

In 2020 during the Advent Season, Our Common Ground committee (which is birthed out of the Inner City Pastoral Ministry) reflected on the book 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act by Bob Joseph. In the spirit of understanding the deep injustices Indigenous peoples in this Nation both historically and presently, we have committed our time reflecting and deepening our knowledge by reading this book. We invite you this June to take one day to read a reflection.

#1 Imposed the elected chief and band council system

Reflection by Quinn

Every Advent I'm startled again by the mystery of the God and Creator of the universe coming into the world as a helpless, vulnerable infant. The mystery for us is that God's power is shown most clearly when all of God's majesty and might are stripped away to reveal a child capable of loving and being loved in all of humanity's weakness and vulnerability. The same Jesus, born as an ordinary baby, grew up and called a little child to him and said, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:2-3). I've had this in my mind as I read the introduction to '21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act.' The same people who, in their minds, were bringing the Good News of Jesus to the original inhabitants of Turtle Island, could not possibly have gotten his teachings and example more wrong. As Bob Joseph highlights, quoting a Government of Canada report written in 1877, "Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of *tutelage* and treated as *wards* or *children* of the State." The job of the settler state, however, was to use their *wisdom* and *duty* to lift the 'Red Man' (sic) out of their childlike dependence into the *privileges and responsibilities* of full citizenship in 'higher civilization' (p.8 italics added). The language used here clearly shows who the grown-ups and who the children were in this scenario. The paternalism of this attitude is utterly barren of the humility and child-like openness to change that Jesus calls his followers to as children of God.

As we'll read throughout the book, that lack of humility is the basis of the Indian Act, still in force today. As Joseph highlights in the first thing we might not know about the Act, the arrogant paternalism of the Canadian State who passed the Act still affects the lives of Indigenous people in Canada today. That the majority of First Nations in Canada continue to be governed by a Chief and Council system foreign to their ancient ways of self-government is a testament to the enduring influence of the idea that Indigenous people are 'children' needing to be supervised by the 'grown-ups.'

As we move through this season of Advent and read Bob Joseph's book together, I find myself reflecting on this question: What might our society look like if the earliest European colonists and their descendants who framed the Indian Act had taken Jesus' words that they must change and become like little children seriously? What if they entered relationship with Canada's Indigenous People with the fundamental belief that they were children of God meeting other children of God? What if they were open to learning and humble enough to recognize their at best partial knowledge and incomplete grasping at wisdom? What if, like children, they knew they were vulnerable and needing to listen, learn, and share? What might the shared Land be like today? What might Indigenous communities be like today? What might settler communities be like today? What if we today truly had the child-like attitude Jesus asks of us? I would love to hear thoughts on these questions to begin our discussions.

May you all have a blessed, vulnerable, and peaceful Advent open to wonder and growth!

#2 "Denied women status"

Reflection by Andrea

The patriarchal attitude behind who "counts as an Indian" just galls me. And that even today, "Indian women do not have the same human rights or protection of their rights as Canadian women" (p. 23, quoting Peggy J. Blair).

Imposing a patrilineal system without consideration of the existing Indigenous systems for determining who is "family" is part of the same arrogance that Quinn talked about yesterday.

When my daughter was born to German parents living in Canada she was automatically granted Canadian and German citizenship. Canada also did not have a problem with me becoming a Canadian citizen - in addition to being a German citizen. I find it astounding that Canada treats newcomers better than it treated (and treats) Turtle Island's Indigenous people - a glaring double standard that reveals once again the ultimate goal of the Indian Act: assimilation, read "complete disappearance" and "erasure." We see the lasting success of the policy very clearly in the staggering numbers of MISSING Indigenous women and girls. No such violent policies of erasure were practiced by Indigenous inhabitants of Turtle Island among each other, as far as I know. And no such policy was practiced towards the European arrivals. It was welcome, co-existence and co-operation. That same welcome is what we see in the life and words of Jesus. He treated women astonishingly well - including the Samaritan woman at the well, and the Syro-Phoenician woman who bested him into healing her daughter. Jesus did not

exclude anyone from the family - his kin is not defined along blood lines. He said "whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:35). And to "all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13).

Jesus' teachings run counter to the Indian Act. Time to get rid of it. And even more: time to make right and heal its devastating effect on Indigenous women and their children. Let Indigenous women lead us all in this. Specifically, thank you for your spirit-filled leadership,

[Michelle D Nieviadomy](#)

, that leads us to respect and a new kinship I will now, a little provocatively, call sisterhood--

#3 Created reserves

Reflection by Nick

It has been important for me as a settler to learn to think differently about the gift of the Land. To learn that the city stands (and falls) on the integrity of the Earth beneath it. The Creators gift of the land and of creation, of which we are a part. My understanding of land and how we live on it was formed by the grids and fences that we see in most cities. The fence between the land and home I live in with my family that divides what is ours and us from what is outside and other. I used to take the train often in South Eastern Ontario, where I grew up, and enjoyed watching deer jumping over the fences of farmers fields. It only recently occurred to me that it was the fences and fields, not the deer, who didn't belong there. I remember my first trip in an airplane, looking down on the patchwork of rectangles and grids of roads that carve up the land into tightly ordered parcels. These are of course all the marks that Canadian society has made on the land, the furrows that we have plowed and the divisions that we have created. It had never occurred to me to imagine living on the land in a different way. In a way that does not divide people and parcel out pieces of our common gift, heritage, and createdness.

I remember the first time I visited a reserve. I didn't think of it any differently than visiting a neighbouring town. Sure, the signs were in Mohawk and the roads were different but I had assumed it was a town, established sometime long ago in history, with a mayor and citizens just like any other. It had not occurred to me that it was not a town. That it was created not for the flourishing of people, society and economy but rather to limit a people and their freedom on their land; to change and control a society, a people and a way of life.

When Treaty 6 was being negotiated Pihtokahanapiwiyin, Pound Maker, said “This is our land, not a piece of pemmican to be cut off and given in little pieces.” This was not a statement of title or ownership but of spirit and creation, of a wholistic view of common life together on the whole of the land, with everything Creator has given us and called us to be.

1492 Land Back Lane and the other work and actions of Land Defenders from coast to coast is not about money and ownership, it is about living a life as connected to the land.

Like it or not, we all live on the land and truly, there can be no reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada until we learn how we can live on this land in a good way together, thinking differently about the boxes and fences that divide us into pieces and knowing each of us to be a part of the whole of creation. I’m thinking specifically of Ephesians 2, of Christ who is our peace, breaking down the walls and hostility that divide us so that we might know we are one.

#4 Encouraged voluntary and enforced enfranchisement

“Enfranchisement” sounds like it should be a good thing; a pretty word covering the bigoted and racist intention to take someone and their family and resources away from their community and way of life, and to keep the needs and perspectives of Indigenous people out of authority and discourse of Canadian society.

As a settler and a priest in the Anglican Church of Canada I am on a walk of reconciliation. I know that I carry the heritage of people and institutions that have perpetuated genocide, harm and injustice and I have benefited from it. I must acknowledge and know that, understand its causes, atone for the harm and act for change; that’s how I understand my journey of reconciliation and that of my church.

In walking that journey of reconciliation, and truly the journey of coming to know Christ in my life, I have found such grace and blessing and healing in ceremony and spiritual traditions and understandings of Indigenous colleagues, partners and co-workers. If I could imagine my life without them, or without them being fully themselves; I can only imagine myself being less, my mind being narrow and my heart being hard.

In 1911 Rev. Edward Ahenakew was the first Indigenous student at the University of Saskatchewan, and the only for many years. As both a university graduate and Anglican priest he was subject to the “Gradual Civilization Act”, and though it was never enforced upon him its effect was felt. In “Voices of the Plains Cree”, published after his death, through the voice of Old Keyam, Rev. Ahenakew makes his struggle of not belong and be himself in a world of settlers keenly felt:

“In Old Keyam, it is true, much of the past lingers deliberately, though he is an inferior and often garrulous successor to the Old Men. Still, he makes the effort to look also to the future. In his youth he had tried to fit himself to the new ways; he had thought that he would conquer; and he was defeated instead. If we listen to what he has to say perhaps we may understand those like him who know not what to do and, in disguising their bewilderment and their hurt, seem not to care. “ I can only imagine the Canada that would have been, and rejoice in the Canada that will be in generations to come, as Indigenous voices are able to enter into academia, the courts, medicine, the church and beyond, with true honour and authority, in tact with traditions and communities, without the fear of “enfranchisement”.

5 Could expropriate portions of reserves for public service by Fiona

Here is today's reflection on #5 of the things we may not have known.

“God saw everything that God had made and indeed it was very good.” Genesis 1:31a

“Land. If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America, you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.” Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*

Land is essential to all of us. We all rely on it to feed us, to drive on, to build our homes on. It is how we stay connected to each other and to nature. My husband and I own our home and the small plot of land on which it sits. We have carefully over the years added to the beauty by adding flowers and shrubs. We have planted flowers that encourage pollinators and every summer we see many bees, butterflies, damselflies, and dragonflies. We love it and want to take care of it. We understand that our caring is a result of Creator’s creation and loving us first.

Land for First Nations people is essential, it is connection to Creator, to history and to family. Reclaiming land is an important justice issue for First Nations all across the country. Take a look here for more information on how one community is putting pressure to make this happen:

<https://www.facebook.com/1492LandBackLane/>

It is a deeply spiritual issue and is connected to ceremony and overall good health. The prophet Isaiah says: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus 2 it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. Isaiah 35; 1 This Advent we need to think how as an act of

reconciliation we can understand that all the land we live on is Indigenous land and how we can support Indigenous leadership in their work to reclaim land that was taken away. Do you know whose land you are on?

#6 - Renamed Individuals with European Names

Reflection by Fred

What's in a name? A name is what is used to identify who you are, the family you belong to, and can sometimes indicate where you come from. At one point in time, it even told be people what you did for a living. A blacksmith in medieval England would have been known by the surname, Smith.

Much of indigenous culture is tied to language. For many indigenous cultures on Turtle Island, names were given during sacred ceremonies and naming rites was an important part of being part of the community. For Haudenosaunee, the naming of children was done by Clan Mothers in the fall during one of the most important Haudenosaunee ceremonies during the year, the harvest festival.

To remove one's ancestral name is to remove your connection to your language, your culture, your community, and in the case of the Haudenosaunee, the land. It was another tool in the colonial government's arsenal to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the dominant society.

The issue of stripping ancestral names from Indigenous Peoples became a talking point recently because of the controversy surrounding the name of Edmonton's CFL franchise. The vast majority of sports fans don't have a problem with the name and will argue that the name isn't a racial slur and that people in the Western Arctic don't have an issue with the name. While for some Inuit this may be the case, for many this is not the case.

What the majority of people are not aware is that the name is not what Inuit identified themselves by and that the term "Eskimo" is associated with the "Eskimo" Identification Tag program that the colonial government implemented in the early 20th Century. Deprived of their Inuktitut names, the Inuit in the Eastern Arctic were issued serial numbers in place of their names and forced to wear dog tags as a form of identification.

The justification behind the tag and serial number system was two-fold. First, the government agents said that it was difficult to pronounce the Inuktitut names. The second reason was that it permitted the colonial government to track the movements of Inuit at a time when the colonial government was relocating villages in an effort to assert its sovereignty over the North during the height of the Cold War.

What the tags did is reduce the Inuit of the Eastern arctic to nothing more than a number. It took away their humanity and perpetuated the doctrine of Terra Nullis. That the Inuit were not human beings and therefore could not hold claim to the land.

When I think of the answer to the question what's in a name, I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 147:4. "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names." If our loving Creator knows the names of all the stars, then he certainly knows the names of all of us, his greatest creation. Our name is our identity. It is our connection to our community, our family, the land, and most importantly, it is our connection to Creator.

Ekosi.

#7: CREATED a permit system to control Indian's ability to sell products from farms **Reflection by Michelle**

I was outraged by the way the government tied the hands of Indigenous peoples from having a fair chance of making a decent living while trying to navigate a new economic system.

When the Indigenous people began to collaborate and work as a collective in order to make the best of a system that was against their success, they were further faced with more barriers. What was natural, to work together in community based on Indigenous traditional belief systems, the hope was to instill individualism & self reliance. Further to that, they had to be given permission from their Indian agent. The very system who did not want to see the rise of the Indigenous person.

Success was not meant to be ours. Or at least not to be more successful than the settlers.

But here we are today. Vibrant and strong.

Today there are a couple of (virtual) Indigenous markets I have my eye on! Over hundreds of Indigenous people channelling their entrepreneurial spirit to make a decent living for themselves. There are many Indigenous artisans who now have the freedom their ancestors never had, to rise in their gifts & talents Creator! I often find myself being the blessed one when I buy & shop Indigenous!

We are reminded in this Advent season as we reflect on this book, the spirit of Creator at work in humankind. Despite it all, Indigenous people continue move in community, in creativity, ingenuity, in resiliency and in capacity. This is testament of Creator's spirit.

Our HOPE is Creator in who we live and move and have our being

#8 Prohibited sale of ammunition to Indians

Reflection by Quinn

Today we begin chapter 3 of Bob Joseph's book, skillfully entitled "Tightening Control." As we progress slowly through the book I am definitely getting a clearer sense of how the strategy of the Indian Act was from the beginning to put a metaphorical rope around the necks of Indigenous People and to slowly tighten it and tighten it until all oxygen is cut off and the people are forced to assimilate. The creation of the elected male chief and council system to replace older forms of self-government and stifle the voice of Indigenous women. The creation of reserves to keep the people in place. Forced enfranchisement for those who might wish to rise up and defend their people through the law. The law-enshrined right of governments to expropriate Indigenous reserve lands (eg. Papaschase lands in South Edmonton). The undermining of the ability of Indigenous farmers to compete in the imposed 'free market.' All are measures to steadily tighten the rope and increase the government's ability to control Indigenous People.

And then we come to today's topic: 'Prohibited sale of ammunition to Indians.' Not only did this seriously curtail Indigenous Peoples' ability to hunt to feed their families, but, as Joseph writes, "There was a fear that if the Indians were armed, the government would have serious difficulty in curtailing the mounting agitation among Western Indians and Metis" (p.41). In other words, when the methods used to dominate the people become so oppressive that First Nations and Metis people begin to resort to the only thing left to them, to resist using force if necessary, their ability to do just that is also legislated away. This is a classic tactic of oppressive regimes everywhere.

Having studied 'just war' theology, it seems to me that the often violent struggle of the ANC and others to resist the apartheid system in South Africa, or the armed resistance to the Nazi regime in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust, were both legitimate uses of violence to counter the more vicious violence of the State. As a Christian leader I am very hesitant to speak of the use of violence to counter violence. As Jesus said, "All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). And I must say that, despite a long road yet to travel, some of the more obviously repressive portions of the Indian Act are no longer in force. Yet, when I see those who protest the violation of land agreements by setting up road and train blockades being labelled as 'terrorists,' and when I see hereditary Wet'suwet'en Chiefs and Elders having the snipers' guns of the RCMP aimed at them and being subjected to arrest and removal from their own lands, I have to wonder. I'm certainly not saying that I wish to see increased violence in the relationship between Indigenous People in Canada and the government. That

would break my heart. Yet neither is it my place to say how, when, and using what means Indigenous People should resist oppressive government actions.

In this second week of Advent I pray for the work of peacemakers everywhere. I pray for those who would exercise violence to 'curtail mounting agitation.' And I pray for those who continue to feel the ropes of oppression tightening, and who contemplate what forms of resistance will be required in this tense day and age. And I long for the time when "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24).

#9 Prohibited the sale of intoxicants to Indians

&

#10 Declared potlatch and other cultural ceremonies illegal

Reflection by Andrea

Section 9 helps us understand the Indian Act's direct role in the widespread, harmful stereotypes around Indigenous people and alcohol. I knew about alcohol use as a form of self-medication against trauma, but did not know the Act's role in hasty drinking so as not to be found "in possession".

I have traveled and eaten in restaurants with Indigenous friends. There was no evidence they handled liquor less well than me. But I got a weird vibe: I seemed to feel the eyes of the server and others on us and them perhaps thinking, "Will those people get into trouble?" I felt almost imperceptibly under the microscope, as I never had in the company of non-Indigenous friends. It told me something about how subtle the racist stereotypes are.

At the end of the section, Bob Joseph asks whether "how mainstream society views Indians" will ever change. We can do our part by changing our own thinking, and by speaking up and informing others when the topic comes up. In addition, Wab Kinew's video about the stereotype of the "drunk Indian" (and a bunch of others) is a powerful counteragent - watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GlkuRCXdu5A>.

cultural practices and ceremonies. In the Dene community I am most familiar with, Elders told me that the main missionary to them, Father LeGoff, a) ousted the medicine man, and b) after having learned the language, turned the Dene word for God into the word for devil and invented a new word for God (still used today). On Sunday we heard from Harold Rocher that his request to have the pow-wow drum played at his ordination service was denied. In the Dene community I mentioned, drumming (in this case with hand drums) was tabooed. In the mid 2000's, the Dene drum was heard again publicly for the very first time, I believe. I

was present, the drummers were young men from a more remote Dene community. Their drumming and singing (in their language) was powerful and moved people; some swayed hesitantly, some had tears of joy in their eyes. It was a moment of palpable relief and healing. Healing and restoration is what our God is about.

#11 Restricted Indians from leaving their reserve without permission from an Indian agent

Reflection by Nick

A few years ago Jacqueline Cardinal shared with a group the image she had been taught of reconciliation as “building bridges”. Bridges are not just how we are connected she says, we don’t just walk halfway and shake hands to turn around and go back. Bridges are for travel and visiting and commerce. If we are building bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities it is so we can be with and among each other, sharing the relationships, stories and goods of each community.

This pass policy burned many of those bridges.

As pandemic precautions require each of us to stay home and limit contacts for safety, we get a small glimpse of how much life we truly give one another through visiting and traveling and even just shopping and browsing.

Luke tells us Jesus was born in a manger because “there was no place for them in the inn”. No place in their own homeland, pushed out and unwelcome was Creator, freedom, love and mercy, born on earth. The pass system made “no place for you” a policy and normal part of Indigenous / Settler interaction. I have no doubt of the wounds and harm this has wrought through the years.

I can never know the great magnitude of people and communities having being kept from simple and necessary free travel across the land and within various communities, for generations. Not only lost relationships and opportunities but the enormous psychological and spiritual harm and associated side effects, especially as the policy was used specifically to attack spiritual ceremony and gathering.

Knowledge of this policy brings greater urgency to becoming inclusive in all our spaces and a different lens and understanding to incidents like Indigenous Elders being removed from mall food courts by security guards.

(<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/security-guard-bans-metis-elder-from-city-centre-mall-until-complaints-investigated/>) and

(<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/apologetic-mall-officials-hounding-me-says-formerly-banned-aboriginal-elder>)

I wonder, in the places I visit and work, what are the attitudes, assumptions, environment and policies that signal to Indigenous or other peoples that they might not belong or are not welcome. How can I create environments and opportunities to build and open new bridges and to make a place for one another; ways for people to visit and share the stories and riches of one another and their communities?

I'm certain there are already places here in the city that are doing that work, highlighting the work of Indigenous entrepreneurs or welcoming and supporting Indigenous people and communities.

#12 Created Residential Schools

Reflection by Fiona

“But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations. Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days? Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old—unless you have utterly rejected us, and are angry with us beyond measure.”

Lamentations 5: 19-22

I first learned about Residential Schools after the former Primate of the Anglican church, Michael Peers, made his apology to survivors in 1993. My first reaction was shock and then anger. I couldn't understand how the church I grew up in, who nurtured my faith and compassion for others and that I loved had participated in such a repulsive enterprise. It didn't matter to me that we stopped running them in 1969, it mattered to me that we participated and that we led them.

Time after time I hear in my conversations with folks in the Anglican church is how long do we need to keep talking about this. I always say that we will never have a time when we don't talk and remember our role in Residential Schools. I think this is true for even the church communities whose denominations who weren't involved in running Residential Schools, as everyone who is not Indigenous has benefitted from the actions of past and present federal governments. We all need to repent and ask for forgiveness from anyone who went to residential school and those whose parents and grandparents went to them. We can never stop saying we are sorry for the past actions of the church and the government. We cannot move forward with reconciliation unless we acknowledge the wrongs that took place.

Bob Joseph finishes up this section with this:

As a part-time seminarian, I get to explore the history of the Church and the history of scripture. I think about where the Church would be or if it would even exist if the passing down of the oral histories of the Hebrew people was suppressed by the Babylonians during the exile. Much of what we know as the Hebrew Scriptures would not exist. Jesus would not have been able to read from Isaiah in the Synagogue.

The richness of what is expressed in the Old Testament would have been lost forever had the Hebrews lost their language and were unable to record their oral history and teachings. I am grateful for the Elders and knowledge keepers for preserving the languages, the oral histories, and worldviews. Without them, our culture would have been gone forever.

**# 14 Forbade western Indians from appearing in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede, or pageant wearing traditional regalia.
Reflection by Michelle**

In 1973, Marlon Brando won the Oscar for his role in *The Godfather* in which he had sent Sacheen Littlefeather to decline the award on his behalf. A couple of reasons for this: the way the native people were portrayed in Hollywood film & to bring to light the stand off at Wounded Knee.

In this black tie event, when Sacheen made her way to the stage, she was wearing her regalia & beadwork. I imagine she wore this because it had great significance in who she was as Apache woman. I can only imagine the courage & conviction it took for her to be there, to stand on this world stage to show the beauty of her culture and WHO she was especially in a time when Indigenous peoples were not respected (to say the least).

Two summers ago, I had put on my regalia for the first time, entered the arbour & danced my first pow wow. Part of me in that moment had to fight this internal battle of shame (the shame of being Indigenous person that I have carried for many years) but a bigger part of me was so proud to be able to dance in my regalia because I knew this was not allowed at one point in our history.

When I was dancing, I was really dancing my prayers. It was a sacred moment for me.

I don't have the power to speak on behalf of all dancers, but from the teachings that have been given to me, we dance for the people who cannot dance. We dance to heal. We dance our prayers. As beautiful as the dancing is to watch, the spiritual connection behind the dance is even more beautiful. So to read "inviting Indigenous peoples to dance as a novelty act" struck me hard.

I cannot help but to honor the ancestors who have walked before me again and again as I read this book. The ones who fought hard against injustice, inequality and blatant racist policies. The irony of reading “it was outside the jurisdiction of Indian agents acting as justices of the peace”. Perhaps in the small sense, the Indian agents were trying to keep the peace between the colonial system, the powers that be and the Indigenous peoples. BUT definitely in no shape, way or form was PEACE known to our people.

PEACE is not found when the people cannot be who Creator made them be. PEACE cannot be found with policies that target the very heart of people’s culture. PEACE is not in sight when one culture attempts to dominate and assimilate another culture.

In this Advent season, on the 2nd Sunday, the candle lit represents PEACE.

I believe we all want and pray for peace on earth.

But we cannot know peace when we still have the injustices in our communities. When there still is inequality and racism. When a people are still searching for the PEACE within themselves because being told in so many ways “being an Indian won’t do you any good”.

Peace is what we pray for and peace is what we will continue to fight for. ❤️

Reflection **Michelle**

#15 Leased uncultivated reserve lands to non Indians Reflections by Quinn

Anger is what I feel as I write this. As we go through the book all the chess pieces of the Indian Act move toward an inevitable checkmate for the settler government of Canada. Move: We'll negotiate a Treaty with you and set aside reserve land for you and your descendants' use forever. Counter move: Great, we can continue to hunt and fish our lands as our ancestors have done for millennia. Counter move: No, you must cultivate the land in true European fashion. Move: Ok, some of us are willing to do that. But you must give us proper farm implements as promised in the Treaty. Counter move: No, that's too expensive. Move: Ok, we'll work together as community to buy modern farm equipment and cultivate our land for a profit. Counter move: No, you can't do that. You'll be competing with settler farmers, so you can't actually sell your farm produce. Move: Well then we'll have to use our land to hunt and fish as our ancestors have done for millennia. Counter move: No, you're obviously not willing or able to use your land for proper cultivation so we'll have to lease out your land to corporations and the military to not cultivate it. And we'll do it without your consultation or consent for our profit. Checkmate.

Yesterday in the presentation by Archbishop MacDonald he told a story of the Navajo response to land ownership. A leader of the Navajo, when told the people needed to parcel out land for individual ownership, laughed and said something to the effect of, "Haha own the land? Next you'll tell us that we can own the sky!" It made me think about the clashing of worldviews between Europeans and many Indigenous People. The idea of a person owning the land and its animals, the trees and the sap running in them, and the water and its fish, grows out of a European and capitalist notion that everything on earth is for sale to the highest bidder. Since resources are finite the one who owns the most stuff becomes the winner. On the internet today, for \$80.00 you can buy a square foot of Scotland and become a 'Laird' complete with a fancy certificate. Just for the holidays you can buy a star for only \$34.99 and have it registered in the 'star catalogue' with your name on it. These are absurd examples, but are they more absurd than the process of 'giving' Indigenous people their own land, forbidding them to thrive on it, and then taking it back when they fail to thrive?

I'm not sure what to do with these meandering thoughts of mine and the emotions the reading of the book have brought forth in me. As a settler in this land, obviously I'm a direct beneficiary of the expropriation of Indigenous land. And yet I love this land and feel a part of it. I know that real compensation will have to be made and that will come with a cost to me and my descendants. I also know that as the people who occupy this land, both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous, we can do better in walking and sharing together nation to nation, people to people. I long to be a part of that process and to see the day when it's no longer winner take all, but where all of Creator's children thrive together on this land that we all agree to protect and cherish.

#16, Forbade Indians from forming political organizations

Reflection by Andrea

Of course.

If you are in power and people who are not happy with what you are doing start talking to each other and end up banding together, that is a real threat. We think that political suppression only happens in evil dictatorships. This is not so. Canada was and is not an evil dictatorship. But it could not tolerate Indigenous organizing and resistance. And insidiously, the language that is used to suppress such organizing and resistance demonizes the resisters: "...any Indian of another reserve to come amongst them with the object of disaffecting them against the government. If you find that anyone uses such seditious language..." (J.D. MacLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary, 1922, quoted on p. 72). Creating disaffection,

dissatisfaction, sedition. The idea is that things are good the way they are. Those in power know best. Those who resist or protest are ungrateful, anti-government, anti-country, and against the common good. Laws and force against them are necessary. It's completely logical.

And it is still happening today. Think of Alberta's 2020 "Critical Infrastructure Defence Act". We are meant to think that regular law-abiding citizens would never be affected by a bill such as this. We are to think that this bill is good and necessary. After all, it was created in response to the Indigenous-led blockades in protest of the Coastal Gas Link pipeline's route through Wetsuwet'en territory (a year ago...remember?). This bill, too, is only good if things are good the way they are. But I submit that this bill outlaws legitimate, peaceful land protection.

I find it very ironic that, as Thomas King tells it on p. 73, underground Indigenous political organizing disguised as Bible studies and sang "Onward Christian Soldiers." Because of course, the church would be the last place to find subversion. -- Really? If we read the gospels, and actually much of the Bible, without our mainstream, settler blinders on, subversion is all over! I wish the priests and missionaries of that time had read the Bible with Indigenous people in this subversive, faith-ful way (like happened later on in places in Latin America). The hymn would have taken on a whole other meaning.

Where are we as the church today? As people of Jesus? How do we read the Bible? What do we teach? What do we condone and what do we resist?

17 Prohibited anyone, Indian or non-Indian, from soliciting funds for Indians to hire legal counsel

Reflection by Nick

There is some irony that one of the reasons we are on this journey of reconciliation together is because of the largest class action settlement in Canadian history, the Residential School Settlement Agreement which established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There were clear motives on Canada's part for keeping issues of Indigenous justice and land claims out of the courts for so long. To avoid facing our injustices, to maintain our control over land and resources and to continue to avoid the nation to nation negotiation that ought to have been the foundation of our life on this land together.

While legal counsel is now permitted, our legal processes and government institutions still often fail to operate in good faith when Indigenous needs and land claims come into conflict with industry and resource extraction. We've seen the effects of this with ongoing protests and blockades across the country.

We have all seen pictures of Indigenous land defenders, of all ages and genders, standing with authority and courage against the power of the state enacted through police and RCMP. This kind of escalated conflict is never anyone's first choice. It is often the last and desperate efforts after decades of slow and ineffective court procedures. This combative divide between Indigenous Peoples and Canada has been entrenched in our institutions for generations.

Last year Canada failed to legislate bill C-262 to align the policies and laws of Canada with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with a great deal of the debate involving economic and legal concerns around land disputes and pipelines. This month Canada is trying again with the introduction of bill C-15 on UDRIP.

In this area, it appears to me, that reconciliation for Canada means continuing to give more authority to the voices that have little power.

I wonder, can we hear this call to reconciliation in the prayer of Mary? "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour... he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty." Luke 1:46-55

#18 Prohibited pool hall owners from allowing Indians entrance &

#19 Forbade Indian students from practicing their traditional religion Reflection by Fiona

The Lord has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8

Do you like to go to the movies? Go to concerts? Eat out at fancy restaurants? Do you have the freedom to worship in the way that you want to? Are you able to live out your life in the way that fits with your culture, your faith, your language? If you can do any of these things then you live better than First Nations did in the past and how some live today.

I have Indigenous friends who have shared with me how when they go shopping in the bigger centres that they are followed when walking around the stores by security personnel. I have never been followed anywhere that I have shopped. Never! I know that I live with white privilege and what being followed for my friends is racism. And that needs to stop. There is a clear line between what the

Indian Act laid out about pool halls and the security personnel who have followed my friends.

Like many of you here I am a Christian and I have never, ever had anyone tell me that I couldn't go to the church community that fed my soul. I have sometimes tried to imagine what it would be like to be not able to worship the way that feeds me the best. I wonder if I would have the courage to worship secretly if it meant that if I was found out I would be sent to jail or punished in some way.

I have also been fed by First Nations ceremony; the smudge, the pipe ceremony, learning about sacred medicines and how they are used. I have had my Christian faith enriched by all of this and the relationships that have developed. I am so grateful to all those who took their ceremonies underground and when able shared it with those of us who are settlers on this land. The generosity of those who suffered because of residential schools continues to amaze and awe me.

During this Advent season we are being called into a deeper relationship with Jesus and with our neighbours. How does learning this part of our history encourage you into deeper relationships?

Reflection #19 – Forbade Indian students from practicing their Traditional Religion

Reflection by Fred

“I confess our sin in acts such as smothering the smudges, forbidding the pipes, stopping the drums, hiding the masks, destroying the totem poles, silencing the songs, stilling the dances and banning the potlatches. With deep remorse, I acknowledge the intergenerational spiritual harm caused by our actions.

I confess our sin in declaring the teachings of the medicine wheel to be pagan and primitive.

I confess our sin in robbing your children and youth of the opportunity to know their spiritual ancestry and the great wealth of its wisdom and guidance for living in a good way with the Creator, the land and all peoples.”

- Archbishop Fred Hiltz, former Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. July 11, 2019.

I will never forget where I was when Archbishop Hiltz offered this apology to Indigenous people across Canada on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada. I was sitting at my desk at work writing a report and listening to the live stream of the proceedings of the 2019 General Synod. As I heard the Primate utter the words I quoted above, a feeling of joy was replaced with a sudden rush of sorrow and tears. I was elated that the Church I had decided was going to be my home was apologizing for its spiritual arrogance and the harm that it had caused but I was also sad that those who came before me did not get to hear that apology.

I have included a link to Archbishop Fred Hiltz's apology below for those of you who are not familiar with it and wish to read it.

I was reminded of this term "spiritual arrogance" as I was reading this section of the book. I confess that I was a bit shocked when I read the opening paragraph of #19. That Canada was committed to insisting that its citizens belong to "one or other Christian churches" and there was no point for Residential Schools to "foster aboriginal beliefs." I was equally surprised when I read that a representative of one Christian denomination went so far as to question whether there was in fact such thing as a "native religion."

Residential schools were a partnership between the Government of Canada and the three main Christian denominations, the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the United Church of Canada. Religious instruction was a mainstay in the schools. In these schools where students were taught that their spirituality and beliefs were pagan.

This spiritual arrogance has had long lasting effects on survivors of Residential Schools and their communities. It reminds me of the division that occurred between Saul's mother and grandmother at the beginning of the film *Indian Horse* when Saul's brother died from tuberculosis. A division that occurred because Saul's mother insisted on taking the body to a Priest for a "proper burial" so that the boy's soul wouldn't go to hell. That kind of division existed all across the country and still exists in at least one community where Band Council Resolutions have been passed that forbids sweat lodge, pipe ceremonies, and even pow wows from taking place in the community.

While there is no doubt that there are differences between walking the Red Road and following the teachings of Jesus, they are not mutually exclusive of one another either. One simply has to look carefully and see many of the oral histories and teachings reflected in the teachings of Jesus. The Seven Grandfather Teachings. The Peacemaker and the Great Law of Peace. The Medicine Wheel. All of them pointing to the importance of loving the Creator and loving your neighbour as yourself.

I often wonder what life would have been like had this been recognized much sooner.

#20 Denied Indians the Right to Vote

Reflection by Michelle

It was the year 1960 when Indigenous Peoples were finally allowed to vote. This is only 60 years ago.

Not having the right to vote for a people who have been here since time immemorial is just another example of the injustice facing the Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous people “were not responsible enough to have a say in the choosing of the government” because we didn’t pay taxes or own property which by the way, a system put in place by the colonial government.

Before the Europeans arrived, Indigenous peoples had their own systems of governance.

Not having the right or the voice to be part of this ‘new system’ in a land in which they are the original inhabitants, must have felt disempowering.

When the time to vote for us as citizens in this country whether it is nationally, provincially or locally, there is a sense of hope. A sense of having a voice for change & for better.

I cannot fathom the hopelessness & the frustration by not having a voice to fight for their equality and their rights at the time.

It was after World War II with many Indigenous peoples who served with distinction, the government was beginning to see the unequal treatment of the original inhabitants of this land. Change did not come right away, but it was a starting point. IF Indigenous peoples wanted to vote, they would waive their right to status.

I honor the ones who fought for the rights I have as an Indigenous person today.

However, it should have never have had to be this way.

If only we were seen as valuable. If only “they” knew that Indigenous lives matter.

#21 Is a piece of legislation created under colonial rule for the purpose of subjugating a group of people

Final reflection by Michelle.

Over years and years of “trying to get rid of the Indian problem” by taking away our land, our languages, our rights, our traditional & spiritual belief systems and our children/family, we have survived as Indigenous peoples.

The rest of the world is beginning to see the gift of our way of life.

We are the seeds of our ancestors. We are their prayers answered. We are the vision of who they were fighting for.

Despite all the barriers, the racism, the policies/ideologies that tried to eradicate us, the injustices, we are still here.

Our stories, our traditions, our songs, our ceremonies, our teachings, our way of life survived.

We are a testament of Creator's strength.

ICPM in the last four years has been deeply committed to learning & understanding the historical implications of colonization & racism of the Indigenous peoples in our country. As we have walked this journey together honouring both traditions-the Christian tradition & the Indigenous traditions. It is possible for two canoes to row in the same direction.