

my friends **Intotemak**

Fall 2014 Vol. 43, No.3



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Scripture's Unsettling Call: Own the Injustice

Watch out for those Indigenous Christians! Like Jesus, they're often terrific troublemakers, turning tables and texts on colonial powers to tackle the tough issues. Consider the Tsimshian Christian, Arthur Wellington Clah. In the late 19th century, Clah's people were struggling to hold on to their traditional territories along the Nass River, territories that white Christian authorities – including the church – were naming and claiming as their own. In 1888, Clah wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and demanded justice. But note this – he did it by pointing all ears and eyes to Scripture...the sacred and subversive stories that missionaries had given him: “I read the Bible and God [does] not approve of Ahab taking land from Naboth (1 Kings 21)... God is not pleased with the way the government has taken our land.”

The list is long of Indigenous Christians and communities who have called both church and state to submit to their own stories, from yesterday's Peter Kelly and Jane Constance Cook, to today's Stan McKay and Adrian Jacobs. Yet sadly, the list of settler Christians who have responded is not nearly as long. Yes, some have affirmed the need for education, to grow in their understanding of the issues. Yes, some have affirmed the need for relationships with those who've been marginalized. But there have been few who, as Chris Budden puts it, “have owned the injustice and acted to help put it right.”

The Naboth story that Clah references is pretty straightforward. About 3800 years ago, an Israelite farmer had land, land passed on from his father, his grandfather, and his great, great grandfather. Naboth loved that place. But Naboth was not alone. King Ahab treasured it too, for it was close to his palace and perfect for vegetables. So Ahab paid Naboth a visit: “Friend, name your price, or if you don't like shekels, I'll give you a better vineyard somewhere else.” But Naboth refused, telling the king that he's not interested, no matter what the return. Why? The text doesn't say. Perhaps it's because Naboth had a deep connection to that particular soil. Perhaps it's because that land was a part of his family's soul and body – giving it up would be like losing a grandmother. Or perhaps it's because Israelite law said that the land belongs not to the families who technically “own it,” but to God...a God who wants each tribe to have their own place to call home (Leviticus 25).



Well, you know how the story goes. Ahab didn't take no for an answer. So Naboth is knocked off by Crown forces and the land is taken. Does that sound eerily familiar? Native Christians say, “Yes!” Non-native Christians say (forgive me for generalizing), “Well, it's much more complicated than that.”

But is it? Lorenzo Veracini has recently written a book about settler colonialism, exploring how this ‘power and principality’ plays itself out around the world. One thing he notes is how settler peoples – be they in Canada, Palestine or Argentina – routinely conceal their possession of native land *behind* other forces. In other words, “We didn't do it. King Ahab (read: the State, some distant ancestors, some X, Y, or Z) did the dirty work. And so we can't be held responsible.”

That's true – “We didn't do it.” But it's also true that the land that I am living on has been stolen from Naboth - the Dominion government did the dirty work in my southern Manitoba home back in the 1870s soon after it had

agreed to a shared existence in Treaty. So what should I and my Christian community actually do about it? I am not Ahab. I'm not even distantly related to this colonial king. But Ahab has passed a part of his blood-soaked inheritance on to me and I am a citizen in his kingdom.

Indigenous Christians are still preaching these stories today - we heard some at this summer's Native Assembly. They are crying out for a justice that deals with the foundational issues of land. We settlers really need to animate a significant contingent within our communities who will pursue these matters. If we don't, Indigenous peoples, rightly so, have little reason to respect the non-native Church. Thank God, there are some hopeful examples out there - small, fledging, but real - that can disciple us. Check out Ryan Siemens's article - *Learning to Live as Treaty Peoples* - about the ongoing work of Mennonites and Lutherans to mend the wrong done to the Young Chippewyan. These Christians are owning the injustice and are acting to make it right. They are responding in real ways to the sacred stories that Clah and other Indigenous Christians know so well, and in doing so, are able to love them, too.

Steve Heinrichs,
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Intotemak translates as my clan and are people who walk in solidarity. *Intotemak* is a quarterly “zine,” 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.

Commitment is Needed by Everyone

People who have heard me speak about reconciliation, often say they do not support it because they are angry at this government.

I understand that. I have said many times that reconciliation will not be achieved in my lifetime, nor will it be achieved in the lifetime of my children, I suspect.

The attitude that Aboriginal people are just another inferior minority group, responsible for their own situation (look how newcomers have pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps, they say), working against the Nation's interest and corruptly misspending public money is very entrenched. The majority of Canadians believe that, even though a majority of Canadians also feel empathy, even sympathy, for the “plights” Aboriginal people face.

Changing those situations is important, but nothing will be very effective, in my opinion, until we educate Canadians in a manner that results in respect for Aboriginal people and their rights as the original peoples of this land. Knowing the history of residential schools is key, to understanding why things are the way they are, but knowing what public schools have done and are still doing is also key. It's not an Aboriginal problem we're trying to fix, it's a Canadian one. That's gonna take time...and serious long-term commitment, the same long-term commitment that was behind the schools even when every analysis done during their existence showed they were failing. The Americans closed down their operation of Indian Boarding Schools in the 1930s for that reason, but Canada just kept plugging away, usually because churches would not agree to closure. They had their own motives.

Money will not buy new attitudes. Education will. It is through education that we got here, and it is through education that we will fix this relationship.

So, to the cynics throwing the stones, keep that in mind. I know that's not going to make you stop – you are entrenched in your thinking too. But next time attach a note to your stone, with your plan, so at least part of what you do might have a positive impact.

**It's not an Aboriginal
problem we're trying to fix,
it's a Canadian one.**

*Justice Murray Sinclair is the
Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
This article was originally posted on Sinclair's blog
[-sincmurr.com/](http://sincmurr.com/) - and is printed here with permission.*



Murray Sinclair

“The Doctrine of Discovery” article by Harley Eagle in the Summer 2014 Intotemak first appeared in the Winter 2014 issue of Intersections: MCC Theory and Practice. Our apologies to Intersections for failing to note that.

Ears to Earth, Eyes to God

Teachings on Land and Life Together

From July 28 to 31, Mennonite Church Canada hosted Native Assembly 2014 in Winnipeg. It was a powerful time of exploring what it might look like for settler and Indigenous peoples to live into treaty relationship—a covenant commitment with one another, the land, and the Creator. The conversations were at once passionate, gentle, and deeply unsettling. They called us to radical respect of traditional Indigenous pathways and to a rediscovery of transformative biblical memories. They invited us to stillness and risky action, to simplicity and mutual generosity. It wasn't perfect. But it was joyous, challenging and really good.

To give you a taste of what was experienced, I'd like to share some of the words that our keynote speakers offered up. But first, a word of thanks. Without the support of the Mennonite Church Canada constituency, we couldn't do gatherings like this – gatherings that are truly animating significant steps towards right relations and peacemaking. One Anishinaabe friend said to me, "I used to hate the church. But this [dialogue] is amazing. I'm doing a 180."

I am so grateful to you all for making this possible. I lift my hands with thanks. We can make a difference, and we are.

*Steve Heinrichs,
on behalf of the Native Assembly planning team*



Teachings

Thanking God, Thanking the Land

Adrian Jacobs, Beausejour, Manitoba. Adrian is the Keeper of the Circle at Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre.

In June of last year, we had a Christology learning circle at the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. Reverend Andrew Wesley, a Cree from Norway House, came and taught our class. Andrew said, “We are going to have our class on the land.” He had a bowl of tobacco. “I want you to take some tobacco in your left hand, the hand closest to your heart,” he said. “I’m not going to teach you anything out on the land. The land is your teacher. Just go out there and find a place and be there. Be quiet and see what the land says.” So I went out there and sat by the Brokenhead River on a bench.

In our Haudenosaunee tradition, we have a prayer of thanks. It’s an hour and a half long. And in that prayer, it begins by thanking the Creator for the human people, then a thank you to Mother Earth, then a thank you to the waters...the medicines...the first fruit strawberries...the fish folk...the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash)...the maple trees...the deer...the eagle...the grandfather rains that renew the earth.... elder brother sun and grandmother moon and the stars...the messengers who have come to our people...and finally, a thank you to the Creator.

When I came to faith in a middle-class Canadian church, I thought this prayer was pagan. “I don’t pray that way anymore, for *“All things have past, and all things have become new”* in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).” So I put that away. I even burned all my regalia. I was never happy about that. But then, in my Christian growth, I began to think, “You know, that really is a good prayer. But I’m going to thank the Creator for those things. Thank the Creator for the earth, thank the Creator for the strawberries, for the trees, for the birds...and I began to pray it that way.”

But when Andrew Wesley sent us out there on the land, I had this tobacco, and I said, “Thank you waters. Thank you fish people. Thank you tree folks. Thank you bird people. Thank you medicines.” And I began to cry. Because if I say, “Thank you Steve,” I’m not worshipping Steve, but I’m honouring my relationship with Steve. And that’s what I was doing. And having been there for almost a year, I felt like I had finally arrived and sat down on the land. I had made connection.

Out of Balance

Peter Haresnape, originally from the UK, now living in Toronto, Ontario. Peter works with Christian Peacemaker Teams on their Aboriginal Justice project.

After decades of protest and negotiation, the Ontario ministry of natural resources continues to plan clear-cut logging which poisons the land and water that the people of Grassy Narrows First Nation rely upon. Therefore, community elder Steve Fobister Sr., former Grand Chief of Treaty 3, will begin a hunger strike today (July 29, 2014) in Toronto.

Grassy Narrows is demanding that the provincial government:

- Apologize, and take responsibility for allowing mercury to poison people in Grassy Narrows.
- Compensate all mercury survivors, and make sure that they have quality health care.
- Clean up the river.
- Do not allow clear-cut logging that will release more mercury.

How is it that such simple, basic requirements have to be framed as demands? Why does a severely disabled elder need to starve himself? Why do children need to stand in front of logging trucks? Each of us knows that something is out of balance here.

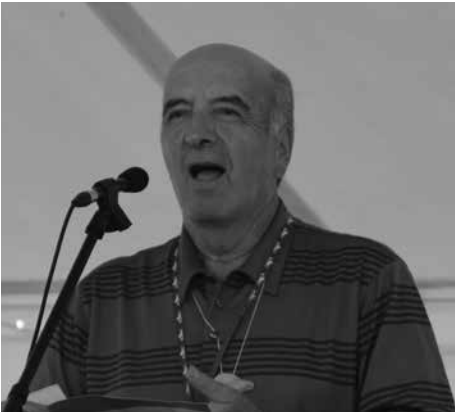
This land is not healthy. Neither the physical environment, nor the lives of those that depend on it for their sustenance, nor the powers and principalities that are ordained for justice and the restraint of evil. Something is out of balance.

A time is coming, and is already here, where creation itself is reaching out with a warning. Will we read the signs? Do we believe that God speaks?



One Tree for All Peoples

Stan McKay, Gladstone Manitoba. Stan is the former moderator of the United Church of Canada and director of the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Centre.



You see, our Cree word for this territory is Kanatan, which means, this is sacred land... Our problem - if I can use a metaphor - is that we have this plant that is root-bound (that is, it loves the land). And many different communities have taken shoots of the plant and put it (not into the land but) into a pot. So we have all these little pots of gospel...little pieces of truth all over the land and disagreement over what the real plant is about. Well the plant - which is the incarnate love of God in Christ - is a plant for all peoples.

I learned from Haudenosaunee peoples about the Tree of Peace, where all the nations can gather under the tree and find peace. Now I think that is the plant that we are wanting to nurture. That's the plant that we have gathered all this week to dream about. "For God so loved the world." Not this people or that people. Not this truth or that truth. But the whole created community, with all our scars and struggles.

We need a vision, like the one offered by the Lakota Chief, Arvol Looking Horse. His vision is that we would gather together, regardless of how we believe in the Creator, in this land, to pray, to meditate, and to commune with one another, promoting the positive energy that would heal the earth - our mother - [and in doing so] we, too, will be healed.

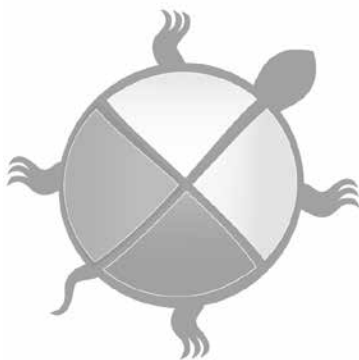
Seeing Differently

Deanna Zantingh - Southern Ontario. Deanna is currently in Winnipeg, Manitoba attending Canadian Mennonite University and in summer works for iEmergence as a camp director in the First Nation of Mishkeegogamang.



The Biblical concept of reconciliation is a change in relations between individuals and communities, but it also means change in our relationship with creation. As we reflect on the Old Testament notions of Jubilee and Sabbath, these [real life practices] included rest for the land, not just release and rest for humans. The land was to rest so that land could heal. This is about shalom, a harmony that involves all of creation.

In 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul says that Jesus has ushered in a new creation, which means that we have to change the way we view the people around us. "So from now on we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view" (5:16). In Christ, I can't view and judge someone based on human or worldly status, whether you are Jew or Greek or Aboriginal or Scottish or Dutch or Mennonite. No, you are all part of a new humanity. But I'd like to extend this to how we view creation. Instead of continuing with the socially inherited view of what creation is, especially within a culture that does not really understand how to live within creation wisely - we are feeling the [ecological] repercussions of such deeply now - what we really need to do is rethink the conventions passed on to us. Paul talks about a rupture, a radical change taking place in his way of knowing. That rupture is what needs to happen with our way of knowing creation.



The Gifts of Patience and Perseverance

Niigaan Sinclair, originally from St. Peter's (Little Peguis) Indian Settlement near Selkirk, Manitoba. Currently living in Winnipeg, Niigaanwewidam teaches courses in Indigenous literatures, cultures and histories at the University of Manitoba.

The power of gifts is often found in letting the gifts grow on their own. There are times in recognizing the autonomy of gifts. Gifts and relationships need time to grow.

Some of my students at the University of Manitoba want to work in First Nations communities. And they want it to be done in one semester. And I ask them, "What do you want to work on?" And they say, "Anishinaabe thought." "Really?" "Yes. And I'm going to go to a community and everyone's going to talk to me and I'll write it all down and submit it and...done."

It doesn't quite work that way. Gifts and relationships take a long period of time in which to grow. That for me is one of the biggest failures of the Christian-First Nation relationship. There's been an expectation that the relationship can happen so quickly. And the epitome of that is the residential school system, which sought to indoctrinate and assimilate First Nations children into what was perceived to be a sense of Christianity...but it was not based on the teachings of Christianity. It was a violent, hierarchical, abusive relationship. And as a result, the residential schools have created a legacy of distrust, pain, anger, and a failure of gift-giving, and a denial of gifts. And so it's extremely impossible in many cases for First Nations people to recognize that the church has any gifts to give. And it will take beyond our lives to open that conversation for many.

But the power of gifts is that they can teach us patience. And maybe, if we work at this every day of the year, we might get a little ways. But look at the beauty that we create if we are patient! And for those who spend their entire life at it, maybe we can rectify some sense of relationship.

Knowing the Stories

Melanie Kampen lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba and attends Springfield Heights Mennonite Church.

My name is Melanie Kampen, daughter of Heinz and Helene Kampen who were born in the Ukraine and Siberia. I'm the first generation to be born on this land. Yesterday, Brander McDonald (MCBC Indigenous Relations Coordinator) talked about how his parents would always tell him "remember who you are, who you belong to." I was also told this by elders in my Mennonite community. But they also said, "Remember where you came from." What they were really saying was, "Know the stories of your parents, of your relatives, of the other Mennonites who travelled with your family and lived in community with them. Know your people. Because that is where your identity rests. You get your identity from the community." That is what I was taught growing up.

And I knew my identity. I knew the stories. My dad taught history, among other things, and I learned about Mennonite history in school, and I listened to the stories that my relatives told at family gatherings.

But the nature of my Mennonite identity is that it is a travelling identity. It is an identity of people on the run. Of people who in some cases had close relation to the land as farmers, but were still largely on the move. Many Mennonites here in Manitoba have been here for several generations and know the land. I have only lived here for 24 years. Yet even though I was born here, I do not feel that this land is home. I feel that I have to work hard to listen to this land, to put my ear to the earth.

My journey living here on this Treaty 1 land is a journey of learning to listen to the land. But when I put my ear to the earth, I hear silence. What I mean by that is this: I know my history, the stories of migration, of fear and trembling, but I did not know the songs. Sure, I knew the hymns we sang in German and in English, but I did not know the songs of the hearts of the people, the songs of the land where they travelled from, where they fled to, the songs of the lands that took them in and sheltered them, the songs of the lands and the oceans that led them across the globe. I think this is because we have stopped singing those songs. Perhaps it is because they are too hard to sing. I sense that they are very sad songs, songs of lament, of grief, of trauma—perhaps it has been easier to be silent. Perhaps we ought to start singing them again. I don't know. Only the people who travelled through those lands and across those oceans know those songs, and so only they know when the right time is to share them, to sing them again.



To watch all the keynote presentations from Native Assembly 2014, go to <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/event/Native-Assembly2014/video>

To view images from Native Assembly 2014 visit, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mennonitechurchcanada/14795080265/in/set-72157645660607209>

EARS to EARTH EYES to GOD

Native Assembly



SNAPSHOTS OF native assembly 2014





Searching for Harmony

There's an imbalance here. Of the 250-ish gathered for Native Assembly 2014, Indigenous people are overwhelmingly outnumbered by non-native folks.

A few months ago, planners were concerned that not enough white church folks would attend. This turnout troubles me. Dominant people can often become dominant voices. So, I'm trying to listen more and say less.

The theme for the gathering is "Ears to Earth, Eyes to God." I'm learning a lot about the many references in scripture that tie people to creation, to the land they occupy, and the implications this holds for people of faith. To say that this teaching has not been part of my faith formation during my childhood and young adult years would be an understatement.

In Vince Solomon's workshop, "Where do Aboriginal Beliefs and Teachings Intersect with Scripture" I realized that I've too often understood my faith through the lens of culture, rather than trying to understand my culture through the lens of faith. This topples my worldview and identifies the ease with which Christians write off each other's belief systems in the guise of culture.

Solomon, the Aboriginal Neighbours Coordinator for MCC Manitoba, says, "There's only one reason I became an Anglican priest, and that is Jesus Christ."

It's a profound revelation considering that his chosen profession has been such an isolating experience. Even as he underwent religious training, Solomon was rejected by white society. Fellow students marked his dorm room door with an "X," warning others not to associate with him. Many of his own people have rejected him, asking why he chooses to be part of a church that hurt his people – and why he is perpetuating that hurt. But in the midst of all that, Solomon recalls hearing God say, "I don't think I ever told you to stop being Native."

Since then, Solomon has been recovering the theology of the land he grew up with. At the same time, he is studying scripture to understand where Christianity lost the knowledge that the created order is the "stage of God's revelation in history... If you don't take care of it, the earth will vomit you out." (Lev. 20:22)

"We see creation in everything. This does not mean animism, monism, polytheism, or pantheism." It was the Creator's intention for First Nations people to understand God through the attributes revealed to them through the land, he says.

During the question and answer time, someone in the audience asks what bugs him most about Western non-native culture. It doesn't take long for Solomon to respond – and explain: "Individuality. It should not supersede or get in the way of community." Individuality, he adds, exists in every culture at some level. But he is stunned by the way it trumps community and caring for one another in non-native society.

I remember Solomon's comment later during a Learning Tour of the historic Forks area in downtown

Winnipeg, where the Red and Assiniboine Rivers meet. Indigenous peoples of many tribes used this location as a meeting and trading place for thousands of years. Its waters connect with the Mississippi to the south, and the Hudson's Bay to the far north.

Tour leader Clarence Nepinak tells the group that this land was no man's land. Its value as a meeting and trading place made it "too important to be held by any one people."

Too important to be held by any one people?

Perhaps all land is too important to be held by any one people. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers (Psalm 24).

Today I meet my Aboriginal brothers and sisters at Native Assembly 2014. Many were robbed of their dignity by the residential school system and relocated to impoverished reserves in rural and remote areas, while my home and office are constructed on Treaty 1 land. Their land. In many of the areas where they live, government sanctioned resource extraction has poisoned water and stripped timber – probably to build the 1950's era home I live in. Lands where Indigenous people once hunted and fished were flooded by Hydro dams constructed to power the computer I'm writing on.

None of this is news to me. But it hits home in a new way when I sit beside them and sing the theme song for this event: "Creation is a song, a song that we can see | A sacred gift from God, let's join the harmony."

Dan Dyck,
Director of Communications,
Mennonite Church Canada

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Brander Strongraven/Standing Bear McDonald (left) shares insights into the Indigenous worldview at Native Assembly 2014. In *The Blanket Exercise*, (right) quilts covering the floor are Turtle Island – North America. They are folded and removed to represent the insidious ways that land and control were taken from Indigenous people through colonialism. Participants, who represent Indigenous peoples, are crowded into smaller and smaller areas, or sent back to their seats to represent those who died from disease or imposed malnutrition.

In Another Skin

Brander McDonald is soft-spoken. He moves about the room with quiet dignity, avoiding eye contact while he presents a workshop exploring Indigenous worldviews at Native Assembly 2014. He admits to being a shy youngster, but there is more to his demeanour than being reserved. “My grandmother taught me that I shouldn’t look someone in the eye when I first meet them,” he says. “She told me to look at their feet until I got to know them.”

It’s a sign of respect rather than avoidance and it certainly has nothing to do with strength or lack thereof. Further into the workshop, McDonald relays a story using “white” approaches to attentiveness. His posture changes. His movements become swifter and more direct, and his gaze bores into mine with unnerving intensity. I am intimidated and for a moment, the tables are turned. I glimpse what it might have been like to experience colonialism as an Indigenous person, perhaps a child in Indian Residential School, immersed in a frightening, completely foreign world without parents to protect me.

McDonald, the Indigenous Relations Coordinator for Mennonite Church British Columbia, says the Indigenous perspective is about harmony between body, mind, soul and our relationships with others. It places an emphasis on relationships, just as

the Bible does, and it’s rooted in the land, a gift of the Creator, designed to provide all we need.

In another workshop exploring the loss of Turtle Island – the Indigenous term for North America – I experience a disturbing fast-forward account of Indigenous history with *The Blanket Exercise*. It’s led by Sue and Harley Eagle, Mennonite Central Committee Canada Indigenous Work Coordinators. An array of quilts covers the floor in a large conference room to represent the continent. Roughly 30 participants stand barefoot on the blankets. We’re the Indigenous population before the arrival of Europeans and settlers. We each hold a card detailing our fate. Skulls. Trains and buffalos. Residential schools. Medicine Wheels.

Recalling an earlier outdoor workshop, I stand on my blanket and imagine a prairie clearing with tall grass and sage beneath my feet. I’m surrounded by whispering aspen, the smell of wood smoke, and the broad blue sky above.

The history of Canada’s relationship with Indigenous people is read. After we encounter the intricate, fully functional, matriarchal structure of Indigenous societies, the Europeans arrive. Elaborate words enact treaties and proclamations, espousing our nationhood. It sounds good and promising, but then more laws

are imposed. The British North America Act puts “Indians and Lands reserved for Indians” under the control of the federal government. Spiritual practices are forbidden. Women are relegated to non-entities. Corners of blankets – our land – are folded up, forcing us closer together, some onto foreign territory. The blankets feel different beneath our feet.

Other blankets are drawn apart, separating us with arbitrary borders. People with skull cards are sent back to their seats; they died of smallpox or tuberculosis, or other diseases brought by Europeans and sometimes spread by the distribution of infected blankets. Those who hold train and buffalo cards die, too. Malnutrition. They’ve been forced off homelands and away from traditional hunting grounds.

The Indian Act is imposed. We’re forbidden to take action or make decisions on our own. We must turn to the government as a child turns to his parent. Our blankets are folded again and again, growing smaller and further apart. Those of us holding residential school cards are crowded together on a single blanket separated from the others.

We look around. There are far fewer of us standing. Only remnants of our Turtle Island blanket land remain. A handful of

Continued on page 12.



Letter

participants hold cards of the Medicine Wheel. They are the survivors.

When the exercise is complete, we sit in a circle and take turns sharing our thoughts. This simple exercise brought history to life in a new way for the non-Indigenous, who form most of the group. They express rage, sorrow, confusion, anxiety and despair, with glimmers of hope for the future. The Indigenous among us speak softly, quietly. Their experience is even more profound because they are reliving what they already know.

In Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch tells his daughter, Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." Who among us can truly walk in another person's skin? The best we can do is try. I haven't gone far, but I'm beginning to get the picture.

Download The Blanket Exercise teaching tool at <http://spiritoftheland.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Blanket-Exercise.pdf>
Deborah Froese, Mennonite Church Canada, Director News Services

Letter to the Editor

In reading the summer 2014 edition of Intotemak, I find that I have to respond.

First and foremost to Mark Bigland-Pritchard's question, "What do we do with Jesus' clear statement that no-one comes to the Father but through Him." I believe that Mark is right in pondering Jesus' statement. I wonder if his question might be answered in the artwork that's found on page 2 - the "Australian Aboriginal art that recognizes that the Crucified is found amongst their own." My own study of the Kwakwaka'wakw culture and traditions, along with their first encounters with Europeans, answers the question for me. I do believe that no one comes to the Father but by Jesus. My question is, "Do all cultures know him by the same name?" The English impartation of the "name" of Jesus ignores the languages of many people. The Kwakwaka'wakw could not have known Jesus by that name. Their best transposition was the "Hamatsa," who is, from my understanding of the culture, history, and tradition, the person of Jesus. In the same way, I am sure that the aboriginal community of Australia had a word corresponding to the person of Jesus that they portrayed crucified in their own art. I am also as sure that he was not known

through the Greek word "Jesus."

I have been challenged by a friend to consider whether "McDonalds" or "Nike" went by any other name when the products were carried to Japan. The fact that the Japanese use the trademark names only proves my point. I think that the trade names help us to understand, but I am as sure that in the vernacular of the people, there is another name which represents the product or the person intended.

It does not concern me that the aboriginal community might use the name of Jesus as his trademark; it concerns me that the vernacular of the people is ignored when referring to him. Acts 2:6 states: "When the sound occurred, the multitude came together and was confounded because each one heard them speaking in their own dialect." I humbly suggest that we all hear in our own dialects.

*Arnet Hales,
Port Hardy, BC*



Events

October 13, 2014 – Indigenous Peoples Day

October 30, 2012 – This Day in Living History: The First Idle No More Tweet takes place in opposition to Omnibus Bill C45.

November 1, 2014 – Manitoba Partnership Circle Fall Meeting (location to be announced)

November 1, 2014 - "Sto:Lo History and Cultural Learning day, St Mary's Residential School, Mission, B.C., sponsored by MCBC.

November 9, 2014 – Peace Sunday

December 10, 2012 – This Day in Living History: The First Idle No More National Day of Action – Thousands of Indigenous and settler peoples take to the streets in cities all across Canada.

February 14, 2015 – March for Missing and Murdered Women



Community News

Joseph (Joe) Peter Carlson of Matheson Island, Man. died suddenly on May 24, 2014, at the age of 74 years. A celebration of his life was held at the Matheson Island Community Hall on May 31, 2014.

Born in Berens River and raised in Princess Harbour, Joe spent his early adult years working for lodges in northwestern Ontario and the Northwest Territories. After his move to Matheson Island in 1971, he worked as a commercial fisher and an avid trapper on the Flour Lake and Pigeon River trap line.

Joe is known for his friendliness, love of music, and for the delicious fish fry he prepared in a huge skillet over an open fire for many occasions.. Joe is survived by his wife Edie (Whiteway), daughter Cyndi (Pat) Devaney, grandson Michael, 7 grandchildren; sisters Edna, Allie, Vernie and Millie; the Whiteway family, and many other relatives and friends.

Summer Service Trip? It's possible.

Last November, I received an email with a subject line reading, "Summer Service Trip?" As often happens when I get an email like this, a wave of anxiety and apprehension washed over me as I worked up the courage to open it.

In my role with the Mennonite Brethren, I have the honour of learning from and partnering with First Nations communities in the Georgian Bay area of Ontario. My family and I began this journey about three years ago and we have been incredibly blessed by the experience. But, like any journey, there are always some challenges, and facilitating various types of summer service trips has been one of those challenges. It's not that I am against service trips in general - they have been formative in my own life - but they just didn't seem to fit the First Nations context very well. The first summer we were here, we witnessed an influx of church groups running Bible camps and painting buildings. As a third party observer, I was privy to the commentary of many of the community members and it quickly led me to conclude that I wouldn't be facilitating any of these types of trips. Something about them seemed too familiar, too much like residential school and a long list of other colonial-related atrocities.

By my second summer I was being forced to rethink my perspectives. On the one hand, my inbox was starting to be flooded with requests from very well-intentioned churches who, like me, felt led to simply learn and serve. On the other hand, my community partners were asking if I would consider working with them to help find some healing by exploring reconciliation with Christian churches. Could there be a way to bring these two desires together? So, with some anxiety and apprehension, I opened the email titled "Summer Service Trip?" and was introduced to Salford Mennonite Church from Harleysville, Pennsylvania.

The following summer, I found myself at a local powwow waiting for the youth group from Salford Mennonite Church to arrive. As the hours rolled by and a storm rolled in, it became apparent that we were going to have to modify our plans. I ended up meeting them at their campsite, setting up their tents in the pouring rain. Interestingly, over the course of the week, almost

none of our eight months worth of planning went according to plan. Instead, we were blessed with something better, the kind of interactions that seem to happen best when the Creator brings people with open hearts together in spontaneous and natural ways. Throughout the week, we learned traditional crafts, cleaned old buildings and swapped stories with the local communities. It was a blessed experience and it was clear that everyone involved was growing and learning from the interaction.

Probably the most powerful moment came later in the week when I received a call from a community partner asking if the Salford group wanted to have "a youth culture exchange" that same afternoon. I didn't quite know what that was going to involve, but we jumped in the vans and drove two hours to their community. When we arrived at the band office, we were greeted by the majority of the community's youth and a good number of the community leaders. I organized the two groups into one big circle, made some introductions and then snuck off to the kitchen to prepare some food for everyone. I listened from the next room as the youth began to share about their lives and views of the world. The topics ranged from Anabaptist history to the history of treaty making, from favourite types of music to stories of pain and struggle. When they were finished, the group from Pennsylvania were all given a gift of sweetgrass from the community, and after a little prompting, the group offered some traditional Mennonite songs in return. The room was filled with joy and tears.

As we were preparing to leave, one of the First Nation women suggested that everyone go swimming in the river rapids that form the centre point of the community. As had become the norm, we were unprepared and off schedule, but after some encouragement, the group decided to go and check it out. When we arrived, the local youth were joined by half the



Derek Parenteau and family.

children on the reserve and everyone jumped in fully dressed or in their underwear. The visiting group however was feeling uncomfortable and were standing on the rocky river bank watching the rest of us swim. Eventually their pastor worked up the courage, stripped down to his underwear and jumped in with almost everyone following close behind. The two communities swam together for several hours and everyone had a great time.

I am by no means an expert on reconciliation, but that moment felt good. With all the theory and best practices set aside, God brought these two very different groups of people together and created a small glimpse of peace and real joy.

Derek Parenteau is a Pastor with the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren churches and partners with First Nations communities in the Georgian Bay area.

Learning from Cree and South African Missionaries

A Review of Tolly Bradford's, *Prophetic Identities; Indigenous Missionaries on the British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75*

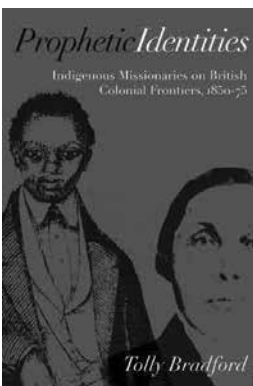
Central to the challenge of cross-cultural ministry is the fact that we all understand God and how to be faithful in the context of culture. Often the journey with those from another culture involves a journey through our own head and heart in relationship to the faith of our own ancestors.

I remember very clearly the day I was sitting in a mud brick church building on a hill in rural South Africa discussing blood and sacrifice. At one point in the conversation I realized we were using the same words, but there was a whole range of meaning behind those words based in cultural traditions and beliefs on both sides that would not be sorted out that day, if ever. What is more, I realized that the experience and culture of my amaXhosa colleagues was closer to the biblical context, and their understanding could greatly enhance my own cultural understanding of the nature of God in the world. However, I didn't know how I could possibly unpack that mystery myself and even less for "my people." It would be a long journey.

What I did not fully appreciate at the time was that my amaXhosa dialogue partners had been on their own journey to that church building. As Christian leaders in their communities, they had received the task of interpreting a gospel first brought about 180 years earlier, and continually reinterpreted. They had taken up the task of making the gospel relevant and comprehensible in their current cultural context.

Wherever missionaries have gone, they have been greeted by those who embraced the message early and worked at contextualization for their people. Tolly Bradford's *Prophetic Identities, Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75* explores that journey for two Indigenous missionaries in two different locations, and looks at their various roles as they navigated the cultural divide while trying to guide their people through the *Terra incognita* (unknown land) of Christianity.

Henry Budd (ca. 1812-1875) was the first Cree missionary ordained by the Anglican Church. He lived and worked



Prophetic Identities; Indigenous Missionaries on the British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75
Tolly Bradford
UBC Press
Vancouver, 2012
ISBN: 9780774822800

mostly in The Pas in what is now Manitoba in Canada. Tiyo Soga (1821-1871) was ordained as a Presbyterian missionary. During his life, he was in charge of two mission stations in what is now the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

Though Budd and Soga lived half a world apart, there were similarities in their lives and work. Both were guided by the faith of their mothers and not their fathers. Both focused on the importance of translating texts into their peoples' languages. Both emphasized literacy and education for children and European style agriculture in their ministries.

Central to the life and mission of both was the struggle to sort out what of the tradition of their people was consistent with being a faithful follower of Christ, and what was not. While this is always a delicate and difficult concept to navigate in a cross-cultural ministry, it has unique challenges for early leaders in an ethnic group. The focus of Bradford's book is the various roles each man had to play while navigating this cultural divide while making the gospel relevant to their people.

According to Bradford, while both Budd and Soga strongly identified with their indigeneity and the related association to land and language, they also had a strong appreciation for what British colonialism brought to them, and wanted it to be a significant force in shaping the future of their peoples. Bradford writes: "The particular history of Budd and Soga and their remaking of indigeneity, suggests a need to pay closer attention to how colonialism

not only oppressed indigenous societies but also forced them to define themselves and their communities (159)."

This vision seems more profoundly defined in the writing of Tiyo Soga. One can see him taking the mission theology and abolitionist rhetoric of his day to develop a kind of pan-African vision (131ff). While he and Budd had struggles, they saw their people as having an important place in the British Empire.

While this view of colonialism is perhaps a necessary corrective, I was left with questions about Budd and Soga's ministries vis-a-vis the colonial powers and the long term implications for their peoples.

Education was central to the faith development and ministry of both men. While both seemed to have been nurtured at mission schools, and that appears to have extended to their children's education, this experience was drastically different than that of many indigenous children over the years. Why did the mission schools produce two fine, self-confident leaders, not to mention their children who followed in their footsteps, and crush so many others?

Agriculture was central to the ministry of both Soga and Budd, as well. This came at a significant time for both the amaXhosa and the Cree. In Soga's lifetime, the amaXhosa had been devastated by a time of widespread cattle sickness and the Xhosa cattle killing rooted in the anti-European prophets among the amaXhosa. For the Cree, the buffalo, so central to their way of life, were in decline. I was left contem-

Learning to Live as Treaty People

The Office of the Treaty Commissioner in Saskatchewan reminds us, “We are all Treaty People.” Being a treaty people means we are a covenantal people, a people invited into that sacred space where room is created for each other.

As settler Canadians, we have not fully appreciated what it means to be such a people. Treaties 1-11 (the numbered treaties), and particularly Treaty 6, (which covers central Alberta and Saskatchewan) where I am located, created room for our ancestors to move into this land, to cultivate it, to establish families and communities. Yet this land was not simply given to us. We received the gift of settling on this land under the conditions of Treaty and Covenant. Unfortunately, settler Canadians have not appreciated or been made aware of the Treaties that allowed us to live here, which has made it impossible for us to collectively live into the conditions the covenant set forth. It seems that this is what the colonial powers intended all along. Before the ink was even dry on the treaties, policies such as the Indian Act were enacted for the purpose of “assimilation, integration, civilization, Christianization and liquidation of indigenous peoples” (Saul Sanderson).

In its fifth year, the Spruce River Folk Festival is a small attempt to rectify past wrongs and to help settlers come to appreciate what the Treaties mean for all of us. In the 1890s, land that was designated for the Stoney Knoll Band at Treaty 6 for reserve 107 was dissolved (along with the band) without due process and given over to Mennonite and Lutheran settlers. In August 2006, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the descendants of the Young Chippewyan First Nation and Mennonite and Lutheran settlers, to work together at resolving this past injustice. In the last four years, the Spruce River Folk Festival has raised \$25,000 to help with a genealogical study to discover the band’s ancestry (something required by Indian Affairs to move the land claim ahead). Now the focus has changed to developing a land trust in order to purchase actual land for the band.

We raised the profile of the Folk Festival this year by seeking out sponsorships in order to help cover the costs (thank you Mennonite Church Canada Indigenous Relations for your support!) and to bring in some more local, notable musicians, including All Mighty Voice and Constant Reminder. As a result, we had our biggest year yet! Between 150 and 200 people came



Violet Naytowhow

out to hear stories of landless bands; they enjoyed a variety of musical acts (including traditional Indigenous song and dance and traditional Mennonite four-part harmony); they ate “Mennonite” sausage, bannock, and fish from Wollaston Lake Fish Plant, and bid on beautiful items that were donated to the silent auction. In total, over \$6300 was raised this year and we are very much looking forward to the 6th Annual Spruce River Folk Festival on August 22, 2015. You are all welcome to join us as we seek, together, to be Treaty people.

*Ryan Siemens,
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