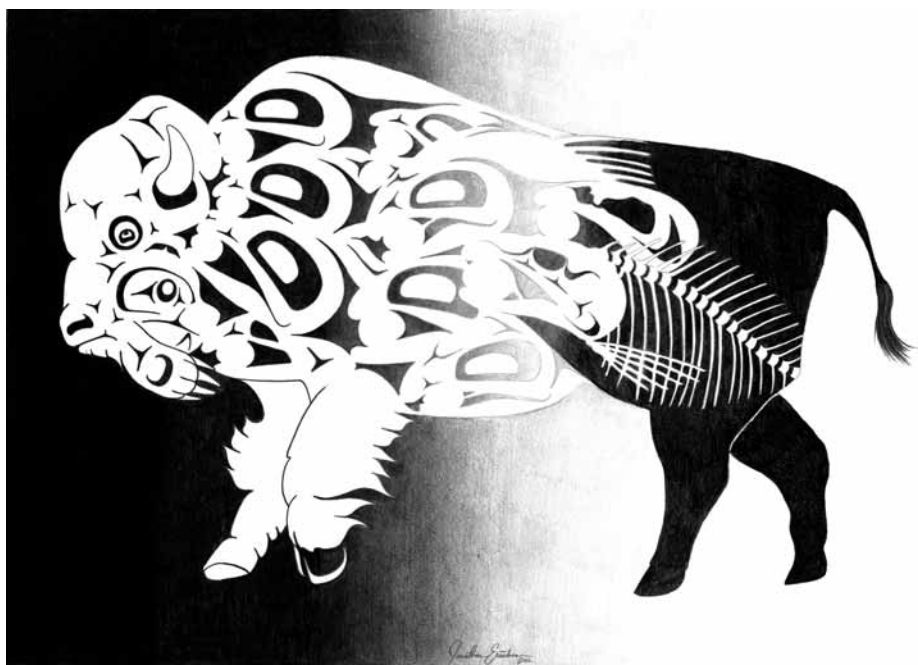


BUFFALO SHOUT, SALMÓN CRY

Study Questions and Action Responses

by John Heinrichs and Steve Heinrichs



Mennonite Church Canada

Thank you, friend, for picking up this book, and for your willingness to engage in this conversation. My prayers are with you and your communities as you make your way:

Be strengthened as you receive truths as good as old
Be challenged as you contemplate new ways of being
Be unsettled as you ponder loss beyond imagining
Be angered as you lament situations that none asked for
Be broken as you discern what you can't do . . . and what you can

And as you

join hands with that fierce, but life-giving circle
join all things in a courageous search for interdependence
join all peoples in a cruciform way of healing resistance

May you be graced with hope, beyond fear, to risk-taking love
indigenous and settler
together
in a good way

- *SH*

Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Study Questions and Action Responses

By John Heinrichs and Steve Heinrichs

Layout by Ryan Roth Bartel, Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite Church Canada

600 Shaftesbury Blvd, Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4

Toll-free: 1-866-888-6785

P: 204-888-6781

F: 204-831-5675

E: office@mennonitechurch.ca

W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

© Mennonite Church Canada, 2013

This material may be reproduced and adapted by Mennonite Church Canada and USA congregations free of charge. For free download of this material, visit www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2134.

Please add an explanatory note acknowledging by whom it has been adapted. For other permissions contact: office@mennonitechurch.ca; 1-866-888-6785.

Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Study Questions and Action Responses

By John and Steve Heinrichs

Note to the reader: As my Dad (John) and I (Steve) reflected on the chapters in the book, we tried to craft questions that could be used in various settings by diverse peoples. We recognize however that the kinds of queries that we raise flow from minds, hearts, and bodies that are white, Christian, middle class, male and settler. This informs and distorts what follows. So we welcome Indigenous friends, other peoples of color, non-Christians, women and those on the margins to reconstruct the questions and add their own to make this study guide fuller and more faithful.

Introduction: An Indigenous Intrusion Troubles the House

1. Steve Heinrichs begins with a riff on the biblical parable of Jonah, speaking a startling word of repentance to settler society. Is that a good place to begin? Does the non-Native church need such a message? Does it have ears to hear such a word? Why or why not?
2. How do you react to Heinrichs's assertion that we are in the midst of a global, eco-Indigenous crisis, "bigger than the biggest of wars" (p. 18)? And how might your social location (e.g., the middle-class urban church, the rural reserve/reservation, etc.) shape your response?
3. Heinrichs claims that the global ecological crisis and the problems in Indian country are not separate issues, but intimately connected; they are the results of settler-colonialism. Why does he argue such, and how persuasive is his argument?

Action response

This book seeks to bring into the circle of conversation voices from a diverse array of backgrounds, beliefs, and practices. The voices don't all agree. In fact, some are opposed on key matters. Reflect on your community of friends. How diverse is it? Who can you invite into this particular conversation who will offer up a different perspective that you may need to wrestle with?

Part 1: Naming the Colonial Context

Chapter 1—Creation, Original Peoples, and the Colonization of a Hemisphere

1. Stan McKay notes how some see earth as property and others view it as mother (p. 32). What practical difference does it make which view we hold? Are the two views necessarily at odds? And does the history/origins of these concepts offer us any insights? Warnings?
2. Anthony Hall draws on both Christian and Indigenous stories of origin to begin his chapter (pp. 33–34). How does that make you feel? Later on, Hall notes how most Christians have struggled to give space to the teachings of host peoples. What are the reasons for that?
3. Hall asserts that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and contemporary practices of treaty making are founded on sacred principles embedded in Turtle Island's origins (i.e., Indigenous values of reciprocity and alliance). Most settler Christians, however, are not aware of or feel the importance of these Indigenous-Settler treaties. Why is that? What scriptural stories/teachings might give such persons and communities energy and imagination to honor these concepts?
4. What attitudes toward Indigenous people and their rights are reflected in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the American Declaration of Independence (pp. 38–42)? How do those attitudes persist today?
5. Hall lifts up Jeremiah Evarts as a prime example of non-Native solidarity in the cause of Indigenous rights and land justice (p. 37). What examples from your region can you draw on for strength and example?

Action response

Research the treaty history (or lack thereof) in your home region—not only the documents of the settler-colonial governments, but also the Indigenous interpretations of compacts that were made, and how those agreements are currently being honored (or not).

Chapter 2—Liberated Peoples, Liberated Lands

1. In her poetry (p. 58), Rebecca Seiling asks, “Whose land is this? God’s? Settler? Indigenous?” How would you answer? Do we non-Natives stand, like Jewish settlers in the West Bank, in occupied territory? When does this land become shared land . . . and what are the terms of such coexistence?
2. Leanne Simpson contends that colonialism is a choice that Canadians and Americans make every day (p. 53). What does that mean? Do you agree? And if so, what are the first tangible steps to undoing colonialism?
3. Simpson elevates small, local, community-controlled economic initiatives over against large-scale economic industry (p. 54). Will the former resolve the dichotomy of land versus jobs? Are you aware of examples of where this has happened?
4. How different are the scientific and Nishnaabeg definitions of sustainability that Simpson puts before us (p. 55)? What implications could these differences have in your home, neighborhood, city, or reserve?

Action response

According to Simpson, a critical step toward decolonization of the mind and body is to reconnect with the land. Go to a nearby creek, urban forest, prairie field, or beach. Prayerfully reflect on ways that you can get to know this particular land that sustains and gifts you.

Chapter 3—Where Creation Was Begun: NASCA and Indigenous Regeneration

1. Frances Kaye asserts that “stealing the children was about stealing the land” (p. 65). How does Kaye back that up? Do you agree? If so, what does that mean for those of us who have benefited from Indigenous dispossession? And what of those of us (including Steve and many other non-Native Christians) who have Indigenous children in their homes today? What are our responsibilities?
2. Most Indigenous communities have been devastated by the dramatic loss (and theft) of children. If you are not from such a community, take time to imagine and spell out how your life would be different if most of the children were taken from your relatives and placed in schools/church contexts that taught them to be ashamed of your culture, language, beliefs, and bodies.
3. Kaye narrates some of the ways Indigenous prisoners are finding strength by reconnecting to their cultures and spiritual traditions (pp. 66–68). Since the church has had such a significant role in discrediting and actively oppressing Indigenous spiritualities in Canada and the United States, what practical responsibility does it have to support these “traditional” prison programs (like NASCA), and not simply Christian-based efforts?
4. Kaye opens by narrating some of the many origin stories that Indigenous communities have (pp. 61–62). She then finishes by pondering the possibility of Christians joining Indigenous circles and listening attentively to host peoples’ sacred stories (p. 69). How important is such sharing, and what needs to happen to make that possible? Is it possible/desirable for Christians to understand one another’s creation stories as presenting something other than rival truths?

Action response

Where is the nearest prison in your community? Try to visit it and learn about its history. Ask to meet inmates, particularly those of color, to hear their stories of survival and perseverance.

Chapter 4—Small Steps toward Reconciliation

1. Neil Funk-Unrau begins his discussion by speaking of the gap that exists between Indigenous and settler communities (pp. 75–76, 79). How big do you think that gap is, both in your community and in your nation?
2. How does Funk-Unrau understand the meaning and practice of reconciliation (p. 83)? How does this compliment or differ from biblical understandings? How does it compare to Indigenous understandings, like that presented in Terry Leblanc’s poetry (p. 85)?
3. Funk-Unrau describes some of the public apologies issued by Canadian churches and the Canadian government for their role in Indian residential schools (pp. 80–82). How helpful are such acts of public remorse and confession? Why do many, both Indigenous and settler communities, find them unsatisfactory? What steps do you think government and church could take to make them more satisfactory? What about you and your community . . . is there a role to play?
4. Wab Kinew, an Indigenous artist and journalist, has said, “Reconciliation isn’t a second chance at assimilation, or a kinder, gentler evangelism.” Why would Kinew and others express such sentiments? In what ways are church and government still promoting such views of reconciliation?

Action response

In Canada, more and more settler peoples are coming to grips with the residential school history. In the U.S., the boarding school history is still largely unknown. Find out where the nearest Indian residential/boarding/day school was in your area. Find out if your church was involved in the running of such institutions. Discover what steps have been taken, if any, to grapple with the injustice and make amends.

Part 2: Unsettling Theology

Chapter 5—Early Dialogue in the Community of Creation

1. Why should Christians, both settler and Indigenous, reverence Indigenous origin stories, such as the Keetoowah teaching that Randy Woodley offers? Are not the traditions of the Bible enough for the church?
2. Woodley asserts that Jesus' kingdom of God is similar to Indigenous understandings of harmony and the "community of creation" (pp. 92–94). What do you think? Was Jesus really concerned with such? And if he wasn't, does it matter?
3. In what ways does the Keetoowah portrayal of the fall enhance your previous understanding of that event (pp. 95–97)? In what ways does it cause you conflict?
4. Woodley attempts to show how Indigenous stories compliment biblical teaching, and can give settler Christians "eyes to see" what is in the text, yet hidden due to our contexts and prejudices. Do you agree? But is it possible to take it one step further, being open to the prospect that Indigenous origin stories may offer genuinely new and different insights that Scripture doesn't have (not merely complimentary teachings)? And if such stories disagree with scriptural stories at points, can we choose to embrace the former if they are more life giving?
5. How does Rose Berger's poetry illuminate the distinctions between Indigenous and settler understandings of the community of creation and their on-the-ground relationships?

Action response

Discover the origin stories of the Indigenous peoples in your home region.¹ Read them together with Genesis and contemplate the differences and similarities. If possible, invite a local Indigenous elder who is steeped in the traditions to come and share them with your group.

¹ Many Indigenous communities have published accounts of their origin stories. If not available at your local library, check with the nearest Indigenous community/cultural center.

Chapter 6—From Garden to Tower: Genesis 1–11 as Critique of Civilization

1. Ched Myers begins by stressing the importance of origin stories/myths and how they impact the way we live (pp. 109–11). Do you agree? Are these stories that powerful and important?
2. What about Myers’s interpretation of the fall do you find helpful in understanding the book of Genesis and the problems addressed in this text? What difficulties, if any, do you have in reconciling Myers’s interpretation with traditional interpretations?
3. Myers argues that the “civilized” life-ways of the last five thousand years are not sustainable and have led us to our current ecological crisis. Do you think civilization is the problem? Or is it possible to have civilization and to live symbiotically with creation? If so, what changes must occur for that relationship to be sustainable?
4. If you find Myers’s interpretation of the Genesis narrative persuasive, what might that mean for you and your community? In other words, how can you incarnate this “anti-civ” good news where you live?
5. Vonahe’e engages Myers’s rereading of Genesis through indirection, reflecting on linear and circular pathways and how those paths shape us (pp. 108, 122–23). Typically, Christians have read the narrative of Scripture in linear fashion. But does Genesis offer us hints of a circular worldview? And what difference do these two views of the world make in our relationship with Creator and the nonhuman creation?

Action response

Myers says that we “can’t save what we don’t love, we can’t love what we don’t know, and we can’t know what we haven’t learned” (p. 120). Discover ways to further your knowledge and love of your specific bioregion.² Find a mentor who can disciple you in the land and enable you to experience the “wisdom that sits in places.” If such a teacher isn’t available, read a few books that narrate the stories—biological, geographical, historical, and cultural—of your home region.

2 A bioregion is an area constituting a natural ecological community with characteristic flora, fauna, and environmental conditions and bounded by natural rather than artificial borders.

Chapter 7—White Christian Settlers, the Bible, and (De)colonization

1. Reread Lee Maracle’s “Blind Justice,” and note the ways that she explicitly and implicitly deconstructs dominant colonial myths (pp. 124–26, 138–39). What do you find surprising in her words?
2. Dave Diewert begins his chapter by naming his whiteness and his settler identity on occupied land (p. 127). How does that make you feel? Is this statement/confession necessary? Why or why not?
3. Diewert asserts that the Indigenous in Canada and the United States are like the oppressed Israelites in that they need an “exodus” from the dominating colonial powers (p. 134). What would such an exodus entail? What are the keys to such liberation, according to Indigenous voices in this book and elsewhere?
4. Diewert notes that the exodus narrative can and has been co-opted by those of us in the dominant society (pp. 133–34). Which other key biblical narratives have been co-opted as a tool of colonial imperialism, and how? What are some narratives that resist colonial exploitation that you and your community can use in your journey of decolonization and solidarity with the margins?
5. Do you agree with Diewert that we need to dismantle the colonial powers, rather than reform/transform them and make them better (pp. 135–37)? Why or why not? Is the call realistic? And how can we reconcile this revolutionary summons with the biblical visions which call for a softening of harsh sociopolitical structures (e.g., the household codes in Ephesians 5–6; slavery in Philemon)?
6. Diewert highlights the courage of Shiphrah and Puah, the Egyptian midwives, as resisters of the violence of imperial power (p. 135). Who are the present-day Shiphrahs and Puahs engaging Indigenous justice? What kinds of things are these “settler allies” doing? What can you and your circle/church do to join that stream?

Action response

Diewert notes how approximately 50,000 Indigenous children died in the Canadian residential school system (p. 133, footnote 10). That figure, not surprisingly, is debated. Still, we know that an alarming number of children in Canada and the U.S. died because of neglect, abuse, torture, and murder. And many did not receive proper burial.

If your community has a day in which it remembers the dead (e.g., All Saints' Day, November 1; Stolen Sisters, February 15), find the names of some of the children who have died in your area. Name them in your worship; name them in public with signs. If you don't know their names, name the loss and ongoing injustice.

Chapter 8—Theological Composting in Romans 8

1. How do you understand Paul's rhetoric of decay? And what do you think about Laura Donaldson's assertion that this scriptural teaching has played a part in the careless and destructive relationship that Christians have (generally speaking) with the other-than-human creation (p. 144)?
2. In what ways does an embrace of "decay," both now and in the future, enable one to live well with the rest of creation?
3. Vic Thiessen asks: If a "renewed creation includes death and decay, what are the ramifications for salvation theology?" (p. 150). How would you answer the question? What practical difference does our answer make in our lives?
4. For centuries, Indigenous peoples who have entered the church (willingly or coercively) have had to abandon traditional beliefs because they were, purportedly, not compatible with Scripture. Donaldson respectfully turns the tables and urges that our views of Scripture be challenged, nuanced, and re-visioned by Indigenous teachings. She, along with many Bible scholars, believes that Scripture itself contains competing traditions and thus invites such challenge. What do you think? Should we embrace such challenges? How would that impact our relationship with Scripture?

Action response

Author Steve Heinrichs recently visited a church in Toronto that had a working and permanent compost bin not in the parking lot, but right inside its sanctuary. Explore ways in which your community can make decay an icon of life in your worship and home life.

Chapter 9—The Earth Is a Song Made Visible: A Cheyenne Christian Perspective

1. Which biblical passages have helped enhance your sense of place and connection to the land?
2. Marcus Rempel's poetry speaks of "invasive [plant] species" (p. 150), implicitly referring to the rootlessness of settler society in this land. Lawrence Hart talks about North American Christianity as being "placeless" (p. 155). Do you agree with their assessments? If so, what can transform a foreign/invasive species to one that has roots and gifts the land?
3. Native American Christianity has been influenced by a variety of cultures; French, Scottish, English, Spanish, Italian, German, African, Eastern European, and more. Hart invites non-Native Christians to learn from the cultures and spiritualities that are native to this very land. What steps have you seen settler Christians take in that direction? How successful have they been? Why have Christian settlers, broadly speaking, ignored or showed indifference to spiritual knowledges of host peoples?
4. Hart speaks of Cheyenne pipe ceremonies and Pueblo corn songs that honor the goodness of the earth (pp. 156–57). What ceremonies does your tradition contain that do the same? If your tradition doesn't have such, or they aren't central to it, why is that?
5. Rempel writes about the Manitoba prairies as being the body of Christ, chemically lashed, burned, and exhausted by the dominating ways of Monsanto, and the farmers who submit to its corporate ways (p. 163). How do you react to this image? Is it fair? Can the Madeleines who bless each potato they plant (p. 162) and the Monsanto megafarmers be reconciled? If so, how? What can they learn from each other in relating to the land in a faithful and just way?

Action response

Bring an especially bruised piece of earth from your neighborhood into your circle/sanctuary. Pass this broken body around, feel it, and listen to God as you hold the land in your hands. What is the Spirit saying?

Part 3: Voices of Challenge and Protest

Chapter 10—Why I Do Not Believe in a Creator

1. Tinker advocates a worldview of “reciprocal dualism” over against the hierarchical monotheism of Christianity. What does he mean by this? Is it possible to embrace reciprocal dualism within or alongside a belief in “God” (e.g., an egalitarian Trinitarianism)? What might that look like?
2. Tinker boldly asserts that “the deep structure realities of the two worlds, those of euro-Christianity and American Indians, are inherently opposite to one another” (p. 171). What do you think about this claim? And where does the biblical/gospel worldview fit into this? Does it promote an up-down spatial imaginary too?
3. Settler Christians have frequently appropriated Indigenous concepts and names in attempts to communicate their worldview to Indigenous peoples. In doing so, critics say that they have been guilty, more often than not, of a profound spiritual violence against Indigenous souls. Is this simply a danger inherent in any cross-cultural engagement, or is there something about settler Christianity that fuels such postures and results? What would a more faithful posture look like, and how can we learn it?
4. Most everyone would agree that hierarchies are susceptible to being used for dominance and harmful inequalities. But Tinker appears to suggest that all hierarchies necessarily entail abusive relationships, whether toward lands, women, or people of other heritages. Do you agree? Or are some hierarchies capable of producing good?
5. What aspects of Tinker’s explication of Indigenous spirituality can you “assimilate” into your own faith? And how can you do so, without committing the sin of appropriation?

Action response

Tinker speaks of Indigenous ceremonies that not only recognize the goodness of the nonhuman creation, but also seek to restore balance by giving something back (p. 177). Discover which ceremonies in your tradition (be they ancient or contemporary) honor this practice/belief of collateral balance. If you cannot find any, try creating a liturgy or ritual that can be used in your circle/community.

Chapter 11—Inside or Outside Eden?

The Gods Who Give Us Language and Story Our Place

1. Tomson Highway asserts that Eden is not somewhere in the past or the Middle East, but here, at home, in the present . . . and we've never been evicted from it (p. 191). How does this sit with you? How does it differ and agree with biblical views? And what are the implications of such, if we took it seriously?
2. Highway claims that North American Christianity is still dominated by conceptions of a male God (pp. 188–91). How gendered is your community's concept/worship of God? In what ways does that view impact your relation with land and with others, including those who are racially different from you?
3. Imagine the character of God as being closer to that of Helen Betty Osborne—a young, native, marginalized woman in our colonial society (pgs. 189–90)—rather than a white (or even Palestinian-Jewish) male. How might such a vision change your relationship with the Creator, the gospel, and the land? What difference would that make to the way you perceive the church's mission?
4. Highway highlights some alarming Scriptural texts of misogynist terror (p. 190). What Scripture texts offer countertestimony suggesting the equality of the genders? Are those countertestimonies powerful enough to set “male and female” free in your community? Or is something more needed?
5. How has this essay affected you? How has it unsettled and troubled you? How has it challenged your theology, your appreciation for sexual equality, your concern for the environment?

Action response

Tomson Highway joyfully describes the land of Manitoba and Nunavut in Edenic terms. Di Brandt does the same with her poetry, seeing the divine spirit present in all things in her city of Brandon and in Nopiming Park (pp. 182–83, 192–95). Spend a week contemplating your neighborhood and discovering the paradise that is right here through prayer and poetry.

Chapter 12—Chief Seattle Syndrome

1. Will Braun argues that Indigenous-settler dialogues are too theoretical and ignore on-the-ground realities that should actually challenge our all-too-romantic abstractions (pp. 199, 201). Do you agree? Is this book guilty of such romanticism?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting Indigenous-settler discussions with an acknowledgment of the complexity of the situation and the complicity of both sides?
3. The poetry by Adrian Jacobs highlights the tension and disconnect that he has with Will Braun's chapter (pp. 196, 208). What is Jacobs upset about? Is his response legitimate? How would you deal with the tension and the disconnect?
4. Is it possible to accommodate major industrial projects without compromising core principles of Indigenous culture (p. 201)? If not, might these projects still do more good than harm?

Action response

Adrian Jacobs encourages settlers to go and listen and stay with Indigenous communities so that we can understand the predicament that so many First Nations are in. Connect with someone in your circle who has good relations with an urban or rural Indigenous community; explore the possibility of taking a week, a month, or more to simply live with, be with, and learn from that community.

Chapter 13—A Serpent in the Garden

1. Waziyatawin claims that Christianity is largely responsible for the utter destruction of Turtle Island's Indigenous lands and life-forms (pp. 210–13). Do you agree? Can the Christian faith be held responsible for the destructive actions of Europeans when the core of the early Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus were that God is love and that one must love one's neighbor as oneself?
2. What if Christianity never came to this land? Would Indigenous communities be better off today? What about the ecosystems of Turtle Island, and the communities of salmon, buffalo, passenger pigeons, and the great forests? And how important is this "what if" question?
3. Brian McLaren responds to Waziyatawin with confession. One white reviewer of this text was deeply upset with this. He wanted McLaren to go "toe to toe" with Waziyatawin as much as possible, challenging those points where "she is off." What do you think? Is McLaren's posture a good one?
4. A friend of Waziyatawin's, Derrick Jensen, says that the key difference between settler-Christian and Indigenous worldviews is that "even the most open-minded Westerners generally view listening to the natural world as a metaphor, as opposed to the way the world really is."³ How would you describe the difference?
5. Waziyatawin heavily critiques Christian notions of particularism and evangelistic mission (pp. 216–19). Would it be better for the "community of creation" if Christians abandoned such beliefs? Is it possible to hold these beliefs without being Christian supremacists?

Action response

Approximately 150 species of plants and animals that the Spirit has brought into being are destroyed each day, their presence removed from this planet forever. Indigenous languages, which contribute to the diversity and well-being of the earth, are being erased at an alarming rate. How can you and your friends "witness" this devastating loss to the watching world? How can you suffer with and resist the destruction through such actions as prayer, fasting, financial aid, education, political struggle, and public lament? Settle on one action, and practice it in the month ahead.

3 Derrick Jensen and Aric McBay, *What We Leave Behind* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2009), 230.

Chapter 14— Coyote and Raven Visit the Underworld

1. Peter Cole employs a unique style to tell his story, and gives us rationale for doing so (see p. 232, footnote 1). One reviewer loved it. Another was left scratching her head. What about you? How did it make you feel? How did it change, gift, and/or challenge your learning experience?
2. Coyote and Raven explore a lot of ground as they venture through the mythic underworld. What do you think are the most pressing issues— theological, sociopolitical, epistemological, relational—that they raise?
3. Both Cole and Iris de León-Hartshorn assign significant blame to Christianity for the destruction of Indigenous land and life in Turtle Island. How are their critiques similar and dissimilar? Whose perspective do you identify with most, and why?
4. Cole's Jesus (yay-zeus) stands over against the dominant church. In what ways is this Jesus similar to the portrayals we find in the Gospels? In what ways is he/she different?
5. It's clear that Cole has many issues with mainstream Christianity. But what Indigenous alternatives (both worldview and practice) does he offer up? And how helpful do you find them?
6. On page 250, Cole reflects on what it means to be Indigenous. How do you understand that concept? Can settlers become Indigenous in the same way?
7. De León-Hartshorn says that she feels caught between the unjust history of the church in the Americas and the glimpses of a beautiful "kin'dom" (pp. 229, 260). Describe a time when you have felt a similar tension.

Action response

Iris de León-Hartshorn finds hope in radical minority movements that have pursued justice for the dispossessed at cost. Research what communities in your neighborhood might be doing this in relationship with host peoples. Connect, go out for coffee, and explore ways to join in.

Part 4: Where To from Here?

Chapter 15— Reflections of a Christian Settler in the Haldimand Tract

1. Derek Suderman recounts his ancestors' history of land migration, their occupation and dispossession of Indigenous peoples' territories (pp. 264–66). What is your family's story? And how does that story inform, bless, or distort your current relationships with host (or settler) peoples?
2. Suderman explores his relationship with the Six Nations primarily through the biblical text. By contrast, Gord Hill points us to the Two-Row Wampum (pg. 275). What is the Two Row Wampum, and how important is it that settler Christians be as conversant in these ancient covenants as they are with their own Scriptures and sacred traditions?
3. Suderman uses Jesus' proclamation of Jubilee to stir Christian engagement with land politics (pp. 267–68). Most scholars surmise that the Jubilee described in Scripture was never actually practiced by the Israelites. What contemporary relevance might that failure have? And if a Jubilee perspective is relevant, what are paths that privileged settlers can/should take to incarnate this good news? Finally, what call to action might the Jubilee offer the dispossessed?
4. Some say that Christians can be more faithful by being "the quiet in the land" instead of engaging these political disputes over land/title. How do you respond to such questioning?

Action response

Suderman explores the good news of Jubilee in Luke and Leviticus. What biblical texts animate your pursuit of right relations with the world around you? What are the key treaty Indigenous-settler texts (written and oral traditions) that are critical to your territory? Study both texts (Scripture and treaty), pondering how they can interpret, compliment, and challenge one another in the pursuit of reconciliation.

Chapter 16—Broken Covenants and Restoration

1. Steve Berry claims that places are made more sacred when we know the broken and bruised history of that place (p. 283). Others say we should just forget the past and move on. How do you respond? Is forgetting the past ever appropriate? And who should be advocating such forgetting: settlers or Indigenous or both?
2. Berry is able to recount the history of the Nipmuc First Nation in whose territory he grew up. Most settlers cannot do this. Why don't we know these stories?
3. Berry talks about his relationship with Tom, of the Abenaki First Nation, and how that friendship deeply impacted him (pp. 283–85). How necessary is it that settlers cultivate actual friendships with host peoples as they seek to live in spirit, truth, and solidarity?
4. Do you agree with Berry's claims that we cannot love God well unless we know, respect, and love, not only creation, but our particular Edens (p. 285)? Why or why not?
5. On page 289, Berry lobs a critique at the institutional church. He's not alone. Many of the authors in this book severely criticize the church. Are they being fair? Why do you think their critique is so prevalent?
6. Berry makes much about the importance of covenant theology (pp. 285–88). What implications does covenant thinking have for relationships among settler and Indigenous peoples and creation? Many Indigenous communities think of treaties in terms of covenant (see Stan McKay, p. 32). Can Indigenous understandings of treaties help Christians understand/practice covenant theology today?
7. The chapter concludes with Berry calling upon followers of Jesus to subvert the corporate industrial culture and join with those who are struggling for respect and well-being (pp. 289–90). Do you see yourself joining such a struggle? Why or why not? If so, what might that look like?

Action response

Berry notes how his town of West Brookfield lacked any public markers that recognized Indigenous presence in that place, let alone their claim to it, though the town publicly celebrated settler origins (pp. 282–83). Anita Keith laments in her poetry that lack of common memory/recognition for her ancestors (p. 291). Learn the history of your place and explore in conversation with host peoples ways to publicly “re-member” your

neighborhood. If a marker isn't possible at this time, make one in front of your home, at your church/circle, or even consider subverting an "official" monument to help bring a bit of truth-telling to that place.

Chapter 17— Just Creation: Enhancing Life in a World of Relatives

1. Derrick Jensen asserts that the dominant culture is sociopathic, and that's why it has voraciously pillaged both lands and peoples over the last few hundred years (p. 312). Is his judgment fair? If so, how do we stop the sociopath from pillaging (assuming the sociopath is not us)? And do you agree with him that decisive action (even violent action) precedes dialog? Explain.
2. Daniel Wildcat reinforces Indigenous connections to particular places, asserting that Indigenous wisdom and practice is inextricably bound to the locales native to the tribes (i.e., the real experience of peoples in home territories over centuries; see pp. 298–300). For Christians and settlers living in an age of global dislocation, and whom the Bible calls to be "aliens and strangers" in this world, what might this mean?
3. Wildcat draws a distinction between having a religion and living a life-way (p. 302)? In what way does this relate to your community's practice of traditional spirituality and/or Christianity?
4. Like others in this volume, Wildcat challenges Western and Christian anthropocentrism and invites us to see humanity as one creature in a world of creaturely relations (p. 297). Do you find this desirable? Why? Given the privileged status of human beings in Scripture, is it possible or desirable for settler and Indigenous Christians to embrace a less anthropocentric view of creation (even a non-anthropocentric view)—and if so, how do we get there?

Action response:

In the Hebrew Bible, Job invites his friends to learn from the other-than-human world: "But ask the animals what they think—let them teach you; let the birds tell you what's going on. Put your ear to the earth—learn the basics. Listen—the fish in the ocean will tell you their stories" (Job 12:7-8 *The Message*). Spend a full day, or even a weekend, outside in the urban or rural "bush." Try listening, not metaphorically, but actually listening to the creatures that surround you and the earth that holds you. Use ears, eyes, and hands to listen. Try talking back. Journal your experience, and share with a friend.

Chapter 18—Dangerous Goods: Seven Reasons Creation Care Movements Must Advocate Reparations

1. Robert Two Bulls points out how settler society often holds contradictory stereotypes of Native peoples (p. 314). On the one hand, dirty Indians. On the other, eco-Indians. What allows settlers to hold (and get away with) such divergent and racist views? How can we really undo some of that stereotyping in our communities?
2. Jennifer Harvey starts off with a bold statement: “the specific lands on which we live when we advocate for care of the earth are not ours. It is that simple, and that complex” (p. 318). Is she right, and what are the implications if she is?
3. Harvey offers up seven reasons why creation care must be tied to reparations. Which reasons are the most compelling? Which aren't? And what's missing?
4. Broadly speaking, the Christian church holds high the rhetoric of peacemaking. Yet most churches are reluctant to talk concretely about land justice and reparations. What are the reasons for that? And how can we actually make some tangible moves towards such (talk, yes . . . but real action too)?
5. What is the biggest factor in your decision whether or not to pursue reparative justice for Indigenous peoples?

Action response

Learn the history of struggle over land in your area, and discover hopeful stories that can animate discussion and action (like those mentioned by Harvey; see pp. 327–28). Share the history/stories with your circle and invite an Indigenous teacher or settler ally to share what's currently happening. Prayerfully contemplate the Jubilee journey . . . and join in.



Mennonite Church Canada

600 Shaftesbury Blvd
Winnipeg MB R3P 0M4
Toll-free: 1-866-888-6785
P: 204-888-6781
F: 204-831-5675
E: resources@mennonitechurch.ca
W: www.mennonitechurch.ca

Resource Centre:
Toll free: 1-866-888-6785
resources@mennonitechurch.ca