

LIVING THE 8TH FIRE

LEARNING TO WALK IN
RECONCILIATION WITH OUR
INDIGENOUS NEIGHBOURS



“All of you are Christ’s body, and each one is a part of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:27)

Please Note:

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Facilitators need to create a (free) Vimeo account at <https://vimeo.com/join>. From there they should send their **User Name** to Shannon Perez sperez@crcna.ca or Mike Hogeterp: publicdialogue@crcna.ca. They can help you get set up.

Acknowledgements

The artwork that appears in this curriculum is from the series *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – The Creator’s Sacrifice*. Artist **Ovide Bighetty**, 2002 © Indian Métis Christian Fellowship, Regina Saskatchewan. We gratefully acknowledge their generosity in providing permission to use representations of the paintings.

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KAIROS for your tenaciousness in developing and presenting *The Blanket Exercise* as a tool for building truth and reconciliation.

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Endorsement

When we sit in Circle after a Blanket Exercise, one of the most common questions is: *so now what?* We usually respond with encouragement to learn more and build relationships. In a sense Wab Kinew’s invitation to ‘get to know the neighbours’ in this excellent video series, is a way to begin some of that learning and living in relationship with Indigenous neighbors. We know that the journey of reconciliation is a challenge, a blessing and a deeply spiritual journey. The *8th Fire* videos and this curriculum, draw us into this journey in a friendly and moving way. I trust that we will be blessed and stretched on this path of *Living the 8th Fire* of reconciliation together.

-Mike Hogeterp, Centre for Public Dialogue

Fourfold Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths,
and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

Amen

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

Amen

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection,
starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their
pain into joy.

Amen

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference
in this world; so that you can do what others claim
cannot be done.

Amen

We Drink Downstream

Okay, let me try to lay this out straight for you.... I'm not saying any of this is your fault
or even that your grandparents did any of it. I'm saying it happened, and it happened on
your people's watch. You're the one who benefited from it. It doesn't matter that
you're way downstream from the actual events. You're still drinking the water.

"Dan" in Kent Nerburn's *The Wolf at Twilight*

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¹ The artwork that appears in this curriculum and is listed here is from the series *Kisemanito Pakitinasuwin – The Creator's Sacrifice*. Artist **Ovide Bighetty**, 2002 © Indian Métis Christian Fellowship, Regina Saskatchewan.

Introduction

“In the seventh fire, the white race will be given a choice between two paths: one will lead to destruction, the other to the lighting of the Eighth and final fire, an Eternal Fire of Peace Love, and Brotherhood.”

Traditional Anishnabe prophecy as told in *The Teachings of the Seven Fires and our Response through our Song of Faith*.

Indigenous People and non-Indigenous People in Canada have a significant relationship. This relationship dates back 500 years to the earliest days of contact between the original peoples of the land and the newcomers from Europe, who began arriving to trade, explore and live in this blessed land. The enormous size of the territory made it easy to think that all peoples could share in the bounty of the land.

The earliest treaties between Indigenous Peoples and the newcomers were called *Peace and Friendship treaties* – underlining the shared hope for respectful and supportive relations between unique peoples who had sophisticated cultures and languages, and profound and distinctive relationships with the Creator God. Among the treaties was the “Two Row Wampum” – a stunningly beautiful expression of relationship in purple and white seashells that symbolized how these distinctive peoples would share the rivers (and land): side-by-side as in separate boats, continuing to live in their own ways and sharing land and



The “Bentwood Box” collects ‘expressions of reconciliation’ presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

resources with mutual respect and non-interference.

These early visions of *Peace and Friendship*, of thriving together, are echoed in the 8th Fire Prophecy’s vision for a new, just and reconciled relationship between the Original Peoples of this place now called Canada, the descendants of those first European settlers and the many more recent immigrants to this place.

The goal for this curriculum is two-fold. First, we hope that it can help to restore the 8th Fire vision and hope in the hearts and minds of those who choose to participate in the learning. Second, we hope that participants, as vessels of hope, will seek out ways to “get to know the neighbours,” as 8th Fire host Wab Kinew puts it.

The curriculum is designed with a conviction that this call to a new relationship is for all Canadians. When Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave an apology on behalf of the Government of Canada for the damage caused by the Indian Residential Schools, he closed by saying that there was hope for “a new

relationship between Aboriginal People and other Canadians, a relationship based on knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.” For this new relationship to become a reality, participants may need to challenge long-held stereotypes and judgments made at a distance and be prepared to do the gritty, demanding and ultimately joyful work of our reconciliation journey.

As a facilitator, you have a unique opportunity to help and join people on this journey. This curriculum aims to be invitational rather than confrontational. To fully achieve this goal, facilitators need to be both gracious and challenging. Many of the issues dealt

within the 8th *Fire* videos and the pages that follow can spark strong reactions and emotions. They are politically, culturally and racially loaded. Navigating tense conversations with tact, clarity and humility is essential.

One other important note: This curriculum is intentionally biased. It is biased in favour of hearing voices and perspectives that are unfamiliar to many Canadians – the voices of Indigenous People. It is also biased in favour of encouraging the journey of reflection and action that is necessary to restore broken relationships between Indigenous People and non-Indigenous People in this country. We believe this is what God is calling us to as people, as citizens and as members of the body of Christ.

Notes for Facilitators

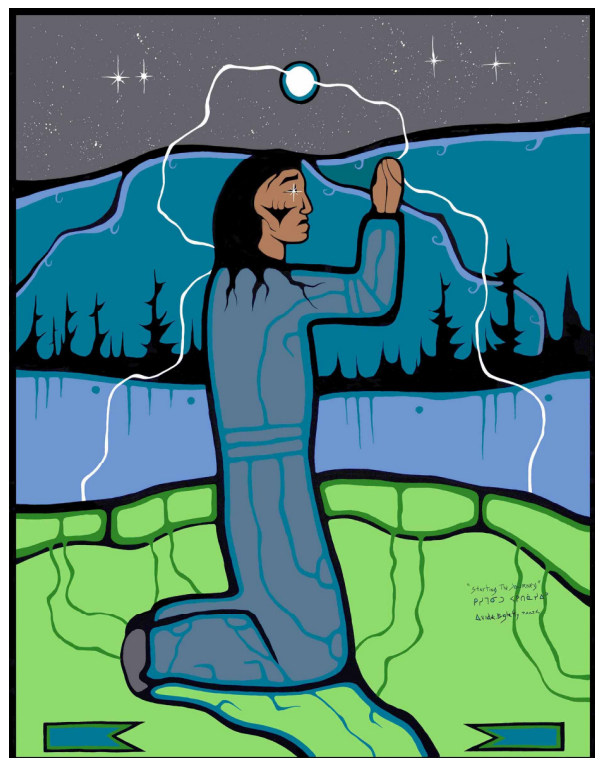
1. Please take time to **read over the instructions for each Circle** (the term we’ll use for each session). This will help you organize the materials and handouts that you’ll need. If possible and to save paper, it may be worth using an overhead or video projector to display some of these handouts. Each circle includes a section entitled ***Preparation*** that provides a quick overview of necessary prep needed in each session.
2. Each Circle is designed to take approximately 90 minutes. The ***Timing*** section for each Circle provides estimates of how much time to devote to each section of the session. 90 minutes will go by quickly so careful time management is essential to completing all the tasks. The final task, ***What Does This Mean for My Life***, is critical for planning personal next steps and should not be dropped or skipped.
3. Where possible, **do background research** in order to introduce local stories that incorporate historical and contemporary perspectives of Indigenous People in your area. This will make the learning more relevant for the participants as they

experience the diverse stories included in the 8th Fire series. Learning these local stories, perhaps from local Indigenous People themselves, are one of the seeds of 8th Fire reconciliation. Consider these local inclusions specifically within Circle 3's "Truth Telling" exercise and in Circle 6 when talking about contemporary realities. There are many good sources for local information: Basic community facts and histories can be found in First Nations Profiles from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs <http://pse5-esd5.ainc-inac.gc.ca/fnp/Main/index.aspx?lang=eng>. Many sessions offer ideas for background reading and research in the **Background Reading** section at the beginning of each session description – this is meant for facilitators, not the participants.

4. Even more meaningful than incorporating local stories and examples into the curriculum would be to **invite an Indigenous brother or sister to join your group for some or the entire curriculum**. This may require more time, as you will want to have enough time to share personal stories. However, it is essential at some time in this learning journey to hear the voices of Indigenous people. The 8th Fire is good; hearing stories from someone in the room is even better. Cutting some of the 8th Fire viewing is a good option for finding time to do this.
5. When conducting group discussions consider using a **talking circle**. In the circle all participants' views are respected and heard equally. As a facilitator introduce the talking circle by reminding participants of some basic talking circle guidelines:
 - The circle itself is sacred.
 - The circle is intended to be a way of hearing each other. Therefore, a participant's comments should address their perspective on a question or the issue presented, and avoid a rebuttal of the comments another person has made.
 - In the circle, we listen with our heart and we speak from the heart.
 - Any object can be used to facilitate the circle. The piece used symbolizes connectedness to the land i.e. a stick, a stone, or feather.
 - Only the person holding the "talking piece" has the right to speak. This is not a time for discussion or debate.
 - The talking piece should be passed in one direction (usually clock-wise) and continue until the piece is passed to everyone. The leader of the circle can decide how many times to let the piece go around the circle, whether to introduce a second question on the second round, or whether to stop after one round. See notes under **Sharing Circle** task in each Circle session.
 - Silence is also acceptable – any participant can choose not to speak and should then just pass the talking piece to the next person.

- Indigenous Elders have said that all things spoken in the circle should not leave the circle. Ask participants to respect this rule, particularly when difficult subjects and intense emotions are raised.
6. We encourage you to **begin each session by acknowledging the people who originally lived on the territory on which you are gathering.** Your research on local context (see #3 above) will help you discover which groups you should acknowledge. This can be simple: For instance if you are doing this curriculum in Nova Scotia, begin by saying: *“Friends, welcome to this circle of discussion on the 8th Fire. We are meeting on the traditional territory of the Mi’kmaq peoples and thankfully acknowledge their place in this land and the Creator’s faithfulness in their continued presence here.”* See the **Welcome and Overview** task in each Circle session.
 7. **The 8th Fire video episodes** are a key component of this curriculum. Access to these videos is provided through internet streaming with a link included in each circle explanation – please ensure that all technical elements are running well in advance. The videos are subject to copyright and license restrictions. Please do not copy the streamed content and only make use of it for the purposes of this curriculum. For technical support please contact us at: publicdialogue@crcna.ca or 613-686-6298.
 8. Effective facilitation of these seven sessions is critical to deep learning and real change in hearts and lives. To continuously strengthen your facilitation skills **review 1 or more Tips Sheets** in the Appendix of this curriculum. It includes:

- Tips for Effective Facilitation
- Types of Probing Questions
- What to Do with Tough Questions
- How to Address Strong Emotions
- How to Ensure Safety



CIRCLE 1

The Blanket Exercise

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

-Galatians 3:28 NIV

The first session centres on *The Blanket Exercise* – a teaching tool developed by KAIROS to present an introduction to the history of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island (a term that some First Peoples use to describe the land of North America). It is an excellent starting point for this curriculum and requires no prior knowledge of Indigenous or Canadian history. KAIROS has developed an excellent resource guide for those facilitating *The Blanket Exercise*.



Themes

Nation-to-Nation relationships; Treaty making and broken promises; Intergenerational trauma

Objectives

To introduce participants to the historic relationship between Europeans and the Indigenous nations in the colonization of the land we now call Canada. As an introductory exercise, it is intended to add detail and fresh perspective to any knowledge participants might have about the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People. *The Blanket Exercise* reaches people on an emotional and intellectual level by inviting them into a physical dramatization of the history of Canada from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples.

Timing

- 5 min. Welcome & Overview
- 3 min. Opening Prayer
- 10 min. Who Are We and Why Are We Here (a warm up to the exercise)?
- 45 min. *The Blanket Exercise*
- 20 min. Sharing Circle

- 5 min. What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min. Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 1, 1/participant
- Pen, 1/participant
- Blankets
- Scrolls and scripts
- Box of tissue
- The Blanket Exercise
<http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise/>

Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 1, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up the room with the blankets
- Get scrolls and scripts ready
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.

Background Reading

- Read about the *Blanket Exercise* in the CRC
http://www2.crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue_blankets.cfm
- Read about the *Blanket Exercise* and how to facilitate it on the KAIROS website
<http://www.kairoscanada.org/dignity-rights/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise/>
- Read the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (highlights)
<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637>
- Find out more about KAIROS
<http://www.kairoscanada.org/>

Post-Session Work

- Complete the KAIROS survey about using the *Blanket Exercise*. They value hearing where and when it is taught:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TKTVBNP>



Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory (see **Facilitator Notes** on pp 7 of this *Living the 8th Fire* curriculum).

Step 2

Share an overview of the entire program, including all seven sessions:

- Circle 1 - The Blanket Exercise
- Circle 2 - 8th Fire, Episode 1: “Indigenous in the City”
- Circle 3 - Truth Telling
- Circle 4 - 8th Fire, Episode 2: “It’s Time”
- Circle 5 - 8th Fire, Episode 3: “Whose Land Is It Anyway?”
- Circle 6 - 8th Fire, Episode 4: “At the Crossroads”
- Circle 7 - The Gospel Vision and Living the 8th Fire

Let people know that a set format will be repeated in each session. It has been designed this way to do the following:

- Ensure the respect and safety of all participants
- Ensure new learning and working with the new learning
- Ensure the voice of Indigenous Peoples is shared and listened to, deeply
- Ensure personal reflection and planning on how this will impact your life
- Ensure God is present and listened to throughout.

Step 3

Share an overview of this session, *Circle 1 - The Blanket Exercise*:

- Opening Prayer
- Who We Are and Why We Are Here (a warm-up to the exercise)?
- *The Blanket Exercise*
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*. This is something you will remind people of at the start of every session.

Opening Prayer | 2 min.

Start by praying the prayer below. Before starting, let the group know you will read this prayer at the start of every session as a way to prepare ourselves.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

Who Are We and Why Are We Here | 10 min.

Go around the circle and invite everyone to introduce themselves. They should share their name and why they decided to participate in the seven *Living the 8th Fire* sessions.

Make everyone feel welcome and share your excitement about the journey you are all embarking on. You should also tell everyone that you are a learner with them. Although you will be facilitating the process, you don't have all the answers. This is an experience of the heart, and we will all need to enter humbly and with genuine curiosity and a desire to learn.

The Blanket Exercise | 45 min.

Follow the KAIROS Blanket Exercise by involving the entire group.

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works. See the **Facilitator Notes** at the beginning of this curriculum about what to say about the circle practice and the use of a “talking piece”.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and the time it takes, you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What was the most powerful moment for you in the Blanket Exercise? Why?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *How has the Blanket Exercise helped you to see your neighbour, Indigenous Peoples, or Canadians differently?*

What Does this Mean for My Life | 5 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What does this mean for my life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 3 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about Circle 2:

The second session takes us deeper into the issues we experienced in the Blanket Exercise. It invites us to explore how our understanding of Indigenous Peoples might be incomplete or shallow. It explores the message that, unless we engage in relationships with our Indigenous neighbours and embrace our mutual interdependence, efforts for reconciliation, healing and justice will not reach their full potential. The discussion of prejudices and stereotypes must be facilitated deftly. This exercise touches on sensitive topics related to racism, so defensiveness is a common reaction. We have aimed for an invitational approach, suggesting that we look for a more vivid understanding of Indigenous Peoples and challenge the simplistic stereotypes through engagement with people and their stories.

Step 2

Close the session by reading “A Prayer for Healing” on the handout together:

Voice 1: Father of all, look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation, only the human family has strayed from the Way.
We know that we are the ones who are divided
and we are the ones who must come back together to walk in the Way.

Voice 2: As we reflect on the history of the relationship
between the church and Indigenous Peoples,
we pray for openness.

All: In our learning and our growing, may there be healing.

Voice 1: As we open ourselves to the stories of Indigenous Peoples,
hurt and wounded by abuse of power, we pray for compassionate listening.

All: In the telling and hearing, may there be healing.

Voice 2: As we feel the pain of individuals and communities,

and come to recognize our impoverishment of spirit through our failures
to honour the ways, gifts, and visions of different cultures,
we pray for a hunger to seek new ways of walking the Earth together.

All: In our recognition of the need for forgiveness and change, may there be healing.

Voice 1: As we work together to embody the spirit of reconciliation and healing,
we pray for expectant anticipation that our life together in the church
will be enriched and deepened.

All: In the giving and the receiving, may there be healing.

Voice 2: As we move forward as the people of God,
lifting up and supporting our sisters and brothers of all tribes and races,
we pray for God's richest blessings.

All: In the honouring and the sharing, may there be healing.

Voice 1: Creator, Sacred One,
teach us love, compassion and honour
that we may heal the Earth, and heal each other.

All: Amen

CIRCLE 2

8th Fire, Episode 1: “Indigenous in the City”

Society will be transformed for the better when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people develop a new understanding of each other and build a new relationship founded on mutual respect and love of neighbour. Healing is required to overcome the legacy of misunderstanding.

This second session takes us deeper into the issues we experienced in the Blanket Exercise. It invites us to explore how our understanding of Indigenous Peoples might be incomplete or shallow. It explores the message that, unless we engage in relationships with our Indigenous neighbours and embrace our mutual interdependence, efforts for reconciliation, healing and justice will not reach their full potential. The discussion of prejudices and stereotypes must be facilitated deftly. This exercise touches on sensitive topics related to racism, so defensiveness is a common reaction. We have aimed for an invitational approach, suggesting that we look for a more vivid understanding of Indigenous Peoples and challenge the simplistic stereotypes through engagement with people and their stories.

Themes

Prejudices and stereotypes; identity; getting to know your neighbours

Objectives

To encourage participants to consider how their understandings of Indigenous Peoples might be incomplete. To explore how we understand our own identities as a way to appreciate and respect the dignity and identity of others’ and, as a result, stress the significance of relationships in the formation of our allegiances and values.

Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	What are Stereotypes (a warm up exercise)?
45 min.	<i>8th Fire, Episode 1: “Indigenous in the City”</i>
20 min.	Sharing Circle
3 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 2
- Pen, 1/ participant

- Computer and television or screen
- Portrait series fights stereotypes about Aboriginal People:
- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/portrait-series-fights-stereotypes-about-aboriginal-people-1.2742330?cmp=rss>
- 8th Fire, Episode 1: “Indigenous in the City”

Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 2, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up audio-visual technology and test it
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.



Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- What are Stereotypes (a warm up exercise)?
- *8th Fire, Episode 1: "Indigenous In the City"*
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the prayer below.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

What Are Stereotypes | 10 min.

Pass out the handout.

Step 1

Introduce this warm-up task by stating how human beings often think and talk in stereotypes. The reality is that we all have certain stereotypes of each other. Some come out of real experience but much does not. What are some of the common stereotypes we hear from society about different cultural groups?

Step 2

Share the photos from “Portrait series fights stereotypes about Aboriginal People”² on a screen at the front of the room.

Step 3

Then, in pairs ask them to discuss the following questions:

- *What came to mind for you when you saw this photo series?*
- *What does it say about stereotyping people?*

Step 4

Let's end our warm up with this quote from Kent Nerburn. It is also found on your handout:

But those echoes are not to be found in the myths and false images upon which we have been raised. The drunken Indian, the vicious savage, the noble wiseman, and the silent earth-mother are all products of our historical imagination. We do the Indian people no honor by dehumanizing them into such neat and simple packages. The real Indian people laugh, cry, make mistakes, honor their Creator, get angry, go to stores, raise children.... And it is in the real Indian people, not in the myths and images, that the true voices of our land can be heard.

-Kent Nerburn, *Neither Dog nor Wolf* (New World Library: Novato, California, 2002): 5

- *What came to mind for you as you were listening?*

² CBD Manitoba news, August 20 2014

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/portrait-series-fights-stereotypes-about-aboriginal-people-1.2742330?cmp=rss>

8th Fire, Episode 1 | 45 min.

Step 1

Introduce Episode 1 of “8th Fire” by sharing:

What we are about to watch begins to challenge the stereotypes we have about Indigenous Peoples. You will come face to face with a variety of folks living very distinct lives. You will also hear how these people are struggling to come to terms with their own identities. As you are watching this film, think about the ways in which you might respond to persistent prejudice and discrimination if you were in their shoes.

Step 2

Watch the 45 minute film in silence.

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and time it takes you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What has this video clip made you realize about yourself and Aboriginal People?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What did this video tell you about your way of living and interacting with the world around you?*
- *What is coming to mind for you about “getting to know your neighbours”, one of the themes of this film?*

What Does This Mean for My Life | 3 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What Does This Mean for My Life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about Circle 3:

Next week's session the ways in which the broken relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in this country should be fixed. It challenges past approaches and will remind us that there are no easy answers – that reconciliation is a challenging and important journey.

Step 2

Close the session by reading the handout “A Prayer of Confession” together:

A Prayer of Confession

God of new beginnings,
Be with us as we take this step
On a reconciliation journey.

We bring before you O God, the hurt and suffering of so many at Indian Residential Schools. Though we want to say—we were not there, we didn't do it—still we cannot absolve ourselves of blame. For the Church is the body of Christ and we are his arms and legs, his mouth and feet. We speak, walk, and act on Jesus' behalf. So when the churches in Canada have sinned we all bear the mark. We all share the guilt.

We ask your forgiveness, God, as we come to understand the results of our church's and nation's failures toward Aboriginal People: we see the damaged lives, devastated by the disease of alcoholism, unable to escape the grip of poverty, sometimes caught in a cycle of violence and abuse—and we are sorry beyond the words to tell it. We wish we could go back and do things differently, but the river of life flows in one direction only. No matter what we wish for, we must make the best of the situation we have now.

We thank you, God, for your generous gift of forgiveness that makes every day the possibility of a new beginning. May this gift help us to begin to heal and make new connections, as Jesus would have, with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers. May we be fearless and unafraid as your children. Give us the courage to face those from whom we so often turn away. Let us live with a deep abiding respect for all your children, and for

your wondrous, beautiful, matchless creation, O Great Creator.

God of new beginnings,
Be with us as we take this step
On our journey together—toward reconciliation.

Amen

—based on *Toward Truth and Reconciliation* from the United Church of Canada

CIRCLE 3

Truth Telling

Of all the non-governmental institutions in Canadian society, religious institutions have perhaps the greatest potential to foster awareness and understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

-The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996

In 2008, following the Prime Minister's historic apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC) was established. Its mandate has been to provide survivors of the residential schools with a forum to tell their truths and begin a process of healing and forgiveness. The telling of these often disturbing truths is an essential part of the journey of reconciliation.



Prime Minister Stephen Harper stands in the House of Commons to offer an Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, June 11, 2008.

In the same spirit, it is important that all Canadians learn the truth about the history of interactions between Indigenous Peoples and settlers in this country. The residential schools experience is one piece of this history. This week's session will provide an opportunity for deeper learning and reflection on the truths revealed within the *Blanket Exercise*. Though you may be eager to dive right into contemporary Indigenous issues, it is important to first know both how we got where we are today and the ways in which we might learn from the mistakes of the past. It is also important to understand how profoundly the effects of the past impact generations that follow.

Themes

Truth-telling; Indigenous history.

Objectives

The goal of this session is to continue with the exercise of truth-telling begun in Circle 1. We'll challenge and stretch ourselves by comparing what we learn in this truth-telling with our earlier perspectives of truth. The crucial 'take away' for participants in this session is that telling Indigenous People to "get over the past" is ignorant and unhelpful; it fundamentally ignores the complex number of ways in which actions and attitudes of the past impact lives in the present: socially, economically, psychologically, and spiritually.

Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
3 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	The Connection between Truth and Peace-Making (a warm-up exercise)
50 min.	Twelve Truths We Need to Know
15 min.	Sharing Circle
5 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 3, including all 12 Truths, 1/participant
- Pen, 1/participant
- 12 poster papers with each of the 12 Truths
- Markers, 3/table



Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 3, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up the room in 4 working tables; later you will also need a circle of chairs
- Research 'local truth' so you can write Truth #12
- Write each of the 12 Truths with 1 per poster paper (only write the sentence in **bold** = 12 sheets. There will be 3 Truths at each table: 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12.
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.

Background Reading

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper stands in the House of Commons to offer an Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, June 11, 2008:
<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)
<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- The Connection Between Truth and Peace-Making (a warm-up exercise)
- Twelve Truths We Need to Know
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 3 min.

Start by praying the prayer below.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

The Connection between Truth and Peace-Making | 10 min.

Step 1

Let the group read together the verse from Zechariah 8:16, which is also found on their handout:

These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace...

Step 2

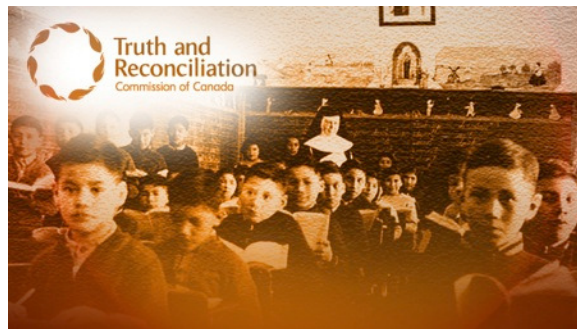
In pairs, ask them to discuss the meaning of this text for them.

After 5 minutes, invite them to share some of their thoughts. Dig deeper about the connection between being truthful and peace-making.

Twelve Truths We Need To Know | 50 min.

Step 1

Tell the group that they will hear 12 truths in this session. They will be presented in groups of 3 and they will be invited to reflect and dialogue deeply. Although these are truths, they may be different from what they know or have heard, and therefore an emotional response may be felt. That's normal and okay. Encourage them to be honest and dig deep.



See the tip sheets in the front of this curriculum for guidance on how to facilitate this well: *What to Do with Tough Questions* and *How to Address Strong Emotions*.

Step 2

Divide the group up into groups of 3-4 people. Every group should be sitting at one table. Each table has 3 truths that they will engage with for 10 minutes. They should read all three truths at once and then discuss using these questions as their guide (they are also at the top of their 12 Truths handout):

- *What comes to mind for you when you read this?*
- *What feelings are surfacing for you? Why?*
- *How is this the same or different from what you hear in the media, literature, books, schools, etc.? Why may this be?*

As they discuss these questions they should jot down ideas, draw or record their thoughts, feelings and questions on the poster sheets in front of them. Each group will add new ideas, questions.

If you wish, these poster sheets can be typed out and emailed to the group before the next session, for further reflection.

Step 3

After 10 minutes, everyone should stop and move to the next table. Then they have 10 minutes at this new table.

Step 4

After 10 minutes, they stop and move to the next table.

Step 5

After 10 minutes, they stop and move to the last table. By this time each group will have visited all 12 Truths and jotted down thoughts at each of the tables.

Step 6

Tell the group that there will be a circle time to share some of the thoughts and feelings that surfaced. For now, you will take 10 minutes to address pressing questions that came up at the tables.

Don't feel you have to answer the questions that come up. You can bounce them back to the group (who can be a wealth of knowledge) and if nobody knows you can thank the person for the question and state that this will be an important question to research before your next session. See the tip sheet *What to Do with Tough Questions* at the front of this curriculum for more ideas.

Sharing Circle | 15 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle (you may need to rearrange the furniture if you couldn't set this up in advance) and review how it works.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and time it takes, you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What impact has these 12 Truths and the Blanket Exercise we did in the first session, have on your perspectives on Canadian History and the relationship between Indigenous People and settlers?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What insight are you starting to have about yourself in regards to Indigenous Peoples of Canada, that you would like to share with this group?*

What Does This Mean for My Life | 5 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What Does This Mean for My Life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about Circle 4:

In Circle 4, we'll grapple with the often heard question/statement: “It's in the past, why can't they just get over it?” Episode 2 of 8th Fire will challenge us to understand that the broken relationships of the past still have repercussions today.

Step 2

Close the session by reading the handout “Reconciliation” together:

We are waking up to our history
from a forced slumber
We are breathing it into our lungs
so it will be part of us again
It will make us angry at first
because we will see how much you stole from us
and for how long you watched us suffer
we will see how you see us
and how when we copied your ways
we killed our own.

We will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again
But we will go home to cry
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old and it will be new.

Then we will breathe our history back to you
you will feel how strong and alive it is
and you will feel yourself become a part of it
And it will shock you at first
because it is too big to see all at once
and you won't want to believe it
you will see how you see us
and all the disaster in your ways
how much we lost.

And you will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again
But we will cry with you
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old and it will be new.

-Rebeka Tabobondung, Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario

CIRCLE 4

8th Fire, Episode 2: “It’s Time”

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

-Micah 6:8

As Wab Kinew notes in this week’s 8th Fire Episode 2, “It’s Time” for all Canadians to come together to rebuild this broken relationship. To really begin the rebuilding it is essential to understand how we got here. In today’s discussion, we’ll recap some essential pieces of history as brought out in the Blanket Exercise. After this, we’ll discuss the significance of history for our lives together in the present.

Themes

The past is still with us; knowing the stories.

Objectives

In this Circle, we’ll grapple with the often heard question/statement: *It’s in the past, why can’t they just get over it?* Episode 2 of 8th Fire challenges us to understand that the broken relationships of the past still have repercussions today.

Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	Get Over It (a warm up exercise)
40 min.	8 th Fire Film, Episode 2: “It’s Time”
20 min.	Sharing Circle
3 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 4, 1/participant
- Pen, 1/participant
- Computer and television or screen
- 8th Fire, Episode 2: “It’s Time”

Preparation

- Print handouts, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up audio-visual technology and test it
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.



Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- Get Over It (a warm up exercise)
- *8th Fire Film, Episode 2: "It's Time"*
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the prayer below, as we prayed it in our last session.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

Get Over It | 10 min.

Step 1

Invite the group to consider the quote below – it is also on Handout Circle 4:

Justice Murray Sinclair, chairperson of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, often comes across people who say 'Just get over it. Residential schools were in the past, why don't you move on?' His response is simply this: 'It is not over. We are still in the era of residential schools, because of their lingering effects.'

Step 2

Then ask them in pairs to discuss the following questions:

- *What comes to mind for you when you hear this quote?*
- *How might it feel to Aboriginal Peoples to be told to “get over it”?*

8th Fire, Episode 2 | 45 min.

Step 1

Introduce Episode 2 of 8th Fire by sharing:

In this episode we will hear a lot of people use phrases like “Get over it!,” “It’s in the past” or “It’s not our fault”. The snippets of history covered here (Royal Proclamation, Treaty of Niagara, Indian Act, Residential Schools – 500 years in just a few minutes) – also tell a story of broken relationships that have implications for today. Let’s watch and listen to “It’s Time” and then after the 45 minutes, we will share some of our thoughts, feelings, experiences and questions in the circle.

Step 2

Watch the 45 minute film in silence.

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and the time it takes, you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the below question:

- *What do we all gain when we work to heal relationships between Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal Peoples?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What is needed to heal the relationships between Aboriginal Peoples and non-Aboriginal Peoples?*

What Does this Mean for My Life | 3 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What does this mean for my life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about Circle 5:

Next week's episode will explore the significance of land for Indigenous identity. We will also reflect on our own histories, in an attempt to understand how the struggles and triumphs of our ancestors in this country are - and are not - comparable to those of Indigenous Peoples. This reflection will require reflection on the truths told in Circle 3.

Step 2

Close the session by reading "A Prayer of Confession" on the handout together:

A Prayer of Confession

How difficult it has been, O Creator, for us to be humble and caring.

We so easily forget your teachings of the just and right relationships that we are to have with each other, as brothers and sisters, in this land.

We so easily forget that our responsibility carries from generation to generation for all those who are hurt and oppressed and denied their place in the circle of life – those who still need our support, who need justice and peace.

How difficult it is for us to remain humble as we walk the road of life.

May we find peace so that we might share peace that is genuine and real, and help others to know peace within.

Spirit of life, help us to walk the road of integrity back to the circle of life, where we will be truly joined by all our brothers and sisters.

Meegwetch Che Manido (Thank you Great Spirit).

Amen

CIRCLE 5

8th Fire, Episode 3: “Whose Land Is It Anyway?”

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

-2 Corinthians 5:18-19

This episode is all about land and its importance in the spiritual, cultural, and economic well-being of Indigenous Peoples. It focuses both on triumphs and tragedies. As participants watch the Episode 3 of 8th Fire, encourage them to think of how the stories told connect with themes from previous circles such as *truth-telling, prejudices and stereotypes, treaty-making and deal-breaking, and intergenerational trauma*. Also encourage them to think about the interrelationship between land, identity and a sense of home.

Another layer to this complex issue is: Indigenous Peoples were stewards of the land-the ultimate role models which speaks of their relationship and deep respect for Mother Earth. Not only was land taken from them but what is now happening with that land that hurts the heart of Indigenous Peoples.

Themes

Understanding Indigenous People’s connection to the land; the role of the past in interpreting the present.

Objectives

The goal of this session is to highlight the complexities of land issues. It is also meant to show participants that although land issues can sometimes feel like a thing of the past, the sting and destructive effects of treaty-breaking and the loss of their land is still felt in the intergenerational trauma and other social illnesses today.

Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	Engaging Our Collective Histories (a warm up exercise)
40 min.	8 th Fire, Episode 3: “Whose Land Is It Anyway?”
20 min.	Sharing Circle
3 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 5, including homework assignment
- Pen, 1/participant
- Computer and television or screen
- *8th Fire, Episode 3: "Whose Land Is It Anyway?"*
<http://www.cbc.ca/8thfire/2011/11/whose-land-is-it-anyway.html>
- One stone collected from a local river, First Nation, residential school area, or other site of significance

Preparation

- Collect one stone from a local river, First Nation, residential school area, or other site of significance, 1/participant
- Print Handout Circle 5, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up audio-visual technology and test it
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.

Background Reading

- <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/honoring-earth>
- "On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada" by Michael Asch



Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- Engaging Our Collective Histories (a warm up exercise)
- 8th Fire, Episode 3: “*Whose Land Is It Anyway?*”
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress again that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the prayer below, as we prayed it in our last session.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

Engaging Our Collective Histories | 10 min.

Step 1

Ask everyone to use a piece of paper to tell their family's immigration story (as best they know it) – they can draw or write or any combination. Some elements to consider are:

- *What were the hardships your ancestors faced when immigrating to Canada?*
- *How did they overcome these hardships?*
- *How did they establish communities in Canada?*
- *How was life in Canada different from back home?*

If people cannot relate to this activity, you can invite them to think of someone they know.

Step 2

Invite them to share their immigration story with one other person.

Step 3

Discuss how these stories are the same or different from that of Indigenous People in Canada.

8th Fire, Episode 3 | 45 min.

Step 1

Introduce **Episode 3** of 8th Fire by sharing:

In this session, we'll explore the significance of land for Indigenous identity. We will also reflect on our own histories, in an attempt to understand how the struggles and triumphs of our ancestors in this country are - and are not - comparable to those of Indigenous Peoples.

NOTE: This activity will require reflection on the truths told in Circle 3. It may be helpful to have these on hand for participants to refer to as they compare these experiences.

Step 2

Watch the 45 minute film in silence.

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and the time it takes, you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *How does what you heard in this episode impact your thinking of Indigenous People and our righting relationships?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What lessons from our past do we need to carry forward into the future?*

What Does This Mean for My Life | 3 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What does this mean for my life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about **Circle 6**:

This circle will focus on the key implication of the Prime Minister’s 2008 apology: that all Canadians are called to participate in the journey of reconciliation. It will also focus on, as Indigenous theologian Terry LeBlanc puts it, the counterpoint to this apology – that Indigenous People were right to fight for their identity. To get into this, we’ll explore contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities, and specifically we’ll look at the Indian Act in order to better understand its dominating effects on communities. For facilitators, it will be most important to help participants understand how reforming the relationship is absolutely critical.

To prepare yourself for our next session, please read the Indian Act. The web-link is at the end of your handout for today.

Step 2

Close the session by reading the handout “Stones Liturgy” together:

Stones Liturgy

Leader: This stone comes from (name of river, First Nation, residential school, or place from which the stone was gathered).

ALL: It is part of the Earth, formed by the Creator, just as we are.

Leader: Jesus said stones would cry out if humans remained silent.

ALL: We will listen to our hearts and speak from them.

Leader: Stones like this have marked graves.

ALL: Jesus rose out of death into a new life and the stone was rolled away from his grave.

Leader: Stones like these mark paths for those who journey.

ALL: This stone in our hands will mark the way we journey toward right relationships.

Leader: Like words and broken trust, stones can be used to break apart, hurt, and injure.

ALL: In our hands this stone will be a sign of the strength of what we can build together.

(Liturgy based on the following passages of scripture: Genesis 1:1, Luke 19:39 – 40, Matthew 27:59-60, Joshua 4:3, Jeremiah 31:21, 1 Peter 2:4 – 5)

CIRCLE 6

8th Fire, Episode 4: “At the Crossroads”

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28

This session will focus on the key implication of the Prime Minister’s 2008 apology: that all Canadians are called to participate in the journey of reconciliation. It will also focus on, as Indigenous theologian Terry LeBlanc puts it, the counterpoint to this apology – *that Indigenous People were right to fight for their identity*. To get into this, we’ll explore contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities, and specifically we’ll look at the Indian Act in order to better understand its dominating effects on communities. For facilitators, it will be most important to help participants understand how reforming the relationship is absolutely critical.

Themes

Contemporary realities; the colonial heritage of the Indian Act.

Objectives

To engage participants in a reflection on the colonial roots of the contemporary struggles that face Indigenous communities.

Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	How Present-Day Rights Reflect Past Wrongs
45 min.	<i>8th Fire, Episode 4: “At the Crossroads”</i>
20 min.	Sharing Circle
3 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
2 min.	Closing and Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 6, 1/participant
- Pen, 1/participant
- Computer and television or screen
- *8th Fire, Episode 4: “At the Crossroads”*
<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/Doc+Zone/8th+Fire/ID/2196907845/>

- Access to the text of the Indian Act and the 1969 White Paper (optional)
- Copies of “The Gospel Comes to North America” (for homework)

Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 6, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/ participant
- Print “The Gospel Comes to North America” (for homework), 1/ participant
- Set up audio-visual technology and test it
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.



Background Reading

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Statement of Apology (excerpts)
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prime-minister-stephen-harper-s-statement-of-apology-1.734250>
- #1 Residential School: Policy, Power and Mission by Terry LeBlanc
http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/files/edinburgh2010/files/Study_Process/case%20studies%20and%20theological%20for%20website.doc
- Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy - The 1969 White Paper
<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010189/1100100010191>
- The Indian Act
<http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-5/>
<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- How Present-Day Rights Reflect Past Wrongs
- *8th Fire, Episode 4: "At the Crossroads"*
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing and Prayer

Stress again that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the prayer below, as we prayed it in our last session.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

How Present-Day Rights Reflect Past Wrongs | 10 min.

Step 1

Invite the group to consider the quote below from the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (and is also found on their handout):

Article 3

Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 8 (part I)

Indigenous Peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

-from United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Step 2

Then ask them in pairs to discuss the following questions:

- What comes to mind for you when you hear these two articles?
- What concerns you?

8th Fire: Episode 4 | 45 min.

Step 1

Introduce **Episode 4** of 8th Fire by sharing:

Focusing on a younger generation of Indigenous Peoples, this episode is particularly hopeful that this generation holds the key to restored relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in this country. It shines a spotlight on the Indian Act and the challenges and prospects for repealing it. It also looks at the tricky issues of economic development that are so important for justice and reconciliation.

Step 2

Watch the 45 minute film in silence.

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

Invite everyone to the circle and review how it works.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and the time it takes, you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What concerns you most about the impact of past wrongs/hurts and the future of Canada?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *What gives you hope for right relationships, healthy communities, and a united Canada?*
- *What can we learn from the mistakes we made in the 1969 White Paper, Indian Act, and other parts of our history?*

What Does This Mean for My Life | 3 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to write on their handout in the box “What does this mean for my life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell them about **Circle 7**:

The objective is to begin developing an enriched appreciation for ways in which Indigenous approaches to the Gospel can be used to counter the brokenness of colonial legacies. Explore practical next steps in the journey of reconciliation.

Step 2

Close the session by reading the handout “Walking in the Sacred Way” together:

Walking in the Sacred Way: An Ojibway Prayer

Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.
We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones
Who are divided,
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion and honour
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.³

³ Prayer offered at *The Meaning of Life: A Multifaith Consultation*, Mauritius, January 25-February 3, 1983. As cited in *Towards an Intercultural Theology*, 56.

CIRCLE 7

The Gospel Vision and Living the 8th Fire

Perhaps the most important theme in Christian Scriptures is the theme of grace. The Apostle Paul interprets the death and resurrection of Jesus as the paramount manifestation of restoring broken relationships. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul describes God's justice: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us."

-2 Cor. 5:18-19

This is a vision, not of a vengeful God who punishes and abandons but of a God who reaches out to reconcile, to rebuild, and to repair the brokenness in spite of the harm that has been done. It is grace, – not what Bonhoeffer calls "cheap grace" which is given when the harm doesn't really matter. It is the vision of a God that suffers with the victims of crime but at the same time refuses to let go of the offender, to let go of the potential for healing and redemption in every broken situation. It is the vision of a God who in Jesus suffers the pain of the hate and violence that human beings can do and still reaches out for us beyond the grave declaring that love is stronger than our hate, forgiveness is stronger than harm we can do, God's longing for restored relationship is stronger than death itself. This is the vision that we have been given through our faith- It is a vision of grace, it is a vision of restorative justice.

-Rev. James Scott, presentation during Correctional Services Canada's
2003 Restorative Justice Week

Themes

God's grace as a call to action on the Gospel call to reconciliation; moving towards substantive and sustained relationships with our Indigenous neighbours.

Objectives

To begin developing an enriched appreciation for ways in which Indigenous approaches to the Gospel can be used to counter the brokenness of colonial legacies. To explore practical next steps in the journey of reconciliation.

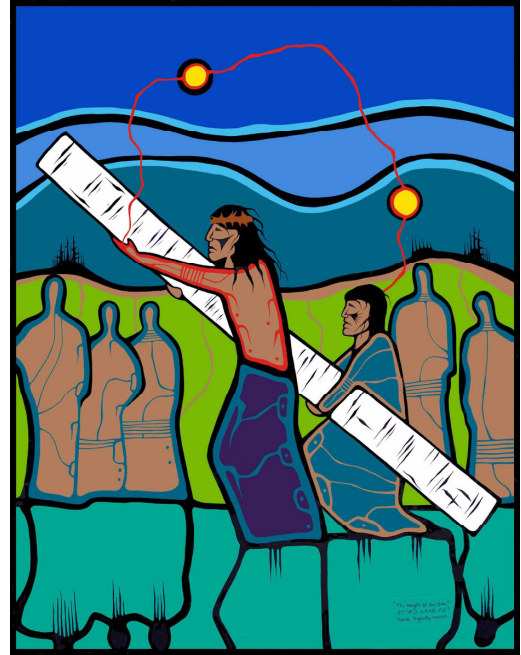
Timing

5 min.	Welcome & Overview
5 min.	Opening Prayer
10 min.	A Personal Story (a warm up)
20 min.	The Gospel Comes to North America
20 min.	A CRC Response
20 min.	Sharing Circle
10 min.	What Does This Mean For My Life?
5 min.	Closing & Prayer

Materials

- Handout Circle 7
- Pen, 1/participant
- Computer and television or screen
- Copies of Bishop Macdonald's article "The Gospel comes to North America."

http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_gospel_comes_to_north_america_bishop_mark_macdonald/



Preparation

- Print Handout Circle 7, 2-sided is best so there is 1 sheet/participant
- Set up the room in circle of chairs, 1/participant
- Pray for humility, guidance and wisdom.

Background Reading

- Bishop Macdonald's article "The Gospel Comes to North America."
http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_gospel_comes_to_north_america_bishop_mark_macdonald/

Post-Session Work

- Send in the Feedback to CAMC. See **Feedback Sheet**.

Welcome & Overview | 5 min.

Step 1

Begin with a greeting and an acknowledgement of territory.

Step 2

Share the theme of this workshop and an overview of your time together:

- Welcome & Overview
- Opening Prayer
- A Personal Story (a warm up exercise)
- The Gospel Comes to North America
- A CRC Response
- Sharing Circle
- What Does This Mean For My Life?
- Closing & Prayer

Stress that these sessions are not “easy” or “light” in any way. They may stir emotions (positive and negative) but that you are all here to *listen deeply, share truly, and reflect personally*.

Opening Prayer | 5 min.

Start by praying the below prayer, one last time.

Creator God,
Cleanse our hearts from sin and brokenness
as we seek your holy way.
Purify our minds
and let them be guided by your Word.
Give sight to our eyes
so that we may see others as you have seen them.
Open our ears
so that we may listen for your voice.
Guide our mouths
so we may choose our words wisely, giving no pain to others.
Humble our hearts
so we may have empathy for others and accept their stories.
Make us one, to worship in spirit and in truth
and may we love you with all our strength
and invite you to walk with us here in this session of learning.

A Personal Story | 10 min.

Step 1

Based on your research and preparations, share a story or testimony of reconciliation that you think will resonate with the group.

You may also want to invite an Indigenous Person to do this.

Step 2

In pairs, share what you found most moving or important about this story. What else is coming to mind for you?

The Gospel Comes to North America | 20 min.

Step 1

Briefly introduce/summarize “The Gospel Comes to North America”.

Step 2

In groups of 2-3 read the section “The Gospel Comes to North America” task on their handout.

In Circle 1: *The Blanket Exercise* and Circle 4: *Truth Telling*, and now in this article we encounter the Doctrine of Discovery – a Pope’s edict that provided the legal basis for colonialism and the settlement of North America. It also has theological implications. Bishop MacDonald writes:



Rev. Mark MacDonald, National
Indigenous Anglican Bishop
(General Synod, Flickr)

The western Church assumed that the land and its history that produced European Christianity was sacred in its role in the development and communication of Christian faith. This assumption is so deeply engrained in the churches of the West that many Indigenous People assume that Christianity and Euro-American culture are inseparable.

- How do you respond to Bishop MacDonald’s claim that “God has acted definitively in the survival of the Peoples of the Land”?
- What is it about the Gospel message that transcends culture so powerfully?
- What does Bishop MacDonald mean, when he suggests that the Gospel is just beginning to find its home in North America?

After 10 minutes, invite some sharing of the dialogue that happened in groups.

Step 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and ask the group what light this sheds on the conversation.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- *How do these verses shed light on the conversation we just had?*

A CRC Response | 20 min.

Step 1

Read the **Expression of Reconciliation** on your handout, presented by Rev. Bruce Adema on behalf of the CRC in Canada at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission National Event in Saskatoon Saskatchewan, June 2012.

Note that other faith communities have similar statement that you may use in place of this one.

You may want to also project this quote on the screen.

Step 2

Ask everyone to underline or highlight parts of text that they find especially moving or important.

Step 3

Invite people to share what they have highlighted and open it up for people to share thoughts or questions.



Rev. Bruce Adema, former
Director of Canadian
Ministries
CRCNA, addresses the TRC in
Saskatoon, June 2012

Sharing Circle | 20 min.

Step 1

On the handout, you can read the following:

In the article, *The Gospel Comes to North America*, Bishop McDonald testifies to the ongoing presence of Creator God with the “Peoples of the Land”. The CRC’s “expression of reconciliation” laments the loss of the full contribution of Indigenous People to the life of the church and the Nation. Mi'kmaq/Acadian theologian Terry LeBlanc underscores this fundamental point in a reflection on the Prime Minister’s Apology to former Students of Indian Residential Schools:

Deep reconciliation means moving beyond regret to personal change. Regret means sorrow about the exposure of the fault; reconciliation means changed behaviour. The June 11, 2008 Apology from the Prime Minister has potential in this respect. The PM and leaders of the opposition admitted that we were wrong – this raises a counterpoint: Native communities can legitimately say we were right to struggle for our culture and our language. Parliamentary leaders also acknowledged that they robbed the nation of the contribution that Aboriginal People might make – the counterpoint is, again, that Aboriginal People have a contribution to make to this place and nation – we need to do things to ensure that this contribution can be re-acquired. If there was a wrong, there is a right. This needs to move from personal change to collective responsibility at multiple levels. Therefore the apology was not resolution – it was only a beginning point for a new relationship that is characterized by mutual responsibility.

Step 2

Depending on the number of people you have and time it takes you can go around the circle as many times as you like. Use the question below:

- *What comes to mind for you after hear this, in light of what we have heard today?*

If you have more time and the group has “finished” responding to the above question, you may wish to ask a new question and go around the circle again:

- *How do you see yourself contributing to this idea of the “mutual responsibility” that Terry LeBlanc talks about?*

What Does This Mean for My Life | 10 min.

Invite the group to take a few minutes on their own to review the **Resource Sheet** as part of their handout.

Then, write on their handout in the box “What does this mean for my life”. Encourage them to write 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing, 1 person they want to talk to about this, or 1 personal realization they had during this session.

Closing and Prayer | 2 min.

Step 1

Thank everyone for opening their hearts, listening deeply, sharing truly, and reflecting personally. Encourage them to continue talking, reading, and thinking about these issues.

Tell everyone that this is the final of seven sessions. What a rich learning journey it has been! Thank everyone for participating. Invite them to continue the learning and questioning. Encourage them to revisit all their handouts with personal action plans and notes on them, and put them into action.

Step 2

Close this final session by reading the handout “A Litany of the Four Directions” together. Everyone should stand while reading the litany. NOTE: you will need to know which direction is North, South, West, and East.

One: God of a thousand names and faces, we experience you to be beyond our knowing and telling, and at the same time deeply present, incarnate and alive, within us and in our relationships. Holiness beyond us, within us, and among us... Blessed be!
Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the northern direction, the direction of wisdom. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of wisdom, we remember our sisters and brothers in the north and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, steadying in wisdom, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the southern direction, the direction of struggles. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of struggle we remember our sisters and brothers in the southern direction and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, prophetic in struggle, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the western direction, the direction of kindness. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of kindness we remember our sisters and brothers in the western direction and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, constant in kindness, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the eastern direction, the direction of hope. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of hope, we remember our sisters and brothers in the eastern direction, and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, courting us with hope, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward each other, the direction of revelation. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of revelation, we remember our lives and relationships and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, steadying in wisdom, prophetic in struggle, constant in kindness, courting us with hope, guiding in revelation, be with us and help us to be with one another. Amen.

-So Long As the Sun Rises and the Rivers Flow, a KAIROS resource (1997, 2001)

Handouts

CIRCLE 1



What this means for me...

“Where common memory is lacking, where people do not share in the same past, there can be no real community. Where community is to be formed, common memory must be created.”

-Georges Erasmus, Dene Nation, co-chair of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

A Prayer for Healing

Voice 1: Father of all, look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation, only the human family has strayed from the Way.

We know that we are the ones who are divided and we are the ones who must come back together to walk in the Way.

Voice 2: As we reflect on the history of the relationship between the church and Indigenous Peoples, we pray for openness.

All: In our learning and our growing, may there be healing.

Voice 1: As we open ourselves to the stories of Indigenous Peoples, hurt and wounded by abuse of power, we pray for compassionate listening.

All: In the telling and hearing, may there be healing.

Voice 2: As we feel the pain of individuals and communities, and come to recognize our impoverishment of spirit through our failures to honour the ways, gifts, and visions of different cultures, we pray for a hunger to seek new ways of walking the Earth together.

All: In our recognition of the need for forgiveness and change, may there be healing.

Voice 1: As we work together to embody the spirit of reconciliation and healing, we pray for expectant anticipation that our life together in the church will be enriched and deepened.

All: In the giving and the receiving, may there be healing.

Voice 2: As we move forward as the people of God, lifting up and supporting our sisters and brothers of all tribes and races, we pray for God's richest blessings.

All: In the honouring and the sharing, may there be healing.

Voice 1: Creator, Sacred One,
teach us love, compassion and honour
that we may heal the Earth, and heal each other.

All: Amen

CIRCLE 2



What this means for me...

But those echoes are not to be found in the myths and false images upon which we have been raised. The drunken Indian, the vicious savage, the noble wiseman, and the silent earth-mother are all products of our historical imagination. We do the Indian people no honor by dehumanizing them into such neat and simple packages. The real Indian people laugh, cry, make mistakes, honor their creator, get angry, go to stores, raise children.... And it is in the real Indian people, not in the myths and images, that the true voices of our land can be heard.

-Kent Nerburn, *Neither Dog nor Wolf* (New World Library: Novato, CA, 2002): 5

A Prayer of Confession

God of new beginnings,
Be with us as we take this step
On a reconciliation journey.

We bring before you O God, the hurt and suffering of so many at Indian Residential Schools. Though we want to say—we were not there, we didn't do it—still we cannot absolve ourselves of blame. For the Church is the body of Christ and we are his arms and legs, his mouth and feet. We speak, walk, and act on Jesus' behalf. So when the churches in Canada have sinned we all bear the mark. We all share the guilt.

We ask your forgiveness, God, as we come to understand the results of our church's and nation's failures toward Aboriginal People: we see the damaged lives, devastated by the disease of alcoholism, unable to escape the grip of poverty, sometimes caught in a cycle of violence and abuse—and we are sorry beyond the words to tell it. We wish we could go back and do things differently, but the river of life flows in one direction only. No matter what we wish for, we must make the best of the situation we have now.

We thank you, God, for your generous gift of forgiveness that makes every day the possibility of a new beginning. May this gift help us to begin to heal and make new connections, as Jesus would have, with our Aboriginal sisters and brothers. May we be fearless and unafraid as your children. Give us the courage to face those from whom we so often turn away. Let us live with a deep abiding respect for all your children, and for your wondrous, beautiful, matchless creation, O Great Creator.

God of new beginnings,
Be with us as we take this step
On our journey together—toward reconciliation.

Amen

-based on *Toward Truth and Reconciliation* from the United Church of Canada

CIRCLE 3



What this means for me...

These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace...

Zechariah 8:16

Reconciliation

We are waking up to our history
from a forced slumber
We are breathing it into our lungs
so it will be part of us again
It will make us angry at first
because we will see how much you stole from us
and for how long you watched us suffer
we will see how you see us
and how when we copied your ways
we killed our own.

We will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again
But we will go home to cry
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old and it will be new.

Then we will breathe our history back to you
you will feel how strong and alive it is
and you will feel yourself become a part of it
And it will shock you at first
because it is too big to see all at once
and you won't want to believe it
you will see how you see us
and all the disaster in your ways
how much we lost.

And you will cry and cry and cry
because we can never be the same again
But we will cry with you
and we will see ourselves in this huge mess
and we will gently whisper the circle back
and it will be old and it will be new.

-Rebeka Tabobondung, Wasauksing First Nation, Ontario

CIRCLE 3

At your table discuss your 3 Truths using the following questions as a guide:

- What comes to mind for you when you read these 3 Truths?
- What feelings are surfacing for you? Why?
- How is this different from, or the same as, what you hear in the media, literature, books, schools, etc.? Why may this be?

Table 1

TRUTH #1 - The Americas were not discovered by Europeans.

This may sound obvious but the claims of discovery can still be found in many textbooks - that “*Columbus sailed the Ocean blue*” - is often the narrative that we teach our children. The Europeans regarded the Americas as *terra nullius* (empty land) and their exploration of it was guided by the Doctrine of Discovery, a 15th century papal bull (formal edict) that presumed the right of Christian nations to “discover” and exploit land not occupied by other Christians.

Canada, at the time of contact, was home to more than 2,000,000 Indigenous Peoples; British Columbia alone was home to more than 200,000 people, with 50 distinct languages.

TRUTH #2 - For at least 200 years, the newcomers would not have been able to survive the harsh climate, make a living (fishing, whaling, fur trading), or dodge each other's bullets without the help of Indigenous Peoples.

Military alliances and trade agreements characterized the first couple hundred years of the relationships of Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous settlers. Treaty making was not actually a new practice for Indigenous Peoples – they had a long tradition of such covenants for the purposes of maintaining peace and regulating trade.

While the colonists were few in number, it appeared that there was plenty of space for all in what is now Canada.

And yet the British saw a need to create alliances and treaties with Indigenous neighbours, who outnumbered them in strength and population. While they seemed to recognize the nationhood of these peoples, eventually they also expected the First Nations to recognize the authority of the Crown. More on that in another Truth Statement.

TRUTH #3 – Indigenous views of treaties were much different than the European view.

Indigenous People believed what the King's men told them and gave assent to verbal covenants – often after solemn ceremony and consultation. These verbal agreements were followed with symbolic signatures or marks on parchment. In reality, Indigenous understanding of these words was often dramatically different from what was written in the language, culture and understanding of the settler.

"In my language, there is no word for 'surrender'. There is no word. I cannot describe 'surrender' to you in my language, so how do you expect my people to [have] put their X on 'surrender'?"

Chief Francois Paulette
Treaty 8 Tribal Council
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

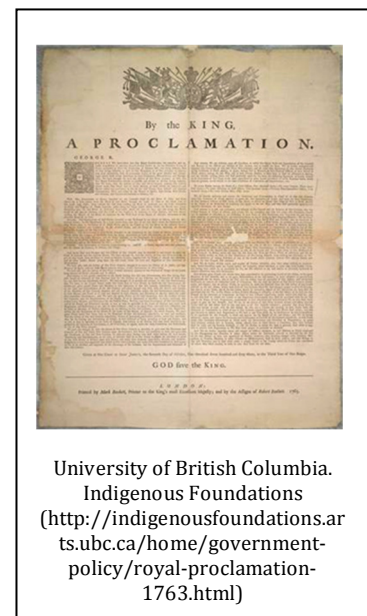
Indigenous Peoples viewed treaties as statements of peace, friendship, sharing or alliance, not submission or surrender.

Table 2

TRUTH #4 – The *Royal Proclamation of 1763* makes it clear that the original intent of the British was that Indigenous People be neither “molested” nor “disturbed” on their lands.

Though a complex legal document, the intent of the Royal Proclamation is clear: that Indigenous Peoples should be treated as autonomous nations, living under the protection of the Crown but retaining their own internal political authority.

Its noble sentiments were twisted to change what it meant for Indigenous People to be given protection. Originally, this meant cultural preservation and territorial integrity. It later came to mean ‘assistance’ in the paternalistic language of colonialism: assistance in becoming civilized and assimilated into settler society. This new interpretation took the form of compulsory education, economic adjustment programs, social and political control by



federal agents. Coupled with missionary efforts to civilize a “savage” population, the diverse cultures in which Indigenous identity was so firmly rooted came under direct assault. The psychological impact of this identity theft cannot be understated.

TRUTH #5 – The 1800s saw a significant shift in the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous settlers.

As the number of settlers increased, so did their power. By 1812, immigrants outnumbered Indigenous Peoples in Upper Canada by 10 to 1.

The fur trade began to dry up and the economic partnership along with it. The new economy of timber, minerals and agriculture required land and not labour from Indigenous People.

First Peoples were no longer needed as military allies since the British had defeated all opponents north of the 49th parallel.

European global military superiority came with presumptions of cultural superiority; domination and assimilation replaced partnership.

TRUTH #6 – The profound legacy of policies of domination and assimilation are the source of significant Indigenous distrust of settlers and their governments today.

The first ‘reserve’ of land for Indigenous Peoples was established in 1637, a Jesuit settlement at Sillery, New France – very near present day Quebec City. Though the original intent of reserves was to protect Indigenous People and preserve their ways of life, it ultimately isolated and impoverished them.

1857 – The Province of Canada passed: “An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes.”

Table 3

TRUTH #7 – Métis people, those with both Indigenous and settler heritage, became a distinct people institutionally and culturally.

Historically, Métis were deemed neither ‘Indians’ nor settlers and were pushed to the margins of both societies.

Their quest for independence and self-determination was realized with the *Manitoba Act of 1870* after the Red River Rebellion. A government-mandated dispersal set the

Métis in search of a home and independence again, eventually leading to the North West Rebellion and the defeat of Riel, Dumont and the Métis at Batoche in 1885.

TRUTH #8 – Confederation was negotiated without consultation with First Nations.

Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, declared it his government's goal to "do away with the tribal system, and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion."

The *British North America Act*, Canada's original constitution, made Indigenous People wards of the state; that is, it put them under government protection and control. Traditional Indigenous forms of government were replaced with band councils with little power, reserve finances were taken over, and non-Aboriginal concepts of marriage and parenting were enforced.

The Indian Acts of 1876, 1880 and 1884 codified the policies of assimilation. The Department of the Interior (later, Indian Affairs) dispersed Indian agents to every part of the country to ensure that these new laws were enforced.

TRUTH #9 – Throughout Canada's history the government's clear intent was to assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Those who resisted would be left in isolation. There was little middle ground.

In 1884, the potlatch ceremony of West coast First Nations was declared illegal.

In 1885, the sun dance of prairie First Nations such as the Plains Cree, Saulteaux, and Blackfoot was outlawed. That same year, the Department of Indian Affairs instituted a pass system which outlawed non-Indigenous entrance to reserves without the consent of an Indian agent. In many cases, Indigenous People needed the permission of the Indian agent to leave the reserve. With such

restrictions on access and movements, reserves were all too similar to prisons.

In 1849, the first of what would become a network of residential schools for Indigenous children was opened. The goal of such schools was to "kill the Indian in the child." Attendance at such schools was compulsory. They resulted in thousands of broken bonds between children and their families, communities and cultures.



In the 1920s, "Dr. Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs 1913 – 1932, was quoted as writing to a colleague, *"I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that the country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department."*

Only in 1951, were laws banning potlatches, pow-wows and sun dances repealed.

Only in 1960, were status Indians granted the right to vote in federal elections.

Table 4

TRUTH #10 – The Trudeau Government's 1969 White Paper was an attempt to solve the "Indian problem" by abolishing the Indian Act and having all Indigenous People assimilated into Euro-Canadian society.

Indigenous Peoples recognized this proposal as a termination of their rights and stopped the paper from coming into force.

TRUTH #11 – Indigenous Peoples continue to be marginalized and sidelined from leading the development of their own futures.

Large companies continue to establish themselves on Indigenous territories, often polluting and depleting the land and giving few of the resources back to communities.

Over 2/3rds of treaty land has been taken away from Indigenous Peoples through fraud, mismanagement, intimidation, and expropriation for military purposes or development.

TRUTH #12 – Facilitator should explore an historic and/or contemporary example relative to Indigenous Peoples in your area or region and make that "Truth #12".

CIRCLE 4



What this means for me...

Justice Murray Sinclair, chairperson of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, often comes across people who say 'Just get over it. Residential schools were in the past, why don't you move on?' His response is simply this: 'It is not over. We are still in the era of residential schools, because of their lingering effects.'

A Prayer of Confession

How difficult it has been, O Creator, for us to be humble and caring.

We so easily forget your teachings of the just and right relationships that we are to have with each other, as brothers and sisters, in this land.

We so easily forget that our responsibility carries from generation to generation for all those who are hurt and oppressed and denied their place in the circle of life – those who still need our support, who need justice and peace.

How difficult it is for us to remain humble as we walk the road of life.

May we find peace so that we might share peace that is genuine and real, and help others to know peace within.

Spirit of life, help us to walk the road of integrity back to the circle of life, where we will be truly joined by all our brothers and sisters.

Meegwetch Che Manido (Thank you Great Spirit).

Amen.

CIRCLE 5



What this means for me...

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Stones Liturgy

Leader: This stone comes from (name of river, First Nation, residential school, or place from which the stone was gathered).

ALL: It is part of the Earth, formed by the Creator, just as we are.

Leader: Jesus said stones would cry out if humans remained silent.

ALL: We will listen to our hearts and speak from them.

Leader: Stones like this have marked graves.

ALL: Jesus rose out of death into a new life and the stone was rolled away from his grave.

Leader: Stones like this mark paths for those who journey.

ALL: This stone in our hands will mark the way we journey toward right relationships.

Leader: Like words and broken trust, stones can be used to break apart, hurt, and injure.

ALL: In our hands this stone will be a sign of the strength of what we can build together.

(Liturgy based on the following passages of scripture: Genesis 1:1, Luke 19:39 – 40, Matthew 27:59-60, Joshua 4:3, Jeremiah 31:21, 1 Peter 2:4 – 5.)

Pre-Circle 6 Activity

Please read and reflect on the Indian Act:

<http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act.html>

CIRCLE 6



What this means for me...

Article 3

Indigenous Peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Article 8 (part I)

Indigenous Peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

-from United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Walking in the Sacred Way: An Ojibway Prayer

*Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.
We Know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.*

*We know that we are the ones
Who are divided,
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.*

*Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion and honour
That we may heal the earth
And heal each other.⁴*

Pre-Circle 7 Activity

Please read Bishop Macdonald's article "The Gospel comes to North America."

http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_gospel_comes_to_north_america_bishop_mark_macdonald/

⁴ Prayer offered at *The Meaning of Life: A Multifaith Consultation*, Mauritius, January 25-February 3, 1983. As cited in *Towards an Intercultural Theology*, 56.

CIRCLE 7



What this means for me...

Deep reconciliation means moving beyond regret to personal change. Regret means sorrow about the exposure of the fault; reconciliation means changed behaviour ... If there was a wrong, there is a right. This needs to move from personal change to collective responsibility at multiple levels. Therefore the apology was not resolution – it was only a beginning point for a new relationship that is characterized by mutual responsibility.

The Gospel Comes to North America

Step 1

In the Blanket Exercise, in our Truth Telling Circle, and now in this article we encounter the Doctrine of Discovery – a Pope’s edict that provided the legal basis for colonialism and the settlement of North America. It also has theological implications. Bishop MacDonald writes:

The western Church assumed that the land and its history that produced European Christianity was sacred in its role in the development and communication of Christian faith. This assumption is so deeply engrained in the churches of the West that many Indigenous People assume that Christianity and Euro-American culture are inseparable.

- How do you respond to Bishop MacDonald’s claim that “God has acted definitively in the survival of the Peoples of the Land”?
- What is it about the gospel message that transcends culture so powerfully? Follow this question with a reading of 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

Step 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

- How do these verses shed light on the conversation we just had?

The Christian Reformed Church offered a formal Expression of Reconciliation at the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's** (TRC) Saskatchewan National Event in Saskatoon on June 22. A booklet of the art series "Kisemanito Pakinitasuwin – The Creator's Sacrifice" was placed in the TRC's Bentwood Box as a public expression of the CRC's commitment to the journey of reconciliation with their Indigenous neighbours ...? I don't know what you are trying to stay here ... the sentence is not finished.

Members of Bethel Christian Reformed Church in Saskatoon and CRC staff who had traveled to Saskatoon for the National Event stood in front of the stage as Rev. Bruce Adema (CRC Director of Canadian Ministries) read the following statement:

Commissioners, Elders and all present,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I represent the Christian Reformed Churches in Canada and consider it a profound responsibility and honour to express our commitment to the Journey of Reconciliation – to walking with all of you here and so many other Indigenous People and Communities in Canada. Our church does not have a direct history of running Residential Schools in Canada. However, as members of the body of Christ in Canada we confess that the sins of assimilation and paternalism in Indian Residential Schools, and in wider government policy, are ours as the Christian Reformed Church. We are deeply sorry and pledge to walk the journey of reconciliation and healing with you.

In this, our first Expression of Reconciliation we offer a small gift; a book that describes the paintings in the series Kisemanito Pakinitasuwin – the Creator's Sacrifice. This series of paintings by Missinippi-Ethiniwak Cree Artist Ovide Bighetty was commissioned by The Indian Metis Christian Fellowship in Regina – a long term ministry of our churches. We were honoured that the first stop of the "reForming Relationships Tour", a national tour of this artwork, was here at the Wanuskewin Heritage Park. It is our prayer that Ovide's beautiful depiction of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus – using Indigenous symbols and imagery – will help bring people together on the road to reconciliation.

This art also testifies to the presence of the Creator's truth and beauty in Indigenous Culture. It reminds us that the journey of faith, healing and reconciliation is one of sharing and mutual respect. The church and the nation of Canada are poorer because we refused to acknowledge the Creator's truth and way as revealed to Indigenous people. We are grateful that the Creator has sustained your will to protect your culture, language and ceremonies. As we –together- heal and reconcile, we eagerly look forward to the ever deepening contribution of you the Indigenous People to our shared lives on this land. We pray expectantly that Kisê-manitow will guide our mutual journey to healing, justice and reconciliation.

May our children and grandchildren and the generations yet to come celebrate the steps we take together today, tomorrow and in the years to come, as children of the Creator. All my relations.

Hay-Hay, Mîkwêc, Merci, Thank you.

Sharing Circle

In the article, *The Gospel Comes to North America*, Bishop McDonald testifies to the ongoing presence of Creator God with the “Peoples of the Land”. The CRC’s “expression of reconciliation” laments the loss of the full contribution of Indigenous People to the life of the church and the Nation. Mi’kmaq/ Acadian theologian Terry LeBlanc underscores this fundamental point in a reflection on the Prime Minister’s Apology to former Students of Indian Residential Schools:

Deep reconciliation means moving beyond regret to personal change. Regret means sorrow about the exposure of the fault; reconciliation means changed behaviour. The June 11, 2008 Apology from the Prime Minister has potential in this respect. The PM and leaders of the opposition admitted that we were wrong – this raises a counterpoint: Native communities can legitimately say we were right to struggle for our culture and our language. Parliamentary leaders also acknowledged that they robbed the nation of the contribution that Aboriginal People might make – the counterpoint is, again, that Aboriginal People have a contribution to make to this place and nation – we need to do things to ensure that this contribution can be re-acquired. If there was a wrong, there is a right. This needs to move from personal change to collective responsibility at multiple levels. Therefore the apology was not resolution – it was only a beginning point for a new relationship that is characterized by mutual responsibility.

After a few minutes of personal reflection, in the Sharing Circle let’s share our response to this question:

- What comes to mind for you after hear this, in light of what we have heard today?

If you have more time:

- How do you see yourself contributing to this idea of the “mutual responsibility” that Terry LeBlanc talks about?

Resources

A CRC letter encouraging prayer and attention regarding the important developments in indigenous justice and reconciliation in Canada

https://content.crcna.org/communications/downloadables/letter_2013jan24.pdf

Churches' Covenant with Aboriginal Peoples (1987, 2007)

<http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/A%20New%20Covenant.pdf>

CRC worship resources

http://www2.crcna.org/pages/publicdialogue_worship1.cfm

<http://www.crcna.org/CanadianMinistries/aboriginal-ministries/liturgical>

In Peace and Friendship: A New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples

(a KAIROS resource - \$10 <http://www.kairoscanada.org/shop>)

Living the Story of Reconciliation: Values, Community and Diversity in Indigenous Education

http://www2.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/cpd/Panel%20FN%20Ed_0911.pdf

Making it Matter: Truth, Reconciliation and Equity

(a KAIROS resource - \$3.50 <http://www.kairoscanada.org/shop>)

Moving from Regret to Substantive Change: Reconciliation in Indigenous Education

http://www2.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/cpd/Reconciliation_Education_0811_Final.pdf

Prime Minister's Apology (June 11, 2008)

<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649>

reForming Relationships art exhibit in the CRC – *the calendar of events*

<http://www.reformingrelationships.ca>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) – *official website*

<http://www.trc.ca>

United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - *a booklet*

(a KAIROS resource - \$1 <http://www.kairoscanada.org/shop>)

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - *a poster*

(a KAIROS resource - \$1 <http://www.kairoscanada.org/shop>)

Organizations to Contact

Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue (CRCPD)

140 Laurier Ave. W | Ottawa, ON K1P 5J4

Phone: 613-686-6298

Website: publicdialogue@crcna.ca

Contact person: Mike Hogeterp mhogeterp@crcna.ca

Canadian Aboriginal Ministry Committee

Phone: 204-254-3699

Website: <http://www.crcna.org/CanadianMinistries/aboriginal-ministry/canadian>

Contact person: Shannon Perez, Justice & Reconciliation Mobilizer, sperez@crcna.org

Indian Family Centre - Winnipeg

470 Selkirk Avenue | Winnipeg, MN R2W 2M5

Phone: 204-586-8393

Website: www.crcna.org/CanadianMinistries/aboriginal-ministry/indian-family-centre-winnipeg

Contact person: Michele Visser, Director, mvisser@crcna.org

Indian Metis Christian Fellowship - Regina

3131 Dewdney Ave. | Regina SK S4T 0Y5

Phone: 306-359-1096

E-mail: imcfr@sasktel.net

Edmonton Native Healing Centre

11813-123 Street | Edmonton, AB T5L 0G7

Phone: 780-482-5522

Email: enhc@telusplanet.net

Website: www.edmontonnativehealingcentre.com

KAIROS

200-310 Dupont St. | Toronto, ON M5R 1V9

Phone: 416-463-5312

Toll-free: 1-877-403-8933

Website: www.kairoscanada.org

A Litany of the Four Directions

One: God of a thousand names and faces, we experience you to be beyond our knowing and telling, and at the same time deeply present, incarnate and alive, within us and in our relationships. Holiness beyond us, within us, and among us... Blessed be!

Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the northern direction, the direction of wisdom. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of wisdom, we remember our sisters and brothers in the north and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, steadying in wisdom, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the southern direction, the direction of struggles. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of struggle we remember our sisters and brothers in the southern direction and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, prophetic in struggle, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the western direction, the direction of kindness. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of kindness we remember our sisters and brothers in the western direction and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, constant in kindness, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward the eastern direction, the direction of hope. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of hope, we remember our sisters and brothers in the eastern direction, and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, courting us with hope, beyond our knowing and telling and deeply present, incarnate and alive.

One: Let us turn our bodies and our community toward each other, the direction of revelation. (*Turn*) As we breathe and take in the spirit of revelation, we remember our lives and relationships and we offer prayer:

All: Holy friend, steadying in wisdom, prophetic in struggle, constant in kindness, courting us with hope, guiding in revelation, be with us and help us to be with one another. Amen.

-So Long As the Sun Rises and the Rivers Flow, a KAIROS resource (1997, 2001)

Homework

CIRCLE 7

The Gospel Comes to North America

By Bishop Mark Macdonald

http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/the_gospel_comes_to_north_america_bishop_mark_macdonald/

The title of this piece might suggest an essay about something that happened centuries ago. In fact, I want to describe something that is taking place now. Though it may seem absurd or amazing or both, it appears, at least from the perspective of mainline church institutions that the Gospel is just now about to find its first real home in North America.

This thought began to dawn in my consciousness in 1996, with a winter visit to the Rt. Rev. Gordon Beardy in Kenora, Ontario. I was seeking his counsel and prayers regarding the possibility of my nomination as bishop of Alaska. As the Oji-Cree bishop of a multi-cultural diocese, he would know both the pitfalls and promise of working in a church institution in a diverse population. As an honest friend, he would have some idea of my capacity to do the work with effectiveness and integrity.

Gordon warmly and enthusiastically encouraged me, but it came with a challenge: “Do you think I can start a church that believes that this is sacred land?” I asked him what he meant and, with very little explanation, he said, “If you were a bishop, you could join me in a church that would believe that this is sacred land.”

I was confused. Though Gordon’s thought and values respectfully reflect both traditional Native and Christian teaching, I had never heard him use a phrase with such a powerful traditional Native reference. Like many Native elders, though his thought and values are thoroughly aboriginal, his theology is normally phrased within the confines of a very orthodox and evangelical Christian faith. Further, the promotion of what sounded like a new church seemed completely out of character. He has always been loyal and dutiful to the Anglican Church.

I’ve thought about it a lot since that day. Time and experience have peeled off a number of layers of my confusion. Today, I consider Gordon’s words prophetic. At one level, his words confront the evil that has stubbornly refused to recognize God’s presence in this graced Land and its peoples. At another, they unveil God’s grace and sovereignty in the history and ongoing life of the People of the Land, the aboriginal nations. Taken together, and at both of these levels, we are inspired to expect a new future for the Native Peoples and Nations of North America.

The Churches of the West in North America and the Doctrine of Discovery

Aloysius Pieris, a contemporary Asian theologian, has pointed out that the most of the churches of Asia, though they attempt to be local, are local churches of another continent. They have been “struggling for centuries to get acclimatized.” This is even more strikingly true of the churches of the West in North America. They came guided by European assumptions of cultural superiority and, with deadly consequence, by what has been called the Doctrine of Discovery. Ignoring for the moment larger societal issues presented by colonialism, we may say that the impact of these embedded cultural themes on Christian mission has been devastating. Though the modern age of mission began with the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the colonial churches’ basic operating assumptions have stunted

the growth and impact of the Christian Faith among the Peoples of the Land and compromised the testimony of the churches of the West around the world.

The influential Doctrine of Discovery, providing the basis for Colonial expansion for over 500 years, presumes that Civilization is not present if the institutions of Western Culture are not available. A land that is discovered without Western institutions is considered “Terra Nullius,” an uninhabited land, even if peoples and cultures are present. The Right of Discovery, then, grants to the one who discovers the right to control, exploit, and rule, in the name of a supposed beneficial progress for the discovered. Actual experience suggests, however, that as Western colonialism spread, catastrophe and discovery were hard to distinguish.

Though we may acknowledge that Western development brought some good in its wake, the good comes with a heavy price. A quick and simple review of the sad history of the European encounter with the Peoples of the Land shows this clearly. The “discovery” mentality is also related to the now familiar litany of environmental destruction in North America. Regrettably, we are now seeing this attitude exported around the world through globalization or, as Lamin Sanneh has described it, “Americanization.”

Though long repudiated by most of the world’s major religious, moral, and legal traditions, the Doctrine of Discovery reappears like a noxious weed in the all too frequent arguments that challenge the contemporary legitimacy of aboriginal life. Theologically, the Doctrine of Discovery has been the handmaid to the idolatrous assumption that God’s presence has been confined to Western Civilization – an idea that has all but destroyed the capacity of the major denominations to grow in indigenous communities.

Amazingly, the churches of the West remain perplexed that their cultural framework is neither easy nor self-evident for the People of the Land. Much of the Western mission to the People of the Land treats them, as a number of commentators have noticed, as insufficiently developed Euro-American suburbanites. They must join the church of a European Diaspora in order to achieve spiritual legitimacy.

The basic operating assumption of the colonial mission to North America has been that the land and history that produced European Christianity was sacred, having a privileged role in the development and communication of Christian faith. This privilege is so deeply ingrained in the Churches of the West that many Native people assume that Christianity and Euro-American culture are inseparable. It is hard for many, even among the Native nations, to understand the monumental change that would come from a repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery by the recognition that this North American land is sacred.

To this day, the climate and seasons of European Christianity shape the liturgical seasons of faith and worship in North America. This is so elemental that it is barely noticed, despite a growing appreciation for the way that the land based pre-Christian cultural beliefs and practices of Europeans shaped the churches of the West. Even before this awareness, the interaction of a developing Christianity with pre-Christian philosophers was, at the very least, seen as providential if not divinely ordained. The shape that non-Christian cultural influences gave to faith and practice has been normative for all who have followed in the churches of the West. In many, if not most, of these churches in North America, a basic understanding of the history and environment of Europe, as well as its churches, is necessary to be a fully recognized practitioner of the Christian faith.

Central to the Gospel is the idea of Incarnation: the Word made flesh. Unfortunately, even an idea so central to Christian faith can be ignored when obscured by cultural idolatry. The cultural experience of missionaries could be viewed as a part of the precious legacy of a worldwide faith, if put in proper perspective. Made an idol, it becomes a difficult obstacle to living experience of faith in a new context. The Word made flesh, the living experience of the Gospel, cannot be “freeze dried” in one culture’s experience and transferred to another (hoping, perhaps, that the addition of baptismal water would lead to the production of a Western Christian on foreign soil). It is wrong to hope that the normative experience in one context will become an identical or normative reality in a new context. Incarnation means local. You can’t have an incarnational church that is not local. You can’t have a local church in the Americas that is substantially and foundationally a European export.

The Gospel’s Power and Promise

Gordon’s words reach beyond a simple repudiation of cultural idolatry. Constructively, they point to a living encounter with the Gospel in a North American context. Such an incarnation of the living and active Word of God would have great impact and consequences among the First Nations and far beyond. To be sure, one of the first places to be transformed is the past, or more precisely, our reading of the past.

Though colonialism limits the capacity of Westerners to see it, God Word’s has always had a vital and prophetic presence among the Peoples of the Land. In their diverse cultures and histories, we see constant suggestions of that presence, before, during, and after the arrival of the missionaries. Before, as many missionaries noted, evidence of God’s presence was seen in the values of family and faith that echoed so surprisingly and powerfully the Gospel the missionaries carried. During their initial encounters with the People of the Land the missionaries were surprised by the hospitable reception of the central values and precepts of the Gospel by many. Some missionaries even noted that aboriginal ambivalence about some aspects of Western Christian practice often indicated a laudable allegiance to Gospel principles, present prior to European arrival in Native culture. After the arrival of the missionaries, aboriginal survival is one of the great stories of God’s deliverance, a salvation that occurred in the midst of overwhelming opposition. Further, though largely ignored and rarely understood, there have been many examples of Gospel fruitfulness with a unique prophetic capacity among the People of the Land after the arrival of the missionaries and, quite often, without their support or involvement.

Despite colonialism, the Gospel found a home with some quite unexpected promise among with the People of the Land in North America. For example, the Ojibwa Prayer Meetings of Northern Minnesota, loosely related to the Episcopal Church still provide hope and a sense of renewed aboriginal identity for close to 150 years. The Gospel has even been inspiration for some forms of aboriginal resistance to colonialism, the Ghost Dance being one prominent example, Louis Riel being another. The Gwich’in Nation of Arctic Alaska and Canada is an impressive example of Gospel based resistance to colonialism that continues to this very day.

These are glimpses of alternative development contrary to colonialism and seeds of a Gospel future among the aboriginal nations of North America. We see here the Gospel’s stubborn refusal to become the servant of one culture’s attempt to subvert another. The Gospel has a power to convey liberation that transcends the intent, capacity, and experience of its preachers. In all of this we can also see the vigorous presence of God among the First Peoples of North America.

A Church for Turtle Island

Gordon's prophetic words have come to mind on a number of occasions over the last 10 years. They echo in the conversations about aboriginal justice and reconciliation within the Canadian church. These discussions have helpfully focused attention on the discrepancy between church advocacy and policy on aboriginal rights and the continuing practice of Western cultural domination within Native churches. More important has been the spontaneous, uncoordinated, and unprecedented growth of vital Christian involvement and discipleship among the People of the Land. It is significant that this has been in the wake of institutional decline and chaos, much of it related to the residential school crisis and other byproducts of colonialism, among the churches of the West in aboriginal communities. As these developments and their meaning unfold, we are seeing the embryonic emergence of a new church in North America.

For me, Gordon's words have never been so tangible as this last summer. At the Sacred Circle of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples held in Pinawa, Manitoba in August, the first steps towards a church of the People of the Land of this Turtle Island (a number of tribes use this term to describe the Americas) were made. It is in this sense that I can say that we may be witnessing the birth of the first indigenous Anglican Church in North America – a church that would hold that this land is sacred.

Although it is far too early to tell whether or not the actions of the Sacred Circle in Pinawa will bear fruit – there is much that will work against it, to be sure - it is important to note the way the Circle mirrors developments in Christian mission in other parts of the Americas and around the globe. Despite a deterioration of the power and influence of the churches of the West, internally and externally, there has been an explosive vitality developing among churches and in areas that were formerly thought to be dependent and weak. This development, dramatically evident in the relationship of the churches of the West to the churches of the global south, is also gaining momentum with the Fourth World, the Peoples of the Land.

As colonial administration ends or weakens among the People of the Land new possibilities for mission and ministry emerge. First and foremost is the growing clarity of a Gospel shaped identity unique to the indigenous nations. This resonates with a broader based renewal of culture among aboriginal peoples and consciously draws on the vital Gospel presence in some of the earlier challenges to colonialism that we cite above, like Ojibwe Prayer Meetings.

There is, with these developments, a renewal of appreciation for the God given authority that has always existed among the aboriginal nations. This authority, sometimes called sovereignty, is a direct repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. With many, especially in a religious context, there is evidence of a unique awareness of the larger mission to humanity and the rest of Creation that this authority bears with it. This understanding of sovereignty – the authority and power to respond to the Creator's call to serve Creation – is in sharp contrast to the understanding of sovereignty generally present among the modern nation states. We may attribute it, in part, to the translation of the tribal ethos into a modern context.

Westerners often misunderstand the tribal ethos and its understanding of community. It is common to see the word "Tribalism" used to describe an isolated and fragmented identity held over against the good of the larger needs of humanity. In fact, this fragmentation is a common result of the commodification and breakdown of both social identity and community in the process of globalization. Aboriginal life – true tribal life – is, to the contrary, a call to relational and interdependent

identity with humanity and all of creation. This is a vision that is desperately needed by the peoples of our world.

The events and movements of Christian renewal we witness today among the People of the Land in North America are undirected, uncoordinated, and simultaneous, in a pattern similar to indigenous church development around the world. We witness a sprouting or spiritual vitality in myriads of patterns, too numerous to mention in a brief paper like this, but with a kind of family resemblance that has the stamp of both spiritual authenticity and authority. This renewal in aboriginal communities seems to be influencing in equal measure those affiliated with the old-line denominations, newer independent and Pentecostal congregations, and others who have no clear identification with any known Western Christian institution. Significantly, though much of the renewal is premised on a certain independence from earlier colonial and Western models, there is very little evidence of bitterness or resentment displayed towards earlier mission work.

A survey of the various expressions of this renewal reveals that, from the human side of its genesis, the motivating and inspirational factors that accompany it are dynamic and multiple. First, there is a collective sense of obedience to a unique and timely mission and vocation among the People of the Land. This mission begins with a focus on the Word becoming flesh, being enculturated in contemporary aboriginal life. This incarnational presence, despite its highly local context, is related and a vital part of a broader spiritual message and destiny addressed to “every family, language, people, and nation.” This dramatic expansion of mission results in a sense of responsibility for all humanity and all of Creation, a clear imperative in Scripture that is given too little attention in recent Western missions. There is, along with this broad sense of mission, a sincere desire to deepen communion with other Christians and cultures, not to separate from them. The paradox of a growing sense of aboriginal identity is a more intimate sense of world community. But with this sense of global membership and leadership, there is, with great passion, a commitment to reconciliation and healing among the People of the Land – reconciliation and healing that a growing number of aboriginal Christians recognize can’t happen apart from the fulfillment of the Gospel in Native Life that is quite separate from the colonial church system.

Marks of a North American Church

What will be the marks that this venture is succeeding, both liberating for the People of the Land and transformational for the Church as a whole? What will be the critical factors for the creation of a North American home for the Gospel of Jesus? I believe there are 7 touchstones:

1. A robust awareness that God has, is, and will be present among the People of the Land.
2. A recognition that God has acted definitively in the survival of the Peoples of the Land. Their continued life, despite centuries of often deadly and vicious opposition is a sign of God’s Grace and Judgment. Their on-going life is a prophetic act of witness against the materialism and avarice of our age.
3. Along with 1 and 2 is a related denunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery and an end to measuring aboriginal church development by Western models.
4. The boundaries of Native church life should reflect and respect the boundaries of the People of the Land. The churches of the West must do more than affirm the authority and validity of the First Nations as it relates to other Nations and States. They must recognize it among themselves.
5. The Spirit of God has and will develop leaders among the People of the Land.

6. The Land is Sacred and a gift from God. We must recognize sacred place, history, and ecology. All people are here to tend and care for Creation in the service and power of the Creator. In addition, as the pattern of seasons and geography have shaped the experience of prayer, faith, and service since the beginning of the revelation recorded in Scripture, so must the Land of the Americas shape the pattern of Christian life in the Americas.
7. The spiritual and moral authority of the aboriginal nations of the Americas, especially as they relate to their own, must shape the decision-making and the actual shape of these factors. This discernment must be both tribal and consensual, not imposed from above. This will demand flexibility and creativity. The shape of the relationship of the People of the Land to the churches of the West must be up to them, but promises a pattern of community that, of necessity, call all to transformation.

The Promise of Gospel Transformation

If an Anglican Church of the aboriginal nations of North America fulfills its promise, it may lay a serious claim to being the first and highest profile truly indigenous witness to the Gospel to North America among the historic mainline churches from Europe. It would be a church that holds sacred this land; its history – both prior to and since the coming of the colonial powers. It would also hold sacred the future of God's Gospel in this Land and among its Peoples. Its development is radically placed in the power of the Gospel, which unveils God's presence and, thereby, opens the door to repentance and new life. We may say, then, that in the Gospel, we see the Word of God, living and active, revealing the presence of God in the land and its Peoples prior to the introduction of Western civilization and, since that time, in the survival of the aboriginal nations despite 500 years of oppressive and destructive colonialism. This revelation calls all of the churches of North America to repentance and new life, breaking down the walls of enmity and creating the way for us to become the true Church, together.

Throughout this paper, we have paid some attention to the larger context in which these developments among the Peoples of the Land will be received, both locally and globally. A Church for Turtle Island would call the whole Church to transformation. Locally, the churches of the West in North America would need to face some of the internal barriers that keep it from true growth. They must deal with the log in their own eye before taking out the speck in the eye of others. Globally, we may anticipate that the realization of a truly North American church would enrich all of the local churches. Once again, we would see that, perhaps more than anything else, the Gospel thrives on translation. Nothing is lost in translation; a new world is gained.

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Take Away

CIRCLE 6

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Statement of Apology

CBC News, Posted: June 11, 2008

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prime-minister-stephen-harper-s-statement-of-apology-1.734250>

Here are excerpts from the text of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's statement of apology on Wednesday, as released by the Prime Minister's Office. French sections, which repeat the English text, have been excluded:

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in Indian residential schools is a sad chapter in our history.

In the 1870's, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligation to educate aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools.

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.

These objectives were based on the assumption aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal.

Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child."

Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country.

Most schools were operated as "joint ventures" with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian or United churches.

The government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes, often taken far from their communities.

Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed.

All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools.

Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today. It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors that have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered.

It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strength of their cultures.

Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation.

Therefore, on behalf of the government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students, and all family members and communities, the government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you.

Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long.

The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country.

There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail.

You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time and in a very real sense, we are now joining you on this journey.

The government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.

We are sorry.

In moving towards healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian residential schools, implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement agreement began on September 19, 2007.

Years of work by survivors, communities, and aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.

A cornerstone of the settlement agreement is the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

This commission presents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system.

It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.

Tip Sheets

Tips for Effective Facilitation

Facilitating well can make all the difference in learners feeling safe in a learning event or not. This is a skill and an art. Here are some tips to support:

1. **Transparency.** People like to know what will happen in a learning event – sometimes it is connected to safety, other times it is about fear, and other times it is just a practical issue. Tell the group what is coming up and why it will happen in this way – this is always part of the “Welcome and Overview” task of each Circle session.
2. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue and invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions have no ‘yes/no’ answers, learners are invited to engage with the content and each other, explore and make sense of the topic for themselves i.e. “What in this experience of _____ resonated with you?”
3. **Weave.** Weaving past and future information and stories into what you are doing will help learners see connections i.e. “Remember in Circle 1 how the blanket changed over time...” or “In Circle 7 will hear from... and see how...”
4. **Talk less, listen more.** The more learners can discuss, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means: less of *you*, more of *them*.
5. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: “Who has a question?” or “Who doesn’t mind sharing their idea with the group?”
6. **Echo and summarize what is shared.** This can be very affirming and help people feel respected. Ensure that you do not speak for participants, rather use the language they have used to echo.
7. **Be humble.** You don’t need to know all the answers and it is okay to tell participants that you are a learner just like them. Together, you are listening and learning for a better tomorrow.

Types of Probing Questions

The following questions will help you to encourage participants to share more deeply. These are not to be used in the sharing circle, as there is not cross-talk in this sharing.

1. Tell me more about...
2. Why do you say that?
3. It must have been very difficult for you to... . Tell me more about how you...
4. What else can you tell me about...?
5. Help me understand...
6. Can you give me another example of...?
7. Tell me why...
8. So why do you think that ...?
9. I'm not sure I understand... Can you tell me more about that?
10. I'm not certain what you mean by... Can you give me some examples?
11. What stands out in your mind about that?
12. So what I hear you say is... What am I missing?
13. What makes you feel that way?
14. You just told me about... I'd also like to know about...
15. What would _____ say about what you just said?
16. How do *you* feel about that?
17. What exactly did you mean by ... ?
18. And, what happened after that?
19. Why do you think that is/happened?
20. For you, what prevented... from happening?
21. What would it take for us/you to do that?

What to Do with Tough Questions

Participants in the *Living the 8th Fire* often ask tough questions. Some of these may include:

- “I don’t believe that this actually happened, because I once read... . What do you think?”
- “You may say that the history was one-sided before, but now it is one-sided too – the other way!”
- “This can’t be true! Why haven’t I ever heard this before?”
- “I don’t understand the facts around... . Can you explain them to me?”

Ways to deal with this are:

1. **Affirm all tough questions.** This will encourage more of them and, even if you can’t answer it (or choose not to), it validates asking tough questions.
2. For Circle 1, The Blanket Exercise: You’ve just taken 45 minutes to walk through 500 years of history – the information comes from more than 4,000 pages of deep historical research. **Be clear that this is not a workshop to learn and debate all the facts of history.** Rather, it is a time to let the Holy Spirit move in the room, open our hearts and get a feeling of the truth-telling we have been missing over the generations.
3. **Know you are not a content expert and don’t need to know all the answers.** You can say, “That is a good question that you and I will have to look into ourselves outside of this session. Let’s get back to that in the next session after we have done some more research.”
4. **It is okay to say: “I don’t know”.** We are all co-learners.
5. **Bounce the question to the group.** Sometimes the knowledge and expertise is in the room, and when it comes from the group rather than you it validates the speaker and her knowledge.

How to Address Strong Emotions

Having a strong emotional response is normal and common for participants in *Living the 8th Fire* sessions. How we deal with it (or don't) can make the difference between a positive experience and a negative one. Here are a few suggestions:

Sorrow/Sadness

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. There is no need to talk; just sit in silence and allow the person to feel the emotion.
3. Don't try to "fix" it, or gloss it over.
4. Have tissue handy.

Anger (positive)

1. Assure the person this is a normal and important response.
2. Although it is natural to want to leap into action, it is important to live with this emotional response. Action can be discussed and planned at a later time.
3. Enhance safety by thanking the person for being open to expressing their anger.

Anger (negative)

1. Acknowledge this response; don't try to ignore it.
2. Avoid being pulled into a deep discussion about specific facts and figures, or personal stories.

Guilt

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. Although many of these are the wrong doings of our ancestors, it is now our responsibility to move in the direction of reconciliation.

Denial/Disbelief

1. Assure the person this is a normal response, because this information has been unknown and even hidden for a very long time.
2. Highlight the fact that all the information in the *Circle 1 – The Blanket Exercise* comes from the 1996 Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples, a 4,000-page document based on deep research into facts of history. The information in the other sessions/Circles is also based on solid research, public documents and personal experience.

How to Ensure Safety

1. **Connect with the group before the series starts.** An email, face-to-face chat during a church service, or phone call can go a long way to building safety for them *and you*.
2. **Know your group.** In the *Blanket Exercise* or in the second circle, provide an opportunity for group members to share why they wanted to engage the curriculum or learn more so you, as a facilitator, have some background about your participants.
3. **Warmly welcome each person as they arrive.** How they are greeted can set the stage for what happens throughout the session and entire series.
4. **Affirm all answers.** Paraphrase and say “thank you”, even to tougher more negative responses. Participants need to know that every answer and comment, regardless of how strange or different, is appreciated and welcomed. When learners know that all answers are valid, even if they are not universally shared by the group, they will be more open to sharing in the large group.
5. **Keep the session tightly focused.** Follow the session tasks, so flow and sequence of learning are ensured. Effective time management will help prevent dropping or skipping the final task “What Does This Mean for My Life” – which is essential for personalizing the learning and planning the next steps.
6. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer, after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say and how they feel. Sometimes they need to gather the courage to speak, and that’s okay. Slowing down and pausing will also help people feel relaxed and safe.
7. **Encourage work in pairs, trios, and table groups.** These increase engagement, invite all voices, and create more safety for “rough draft” thinking. By having some pair work right away in the sessions (in the warm up task), people feel included right away.

Feedback Sheet

1. What was especially meaningful for you in participating in *Living the 8th Fire*?
2. What is 1 thing they want to start doing or stop doing as a result of what you have learned?
3. How has *Living the 8th Fire* confirmed what you already knew?
4. What 1 thing did the facilitator do that helped your learning and sharing in *Living the 8th Fire*?
5. What suggestions do you have for the next time *Living the 8th Fire* is used?
6. What else would you like to share?

Thank you!

