

January 2007

RESOURCES ON HEALING AND RECONCILIATION WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

I am delighted to provide you with the enclosed worship and educational resources on the subject of Healing and Reconciliation with Aboriginal people. Members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada are encouraged to take part in the ministry of healing and reconciliation, by

- Deepening their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people and the issues of concern to them;
- Building on existing relationships, or reaching out to develop new relationships, with Aboriginal people in all communities across Canada; and,
- Demonstrating leadership within Canada, about how to establish right relationships with Aboriginal people, relationships that transform society for the better.

We encourage all groups: congregations, the AMS, WMS, youth groups, Sunday Schools, Bible study groups, and others to set time aside each year to reflect on the place of Aboriginal people in Canadian society, and to live out our calling as Christians to be good neighbours who build strong and loving communities together with Aboriginal people.

Healing and Reconciliation Sunday is May 20, 2007

Aboriginal Day Sunday is June 17, 2007

It would be appropriate to devote one of these Sundays, or any Sunday in between, to reflection, discussion, prayer, and education on the subject of healing and reconciliation with Aboriginal people. A liturgy, sermon illustrations, fact sheets, bulletin inserts (including an order form), and information about how to acquire additional resources are enclosed.

We Invite Your Feedback

Please let us know if these resources are useful to you, and tell us your stories. We are keen to hear about how your group uses these resources, and about relationship-building initiatives undertaken by local congregations and other church groups, across Canada. **Send your stories and feedback to Lori Ransom, the Healing and Reconciliation Animator, at lransom@presbyterian.ca. Or call Lori at 1-800-619-7301.** We look forward to hearing from you!

Yours in Christ,

Stephen Allen
Associate Secretary, Justice Ministries



The Healing and Reconciliation Ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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

Who is my neighbour?

In response to the great commandment, Love Thy Neighbour, The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (The PCC), 2006, approved plans for a Healing and Reconciliation ministry.

At the heart of the Healing and Reconciliation ministry is the belief that 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.

The approach is simple: local church members and groups are encouraged to reach out and get to know their Aboriginal neighbours.

The 2006 General Assembly approved the following specific recommendations from the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team:

- i. Invite other denominations to engage in a Leaders' Tour, with reference to the model of Ten Days for Global Justice
- ii. Encourage and support Healing and Reconciliation activities for youth
- iii. Develop and distribute resource materials
- iv. Establish, direct, and support a resource team to further the work of Healing and Reconciliation at the local level in the years to come
- v. Provide support and/or seed funding for local initiatives

To help church members begin the process of reaching out to Aboriginal people, The PCC has hired a Healing and Reconciliation Animator, Ms. Lori Ransom. She will work for one year to provide information and advice to church members. She welcomes invitations to speak and/or lead workshops. Seed funding is available to support local initiatives that build bridges between peoples. (See www.presbyterian.ca/healing/projects.)

While the Animator will work for one year, the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team emphasized that The PCC's healing and reconciliation ministry will not be a time limited initiative. We believe the Church is called to engage in an ongoing process of community building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada.

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

For more information, contact Lori at lransom@presbyterian.ca
or 1-800-619-7301, 416-441-1111, ext. 283.

Healing & Reconciliation

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

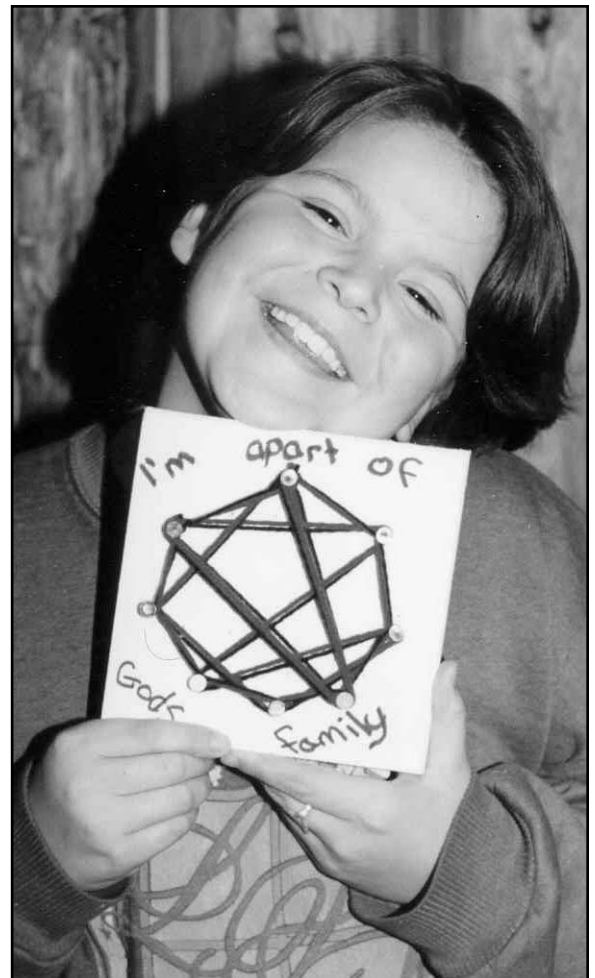
Native Ministries Supported by The Presbyterian Church in Canada

ANAMIEWIGUMMIG (KFC):

Kenora Fellowship Centre (KFC) is also called Anamiewigummig (an Ojibway word meaning “House of Prayer”). KFC is a place of refuge, sanctuary and hospitality for those marginalized by poverty, addictions and alienation in the Kenora area of northern Ontario. It operates as a drop-in centre and provides medical, housing, legal and detoxification services with the help of agencies in the community. It offers homeless people a 24 hour shelter during the winter and other services as needs become apparent. KFC also has a regular Sunday worship and Bible study during the week.

CARIBOO MINISTRY:

The Cariboo Ministry, which covers an area of 80,000 square miles in the Cariboo/Chilcotin region of British Columbia, ministers to people who live beyond the reach of the traditional church. Fuel costs are a major concern for this ministry as ministers must travel great distances in 4 x 4 trucks to reach people in remote areas. The Cariboo Ministry has one of the largest children’s ministries among Presbyterian churches in British Columbia. Much work is being done with children of the Nazko First Nation. A Bible class takes place weekly on the Nazko reserve, offering games, healthy snacks, crafts, Bible stories, praise songs and prayer in a way that also celebrates and honours the children’s Carrier culture. The church also offers a Vacation Bible School and a “Talking Circle” for teen girls.



A child holds up a craft made at Nazko Bible Class, a part of the Cariboo Ministry.

EDMONTON URBAN NATIVE MINISTRY (EUNM)

According to Census Canada, there are 43,000 Aboriginal people within the City of Edmonton. That is the second largest Native population in a metropolitan area in Canada (next to Winnipeg). A large percent of this group are on social assistance or are low income families. Very few have any knowledge or experience of Christ's love and the Christian faith.

The Rev. Hoo Sik Kim along with his wife and family came to Canada in 1999 under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church of Korea to gain experience in The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Native work in cities and on reserves. EUNM's programming consists of a drop-in centre; emergency food bank; clothing bank; counseling; hot meals; Sunday worship service; Vacation Bible School; healing workshop; discipleship; leadership; music; sports; and crafts.



First clients at Edmonton Urban Native Ministries drop-in centre

HUMMINGBIRD MINISTRIES

Hummingbird Ministries was initiated in February 1, 2005 with support from Canada Ministries, the Synod of British Columbia and the Presbytery of

Westminster. At first most of the work took place at the Tsawwassen First Nation in Delta, BC, but other sites have been added since that time. Mary Fontaine works under an Advisory Committee made up of people from the Synod of BC, Presbytery of Westminster, churches in the presbytery, VST, and from the ministries themselves.

Hummingbird Ministries envisions establishing healing circle ministries to restore hope, freedom and justice for Aboriginal healing socially, politically and spiritually and, where the grace and peace of the Spirit of God would prevail in the relationship between Aboriginal people and the Church.

MISTAWASIS

Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church is working towards restoring relationships and providing a number of services to the Aboriginal community. These services are helping to restore dignity and to create relationships with Aboriginal people based on love, caring and compassion.

The Mistawasis community numbers about 2,090 residents, of whom about 50% are under the age of 25. There is a need to help young people find hope and opportunities for the future. Plans are in the works, in cooperation with the Mistawasis Band Council, to launch a Youth Consultative Process (a programme of encouragement and empowerment for youth). Phase 1 will draw a number of interested youth together to learn about the process of planning and conducting a consultation with other youth so as to solicit from them information on their needs and the kinds of programming that will address those needs. Phase 2 will involve the youth in helping to develop programs that will address their needs and empower them to take ownership of their own futures.

The Rev. George Yando, the minister at Mistawasis, is pleased with the growing acceptance he senses among the people at Mistawasis for his presence and his ministry, particularly among the council leadership and the First Nation Elders. He says the church is pleased to be invited to be part of the process because it is hoped that the church will be, and will be seen to be, part of the solution to many of the challenges being faced by the people as individuals and as a community.

SASKATOON NATIVE CIRCLE MINISTRY (SNCM)

Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry is a spiritual home where people from the inner-city come for worship, to celebrate Jesus Christ, to give, to share and to receive God's love, and to enjoy fellowship with a community in Christ. SNCM's objectives are to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to the inner-city and to the Aboriginal peoples of Saskatoon; to offer an outreach program to the community including through a drop-in program; to provide Sunday Worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, Prayer, Healing Circles, Crisis Counseling, Advocacy, Children and Youth Programs, and Hospital and Home Visits to the community; to comfort and support those who are trying to find a better lifestyle and purpose in the world; to learn by listening to the Word of God to direct SNCM in outreach and evangelism and in a caring, sharing and healing ministry; and, to build upon and strengthen SNCM'S Board of Directors through training so that they may assist SNCM in reaching its goals.

WINNIPEG INNER CITY MISSIONS (WICM)

Anishinabe Fellowship Centre and Flora House make up Winnipeg Inner City Missions. Both focus on ministering to the four aspects of well-being: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. They provide safe, nurturing and peaceful spaces for children, youth and adults, the majority of whom are Aboriginal.

Both centres rely heavily on the work of volunteers; they are the ones who keep the food banks operating, take care of the clothing store, provide the emergency food, and keep the centres clean. Winnipeg Inner City Missions face many unique challenges on a day to day basis as they deal with the complex social needs of their community. They offer hope and opportunity for children, youth and adults who are living in poverty.

WICM is presently building housing for those on the streets in north Winnipeg. Plans are for the building to be completed in 2007. A national fund-raising campaign is under way to pay for this building and the programs that will be run within it.

Prepared by Canada Ministries

December 2006



Liturgy for Healing and Reconciliation

Call To Worship:

Leader: We come together to worship the one God and Father of us all.

People: Let us put aside our differences and be united in our love of the Creator.

Leader: We come together to seek healing and reconciliation.

People: Let us deal with past hurts and go forward together in the comfort and strength of our Holy Spirit.

Leader: We come together to honor and affirm our faith as children of the One God who created us.

All: Let us praise God for all his mercies. Let us worship God.

Opening Prayer and Prayer of Confession:

Eternal and Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise for all your blessings this day. We remember your Son Jesus, who gave us the ultimate gift of love, who gave everything of himself so that we may have his mercy and his forgiveness. We remember the Holy Spirit, who comes to be with us now, as a gift from your Son Jesus Christ, so that we may always have your strength and guidance and know that you are always with us.

Lord, we know, too, that we can never be perfect. We regret that we have learned the mistakes of our ancestors: we have learned to be condescending and selfish, and we have ignored the suffering of the poor and the needy. Lord, forgive us and help us to treat all people as our equals. Help us to reach out to the needy and to bring the good news to the poor. Help us to fulfill the ministry that Jesus started. Help us to bring your love into the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

Offertory Sentence:

The Lord said that when we help the least of these his children, we are actually reaching out and helping him. We never know when we might be in his presence. Let us offer our gifts unto him and for his holy work. The offering will now be received.

Prayer of Dedication:

Holy and Gracious God, we come to share the gifts you have blessed us with each day. We know that when we show your love to all the world, the world will be drawn to you, and through our gifts we can be part of that outreach. We pray that our gifts may be the blessing that will save lives and bring those who do not know you into your family. So bless these gifts and help us to use them in the best way possible to help to increase your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith:

Living Faith, 8.3, Love, P.24

Pastoral Prayer:

Grandfather, Great Spirit, we greet you this day and we give you thanks for this day you have given us. We thank you for the gift of life. We thank you for the four directions and for the gifts of life that each of them brings to us. We thank you for the birds and for all the creatures that fly. We thank you for the wind and for the air we breathe. We thank you for the four legged creatures, for the animals that are willing to give up their lives for us so that we might have food and clothing and blankets and shelter. We thank you for the trees and the plants that provide medicines and paper and lumber and beautiful flowers and fragrances and perfumes and fruit and all kinds of spices and foods. We thank you for the mountains and the rivers and lakes and oceans, for everything that swims and for the clean water we have to use and to keep things growing and alive. We thank you for our Mother Earth.

Grandfather, we thank you for your Son Jesus who taught us how to share and how to love, how to put others first before ourselves.

Lord, we pray for this world. We pray for all the Aboriginal peoples of this world. There are the people of Guatemala and the Philippines who send their children out to the landfill sites to dig through the garbage to find items they can sell to help support their families. There are the indigenous Bhil people of India who suffer persecution because of their beliefs. They are victims of racism, marginalized and discriminated against by people in power whose actions, and inaction, perpetuate their suffering. There are the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and the United States, among whom are many homeless people and many youth who commit suicide because they feel there is no hope for the future. Lord, we pray for all these peoples and we ask for your support, guidance and healing presence to be in their midst. Lord, lift them up and help them to find justice and equality and healing and peace.

Lord, we pray for your Church. We pray for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Help us to reconcile with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and help us to find healing and wholeness. Help us to forgive one and other for past hurts and for the anger and mistrust we have inflicted upon each other. Help us to acknowledge the good and the bad and the sadness of the era of residential schools. Lord, we pray for those who taught in these schools who did much good work and who loved their students in a genuine way. And Lord, we pray for the students and generations of families who suffered because of

the effects of the harms that they endured and for the loss of their culture and language and identity. Lord, help us to recover those things that are possible and help the church to be the support system and the neighbors that the Aboriginal peoples need. And Lord, help us to walk this healing journey together and show us that even in our suffering, your presence is revealed.

Lord, we pray for this community:

Lord, we pray for our families and friends:

Great Spirit, we have taken some small steps this day but we have taken them together and we can feel the presence of your Holy Spirit. Help us to hold on to that feeling of oneness and continue to lift us up so that we can show the world that the love of Christ is still alive. And now go with us, so that we can continue to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, and so that we can make all peoples of this world to be part of us as our brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, surround us with your loving arms and embrace us together so that we can be one people, your children, and so that we can support each other as we journey to your heavenly home, through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose precious name we pray. Amen.

Commissioning and Benediction:

Go out into the world in peace, and whatever you do in word and deed, do everything in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, giving thanks to God through Him. And now may our Creator direct our ways so that we may always walk upon His road. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us this day and every day. Amen.

Suggested Hymns (The Book of Praise):

260 - Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord

27 - As the deer

301 - Many and great, O God are your works

763 - To show by touch and word

587 - Called as partners in Christ's service

The Rev. Stewart Folster

Stewart Folster was born at the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation's reserve in Manitoba. He was ordained in 1996 and is Minister and Mission Worker for the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry.



Two Sermon Illustrations on Healing and Reconciliation

STORY TELLING – Luke 10:38–42

A favourite old hymn of many Presbyterians is “Tell me the stories of Jesus,” written by William Henry Parker (#348 in the Book of Praise). It's a hymn that celebrates the stories of Jesus, and the oral tradition of story telling itself. Week by week, we gather in Christian community and we recount the stories of God and of God's people. We tell the stories of Jesus: his life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. We tell the stories in order to teach one and other, to strengthen our faith, and to know how to live in the world today. Some of the stories we have heard many times before, but we do not stop telling them. Each time we hear them, we learn something new. Each time we study and reflect on the stories together, God speaks to us in new ways.

We know that many of the stories were passed on orally, from generation to generation, before anyone ever wrote them down, collected and edited them to create the books of the Bible. We can imagine when they were first told. We can see Jesus sitting on the ground with friends and followers standing around and listening, the friends and followers who would later tell the same stories to others gathered around them. We can imagine the people being surprised by Jesus' sayings and confounded by his parables. And we can imagine the discussion, the reflection, and the “aha” moments when his listeners began to understand things in a new way.

Storytelling has always been a vital tradition among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. For centuries, Aboriginal people have used stories to teach Aboriginal values and culture. Like the stories from our Bible, these traditional stories are told over and over again at ceremonial gatherings. Stories bridge the gap between generations. Aboriginal Elders have a special role in their communities to tell the stories of their ancestors to subsequent generations. Elders model the important traditional value of respect. They know that even the youngest children do not have to be told what a story means. They recognize the power of stories: how different elements of a story will speak to different individuals, in different ways, depending upon the individual's place in the circle of life. Members of the community will hear the stories over and over again throughout their lives, and as they acquire different experiences, their understanding of what that story is about will change, even though the stories themselves do not change.

One of the losses experienced by Aboriginal people in Canada is that many of their traditional stories have not been passed on to the next generation. This is one of the effects of residential schools: moving children away from their communities, and failing to teach them their traditional languages, created a situation where many Aboriginal people were never able to learn the traditional stories from their Elders. This is a great loss. It is a sign of hope today that many Aboriginal people are working to reclaim their culture and their stories.

In our story from Luke, we remember how Mary chose to sit and listen to Jesus as He told stories and taught the people about God. In so doing, Mary grew in relationship to God through Christ. So we also are invited to listen and learn from one and other, as we build relationships. Canadian Presbyterians are invited to pursue Healing and Reconciliation with Aboriginal people through story telling: by listening to, and learning from each other. We are invited to share our stories and thereby get to know one and other better.

Consider inviting an Aboriginal person from your congregation, group, or community, to share a story during the worship, or to teach you a story to tell to others. Alternatively, you may want to tell a traditional Native Canadian story that you already know or discover through research, such as the one below.

A story from the Nekaneet First Nation in Saskatchewan:

“The making of the land goes back to when there was no land or animals. There was a flood that lasted 40 days and 40 nights. Wesakechak and the animals went through a great flood. They made a raft that would carry the animals. From the raft, the muskrat was the only animal that could swim down through the water to the bottom and get some dirt. Wesakechak took that dirt from the muskrat and stood on top of the Okimaw Ohci Hills. He blew the dirt from his hand and created land. After some time, he asked the coyote to go see how much land was there. Always the coyote came back, saying there wasn't enough. Then one young coyote, a yearling pup, went and didn't come back for a long time. When he returned, he was old and said there was enough land. That is why this [the Nekaneet land around the Okimaw Ohci Hills] is a special place, a very special place.” (Story found at www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/pblct/forum/Vol16No1/v16-a15_e.shtml.)

THE HEALING CIRCLE – 1 Corinthians 14:26–33 and Luke 24:13–35

Aboriginal world views reflect interconnectedness among all living forms and consider each form of life sacred. Cycles within nature, such as the seasons of spring, summer, fall, and winter, are a main teacher of Aboriginal peoples and form the basis of belief systems. Circles, being inherently non-hierarchical and inclusive, represent respect, equality, continuity and interconnectedness.

A common practice within Aboriginal cultures is for people to gather in a circle to talk, share stories, and reflect on experience. At the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry (a ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada) when the people gather for worship on Sunday afternoons, they gather in a circle. When you gather in a circle, it is clear that no one person is more important than another. Everyone has an equal opportunity to take part and to speak. Everyone is included. Sometimes you might use a talking stick. The person who is holding the talking stick has the opportunity to speak, while everyone else listens. When the person has finished speaking, she/he passes the stick to someone else. It reminds us of the way that Paul described orderly worship to the Church at Corinth: *When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up . . .* (1 Corinthians 14:26-33).

The circle invites participation by the whole community in a spirit of respectful listening and learning from one and other. It can also provide an environment in which healing and reconcilia-

tion takes place. Participants in the circle have the opportunity to share experiences, feelings, and questions. Others listen carefully, and when it is appropriate they have an opportunity to respond, reflect, and share their own experiences and feelings.

When the Healing and Reconciliation Design Team of The Presbyterian Church in Canada met with Native communities and ministries across Canada, members of the team described the experience of participating in talking circles in several Aboriginal communities. It was a humbling experience to be part of the circle, listening carefully to people's experience which often contained deep pain and sadness. It was a challenging experience for members of the Design Team, and yet also one that they were very grateful to have had. By listening with compassion, they were beginning to share the pain and suffering of those who related their experience. The Design Team heard what it was like to attend a residential school. They listened to people talk about what it is like to live on a reserve or in the city as a Native person. They tried to understand experiences of discrimination and marginalisation in Canadian society today. And perhaps, in that sharing, some healing took place.

It is not unlike the way that Jesus joined with his disappointed and disillusioned disciples as they walked along the road to Emmaus. While they were talking and discussing what had happened to their Lord, Jesus himself came near and went with them. Jesus asked them to share with him what they were discussing. Not knowing that he was Jesus, they told him about himself: about his deeds, about his arrest, about his crucifixion and death. They told him how they had hoped that Jesus was the one to redeem Israel, and how his body had disappeared. It had probably been stolen.

Jesus listened. He listened to their thoughts, to their experiences, and to their feelings. Then he shared his own thoughts. He explained his own interpretation of the scriptures so that they gained a new understanding of what had happened to Jesus, their Lord. And then they shared a meal together. Jesus gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them. And that's when they recognized him.

Canadian Presbyterians are invited to focus on Healing and Reconciliation, to walk with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Together, we are invited to listen to one and other, to reflect on our experiences, our stories and the scriptures. When we choose to walk together we will have opportunities to learn from each other, to gain new insights and understandings, and to find healing and wholeness. And perhaps, if we choose to stay together for a meal, maybe we will begin to see Christ in one and other as well.

Think about what opportunities might exist in your community or in your congregation to join with your Aboriginal brothers and sisters. Could you gather for shared worship, a talking circle, or a community meal? If there are Native ministries nearby, how can members of your congregation be involved in supporting these ministries?

The Rev. Amanda Currie

Amanda Currie was raised in Ottawa and ordained in 2003. She is Minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Saskatoon. Since arriving in Saskatchewan, she has gotten to know and work with Aboriginal people in the Presbytery of Northern Saskatchewan.



Lectionary Readings

May 20–June 17, 2007

Sunday, May 20th (Healing and Reconciliation Sunday)

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47 or 93 or 100

Eph. 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53

Sunday, May 27th

Acts 2:1-21 or Genesis 11:1-9

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; Romans 8:14-17

Or Acts 2:1-21; John 14:8-17 (25-27)

Sunday, June 3rd

Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8

Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15

Sunday, June 10th

Kings 17:8-16 (17-24); Psalm 146

Galatians 1:11-24; Luke 7:11-17

Sunday, June 17th (Aboriginal Day Sunday)

Kings 21:1-10 (11-14) 15-21a;

Psalm 5:1-8; Gal. 2:15-21; Luke 7:36-8:3



Resources on Aboriginal People for Use with Children

AVAILABLE FROM



50 WYNFORD DRIVE
TORONTO, ON
M3C 1J7
416-441-1111/1-800-619-7301
bookroom@presbyterian.ca

1. PARTNERS: MEETING FIRST NATIONS FRIENDS IN CANADA

–A Mission Learning/Sharing Experience for Children and Youth by Ken Borden and Dorothy Henderson, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2002

Includes stories and activities for use with children and youth

The Book Room's price: \$6.00

2. THE KIDS BOOK OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA

by Diane Silvey, Kids Can Press, 2005

Hard cover, illustrated book which provides an overview of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada before and after the arrival of settlers from abroad

The Book Room's price: \$20.95

ALSO RECOMMENDED:

Story books for children by Ray Buckley, a Christian writer of Lakota/Tlingit/Scots heritage, who is published by Abingdon Press.



Glimpses of Aboriginal People in Canada: Some Facts & Figures

Six Authors

- ▲ **Jeannette Armstrong**, poet and fiction writer, founder of En'owkin International School of Writing, British Columbia
- ▲ **E. Pauline Johnson**, 19th century poet and performer from Six Nations of the Grand River
- ▲ **Thomas King**, prolific writer and teacher of Native Literature and Writing, University of Guelph
- ▲ **Beatrice Culleton Masionier**, Métis writer of fiction for adults and children
- ▲ **Drew Hayden Taylor**, Ojibway humorist and playwright
- ▲ **Richard Wagamese**, former columnist for the Calgary Herald, fiction writer

Armstrong and King have edited anthologies of Native poetry and fiction respectively. One source of information on these and other Native authors: www.goodminds.com (suggest search by "Subject")

Five Award Winners

- ▲ **Bernd Christmas**, graduate of Osgoode Law School, a business leader in Atlantic Canada, he is CEO of the ISO-certified Membertou First Nation
- ▲ **Myra Cree**, broadcaster awarded 1997 Humour Prize for Radio Montreal, Mohawk language educator from Kahnésatake, Quebec where she founded Movement for Justice and Peace
- ▲ **James Youngblood Henderson**, legal theorist and teacher from Saskatchewan, holding a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Harvard, helped establish Native Law Centre of Canada and draft international declarations on Indigenous rights
- ▲ **Shirley Firth Larsson**, a four-time Olympian Nordic Skier and Order of Canada recipient, from the N.W.T., she has promoted Dene and Inuit culture in Europe
- ▲ **Jane Ash Poitras**, Cree/Chipewyan artist, from Alberta, has exhibited around the world, and is a powerful visual communicator on Native themes

To learn more about these 2006 National Aboriginal Achievement Award-recipients and many other award winners go to www.naaf.ca

Some Dates

1500s to mid 1800s	“Peace and Friendship” treaties and early land treaties signed in what are now the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, and Vancouver Island
1763	<i>The Royal Proclamation of 1763</i> ; as described by the Government of Canada it “decreed that First Nations should not be disturbed in their use and enjoyment of the land. It also declared that only the Crown could acquire land from First Nations, and only through treaty-making . . . and set the framework for negotiation based on co-operation rather than conquest.” ¹
Mid 1800s	The first residential schools open. The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated 5 day schools, 8 boarding schools, and one industrial school. Two schools remained under PCC control after Church Union in 1925 until 1969: Birtle in Manitoba and Cecilia Jeffrey in Ontario.
1876	The Canadian Parliament proclaims the first version of the <i>Indian Act</i> , which KAIROS notes, “at various times outlawed raising funds for land rights cases, made ceremonies illegal, required Aboriginal peoples to receive permission to travel or engage in trade, and prevented voting” ²
1871 - 1921	The eleven numbered treaties signed
1960	Aboriginal people gain right to vote in federal elections
1973	<i>Calder</i> Supreme Court decision, recognizes Aboriginal land rights and leads to establishment of federal claims policy to address outstanding issues
1982	<i>Constitution Act</i> recognizes existing Aboriginal and treaty rights; defines Aboriginal people as including “Indian” (i.e. First Nation), Inuit, and Métis peoples
1987	“A New Covenant,” a pastoral statement issued by the Leaders of the Christian Churches on Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution supports constitutional entrenchment of Aboriginal right of self-government
1991	<i>Sparrow</i> Supreme Court decision articulates framework for Aboriginal right to hunt and fish for subsistence purposes after resource conservation needs are met
1994	The Presbyterian Church in Canada makes its Confession to Aboriginal Peoples
1996	Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples issues its 5-volume report
1998-2002	The PCC’s <i>Journey to Wholeness</i> campaign raises over \$280,000 and funds a number of healing projects
1999	<i>Delgamuukw</i> Supreme Court decision clarifies concept of Aboriginal title
2005	Indian Residential Schools Agreement signed by the Assembly of First Nations, the Government of Canada, the churches who ran residential schools, and Aboriginal plaintiffs in residential school litigation

¹ From “*Fact Sheet, Treaty Negotiations*,” *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2004*

² From “*So Long as the Sun Rises and the River Flows, Land and Treaty Rights Workshop Booklet, KAIROS (Aboriginal Rights Programme), Ottawa, Ontario*



Some Statistics

Trying to describe people using numbers alone is inadequate. The following are provided only to contribute to understanding Aboriginal people in Canada. Sources of data include the 2001 Canadian Census, 2003 data from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), 2005 data from the Public Health Agency of Canada, and a January 2005 publication by Health Canada. Often Census data refers to “Aboriginal” people which encompass “North American Indian, Inuit, and Métis” people. INAC maintains a registry of people who have status as “Indians” within the meaning of the *Indian Act*, hence the references to “registered” people below. As discrepancies in some numbers reveal, not all registered Indians, or other Aboriginal people, are captured in Census information.

Population

It’s fair to say there are approximately a million Aboriginal people living in Canada in 2007. In 2001, they comprised 976,305, or 3.3%, of the population of Canada: 62% North American Indian; 30% Métis, and 5% Inuit. These numbers do not include persons who identified some Aboriginal heritage but did not identify themselves with one of these constitutionally recognized Aboriginal groups.

In 2003, registered Indians living on reserve numbered 409,671 (57%); those off reserve numbered 309,496 (43%). Among the provinces, the largest number (23%) live in Ontario.

The largest number of Métis live in Alberta: 66,055 or 23% of the total 2001 Métis population of 292,310. 68% of Métis live in urban settings.

Aboriginal people, largely Inuit, are 85% of the Nunavut population, which is projected to increase by 29% over the next 20 years.

The median age (24.7 years) of Aboriginal people is 13 years less than non-Aboriginal people (37.7 years). In Saskatchewan, the median age of Aboriginal people is 20.1 years. The Province of Saskatchewan projects the Aboriginal population of the province (now at 14%) will be 33% by 2045.

The 3.3% Aboriginal population of Canada is second to New Zealand’s 14% Maori population. Comparable figures in Australia and the United States are 2.2% and 1.5% respectively.

Languages

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal people reports there are 11 distinct North American Indian language families in Canada, as well as Inuktitut, and its dialects, spoken by the Inuit, and Michif, a Métis language.

There are between 53 and 70 separate languages in these families, the number difficult to arrive at because of linguistic classification challenges.

In 2001, there were 14 Aboriginal languages spoken by a minimum of 2,000 people. Cree, Inuktitut, and Ojibway are the most widely spoken languages. In 2001, one quarter (235,075) of Aboriginal people could carry out a conversation in an Aboriginal language.

Health

The gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people has fallen from 10.8 years in 1980. But Aboriginal people still live on average 6.6 years less than non-Aboriginal Canadians.

The rate of tuberculosis among Aboriginal people is 6-times higher than in the non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal people accounted for 9% of AIDS cases in Canada in 2005.

Suicide, especially among young people, is of heartbreaking concern among Aboriginal people. In the clinical terms used by statisticians, the rate was three times the Canadian rate, with 1,080 potential years of life lost due to suicide per 100,000 Aboriginal people in 2000.

One Excellent Source of Additional Information

The Aboriginal Canada Portal:
www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca

Education

120,400, or 60%, of on reserve students attend 496 First Nation-managed elementary and secondary schools. The balance attend provincial or private schools.

Approximately 25,000 Aboriginal people are enrolled in post-secondary education. While the gap is closing, the post-secondary attainment rate remains 23% among Aboriginal people compared with 38% among the non-Aboriginal population.

Housing

Only 53% of on reserve housing units are considered “adequate” by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: up from 46% in 1993-1994, but down from 57% in 1999-2000.

Lands and Governance

Aboriginal people and the Government of Canada are negotiating aspects of Aboriginal self-governance at 72 tables across the country, involving 427 First Nations, 18 Inuit communities, and some Métis locales. Some of these are “comprehensive,” meaning they address a number of areas of governance; others are “sectoral,” meaning they concern only one jurisdiction, such as self-government over the area of education.

16 final comprehensive claim settlements have been brought into effect since 1973. A further 26 are in negotiation, involving 130 Aboriginal communities. Comprehensive claims involve Aboriginal groups which did not sign treaties.

365 of the 614 First Nations recognized by the Government of Canada signed historical treaties in Canada, including the 11 numbered treaties.

273 specific claims have been settled. These most often concern First Nations which signed treaties. Over 400 other specific claims have been filed with the government and 120 of these are under active negotiation.



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