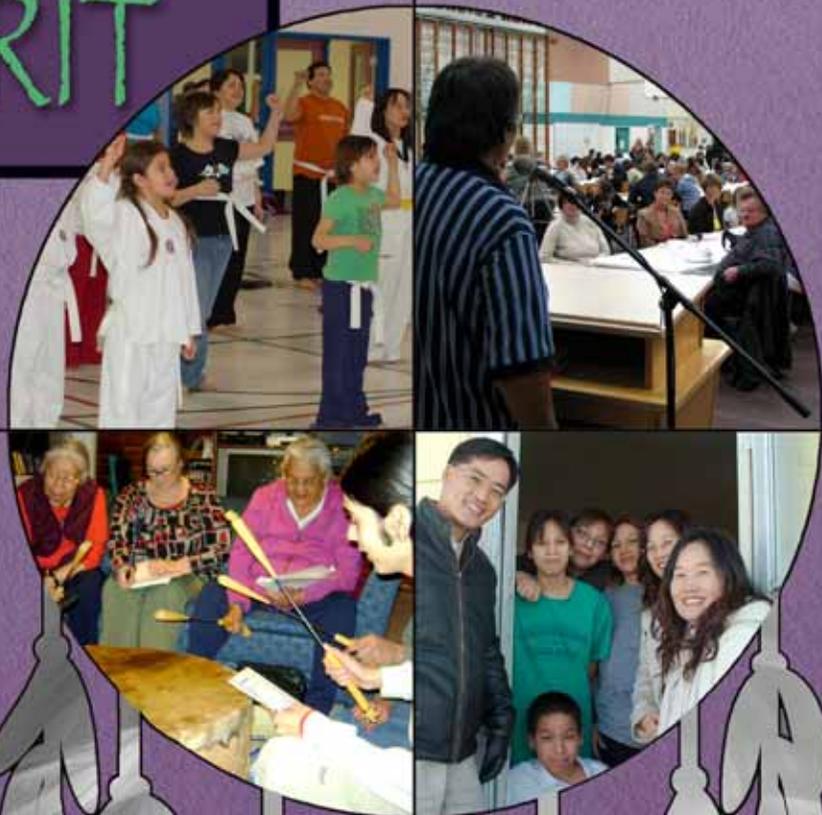


Healing & Reconciliation

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

WE ARE ONE
IN THE SPIRIT



Liturgical Resources

Including Church School Activities
for Services of Worship
In support of Healing and
Reconciliation in Canada

Table of Contents

Introduction	Lori Ransom	3
A Healing Journey	Audrey Bone	5
Tanis and 'Atsoo	Shannon Bell-Wyominga	10
• Story and Bible Studies for Sunday School		
• Medicine Wheel Crafts	Shannon Bell-Wyominga and Margaret Mullin	16
Liturgy for a Service of Worship on Healing and Reconciliation	Margaret Mullin	23
We Are One in the Spirit: a Sermon on Healing and Reconciliation	Margaret Mullin	27
Sermon Notes Suggested for Healing and Reconciliation Sunday or Aboriginal Day Sunday	Marty Molengraaf	30
The Confession of 1994 and Bible Study	Katharine Masterton	33

Introduction

We are delighted to present these resources on the theme of Healing and Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. They are commended for use by those leading services of worship, Sunday school classes, Bible studies and other forms of discussion and reflection among Christians.

We are One in the Spirit, which echoes the title of a hymn known to many Presbyterians, is the title and theme of this publication. We are One in the Spirit expresses the hope which is at the heart of healing and reconciliation. That hope is that peoples whose relationship is now strained, and broken in many ways, will create new bonds of unity, oneness, through the work of the Holy Spirit. We are One in the Spirit reminds us also that we are already one in the Spirit: all the peoples of Canada are among the whole people of the One Creator God, who urges us to reconcile with each other, as we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Emphasis is placed in this publication on the work of healing from the legacy of residential schools. We are living at a sacred moment in Canadian history. For the next four years, a national movement of healing and reconciliation will be fostered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

The TRC began its work in 2009 and holds its first of seven national events in Winnipeg in June 2010. This Commission is The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Commission. The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) along with the United Church of Canada, the Anglican Church of Canada, 54 separate Canadian Roman Catholic entities, the Assembly of First Nations, the Government of Canada, and representatives of the over 90,000 survivors of residential schools signed the agreement which gave the Truth and Reconciliation Commission its mandate. That mandate is to examine and report on the legacy of residential schools, to preserve that legacy in a format, such as a national archive, which will allow future generations to study the history of residential schools, and, most importantly, to

give impetus to the movement towards healing and reconciliation in Canada.

The TRC will invite all Canadians to take part in its work not only at the seven national events but also in the many local community-driven events which will occur. Indeed, faith communities are encouraged to initiate truth-telling, healing and reconciliation events to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people together to learn from each other and to discern the way forward together.

This publication begins with a look back to the residential school era, which was not really so long ago, when we remember that the last residential school closed in 1996, although the churches stopped running the schools in 1969. Audrey Bone, an Anishinabe Elder, who attended the Presbyterian-run Birtle school offers very powerful and very personal reflections on her experience at school and how it influenced her life.

There is nothing like hearing a survivor of a residential school tell their story—to be in the presence of a survivor and witness the emotion of their journey with all one's senses. The best learning still takes place through direct personal experience. For this reason, Canadians are encouraged to be present with survivors as they share their stories at TRC events.

Audrey's story is one of the many examples of how Aboriginal peoples' lives have been affected by residential schools. We are pleased to share it in written form, and honoured that Audrey has given permission for others to draw from her text to illustrate sermons, Bible studies, and other activities as her words inspire them.

Given some of the harsh truths about the history of residential schools, it can be difficult to find appropriate resources to teach children about the subject. Shannon Bell-Wyminga offers us the story of Tanis and 'Atsoo, based on real-life experiences which have been shared with Shannon by Aboriginal peoples. Tanis and 'Atsoo is a story written with great sensitivity to share difficult

information with young people in the way a grandmother gently tells a troubling story to her grandson in a loving and especially careful way.

The present-day relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians derives from a complex history, of which the residential schools are but one significant element. The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession speaks, for example, to how the "churches encouraged the Government of Canada to ban some important spiritual practices through which Aboriginal peoples experienced the creator God." The Confession states, "In our cultural arrogance we have been blind to the ways in which our own understanding of the Gospel has been culturally conditioned, and because of our insensitivity to Aboriginal cultures, we have demanded more of the Aboriginal people than the Gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ who loves all peoples with compassionate, suffering love that all may come to God through him."

Margaret Mullin offers a liturgy for use by all Christians to help us learn how a service of worship can honour the indigenous worldview and speak meaningfully to all peoples using language and concepts which are common among First Nation peoples in North America. We hope congregations will enjoy experiencing something just a little bit different as they learn through experience how Aboriginal peoples worship Christ.

Like Audrey Bone, Margaret also shares her own very personal story, in the form of a sermon, to tell us how many indigenous peoples and families have been affected by their historical encounters with European immigrants. She too graciously offers her witness for use in whole or in part. Margaret's story reminds us of the many individual Canadians who deeply need and crave healing and reconciliation in their hearts, minds, and spirits.

Marty Molengraaf and the members of his congregation, Duff's Church, Puslinch, Ontario have made a commitment to the work of reconciliation. A significant part of this commitment is the relationship they are building with the Webequie First Nation, which is located some 540 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. Marty shares two passionate reflections in the form of sermon notes. These reveal the modern day complexity and challenges in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and our Biblical calling to action in response.

At least since The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession of 1994, concerning The Presbyterian Church in Canada's role in residential schools, Presbyterians have sought to fulfill the promise of our Confession to walk with Aboriginal peoples towards healing and wholeness together as all God's people. The Confession remains a powerful and moving statement. Katharine Masterton provides a concise series of study questions that get to the heart of what the Confession seeks to accomplish. Leaders may also chose to study the theological richness of the Confession, by working through it section by section, over a series of Bible study classes for example.

Like Marty, Susan Samuel and her congregation at Knox, Kincardine, Ontario are reaching out to build relationships with Aboriginal peoples. Susan provides bulletin inserts that speak to the hope which is to be found in reaching out: the simple human ways, such as conversation and fellowship, that work powerfully to open up new possibilities between peoples. Susan also reminds us that our story in Canada is not unique. Indigenous peoples are to be found the world over. They face similar challenges. They face similar opportunities and have similar hopes for a future where all God's children will walk together in confidence, loving each other as Christ loves us.

General Assembly has suggested two different Sundays to congregations for reflection on the subject of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The first is the Sunday before the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation (May 26th) and the second is the Sunday before National Aboriginal Day (June 21st). This period has become all the more significant since the Government of Canada offered an apology to survivors of Indian residential schools on June 11, 2008. This period therefore is commended to Presbyterians as an appropriate time to use these resources. Of course, we would encourage their use at any time and in any way they are helpful, and we would welcome information about how these resources have been used.



Healing and Reconciliation Animator
Justice Ministries

May 2010

A Healing Journey

**By Elder Audrey Bone
Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First
Nations, Manitoba**

*With full permission to use or to publish
within The Presbyterian Church in
Canada*

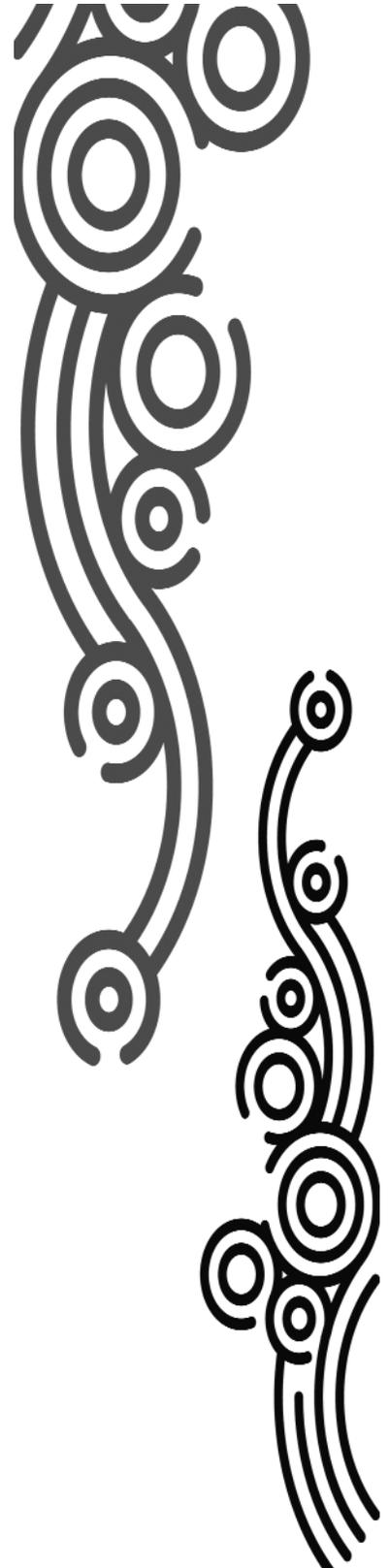
This is my journey. I am a woman of the Deer Clan from the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation. My Indian names are Morning Star Woman and Walking In The Clouds. I also have another name that cannot be translated as there are no English words that would describe its meaning. The names, I have been told by the Elders, have a significance and special meaning that relates to my work and the purpose of my journey in this lifetime. The names are very precious to me and I am grateful to the Elders who gave them to me.

I remember the summers that I spent as a young child with my grandparents, who lived a traditional Anishinabe lifestyle. I remember the healing my grandfather did to help people who were sick. I remember the ceremonies. I remember the medicines. I remember how we would travel by horses to a place where we camped all summer to hunt, fish and gather medicines and berries. I also remember the pain and the loss I felt after the death of these two very important and significant people in my life. My grandmother left the greatest teaching and gift that anyone could leave someone they loved very much. She taught me to believe that there is a God, Creator; that Creator

listens to our prayers no matter where we are; and that Creator lives within us. We can pray any place, anywhere, any time because Creator is everywhere and Creator will hear us. I hold this time with my grandparents dear to my heart. Learning the traditional values of my people and the power of prayers at such a young age, I didn't realize how these early teachings would one day help me to find my way back to who I am after a very painful adolescent life.

Living with my parents was a totally different experience from the time spent with my grandparents. Their own experiences changed my whole life. My late father was a World War II veteran. My mother is still with us today at the age of 75. Both my parents were residential school survivors. They lost everything as a result of that experience, especially the most important things that children need to grow up: security and pride in who they are. Consequently I did not experience the safety, love, and security that I once had felt with my grandmother and grandfather.

I attended the same residential school as my father, which was run by The Presbyterian Church in Canada (at Birtle, Manitoba). My experience in the residential school was the same as that of my parents. The only difference was that I rebelled. I didn't believe all that was being put in my head. I felt helpless sometimes when I would see things happening that I knew were not right. I ran away once





because I didn't like the feeling of being there; it felt like I was imprisoned and not allowed to feel freedom. All of this did something to me. I was also very sick during the time I was in that residential school. I felt afraid and alone because it seemed that no one really cared about how sick I was. I was sent to Winnipeg to a specialist and there I had my thyroid gland removed. I never returned to that school. I returned home for a very short time, then left again to go back to the city to school. Eventually I started working.

My life wasn't very good for many years. When I began my journey to healing I didn't realize how much the residential school system had taken away from me. I didn't know the root of my pain. I couldn't even remember the good things from my childhood with my grandparents. That's how much anger, low self-esteem, and low self-worth I felt.

At the age of 28, I decided to make some changes. It was going back to the traditional ways of my Anishinabe people that helped me to regain my strength and pick myself up off the ground. What I had to deal with always went back to the experiences that my mother and my father had lived through in residential school. Once I was able to get past that, I was able to start rebuilding my life, putting the pieces back together. I also knew that deep down inside of me there was a good human being. It was in a traditional ceremony that I was able to get in touch with my spirit and open the doors to what I had blocked for so many years. The memories of my childhood started coming back. In the ceremony I asked the Creator, my ancestors, grandfathers and grandmothers, to

give me the strength to heal. During that special night in the ceremony I felt a sense of belonging; it stirred something within my soul, and I felt the power of their love comfort me. Many familiar things started coming back to me: the scents, the feasts, the feeling of being safe, loved, secure.

At the age of 28, I was finally able to mourn my grandparents' deaths. At the time my grandparents passed away, no one explained what had happened to them. There was just a sudden and big impact on my life. I did not understand death. I was angry because I felt abandoned by them. And so I didn't get over their loss for many years, because I had never let them go. For me to do that, I had to go back to that place where they once had lived and offer my tobacco, in the traditional way, and talk to them. I needed to cry and let out what I had held in for so many years. I wanted so badly for them to be there because they had once given me everything I needed.

Remembering the difficult times of my healing, when no one was there, I recall some of the ways that I pulled myself through. It was really amazing when I opened myself to the Creator and allowed Creator to guide me. The Creator made things for me in this universe that are a source of energy and strength when no one else was there—all the living things out there on mother earth—the water, the wind, the earth, the sun, the trees, the rocks, the plants, the birds, the animals. During those very stressful times I turned to nature for healing. I felt a part of everything in the circle of life that the Creator wanted me to be a part of. I was not alone.

I believe that my Creator guided me to the people, places and experiences

that I went through on my journey of healing. Seeking help from other Native people who were going through a similar healing process was the best thing for me. I took training that was available through the people of Alkali Lake, British Columbia. I have had many powerful experiences and wonderful spiritual teachers who were Medicine Men and Medicine Women. Some of my teachers were a Lakota Medicine Man from South Dakota, and Ojibway Medicine Men and Women from Manitoba and Ontario.

My first vision quest was on a sacred mountain, Bear Butte in South Dakota; this involved a commitment of four years. I continued my journey for the next 14 years with vision quest and sun dance. Over the years I was given a ceremonial bundle. Of course it did not come all at once. It took a period of 25 years for me to receive all of the items.

I learned my gifts and ceremonies through my dreams; most of my guidance and messages came to me also through dreams. I really paid attention to the dreams. If I didn't understand, then I would ask for guidance from an Elder who I knew would help me to understand their meaning.

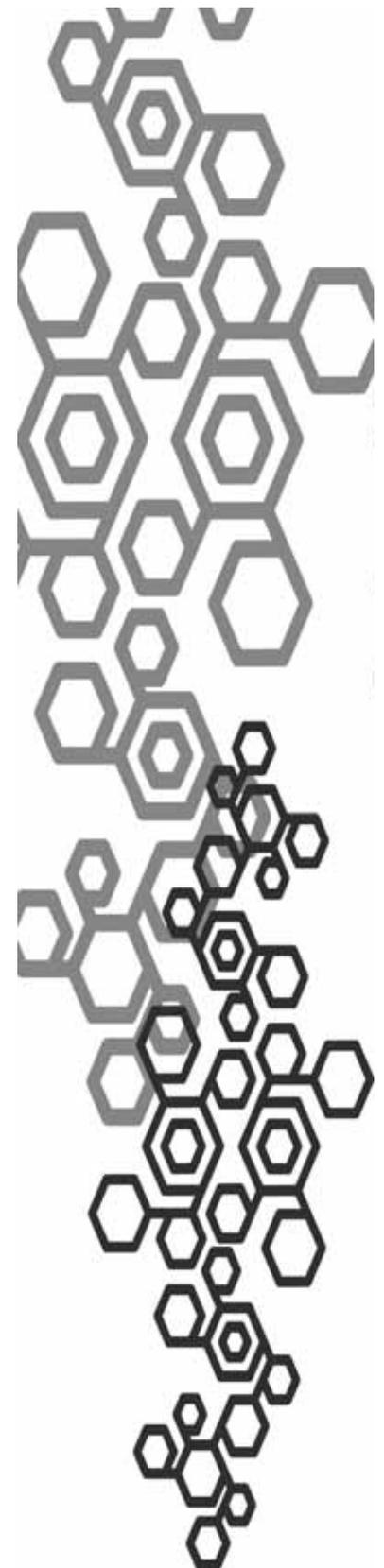
For me to be effective in the work that I do, to be able to help the people with whom I work, I had first to go through my own personal healing. Today I stand by that. It isn't the things that I learned in books that help me do my work. It is the experiences in my own healing journey that now help me to walk with other people through their pain.

Early in my study at the School of Social Work, through the University of Manitoba, a very special woman

who was my professor recognized that I was a natural helper, gifted to do the work that I do. She was the one who helped me to see that. I say thanks to her for that, wherever she is. She probably doesn't realize how much she helped me to believe in myself and to move forward to use the very special gifts with which the Creator has blessed me.

Today I understand that life is not a one-way road: you teach someone and they teach you. That is how life is. I was given one very powerful teaching by a very kind and gentle teacher. This teaching has carried me to where I am today, strong and brave. His words would come back to me like a whisper in my ear during the years when I was dealing with difficult issues and confusion would set in. He said to me, "When you pray to the Creator, it is between you and Him. Do what you feel is right. Don't ever let anyone use your mind. When you listen to what you feel inside, it is your truth; when you do what you feel is right for you, then it is your answer. When you believe in yourself and put your trust and faith in the Creator, you will never go wrong." This was a great inspiration to me; I will always be grateful to this gentle old soul, who is now in the spirit world.

I have dedicated all of my life to helping my people wherever I go to work. I have worked in many First Nations communities besides my own home community. I have learned from many different people. I am thankful to the people at Eagle Lake First Nation who accepted me as part of their family during the years I spent there and also to the First Nation communities in the Lake of the Woods area, near Kenora, Ontario.





It has always been my dream and vision to help my people through the things with which I have had to deal. Along with that dream and vision I wanted to create a retreat place where people would feel safe to let their pain go, or where they could come to renew their spirit. It is the place where an eagle gave its life so people could heal. We named it in honor of the spirit of the eagle: Medicine Eagle Retreat. It is not complete; there is still work to be done, but we continue to have group gatherings and retreats, youth and adults. We have sweat lodge ceremonies, feasts, sharing circles, medicine teachings, and other traditional teachings.

I have always been drawn to the traditional healing medicines. This is one of the gifts that my ancestors carried, so I am the one in my family who will carry this gift of healing on to the next generations. For over 26 years I have been learning about the Native traditional medicines. I also completed four years of medicine teachings through the Mattotooe Lake Medicine Lodge in Peguis First Nation, Manitoba. In the summer of 2007, I opened my own medicine lodge in my First Nation community. Each year I harvest about 100 medicines, and dry and store them for the winter. The medicine lodge is a very unique and special place. Our aim is to provide a holistic healing program when it is complete. I have many special people who have already come forward to help me with the work of building the retreat centre. I am grateful to the Creator for making that possible.

Each year in my community we have our annual traditional pow wow. I brought back this event to my community when I returned home after working in Eagle Lake First

Nation. The pow wow is very special; it has brought back a lot of the teachings. Many youth and very young children have begun dancing; we have done the initiation ceremony of bringing them into the circle. We have also honoured our people during this time. We have many visitors, special friends and relatives, who come to join us in our celebrations and gathering. This is a time to visit and celebrate who we are. I am a singer in a women's drum group and a jingle dress dancer. I am very proud of accomplishing the goals that I had of becoming a singer and a dancer. I never dreamed I could do it, but I did.

Becoming a grandmother was a very important time in my life. I have six grandchildren who are all very special to me. One, who is 4 years old, has spent lots of time with me. She is drawn to the medicines already and I have started teaching her. This was the way of our ancestors: they passed on teachings to their grandchildren. I had the opportunity as a child to experience some of this. It is what helped me to survive the tough life experiences that I faced as a young adult. It is a blessing to have grandchildren. They are so precious. They teach us unconditional love, and give us a second chance to give them what we were not able to give to our children, their parents. It is so fulfilling to be able to give to them.

I have learned that there will always be pain, problems and conflict around us everywhere, that we cannot escape. I accept these difficulties and have learned how to deal with them. I know that I have healed from my experiences. I have learned a more positive way. I am capable of finding solutions to everyday problems. I can live a more peaceful life knowing that I can find an answer or a solution to

conflicts. I have learned that healing is a lifetime process; we continue to heal and learn until we leave this world.

The strongest foundation that I have built for myself is faith and prayer. When faced with difficult times and issues, I have learned that turning them over to the Creator has always kept me from stressing myself out over things that I cannot change. So I go forward in my journey with prayers of faith and guidance from the spiritual realm.

I have also learned that each and every one has a gift and a purpose to fulfill in our lifetime. When one is happy and fulfilled in the work they are doing then they are following the path in life and are fulfilling the purpose for which they were put on this earth.

There are no mistakes in life; there are lessons that we have yet to learn. Whatever we experience in life good or bad, it is there for a reason. Through my healing journey, there was a teaching in every experience. There were people put in my path who were there for a purpose; they were there to help me and I was there to help them. When they finished their purpose with me, some moved on and others stayed. That's the way it has been in my life.

I don't believe there is such a thing as coincidence. At this time in my life, the Creator is giving me the chance to cross paths with special people like the women and men at Winnipeg Inner City Missions (Flora House, Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, and Anishinabe Place of Hope – Endaayaang). I feel blessed to have met such loving, caring, kind people. I feel that people who walk through those doors are very fortunate people. I am also very happy to say that an

Elder, Stella Blackbird, and I have been able to contribute in a small way by providing a healing program at Winnipeg Inner City Missions to help people heal from some of the pain they carry.

I have also shared the medicine teaching with the The Rev. Margaret Mullin, and staff from Winnipeg Inner City Missions. When sick people come for help, the staff can introduce them back to their natural medicines, and teach them how to use the medicines to help with their healing. This is all part of bringing back our traditional teachings, values, and way of life that were temporarily lost when our people were institutionalized. Working in a partnership with the Anishinabe Fellowship Centre to help people heal builds a stronger foundation for the people.

There is a lot of healing that needs to be done from the residential school experiences, and without forgiveness there is no healing. There is only one way for this healing to happen: that a trusting relationship is built between the churches that operated the residential schools and the residential school survivors and their families. It is a long journey. Yet, it is worthwhile. When I felt some peace within myself, I knew I was on the right path. I wish this for everyone.

From my own personal healing journey I want to say to all that, if you have the courage to go within and find your true selves, it's a great feeling to know where you came from and where you are going. Follow your heart. The guidance you pray for will come from the Divine Spirit, our Creator. May you find peace within, and when you have you will know that you have succeeded. God bless all of your beautiful spirits.



Tanis and 'Atsoo

A Resource for Sunday School Teachers

Prepared by **The Rev. Shannon Bell-Wyminga,**
Nazko and Area Dakelh Outreach,
The Cariboo Presbyterian Church,
British Columbia

Introduction: (5 minutes)

The experience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in the residential schools is something that cannot be forgotten. It continues to affect us all today. For the indigenous peoples, the effects are felt in the signs of pain and loss that were never healed. For those of us of other ancestry, we may be affected by a sense of collective grief over the benefits we unwittingly enjoy because of the appropriation of lands and resources from the first peoples. All of us are affected by the broken relationships which continue today. This lesson is shared with the hope that our next generation will learn from the pain of the past of all the parties involved, so that we can move forward in healing together. We cannot learn from the history that we do not know. I have personally been dismayed at the lack of awareness among our non-Native youth about the history of residential schools and their affect on the indigenous peoples in Canada. We need to tell the stories, to weep together, to heal and share hope with one and other for a brighter future together in this land that the Creator has put us all on together.

The story of Tanis and his 'atsoo is both fictitious and true. The experiences related in the story all happened to people I know. They relate their own experiences at specific residential schools. I have tried to strike a middle ground in the telling as some students faced much greater abuses than are shared here, while others remember the caring teachers who gave their best. These experiences are held together by characters that are compilations of friends. I hope that you and your students will feel the compassion of Jesus as you share this lesson together.

How to Use These Resources:

More than enough material is provided for one weekly Sunday school class. Teachers are invited to consider how much time they wish to devote to this topic and plan accordingly. For instance, a selection may be made for one lesson, or the entire set of material may be covered during two or three lessons over consecutive weeks. The songs may be repeated at each lesson to reinforce the impact of the story. Another option would be to use the material for an intergenerational event, for instance where children and grandparents might study the topic together.

Again, teachers will want to think through a lesson plan with the precise age group and size of their class in mind. To help plan a lesson, it is suggested that time be allowed for each activity as follows:

- Introduction and opening discussion: 5 minutes
- Story and discussion: 15 minutes
- Bible Story and discussion: 15 minutes
- Prayer Circle: 5-10 minutes
- Craft*: 20-30 minutes, assuming advance preparation of materials

*either one of the two Medicine Wheel crafts; add an additional 20 minutes for craft two's option for older children

Words to Understand:

First Nations: refers to many of the peoples, such as the Carrier, the Cree, the Ojibway, the Mik'maq, and other indigenous nations, distinct from the Inuit and Métis peoples, who were originally on the land we now call Canada. They lived as peoples of many different cultures, speaking many different languages, with social structures and economies according to their traditions and environment. They lived here for thousands of years before anyone from Europe ever stepped onto this continent.

Indigenous or Aboriginal

peoples: the collective name from the original inhabitants of a country. In Canada, they include First Nations peoples, along with the **Inuit**, the original peoples who live in the High Arctic, and the **Métis**, descendants of First Nation and French immigrants to Canada who developed their own distinctive culture and communities.

Southern Carrier: this is a nation of people who inhabit part of the Central Interior of British Columbia. Now there are only 4 Southern Carrier communities and a total of about 2000 people. They are also known in their own language as **Dakelh**.

'Atsoo: this is the Southern Carrier word for grandmother.

Bannock: a traditional bread made of flour, water, and baking powder, fried in lard.

Residential Schools: For several generations, First Nations, Inuit and Métis children were taken from their parents and communities to attend live-in schools. These schools were usually run by the churches on behalf of the Canadian government. It is well documented that the government's intention in these schools was to eliminate the indigenous peoples' cultures and languages, to acculturate the children

into the dominant culture, and to integrate them completely into the larger society. One high ranking government minister was quoted as saying that the intentions of the schools were to "kill the Indian and save the child."

In most schools, the indigenous peoples' culture was stripped away. Children had their hair cut, were not allowed to speak their language, and were, in many cases, abused physically, sexually and emotionally. They did not see their parents for months at a time. Many well-meaning people taught at the schools who were kind to the children, but the practice of removing children from families and culture was devastating no matter how good the individual teachers were.

Opening Discussion:

- What do you like best about school?
- What don't you like about it?
- How far do you have to travel to get to school?

- Do you know where your grandparents went to school?
- How do you think school was different for your grandparents than it is for you?

Story: Tanis and 'Atsoo (10 minutes)

Tanis came in the front door of his log house and dumped his pack on the floor. "What can I have to eat, 'Atsoo?" he called out. His grandmother, who he called 'Atsoo in their Carrier language, was in the kitchen making fresh bannock. She offered him a piece and Tanis sat down at the table to spread butter and blueberry jam on it before taking a big bite. Nine-year old Tanis had a good appetite which led him to a second piece of the warm fried bread as 'Atsoo asked him how school had been that day.

"It was all right," he replied. "We had fun on the rink at lunchtime. Mrs. Taylor . . .

"'Atsoo?" Tanis continued. "Did you go to school in Ndazkoh?"

“No,” she said as she sat down with Tanis at the table. “School was very different for me. We couldn’t go to school here in our village. We had to go to a school many hours away from here and we lived there all year. We didn’t get to live with our parents.” ‘Atsoo fingered her long black braid as she looked out the window. She seemed sad as she talked. ‘Atsoo was still young, only 53, not like Tanis’ granny who was ‘Atsoo’s mother, but in that moment, ‘Atsoo looked much older.

“What was it like?” Tanis asked curiously. He had heard that the Elders had gone to church schools, but he hadn’t heard his grandmother talk about it.

“At the end of every summer, “Atsoo began to speak quietly, “the Indian agent came to take all the children away. I remember when I was too young to go yet, and I was at my cousin’s house playing. This man came to the door with a priest all dressed in black. They told my auntie that it was time for her children to come to school. My auntie began to cry and beg them not to take her children. My cousins were all older than I was and the youngest one was five, and so had to go to school. The men began to get impatient and told all the children to get their things and get into the back of a big truck. Some of the other children from our village were already in the truck. My auntie held onto my cousin and wouldn’t let go. She and my cousin were both crying. The men pulled my cousin roughly out of auntie’s arms and carried my cousin to the truck. My auntie was left there at the front door weeping. When I got home, my older sister and brother had also been taken in the truck. We didn’t see them again for 10 months.

“The next year, it was my turn to go to school. I was very afraid. I didn’t know what to expect. The men came again and this time I had to go with them in the truck. We travelled for hours and finally at night got to the big school. They took my clothes and gave me a uniform. They cut off my hair which made me feel ashamed. I was taken to a room with 100 other girls with beds all in rows. We were sent to bed. I could hear some of the girls crying and I began to cry. No one came to talk to me or make me feel better. The next day we got up and dressed and went to have breakfast. I was really hungry by that time and remembered the breakfasts of bannock and dried fish at home. At the school though, we just had a bowl of mush which was lumpy and cold.

“School was hard work. We didn’t spend much time learning to read and write, but the girls had to do kitchen chores and the boys worked outside. We were hungry all the time. As I got older, I remember that I had to serve the teachers in their special dining room. They would eat bacon and eggs and toast in the morning, or roast beef and mashed potatoes while we would have just soup or mush. It made me so mad.

“I really missed my parents and cousins and aunts and uncles. I missed fishing with my dad and picking berries with my mother and grandmother. I didn’t know how to speak English when I went to the school, only Carrier, but we weren’t allowed to speak Carrier. If we were caught speaking our language, we were punished. We also couldn’t talk to our brothers. The boys and girls were kept separately. When my little brother came to the school, I saw him across the yard. He looked so sad and was crying. I tried to run over to give him a hug and comfort him, but one of the teachers saw me and yanked me by my arm and swatted me. I wasn’t allowed to go to him at all.”

Tanis saw a tear in the corner of ‘Atsoo’s eye as she spoke. He was very quiet as she told him her stories. Just then, there was a knock on the door and then it burst open. Their friend Ben came into the small house. Ben was a big man, but had a twinkle in his eyes. He wasn’t Carrier. His skin was pale and his eyes were blue, but he had been in the community for many years and was loved by the people.

“What are you talking about today?” asked the big man.

“Atsoo is telling me what it was like when she went to school,” Tanis said.

Ben’s face clouded over. “School was a sad time back then,” said Ben.

“Did you go to the same school as ‘Atsoo?” asked Tanis.

“No.” said Ben. “The residential schools were only for the Native kids. We went to school in town and lived at home with our parents. Our school was much the same as yours. But I visited the school your ‘atsoo went to once.”

“I used to play hockey and sometimes we would play against the kids at the residential school. There were some good hockey players on that team.”

“Like Carey Price?” Tanis asked with admiration in his voice. “He’s a goalie for the Montreal Canadiens and he’s Carrier!”

“Well, maybe some of them could have gotten that good eventually,” laughed Ben. He went on with his story. “We went to the school to play hockey and at dinner time we went to the dining hall. They served us a meal in there. While we were all enjoying the food, we noticed some of the Native kids looking in at us while we ate. They just kept staring at us. Then someone asked one of the teachers why the kids were all looking at us. They told us that they didn’t have enough food to feed us and the students at the school, so the Native kids were going without dinner that day. After that, none of us could finish our plates. We felt so bad. I wished I could have done something for them to help them, but I didn’t know what to do. I always just wished that they could come to our school instead.”

Tanis turned back to his ‘atsoo: “What happened when you finished school and came back to the reserve? Did you speak Carrier and live with your family again?”

“I came back,” ‘Atsoo replied. “But everything was different. My parents had been so sad to have all their children taken away that they started to drink a lot and get drunk. They tried to forget how much it hurt them. There were a lot of fights in the community too. We hardly knew our families anymore and didn’t know how to fit in. So we started to drink too and it was a really bad time. When your mother was about 10 years old, I realized that things had to change. I talked to a friend who told me about Jesus and how he could help me and heal all the hurt inside of me. That’s when I started to walk with him and become a Jesus follower. I quit drinking and haven’t done that for 24 years. I want you kids to have a better life, so that’s why I work at the clinic helping the mothers learn about being good parents.”

Ben nodded his head. “Your ‘atsoo is a good teacher,” he said. She is helping the community heal. But we white folks need to heal too. A lot of people don’t understand how much hurt is in the Carrier people and other First Nations. They need to know the stories too so we can help each other. I’ve learned a lot from your ‘atsoo and the other Elders here. It is important that people like me listen to the stories and understand so we can work together to make things better for everyone in our community.”

Tanis considered this. “I’m sorry that school was so hard for you ‘Atsoo. But I’m glad you told me about it. I’m glad my school isn’t like that. I want to become a writer for a newspaper. Maybe someday I can write about your school and more people will understand.”

“That’s a good idea,” said ‘Atsoo, giving Tanis a warm hug.

“But for now,” said Ben. “Why don’t you show me where your ice fishing hole is out on the lake and we’ll see what we can catch today.” He winked at ‘Atsoo. “It’s time I learned from an expert!”

Ben and Tanis breezed out the door and began to trudge through the snow towards the lake laughing together as they went.

Discussion after the Story:

- **What would it be like to be taken away from your parents when you were just five years old?**
- **What would it be like to have to speak another language and not use the one you know?**

Bible Story: Genesis 27, 33 (15 minutes)

The story of Jacob and Esau is rather long to read in the midst of the lesson. It is suggested that chapter 27 be summarized by telling how Jacob tricked Esau out of what was supposed to be his and how Esau was so angry about it that he wanted to kill his brother. A suggested summary follows.

Genesis 27

A long time ago there was a man and woman named Isaac and Rebekah. They had two twin sons: Esau who was the oldest, and Jacob, the younger twin. Isaac was becoming very old and it was nearly time for him to die. Back in those days, the oldest son would receive special gifts and blessings from his father. This was Esau's right because he was the oldest. One day Isaac, who had become blind as an old man, asked Esau to go hunting and get him some fresh meat so he could give Esau these gifts and blessing before he died. Esau went out to do what his father had asked.

In the meantime, Rebekah told Jacob to go and get a goat from their flock so she could cook it up. She wanted Jacob to go to his father and pretend to be his brother Esau so he would get the gifts and blessing instead. Rebekah made up some of Isaac's favourite food and then helped Jacob to disguise himself so he would feel and smell like Esau and fool poor old Isaac. Jacob went to his father and fooled him. Isaac gave Jacob all the blessings he had intended to give to Esau.

After Esau came home with the meat he had hunted, he found out what Jacob had done and he was furious. Jacob had been dishonest, tricky and had stolen what was really supposed to belong to Esau. Esau was so angry that their mother Rebekah sent Jacob away to live because she was afraid that Esau might kill his brother. So Jacob went away for many years to live with his uncle in another place. He worked for his uncle and got married and had many children.

Discussion of Esau and Jacob's story in Genesis 27:

- **Have you ever had anyone trick you or take something that was yours? How did it feel?**
- **What do you think that Esau should have done when he found out what his brother did?**
- **Who do you think was hurt in this story?**

Genesis 33:1-11

¹Then, in the distance, Jacob saw Esau coming with his four hundred men.² Jacob now arranged his family into a column, with his two concubines and their children at the front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.³ Then Jacob went on ahead. As he approached his brother, he bowed low seven times before him.⁴ Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him affectionately and kissed him. Both of them were in tears.

⁵Then Esau looked at the women and children and asked, “Who are these people with you?”

“These are the children God has graciously given to me,” Jacob replied. ⁶Then the concubines came forward with their children and bowed low before him. ⁷Next Leah came with her children, and they bowed down. Finally, Rachel and Joseph came and made their bows.

⁸“And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?” Esau asked.

Jacob replied, “They are gifts, my lord, to ensure your goodwill.”

⁹“Brother, I have plenty,” Esau answered. “Keep what you have.”

¹⁰“No, please accept them,” Jacob said, “for what a relief it is to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the smile of God! ¹¹Please take my gifts, for God has been very generous to me. I have more than enough.” Jacob continued to insist, so Esau finally accepted them. [New Living translation]

Discussion of Esau and Jacob’s story in Genesis 33:

- **Do you think that Jacob was afraid of seeing his brother again after many years?**
- **What did Jacob do to try to show Esau that he was sorry for what he had done?**
- **How did Esau respond?**
- **Do you think that they were able to be brothers again after this?**
- **When we have done something wrong to someone, how can we show we are truly sorry?**
- **When we know someone who had bad things happen to them, how can we show them we care and that God cares?**
- **Can you think of something you could do for someone like Tanis’ ‘atsoo to show her God’s love?**
- **Do you know any First Nations people? How can you be a friend to them?**

Prayer:

In most First Nations traditions, prayer is done in a circle. In the circle everyone is equal and respects one another. An item (such as a prayer stick, talking stone, or eagle feather) is passed around the circle in the direction of the sun (clockwise) as each person has a chance to pray. While the person has the item, it is their turn to offer their prayers and everyone else is quiet. When the item comes back to the first person, the prayer is finished. In the Carrier language we pray to Neba (pronounced with both vowels short) which means “Great Father,” or Yak’usda which means “the one throned on high.” This style of prayer gives everyone in the circle the option to offer prayer without anxiety of when to jump in as well as the option to pass the item on.

Editorial Note: See also the section on Talking and Sharing Circles in this guide (page 21) for other ways in which this style of communication and sharing may be used.

Music:

Two excellent sources of Christian music from the First Nations community in Canada are recommended:

Cheryl Bear is a Carrier recording artist who has released two recordings, with a third scheduled to be released later in 2010. Her song “Drum Doxology” is great for people of all ages, using the familiar words of the doxology along with a new tune and Native chant. This may be heard on her web site: www.cherylbear.com

Broken Walls is a worship band with numerous albums available. Many of their songs are drum songs and chants. A favourite of the Cariboo Church in Nazko is “River of Life.” Broken Walls’ music can be heard on their web site: www.brokenwalls.com

Both of these music resources are covered by CCLI music licenses.

Craft: (20-30 minutes)

Below are two options for making a medicine wheel and related teachings.

The Medicine Wheel: One Teaching

The Rev. Shannon Bell-Wyminga was given the following teaching from an Ojibway sister, who in turn had received it from an Elder.

The medicine wheel has been used by many nations of people as a way to heal. The teachings of the medicine wheel vary from nation to nation, tribe to tribe, teacher to teacher, but many of the basic components are the same.

Materials needed:

- One sturdy paper plate for each child. (e.g. Chinette or a no-name equivalent. The thinner, flatter plates don't hold up as well)
- Narrow ribbon (approx. 5 mm wide), 1 metre per child
- 6 feathers for each child
- plastic beads with wide holes (called pony or crow beads) - 6 red, 6 yellow, 6 black and 6 white for each child.
- Paintbrushes
- Water jars
- Acrylic craft or tempera paints: red, yellow, black, white, blue, green, purple
- White glue or tacky glue
- Hole punch
- Black marker
- Photocopies of the "Meaning of the Medicine Wheel" on paper small enough to fit on the inside of the plate.

Craft Instructions:

1. Before class, draw a circle around the raised part of the paper plate with the black marker. Then draw two lines, horizontal and vertical with a pencil through the middle of the circle to make 4 equal quadrants. Draw a cross at the point that the two lines meet. Outline the cross and the lines with black marker as well, leaving the cross in the centre without lines through the middle. (See the diagram on page 18.)
2. Have each child paint the 4 quadrants with the 4 colours starting with white in the upper left and moving to yellow in the upper right, black in the lower right and red in the lower left, all the while leaving the cross in the middle empty.
3. The children can paint the cross a colour of their choice from blue, green or purple.
4. Once the paint is dry, take a hole punch and punch a hole along the side of the paper plate at the top and bottom and each side.
5. Cut 3 pieces of ribbon 20 cm long and keep the last piece aside. Take each of the 3 pieces and fold in half. Push the folded part through one of the holes on the sides until it comes partway through the hole. Then push the ends of the ribbon through the loop and pull tight. This should attach the ribbon to the plate leaving two equal tails hanging down. Do the same with the two other 20 cm pieces on the side and bottom.
6. Take the remainder of the ribbon and repeat the process in the top hole. This will be your hanger for the medicine wheel.
7. On each of the 6 tails of ribbon hanging down, place four beads in this order: black, red, yellow and white. Pull the beads up the tail about a third of the way.
8. Place a dab of glue on the ribbon just where the last white bead sits and push the shank of a feather into the bead where the glue is. This will hold the beads in place. Repeat for all 6 tails.
9. Glue the "Meaning of the Medicine Wheel" (page 18) on the inside of the paper plate.

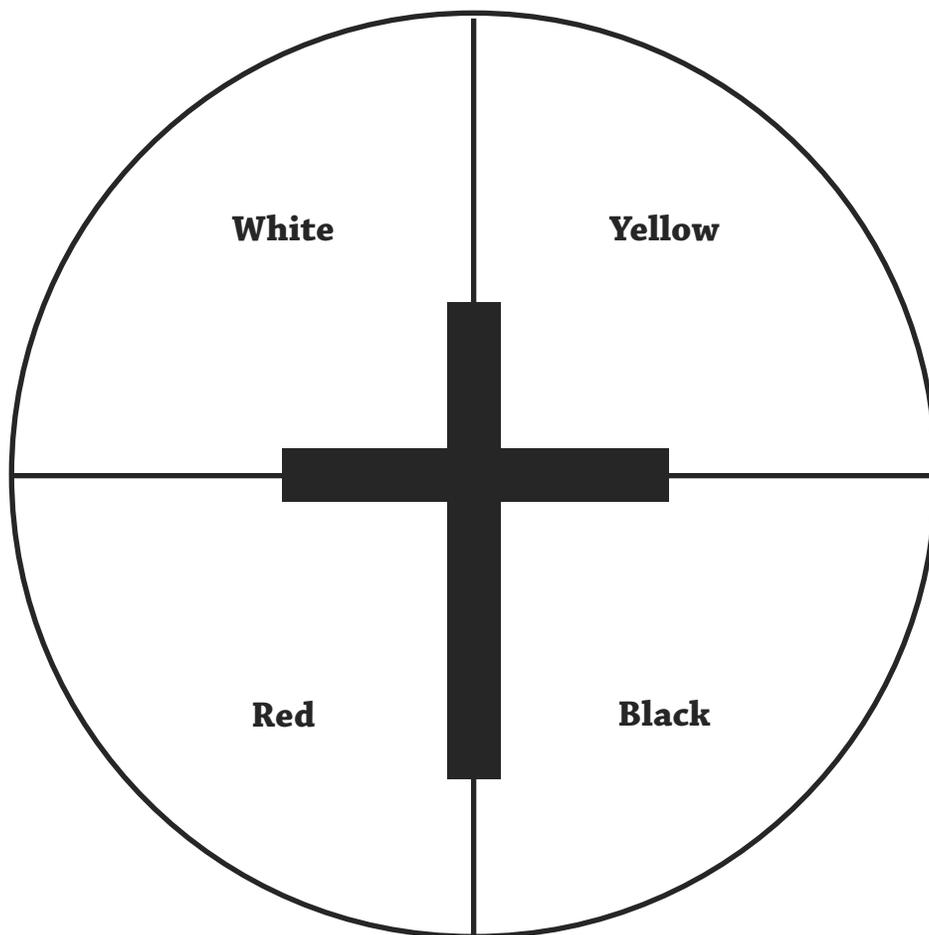
The Meaning of the Medicine Wheel

Circle: represents the Creator who has no beginning and no end. Creator has always lived and will live forever. Creator's love never ends.

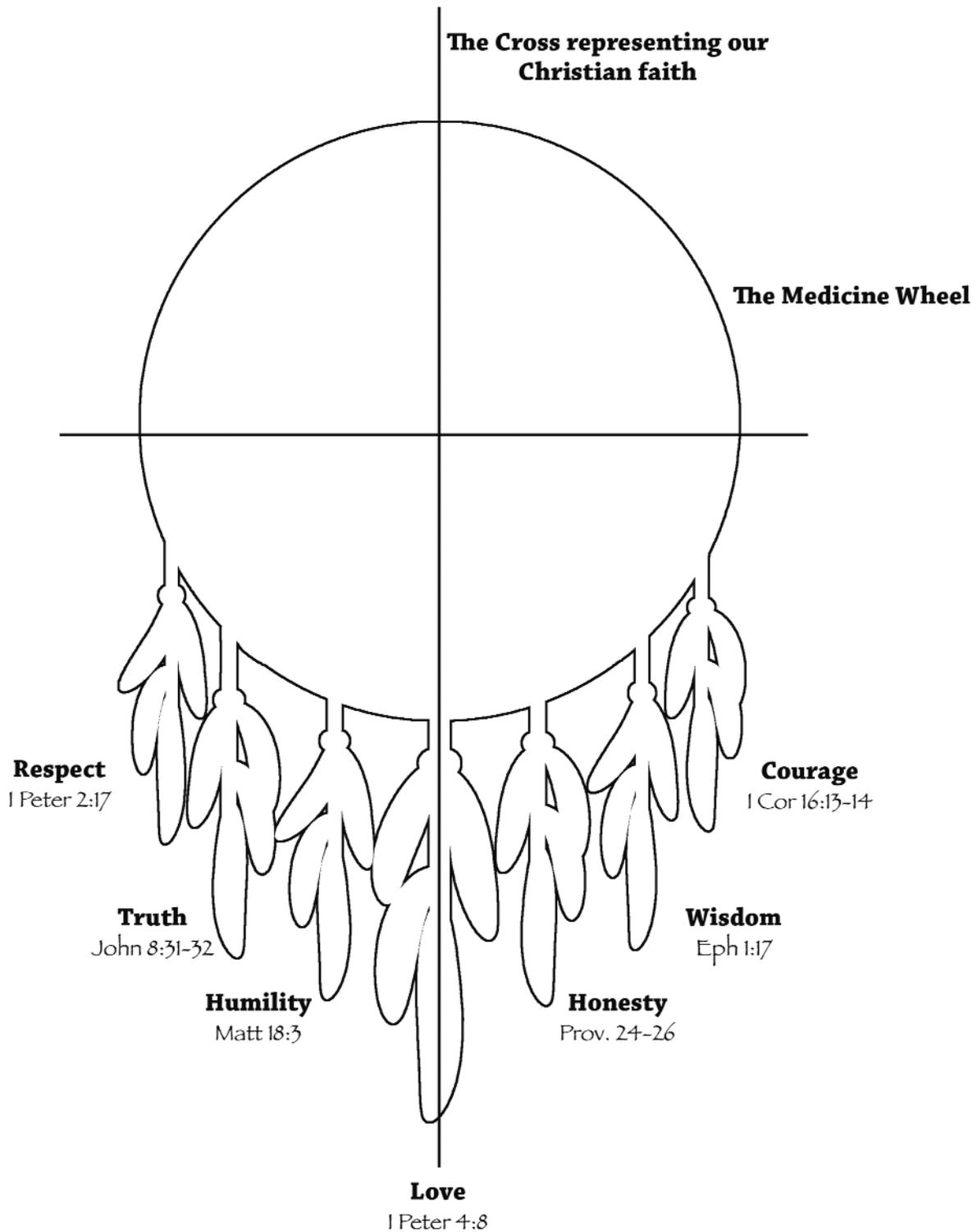
4 Colours: represent the 4 races of people and the 4 directions: red, yellow, black and white. In the wheel they all come together. Healing means that we respect one another and the gifts of each person. The Creator made all of us and we come together in the circle.

Lines: the up and down line is about our relationship with Creator. The line across is about relationships with other people. We find healing when all those relationships are right.

The Cross: Jesus was both God and a human being so he is at the centre of the wheel, the centre of our healing. He brings together all the races and heals all parts of who we are. Jesus is good medicine.



The Medicine Wheel, The Christian Faith, The Seven Sacred Teachings



All teach us how to live on earth as best we can

The Medicine Wheel: Another Teaching

The Rev. Margaret Mullin provides the following based on the teachings of Christ, The Rev. Stewart Folster, and her Elders Audrey Bone and Stella Blackbird.

On page 19, there is a drawing comprised of The Cross, The Medicine Wheel and The Seven Sacred Teachings. All of these teach us to live on Earth the way God wants:

- The Cross represents our Christian teachings
- The Medicine Wheel represents the teachings of the First Nation peoples of Canada
- The Seven Sacred teachings are found in Jesus' teachings and the teachings of the early Church.

The medicine wheel is a circle divided into four equal parts. There are many teachings which the Elders pass on to us using the medicine wheel. One teaching has the colours of the medicine wheel in this order, White, Yellow, Red and Black, starting at the top right hand side and going clockwise around the wheel. The four colours represent all the races on this earth, all being created by the same God and loved by God.

Yellow is in the East. The sun rises there. It reminds us we come from God and go back to God and there will always be life on earth. [The sun rises. The sun sets. People are born. People die. The sun always comes back up again. There is always new life.] We are reminded to believe in Creator, the One True God, and to respect all things that are given to us.

Red is in the South. It reminds us to respect the earth and make sure we do not destroy the trees and plants, the water, the air, or anything that lives on the earth.

Black is in the West. This direction reminds us to eat good food, to exercise, and to get enough rest so that we may be healthy and able to do God's work.

White is in the North. It reminds us that we should always try to stay healthy in our minds even when things happen that make us sad or angry.

Activity: Make a Medicine Wheel to Take Home

This activity may be adapted to suit both younger and older children.

Materials needed:

- One wire coat hanger for each participant
- Long, narrow strips of leather
- Electric tape
- Yellow, red, black, and white feathers
- Long, thin strips of leather or cotton cloth

Instructions:

1. Cut long strips of leather which have a width that is about the size of your little finger.
2. Bend the wire coat hanger into a circle and use electric tape to hold the circle together.
3. Take two pieces of leather, long enough to fit across the circle, and tie them in a cross over the wire circle so that the interior of the circle is divided into four equal parts. The leather strips should be long enough to hang approx. 20-30 cm over each side of the circle, so that a feather (step 4) may be tied to each of the four ends and hang attractively beneath the circle.
4. Tie yellow feather to leather strip hanging from the right side of the circle; red feather to leather strip at the bottom on the circle; black feather on the left side; white feather at the top of the circle.
5. Take strips of leather or cotton cloth and wrap the entire wire with them. Go round and round the wire, overlapping each round a bit, so that all the wire is covered. You may wish to wrap each quadrant in suitably coloured cloth.

For younger children:

- a. In advance of the class draw a circle divided into four equal quadrants on a piece of paper and copy these to hand out to the children.
- b. Invite them to colour each section of the circle, starting with white in the top right corner; yellow at the bottom right; red on the bottom left; and black on the top left.
- c. Provide the children with pictures cut from magazines (for example) of people from the four races that they can glue opposite the appropriate colour on the circle.
- d. You could also give them coloured feathers to glue on the circle, pointing outwards from the circle: white at the north; yellow to the east; red at the south; and black to the west.

For older children and youth:

Older children may be encouraged to add the seven sacred teachings and the cross to their medicine wheel (see illustration on page 19).

- i. Wrap the cross in white cotton cloth and the wheel in natural leather strips.
- ii. Paint seven small river rocks and write one teaching on each with a black marker. (Option: use feathers instead of rocks.)
- iii. Use fine wire to wrap the stones (or feathers) and hang them from the medicine wheel with love in the centre.

Another Craft Option:

If someone knows how to make a God's eye, another version of a medicine wheel can be made: use popsicle sticks for the cross arms and wool to wrap the eye starting with white in the middle, then yellow, then red, then black. (Instructions for making a God's eye may be found on the internet by searching "kid's crafts God's eye.")

The Talking or Sharing Circle (5-10 minutes)

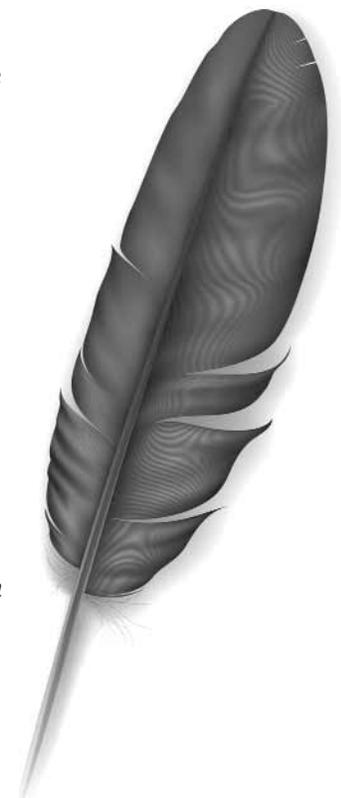
Teachers may wish to hold a discussion with a class about healing and reconciliation using the format of a traditional Talking or Sharing Circle: a communication technique used by many indigenous peoples. (See also the suggestion for Prayer on page 16.)

When we want to discuss an item of interest or importance with three or more people, we form a circle so we can see each other when speak, giving equal importance to all in the circle. From the time the first person speaks, it is the person to their left that speaks next, and continues around the circle. If there is more to be said once a person's turn has passed, the person must wait until their turn comes again around the circle. It is not unusual to have three or four "rounds" before everybody has finished talking. And this takes time!"

(Elder Audrey Bone)

A traditional talking circle is based on respect, sharing, interdependence and harmony. An Elder (or other leader) begins the conversation by holding a sacred eagle feather (or talking stick or stone) in the left hand (the side closest to the heart) and offering thoughts on the question at hand. The object is passed around the circle to allow everyone an opportunity to speak. There are normally four rounds to a talking circle. If decisions are necessary, they are reached by consensus.

Talking circles are considered to be sacred, confidential, and safe. In Aboriginal communities, anything said in the talking circle is not repeated outside the circle.



Additional Resources:

Visit The Presbyterian Church in Canada's web site to find what our church is doing to seek healing and reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples:

www.presbyterian.ca/healing

Visit Turtle Island to find links to many different web sites and resources:

www.turtleisland.org/resources/resources001.htm

Visit CBC for an overview and history along with frequently asked questions about residential schools:

www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/05/16/f-faqs-residential-schools.html

Visit Shannon Thunderbird for stories of survivors and the text of the Government of Canada's 2008 apology and the responses to it:

www.shannonthunderbird.com/residential_schools.htm

Visit the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's website for information about how it is leading a movement of healing and reconciliation in Canada:

www.trc-cvr.ca

Visit Anishnawbe Health Toronto for information about Traditional Teachings:

www.aht.ca/traditional-teachings

Visit Mennonite Church Canada for another excellent related resource:

"Reaching up to God our Creator":

www.mennonitechurch.ca

Liturgy for a Service of Worship

On Healing and Reconciliation

Worship Resources

Compiled by

The Rev. Margaret Mullin - Thundering Eagle Woman - Bear Clan

A woman of Ojibway, Irish and Scottish heritage

Theme:

“THAT THEY MAY BECOME ONE IN YOUR HAND” (Ez. 37:17)
Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord (Zech. 4:6)

Introduction:

In Canada, First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples have been divided as a result of our shared experience with colonialism and residential schools. These experiences have also led to divisions among the First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples themselves so we gather as Presbyterians to seek God the Creator’s wisdom to play our part in healing these divisions, looking to the example of our Saviour Jesus Christ for strength and determination to work for justice and find new ways to walk together as people united by the power of the Great Spirit.

In Ezekiel 37:1-14 we hear a strong message of Hope: God’s Spirit, at work in us, has the power to help us work toward healing and reconciliation. God’s Spirit is blowing and we are coming together. Thanks be to God!

Preparation for Worship

GATHERING: Invite local Aboriginal drummers to sing a welcoming song or play traditional drum and flute music softly as people prepare their hearts and minds for worship at the start of the service.

USE OF SYMBOLS: Arrange five candles on the communion table: four in a large circle, with a white candle in the north, yellow in the east, red in the south, and black in the west, and a blue one in the centre. Blue is the colour of water which is sacred in both traditional Aboriginal and Christian contexts. If coloured candles are not available, use white candles and tie the appropriate colour cotton ribbon around the base of each candle. All candles should be of equal size and equal height to symbolize equality.

As the call to worship progresses light the appropriate candle as the leader introduces each direction. Light the blue candle when the congregation faces the communion table. Leave the candles burning until after the Benediction.

A Service of Worship for Healing and Reconciliation

Call to Worship and Prayer of Adoration:

Invite the congregation to stand if they are able

Leader: It is appropriate when Aboriginal people begin any gathering or sacred ceremony to offer thanks to the one who has created us all, the Giver of Life.

As we come together here today to worship God let us open our hearts and minds to a different way of prayer.

We begin by looking to the east where the sun rises each day.

All [turning to face the east]: **Creator, we offer you thanks for the yellow race of people, for that time in our life which we know as infancy, for the hope of resurrection and for new beginnings. We also offer thanks for the teachings of honesty and truth.**

Leader: We next look to the south.

All [facing south]: **God, we offer you thanks for the red race of people especially for the indigenous people in Canada. We thank you for that time in our lives which we call adolescence, and for all those times of learning and growing that you bring to us throughout our lives. We also offer you thanks for the gifts of caring and sharing.**

Leader: We next look to the west, the place of the setting sun.

All [facing west]: **Great Spirit, we offer you thanks for the black race of people, for the time in our lives which we call adulthood, and for the ability to take all we know from you and live right. We offer thanks for the gift of faith and the teaching of respect for all.**

Leader: Next we look to the north, the cool refreshing breath of the Spirit of God.

All [facing north]: **We thank you Holy Spirit for the white race of people and we offer you great thanks for our elders and the gift of wisdom. We thank you for clarity of vision and a sense of the strength that comes from you. We need that to live each day. We also offer you thanks for the teaching of kindness that comes from this direction.**

Leader: We focus our thoughts upwards beyond the ceiling of this sanctuary.

All [glancing up]: **O Great Spirit, in the day sky's infinite blue and the vast blackness of the night sky sprinkled with stars too numerous to count, remind us that you are beyond our ability to know you, or to tell others about you, but that you also are no further away from us than the air we breathe.**

Leader: We look down to our feet.

All: **O Great Spirit, help us to give thanks unceasingly for the bounty provided to us from our sacred earth. From that sacred earth we come. To that sacred earth we will return. Without our sacred earth we would not live.**

Leader: And, as we finish we turn and face the centre.

All [facing the communion table]: **We give thanks to you God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all life, and we look to Jesus who is the head of the Church to lead us as we forge ahead, working together, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, toward healing and reconciliation with each other and with You.**

Leader: Let us worship God.

Prayer of Confession:

*Read in unison the following prayer which is adapted from
The Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, June 9, 1994.*

“Creator we confess that, with the encouragement and assistance of the Government of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed to take Aboriginal children out of their homes and place them in our Residential Schools. In these schools the children were deprived of their traditional languages and ways of life. The effect of this for Aboriginal people was the loss of cultural identity and the loss of a secure sense of themselves. For the Church’s insensitivity we ask forgiveness.” [section 5, The Confession, found on page 33 of this resource.]

“As a part of the policy of the Government of Canada to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into the Euro-Canadian culture we, with other churches, encouraged the government to ban important spiritual practices through which Aboriginal people experienced the presence of Creator God. For the Church’s complicity in this policy we ask your forgiveness.” [section 2, The Confession]

Gracious God, we know that we are called to respect all of your creation and all nations of your people. We know we are called by you to love as we journey through this life. Forgive us where we have failed in our relations with others and with your entire creation. Have mercy on us, and with your forgiveness, free us from any guilt. Help us to learn from our mistakes and to have the courage to move forward. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Through confession to God the mistakes of the past have been forgiven. We are free now to seek new ways to answer the call of God to walk together in faith one with the other. With profound assurance in God’s ability to forgive, we are free to try, and to try again. Thanks be to God!

Statement of Faith

Read in unison the following excerpt from Living Faith:

Some whom we encounter belong to other religions and already have a faith.
Their lives often give evidence of devotion and reverence for life.

We recognize that truth and goodness in them are the work of God’s Spirit, the author of all truth. We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance implying that we are better than they. But rather, in the spirit of humility, as beggars telling others where food is to be found, we point to life in Christ.

[From Living Faith – A Statement of Christian Belief,
The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1984, Section 9.2.1, page 26]

Suggested Hymns:

[From *The Book of Praise* 1997]

We are One in the Spirit #471
How Great Thou Art #332
Spirit of Gentleness #399
I the Lord of Sea and Sky #592
Called as Partners in Christ's Service #587

Suggested Scriptures:

Psalm 90: Nothing lives long except the earth and the mountains. Intolerable situations will come and go over time. Patience and tolerance have been required by indigenous peoples before they experienced genuine apology. Apology has paved the path for the hard work of forgiveness and reconciliation to proceed.

Ezekiel 37:1-14: In the midst of an image of hopelessness and despair comes God's promise of hope. Can we work towards healing and reconciliation? The answer is yes. The promise of God is being worked out. "I will put my Spirit in you and you shall live."

Luke 4:24-28: The people of God were very pleased with Jesus' message until he started mentioning God's concern for other nations and reminding them that God had sent his prophets to other nations of people in the past.

1 John 4:20-21: The call to love our neighbours is as challenging today as it was to the early Church. The book of 1 John was written at a time when there was intolerance of cultural differences and understandings of God and unhealthy fusion of spiritual practices. How do people from vastly different world views, cultures, histories, and expressions of faith in God love each other and walk together in Christ?

Sermon

"We are One in the Spirit" (*Enclosed, with full permission to use or to copy*)

Benediction

May the love of Creator God, the giver of all life, fill you so full of love that it will spill over into the world around you. May the grace and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ fill you with the assurance that you are indeed forgiven and free to move on from your past mistakes. And may the Power of the Great Spirit give you the courage to live as agents of healing and reconciliation in this world.

*Invite a child (east), youth (south), adult (west), an elderly person (north),
and the worship leader (blue,) to simultaneously blow out the candles at the conclusion of the service.
Represent as many races as possible in the people you choose.*

We are One in the Spirit

A sermon by The Rev. Margaret Mullin/Thundering Eagle Woman

With full permission to use or to publish within The Presbyterian Church in Canada

People ask me, a woman of Christian faith, and a Traditional Anishinabe woman, if it is possible to be a Christian and follow my First Nations traditional Spiritual practices at the same time. After 10 years of learning from my Elders, experiencing many of the sacred ceremonies, praying, discussing, and seeking understanding, I say “Yes, I can.”

Alex, a full blood Ojibway Elder from Kenora, Ontario, was a Traditional man who honoured the Christian ways. I asked him one night after a meeting of the National Native Ministries Council a few years ago if it was possible to be Traditional and Christian at the same time. After a long and comfortable silence Alex said this one word: “Yes.”

During a two hour conversation Alex went on to say that Jesus paid special attention to maintaining a healthy balance in his own life every day. He stayed close to God at all times, and he spent even more time in prayer when things got hard for him. “The way I see it,” Alex said, “Jesus worked at staying healthy, at keeping his own life in balance, and at having a strong connection to God. Then Jesus simply trusted God to help him with his work. I use those ways and the ways of my ancestors to keep myself strong, too.”

Alex went on to help me see that Jesus spent his life helping others find balance in their lives: physical, intellectual, emotional and Spiritual health were all important to him. As we talked, he helped me see that as followers of Jesus we need to help our people find that kind of balance in their lives. Something Alex said to me that night has completely changed my way of thinking and I quote him directly, “Gitche Manitou is not an Indian god Margaret, but the One and only true God with an Indian name.”

That night Alex helped me understand more clearly that First Nations people do not have a God problem. They already know God and they know God’s ways because they were raised up to know God in their own traditional ways long before any contact with Christian Europeans. Alex helped me see that some of our people just have problems living right. When they live wrong they get spiritually bankrupt and all we can do is share with them what we know about living right.

But first we must earn the right to share what we know. We earn that right by loving – love is the most important thing. Second we must show respect. Both love and respect need to be shown before they will listen to us. “When they are ready to listen,” Alex said, “then we can tell them about Jesus and how he took our sin on himself so that we can all be free of shame and stand strong in God’s presence. Then we must trust that God will do the rest in God’s time – when they are ready.” That was wise advice. It is so simple it is profound.

Three out of eight of my great-grandparents were Ojibway but only in the last decade of my life have I started to learn from Ojibway and Cree Elders about the rich meaning of my indigenous ancestors’

cultural and Spiritual traditions. There is something wrong with that picture. Aided by the assimilation policies of earlier Canadian governments my Mum was scooped away from her First Nation's family at the age of three when her mother died. Mum was raised in a Children's Aid group home in Thunder Bay, Ontario and in non-indigenous foster homes. She was denied any access to her Ojibway identity and cultural and Spiritual traditions. Both of us began to learn what had been taken away from her when she was 70 years of age.

This is some of what I have learned. First Nations people believe that we are intimately related to each other by virtue of being children of the one God, and that we are related to the earth itself – to the air, the water, the birds, the animals, the insects, and all the creatures of the waters – because we are all part of the one Creation that was woven together by the one Creator. When I talk about loving my relations as a strong Anishinabe woman I am not just talking about loving my own blood family and closest friends. I now understand that I am related to and called by God to care deeply for all people and every natural element of God's creation.

My European ancestors also believe that one God created everything there is and that God has given humans dominion over and responsibility for maintaining everything that has been created. I personally prefer being related to all things than having dominion over them. When I have dominion I am in charge and tend to force my way. When I am in relationship, love finds a gentle way. The concepts nonetheless are basically the same. God created, God put humans in charge, and we are responsible directly to God to treat each other, the earth, and all that is on it with respect.

My Christian faith and my Elders teach me that God has given us all the things that we need to survive, and that Creator has given us the teachings that will show us the way to a good life.

My Christian faith and my Elders both teach me that we become sick at heart when we wander away from God or go against Creator's teachings. When we do that we lose our power; we become unable to tell the truth and to deal with others honestly. We lose the wonderful vision of a peaceful life that Creator has given us. Our lives become filled with anger and gloom. The only way back to hope and happiness is through God.

My Christian faith and my Elders teach me that there is always hope for us because the Sacred Teachings will never die and forgiveness for wandering away from God is always waiting for us. Creator will keep those two things alive; they do not depend on us.

My Christian faith and my Elders both teach me that the potential for good that lives in each of us will never die because God has planted a strong seed of goodness inside us. That seed is able to survive the darkness, it is able to survive being dried out for years, it will always come back to life when we give it light and water.

My Christian faith and my Elders both teach me that people who have wandered away from God will wake up some day as if from a long sleep. They will start to look again for God and for what is right – and God will always be there to welcome them back.

My Christian faith and my Elders both teach me that each person is given the freedom to choose their own path and that The Great Spirit will help us make good choices. Both teach us that God has given us the gift of willpower or a strong mind and that it is up to us to use it for good with Creator's help. Both help us understand that the choice is ours to do good and resist evil. And both tell us we cannot do good under our own power. Again it is so simple it is profound. We are "One in the Spirit."

There is an incredible and ancient symbol my indigenous ancestors used that has helped inform my understanding of the ways of our common Creator. It is the Medicine Wheel. I firmly believe that if Jesus had been sent to Turtle Island¹ he would have used the medicine wheel teachings, the Sacred Tree teachings, the Turtle teachings, and other First Nations' sacred teachings to show us what God sent him to show us. Just because Jesus was born in Israel and used their sacred books as a starting point to teach from, does not mean he would not have used the sacred teachings of our traditional Elders in North America to build on also. Both nations knew and worshipped the same God.

The medicine wheel teaches that the four races of people on this earth are all a part of the one human family created by One God. It teaches that Creator God has given each nation the responsibility to care for the land that Creator gave them, including all the creatures of the earth, the birds of the air, and the swimmers in the ocean. And it teaches a host of other things.

Each teaching of the medicine wheel is divided into four equal parts that cannot be whole with any one of the parts missing or any one of the parts weaker than the other. There are four different races of people each with their own understanding, languages, ability, cultural expression and Spiritual practice. It is for us to live in harmony, work together, and learn together. There are four essential elements of our world: earth, water, air, and fire. They must all be respected equally and cared for because without each of them we could not survive. There are four things that every human must keep in balance to enjoy life: our physical, intellectual, emotional, and Spiritual selves. These are the four gifts that Creator has given to each of us. These gifts will help us grow strong and when they are in balance, we will have a good life even if things are bad around us.

It mystifies me that my Ojibway grandparents were forbidden by the assimilation policies of our early Canadian government to be taught what the medicine wheel teachings had to offer them. It mystifies me that my European and Ojibway grandparents were not encouraged to learn from each other and encouraged to walk together on a common path as children of the One God. It humbles me that it is coming together in my own life and in this present generation.

So here I am, back to the original question. Can The Rev. Margaret Mullin/Thundering Eagle woman from the Bear Clan be a strong Anishinabe woman and a Christian simultaneously? Yes I can, because I do not have my feet in two different worlds, two different religions, or two different understandings of God. The two halves of me are one in the same Spirit. I can learn from my grandparents, European and Indigenous Canadian, who have all walked on the same path ahead of me. I can learn from Jesus and I can learn from my Elders.

The teachings of the medicine wheel and the teachings of Jesus are powerful medicine for me. They are gifts from Creator meant to help me reconcile with God, heal myself, heal my relationships, help others, and heal the earth.

We can all find a vision of what our human potential is from the rich teachings of the medicine wheel. They closely parallel the same vision we get from the Biblical text and from the example of Jesus' life. That vision is a powerful magnet that will pull us toward God and bring us closer to a healthy, contented, human life that is filled with meaning.

We are all beautiful people because God made us that way. Some of us just need to find more balance in our lives. Jesus and the Aboriginal sacred traditions can show us how to do that. The Great Spirit will blow into us the courage and determination it takes to walk together, learn together, and grow together in faith with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

¹Many of the indigenous peoples in North America refer to North America as "Turtle Island."

Sermon Notes

**Prepared by The Rev. Marty Molengraaf
Duff's Church, Puslinch, Ontario
Member of the Governance Circle, Mamow Sha-way-gi-kay-win,
The North-South Partnership for Children**

For Healing and Reconciliation Sunday

Reflections on John 16:12-15

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.
He will not speak on his own, he will only speak what he hears,
and he will tell you what is yet to come.

In the introduction of the mandate for Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission we find these words:

"There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation. The Canadian government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission dares to speak the truth."

And from their terms of reference:

"The goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission shall be to:

- (d) Promote awareness and public education of Canadians about the Indian Residential School system and its impacts;
- (e) Identify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of the Indian Residential School system and legacy. The record shall be preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use."

Michael Hardy has been the director of the Tikinagan Child and Family Services based in Sioux Lookout for the past twenty years. He has travelled extensively throughout all of the thirty remote communities serviced by Tikinagan in northwestern Ontario – communities like Pikangikum, Kasabonika, Summer Beaver, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Fort Severn, Fort Hope, Sandy Lake and many others.

To speak the truth, Mr. Hardy says, is not easy. Nor is it easy to listen to the truth. "You want the truth," he said

to a recent gathering of ambassadors of healing and reconciliation. “You can’t handle the truth. I can’t handle the truth.” There were tears in his eyes.

He likened the legacy of the Indian residential school system to a huge pit—a pit of suffering and despair, of unspeakable horror.

To listen to the truth is to hear the voices coming out of that pit. It is to stand at the edge and to not run away. Lots of people come to the edge of the pit, Mr. Hardy said. But they do not stay. They come and then we never hear from them again. They are too frightened. The pain and the problems they see are too immense. “We need people,” he cried, “to stand at the edge of the pit and to stay there!”

To do so is virtually impossible. It is not possible for humankind. It is possible only for God! When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you in all truth.

To stand at the edge and to stay there is possible only if we are with God and in God and God in us. To listen to the truth is God work. It is to hear the cries of the people, God’s own people who have suffered unbearably. The problems are immense and extremely difficult to sort out. Those who have begun to try to stand at the edge in the power of God’s love and God’s truth and to listen are learning a few things. The Spirit of Truth is speaking in the voices. “We don’t want or need you to solve our problems,” they are saying. “Aboriginal problems need Aboriginal solutions. But we need you to care. We invite you to be in relationship with us. We need you to tell all Canadians about the realities we face. When we know that there are non-Aboriginal people in Canada who are willing to listen, willing to stand at the edge, willing to be in relationship with us, it gives us hope. To know that you care gives us strength.”

This is God language: the language of love and relationship, solidarity and mutuality. It is the Spirit of Truth, come to guide us in all truth.

How about you? How about your congregation? Are you willing to stand and to listen – to not run away?

For Aboriginal Day Sunday

Reflections on Luke 8:26-39

As Jesus stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion” for many demons had entered him.

The Europeans who came to North America in the 16th century called the Aboriginal peoples who greeted them “Indians” because they thought they had arrived in India. Some also became convinced very quickly that these “Indians” were heathens and that many were possessed by demons. They quickly sought to preach the gospel to them and to “drive the demons out of them.” Later, in the residential school-era, “Indian” children were often forbidden to speak their own language, they were dressed in European-style clothes, and they were sometimes called “little red devils.”

It is time to face the demons that possess us here in Canada today. I imagine Jesus stepping out onto the land called Canada in the year 2010, and an everyday non-Aboriginal man of Canada greeting him. I imagine Jesus asking him, “What is your name?” And in a moment of truth this demon-possessed man responds, “My name is Legion, for we are many. Our name is Racism, Bias, Prejudice, Judgement, Intolerance. Our name is ‘May they all go away,’ or ‘What’s wrong with them?’, or ‘Why can’t they be like us?’”

We were in Webequie¹ visiting the members of that community, beginning to develop relationships with the people at the request of their chief. We were also helping to rebuild some outdoor landings and steps. Children gathered around.

“What is your name?” we asked them.

“I’m Thomas,” said one. “I’m Philip,” and “I’m Devin,” said the others.

But we found out later that Devin had said his name was Thomas, Thomas had said his name was Philip, and Philip had said his name was Devin. They didn’t tell us their real names until the third or fourth day of our visit.

Were they playing with us? Joking with us? Or did they not trust us? Perhaps it was all three.

Why should they trust us? Many have come to their community. Almost all have left, and the vast majority never come back again. Oh, they promise to come back, but they don’t. “When are you coming back?” they asked us.

Many promises have been made, and just as many broken.

The people of Webequie live in abject poverty.

Oh, but we cry, those of us whose name is Legion: “They are just lazy.”

They live with horrible social problems and difficulties.

Oh, but we cry, those of us whose name is Legion: “They are all drunks.”

Who is They?

What are their names?

Many have called them “Indians,” but that is not their name. They are not “Indians.” They are the Algonkian, the Cree, the Ojibway, the Huron, the Mohawk, the Sioux, and the Iroquois. They are the Squamish, the Nisga’a, the Haida, the Blackfoot, the Dene, the Chipewyan, the Anishinaabe and the Mi’kmaq. They are the Inuit and they are the Métis. And there are many more – all nations within Canada.

Their names are who they are and they are children of God. They are a hospitable people – a people who decided to share the land and the resources of this country we call Canada. And they are the people who have been mistreated over the years by the newcomers to this land.

In a statement to the Canadian people – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike—the Prime Minister of Canada on June 11, 2008 said the following:

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.²

“What is your name?” Jesus asked a man of the city. “Legion,” he said, for many demons had entered him.

May God help us this Aboriginal Day Sunday to drive all the demons away.

¹Webequie is an Ojibway community located 540 kilometres due north of Thunder Bay, Ontario

²Excerpt from the Government of Canada’s Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools, 2008

The Confession of The Presbyterian Church

As Adopted by the General Assembly June 9th, 1994

The Holy Spirit, speaking in and through Scripture, calls The Presbyterian Church in Canada to confession. This confession is our response to the word of God. We understand our mission and ministry in new ways, in part because of the testimony of Aboriginal peoples.

1. We, the 120th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, seeking the guidance of the Spirit of God, and aware of our own sin and shortcomings, are called to speak to the Church we love. We do this, out of new understandings of our past, not out of any sense of being superior to those who have gone before us, nor out of any sense that we would have done things differently in the same context. It is with deep humility and in great sorrow that we come before God and our Aboriginal brothers and sisters with our confession.
2. We acknowledge that the stated policy of the Government of Canada was to assimilate Aboriginal peoples to the dominant culture, and that The Presbyterian Church in Canada co-operated in this policy. We acknowledge that the roots of the harm we have done are found in the attitudes and values of western European colonialism, and the assumption that what was not yet moulded in our image was to be discovered and exploited. As part of that policy we, with other churches, encouraged the Government to ban some important spiritual practices through which Aboriginal peoples experienced the presence of the creator God. For the Church's complicity in this policy we ask forgiveness.
3. We recognize that there were many members of The Presbyterian Church in Canada who, in good faith, gave unstintingly of themselves in love and compassion for their aboriginal brothers and sisters. We acknowledge their devotion and commend them for their work. We recognize that there were some who, with prophetic insight, were aware of the damage that was being done and protested, but their efforts were thwarted. We acknowledge their insight. For the times we did not support them adequately nor hear their cries for justice, we ask forgiveness.
4. We confess that The Presbyterian Church in Canada presumed to know better than Aboriginal peoples what was needed for life. The Church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, "If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship like us, sing like us, work like us, they would know God as we know God and therefore would have life abundant." In our cultural arrogance we have been blind to the ways in which our own understanding of the Gospel has been culturally conditioned, and because of our insensitivity to aboriginal cultures, we have demanded more of Aboriginal peoples than the gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ who loves all peoples with compassionate, suffering love that all may come to God through him. For the Church's presumption we ask forgiveness.

5. We confess that, with the encouragement and assistance of the Government of Canada, The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed to take the children of Aboriginal peoples from their own homes and place them in Residential Schools. In these schools, children were deprived of their traditional ways, which were replaced with Euro-Canadian customs that were helpful in the process of assimilation. To carry out this process, The Presbyterian Church in Canada used disciplinary practices which were foreign to Aboriginal peoples, and open to exploitation in physical and psychological punishment beyond any Christian maxim of care and discipline. In a setting of obedience and acquiescence there was opportunity for sexual abuse, and some were so abused. The effect of all this, for Aboriginal peoples, was the loss of cultural identity and the loss of a secure sense of self. For the Church's insensitivity we ask forgiveness.
6. We regret that there are those whose lives have been deeply scarred by the effects of the mission and ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. For our Church we ask forgiveness of God. It is our prayer that God, who is merciful, will guide us in compassionate ways towards helping them to heal.
7. We ask, also, for forgiveness from Aboriginal peoples. What we have heard we acknowledge. It is our hope that those whom we have wronged with a hurt too deep for telling will accept what we have to say. With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people.

Bible Study

Goal: to explore and discuss the role of apology as an act of reconciliation.

Time required: about 40 minutes.

Scripture passage: 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20.

Other documents: The Presbyterian Church in Canada's 1994 Confession.

Getting started:

This bible study is set up for small group (5 or 6 people) discussion, and requires that one person facilitate the process. The leader should read through the study prior to beginning.

Opening Prayer

One person may offer an opening prayer.

Part 1 (5 minutes)

Leader Information

The goal of Part 1 is to explore the feelings associated with being hurt, and the need to apologize for wrongdoing as a necessary part of reconciliation. Participants will not have to share particular examples of personal hurt, but will be asked to name the emotions that they felt. The leader will ask the Discussion Questions, one at a time. Allow each participant about 10 or 15 seconds to answer each question. Ask participants not to comment on what other people are saying, but to share their own feelings. Ask participants to say "pass" if they wish to do silent reflection instead of sharing.

**Discussion Question 1: Can you think of time when you felt hurt by a friend, family member or neighbour? How did this make you feel?
Participants name the emotions they felt.**

**Discussion Question 2: Can you think of a time when you hurt a friend, family member or neighbour? How did you feel?
Participants name the emotions they felt.**

**Discussion Question 3: Did an apology help make things better?
The answer may be yes, no, or something in between.**

Part 2 (5 minutes)

Leader Information

In Matthew 22: 36-39 Jesus is asked to name the greatest of all commandments. Jesus responds saying that we must love God with all our heart, soul and mind, and that we must love our neighbours (our family, friends, neighbours and strangers) as we love ourselves. Read 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20 to the group. Ask participants to share one or two words or images from this passage that caught their attention. Each participant should not take more than 30 seconds to respond. No discussion is necessary.

Part 3 (7-8 minutes)

Leader Information

The dictionary defines 'reconcile' as "to restore to friendship or harmony." Read 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20 to the group for a second time. Give the participants a moment to think about the passage. Read the Discussion Question. Ask each participant to share their thoughts, but not to respond to other's comments unless it informs their own thoughts. Allow each participant one minute to speak. Ask participants to say "pass" if they wish to reflect silently.

Discussion Question: How would you define reconciliation?

Part 4 (20 min)

Leader Information

Read 2 Corinthians 5: 17-20 to the group for a third time. Read The 1994 Confession of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Participants may take turns reading the different sections of the Confession. Read the Discussion Questions. This is an open discussion where participants may express their thoughts and feelings, and also engage in dialogue.

**Discussion Questions: Do you think it was important for The Presbyterian Church in Canada to apologize to Aboriginal people?
Do you think it was important to apologize to God?**

CLOSING PRAYER

One person may offer the closing prayer.