

my friends Intotemak

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What if the missing were Mennonites?

“Rachel weeps and wails for her children”
(Matthew 2:18).

It's not a part of the Christmas story we spend much time with. But there it is, right next to the good news of the newborn Jesus. Mass death, profound lament. Many mothers - and the mothering God - refusing comfort because their little ones have been stolen from them.

In this edition of Intotemak, editor Steve Heinrichs invites us to consider the Rachels of our day - Indigenous moms who've experienced the murderous loss of their children - and to find ways, together, to bear that grief.

- Laura Snider - murdered in Toronto. Age 26.
- Abby Froese - missing from Vancouver. Age 16.
- Zoe Krause - murdered in Regina. Age 31.

What if there were 100 missing Mennonite women in Canada? What if there were 200 murdered Mennonite girls? How would our church community respond? What would we ask MCC to do? What would we demand of our government(s)?

- Jennifer Suderman - missing from Kitchener. Age 15.
- Stephanie Loewen - murdered in Edmonton. Age 21.

According to the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and Amnesty International, there are at least 600 Indigenous women who have met such a terrible fate, impacting thousands of native families and communities across this land. Shawn A-in-Chut Atleo, Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, recently named it “a grave human rights crisis.” But despite the efforts of Indigenous organizations - like *Sisters in Spirit* - and settler allies (including some churches), the government has dragged its feet and done precious little in response. No national action plan. Just a few dollars, with most of it going toward the police to fund programs with “no particular focus on the specific patterns of violence against Indigenous women” (Amnesty).

- Catherine Eby - murdered in Rouge Valley. Age 30.
- Dianne Sawatzky - murdered in Chilliwack. Age 23.

Indigenous women are about three times more likely to be killed by strangers than settler women. Only 53% of their murder cases are being charged. Compare that to 84% for the rest of Canada (NWAC).

If these native women weren't brown and poor, if they were white and middle-class, like most Mennonites, I can't imagine the government responding like it has - “*shockingly out of step with the scale and severity of this tragedy*” (Amnesty).

- Sonja Bergen - missing from Calgary. Age 18.
- Melanie Plenert - murdered in Prince Albert. Age 42.

Here's some good news. Back on July 24, Canada's Provincial and Territorial leaders called on the Federal Government to implement a National Public Inquiry. There's some movement. Things can change.



Never Forgotten mural by Tom Aldrich on the Portage Ave. and Empress underpass, Winnipeg.

As people seeking to live *Intotemak* - to walk in true friendship and solidarity - we need to do our part to respond to the cries of our Indigenous neighbours, to honour the lives of Indigenous women taken far too soon, and to help dismantle the racist colonialism that continues to fracture native and settler communities. What can we do? Here are a few ideas.

- Allow your heart to be broken. Take up the lament of Jeremiah, as he mourned the violence perpetrated against the women in his city: “The tears stream from my eyes...until you, Creator, look down from on high. See what's happened to the young women in the city! The pain breaks my heart” (Lamentations 3:49-51).
- Attend a Women's Memorial March/Vigil on Valentine's Day (February 14th). Held in every major city across the country, it's a way of expressing your support to the families, and calling public attention to the issue.
- Write to your local MP. Tell them that you want the Federal Government to make this a priority and to implement a National Inquiry.
- Share this national crisis in church. Have a time of prayer and silence to remember the women. Collectively discern how your congregation can support local Indigenous women (and their organizations).

The other day, a Mennonite friend with adopted Indigenous kids told me that his daughter was prevented from joining a social group at school. “No Indians allowed,” was the word from a fellow student. My friend's girl has a Mennonite last name. But she's not white.

This isn't abstract, theoretical stuff. There aren't 600 white Mennonite girls who are missing. There are 600 brown Indian girls, who are as precious and sacred as any others. We need to do something. And soon.

*Steve Heinrichs
Director, Indigenous Relations*

EDITORS
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

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Intotemak translates as my friends and are people who walk in solidarity. *Intotemak* is a quarterly "zine," published by Mennonite Church Canada Witness.

Why be a Christian?

One of the most common questions I receive when speaking to non-indigenous audiences is this: Why would an indigenous person want to be a Christian? Most often, it is said or implied that it should be near impossible for people to look beyond the suffering related to the misdeeds of Christians. At times, the question is offered by people who recognize the great depth and wisdom of indigenous traditions.

At these times, I think of a dear Lakota friend who, when asked that question, answered, "That's simple: Jesus." I have learned since then that he spoke for many people. Jesus is the compelling and most complete answer to the question of why indigenous people would want to be Christian.

For many in Western societies, Jesus can't be separated from their experience of church. Both Jesus and the church are thought to be a product of Western culture. Jesus either appears to be the ultimate cheerleader for personal and societal good or, perhaps, as the founder of an institution with an ambiguous record and an increasing irrelevance. For a majority of people in society, his word and deeds have come to lack the power to disturb and, increasingly, even the power to ruffle.

For most of the indigenous people I meet, even those who do not claim to be Christian, Jesus is seen quite differently. His words and actions are seen as a powerful and prophetic confrontation with any status quo that does not put God and the weak ones first. He is portrayed in scripture, quite clearly, as both a deep part of creation and also its wise ruler. He is very interested in every person, even those who seem far away from him. He gives his life for the people, in sacrificial love, which is said to be the highest value of indigenous community. He is raised from the dead and is immediately present as the blessing of life, something that is experienced in a mysterious, but tangible way.

So there is a surprising vitality to the faith that indigenous people have in Jesus. Many Westerners might be tempted to receive this emphasis on Jesus as yet another example of primitive indigenous faith. I

Jesus is the compelling and most complete answer to the question of why indigenous people would want to be Christian.

don't think so. I think it is a vision of the future.

The gospel of Jesus is infinitely translatable. Its horizon is not limited to the culture and religion of any one group. Its capacity is not bound to the mistakes of its would-be proclaimers and practitioners. Today, in many peoples, indigenous and not, it is reaching for a new horizon.

[Thanks to the *Anglican Journal* for allowing us to reprint this!]

Mark MacDonald,
National Indigenous Bishop of the
Anglican Church of Canada



Cover: Ovide Mercredi outside of Buckingham Palace on the 250th Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763

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.



When will we* ever learn? When will they* ever learn? (*Christians)

In the last four years information about the Canadian residential schools and day schools has come to the attention of many of us who, regrettably, knew nothing about this. We became aware that from the late 1800s up to 1996 the government of Canada gave Christian churches the mandate to build these schools and run them. The government played its part by using the RCMP to go into communities and take the children. Some of the parents were willing for this to happen. Most were not. But it was done anyway.

We hear horrific stories about abuse and neglect in the schools. But we also hear stories of “good schools,” ones that provided opportunities for the “poor impoverished” children, and treated them well. But the “good” schools shared the same mandate - to convert the children from their “pagan” religions to Christianity, to teach them English (and do away with their own languages) so they would be an assimilated part of the “new Canada,” and to change their lifestyles to fit into the European ideal. This ignored the fact that these children had excellent languages of their own (languages that carried unique worldviews and knowledges), spiritualities that respected the gifts that the Creator had given them, and lifestyles that lived off the land in a way that worked very well.

Before a recent Aboriginal Justice Christian Peacemaker Team delegation, Peter Haresnape (a member of CPT) and I spent a day in Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows) in order to tell our friends there that the delegation was coming. We met with Judy da Silva, a long time partner of CPT, who was the recipient of

the German Mennonite Peace Committees Michael Sattler Peace Award in May, 2013.

After the initial catching up she said, “I confronted the [group of missionaries who came to Grassy Narrows] the other day.” As the story unfolded, we heard about Judy’s brother, who has two children. One of the parents went to check on the little ones, who were playing outside. To their horror, they were nowhere to be found. The parents feared that they had gone down to the lake, so they ran down to the shore, but the children were not to be seen. Eventually, word got out that the family was hunting for the children and someone said that the children were at the church. Apparently, van loads of the missionaries had driven through the community, seen children playing, and had invited them, using candy as a treat, to go to some activities at the church.

Judy went on, “A few days later I was working around on the powwow grounds and the vans drove up and stopped. I had to speak to them. So first I asked if they all spoke English, which they did. I told them how worried we had been that we could not find the children. And how upset we were when we found out that they had taken them, without the parent’s permission, to the church.” She said that as she spoke one woman began to cry. That made her feel bad, but it meant that her message maybe got through.

As I listened to Judy speak about this event, I wanted so badly to apologize, to say sorry that the faith that I identify with had still not gotten the message. That it is not OK to take children, whatever the good intentions, without the permission of their parents, to teach them about Chris-

tianity. But I didn’t. It was not for me to apologize for the actions of others.

Peter talked about hearing similar stories in other reserves, of missionary groups that offer childcare. It seems to be a common and innocuous practice - a form of service. But taken in the context of colonialism, it replicates the practice of separating children from families to teach them Christian ways.

A few minutes later, Judy informed us that her father was in the hospital. He was battling with an infection in his foot that was leading to the amputation of his leg. The leg that had, for many decades, carried him out on the land, now would be cut off. She said that he was fighting this decision, but that it was inevitable. She said to Peter and me, “When your team gets together to pray, could you pray for my father? Nothing will save his leg now, but please pray for peace for his mind. Pray that he will be able to accept this.”

Again, Judy granted us a gift. She trusted us enough to ask us to pray in our way for something that was so very important to her.

*Kathy Moorhead Thiessen,
Hope Mennonite Church,
Winnipeg, MB*





(Left) Chief Perry Bellegarde and friends read the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in the UK Archives. (Right) Women from Barriere Lake First Nations hold up a picture of the Three Figure Agreement Wampum Belt. Note the cross representing the Church's commitment to uphold the covenant promises.

Finding the Church's place 250 years after the Royal Proclamation

Three years ago in Algonquin territory, an elder of Barriere Lake taught me about the Three Figure Agreement wampum belt. It displays a trio of human figures; French, English and Algonquin, standing hand-in-hand beside the unmistakable form of the cross. "Some folks get angry when they see that cross" said the elder through his translator. "But I tell them why it's there: because the Church promised to make sure that the Europeans kept their promises."

As a Christian aiming to live and work in solidarity with the First Peoples of this land, I find it hard to ignore the Church's history of abuse and betrayal as it collaborated with the colonial project. Discerning how to be a faithful Christian given that knowledge is a challenge.

Recently I accompanied a delegation of First Nation chiefs, elders, and veterans to London, capital of my UK homeland, a city built on the spoils of Empire and cluttered with colonial mementos and monuments. A number of other Christians of both native and non-native heritage joined the delegation to mark the 250 years that has passed since the Royal Proclamation of 1763, a significant piece of colonial legislation that affirmed Indigenous sovereignty and rights to land, and set the stage for treaty-making. In discussions, the role of the Church in these treaties became clearer to me.

Indigenous nations had long-established

forms and traditions for international treaty-making, but the British government did not adopt a consistent policy regarding treaties until the Royal Proclamation.

The Church's significance for Indigenous negotiators can be emphasized by considering different interpretations of "treaty"—the European understanding of them as surrender of land, and the Indigenous conception as a relationship for mutual sharing of lands, technology and gifts. If a treaty is covenant, not land surrender, the spiritual dimension is central, and the Church's presence must have reassured negotiators that these newcomers understood what they were committing to.

Yet the dominant Euro-Canadian system continues to regard treaties as "surrender" documents. A little common sense and humility undermines this idea. Would nations sign agreements to extinguish their way of life? And what does it say about the arrogance of the colonial spirit that this racist myth persists—the idea that Indigenous peoples were willing, even eager, to abandon their heritage and trade their entire landmass for the chance to join settler society?

This wilful ignorance is more than a cultural misunderstanding. The consequences are dire and direct. Consider the officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted



To watch a video of the London delegation, see www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2173

Police yelling, "Crown land belongs to the government, not to f*cking natives," as protectors of unsundered Mi'kmaq land and water were arrested at gunpoint during the recent violent confrontations over fracking in New Brunswick.

As the Church decolonizes itself and works towards reconciliation and justice, it will need to adopt the role Indigenous people allotted to it in the treaties: teach Canadian society its responsibility to treaty relationship; celebrate the exciting places of learning and sharing; and stand as a continuing witness to the incomplete fulfilment of treaty obligations by the state called Canada.

Perhaps followers of Christ can find our place on that wampum belt again.

*Peter Haresnape,
Aboriginal Justice Team CPT,
Toronto United Mennonite Church,
Toronto, ON*



Learnings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

WORTH THE EFFORT

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to Vancouver in early September, and was held on the grounds of the Pacific National Exhibition. Mandated by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the conference was the sixth out of a total seven national events held in the hope of increasing awareness of the residential schools and promoting healing.

I had known that residential schools were a heated topic before coming to the event, but I didn't truly understand how much impact they continue to have on Aboriginal communities. I had always thought of the residential schools as something long past, and I was unpleasantly surprised to find out how wrong I was. The last residential school closed only 17 years ago, and some of the "survivors" who testified were no older than my own parents.

I had never considered that the damage done by residential schools might be felt over generations. These "intergenerational survivors" didn't go to residential school themselves, but their lives have still been impacted because their parent or grandparents did. People like Clara Bob, a young woman from Nanoose First Nations whose mother was a survivor of three different residential schools. When I spoke with her, she described how her mother's childhood experiences followed her into adulthood and affected the family dynamic when she had children of her own.

"They just had no coping skills I guess," Clara told me. "And then that got passed to us."

I had never considered this perspective, and the very concept of intergenerational survivors made me re-evaluate the way that I look at Aboriginal issues. Residential schools changed how entire generations of young First Nations developed as people. That impact cannot and should not be brushed off as inconsequential.

My understanding of what reconciliation means was far more complete by the time I left Vancouver. Firstly, and perhaps most profoundly, I learned that reconciliation is not about blame. Truth is an integral part of healing, and reconciliation cannot happen without an honest examination of the past. At the same time, non-Aboriginal people should not take that examination to mean that every Aboriginal person is pointing at them accusingly.

"(Canadians) are a decent people," said Commissioner Marie Wilson. "But we have had policies that don't reflect the heart of the people." The challenge then is for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to begin to see each other as friends, to honour and pay respect to the past while not letting it paralyze us from moving forward. Every Canadian should be able to hold his or her head up and say, "I am working towards reconciliation."

Reconciliation is about teamwork and forgiveness. It can't happen unless different sides come together in mutual agreement and action. In the case of the residential schools however, the sensitivity of the issue can make co-operation hard to achieve. Sister Patricia Donovan of the Sisters of St. Anne, is a former residential schoolteacher who is working towards reconciliation. "It means taking my experience and trying to figure out, now how does that fit with someone else's experience?" she explained. "And if it doesn't, then how can we work together to heal one another?"

The traditional Aboriginal circle is a powerful tool for reconciliation and healing, one that was heavily relied on during the TRC event. Inside the circle everyone is equal, every voice is heard and every person must respect the right of everyone else to speak. In the Churches Listening to Survivors Circles, many former residential school victims shared stories of incredible abuse, and some expressed incredible anger. Through the circle everyone listened; everyone had a turn to speak and the result was a candid, brutally honest, but still respectful discussion.

Reconciliation is about education. According to the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "The national events are a mechanism through which the truth

and reconciliation process will engage the Canadian public and provide education about the IRS system, the experience of former students and their families, and the ongoing legacies of the institutions."

This was a common theme throughout the week; the idea that residential schools can't be ignored by recent history if there's going to be any hope for healing. To that extent, there were several educational initiatives showcased. The Project of Heart, for example, is a program in which elementary students across Canada learn about the impact of residential schools and are encouraged to decorate a wooden tile. Each tile represents a child who died while in the residential school system. The tiles are then used to cover a "canoe of healing", one of which was unveiled at the TRC event on September 19th.

Finally, I learned that *reconciliation is for everyone*. One of the most rewarding experiences of the week was a dialogue workshop organized by Reconciliation Canada. Within a traditional circle, each person shared what we thought reconciliation should look like, what it meant to us personally and what we could each do to help once we left Vancouver. It was not accusatory; no one was blaming anyone else. It was simply a discussion in which everyone, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, were able to meet as neighbours and talk about the future. It brought home the idea that reconciliation is not just about government policies or national events. It's much simpler than that. Reconciliation starts with ordinary people doing small things.

"People think of (reconciliation) as so grand and 'How can I help?'" said Shelley Joseph, Community Engagement Head for Reconciliation Canada and one of the leaders of the workshop. "It makes me hopeful. Each participant walks away with an idea of how to make a difference."

With only one TRC national event left, set to take place in Edmonton this March, it's becoming increasingly clear that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is only the first step in a much longer process. It falls now to independent organizations like Reconciliation Canada,



Alexis Stockford

publications like *Intotemak*, and to every ordinary Canadian to keep the conversation on reconciliation going. While it may seem unattainable at times, the Truth and Reconciliation conference in Vancouver showed me that reconciliation is worth the effort.

Alexis Stockford,
Graysville Mennonite Church,
Graysville, MB



Cindy Heinrichs

MOVING FORWARD BY CONFRONTING THE PAST

It was with some trepidation that I attended the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Vancouver last September. I wasn't sure that I was prepared to hear stories, firsthand, from people who suffered as children in Canada's residential schools. But in the end I braced myself and went because I felt that if these people had spent their childhoods living these experiences, the least I could do was hear about them for one day.

That afternoon I listened to five First Nations women tell their stories. It was as I'd expected: all spoke of treatment that was cold-hearted in general, and often devastatingly cruel and unjust. As one woman pointed out, though the purpose of the residential schools was to "kill the Indian in the child," when her school had finished stripping away her language and culture, her connection to her traditions and to her family, not to mention the joy and innocence of her childhood, she was still seen as an Indian and treated as an outsider in Canadian society. All five women spoke of being raised without love and without family, so that when they had families of their own they didn't know how to parent. All spoke of how their deep wounds had caused them to inflict pain on those they loved most and all apologized to those loved ones, many of whom sat with these courageous women as they spoke, supporting them, often crying with them.

I cried too, but not just because of what I was hearing. I cried because, the longer I listened, the more I found myself admiring these women, not only for their courage in telling deeply painful stories to a room full of strangers, but because I realized these stories were not just about suffering or even just about surviving. They were stories of healing.


The concept of healing is not one I grew up with, not in my Mennonite upbringing or in the broader context of Canadian society in the '70s and '80s. The core philosophy modeled for me was one of stoicism, of working hard to move forward to a better place, of leaving the hurts of the past where they belonged, in the past. I probably owe my life to my ancestors, in particular my grandparents, cultivating this attitude. Their hard work, perseverance and focus on the future got them through terrible times and brought them to Canada where I've enjoyed a life far safer and more comfortable than theirs ever were. But as I listened to these women speaking I found myself wondering if the wounds of my ancestors had been healed. *What if moving forward and healing are not the same thing?*

On the bus ride home that day I sat next to a man who told me that, when he returned to Haida Gwaii after 11 years in residential school, no one knew him. The pain in his voice, in his eyes, was still raw. When I asked him if sharing his story at the TRC had helped, he said he'd been telling his story for a dozen years and that it always helps a bit.

There are people who would say that this man, who was in his 60s, should have gotten over what happened to him decades ago, but I see now that there is a difference between 'getting over it' and healing. That never truly registered for me before this event. It's true, the past is still with many of the survivors of Canada's residential schools, but it seems to me that, with the help of the TRC and similar programs, my Indigenous neighbours are working to live with that past, not by avoiding it, but by confronting it, accepting it, sharing it, and bit by bit, healing it.

I went to the TRC braced to participate in reconciliation and left feeling deeply blessed. Not only was I able to take part, in some small way, in the healing of others simply by listening, but I feel that I received the gift of healing in turn. The ethos of healing that is at the heart of First Nations cultures shifted my perception of what my own goals in life should be. The policy of the residential schools to 'kill the Indian in the child' may have succeeded in some ways, but in others it failed utterly and I thank God for that. The survivors of Canada's residential schools are slowly healing and they may, if the rest of Canada will accept it, give the gift of healing to us all.

Cindy Heinrichs, Vancouver, BC



Her name is Helen.
She came from Washington State twenty years ago through
broken routes...

She wears a cowboy hat with pretty feathers.
Can't wear cowboy boots because of the arthritis
that twists her feet.
She wears beige vinyl wedgies. In the winter she pulls on
heavy socks to protect her bent toes from the slush and rain.

Helen takes pictures of herself.

Everytime she passes those Polaroid booths,
one picture for a dollar,
She closes the curtain and the camera flashes...

Her girlfriends took care of her.
Told her what to wear
what to say
how to act more like an Indian.
"You should be proud of your Indian heritage.
Wear more jewelry
Go to the Indian Center."

Helen doesn't talk much.
Except when she's had enough
vodkas and Lite beer.
Then she talks about home,
about her mom,
about the boarding schools,
the foster homes...

Helen can't imagine that she is beautiful
That her skin is warm
like redwood and fire.
That her thick black hair moves like a current.
That her large body speaks in a language stolen from her.
That her mouth is wide and full and when she smiles
people catch their breath.

"I'm a gay Indian girl.
A dumb Indian.
A fat, ugly squaw."
That is what Helen says.

Helen can't imagine that she is beautiful

-Beth Brant (Mohawk)

Excerpts from the poem, "Her Name is Helen,"
From Armstrong and Grauer, ed., *Native Poetry in Canada*
(Broadview Press, 2001).

*Indigenous women in Vancouver march in remembrance of their stolen sisters.
Photo credit: Yaakcool*



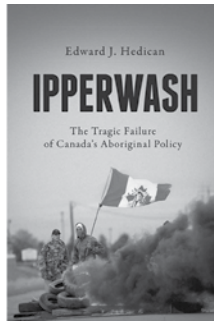
Beyond Hope?

This book is about a tragedy - a tragedy that's unknown by most Canadians and ignored by our government. Canada's widely professed ideals of tolerance, fairness, and peacemaking are largely believed. But those ideals are profoundly at odds with the public policies and postures put into effect by the government, the police, and the news media in relation to our host peoples.

Hedican reveals the depths of this tragedy by examining significant protests and confrontations that First Nation communities have been involved in over recent decades, and more importantly, the underlying causes behind these protests and confrontations. Those interested in understanding the diverse factors that give birth to such events, like the current matter in Elsipogtog, New Brunswick, will find it worthwhile.

Though seeking to present his material with impartiality, one can sense the disappointment and even anger that Hedican has for the politicians and police, who routinely display prejudicial hostility towards Native protestors/resistors. I can understand his feelings. As I made my way through the material, I was deeply disturbed, not only by the racism of those in positions of power, but by the profound failure of those in leadership - including the news media - to present any historical context as to the reasons for Indigenous discontent. This failure leaves the general public unaware of the real injustices that have pushed Indigenous communities into corners where direct action seems like the only option. Natives with legitimate grievances are thus pictured as unreasonable, potentially criminal and yes, uncivilized - the kinds of people who deserve to be strong-armed into obedience.

A central aim of the book, therefore, is to take the reader through a primer and analysis of that critical "background material" - Canada's Aboriginal Policy, the nature of Aboriginal rights (including Treaties and recent Supreme Court rulings), the suppression of Indigenous rights and political mobilizing, the history of land claims, the realities of institutional racism in Canada, and more. Without an awareness of this material, one cannot even begin to understand the reasons for Indigenous frustration and



Ipperwash: The Tragic Failure of Canada's Aboriginal Policy

Edward J. Hedican

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public confrontation. Moreover, given this information, it is clear that confrontations like Oka (1990), Gustafsen Lake (1995), and Burnt Church (1999), were and are inevitable. More positively put - and this is my opinion, not Hedican's - if government representatives and the police were aware of this background material, they would have responded much differently in many cases.

Hedican spends a significant chunk of the book specifically examining the Ipperwash conflict, using this confrontation to highlight "typical" interactions between settler government(s)/forces and host peoples. The story goes like this:

In 1827, the Anishinaabe of Kettle Point and Stony Point ceded 2.1 million acres to the British Crown. In 1912 and 1928 they were pressured by the Department of Indian Affairs and others into surrendering more of their land. Part of this surrender was to become Ipperwash Provincial Park. Significantly, the park contained sacred burial sites that the government made no attempt to protect.

During the 2nd World War, the army expropriated 2,240 more acres and the residents were forcibly relocated into an overcrowded reservation. After nearly fifty years of fruitless negotiations, the government still refused to return the land - something that was promised in 1942. Understandably, some of the former residents (and descendants of such) decided to occupy the military camp and the park. On September 6th 1995, an altercation occurred between the occupiers of the park and the Ontario Provincial Police. The natives were armed with sticks and stones; the police had machine guns and armoured vehicles. One of the protestors, Dudley George, was killed.

Not surprisingly, the news media portrayed the Aboriginals unsympathetically and accepted the police version of what

occurred. Officer Ken Deane, however, was found guilty of shooting an unarmed man, and charged with criminal negligence. Deane was to serve a two year conditional sentence in the community.

It took eight years for the Ipperwash Inquiry to be launched. Its goal was to examine the events of the shooting, the role of the police in relationship to native acts of political mobilization, and to review Canada's policy with regards to Aboriginal rights and claims. The inquiry cost \$36 million and made one hundred recommendations. As with many other inquiries of this sort, none of the recommendations were implemented. No apology was even offered to Dudley George's family by the government or the police.

In the end, Hedican does not seem hopeful about the problems faced by our host peoples. His research strongly suggests that Canada has a history of institutionalized discriminatory policies and practices that has willfully denied First Nations their fair share of the nation's resources and opportunities. With the lack of foreseeable land claim settlements and the rapid demographic growth of Aboriginal communities, the problems will only increase.

It's hard to have optimism after reading a book like this. But I trust that texts like this are being read, especially by young settler Canadians, who will help shape and push our governments, police, media, and even our churches to learn the necessary "background material," and to address, with integrity, the many outstanding injustices that are in need of repair.

*John Heinrichs,
First United Mennonite Church,
Vancouver, BC*

J. R. Miller's *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treat-Making in Canada*, University of Toronto Press, 2009.

One of Canada's longest unresolved issues is the historical and present-day failure of the country's governments to recognize treaties made between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. Compact, Contract, Covenant is renowned historian of Native-newcomer relations J.R. Miller's exploration and explanation of more than four centuries of treaty-making. The first historical account of treaty-making in Canada, Miller untangles the complicated threads of treaties, pacts, and arrangements with the Hudson's Bay Company and the Crown, as well as modern treaties to provide a remarkably clear and comprehensive overview of this little-understood and vitally important relationship.

Borrow here - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2238



We Were Children DVD, National Film Board, 2012.

In this feature film, the profound impact of the Canadian government's residential school system is conveyed through the eyes of 2 children who were forced to face hardships beyond their years. As young children, Lyna and Glen were taken from their homes and placed in church-run boarding schools, where they suffered years of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, the effects of which persist in their adult lives. *We Were Children* gives voice to a national tragedy and demonstrates the incredible resilience of the human spirit.

Borrow here - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2239



Many related resources (books, DVDs, websites, online documents, etc.) can be found here - www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2240



Meditation

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This is what the Lord says: "A cry is heard in Ramah—deep anguish and bitter weeping. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted—for her children are gone." But now this is what the Lord says: "Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you," says the Lord. "Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy. There is hope for your future," says the Lord. "Your children will come again to their own land." Jeremiah 31:15, 16

Venison Stew

Kim White Feather of the Mik'maq First Nation share's her grandmothers favourite venison recipe.

- 1 tbsp. bacon fat or vegetable oil
- 1 ½ cups frozen corn
- 1 sweet onion and 3 cloves garlic, no hearts
- 1 cup frozen/fresh sweet baby peas
- 3 to 4 lbs. of venison cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 tsp. black pepper and 1 tsp. marjoram
- 1 lb. baby carrots and 1 lb. white potatoes, peeled
- 1 can reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1 lb. white mushrooms, sliced
- 2 packets brown gravy and 2 packets pork gravy
- 1 sweet red bell pepper, sliced and 1 sweet green bell pepper, sliced
- 1 tsp. sage and 1 tsp. parsley
- 1 – 16 oz. package of frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 acorn squash, sliced and peeled
- 2 cups hot water

Heat oil in skillet over medium heat, add venison cubes. When browned place meat into crockpot. Slice potatoes into 1 inch pieces and place on top of meat. Slice carrots into ½ inch pieces and place on top of potatoes and meat.

Slice onion, garlic, peppers, mushrooms and place in crockpot. Next, add frozen mixed vegetables and top off with corn. Add spices.

Slice the acorn squash into sections and peel skin, then place on top of other ingredients already in crockpot. Add any remaining ingredients except for water, beef broth and gravy.

Heat beef broth to a boil, then add both packages of brown gravy. Mix well. Pour over top of crockpot ingredients. Do not stir. Heat water to a boil, and add the package of pork gravy, mixing well. Pour over top of crockpot ingredients. Do not stir.

Cook in crockpot on high for 2 hours. Reduce heat to low for 10 to 12 hours, stirring once or twice after 6 and 8 hours of cooking time, stir in and mash acorn squash. Stir again before serving. Served best in a bread bowl or with freshly made bread.

Recipe gleaned from www.nativetech.org



Events



Community News

January 24, 2014

An Evening of Storytelling with Richard Wagamese (Calgary): The Alberta Inter-Mennonite TRC Group warmly invites those in the Calgary area to an evening of stories with author Richard Wagamese, celebrating and exploring Aboriginal identity and culture in light of the history of Residential Schools. The event will take place at St David's United Church (3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW) @ 7 PM. Tickets are \$10.00 and will be available at Mennonite Central Committee Alberta (403-400-3624, office@mccab.org)

March 27-30, 2014

Alberta Truth and Reconciliation National Event (Edmonton)

April 11-12, 2014

Building Bridges (Winnipeg). "Next Steps for Truth and Reconciliation." Special guest teacher TBA shortly!

May 2 - 21, 2014

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

June 5-7, 2014

North American Indigenous Institute for Theological Studies, 11th Annual Symposium (Newberg, Oregon). This year's theme - "Indigenous Reality: Moving Beyond the Colonial and Post-colonial Conversation." Check out www.naiits.org for more info.

June 16-20, 23-27, 2014

2 great classes are being held at the Canadian School of Peacebuilding (Winnipeg). "Indigenous Justice and Healing," with Rupert Ross; "De-Colonial Theology" with Terry Leblanc. See csop.cmu.ca for more info.

July 28-31, 2014

Native Mennonite Assembly (Winnipeg, MB). Mennonite Church Canada will host the first ever urban Native Assembly. Teachers, workshop leaders and musicians will help participants bend their ears to the earth, as we seek to listen to the God who speaks through land. This significant relationship building event will take place on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. If you would like to be a part of something big next summer, please plan on coming out. We also need to raise money to support the event. **If you are able to give**, please call Ingrid Miller at 204-888-6781, or go online to www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2245



"What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset."

-Blackfoot Proverb

ANNIVERSARY:

Congratulations to **Fred and Rose Wood** of Manigotagan, Manitoba who celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary this fall. The family held a supper at the Manigotagan Community Hall to honour this milestone.

WEDDING:

Congratulations to **Dorothy Munroe and Carl Dwayne Johnston** who were married on Saturday, October 19th, 2013 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Originating from Pine Dock, Dwayne is the son of Marge Johnston, now of Riverton, Manitoba, and the late Carl Johnston.

DEATHS:

Leonard Earland Settee, age 82 years of Gimli, Manitoba passed away at the Gimli Community Health Centre on October 9, 2013. Earland was born at Birch Point on Lake Winnipeg and spent most of his childhood living at Matheson Island. Growing up on Lake Winnipeg and making his living working on freighters, he earned his captain's papers and also served as captain on the riverboats that plied the Red River. Earland is survived by his wife Pat (nee Unrau), his son Carmen and four grandchildren, many siblings, and a large extended family and many friends. Prayers were held at the Bayview Evangelical Free Church in Gimli on October 15. Pastor Harv Janzen officiated the funeral service at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on October 16, 2013, followed with interment in Glen Eden Memorial Gardens.

Elmer Daniels of Peguis First Nation, Manitoba died on Monday, November 11, 2013. He is the brother of Barb Daniels and Emily Sigurdson of the Riverton (Manitoba) Fellowship Circle. Elmer had a large extended family. The funeral service was held on November 15 at the St. Matthews Anglican Church at Peguis.

Unsettled

Whose lands are these? Yours? God's? Settler? Indigenous?
Every division a fragile line . . .
if this is your home, where is mine?

Ashamed of skin and story,
every identity a sorry embarrassment
I carry guilt, anger, a muted voice,
claiming: this is not my story.
This was not my choice.

But these were my people.
My ancestors: settlers.

I'm unsettled.
Listening
to creation's moans and groans
to the violence in silence
sifting
through broken pieces
molding, shaping, holding a new story
of home
of land shared
of peoples who dared
to reconcile

We are connected.
We all fall down, ring around roses,
pockets full of poppies, bleeding hearts, forget-me-nots,
arms outstretched
bodies to earth
listening
sharing our stories of loved-lands, lost and found
hearing
knowing
living
another story

Create in me a clean heart, O God.
Unsettle my soul and renew a right spirit within me.
Un-quiet me to shout this story's whispers
so that I won't settle for less than your kingdom come
on earth as it is in heaven.

-Rebecca Seiling
St. Jacob's Mennonite Church, Waterloo, ON
From *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry* (Herald Press, 2013).



our friends
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