two years, we ran the workshops in over 10 venues – mostly churches. Around 1,000 people attended in all. And it happened: though several Cowichans got curious about the church, and some ventured near, and a few put their faith in Christ, the majority of conversions were among white Christians. More and more of us began to see our entrenched racism, to repent of it, and to begin a journey toward real change.

More and more of us chose to no longer just drive by. We slowed. We stopped. We got out of the car. And most of us have never been the same.

PRAYING WITH SMOKE

Ray Aldred is a Cree storyteller and Christian theologian, and a dear friend and colleague. Recently, we both spoke at a church conference on missions. We decided on the final evening of the conference to weave our talks together, back and forth, circling each other's stories, building off each other's insights. It was like a tribal dance. Obviously, we had to choreograph it.

"I think you should invite me up right at the start," Ray said. "I will honour the traditional occupants of the land and thank them for allowing us to be here. And then I will pray with smoke."

Praying with smoke is a Cree tradition (shared by many Plains Tribes) of burning sage or sweet grass (the fragrance of which bears an unnerving resemblance to cannabis) in an abalone shell, snuffing out the fire, and wafting the smoke, with an eagle feather, until its fragrance pervades the room, all the while inviting the Spirit to come from all four corners of the earth and, like the fragrance, fill the room.

"Um, ok. You know people will freak out?"

"I know."

"I'm good then. Let's do it."

So we did. And people freaked out.

I was up next. "I sense," I said, "that many, if not most of you, are deeply uncomfortable with what just happened. I'm going to ask you to do something with that: neither reject it nor embrace it. I'm inviting you, instead, to hold it in open, upturned, outstretched hands" – I modeled this as I said it. "And I'm asking that you give both Ray and I an honest hearing."

That seemed to settle things down, and so Ray and I spoke, back and forth, moving in and out of each other's space, doing our dance. We talked about the broad sweep of the Canadian church and government relations with First Nations people throughout our shared history.

We talked about the tribal, ceremonial, and storytelling roots of biblical faith. We talked about how the church had repeatedly missed opportunities with First peoples to share the full gospel in all its wild, profuse, subversive, scandalizing, extravagant beauty and potency; had failed to incarnate the wide-open arms of God, and yet every once in a while had got it right."

By the end, I sensed a new readiness and openness among those present. I stood on the platform and held out my open, upheld, outstretched hands.

"Some of you," I said, "still aren't sure what to do with what you saw earlier. But I'm sensing that most of us – maybe all – want to be part of a new story. We've heard enough of the old story to feel some appropriate guilt and shame and heartbreak. But what use in getting stuck there? Let's resolve to create a different future. I'm not even sure what the next step is, other than it involves a fierce 'Yes' to that different future, an unswerving commitment to write a new story. If you want to be part of that, would you stand, and with open, upturned, outstretched hands, say to God, 'Yes'."

As far as I could tell, the whole congregation stood.

A year later, Ray was speaking at a chapel service at Ambrose University, where Ray and I are colleagues. He began by praying with smoke, wafting the smoke with an eagle feather so that the fragrance of the sweet grass pervaded the auditorium. And then he invited me up.

Ray gave me the eagle feather. He said it was his gift to me, to honour my love for, and my work with, First Peoples.

I was overwhelmed. And felt unworthy. Really, I haven't done much. I just stopped driving by.



We've heard enough of the old story to feel some appropriate guilt and shame and heartbreak. But what use in getting stuck there? Let's resolve to create a different future.

GUILTY ROOTS

OWNING OUR EVER-PRESENT PAST

by *Terry LeBlanc*



WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, my grandfather, father and I travelled some distance from our home community to go fishing at a spot known only to my grandfather. We soon found ourselves in the middle of deep woods, making our way along a narrow trail. With each passing step, the way ahead and behind became less and less perceptible. Twice I expressed my concern to my grandfather; twice he sought to reassure me. Finally, unable to hold in my anxiety, fearful about what lay ahead of us, I tugged frantically on my grandfather's arm. "Grandfather, grandfather," I called. "We'll be lost, we'll be lost!"

Sensing the rising fear in me, my grandfather knelt down and, after calming me, taught me a lesson in guidance. He told me that each new trail we take could seem like it leads along an uncertain path; the way back can seem unclear. But, he said, "When you set out on a new trail, if you spend twice as much time looking over your shoulder at where you have come from as you do where you are going – if you fix the landmarks behind you in your mind the way they will appear to you when you turn to take the trail back – you will never become lost, you will always be able to find your way home." My grandfather gave me the ability that day to find my way to and from all of the various destinations in life that would lie before me; all of which, as I set out on each new trail, were initially unknown.

Contemporary societies – not just North American – are no longer used to looking at where they have come from. They are far more fixated on an as yet unknown future – and on the present only inasmuch as it helps them determine what will come next. Rather than use the past to help determine where they are in relation to where they started, they plunge ahead, often blindly, expecting that any mistakes made will be corrected in that unknown future.

As far back as 1973, Dr. Karl Menninger said of North American society that, “We have lost our sense of history...lost our traditional respect for the wisdom of ancestors and the culture of kindred nations... we haunt ourselves with [an] illusory ideal.” It is an observation he could justifiably make concerning Canadian immigrant societies and the unwillingness to take seriously their history with Indigenous peoples, with the multiple generations of injustice to which Indigenous peoples have been subjected. Today, however, it is more likely we would hear this attitude expressed as, "That happened in the past. We are not personally responsible."

Indigenous people regularly hear these words, or ones to their effect, in discussions about multi-generational prejudicial social policies, treaty rights, wrongs committed against them (over successive generations), and about the possibility of reconciliation from this point forward. These words are, more often than not, offered by people who, while acknowledging past wrongs, want or need to find personal distance from responsibility for having maintained the environment in which these wrongs originally, and now continue to, take place.

These are words of personal exoneration, which, while they may seem reasonable and even justifiable, give voice to the idea that while they enjoy privileges provided them by the decisions of their forebears, they hold no personal responsibility for the actions that created those privileges.

On the surface, this way of thinking would appear to be reasonable and understandable. After all, they weren't alive when this all started. True, true! When we look below the surface, however, we find that the same ideas that gave rise to the original wrongs and injustice still exist today, albeit in modified form. Often, in the day-to-day behaviours these very same people engage in, we continue to find wilful ignorance, and apathy, judgment and stereotyping, expectations of cultural assimilation, and the election and maintenance of governments that at best ignore, at worst further degrade, First Nations peoples' lives, homes, and communities with policies of assimilation. These ideas about the lack of personal responsibility for decisions made 50, 75, 100, or 150 years ago prevail as the foundation upon which contemporary racial prejudice is maintained.



Contemporary societies – not just North American – are no longer used to looking at where they have come from.

In order for us to actually make progress on reconciliation, these ideas must be acknowledged, extricated from our policies, and forced out of the legislative isolation that has maintained Canadian Indigenous peoples as third and fourth class citizens for well over 150 years. I say third and fourth because immigrant populations, while often looked upon with varying levels of disdain have, more often than not, been treated better than this land's original inhabitants.

In 1995, Elijah Harper called for, and then convened, the “Sacred Assembly.” Indigenous leaders and elders, Catholic, mainline, and evangelical leaders of Canada, participated in multi-day conversations about what it would take to be reconciled in this land, to live together in peaceful relationship. Together with a representative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic bishops, a member of the Citizens for Public Justice, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Bruce Clemenger, I co-authored two documents titled "Principles and Priorities for a New Relationship", and “Proclamation of Reconciliation.”

Convened on the heels of the release of the RCAP (if you do not recognize this acronym, that says something about why you might feel no responsibility), the Assembly acknowledged the fact that the situation in which Canada found itself – and, to a significant extent,

still finds itself today – rests in an unwillingness to stop doing what was done to Indigenous peoples that created the situation in the first place. Hence, the suggestion, “That was then, this is now, therefore I have no responsibility,” is vacuous. The RCAP began 25 years ago; the Sacred Assembly was 20 years ago; all major traditions of the church were invited and/or were participants. Most of you reading this were alive at that time.

Here, in part, is some of what we wrote that was embraced by that Assembly:

WE SHARE THE RECOGNITION

- The sins of injustice which have historically divided Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples remain active in our society today;
- Concrete actions must be taken by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples alike to overcome these injustices and to bind up the wounds of those who have suffered.

WE SHARE AN UNDERSTANDING

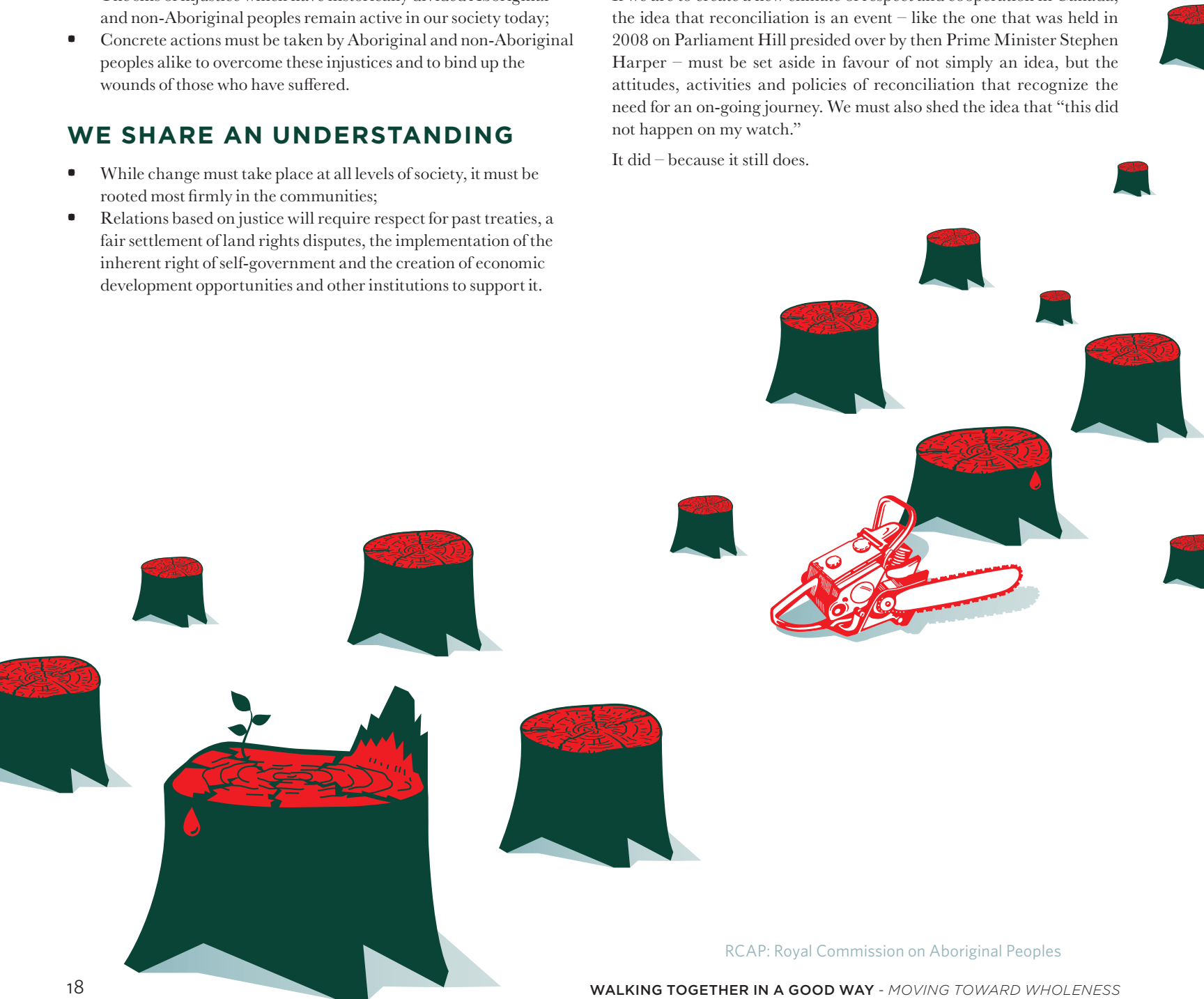
- While change must take place at all levels of society, it must be rooted most firmly in the communities;
- Relations based on justice will require respect for past treaties, a fair settlement of land rights disputes, the implementation of the inherent right of self-government and the creation of economic development opportunities and other institutions to support it.



Hence, the suggestion, “That was then, this is now, therefore I have no responsibility,” is vacuous.

If we are to create a new climate of respect and cooperation in Canada, the idea that reconciliation is an event – like the one that was held in 2008 on Parliament Hill presided over by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper – must be set aside in favour of not simply an idea, but the attitudes, activities and policies of reconciliation that recognize the need for an on-going journey. We must also shed the idea that “this did not happen on my watch.”

It did – because it still does.



A GOOD WAY OF **LISTENING**

HEARING from Indigenous Voices

Widen your horizons, listen to songs, and read stories from Indigenous contexts.

To listen is to acknowledge the voice of the speaker and the intrinsic value of the other's presence. Due to the overwhelming need to educate Canadians on our shared history, many universities now offer free courses in Indigenous studies.

It takes a lot of humility and courage to admit you need to learn, or re-learn Canadian history. Indigenous people have an entirely different perspective of the history of this land. The best way to learn is to listen to the voice of another. Have a listen to another perspective and it will be easier for us to walk together.

~ CB

THE ENTERPRISE WINTER 1987/88

UNDOING THE DAMAGE

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSION AMONG NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS IS NOT A HAPPY ONE

by Dan Kelly

IN 1907, CANON NORMAN TUCKER, the General Secretary of the Anglican Church Missionary Society, wrote in a summary of the Anglican Church expansion among Canada's Indians: "This glorious work, however, has not been without its limitations. It has indeed brought the gospel of Christ, under the unparalleled hardships and privations, to the Indian tribes in the most inaccessible regions of the earth... but in the main, it has not succeeded in training the individual Indian convert in self-reliance, and the Indian congregation in self-support and self-propagation. And now that the Church missionary Society has decided on a policy of withdrawal from this whole field, the prospects of Indian Missions are, to say the least, not reassuring."

With these words, Canon Tucker accurately and prophetically described the state of Indian missions right up to the present era.

It must be said, of course, that there have been significant movements to Christianity. The development of the syllabic writing system and the translation work of James Evans in Manitoba, beginning in 1840, ushered in a new period of substantial church growth. Unfortunately, these kinds of movements are scarce indeed in the history of Indian missions, and often disappear in subsequent generations.

It seems likely that the early missionaries to the Indian people, and in many cases their modern counterparts, simply have not understood the monumental worldview shift necessary for the Indian person to move from his or her belief system to total allegiance to Jesus Christ. And they have muddied the water by often demanding allegiance to European cultural values as well.

In an unpublished paper, R. Pierce Beaver, then Professor of Church History at Chicago Divinity School, wrote several years ago: "All the missionaries were creatures of their own cultures and until very recently, few could see in Indian cultures anything but barbarism. Moreover, they completely identified the gospel with their own particular variety of Christianity and with the segment of European civilization out of which they came." Further on in the paper, he writes: "Evangelization and civilization were inseparable. Transformation from damnation to salvation and growth in Christian faith would be demonstrated in the progressive conformity of the converts to English civilization. Puritan man represented the very flowering of the gospel. The gospel was powerful enough to make the Indian Christian into one."

Alvin Torry, an early Methodist missionary, admitted in his biography: "It has never occurred to the religious denominations that these pagan people could be converted and made humble Christians without first civilizing them."

There is absolutely no doubt that there was a prevailing attitude among the early missionaries that Indian culture was inherently evil and inferior. It was a common practice among both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, for instance, to change the Indian names of native people to suit the European perception of what was "Christian." Thus Chief Pegwys of the Seaulteaux became William King, and his son became Henry Prince. Throughout Canada there are literally hundreds of native people today with the name of King or Prince. Where there were French priests, there are now scores of families with French names; where there were Anglicans or Methodists, there are now multitudes of English names.

The paternalistic and autocratic behavior of the early missionaries is exemplified by Anglican missionary William Duncan, the famous "Apostle of Metlakatla." Metlakatla was the model Indian village founded by Duncan on the British Columbia coast. John Arctander, a contemporary of Duncan and his biographer, wrote the following: "Duncan was the personification of the qualities of the missionaries of the time. He had immense faith and courage, and the gigantic audacity required to move uninvited into a large community of hostile people, single-handedly assume absolute control, and reshape their lives."



A monumental worldview shift is necessary for an Indian person to move to total allegiance to Jesus Christ.

When his superiors, Bishop Hill, disagreed with some of Duncan's ideas, the missionary responded, "He may be the Bishop of Columbia, but I am the Pope of Metlakatla, so it has to be the way I want it, or not at all." Duncan's attitude toward Indian culture surfaces in another comment by Arctander: "Mr. Duncan has never made any translation [of the Bible] or any part of it into their language. He has such a pious veneration of Scripture that he can only think of an attempt to transfer it into their tongue as an absolute mutilation of the Holy Word."

It is only with a grasp of such attitudes that we can understand and analyze the current situation, for both Indians and missionaries have been powerfully influenced by their backgrounds and experience.

The Indian person has little positive to look back on as he considers what the gospel has had to offer. A dominant "Christian" culture has had a severe impact on all of the old values, belief systems, ways of life, and family patterns. The modern Indian remembers with deep resentment the Residential School system, where even Indian language was pounded out of the students. Middle-aged natives still refer to the Residential School as "the Penitentiary." And since such schools were all sectarian, mainly Roman Catholic and Anglican, the result has been a very negative impression of what it means to be "Christian."

At the same time, the missionary has been conditioned by years of exposure to negative impressions of Indians. Until recently, our Canadian and especially American history texts pictured Indians as ruthless, savage butchers who stood in the way of the peaceful development of North America. There was no thought of a nation of people who were trying, with inadequate war equipment, to defend their country from an invader. Movies, books, and articles have pictured the Indians either as heartless savages or as subservient "Tontos." So, as do all dominant cultures, we have arrived at stereotypic attitudes toward this minority. As the modern missionary approaches the Indian culture, he or she must often relearn a whole set of attitudes.



Early missionaries sometimes muddied the waters by demanding allegiance to European cultural values.

The Indian mission field, then, is a burned over area. It's hard to start a forest fire where a fire has already passed through. Indians have experienced the result of mission, and they are not impressed. Missionaries, too, are extremely frustrated. All modern workers have experience the elation of seeing numbers of Indians come to Christ, only to be devastated by their apparent inability to be victorious in their Christian behavior.

Very frankly, Christianity has never become a truly Indian belief system. Yet it has been said that the church is congenial to any culture. The question then arises: why is this not true among Indians?

At the heart of the answer lies our failure to encourage or permit the development of strong Indian leadership – leadership that today is emerging in other areas of Indian life. Any Indian agent will tell you that the administration of Indian Affairs has changed radically in the last twenty years. The paternalistic practices of the past are simply not tolerated today. An aggressive and extremely capable leadership elite is emerging among both status and non-status Indians. There are more natives in university today than the total graduated from 1900 to 1970. Native businessmen recently conducted their first annual conference.

The potential, of course, was always there, but secular and sectarian agencies did not acknowledge it or accept it. We Eurocanadians have been conditioned by the concept of cultural evolution, and so we have come to see ourselves as culturally superior to the non-white.

If there is to be any headway made in Indian mission in Canada, we must therefore rethink our attitude and approach, especially in the area of Indian leadership.

Out west, there is an Indian organization called Mika Nika, loosely translated as "our thing." When Christianity becomes Mika Nika to the Indians, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will diffuse through the Indian population as it never has before. It won't happen by recruiting more and more young missionaries who disappear from the scene after a term or so, discouraged and no longer sure that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." It will happen as native Christians are encouraged to take the Good News of Jesus Christ to their own people; as native pastors arise to shepherd the flocks; and as indigenous outreach organizations develop to evangelize the fringes of their own society.

There is still a need for cross-cultural missionaries, but they must be culturally sensitive people whose primary orientation is to the natives. They must be people who avail themselves of first-rate cross-cultural training, who respect all that is good in native culture, who accept that God is no respecter of persons (or cultures), and who, with Paul, are ready to become "all things to all people, that by all possible means, some might be saved."

Good things are beginning to happen. More and more missionary candidates are receiving sound missiological training in the Bible schools and seminaries. And missionary leadership is becoming somewhat more aware of the strivings for recognition by native Christian leadership. But missions must be prepared to allow the potential for leadership to develop in the native church to the same degree that is developing in the areas of politics, business, and education.

It is, in fact, the missions themselves that represent the greatest obstacle to the development of Christianity as "Mika Nika." Unfortunately, it could be that real progress will have to wait until the old, shell-backed, paternalistic leadership is out of the way. Let's pray that this will not be the case.

Dr. Dan Kelly was Principal of Okanagan Bible College. Formerly Professor of Missions at Ontario Theological Seminary, he has also served as a missionary among North American Indians.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SONG

THIS SONG IS DEDICATED to the Residential School Survivors. Our Elders are courageous, patient and strong. They took their stories all the way to the supreme court of Canada so they could see justice for all Indigenous people in Canada who attended these schools, and justice for their children and grandchildren. This song is the story of the first mother and son who were separated by these schools and how the schools changed us forever.

~ CB

Son when you went away
you were so young and strong
I just couldn't wait for the day
to have you back home where you belong
The only thing that kept me alive
was knowing I would see you again
there was no way for me to know
you'd come back home a man

My son
where did you go
when they took you away
my son
where did you go
when they took you away
I don't recognize you any more
the scars of this life are deeper than before

Mother when they took me away
I looked back to my home
you know I really wanted to stay
when I saw you there all alone
The only thing that kept me alive
was knowing I would see you again
there was no way for me to know
I'd come back to an alcoholic home

Mother
where did you go
when they took me away
Mother
where did you go
when they took me away
I don't recognize you anymore
The scars of this life are deeper than before.



JOURNEYING BACKWARDS

HEALING THE DIVIDES

by *H. Daniel Zacharias*

LIKE EVERYONE, I'M ON A JOURNEY. For many years, my journey was aimed forward to specific goals I had in mind. Awesome wife, check. Great kids, check. PhD, check. Great job, check. In the midst of these busy pursuits, as I was coming near to the end of completing my PhD and becoming part of the faculty at Acadia Divinity College (ADC), I had occasion to meet a man named Terry LeBlanc. Terry would later approach ADC about a partnership with NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, and our friendship has blossomed into kinship. But these initial encounters and discussions sparked in me something that had been dormant in the back of my mind for many years. I put off thinking about it partly because of the busyness of young family and education. But the desire to know and understand has always been there. And it sparked in me a new journey, but this time I aimed backward to my past and my heritage, and what it means for me as a committed follower of Jesus.

I am an Indigenous man. On my mother's side, my ancestors have lived for thousands of years in and around Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba in what is now Treaty 1 territory. Those ancestors, in several generations and families, inter-married with European settlers who came over to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. And it is this family from which I also received my Christian heritage. Yet, while we rightly celebrated our Christian heritage and bond, our heritage as Cree people largely stayed unspoken. I still recall the time when, sitting in my grandparents' home, my mother and her siblings were discussing the process of receiving their treaty and band cards. I did not understand what they were talking about. If I'm remembering correctly, I think I even said, "we're Indian?"

There are three main reasons we silenced our Indigenous heritage. The first had to do with Canada's assimilationist policies. One of my grandfathers, when requesting assistance from the government to feed his family, had to renounce his treaty status to receive food stamps. He received his treaty status back post-mortem, which enabled treaty status to be passed on to his descendants. The second reason is that my mother and her siblings faced racial discrimination in the north end of Winnipeg growing up. Being the darkest-skinned kids in the community translated into plenty of racial slurs and fistfights, which understandably led to a measure of shame for some. The irony of this racism was that there was no more devout family on the block than my grandparents' household. Despite the small house size, hospitality

was the default. Church was several times a week. Preaching, teaching, reading Scripture, and prayer imbued the family. And I still maintain that no one could out-sing my family in old gospel tunes except the Gaithers' themselves. And yet many of the 'civil' light-skinned neighbors couldn't see past the dark complexion.

But the final reason for the suppression of our Indigenous identity was because of our Christian heritage. Like many people in the past, and still many today, Indigenous people's culture was seen as pagan at best, demonic at worst. Christianity was wedded to European 'civil' society. To be a Christian was to live and act like the settlers. Like most Indigenous people who became believers, my ancestors adopted this opinion towards their Indigenous culture. Instead of pride, there was shame. The apostle Paul when talking about salvation uses the metaphor of being "clothed with Christ" (Gal 3:27). For Indigenous people the world over, this has meant a covering over and hiding of who they were because of their faith in Jesus, rather than an ennobling of who they are and who they were created to be.



To be a Christian was to live and act like the settlers. Like most Indigenous people who became believers, my ancestors adopted this opinion towards their Indigenous culture. Instead of pride, there was shame.

I continue on this journey to better understand myself as an Indigenous person. One of my favorite realizations came when listening to Cheryl Bear in 2015 talk about the role of humor in Indigenous culture. I smiled to myself and shed a little tear as I realized that assimilation had not stripped my family of all of their cultural identity — my Anderson family has always laughed loudly and teased one another mercilessly. And as I have continued on this journey of learning about Indigenous culture, I have been able to see other ways in which my family held on to their indigeneity, even if in modified form. And I am conscious that



...I am conscious that as I seek to understand what it means to be an Indigenous follower of Jesus, I do so not only for myself, but also for my ancestors who were pressed to believe the lie that to be an authentic follower of the Christ meant forsaking your culture and adopting another.

as I seek to understand what it means to be an Indigenous follower of Jesus, I do so not only for myself, but also for my ancestors who were pressed to believe the lie that to be an authentic follower of the Christ meant forsaking your culture and adopting another.

I am also cognizant of the fact that my journey backwards is a process that many of my fellow Baptists are going through across Canada. As we seek to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and initiate new and lasting relationships with Indigenous communities in our neighborhoods, I have sought as best as I'm able to assist my brothers and sisters in the faith. I have been part of the Indigenous Working Group for the Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada, and am happy to have played a part in what will be the denomination's official response to the TRC Calls to Action. A big part of this role has been continuing to educate myself so that I might educate others. Part of our response to the TRC is an educational piece. There is a wealth of excellent material available online, and the working group has sought to help others navigate this. The result is an online course that will be free. The course will take a person approximately 20 hours to complete, with additional recommendations for further learning as well. My hope is that Baptist pastors and leaders will go through the course to educate themselves so that they can educate others and equip congregations to be allies and friends with their local Indigenous communities. To do this, we must journey back to understand and come to grips with the fractious history of Canada's past and the broken relationship between the Church and Indigenous peoples.

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With GRATITUDE

THIS BOOKLET CONTAINS a compilation of articles that have been run in previous issues of Mosaic magazine, as well as other thoughts shared by CBM's Indigenous Relations Specialist Cheryl Bear. Our hope is that this guide will be a clarion call to our Canadian Baptist church family to become "other".

We, who have been reconciled to God, have been entrusted with the mandate of the reconcilers (2 Cor. 5:18), bringing together that which was previously separated, uniting divided pieces of the fabric of God's plan. Too often, our refusal to become something other, to be totally changed is, in itself, our greatest obstacle to the restoration of ruptured relations.

We believe that the first step for God's people to becoming the other is listening to one another so that a deeper understanding of the pain and brokenness might be attained. Thank you for taking this first step as we continue walking together in a good way with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

This guide is just a starting point. For more resources that will enhance your understanding of these complex issues understanding, visit agoodway.ca



CBM embracing a broken world through word & deed

As partners in the Canadian Baptist family we exist to serve the local church in its grassroots mission. Together we impact our communities and beyond through the love of Christ.

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