

my friends Intotemak

Spring 2015 Vol. 44, No.1



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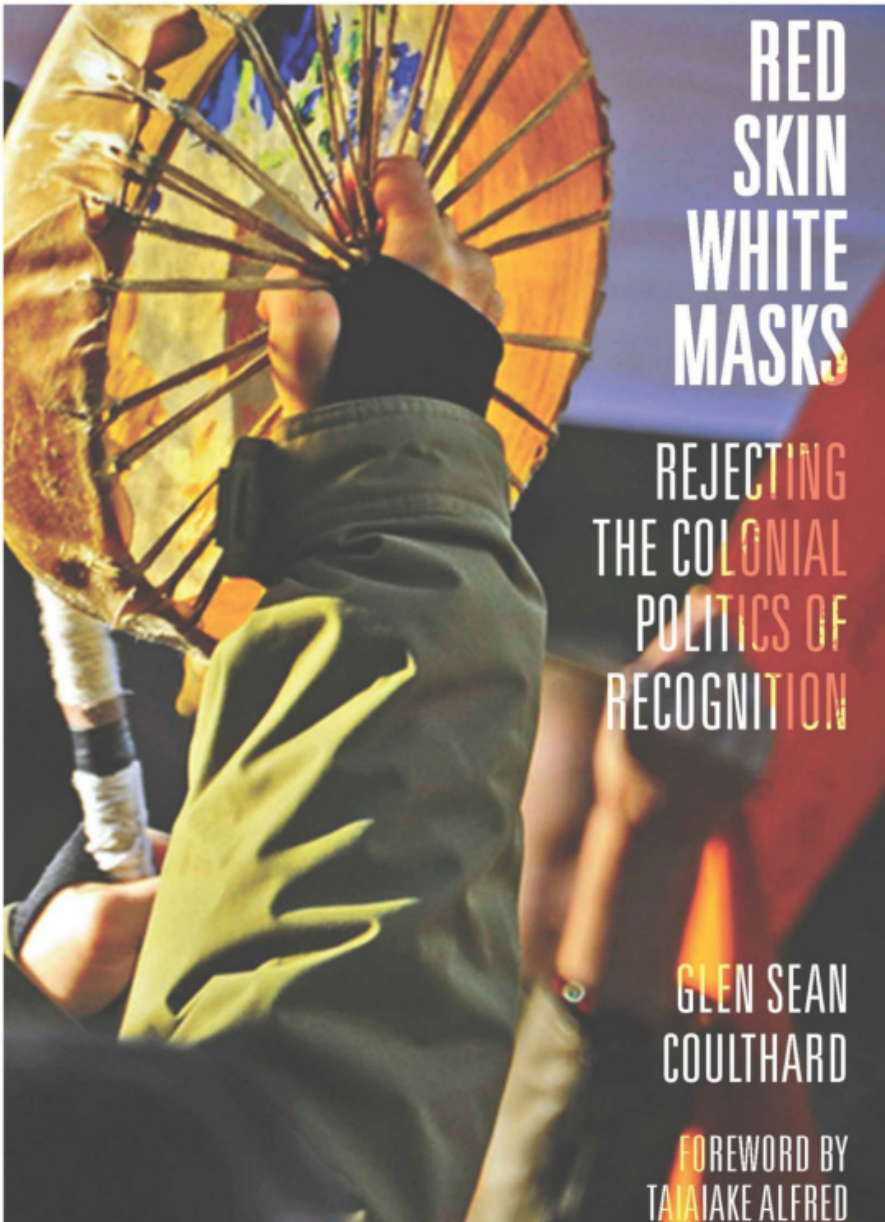


PHOTO: SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Embracing a Revolutionary Word

“For more than two centuries the dominant society has run roughshod over the rights of indigenous peoples, which has resulted in a massive stockpiling of power and privilege by and for Canadian society. Land has been stolen, and significant amounts of it must be returned. Power and authority have been unjustly appropriated, and much of it will have to be reinstated. This will inevitably be very upsetting to some....But it is what needs to happen if we are to create a more just and sustainable life in this country for the bulk of indigenous communities, and for the majority of non-indigenous people as well.”

- Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (2014).

Coulthard’s quote hits settler ears like a mine hard. Calls to redistribute land and power are radical and threatening, unsettling narratives of who we are, and to whom we belong. Though I am intimately familiar with such pronouncements – having heard them repeated by indigenous friends, embodied in the streets by flash mob circles, and ‘manifestoed’ in the writings of both indigenous and settler academics – they, nonetheless, make me feel profoundly uncomfortable.

How much more my settler sisters and brothers who aren't paid (like me) to engage these conversations on a daily basis? How much more the local church, many of whom don't have Indigenous friends or neighbours?

The temptation is to set Coulthard's words aside, or dismiss them. Yet it should be difficult, if not impossible, for Christians to do so. For are we not those people who gather round one of the most revolutionary texts that ever was and will be?

Of course, the Bible has been used as a tool of oppression. And for sure, it contains troubling texts promoting patriarchy, xenophobia (the fear of the foreign), and even the subordination of creation. There's no denying such. But alongside, and more powerful than these, are the Bible's life-giving trajectories towards a just world of right relations; words that sound a lot like Coulthard's.

Remember:

- There's Moses, in the desert, practicing an economics of enough with a community of newly freed slaves: "And they gathered food according to their needs, and none was left over" (Ex.16:18).
- There's Micah, denouncing the capitalists of his day who expropriate lands, promising a socio-political transformation for the sake of the poor – "Doom to those who scheme for more than their share! One day, God will gather all and make it right - gifting each with a home and lasting peace" (2:1, 4:1-4).
- There's the teenage Mary, singing a praise song to God that would make Marx smile: "God will scatter the proud and drag rulers from their thrones. God will give the hungry good things to eat, and send the rich away empty" (Lk. 1:51-53).
- And of course, there's Jesus and that dangerous message of Jubilee: "The Spirit is on me to preach liberation to the marginalized, release to those in economic bondage, healing to those who can't see, and freedom for the oppressed" (Luke 4).

Next to these biblical memories, the call of Coulthard and his indigenous



Jesus was a revolutionary, calling for a re-ordering of society for the sake of the poor. He paid the price. (image: Robert Lentz)

colleagues might not sound any less radical and revolutionary. But they do sound remarkably familiar. They sound like gospel; like that world-changing news that the church is called to embrace – a news that hits Christian ears good... and (we must confess) pretty hard.

The ongoing hope of this little magazine is to press into the prophetic and life-giving word embodied by Jesus, Mary and Moses; a word which has remarkable parallels to the mission(s) and dreams of contemporary indigenous leaders and activists, like Coulthard. As we ponder and struggle with this spring edition of *Intotemak*, may we be drawn closer to both the Crucified One and the crucified peoples of this land.



*Steve Heinrichs,
Director, Indigenous Relations,
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Intotemak

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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.



Families march in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous relatives (photo: David P. Ball)

Settler Faces Behind First Nations Voices

It was the first Tuesday in January, about mid-morning, and five of us from Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach were standing in the hallway outside of Curves, passing the minutes by quietly chatting about our holidays. But we weren't here to put our New Year's resolutions in motion. Instead, we walked through the door towards the end of the hallway and into the office of Ted Falk. It was a scheduled meeting with our Member of Parliament (MP) who spends most of his time in our Nation's capital. We had booked half an hour to talk with him about missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW).

MMIW background

A recently released RCMP report noted that in the last 30 years, 164 indigenous women have gone missing, and a staggering 1017 have been the victims of homicide. This adds up to about 1200 missing and murdered indigenous women, a statistic that has been widely circulated as of late. A separate study conducted in 2009 showed as many as 67,000 indigenous women in Canada reported being a victim of a violent incident that year. That means indigenous women are at least 3 times more likely than the rest of the population to experience a violent crime, and – according to the same RCMP report cited earlier – 5 times more likely to be murdered. And these statistics don't even account for the known gaps in reporting on these incidents.

The collective reaction has been mixed. There have been calls by First Nations and human rights groups for a national inquiry into what many acknowledge to be a societal issue, but there has been debate about the efficacy of just such an inquiry. Prime

Minister Stephen Harper stated just last month the issue "... isn't really high on our radar," but provincial leaders are poised to take action. What does seem to be clear is that with headline media stories about Tina Fontaine, and Rinelle Harper, and reports like the recent revelation of an RCMP officer's abuse of an intoxicated indigenous woman at the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, people are waking up to the realization that change is needed.

Why would we want to visit our MP?

But why were we at our MP's office that morning? After all, our riding has only 2 registered First Nations reserves, and in Steinbach, our indigenous population is relatively small at 1.5%. Isn't this more of a Winnipeg problem, or a northern problem? What's the connection, and why meet with Ted Falk about this?

Our congregation is in a partnership with the church and community of Pauingassi First Nation. We've tried to frame the partnership as seeking to build each other up, where we both bring gifts to the table to share.

Historically, relations between indigenous and settler communities have usually featured one side on the "giving end", and one side on the "receiving end" (you can take a guess as to who's who), with one side knowing what's best for the other. Given the vast cultural, language, and historical differences between our two communities, working towards an equal partnership is obviously a big challenge, but one that we intentionally are aware of and work at.

As part of our partnership with Pauingassi, we now know many more indigenous people. On the one hand, this sounds as

ridiculous as someone claiming that they know black people, or gay people, or people who don't go to church. But on the other hand, given our demographics, starting to know names and faces and stories of our indigenous neighbours is a really important step. As these friendships have grown, we've seen how violence against indigenous women negatively affects families and communities, and it brings us to tears.

Pauingassi is a fly-in reserve, so the cost to get there makes travel quite prohibitive. From the beginning of our partnership we've known that many of us from Grace Mennonite Church wouldn't get the chance to go to Pauingassi, so working towards right relations with our neighbours will have to occur on multiple fronts. We heard from Wendy Peterson, a Metis woman, that one of the ways we can do this is to be "Settler faces behind First Nations voices." So rather than we being the primary faces and voices of advocacy, our job is to walk with and support the indigenous voices that are already speaking.

Every October 4th, there are "Sisters in Spirit" vigils across Canada to remember the murdered and missing indigenous women. They're organized by a variety of groups, but the main one is the Native Women's Association of Canada. This year, a group of us from our congregation attended. At the end of the vigil, postcards were passed around and we were asked to send them to someone in our world who could make a difference. The postcards simply asked the receiver to do their part to ensure the safety of indigenous women. We told one of the organizers that we're from a church, and that we would like a stack of postcards. She looked at us a bit strangely as she handed over the postcards, but we reassured that we would do our part.

We brought the postcards to church and asked people to take one and sign it. We ran out of postcards.

We thought about sending them to Stephen Harper, but we figured that he probably receives truckloads of mail a day that he never reads. So, we followed our great democratic institution of elected representatives and handed the postcards to our local Conservative Member of Parliament, Ted Falk.

What happened during the meeting?

The meeting itself was kind and cordial. Ted more or less stuck to his talking points. We asked questions. He did his best to answer. We talked about whether or not the funding was new money or



MP Ted Falk and Kyle Penner (photo: Kyle Penner)

old money, how it was distributed, the RCMP report, education on reserves, how one protects the wealth of a citizen when they don't have wealth in the first place, a national inquiry, and a few other things. He answered what he could, and when he didn't have an answer, he admitted that he didn't know.

At one point, Ted commented that it seemed like First Nations didn't like being told what to do, so it was hard to reach consensus with the federal government on action plans. We agreed, but also pointed out nobody really likes being told what to do. We also pointed out that many First Nations have a large level of mistrust in the federal government (i.e., residential schools, land claims, nutrition experiments on First Nation children, voting rights, the Indian Act, Kapyong Barracks, etc). And then we wondered how we can work towards restoring that relationship.

One Step

We understand that this issue is large and hard to grasp, and that a small church group spending thirty minutes with their MP probably isn't going to have a drastic change on national policy (or on racism, sexism, and misogyny in general). But we do feel that this meeting was part of our work towards ensuring the safety of indigenous women, of getting behind the First Nations voices that are speaking up, and also working towards right relationships between settler and indigenous peoples in Canada.

*Jeanette Sivilay and Kyle Penner,
on behalf of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, MB*

CommonWord

Bookstore and Resource Centre

On January 5, 2015, the Resource Centre officially became CommonWord: a collaboration of Canadian Mennonite University's Bookstore and Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre. All the usual family and congregational materials and more – for loan and download – will remain available from commonword.ca and through the new physical location at 2299 Grant Ave. in Winnipeg. Expanded services include retail products, extended hours of operation and residence in a beautiful public venue. Plan to visit the next time you're in Winnipeg.



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Conversion is Complicated

A Review of David Lindenfeld and Miles Richardson, eds. *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism: Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800-2000*, Berghann, New York, 2011. 328 pp. \$120. ISBN: 978-0-85745-217-7.

As many tell it, the history of the Christian church is a series of individual conversions in which an evangelist shares the message, a divine encounter is experienced, an old worldview is rejected and a new one's embraced. If any of these components are missing, it most likely means – so we are told – that the evangelist is holding back the whole gospel or the individual is unwilling to part with aspects of their old thinking (which raises the question of syncretism). It's a convenient account, but a close look at the phenomena of religious encounter invites more nuance.

My personal experience reflects that of the majority understanding. I grew up assuming that the cultural expressions in my place of worship were normative. Then, as I observed religious gatherings in other contexts, I tried to peel away cultural aspects in search of a pure, undefiled Christianity. But then I spent two years living in South Korea and witnessed very clearly how mainstream values were embedded in church culture, hallmarks of the coercive and manipulative evangelistic efforts of Western missionaries a century or so ago. (I'm confident that if my Korean friends were to visit my Canadian church, they would observe the same blend of influences). The pure and undefiled religion that I was seeking was ever elusive. I became more and more convinced that faith cannot exist apart from an embodiment in local cultural contexts. Moreover, religious conversion is never complete, in that it is necessarily enmeshed with "impure" or supposedly "impure" elements of culture, practice and context.

The various contributors to *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism: Indigenous Encounters with Missionary Christianity, 1800-2000* understand this well. While the words "conversion" and "syncretism" both carry with them positive and/or negative connotations - connotations about the sincerity of faith, coercive outside influences and cultural affirmation - the seemingly endless list of alternative words that we could employ carry similar baggage. The difficulty of choosing words attests to the complexities of introducing a new world-view to a group of people. Set aside the infinite ways

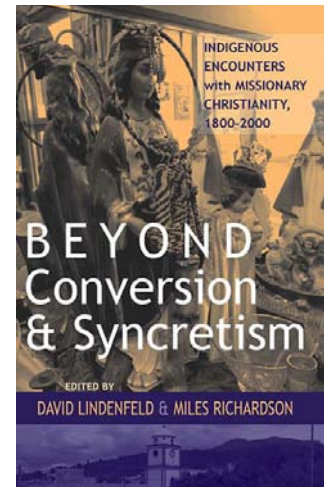
in which a cultural group will respond to Christianity, their perceived acceptance also gets filtered through the unique expectations of the missionizing group, with Evangelical, Protestant, Catholic and Anabaptist groups each emphasizing their own mix of orthodoxy, tradition, revelation and ritual.

Drawing from a broad range of examples, the essayists in *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism* reflect on their own experiences and research with indigenous peoples across the globe. The similarities and differences narrated in the variety of evangelistic efforts and indigenous responses are both curious and striking. Of special interest to North American readers (my context) will be the accounts of missionary engagement with Mohawk and Salish communities.

In our current context in which missions is treated with sweeping suspicion – as inherently colonial – the treatment of missionaries is refreshingly friendlier than one might anticipate. The authors do not ignore the stories of violent and coercive missionary activity, but they suggest through illustrative examples that blame should more often be accorded to state and military powers. Readers are pointed to cases where European missionaries actually encouraged the anti-colonial efforts of local indigenous peoples (e.g., discouraging participation in the state military, even to their detriment).

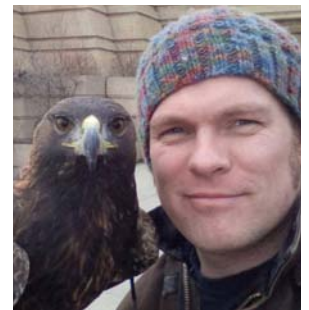
Regrettably, little commentary is offered on the spiritual component of the conversions being analyzed. Certainly, no missionary operates with purely spiritual motives, as personal, cultural, economic and political interests - which are not inherently harmful, but can be life-giving – work their way in. Yet no missionary's good intentions exist entirely outside of their spiritual convictions. The often personal nature of spirituality may make it difficult to analyze, but to neglect its influence interferes with the quality of this study.

Although the depth of the study is sometimes limited by the availability of source materials, the writers have made a significant effort to share the perspectives of indigenous peoples, either from personal interviews or biographical writings. These accounts express both appreciation for the



work and instruction received, as well as frustration over promises broken, support withdrawn and other damage done. Particularly moving was the account of Mohawk Anglican leaders formally complaining about what they perceived as a double standard between what they had been taught and the religious rites that were made available to them; they longed to practice Christianity, but "a version of Christianity that was under their own control" (p. 104).

Overall, *Beyond Conversion and Syncretism* is a useful reader of international indigenous people's experiences with western style Christian proselytization, providing thorough analysis of the different styles, cultural approaches and ties to colonial overseers. The contributors bring a rich diversity of personal experience and a wealth of investigative learnings. Within the collection, most Christian readers will be able to find a place for their own personal and communal journey, whether they be part of a Euro-Canadian church, an adherent of an indigenous form of Christianity, or someone who is working to respond to the multiple and complex legacies of those missionizing efforts.



William Loewen lives in Okotoks, Alberta, with his wife Ana and their three children. He is the author of *A Pie Plate Pilgrimage* and serves as the pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church.

Last week, I gathered with a group of Mennonites who are trying to walk a path of Truth and Reconciliation with host peoples. In the midst of that circle, Garry Janzen - Executive Director of Mennonite Church BC - offered up the following story. I was blown away. Garry didn't make a big deal of it. But these are the kinds of things -simple yet powerful practices - that can dramatically change relationships between settler and indigenous peoples. - Steve Heinrichs

*Do you know anyone who has done something along these lines?
Please share your story by sending it to sheinrichs@mennonitechurch.ca as we seek to encourage one another.*

Witnessing New Relationships

A Wedding and an Indigenous Welcome



Photo: Garry Janzen

One day I was chatting with our son, Jonathan, and future daughter-in-law, Bercin, about their upcoming wedding on July 5th, 2014. It occurred to me that since it was going to be an outdoor wedding near Centennial Beach in Tsawwassen, it would make sense and be a profound honour to have an elder from the Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) do a welcome. Our son and his fiancé are really committed to justice and affirming the host peoples of this land, so they were all over this idea. I called my friend and co-worker, Brander McDonald (Indigenous Relations Coordinator for Mennonite Church British Columbia) to ask how to go about this. He suggested I talk with Auntie Mary (Mary Fontaine of Hummingbird Ministries.) So I called our friend Mary, and she pointed me to TFN elder Ruth Adams, who is also active with Hummingbird Ministries. I had met Ruth before, as she has done welcomes at gatherings at events that I've attended, and we have met at Hummingbird gatherings on occasion. I called Ruth and ask if Jonathan, Bercin and I could meet to discuss the possibility of her doing a welcome at their wedding. She was tickled with the idea, and invited us to her home to discuss the matter.

Our family lives 10 minutes from the TFN; our home and the location of the wedding are both in the Tsawwassen First Nation territory. It has been on my heart to build a relationship with the TFN folks as my neighbours and as my part in the MCBC commitment to build relationships of reconciliation with the indigenous communities nearby. It seemed like this connection would be a good opportunity. Ruth was thrilled that she could do the wedding welcome and that she and her husband, Norman, could bear witness to our wedding festivities. Their participation in our wedding was also a real blessing for our family and friends.

In our conversations, both in preparation for the wedding and on the wedding day itself, I learned much of Ruth's passion for building a pathway of connection along the coastline from Tsawwassen to Vancouver as a way to connect all the first peoples and their neighbours along this part of the south coast of BC. I also learned that Ruth is a widely respected elder and is a regular at doing welcomes at many different gatherings.

Back to the wedding – as attendants and bridal couple finished the processional and moved into their places, it was Ruth's turn. She gave just a few words of thanks for the day and for Jonathan and Bercin, thanks to God, and welcomed us to the territory. She said it was the first wedding where she had been asked to bear witness.

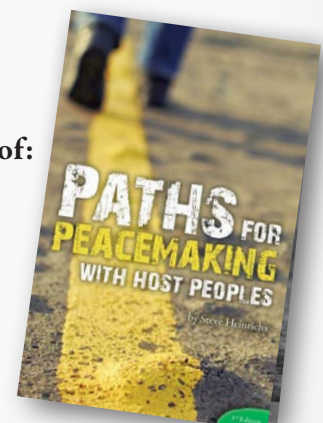


Garry Janzen, Executive Minister,
Mennonite Church British Columbia

WALK IN TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RIGHT RELATIONS

This booklet helps
you guide groups and
individuals on the paths of:

- Learning and Unlearning
- Relationships
- Art, Song and Celebration
- Justice
- Worship



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Beyond Stereotype



Native and non-native gather at The Forks to talk about racism and break down barriers (photo: Greg Littlejohn)

Earlier this month, *Maclean's* magazine created a challenge for my city when it called Winnipeg the most racist city in Canada. A feature article explained why. While there were those who disagreed with the assessment, or tried to bring nuance to the claims, many others simply set about doing something about it. If the article was “a gift in barbed wire,” as I’ve heard it described, they decided to open the gift, never mind the scratches it might involve.



On Monday evening, Rosanna Deerchild, writer and CBC broadcaster, and face of the recent *Maclean's* cover, along with Heather Plett, connection facilitator, invited people to the Forks— whoever wished to come—for an informal dinner and discussion about race relations and the path forward in our city. Some 80 people showed and I among them.

We met in the center court of The Forks Market. After we’d eaten, Heather led us through a conversation process called World Cafe. Essentially it meant moving from one small table group to another, three times, talking and listening with people we didn’t know about experiences with racism and possibilities forward. One person stayed at each table to “keep” the conversation that happened there. These keepers later summarized for the larger group what they had heard at their tables.

I was surprised how well the process worked and how richly diverse it turned out to be. Energy and goodwill filled the place. At the end of the evening, we formed a large circle and passed a stone with the word “courage” from hand to hand. If we wished, we could speak a sentence about something we wanted to do in light of what we’d heard. Just imagine, someone said (Rosanna, I think it was), the difference that even 80 people could make.

Processing this through a small incident of my own

What I’ve been thinking about since then is how a person acts upon the visual information one inevitably picks up about others. The problem of making assumptions on the basis of appearance, whether these relate to race, status, or sexuality, came up in each of the conversations I was part of. A young woman of Caribbean ancestry, for instance, told of being directed to sit in the gallery when she arrived at the courtroom here as lawyer for the defense. An aboriginal youth urged us to

stop thinking “group” instead of individual when we meet someone, not just because of the stereotypes we may have about that group but because there are differences also within groups.

Earlier in the evening, before I could get up to join the line for the multi-nation buffet, a young woman suddenly appeared before me with a fully loaded plate of delicious food. I was taken aback. “For me? Why?”

“Oh,” she said, “we take care of our elders.”

I’m not actually that old, and I certainly don’t feel wise enough to be an Elder with a capital “E”. Must have been the white/grey hair. Well, okay, maybe several facial lines as well. At any rate, I was deemed an elder, and an action followed. I accepted the plate with pleasure, since the food line was long, only asking that my younger (non-elder?) table companion, who had the use of only one arm, be brought a plate as well. Which she was.

I confess that I’m still a little startled, even a wee bit resistant to the gesture in retrospect, because in my cultural context I’d heard “old” with its various and often negative connotations, which is not how I see myself. At the same time I immediately recognized that I was being honored, for “elder” has only positive connotations in the aboriginal culture. The information had been taken and led to a gesture of respect.

So my steps forward? Focus on person rather than group. Vigorously disregard negative stereotypes. If the occasion lends itself to action or response, choose one that honors mutual human worth. And, receive in kind. It may be risky to act, mistakes may be made, but respect will definitely show.



Dora Dueck is an author, blogger, and member of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB.



It Hurts...Even Yet!

We pray with, and
for, and
on behalf of, and
along side

The tribes of loss.

We have lost so much and
what we have lost, we remember.
We remember that we were here at the beginning,
present when the sun came up on day one.
From that day we cherished the land,
we loved the trees,
we named the water,
we watched the animals move as our partners.

We had our violences,
but they were contained violences,
never to eliminate but only to compete.

And then, the new ones came:
They came across the waters from the East;
they came with power, with force, and with violence unleashed,
they came with a thousand seductions.

We welcomed them and we trusted;
we resisted but could not prevail;

We fled and were hemmed in...
until we lost everything.

We sat by the waters and swept,
by the River Potomac;
by the River Delaware;
by the River Hudson;
by the River Ohio;
by the River Mississippi.

We wept our losses:

In our sadness, we said to the empire that passed us by:
Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?

Look and see
if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
which was brought upon me.

And we grieve yet.

But we grieve as those who hope:
We hope for the recovery of the well-being we have lost.
We do not hope for recovery of all our land.

But we do hope...and pray,
for recovery of some territory;
for new just treatment of us as sovereign peoples;
for economic viability;
for respect for our tribal traditions as serious as European rootage,
for the grace to forgive and be reconciled.

We pray with treasured memories;

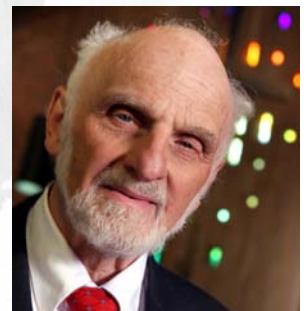
We pray with unabated grief.

We pray with deep and steady hope.

We pray, come spirit, and make new...

In the name of Jesus – elder brother and cruciform healer –
who gives strength to endure.

Amen.



Walter Brueggemann is an Old Testament theologian who lives in Cincinnati, Ohio. He's passionate about the church loving God by doing justice.

As Wild Salmon Go, So Do We

Indigenous Laws and Collective Practices to Address the Climate Crisis



Eddie Gardner (center with drum) stands with the Burnaby mountain pipeline protestors. (photo: used with permission, Eddie Gardner)

Stó:lō elder, Eddie Gardner, offered up the following presentation at a Creation Care Conversation hosted by Columbia Bible College (Abbotsford, BC, unceded Salish territory).

We share it with Eddie's permission. For the complete story and details, please see www.commonword.ca/go/90

The Stó:lō people, as with other indigenous people across Turtle Island, have a deep respect and reverence for our Sacred Mother Earth. The old ones began important meetings related to the land and the waters with this statement:

"S'ólh Temexw te'i. Xyollhmet te mekw stam it kwelat!"

"I'xw lets'axwt ye sth'óqwi qe'su lats'axwt te slhe'amex."

This is our homeland, we have to take care of everything that belongs to us!"

If you destroy the wild salmon, you destroy the world."

We take care of our land, the sacred waters and the air with the thought of benefiting the next seven generations. Embodying this philosophy, we need to think of the vision of our ancestors which is to live in harmony with the natural world, to follow natural laws, by not taking from the natural world more than we need. We encourage everyone to embrace this important worldview, and like torches rekindled, find the light of our ancestors inside our own hearts and carry it through the darkness of these deeply troubled times.

We must respect and honour all that is not human. When matter is seen as devoid of spirit, then nature can be desecrated without a second thought; when one form of nature is seen as devoid of spirit, then all forms of life can be desecrated without a second

thought; when one form of life is seen as devoid of spirit, then human beings can desecrate one another without a second thought. For this reason, the spirit warrior sees the world as the divine homeland shared by the living and the dead and those not yet born.

The more you put the worldview of the ancients into practice, the more you have to offer others.

Three foundational aspects of this worldview

Harmful ethics emerge from bad judgment – they are the collective memory of what does not benefit the whole. Those who work together to serve others must encourage one another to maintain humility and respect at all times, even in private.

Principles emerge from ethics – they are the collective memory of what is worth striving for. Peace is achieved when leaders are content and sincere – prosperity is achieved when leaders do not concentrate the wealth. Nothing holds people together better than sustained peace and prosperity. We leave no one behind, all must benefit, including our relatives in the natural world.

Wisdom emerges from principles – it is the collective memory of what produces happiness. Those who evaluate their own conduct, building on their successes and correcting their faults, dwell together in shared well-being. This is the road of freedom that leads to our collective benefit, to peace and happiness.

The single most pressing issue facing Canada and the world is global warming. Global warming is here and it is going to get worse even if we all stop using fossil fuels immediately. As depressing as this is, it will mean the end of life on earth if we continue "business as usual, and make no effort to stop using

fossil fuels. Doing nothing about this is not the answer. It is becoming more imperative all the time to move towards developing clean energy technology and promote every opportunity to create local economies instead of feeding into the global economy that has fossil fuel fever and has infected everyone of us.

As I mentioned, salmon are the passion of my people. Why are these fish so central to our communities? It's because wild salmon make the forest grow – pulling carbon out of the atmosphere and providing humans oxygen. Wild salmon, in essence, are a global climate stabilizer. Wild salmon are essential to the maintenance of biodiversity as they feed multiple species from the headwaters to the big ocean. Wild salmon are an integral part of the social, cultural, physical and spiritual wellbeing of indigenous people. We Stó:lō acknowledge wild salmon as our relatives. In today's world, preserving wild salmon is an international responsibility, as wild salmon know no borders. This is of particular concern to British Columbia, Washington and Alaska.

So given our situation, here are the critical calls to action that we want to deliver and maintain consistently:

[At this point, Gardner names four 'powers' that residents of British Columbia specifically, and Canadians more broadly, should oppose in order to defend the earth from extreme harm. For reasons of space, we briefly note three.]

Stop Imperial Metals

On August 4, 2014, Imperial Metals Mount Polley Mine Corporation unleashed billions of gallons of toxic wastewater from their massive tailings storage facility into Polly Lake. The toxic waste water rushed out, ripping out a 300-foot wide scar in the forest where Hazeltine Creek used to be. The contaminated wastewater further spilled into Quesnel Lake, which connects to Quesnel River and the Fraser River watershed. Imperial Metals was issued five warnings about the tailings storage facility which was already spilling over in May, 2014. Imperial Metals has failed at mining, and the province of BC has failed in its oversight of their operations.

Yet, with provincial government approval, Imperial Metals is already operating or plans to operate mines with the same tailings dam design as Mount Polley Mine in Tahltan territory, Ahousaht territory, Tla-o-qui-aht territory, Southern Secwepemc territory and already has a mine in operation in Wet'suwet'en territory.

Solution: Put a moratorium on mining until legislative reforms and regulations are in place that will prevent another mining disaster...

Stop Pipeline Expansion and Fracking for Gas

There is growing awareness and understanding that fossil fuels are exhaustible, increasingly expensive, and politically, ecologically and climatically toxic. ... The fact is that we are entering an era when global warming caused by extreme extraction of fossil fuels is dangerously becoming unmanageable and irreversible.

Solution: "...invest heavily in wind, solar and geothermal technologies to power a robust green economy that creates long-term, meaningful employment."

Revoke Fish Farm Leases and Promote Sustainable Land-Based Aquaculture

The federal government is currently enabling and promoting an aggressive 41% expansion of fish farms along the migration routes of Fraser sockeye salmon. This is in defiance of the Cohen Commission recommendations related specifically to fish farms, and there are no plans to view farm locations in relationship to inward/outward migration of wild salmon.

Solution: "...we need to mobilize First Nations all along the river to pressure the federal government to stop its assault on Fraser River wild salmon and its habitat. ... Support the call for a full, international investigation into Canada's failure to protect wild salmon from industrial fish farms."

Revising our Values

We need a radical revolution founded on values of respect for natural laws, cooperation with nature, a spiritual connection that honours our inter-connectedness, and a sharing of the benefits of what our environment bestows upon us alongside a responsibility to give back by protecting and preserving clean water, air and land. We must, if we are to survive, balance this giving and taking.

- Don't take from nature more than you need.
- Consume less, buy local
- We must no longer use the atmosphere as a free waste dump.
- We can't ravage the earth and have no consequences
- Centralized power in the hands of corporations must be decentralized through regulations that protect both the environment and the life within it, including human beings.
- There are limits to earth's ability to absorb pollution. There are boundary limits we cross at our own peril.
- We need a reciprocal relationship with nature.
- Ecosystems know how to self-regulate, corporations don't.
- It is we humans who are weak, fragile and vulnerable and the earth is hearty and powerful.
- Avoid greed, materialism and aggression like a poisoned well.
- We need to value clean water over fossil fuels that belong in the ground.
- Embrace a world-view based on regeneration and renewal rather than domination and depletion.
- Movements of people have to step into any leadership vacuum to take a responsible direction to reducing catastrophic climate warming.
- Keep climate warming gases out of our shared atmosphere.
- As wild salmon go, so do we!



Eddie Gardner is a respected teacher, activist, and knowledge keeper who calls both settler and indigenous peoples to a set of critical values and concrete tasks that can help us avert the ecological catastrophe that we face.

May the Last Be First

Burnaby Mountain as a Recent Site of Anti-Colonial Struggle



Citizens protest attempts to expand the pipeline through Burnaby mountain (photo: Mark Klotz)

Trees had been cut down and people were angry. Texas-based energy giant Kinder Morgan was preparing a small clearing on the side of Burnaby Mountain in order to do some test drilling. The drilling was to gain geological information that would help the company decide whether to construct a pipeline through the core of the mountain. Kinder Morgan wants to expand its Trans Mountain pipeline system and triple its capacity to bring bitumen from Alberta's Tar Sands, store it in tanks, and then ship it in huge tankers through the Salish Sea to refineries for processing elsewhere in the world. But after a previous pipeline rupture that sent oil spilling into a Burnaby neighbourhood, residents have been resisting expansion plans. The trees cut down in a conservation area on Burnaby Mountain awakened genuine fears that more Tar Sands crude was on its way.

The folks from BROKE (Burnaby Residents Opposed to Kinder Morgan Expansion), supported by the municipal government, weren't the only ones opposing the pipeline expansion. Local indigenous communities (Tsleil Waututh and Squamish) were also rallying against more oil and more tankers moving through their traditional territories and the Salish Sea that has nourished their peoples for thousands of years. The Tsleil Waututh had recently launched legal proceedings against Kinder Morgan in order to stop the project. The establishment of drilling sites, located on the unceded Coast Salish territory, was very troubling.

Environmental organizers and activists were also alarmed at the disturbing action

on the mountain, and together with Burnaby residents and some indigenous land defenders, they decided that immediate action was necessary. While Kinder Morgan was waiting for the green light from the National Energy Board to proceed with its testing, people began to organize an occupation of the two main sites where the drilling was to take place in order to block it from going ahead. They began to build up an infrastructure of tents and tarps, and supporters brought up equipment and food that could sustain an ongoing presence on the mountain.

Resistance began to spread more rapidly when the NEB finally ruled in favour of Kinder Morgan, an approval that came amidst allegations of a deeply flawed and politically motivated process, since the NEB is a regulatory body appointed by the federal government. Against clear opposition from indigenous communities, the municipality of Burnaby and its residents,

a host of diverse community groups, social justice and environmental organizations, university students and professors, and many others, the NEB had granted a foreign energy company permission to drill.

A small dedicated group of caretakers on the mountain, along with the activists and residents supporting the resistance, were not going to let the drilling happen without a fight. Their increasingly entrenched and expanding occupation of the two main test sites physically blocked access to them. So Kinder Morgan sought the court for an injunction to remove the protesters. The court complied and the injunction was set to be enforced on Monday, Nov. 17th at 5:00 pm. The occasion was marked by a massive rally on the mountain, where hundreds of people gathered to express their opposition to the project and denounce the company, the NEB and the federal government for pushing this through against such widespread opposition.

The injunction was not enforced until 4 days later. On Thursday morning, dozens of RCMP suddenly converged on the drill site camp beside the main road up the mountain, and immediately set up the perimeter that was to designate the injunction zone. Anyone inside that area was in violation of the injunction and subject to arrest. A number of activists were immediately arrested on the first day and taken off the mountain. Those who set up a resistance camp at the second bore hole site were also arrested; one hauled down from a tree perch and dragged down the mountain into a waiting police wagon. After the initial wave of arrests and a massive police force ensuring the security



A snapshot of the Burnaby Mountain Resistance (photo: Mark Klotz)

of the area, Geo-tech, the company hired by Kinder Morgan, started bringing up the heavy equipment necessary for the work. With aggressive police support, they managed to bring their trucks through a heavy line of linked-arm protesters.

But their work on the mountain could not proceed until another kind of resistance was removed. With the construction of a resistance camp, the caretakers asked for a sacred fire to be lit that would burn continuously and offer warmth, protection and a connection to the land and one another. The fire was set up by an indigenous elder with requisite protocols, and the indigenous elders tended it with care. In addition, a log was brought onto the site and work began immediately on carving it as a totem pole to be raised in that place. For many days before the arrival of the police, the fire and the pole were clear signifiers of unceded indigenous territory. When the police finally arrived, they arrested everyone at the camp and anyone who crossed the injunction line, but the women who tended the fire were allowed to enter the space and maintain their care of the fire.

The fire, however, was directly on the site of the bore hole and so work could not proceed while it remained. Eventually a solution was reached: the fire would be moved to a location near the partially carved totem pole, out of the space where the drilling machinery and workers operated. So the RCMP, with their Aboriginal liaison, carefully moved the fire onto a piece of plywood, carried it over to the new site, and made sure the fire was not extinguished.

The whole situation was remarkable. Dozens of RCMP protected a powerful foreign energy corporation while it did its work on unceded indigenous territory in the face of indigenous and local community opposition, with the permission of a federally chosen regulatory board and legal backing of a court injunction. Colonialism and capitalism here clearly conspired together in accessing native land already transformed into “public” (that is, settler) space for the sake of corporate profits. And the real project on the table (the expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline) will mean tar sands expansion and therefore further destruction of the earth and dispossession of indigenous people. The dynamics of power and the interests they serve were unmistakable.

Also striking was the “politics of recognition” embedded within the over-



RCMP move sacred fire, participating in the “politics of recognition.” (photo: www.warriorpublications.wordpress.com)

whelming presence of armed state actors. The sacred fire and the totem pole were acknowledged and given a space within the enforcement of the injunction zone, but ultimately they were removed from the place where they would disrupt colonial and capitalist interests. The keepers of the fire were apparently respected and allowed into zones forbidden to others, but their cultural activities were explicitly displaced from sites where their presence could block capitalist expansion.

Glen Coulthard argues that the “politics of recognition” constitute another strategy of colonial domination because it fails to alter fundamentally the colonial relationship. He writes, “... colonial powers will only recognize the collective rights and identities of indigenous peoples insofar as this recognition does not throw into question the background legal, political, and economic framework of the colonial relationship itself” (*Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014], 41). While making room for cultural recognition, indigenous sovereignty and self-determination over their traditional lands is denied and the hegemony of the colonial-capitalist state is asserted, backed by overt (or covert) police force.

The struggle on Burnaby Mountain revealed that colonialism and capitalism are fundamentally opposed to the actualization of indigenous sovereignty, community solidarity, care for the earth, and human flourishing. What was also apparent is that there is growing resistance to the tyranny of these twin powers. People who believe that another world is possible are fumbling toward collective modes of dissent and refusal. They aren’t fooled

What is the politics of recognition?

Over the past few decades, the Canadian state has shifted its political relationship toward Indigenous peoples from overt and enforced strategies of assimilation to the recognition of Indigenous legal, economic and political rights, along with the acknowledgement of Indigenous identities and cultures within a broad multicultural discourse. The question remains, however, whether the recognition being offered is truly mutual within a relationship of genuine reciprocity, or whether a politics of recognition ends up reinforcing structures of colonial state power and domination.

by strategies of recognition that leave untouched structures of oppression and domination. People of faith can hold fast to this revolutionary affirmation: the first will be last and the last first.



Dave Diewert is a working class husband and grandfather who lives in Surrey, BC (Coast Salish territory). A former seminary teacher, his passion is engaging communities of conscience in local struggles against poverty, homelessness and other forms of structural injustice.

Untangling Missions from Colonialism?

A Review of Edward Andrews' *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World*, Harvard University, Cambridge, 2013. 336 pp. \$39.95. ISBN – 978-0-67407-246-6.

History is a specific intervention in the present. There is a past, but history is our way of expressing the past in the present. There are various ways of doing history, and with the emergence of postcolonial theory we have learned that it is typically written by the victors who often view events as having a progressive trajectory or destiny; we have learned that any history comes from a limited and particular perspective and not some godlike, all-knowing eye.

Because of these insights I find it difficult to read history. I still find too many accounts unwilling to acknowledge their particular biases and agenda. Too often this unwillingness leads to an intervention that is not up-front in what it attempts to accomplish. Because of this, I came to *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* with some apprehensions.

Edward E. Andrews' text is a work of history bringing into sharper relief the role of missionaries and preachers who emerged from among black and indigenous communities in the 17th and 18th century missions along the eastern seaboard. The purpose of this history is to give greater prominence to these movements than what has typically been given, particularly under the old narrative of the 'heroic white missionary.' Andrews attempts to show that this was a complex period in which the response to missionary activity by indigenous and black people "were as diverse as the peoples themselves" which, in turn, warns the reader that missionaries who emerged from these communities "cannot be lumped into the binary categories of compassionate martyr versus avaricious imperialist" (p. 5). Though it remains unstated, it's evident that Andrews' history is also a work of redemption. It is not so much the *individual* missionaries that he wishes to redeem (though this is the case in several accounts). Rather, he wishes to redeem *a certain understanding of missions itself*. This project is most clearly stated in chapter one:

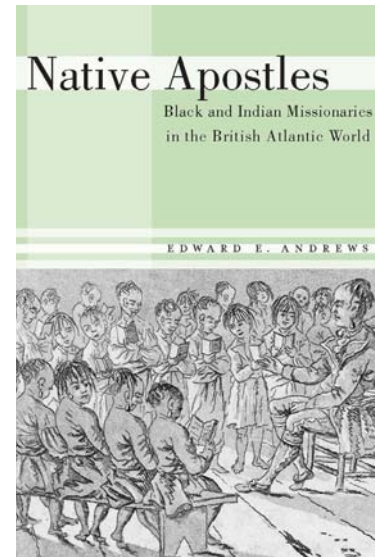
Indeed, if we understand missions less as sites of western imperial oppression and more as a middle ground, a... con-

tested space where indigenous peoples and colonists had to negotiate with one another instead of destroying each other, then the role of native preachers to these missions becomes all the more vital. (p. 23)

What follows is an archive of accounts in which the author attempts to curate such a 'middle ground'. Andrews highlights narratives in which indigenous preachers integrate in Protestant cultures and examples in which they challenge Protestant culture. There are accounts in which black missionaries challenge the slave trade and other instances in which they are critical of their own people. Andrews effectively demonstrates a certain variety of expressions from this time period. For this reason the book is worth reading. Yet he can't make good on his suggestion of reimagining missions.

To be sure, the site of early North American missions was a contested space. Andrews does well to illuminate the various cultural, political, theological, and biological conflicts that surfaced in this time period. However, it's difficult to concede that this was a "space where indigenous peoples and colonists *had* to negotiate with one another instead of destroying each other" (p. 23). Yes, European missionaries found black and indigenous converts useful and even necessary. Yet it seems unimaginable to frame this as a sort of 'middle-ground' when the forces in this relationship seemed so entirely disproportionate. This disproportion was true whether it was the persistent racism of European settlers that could leverage military responses, the devastation of disease when nearly an entire class of indigenous seminary students died, or the final pronouncements of theological validity that remained in the seats of European power. So while there appear to be moments of mutuality, Andrews gives too much autonomy to Christian missions; yes, these missionary engagements were more diverse than the old narrative suggests, but they cannot be preserved from the larger colonial project. Missions were profoundly embedded in the larger forces that worked destruction in black and indigenous communities.

We cannot confuse the diversity of indi-



vidual action with the reality of social and structural pressures. I can imagine a similar narrative being written about the history of Indian Residential Schools in Canada with stories of good teachers, students having good experiences, and perhaps even collaborative expressions that emerged. There can be a place for the writing of such histories but I do not think this can happen apart from the acknowledgement of a theology and logic that was ultimately unable to negotiate and unable to exist on a middle-ground that allowed for mutual influence.

That Andrews is not clearer about his intervention marks a failure of *Native Apostles*. This does not diminish the value of the accounts; there should be histories of those involved in the contested space of missions in that time. However, until we are able to describe more clearly the ultimately supremacist logic of European missions it will be difficult if not impossible for the church to hear indigenous and black voices speak within, against, or simply entangled in the project of Christian missions.



David Driedger is Associate Minister at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, MB.



Peace and Justice on the Wild Mountain:

A Meditation on Micah 4:1-4

LΔb 4:1-4

1 CΔPΠϣ ϣ ρΔϑ ρϑβ ΔΔ ·Ͽϐο βϑ <CρUσβ βΠVρ9σβ Δ·ϿβΔβ°, L·Ͽβ ΔΔ ρΔ·V C·ββ, L·Ͽβ ΔΔ ρΔ·ϿUβ ϿΛβ ·Δ° Δσ δCβ βΛ·βΠαρ°, ϿΛρ ϣ C<Π·Ͽβ VΛΠρ·Ͽβ ϑΛΓ ϿC ·Ͽ<CJ·Ͽβ,

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3 ·Δ° βϿ Δβ Δαδα° β<Π·Ͽ·Ͽαρρ·σβ VΛΠρ·σβ, Δβ ααϿJ° βϿ ΔΔ βJ LJ ·ΔρΠσβ ϑ·β·V Cδρρ·σβ VΛΠρ·σβ ·V·Ͽϣ, VVϿ βϿ ·Vρσβ, Δσ ϣ ΔϿJϿΔϑ·ΔδLσ·Ͽβ Δβ ΔαΛββαCα·Ͽβ ρΔα<Cσσρ° ρΠβσ·Δ Λ·ββΓρΛρβα°, Γ βϿ ϑCJ·Ͽβ Δρ>·VΛσβσ·Ͽβ ρΔJ·Ͽβ ρΔ·αUσρ° LσJβσ·β, βV<β·Ͽ·Ͽαρρ·Ͽβ VΛΠρ·Ͽβ ϣ β·Δ° Γα·Ͽ·Δβ CΓβΠρ·Ͽβ, β·Δ° βϿ ·Δβ Γα·Ͽ CΔJ Cρ·Ͽβ ρ·Δ ΓβΠ·Ͽβ.

4 βρα ϣ Ͽ·ϿΔϑ βCρVJδβ Λϣ° ·V·Vσ CΛLΠρ ρϿϑβ ϑJ ρΠβσβ ϿΓα°, ΔΔ βϿ Λβ Π·ϿΔϿα, β·Δ° βϿ Ͽ·Δϑ° Δβ ϣρΔδρ·α, Γ Δϑβ ΔΔ βΠVρ9σβ βL·Ͽρ L·β·Δρβ ϑJ ϿϿC Lϣ.

In the last days, the mountain of the LORD's house will be the highest of all - the most important place on earth. It will be raised above the other hills, and people from all over the world will stream there to worship. People from many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of Jacob's God. There he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths." For the LORD's teaching will go out from Zion; his word will go out from Jerusalem. The LORD will mediate between peoples and will settle disputes between strong nations far away. They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer fight against nation, nor train for war anymore. Everyone will live in peace and prosperity, enjoying their own grapevines and figtrees, for there will be nothing to fear.

The LORD of Heaven's Armies has made this promise!

As we read aloud this poem, breathing its beautiful promise and holy power, we risk missing the necessary verses which precede it in the book. The prophet Micah names the evils of the patriarchs, rulers, priests and prophets and anticipates the ruin of Jerusalem (Micah 3: 9-12). Zion is ploughed into a field, Jerusalem becomes a ruin and the mountain of the house of the LORD becomes a wooded height. This poem follows, with a resurrection blessing arising from the ruin.

Unlike the identical poem in Isaiah 2, in Micah this vision comes to pass without Jerusalem's temple and priestly hierarchy. The 'mountain of the house of the LORD' is not a metaphor for Jerusalem's Temple Mount, but a literal living mountain, a wooded height, figurative of all mountains; holy places around the world where our God breaks out of urban sophistication and constructed injustice and calls all peoples "Come and meet me here!" Transformed, liberated, and returned to the wild; the house of God is no longer found in one place, held by one people, but is available to all people who seek to shake off the sins of injustice, disbelief and bloodshed that they have settled into.



Peter Haresnape is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church & the Aboriginal Justice Team (CPT)

Ernest (Ernie) Fontaine of Riverton, MB passed away on February 7, 2014 at the age of 82 years. Ernie was an integral part of the Riverton Fellowship Circle and was loved by all who knew him. His congregation writes, "Gone, but never forgotten. You are truly missed by your church family."

At the age of 86 years, **Frederick Valentine Wood** of Manigotagan, MB passed away on December 1, 2014. Freddie attended Manigotagan Community Chapel and was a respected elder in the area. Freddie is survived by his wife Rose of 66 years; 5 children, numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren and 4 siblings. Freddie's funeral service was held at the Manigotagan Recreation Centre on December 4.

Maria Sawatzky Guenther of Winnipeg, MB passed away of acute leukemia on December 10, 2014 at the age of 68 years. For 16 years, Maria worked at the Walnut Receiving Home; a former program of Native Ministries, Conference of Mennonites in Canada which provided housing and much more to people from northern Manitoba communities who came to Winnipeg for a variety of health-related issues. Maria is survived by her husband Wilhelm (Willy), 2 daughters, a son-in-law, 3 grandchildren, many siblings, family, and friends. The funeral service for Maria was held at the Charleswood Mennonite Church on December 16.

Margaret Hamm of Winkler, MB passed away on January 4, 2015 at the age of 90. She is survived by her husband, Otto, 5 children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family. The funeral service was held on January 9, 2015 at the Emmanuel Mennonite Church. The Hamm family pastored in Cross Lake for 10 years through Mennonite Pioneer Mission.

Madalene Janice Monias Smith of Winnipeg, MB passed away on January 13, 2015 at the age of 70 years. A wake/funeral service was held on January 19 at the Aboriginal Funeral Chapel in Winnipeg. Madalene is survived by her 4 children and a large extended family. Madalene enjoyed her years helping with Native Ministries Camp and various other involvements.



Events

April 11, 2015: *The Blanket Exercise – A Shared History* (Abbotsford, BC). A participatory educational event to raise awareness and learn of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Location is Emmanuel Mennonite Church Gym, 3471 Clearbrook Rd. Please register your participation by sending an email to jonnofziger@mccbc.ca. Hosted by Emmanuel MC, MCBC and Mennonite Central Committee.

May 1-11; August 14-24, 2015: *Aboriginal Justice Team Delegations 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.

May 31-June 3, 2015: *Closing Truth and Reconciliation Commission Event* (Ottawa). Everyone is welcome. No registration fee.

June 4-6, 2015: *North American Indigenous Institute for Theological Studies – 12th Symposium: Theologies of Reconciliation*. Wheaton, Illinois. See www.naiits.org for more info.

June 11, 2008 - This Day in Indigenous History: Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologizes for the policy of assimilation inflicted on Indigenous peoples through residential schools.

June 11-12, 2015: *Building Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge – Unsettling the Settler 2015*. Explore how the systemic effects of colonization that create and perpetuate poverty, racism and violence can be countered through the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge, values, language and community participation. If you wish to register, visit www.tatacentre.ca/index.php/programs/details/2271.

June 21, 2015: *National Aboriginal Day*. Join an event or celebration in your community or throw a party and invite Indigenous and non-Indigenous to join you.

August 22-23, 2015: *Spruce River Folkfest* will be held at Ray and Shirley Falstead Funks farm 20 kms north of Prince Albert. It begins at 11:00 am with presentations on Landless Bands in Saskatchewan. At 1:00 pm the music will begin from a variety of musicians and music, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous folks. There will be great food available and a silent auction to support MCC Saskatchewan's work with Indigenous peoples. On Sunday there will be a church service held on the farm, the guest speaker is Rev Roger Bird from Montreal Lake Cree Nation. Everyone is welcome to attend.

October 12, 2015: *Indigenous Peoples Day* - A holiday in the U.S. to counter the Columbus Day celebrations.



Resources



“What are the next steps for the church?”
2014 Partnership Circle Meetings
with Justice Murray Sinclair, online video.
www.commonword.ca/go/108



Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition
by Glen Sean Coulthard, 2014.
www.commonword.ca/go/107



On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada
by Michael Asch, 2014.
www.commonword.ca/go/106

Find other Indigenous-Settler Relations resources at www.commonword.ca/go/43

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