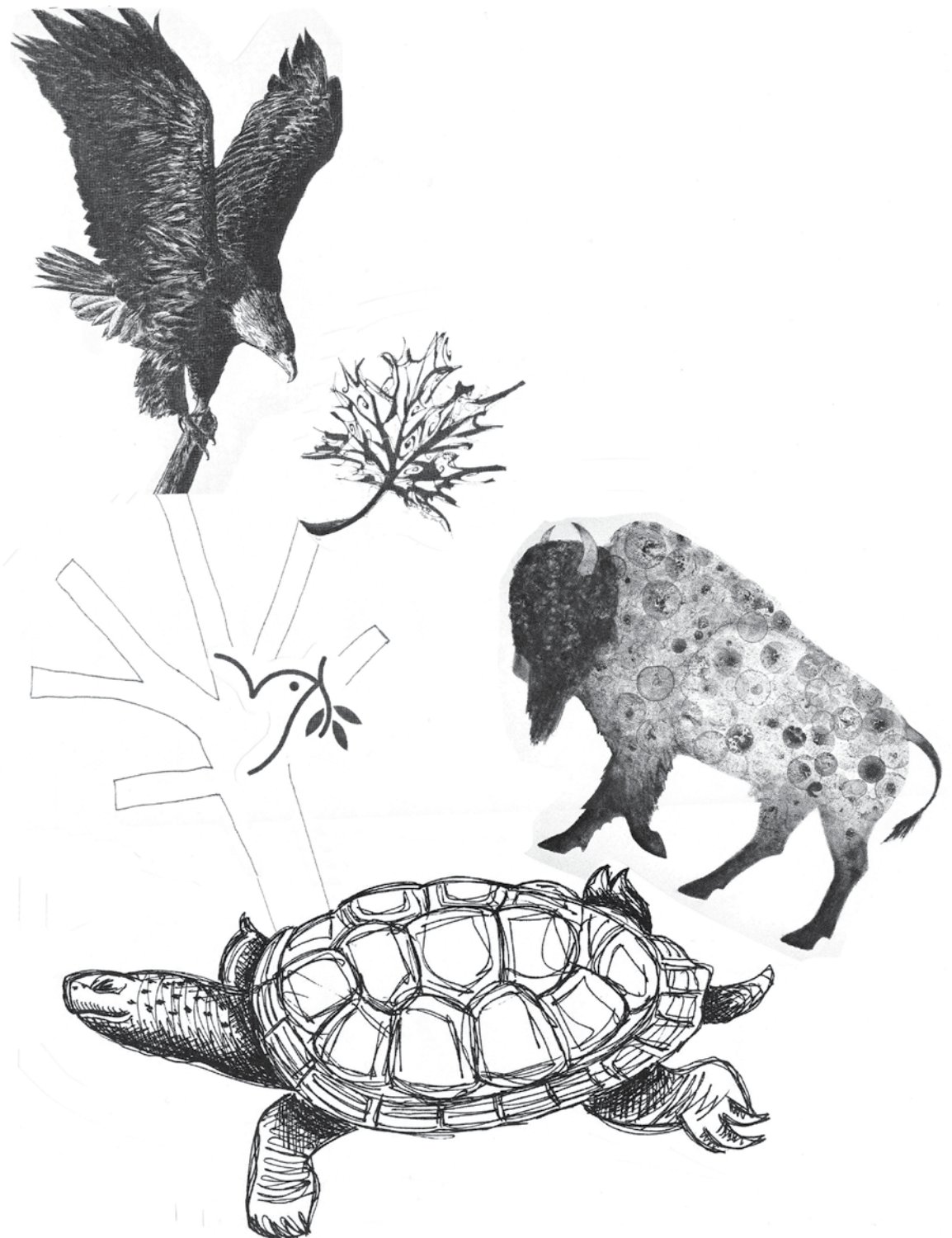


my friends **Intotemak**

Spring 2013 Vol. 42, No. 1





## Seeking an Indigenized Church

For thousands of years, long before Christianity came to this land, 'Canada' was home to powerful Indigenous spiritual traditions; life-giving religions birthed by earth mother that sustained host peoples with healing medicine.

Today, most of us Christians know little, if anything, about these sacred paths. And we all know the big reasons why. Suppressed by Church-run residential and day schools, outlawed by the Canadian state, Indigenous traditions and ceremony went underground for generations, avoiding the hostility of settler sights.

Yet in the last few decades, there's been a resurgence of Indigenous lifeways. Old and young are recovering ancient roots, finding their "good news," and developing strength. You can see it in every major city; you can find it on many rural reserves.

This renewal of native spiritualities has caused great discussion amongst Indigenous Christians. But what does it mean for non-native Christians? No doubt, most of us settlers understand that we need to be in living relationship with host peoples, cultivating friendships of respect and just mutual-ity. But should we also concern ourselves with Indigenous religions?

Not long ago, I heard a story that shook my soul, and got me seriously thinking about this question. It's about an Indigenous medicine woman who lived in North Dakota. Her name was Minnie Enemy Heart.

When Minnie was a little girl, she was taken away to a residential school where she learned a few things about Jesus and the church. The missionaries who taught her were good people with good intentions, but they were imbued with the narrowness of their age. Without much thought, they branded the native children pagans and devil-worshippers, telling them that they were eternally lost unless they adopted their faith. Minnie wasn't sure what to make of it all. So one morning, she went to a secluded place, up into the hills to seek Creator. She was fasting and praying, when all of a sudden, a man came to her in a remarkable dream. It was Jesus. But he didn't look like the flannel-board pictures that the missionaries had in school.

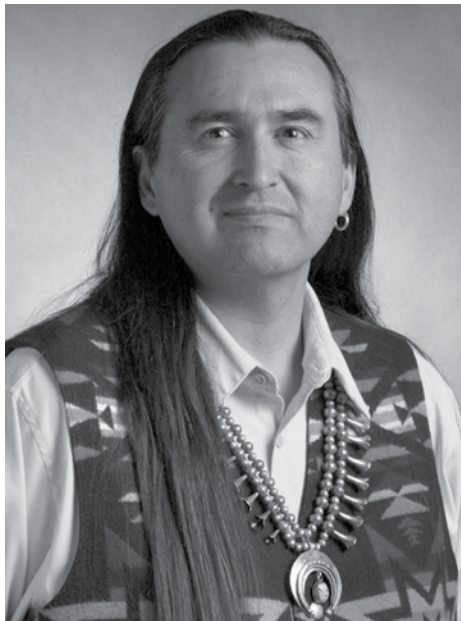
One side of his body was white, like a white man. The other side of his body was dark, like a Native. In his white hand he carried a lamb; and in the other, a little dog. Gently, Jesus spoke to Minnie and explained the dream. "My body is half dark and half white, because I am as much an Indian as I am a white man."

Young Minnie knew straight away what Jesus was trying to tell her. The missionaries had got it wrong. They were trying to change her and all the Native kids into white kids; trying to strip away their sacred religion and culture because they thought the hope of salvation could only be attained by assimilation into a world of whiteness. But this Jesus and this dream proclaimed a better way. For if Christ is Indigenous, and not merely white, then there's got to be something good – very good! – about Native ways. You can't get rid of them. You need to treasure them.

But that's not all. Since Minnie's Jesus was both white and Indigenous, the dream asserts that true healing, and dare I say *salvation*, is to be found in that union of two peoples, two cultures and... two religions; that the Church, if it's to be like Christ, must become a beloved metissage, a holy halfbreed community where white and Indigenous live and move together.

For centuries, Indigenous peoples have been willing and eager to share their religious gifts with the settler church. But for the most part, the church hasn't been willing to receive as it seeks to give and give and give its teaching. What if some of us Mennonites decided to do otherwise? What if some of our congregations went on a listening journey, opening ourselves to the "good news" that our host peoples have to offer? Mennonites in Canada and abroad have engaged in profound dialogues with other religious traditions, like Judaism and Islam. They have participated in and hosted inter-faith conferences. They have written books about it. But we have yet to do that, in any serious fashion, with the Indigenous peoples of this holy land/island and their millennia-old home-grown beliefs. Doesn't that seem odd, if not wrong? Does it say something about the depth of our relationships with the First Nations?

As we seek to live out *Intotemak* – a genuine walk of friendship – we will need to continually address matters like racism and land injustice and the desecration of the other-than-human creature. That stuff is critical. But I'm convinced that in order to nurture true relations of integrity with our host peoples, we settlers will also need to engage religion – and not, primarily, ours. We



Richard Twiss, June 1954 – February 2013

need to hear from and do life with both Indigenous Christians who are traditional, and Indigenous traditionalists who are not Christian. Only then will we discover the hybrid Creator who is white and brown. Only then can we root ourselves in a land that the Spirit has been blessing “since time immemorial.”

We dedicate this Spring edition of our ‘zine’ to the memory of Richard Twiss, a Lakota Christian who had a dream of One Church, with many tribes. Richard was a gifted teacher and theologian who empowered many Indigenous Christians to honor the gifts of their nations, and lovingly challenged settler communities to do the same. Richard passed away February 9, 2013.

Miigwech, and peace,

Steve Heinrichs  
Director, Indigenous Relations



# Inside

- Idle No More...4-6
- Repentance...6
- Lamenting...8
- Holy is One and Many...10
- Eagle...13
- Indigenous Kitchen...13
- Community News...14
- Meditation...15
- Resources...16



# Intotemak

Publication # 40012495  
March Spring 2013 | Vol. 42, No. 1

### EDITOR

Steve Heinrichs  
sheinrichs@mennonitechurch.ca

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Ingrid Miller  
imiller@mennonitechurch.ca

### ART DIRECTOR/DESIGNER

Carpe Diem Communications  
Tammy Sawatzky

Printed by Christian Press  
Winnipeg, MB

Please send all communications to:

### INTOTEMAK

Mennonite Church Canada  
c/o Indigenous Relations  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB  
R3P 0M4 204.888.6781  
Toll Free 1.866.888.6785  
Fax 204.831.5675  
www.mennonitechurch.ca

### COST OF PUBLICATION

\$20.00 a year for four issues.

Donations above the cost of publication will receive a tax-deductible receipt. Please send payment by cheque, VISA or MasterCard. Cheques are payable to Mennonite Church Canada/Intotemak.

*Intotemak* translates as my friends or my clan and are people who walk in solidarity together. *Intotemak* is a quarterly “zine” of particular interest to friends of Indigenous Relations, published by Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

## VISION HEALING & HOPE

God calls us to be followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as communities of grace, joy and peace, so that God’s healing and hope flow through us to the world.

# Idle No More

“Our Relationships Have to Be Built on Respect”

I spent part of this afternoon at a local rally for the “Idle No More” movement. It was one of many such rallies taking place across Canada today as Canadian PM Stephen Harper is meeting with First Nations leaders in Ottawa, ostensibly to address concerns about legislation and the honouring of treaties signed long ago.

The affair here in Lethbridge was a relatively small one. At its peak there might have been 100-125 people present on a frigid January afternoon. There was an eclectic collection of signage with everything from pictures of Stephen Harper’s face covered in oil to “Occupy Canada” to “Save Mother Earth” to one young man, who grinned impishly as he walked by me, proudly holding a sign emblazoned with “I Was Told There Would Be Frybread Here!” There were megaphones and speeches and drumming and dancing and even “war cries” which were repeatedly solicited from one of the organizers. There were little kids playing in snowdrifts, teenagers smoking up, and a steady stream of traffic from the street corner to the Tim Hortons in the mall down the street. It was an interesting spectacle in many ways.

I felt a bit strange being there. To say that my personality is not one that is drawn to political activism would be putting it very mildly. I’m a pretty quiet guy. I don’t like making a scene. I can’t imagine waving a sign in the air or chanting political slogans. Plus, I can’t dance or sing and I’m pretty sure that my Mennoniteness would rule out war cries. I mostly loitered around the fringes, observing, smiling, saying hello, reading some of the publications being passed around, and freezing, like everyone else. Such was the rather meager extent of my activism today.

One of the things that struck me as I observed at the rally today was the simple reality that these people’s stories are not my own. On one level, this is a patently obvious truism that is barely worth stating. Of *course* their stories are not my story. I am not aboriginal. I come from that most boring and privileged of categories—white, male, of European extraction. But simply to acknowledge that these are not my stories to tell is nonetheless important, I think. It forces me to pull back the reins on my instinctual tendency to evaluate, to critique, to decide upon the legitimacy of *x* or *y*. Is this cause just? Are they pursuing their goals in the right way? Are they speaking for everyone? Will this work? Those are important questions, perhaps, but they are not necessarily mine to ask.

As I looked at gathering today, I was reminded again that I have not walked in these people’s shoes. I don’t know what it’s like to be on the wrong end of racism and ridicule. I don’t know what it’s like to be the subject of societal mistrust and damaging and hurtful assumptions. I don’t know what it’s like to be born into difficult and seemingly intractable social conditions that are not conducive to human thriving. I certainly don’t know what it’s like to be a part of people groups who have suffered in a wide variety of ways due to their historical mistreatment at the hands of state and church. I don’t *personally* know what it’s like to be marginalized in any way.

So perhaps it was appropriate that my mouth remained mostly closed at this afternoon’s proceedings. Maybe that was my place



Devon Meekis

One of the things that struck me as I observed at the rally today was the simple reality that these people’s stories are not my own.

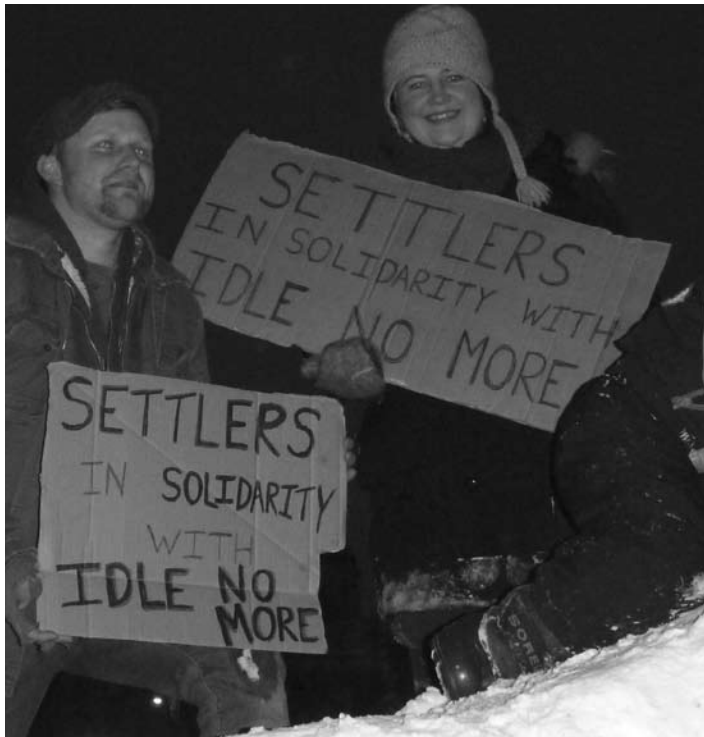
today—a half-informed white guy, curiously looking on, silent and shivering from the sidelines.

As I was drinking my coffee and trying to warm up this afternoon, I pulled out a book called *Speaking My Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation & Residential School*. Garnet Angeconeb, an Anishanaabe, obviously did not have the “Idle No More” movement in view when he wrote these words about the legacy of Residential Schools, but they seemed very appropriate as I reflected on the afternoon:

*If the [Truth and Reconciliation] Commission can create a space that allows people to feel that their stories are accepted without fear of repercussion, perhaps it can help to neutralize some of the negativity that has poisoned our relationships with each other.... Hopefully, in some ways, our relationship with Canada can be improved. It’s all been so negative. I see this process as helping to lead that relationship toward the way it was meant to be. For us, treaties were about co-existence. We need to mend those historical misunderstandings and accept the true history of this country before we can move on...*

*What it all boils down to is respect. Denial is damaging and disrespectful, not healing. Our new relationships have to be built on respect... [The] issue is not about making others feel bad or guilty. This issue is about truth and understanding. Truth and understanding are two key ingredients that will lead to healing and reconciliation... It’s amazing how strong we can be when we act out of love and respect and know that we are a part of something much larger than ourselves.*

As I read these words, I thought of a little girl that I saw at the rally. She was probably 10-11, right around my own daughter’s



Krista Wiebe (right) and Brad Langendoen (left) carry placards stating their support of the Idle No More movement. Both Krista and Brad are a part of House Brew, a Mennonite Brethren community house on Furby Street in Winnipeg, Man.

# Mennonites support Idle No More

The Idle No More movement is definitely getting noticed in Manitoba's Mennonite communities – and it's sparking interest in Mennonite congregations across Canada.

On Jan. 11, 2013, a small protest initiated by Mennonites took place at the intersection of Grant Ave. and Shaftesbury Blvd. in Winnipeg. On Jan. 28, 2013, about three dozen Mennonites joined a rally in front of the Manitoba Legislature. Vic Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada Chief Administrative Officer, spotted about 30 Mennonites and a dozen Canadian Mennonite University students in attendance.

Egon Enns of Bethel Mennonite Church was there. Early on in his working life, he was a teacher in northern Manitoba communities. He recited a litany of injustices perpetrated against First Nations communities over the years – from promises made and broken, to services withdrawn despite obvious negative consequences for doing so. “There is a story behind the scenes... The public is uninformed and it needs to change.”

The [indigenous] youth are latching onto the movement because they want to be equals in Canada and still know their culture.

Only recently has the history of First Nations become required public education in schools.

For Jared Redekop, of Home Street Mennonite Church, participating in Idle No More events meant taking a stand for justice. “The colonial rule of the Canadian government on the First Nations people has not yet been lifted,” he stated.

Neill von Gunten, past co-director of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministry (now Indigenous Relations) concurred. “The average person has no knowledge of the treaties that were signed and how the treaties should affect all of our lives – since we are all treaty people, even today. We as a society [and too-often the government] also have not learned the importance of caring for the land and its resources or realize that the decisions we make will impact the next seven generations to follow.”

Enns said we have a lot to learn about caring for the land and resources God entrusted to us—and we could learn from our indigenous neighbours. He shared a formational experience from his youth. When Enns was 12 or 13, his father sought help during harvest. He hired Jim and Jacob Blacksmith from the Sioux Valley Reserve. The two men came with their horses, wagons and families, and set up tents in the Enns pasture. Despite the influx of a small community during what turned out to be a rainy harvest season, Enns said the Blacksmiths made no mark on the land.

“I still remember clearly how I tried to find where they had camped those weeks and all I saw was where their tents had been,” Enns said. “No garbage, no signs of where they had used a wash-room. I was amazed.”

Mennonites cont. on page 6.

## Idle No More: Because Bill C-45 affects us all

Creation care and government promises are at the heart of the Idle No More movement. It began quietly as a protest by four women against a specific injustice; a government bill that lumped together a series of proposals with the potential to significantly harm Canadian waterways while infringing upon the rights of First Nations people.

But it was more than that. Bill C-45, “not only affects our First Nations people but the rest of Canada’s citizens, lands and waters,” wrote Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon and Sheelah McLean, the four Idle No More founders, on their website.

The Bill was signed into law on Dec. 14 by Canadian Parliament, but since then, Idle No More has taken on a life of its own as a broader movement for indigenous rights. Rallies have been held in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, the UK, Germany, Egypt, Colombia, Chile, and Puerto Rico, to name a few.

age, and she was holding a sign that said, “I am Canadian. I stand for human rights, environmental responsibility, and democracy.” She had half a shy smile on her face as she peered out from a mountain of winter clothing. In the middle of all the impassioned rhetoric, chanting, drumming, and slogans, her sign struck me for both its simplicity and its profound truthfulness. Care for human beings. Care for creation. Equality. In other words, love and respect. Yes, surely, these are *always* worth pursuing.

Ryan Dueck,  
Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Lethbridge, Alta.

# Repentance Requires Reparation

## A Money-for-Land Buyback Campaign

Last year, at the Toronto Truth and Reconciliation Event, I (Steve) met Baiba Vilks, an evangelical with a passion to help the Canadian church live more justly on native lands. In the following, Baiba shares a plan that she has to facilitate such faithful living, a plan that has the prayerful support of some significant indigenous leaders.

“The issue has always been land, it will always be land until there isn’t a square foot of land left in North America that isn’t controlled by Native people.... If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America, you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.” – Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian* (2012)

I’ve been asking the question for over a decade now, “What would repentance toward Indigenous people look like in Canada?” Here’s one idea that I continue to revisit, one that has the support of a number of Indigenous leaders that I’ve talked to.

What if there was a campaign where non-Native Canadians were encouraged to set aside a portion of money each year which



could be used to buy back parcels of land for the Indigenous?

When this idea first came to me, I envisioned individuals and churches paying at least 2% of their income towards such a campaign. I soon realized, though, that most Canadians would balk at such an amount and tossed much smaller figures around in my mind...perhaps, an annual \$65 contribution would be more palatable? Or maybe \$1000 each year for a church? Yet now, with the advent of Idle No More, more and more Canadians are increasingly becoming aware that true justice is going to cost us something.

So here’s what I’m thinking:

Imagine that settler Canadians paid some minimum amount each year in order to repatriate parcels of land to Native people – let’s say 2% of income. A small portion could go towards administrative costs, public awareness/advertising of the campaign, and perhaps an inexpensive gift for individual contributors, such as an aboriginal work of art or a pin of some kind (to help further the conversation). A non-partisan committee consisting primarily of Native persons would be appointed to oversee the collection and distribution of funds. This group would draw up a list of ten or twenty of the most disenfranchised Native communities in Canada. A search could be undertaken to determine whether there are any properties of vacant land available for sale bordering on or sufficiently proximate to any of these reservations, and each year one or more small purchases of land could be made depending upon which property/ies were the best investment, given such considerations as degree of need, nearness to a given reservation and amount and quality of land purchased for money invested. It might also work to buy back land for groups larger than an individual band, such as a First Nations council or alliance.

Initially, this campaign would likely operate on a very small scale. If in its first year it could attract, say, 500 individual participants and 100 churches, perhaps upwards of \$400,000 could be collected.

While at first sight this amount of money might seem laughably trivial, there certainly are locations in Canada where signifi-

---

### Mennonites cont. from page 5

For Enns, faith plays a strong role in his support of Idle No More. He referred to Genesis, where God’s creation and God’s relationship with humans was good – until humans broke the communion between them. “Jesus birth and resurrection was an attempt to restore that relationship. That [restoration] is now our responsibility as a church.”

The Idle No More movement, von Gunten said, fills him with hope that change is possible. “The [indigenous] youth are latching onto the movement because they want to be equals in Canada and still know their culture.” He also said that he is inspired by the emphasis on peaceful action – an approach that is part of indigenous tradition.

Neil Funk-Unruh of Charleswood Mennonite Church said that the Jan. 28 rally was more than just another in a series of protest rallies. “This is part of a new movement that, I believe, is re-shaping the relationship between indigenous and settler Canadians. We came together not just to demand rights or to remind our governments of broken promises and broken treaties; we came to dance together, to celebrate our common humanity by participating together in an immense round dance along with hundreds of our fellow Canadians, indigenous and non-indigenous. Something new is happening here and I am humbled by the way that we Mennonites are being invited to join in.”

Arlyn Friesen Epp, Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre Director also attended the Jan. 28 event, “to smell the sweet grass, witness the passion of indigenous youth, hold the hand of a neighbour in a circle dance, and hear the wisdom and challenge of the aboriginal leaders – all hints of a new justice that lies ahead.”

*Deb Froese, Director, News Services  
Mennonite Church Canada*



cant amounts of land can be purchased for relatively small sums. For example, a 160-acre piece of land north of Timmins, Ontario, was up for sale for \$24,000 not too long ago, with surface and mineral rights included. This piece of land might be purchased and repatriated to the White Sands band that is located just north of Timmins; all it would take is, say, forty-eight contributors of \$500, or, for example, twenty-four payments of \$1000 to make it happen.

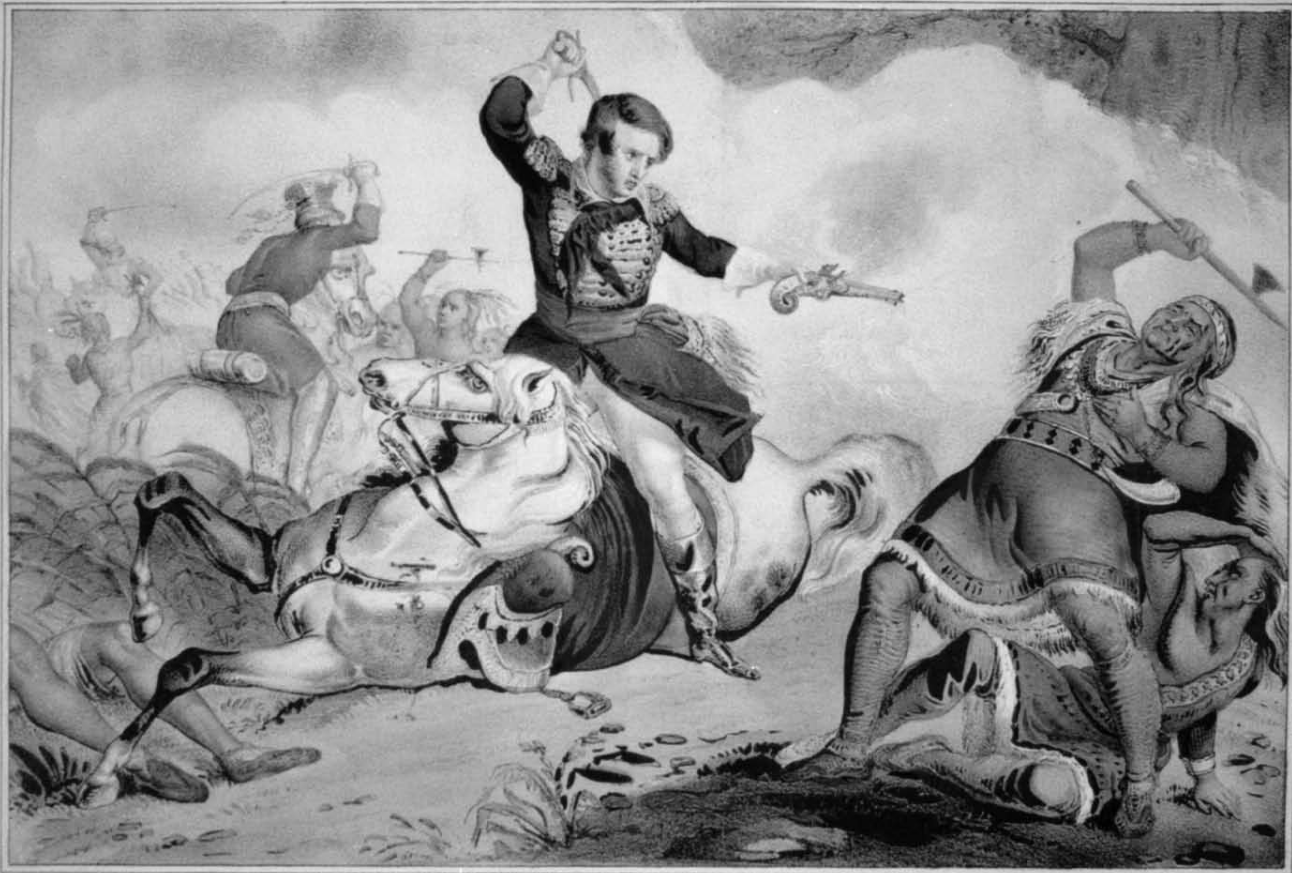
In this instance an individual or church making a yearly \$500 or \$1000 contribution would be directly purchasing 3.33 or 6.66 acres of land for the recipient First Nation, respectively.

Of course, while the amount of land or other restitution returned to First Nations would probably be small, this effort could still make a significant contribution by helping nurture – symbolically and tangibly – the need for land justice and reparations. Native peoples are owed a far larger portion of the pie than they currently possess, and the settler Christian community should be at the forefront of righting this wrong.

Over the past year, I have shared this idea with many Indigenous leaders and settler allies. Most recently, I have been in dialogue with Six Nations Christian Adrian Jacobs, Ed Bianchi of Kairos and Ian Ki'laas Caplette, an Indigenous graduate student

living in British Columbia. Interestingly, Adrian Jacobs told me that when Six Nations' representatives discussed the possibility of entering into a covenant with Mennonite Christians on their territory – a covenant whereby the settler individuals and churches would make some kind of restitutionary payments – members of Six Nations also arrived at a figure of 2% – 1% of property value as a property tax, and, and an additional 1% as a lease payment. Ian Ki'laas Caplette suggests that any kind of campaign to raise reparations should leave it to the grassroots representation of any given Indigenous community – led by provisional traditional governance structures – to decide exactly how funds raised should be distributed; while some First Nations might desire to purchase land, others might have clean water or adequate housing as an immediate priority. At the end of February, Ian, Adrian, Ed and I will have a conference call to further discuss these issues. I'm excited to see what might take place. Personally, I'm prepared to offer up my \$500. What about you and your church? If interested, please contact me at [bvilks@yahoo.ca](mailto:bvilks@yahoo.ca)

*Baiba Vilks,  
Jeremiah Community Church, Toronto, Ont.*



DEATH OF TECUMSEH.  
BATTLE OF THE THAMES OCT. 1813.

War of 1812 - The Death of Tecumseh

# Lamenting the Celebrations of 1812

First Nations and Mennonites should Both be Concerned

2012 was a year of commemoration in Canada as various groups reflected on the impact of the War of 1812 upon our national history and identity. It has been called a “nation-building” war, but at what cost to the original Nations? The interests of First Nations and the British colonists in 1812 were unified to the degree that they sought to curb and counter American expansion, both to the north and westward. But the outcomes of the wars were not shared equally by these supposed victors.

Mennonites and First Nations communities were profoundly impacted by the war in different ways. Despite the devastation experienced by all parties we have all been asked to honour those who fought for our supposed sovereignty, even though First Nations actually saw their hopes

for sovereignty eroded after the war. The military roles of Indigenous warriors now receive greater attention than in the past. Yet few people have noted the paradox of celebrating the victory, including the sacrificial efforts of these Indigenous warriors, while ignoring their loss of sovereignty that resulted from the 1814 Treaty of Ghent.

Reflection on this war has been a patriotic exercise for many Canadians. In this way the War of 1812 has supported the notion that sovereignty is only, or at least nearly always, won through violent conflict and conquest. Some historians see it as the war without which (British) Canada would not exist. Rarely do we notice that it is the war that dashed First Nations’ hopes of sovereignty in North America. During the

peace negotiations in 1814, the British, to their credit, had upheld the creation of a sovereign, geopolitical “Indian Territory” as a necessary condition for a peace treaty. But in the final weeks of peace negotiations they finally dropped First Nations sovereignty from their list of demands and today we still live with the consequences of that treaty.

The bicentennial of 1812 in Canada has become an ideologically foundational event, worthy of lavish celebrations, but tressed with unfettered patriotic interpretations, bolstered with grand mythologies and assumptions. Amid an economic recession and talks of austerity, the federal government afforded a commemoration budget of \$28million in 2012 alone. National galas are, if you can believe it,



## How can Canadians praise First Nations who profoundly shaped our history, yet fail to notice any connection between the devastation those same First Nations experienced during and after the war, up to the present?

fuelled with new flavours of ice cream (Hewitt's Dairy Bar introduced "Redcoat Rations" and "1812 Cannonballs"), and washed down with mediocre wines simply relabeled '1812' and sold worldwide with great success (see John Neufeld's winery, Palatine Estates). There are plenty of festivities, but scarcely any opportunities for lamentation or a posture of contrition in the face of the negative effects of the war.

While Canada and the British claim victory and bragging rights, Americans exalt their alternative version of valour. As for efforts to recognize First Nations' involvement, in recent years there have been clear efforts at many memorial sites and in the media, to highlight the contributions of thousands of warriors in many of the land battles in Upper Canada, especially in Niagara and south-western Ontario. Their contributions have been called "decisive" in some battles, "critical" in others. Yet it is rare to hear First Nations representatives claim victory in this war in like fashion to the other supposed victors.

Battle sites have begun in recent years to feature plaques and memorials to the efforts of "Indians" or "warriors" fighting on the side of the British. There is an extensive online exhibit of First Nations and Métis in the War of 1812 (see <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca>) and many others beside. While this website rightly states that, "The important role played by Aboriginal people in the War of 1812 has not been well remembered," it now offers, "that First Nations and Métis were active combatants in nearly every single major [land-based] battle of the war."

We need to look beyond the question of the military contribution, and ask why is there so little reflection on the devastating impact of the war upon First Nations' sovereignty. What has the enhanced commemoration of those warriors done

to sway Canadians' sympathies for the host peoples who continue to be treated so unjustly by the same government who now eagerly applauds their contributions?

At Rideau Hall on October 25th, 2012, John Duncan (then Minister of Aboriginal Affairs), along with the Prime Minister, Chief of Defense Staff and Governor General, distributed heritage medals to 48 First Nation and Métis communities with a heritage linked to the War of 1812 in a National Recognition Ceremony. Speaking to those assembled, Stephen Harper called the medals, "symbols of an unbreakable bond forged in a common struggle." He praised their ancestors, the "warriors who fought so gallantly... made a great and critical contribution to Canada." He suggested that without such effort and sacrifice, "our country could not have come into being." Yet in all this he failed to acknowledge how lamentable a victory this has turned out to be for First Nations. His speech did not translate into a greater commitment to ensure justice and equity for the First Nations who supposedly fought to found this nation. Imagine the great surprise these 1812 warriors would have if they knew their efforts helped establish a system that would subjugate their descendants!

In response to these official accolades, Chief Isadore Day (Anishinabek) boldly spoke of the changed and shattered relationships between First Nations and the government of Canada over the past two centuries. He noted that while the coalition of First Nations and the British in the War of 1812 demonstrated an effort of allegiance and good will to defeat a common enemy, times have changed. "It is now you that we struggle against, the Crown, in many cases, and the federal government. It is you we now fight in order to eliminate poverty and pain in our people." In this light, the medals of honour seem to hang

more like millstones around their necks.

How can Canadians praise First Nations who profoundly shaped our history, yet fail to notice any connection between the devastation those same First Nations experienced during and after the war, up to the present?

This past summer I participated in several events – including two powwows – which allowed me to reflect more deeply upon the relevance of Canadian identity for both First Nations and Mennonite history, and to listen more closely to the discourses relating to war commemoration. In the next edition of *Intotemak*, I will provide some perspectives on Mennonite-First Nations encounters in the War of 1812 that I gained from these events, and from archival materials that I've discovered. I will also highlight one Mohawk artist's attempt to commemorate Mennonite and First Nations experiences in the War of 1812.

The first calendar year of commemoration is over, but two more years of government sponsored commemorations await us; two more years in which we have an opportunity to scratch beneath the surface and strike at the important, enduring legacies that we have inherited from the nation-state and its leaders.

*Jonathan Seiling,  
First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont.*

# The Holy is One and Many

*“What is your word for God? What do you mean you have no word for God? Everyone believes in a Creator, don’t they? Our more liberal minded White friends always want to know more about us, so they naturally come with questions. Thirty-five years ago a Native elder from northern California told us a “creation” story. Long ago Coyote was floating through the air and wanted some place to rest. So he created the earth—although it was just an accident. So is coyote “God?” The Creator?” —George Tinker (Osage)*

James Perkinson, a “recovering” white man and long-time activist, recently reflected on the thoughts of indigenous theologian George Tinker, then crafted the following poetry, a wild riff that explores the nature of the sacred in a context of global warming, guns and FOX news. An educator in inner city Detroit, currently teaching as Professor of Social Ethics at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary, Jim shares his musings with us.

sandy words and rain spirits  
the bark of the locust outside my window  
drips with hurricane drops from the coast  
a thousand mile message  
slow-motion passage of hermes and his mother  
a dark-light bible of sacred babble  
talking to squirrels and sparrows  
who read without greek squabbles  
scrambling the content table that  
their feet grip like a gospel of living wood  
even in this inner city motown hood  
the brood of true “belief” is multi-colored leaves feeding fungi folk their just deserts  
the mood a cold love of hot, a spot commercial  
in every blast of the uncle from the north  
wooing the south with a wind-surfing froth  
of pirouetting geese, gagging with running  
comment on the fool’s play of capitalizing insanity  
beneath, as if worth could birth from a gucci-  
suited intention to sell everything!

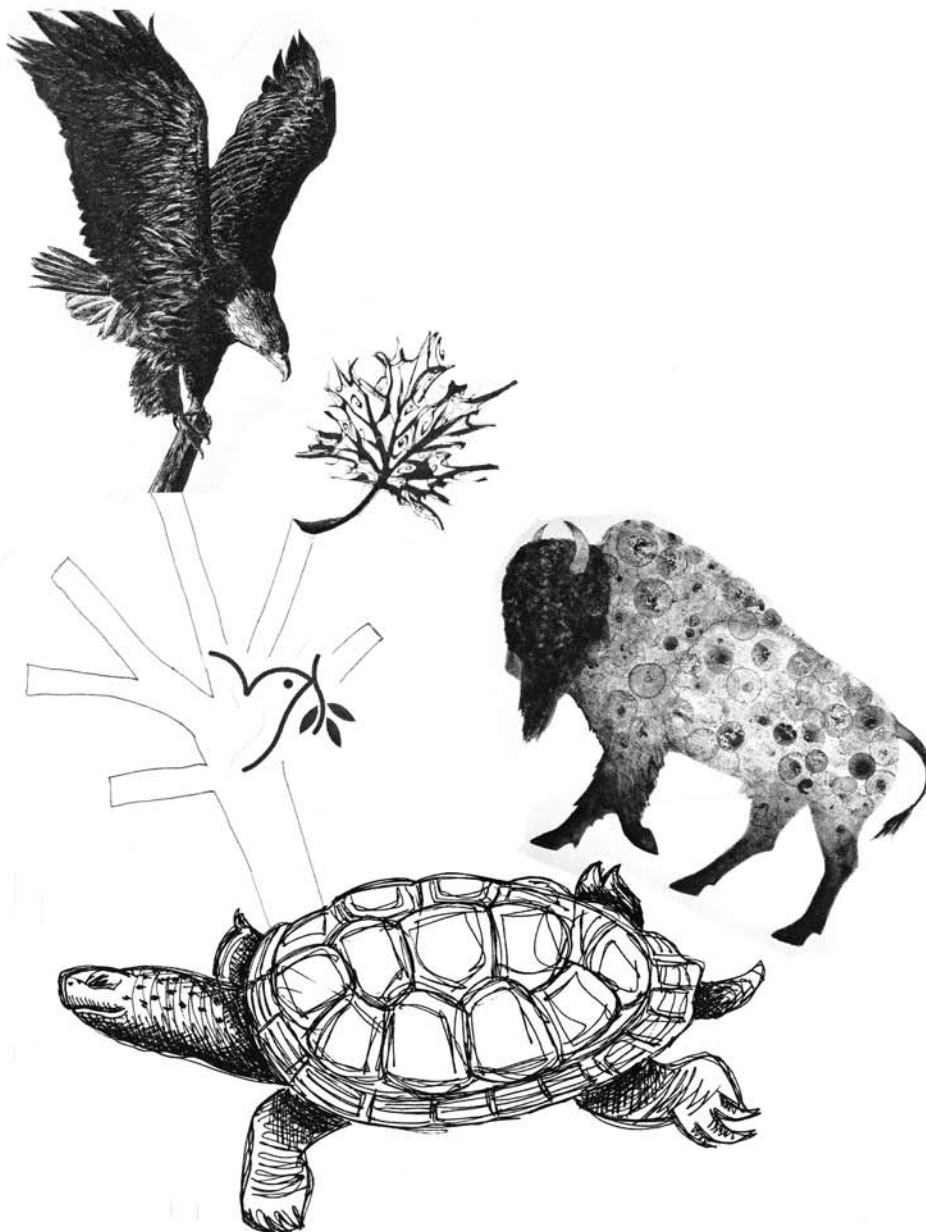
the food of spirit is a complexity of rioting  
verbs shouting like an herb of the earth  
a grandmother girth meeting sky-father mirth  
at the edge of the turf of two-legged city perps pimping rock-folk in the form of brick and  
sea-pounded sand in a blast-glass facade of towering supremacy, always  
blanking the eye with see-through pallor  
thinking their naked violence is good news  
to the grass!

but this is coyote-sass laughing  
before the god-guardian of the prison-house book,  
white collar crooks trying to enshrine “the one”  
behind a wall in new york,  
d-o-d spooks spitting “truth” through the muzzle of a marine-held  
gun-barrel, enforcing the proof of terror on brown bodies  
by drone-dropped grenades of horror,  
the nursing home called florida cheering,  
fox news leering, the whole thing a titanic  
steering straight into the berg-rearing flow of  
the real meaning of “white might,” whale-keened insight,  
dolphin-ping singing on the steel-hull-hubris, warning that the holy is many  
and one too little  
and deep-lying minerals . . .  
like snakes like oysters  
like drakes like mountains like snow-caked  
elk and bison, ibis and wild rice,  
lice and lightning  
lava and kiting hawks  
and waning-moon-summons of the morning-star like a deer on the wing  
a horse on the run  
a twinning and twining of flint and  
sapling and dung-rolling beetles  
from momma afrique  
to navajo peaks in the sun . . .  
are all the origin a world needs  
and all it has, which in the end—when the banks are killed by gravity (or revolt)  
and the tanks by rust,  
will still be beginning.

*Jim Perkinson, Detroit, Michigan*



# The Eagle The Leaf and The Bison



*Dave Driedger, associate pastor of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Man. offers up this re-reading of Revelation 2 and 3, taking the ancient text and inserting it – dangerously so – into the current Canadian context. The result is a challenging word to the Mennonite Church, a liberating word inviting new relations for those with ears to hear.*

**I**n near darkness I saw a single maple leaf clinging to its branch. The leaf hung connected to the life of an artificial tree grown by the neon light of fifty stars to the south. In the tree and above the leaf a great bald eagle lived. The eagle was constantly roaming the length and breadth of the earth scavenging wealth to furnish its nest. I saw the leaf trembling below knowing the eagle would not hesitate to tear the leaf from its limb to further insulate its nest. But still the leaf looked to the eagle and reached for its stars.

Then I heard a sound. I turned around, but could see nothing. I found myself staring out at the expanse of seemingly infinite prairie fields. I could not tell where the sound came from. I could not tell what it was. It was like the sound of a beating drum, of many drums beating as one drum. And then I saw ascending and descending from the four corners of the prairies; coming down from the mountains, out of the forest, through the snow, and up from great lakes; I saw a forgotten sight, an erased sight, a species that was, and then was not, and now is again. I saw a herd of bison. And I heard their hooves pound a rhythm out on the stretched prairie drum. They were returning and taking up their old patterns of migration, their ability to roam. The bison had no tall grass to feed



## Oak Nut Pancakes

Oak Nuts, or acorns, were a traditional food of many Indigenous peoples, especially the Chumash who live in what is now called California. Bruce Gwynne, a bushman, offers up an acorn pancake recipe that he learned from traditional elders. Enjoy!

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup of shelled, dried, cleaned acorns
- Water (as needed)
- Grape-seed oil (on medium-hot skillet for cooking)

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Gather, shell, dry, and clean fresh acorns.
2. Grind in old-fashioned hand-crank meat grinder, a few seeds at a time.
3. Sift out (with a 20x20 mesh) and re-grind the big pieces.
4. Re-sift entire batch through a smaller mesh (40x40). (You can use the coarse remains for a slightly bitter treat). Save the fine powder that's the flour.
5. Put flour in canning jar (one quart jar for one cup flour).
6. Add water to about 3/4 full, shake, and leave sitting for twenty minutes.
7. Carefully pour off the clear yellow water.
8. Repeat steps 5-7.
9. Pour batter into medium-hot skillet with a few drops of grape-seed oil.
10. Cook until holes bubble up and remain. Flip, and cook until firm.
11. Top with maple syrup and butter!

Serves 4

<http://www.nativetech.org/recipes/recipe.php?recipeid=240>

Then a great cry came out from herd. And the drum beat was silenced. The bison cried out again, but there was no response. And one bison emerged from the herd. In between her cries she would lower her head to the ground and would push.

on so they funneled into city streets, these bison danced circles at intersections, they gathered at the foot of legislative buildings, they lay down and rested over railroads.

And I turned and looked back and saw that the Maple Leaf shook and shuddered. It feared the clutches of the eagle above, but now it also began to shake from the drum below.

Then a great cry came out from herd. And the drum beat was silenced. The bison cried out again, but there was no response. And one bison emerged from the herd. In between her cries she would lower her head to the ground and would push. Then I saw that she was pushing bones into a pile. There were large bones and many, many small bones. These were the children of the bison who cried. The bison cried and worked and she could not be consoled. And when she finished the pile the bones began to speak out. And this is what the bones said,

“Maple Leaf. I see you hang high above the earth looking down on us. But you do not understand that you are rooted in the earth. You look up to the eagle, but you should be looking down. If you had eyes to see you would know that you have been living off the back of a giant turtle. This turtle supports the land that would otherwise be washed away into the oceans.” The bones continued, “For years Maple Leaf you have watched and you have been sheltered by the eagle who clawed at the turtle’s back and you have imitated the eagle as if made in its image. The turtle’s once hairy back was first sheared smooth. And its smooth back was then torn into and pulled from it was its life blood, its ancient minerals. You have left great scars and discoloration on the turtle’s back. But hear this

Maple Leaf, you and the eagle do not have the means to go deep enough. The head, the heart, and the spirit of the turtle has remained deep within. This is our witness as the children of the bison who once were, then were not, and are now again.”

After this speech the bones were quiet and the bison were quiet as they remained gathered around the bones.

Then I heard a voice and it asked me, “Where is the Mennonite church?” I turned and looked... I turned and looked... I turned and looked... I turned and looked. I turned and looked to the four corners of the prairies where nothing is hidden, but I did not see the Mennonite church and I said, “I cannot see the Mennonite church.”

And the voice said to me, “Write this down to the Mennonite church who is, but is not seen. I know you are living below in the shadow of the eagle’s nest. I know you bear the Maple Leaf. For this reason you have become invisible. When people see you they see nothing but eagle and leaf. But it has not always been so. Like the bison you were driven out and like the bison you have cried and pushed your own pile of bones. To the Mennonite church that is able to come out of the shadow of the eagle, to the Mennonite church that can let the Maple Leaf fall in its time, to the Mennonite church with ears to hear the bones and the bison in its land, to this visible Mennonite church I will grant communion with the bison, I will grant peace with the turtle, and I will promise flesh for your bones and for theirs. But remember you are not the eagle, not the leaf, and not the bison. To anyone who has an ear, listen and understand what the Spirit is saying.



## Community News

**Harold and Doreen Bennett** of Matheson Island, Manitoba celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday, November 10, 2012 with a Come and Go Tea at the Matheson Island Community Hall. Unfortunately a snow storm that day kept many friends and relatives from outside the community from attending this special occasion. Congratulations, Doreen and Harold!

**Albert Simundson** (better known as Buggy) of Riverton, Manitoba, passed away at the Arborg Hospital on October 29, 2012 at the age of 77 years. Albert was born in Little Bullhead and lived in the Pine Dock area most of his life. His livelihood was in the commercial fishing and guiding industries. Albert is survived by his daughter Geraldine; five grandchildren; brothers George (Jean), John (Nancy) and Jarald (Anne); sisters Emily Collins and Sylvia Zagozewski; his nieces, nephews and many friends. The funeral service was held at the Riverton Fellowship Circle on November 3.

**Elsie (Disbrowe) Monkman** of Selkirk, Manitoba, passed away at the age of 93 years on January 2, 2013 at the Selkirk General Hospital. Elsie was born in Berens River, Manitoba and lived there until she married Harry Monkman of Loon Straits in 1941. The couple lived at Matheson Island and Loon Straits before moving to the Selkirk area in 1963 with their family. In addition to the many tasks of raising a growing family, Elsie was an expert seamstress and craftsperson with leather and beads and she produced many beautiful articles that her family and friends treasure.

Elsie had a strong Christian faith that guided her life, and over the years, both Elsie and Harry participated in numerous Native Ministry events. Elsie is survived by six sons, Gerry (Mary), Ernie (Diane), Fred

(Marilyn), Willy (Gail), Lorne (Michelle), and John (Darlene); four daughters, Darlene, Diane (Randy), Jackie (Gord), and Laurel; 22 grandchildren; 36 great-grandchildren; three great-great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Gladys Monkman; and many loving nieces, nephews and friends. The funeral service was held at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Selkirk on January 7. Burial was in the Loon Straits Cemetery on January 8.

**Henry Phillips** (better known as Buzzy) of the Hollow Water First Nation in Manitoba passed away peacefully on January 24, 2013 at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg at the age of 69 years. Buzzy grew up in communities on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg and pursued a career in mining from a young age until a two-ton rock fell on him and crushed his back; an accident that forced him to pursue other means of making a livelihood

for his family. He had a strong faith in God and enjoyed being in creation while hunting and fishing.

He taught his family to respect and acknowledge both traditional Aboriginal ways and Christianity. Buzzy is survived by his wife Isabel; daughters Wanda (Clayton), Lisa (John), Bobbie (Gabe), Chantel (Vin), Kateri, Leona and Joy; sons Darrell (Charlene), Cameron, Nathaniel and Dennis; the grandchildren he raised, Asia, Meleka, Vincent and Landon; brothers Archie, Brian, Stewart and Robert; sisters Winnie, Geraldine and Linda; 21 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren; many other relatives and friends.

The funeral service was held at the St. Louis Catholic Church in Manigotagan on January 28, with the burial following on the family homestead.



## Events

### **March 15-16, 2013 – Building Bridges, Winnipeg, Man.**

Join the Manitoba Partnership Circle for 2 days of exploring what it means for the Church to live as Treaty People. Ovide Mercredi, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, will be our guest teacher and dialogue partner.

### **April 24-27, 2013 – National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Montreal, Que.**

### **May 3-13, 2013 – Christian Peacemaker Team Aboriginal Justice Delegation to Treaty #3**

Explore what it means to live in right relationship with the earth and each other. Find out what it means to be an ally to Indigenous communities engaged in healing, resisting colonialism and struggling for sovereignty. For more info see [www.cpt.org/work/aboriginal\\_justice](http://www.cpt.org/work/aboriginal_justice)

### **June 6 - 8, 2013 – NAIITS Symposium, Tyndale University/Seminary, Toronto, Ont.**

The North American Indigenous Theological Society will be hosting its 10th Symposium exploring "How Language Informs the Journey." Come and experience the dialogue of Indigenous traditions and evangelical Christianity through lectures, talking circles and music. For more information check out [www.naiits.com](http://www.naiits.com) or email [symposium@naiits.com](mailto:symposium@naiits.com)



## We are Sorry...Again

*“When peoples say to me, ‘Why don’t you Indians get over the past?’  
I say, ‘I’d rather not go forward with a nation of thieves.’”*

– Ovide Mercredi, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations

We pray with, and

for, and

on behalf of, and

along side

the white comers who have occupied the entire land.

We remember the mixed motivations with which we came to the new land;

we came for economic opportunity,

after the exhausted work of our ancient lands;

we came for religious freedom,

and promptly imposed our religion on others;

we came with religious zeal,

believing we were as commissioned as was Joshua before us

to seize “the empty land.”

We remember that with a mix of pride for our success,

and with shame for our habit of brutality.

When we arrived, we were surprised to find them here

long ahead of us.

We traded with our new friends and were honest;

we bargained with our new competitors and conned them when we could;

we assaulted our new enemies who resisted us,

and used whatever force was necessary

until we displaced them,

until we occupied their hunting spaces,

and confined them like prisoners in places of hopelessness.

And now with great measures of honesty,

and with deep waves of chagrin,

we find that we cannot undo our earlier violence.

nor do we want to lose what we have come to possess.

So we pray for a strong gift of grace,

to break the vicious cycles of violence, abuse, and exploitation:

give us enough compassion to value holy traditions other than our own;

give us enough mercy to entertain and engage with cultures other than our own;

give us enough generosity that we ask forgiveness for old sins of confiscation;

give us enough courage to risk and give away some of our unjust inheritance

Turn, we pray, our legal properties into shared lands and homes,

that we may yet become a genuine neighborhood

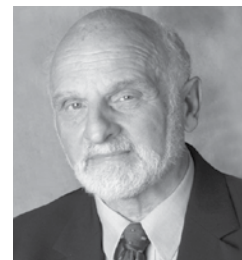
of sisters and brothers.

We pray in the name of Jesus to forgive our haughty self-regard;

forgive us in our moment of honesty.

You are the one who makes new,

evoking possibilities even among us in our exhausted self-sufficiency. Amen.

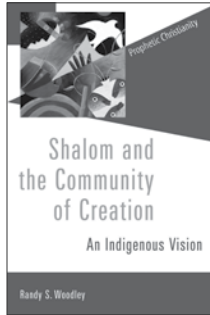


*Walter Brueggemann,  
Episcopal Church, Cincinnati, Ohio*



**Randy Woodley** – *Shalom and the Community of God: An Indigenous Vision* (Eerdmans, 2012)

Materialism. Greed. Loneliness. A manic pace. Abuse of the natural world. Inequality. Injustice. War. The endemic problems facing America today are staggering. We need change and restoration. But where to begin? In *Shalom and the Community of Creation* Randy Woodley offers an answer: learn more about the Native American ‘Harmony Way,’ a concept that closely parallels biblical shalom. Doing so can bring reconciliation between Euro-Westerners and indigenous peoples, a new connectedness with the Creator and creation, an end to imperial warfare, the ability to live in the moment -- and a more biblically authentic spirituality. Rooted in redemptive correction, this book calls for true partnership through the co-creation of new theological systems that foster wholeness and peace.



events and figures, takes a sideways look at film and pop culture, relates his own complex experiences with activism, and articulates a deep and revolutionary understanding of the cumulative effects of ever-shifting laws and treaties on Native peoples and lands. Burnished with anger but tempered by wit, King in the end shares some hope, offering ways in which we might tell a new story for the future.

Want to know more about IDLE NO MORE and why it matters to Mennonites? Check out... [www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1952](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1952)



**Thomas King** – *An Inconvenient Indian: A curious account of Native People in North America* (DoubleDay, 2012)

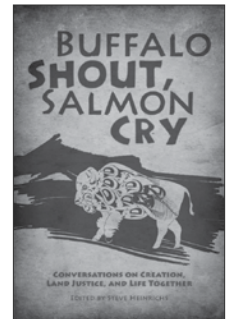
Storyteller Thomas King offers up both a “history” and a personal meditation on what it means to be “Indian” in North America. Rich with dark and light, pain and magic, this book distills the curiously circular tale of the relationship between non-Natives and Natives in the centuries since the two first encountered each other. In the process, King refashions old stories about historical

*Day School Discussion with Mennonite Church Canada*

**Ray Mason** and **Garry McLean**, leaders of SpiritWind – a volunteer organization seeking reparations for Day School survivors – share their experiences of the “Indian School System” in this short video filmed at the MC Canada office. Check out: <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1979>.

*Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*

This summer, Mennonite Church Canada, in collaboration with Herald Press, is releasing a new book exploring issues of creation, land justice and indigenous-settler relations. Thirty-two authors (half native, half non-native, Christian and non-Christian), dialogue through prose and poetry, politics and personal experience, ways that we can mend the brokenness that separates us from one another, the earth, and our Creator.



**CHECKOUT** the Indigenous Relations webpage at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/899>. Read back issues of Intotemak, find materials available for loan from the **RESOURCECENTRE**. If you and your church would like to pre-order a copy, please email Steve at the Indigenous Relations office, [sheinrichs@mennochurch.ca](mailto:sheinrichs@mennochurch.ca). All of these resources can be borrowed from the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre – phone 204-888-6781 or toll-free 1-866-888-6785. Check out the Resource Centre website at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/resourcecentre> for more resources that are available for loan.

## Intotemak

Publication Mail Agreement # 40012495  
Return undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:  
Intotemak  
Mennonite Church Canada c/o Indigenous Relations  
600 Shaftesbury Blvd. Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

Intotemak Spring 2013  
A Mennonite Church Canada Publication

